



**Seeking Asylum in the US:
Examining the Humanitarian Crisis locally, at the border, and in Guatemala**

Aliscia Niles
Faculty Adult Basic and Secondary Education
Sabbatical Report, Spring 2019

Summary of Sabbatical Report

My sabbatical was arranged in three distinct phases in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the asylum-seeking conflict in the US: local, national, and international. Each phase included a volunteer component as the anchor to my research. I selected organizations that have an expertise in their area of focus and also offered me direct interaction with program participants. I interviewed key experts, program participants, and staff in order to gather diverse perspectives and points of entry into asylum. Locally, I was able to conduct a training/education/social service survey to help inform and support our programming. Finally, I reviewed current literature on migration and asylum to support the qualitative research.

Phase 1: Seeking Asylum in Lane County

When I think about the crisis at the border, the violence that rips people from their homes and families, and the dangerous journey to secure safety, I sometimes feel overwhelmed. And in these moments, I take pause and consider my own community. What is the newcomer experience here, what are we doing to support our immigrant families seeking refuge, and what can we do better?

Before heading south, my sabbatical work requires an inward look with the support of Pilas! Family Literacy and The Refugee Resettlement Coalition of Lane County. The purpose of this first phase of my sabbatical was to immerse myself into local groups in order to understand the support systems and challenges for asylum seekers in Lane County. To embed myself in this work, I volunteered for two local programs, Refugee Resettlement of Lane County, and Downtown Languages Pilas! Family Literacy. In addition, I attended workshops addressing asylum and immigrant issues, interviewed key stakeholders, conducted an education and social needs assessment, and formed a community partner interest group in order to have ongoing discussions about planning and programming for newcomers and asylum seekers.

Phase 2: Seeking Asylum at the Tijuana/US Port of Entry

Once I had a general understanding of the asylum experience in Lane County, I volunteered at the southern border with Al Otro Lado. This was not part of my original sabbatical plan but once I saw pictures of families tear gassed at the border, I felt compelled to act. Specifically, I wanted to learn about the legal asylum process. Al Otro Lado is a bi-national, direct legal services organization serving indigent deportees, migrants, and refugees in Tijuana, Mexico. While the bulk of their work is providing legal immigration support, they also assist families with aspects of reunification, and work with non-custodial deported parents to ensure their rights as parents are protected in the United States family court system.

Contrary to public opinion, seeking asylum is legal. Asylum seekers must be in the U.S. or at a port of entry to apply for asylum. In other words, they must show up in order to follow the legal process. Thousands of asylum seekers are stranded in Tijuana, as my colleague says, living in purgatory, unable to return for fear of death, unable to move forward. With thousands of asylum seekers arriving in caravans to the southern border seeking protection, they were greeted with tear gas and illegal executive orders that continue to deny them this basic right, to request asylum. There was no doubt in my mind that this had become a “Humanitarian Crisis” but not in the way it was proposed in the media. Therefore, I had to see for myself what was happening in order to gain some sense of understanding, with this question in mind: What is causing the humanitarian crisis at the border, and how is this impacting the right to seek asylum in the US?

Phase 3: Comprehensive Asylum Reform in Guatemala

This part of my sabbatical takes me back to Guatemala, to understand why thousands of Guatemalans are joining caravans north, with hundreds settling in Lane County. In 1992, Guatemalan refugees, living in exile over the past decade, escaping the violence of civil war, decidedly walked out of the refugee camp of La Laguna, Quintana Roo, Mexico, and down a dirt road in the direction of their homeland. The promised buses that were to return them home had not arrived on the appointed day, and the people could wait no longer. They told me, “*Somos hombre de maíz, queremos regresar a construir nuestro país. Nuestra tierra nos está llamando.*” We are people of the corn; we want to return and rebuild our country. Our land is calling us home. And at that, we set off, on foot, until we arrived to another refugee camp, gathering in numbers. The following day, 76 buses arrived, returning our caravan of 2,500 repatriates with the shared vision of rebuilding their homeland despite the ongoing violence. I turned 22 during the month-long caravan, in the role of a peace observer, assigned to my group of 40 people, families, per the terms of the United Nations repatriation agreement. My sabbatical work returns to this decided moment, when families started the long caravan home on foot. Why, now, after decades since the signing of the peace accords, are thousands of Guatemalans fleeing their homes to join the caravans now moving away from their land? The answers are intertwined in our shared present and past.

My proposal to volunteer and conduct research afforded me the opportunity to work directly with families in communities that have been impacted by the migration north. My methodology involved interviewing key experts including mothers participating in 32 Volcanes Nutrition Programs and Family Support Center, visiting communities impacted by migration, and attended workshops and cultural competency trainings. Finally, I visited and interviewed the Colectivo Vida Digna team, a program that supports deported youth.

Upon reflection of this sabbatical...

The purpose of a sabbatical is to provide faculty members with an opportunity to pursue professional development so that they may serve more effectively on their campuses and in their field of specialization. This sabbatical has been an opportunity for me to grow personally as well as professionally. Personally, I was needing to rekindle and reconnect with the passion that first brought me to education and, in particular, the community college arena: equity through education. I have found, for several years, that while my time in the classroom has been meaningful and continues to inspire my best teaching, institutional level work has been soul crushing, so much so that I've questioned my role and purpose at LCC as of late. I feel like I am able to return to my work on campus with a laser-like focus, and will continue to move our most important work forward including better supporting our asylum and refugee community members: we are the community's college.

In order to make progress on a very complex and ever-changing issue. I gave myself six months to do the work, combining spring and summer terms. I challenged myself to fully immerse into the work by staying on a rigorous schedule, scratching every surface, talking with anyone who would engage, and pouring hours of volunteer work into my programs. The goal of immersion was to come out of the sabbatical period with a new shift in perspective, one that would focus my lens on the important work, while recommitting myself to my purpose at LCC, to design and teach programming that builds equity in our community and alleviates poverty and injustice through education. Lane Community College has a very clear and important role in supporting comprehensive asylum reform as a leader in education. What is our role as educators, our role as a community college, when our own community members are actively persecuted and live in fear? This is a call to action.

Because this topic is changing by the day, due to new executive orders, continued violence, and increasing global migration, it is challenging for me to "finish" this report. In addition, there is so much more that I need to reflect on both personally and professionally, so I am putting a statement here to address this reluctance to be "done": I have only started to scratch the surface of this complex issue, and this report is simply the beginning of a much more complex and ongoing project. As someone who has unearned privilege in two significant ways, my citizenship and my race, I must continue to deconstruct what my role is as a white US citizen both personally and professionally. My own father has not spoken with me since my work at the border. He is unable to make the connection that his very own parents were only able to apply for US citizenships through the asylum process, on grounds of religious persecution, suffered by Molokan Russians. I will not squander or be selfish with my unearned privileges, that much is certain. How I continue to move forward, requires ongoing self-reflection and action.

A detailed description of the results and outcomes of this sabbatical are found in the full report below, as well as interviews, recommendations for Lane Community College and Adult Basic Education, and supporting materials and final thoughts.

Phase 1: Understanding Asylum in Lane County

Inquiry: What is the newcomer experience in my community, what are we doing to support our immigrant families seeking refuge, and what can we do better?

When I think about the crisis at the border, the violence that rips people from their homes and families, and the dangerous journey to secure safety, I sometimes feel overwhelmed. And in these moments, I take pause and consider my own community. What is the newcomer experience here, what are we doing to support our immigrant families seeking refuge, and what can we do better? Before heading south, my sabbatical work requires an inward look with the support of Pilas! Family Literacy and The Refugee Resettlement Coalition of Lane County. The purpose of this first phase of my sabbatical was to immerse myself into local groups in order to understand the support systems and challenges for asylum seekers in Lane County. To embed myself in this work, I volunteered for two local programs, Refugee Resettlement of Lane County, and Downtown Languages Pilas! Family Literacy. In addition, I attended workshops addressing asylum and immigrant issues, interviewed key stakeholders, conducted an education and social needs assessment, and formed a community partner interest group in order to have ongoing discussions about planning and programming for newcomers and asylum seekers.

Refugee Resettlement Coalition of Lane County

Millions of families worldwide are living as refugees and asylum-seekers, uprooted by war, persecution or natural disaster. A few of these families are finding a new home in Lane County, thanks to a resettlement program that is spearheaded by a local community task force and coordinated by Catholic Community Services of Lane County. Local faith-based groups, service organizations, and concerned community members have joined together to form the **Refugee Resettlement Coalition of Lane County**. The coalition is working with CCS to welcome and support refugee and asylum-seeking families coming to Lane County.

Downtown Languages Pilas! Family Literacy

The mission of Downtown Languages (DTL) is to increase opportunities for immigrants and build respect and understanding across cultures by providing language, literacy, and other educational programs. Downtown Languages partners with the Springfield and Bethel School Districts, Lane ESD Migrant Education Program, United Way of Lane County, and other community organizations to offer the **Pilas! Family Literacy Program** for Spanish-speaking families. The program, for families with children ages 0 – 13, offers ESL classes for parents, a preschool classroom, reading and writing for K-3, a homework club for grades 4 – 8, and family and cultural activities.

Refugee Resettlement Coalition of Lane County



Advocate Training

In preparation of my sabbatical, I received the Volunteer Advocate training with Catholic Community Services and the Refugee Resettlement Coalition of Lane County. The training provides the essential skills for Advocates to support refugees, asylum seekers, and asylees navigate our

community. Advocates work in teams to provide regular, on-going support to clients, both individuals and families, in Lane County, who are refugees or have applied for or been granted asylum. Advocates assist clients with issues and challenges they are facing as they seek to become self-sufficient members of the community. They may problem-solve, help clients enroll in health insurance and other government-provided assistance, connect with potential employers or housing resources, and enroll their children in public education.

Background on Unaccompanied Youth/Minors

Soon after the completion of my Advocate training, I was assigned to an unaccompanied youth from Guatemala. To protect his identity, this report will not include details of his experience. However, I will provide a general understanding of the unaccompanied youth/minor path to the US. The National Immigration Justice Center states children seek refuge in the United States for many reasons: to escape war, gangs, or violence; to flee abuse; or to reunite with family. Others enter involuntarily as labor or sex trafficking victims. In recent years the number of unaccompanied immigrant children migrating to the United States has nearly tripled. And, as stated by the American Immigration Council, most unaccompanied children arriving at the southwest border come from Mexico, and the Northern Triangle countries, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

Increased violence in the Northern Triangle is a primary reason for recent migration. A report by the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), citing 2012 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) data, highlighted that Honduras had a homicide rate of 90.4 per 100,000 people. El Salvador and Guatemala had homicide rates of 41.2 and 39.9, respectively. A 2014 analysis determined that the higher rates of homicide in countries such as Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala are related to greater numbers of children fleeing to the United States. (American Immigration Council 2015).

The journey north is especially dangerous of unaccompanied children. The 2014 United Nations High Commission on Refugees report the path to the US dangerous, especially for unaccompanied children. The conditions are challenging. They walk for hours, take difficult and often perilous train routes, boat and truck routes, and are

exposed to high temperatures and lack of sustenance. However, in addition to the physical demands of the journey north, young children are vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse, child trafficking, kidnapping and blackmail. (UNHCR, 2014). Per UNICEF, not all minors who make the journey reach the United States. Many are deported from Mexico, where their asylum requests are not processed and only very few are granted international protection. In 2015, less than 1% of children arriving in Mexico were granted international protection. In many other cases, children disappear or die en route (UNICEF, 2016).

Understanding the reasons why there is an increasing number of unaccompanied youth seeking asylum and the harrowing and traumatic experiences they faced should help inform how we approach their asylum cases. However, children who do make it into the US are even more vulnerable to the negative impacts of the immigration system. They often do not have legal representation to help navigate the complex systems. They are forced to stay indefinitely in substandard for-profit camps. When they are deported, they face additional barriers including increased poverty, severed familial support, and stigmatization, further traumatizing vulnerable children.

Gratefully, with the support of the Refugee Resettlement Coalition of Lane County, some of our local asylum-seeking youth are getting the comprehensive support they need to successfully navigate the immigration system, and are provided resettlement support and advocacy, as with my assigned asylee. This is the model that should be used to support all asylum-seeking youth. In addition, there is an increasing interest throughout the school districts in Lane County to better support the needs of unaccompanied youth as they try to meet a myriad of sometimes conflicting expectations including work, attending school, and meeting the legal requirements of the cases.

Pilas Family Literacy - Downtown Languages



For a ten-week session, I volunteered as the Adult ESL instructor at the Springfield site. This site served over 75 students spring term and continues to grow. I provided ESL instruction and led family engagement and literacy activities. Working with Pilas parents provided me with the opportunity to directly assess community needs through formal and information evaluations. Parents shared their concerns, interests and needs in focused discussion groups and a formal survey. The 15-question survey gathers demographic information, gauges educational and career interests, as well as expressing additional needs or concerns. The survey will also be used to identify and justify critical education and training needs for future programming. Not all questions are included in this report. The full survey can be made available.



Pilas! Family Activity-Families who learn together, grow together.

Summary of the Adult ESL Survey

Location: Outreach Site: Springfield (Several students drive up from Cottage Grove)

Number of respondents: 29

Age Range: 22-60

First Language:

Spanish: 27

Mam: 3

In summary, when asked their last level of education completed, 33% of respondents completed a high school equivalency, or entered/completed college, while 67% have less than a high school level education and 76% of the respondents would like to get a college certificate or diploma.

Respondents are employed in: Forestry (2), Farm work (3), House cleaning (2), Embroider Headwear, Cook, Laundry Attendant, Accounting, Truck Driver, Finish Saw Operation, seamstress, Childcare (2), not currently employed (14).

The survey revealed that the majority of participants would like to see increased educational programming in outreach areas including Springfield and Cottage Grove including more training and employment readiness, certificate and short-term degrees, and secondary education options such as GED Spanish and college transfer. Childcare and transportation are the two primary challenges to accessing education and training opportunities. Respondents overwhelmingly want to see more programming like Pilas! Family Literacy, and an expansion of Pilas to incorporate workforce training with English language development. And, finally, families overwhelmingly want to learn more about how to best communicate with their child's school, and better understand how to navigate the education systems.

The survey also revealed that while many participants are working hard to adapt to the cultural expectations in the US, they often face discrimination in the workplace, schools, and out in the community. Many commented that having more community-based programs like Pilas is a place to build these skills, and also find the support they need to be able to challenge discrimination.

As for social services, respondents would like to see more opportunities to learn to drive and successfully complete their driver's license test. They would also like to learn more about nutrition and making nutritious meals. Respondents would like more support navigating often complex systems such as accessing medical care.

Cottage Grove Partner Meetings: Supporting Guatemalan Asylum Seekers

In the spring, interested agencies in social services and education came together to address our growing interest in better understanding and supporting Guatemalan asylum seekers, especially in the Cottage Grove area. We formed this interest group to assess the local needs of this vulnerable population and how our different agencies might leverage our programming to support unmet needs. This is an informal group and has open membership. Currently, the following entities are in attendance: Downtown Languages, Catholic Community Charities, Springfield Public Schools, PASS Lane-LCC Career Pathways, LCC-ABSE. I also serve as a partner liaison between this group and LCC's ESL workgroup.

After several meetings, we determined two priorities: supporting Guatemalan parents and young children in Cottage Grove, and Supporting Unaccompanied Youth/Minors.

Cottage Grove Interviews and Site Visits

As part of this first phase, I interviewed key stakeholders in Cottage Grove including educators and service providers. Why Cottage Grove? Cottage Grove has a range of 350-400 Mayan Guatemalan newcomers, many are asylum-seekers, and a large percentage are unaccompanied youth. Most of the families come from Todos Santos, Huehuetenango, Guatemala. The primary language is Mam, in addition K'iche. Many of the newcomer mothers do not speak Spanish. About 125 families have arrived in the last year or so. Full interviews can be made available for programming purposes.

Questions included:

- What are the demographics of the newcomer/asylum seekers in your service area?
- What education and social services are currently offered?
- What are the education and social service gaps?
- What ideally, would you like to see in your service area to support this population?

The Immigrant Experience in Lane County - Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed from my work through Refugee Resettlement of Lane County and Downtown Languages Pilas, key stakeholder interviews, Adult ESL surveys, and partner team meetings:

Education

- Hire/train instructors and staff to understand the unique needs of asylum seekers including trauma training, awareness of indigenous cultures/languages, and basic knowledge of asylum immigration law/process.
- Build indigenous language translator pool.
- Cottage Grove: There continues to be an interest in developing some kind of Pilas! model program that integrates the entire family into learning, including ESL adult classes, Pre-Kinder-Middle School language and academic support, and early childhood development for children 0-3 years of age.
- In Springfield, Eugene, and Cottage Grove: Consider adding classes/supports to existing programming where families have already built trust.
- Offer English Classes with career/training focus and college transition, ESL Reading/Writing for the Workplace
- Offer Employment Ready Certificates at low to no cost, non-credit (ABSE).
- Outreach sites: Offer more classes including Spanish GED, bilingual computer classes, English with childcare, Math in Spanish, have an ongoing outreach presence to inform students about training and professional options. Provide one-on-one tutoring. Increase instruction hours.
- Assign staff to outreach sites who will, in addition to support programming, also build trust and assist with outreach efforts, and investment in the community, as part of their assigned duties.
- Ongoing cultural competency training for staff and instructors.

- Contextualize educational content to include and support diverse cultures and languages with basic literacy and EL civics awareness.
- Focus on Literacy and Basic Skill Development: Average Mayan Guatemalan adults/parents have a 3rd grade education level, 23/100 children do not attend elementary school, 53% of students abandon their studies at the 6th grade level
- For secondary youth, offer rigorous/accelerated night classes for GED and workplace training for students who need to work. Offer concurrent certificate and transfer options in partnership with school districts. Provide more instruction time and options for secondary youth who need to work - more night time hours, credit recovery, training/certification.
- Recognize employment as a primary outcome: Develop programming that includes employment or acceleration to employability as the main outcome. Provide secondary youth with opportunities to gain basic skills, in combination with short-term workplace certificates. All Title II programs, under federal law, can now offer certificates. Work with LCC - ABSE to develop a tuition -free workplace skills certificate.

Support Services

- Expand immigration and refugee resettlement support in Lane County.
- Moms and children often suffer from severe dental decay - offer dental care/and nutrition education
- Offer nutrition classes and workshops
- Basic skills - how to complete forms, understanding US systems like education, social services and immigration systems, basic literacy in English, Spanish, and Mam., basic numeracy (how to pay a bill, go to the bank, how to read a thermometer, etc.)
- Translation/Interpretation: Mam, preferably oral translation, due to literacy, for all language needs (forms, appointments, school communication, etc.)
- Provide reliable transportation for Lane County rural communities to attend their monthly Immigration Check-Ins at the Eugene Federal Building.
- Job seeking support including resume, applying for jobs, interviews, etc.
- Work collaboratively with legal services including Catholic Community Charities and GLAD for just representation and resettlement.
- Driver's License Test Preparation and Learning how to Drive

Questions for Discussion:

1. Should we have a designated site to serve Lane County newcomers operated in partnership? What about an intensive secondary education newcomer program?
2. Can we offer supplemental services like tutoring during Pilas!? What can LCC offer? Are ABE/ESL, dual enrollment options a possibility?

3. What do we need to learn about Mayan languages and cultures to be able to design and implement effective and appropriate programming?
4. Who are our potential partners? What can we all bring to the table to offer a comprehensive program/class?
5. How do we help youth understand long term work benefits when someone has an education? Are there programs we can implement that support both work and school for youth?
6. What else do we want to learn or understand? What are our next steps?
7. How can we continue to learn about our newcomer and immigrant populations to most effectively plan programming and support?

Phase 2: Understanding Asylum at the Southern Border

Inquiry: What is causing the humanitarian crisis at the border, and how is this impacting the right to seek asylum in the US?

Once I had a general understanding of the asylum experience in Lane County, I decided to volunteer at the southern border with Al Otro Lado. Specifically, I wanted to learn about the legal asylum process, but, more importantly, I felt compelled to act. Contrary to public opinion, seeking asylum is legal. Asylum seekers must be in the U.S. or at a port of entry to apply for asylum. In other words, they must show up in order to follow the legal process. Thousands of asylum seekers are stranded in Tijuana, as my colleague says, living in purgatory, unable to return for fear of death, unable to move forward. With thousands of asylum seekers arriving in caravans to the southern border seeking protection, they were greeted with tear gas and illegal executive orders that denied them this basic right, to request asylum. There was no doubt in my mind that this had become a “Humanitarian Crisis” but not in the way it was proposed in the media. Therefore, I had to see for myself what was happening in order to gain some sense of understanding.

Border Rights Project - Tijuana Al otro Lado's Border Rights Project

I volunteered for Al Otro Lado's Border Rights Project because it has been at the frontlines of the asylum crisis for several years. Al Otro Lado is a bi-national, direct legal services organization serving indigent deportees, migrants, and refugees in Tijuana, Mexico. While the bulk of their work is providing legal immigration support, they also assist families with aspects of reunification, and work with non-custodial deported parents to ensure their rights as parents are protected in the United States family court system.

The **Border Rights Project** has been focused on addressing the “self-manufactured humanitarian crisis” at the border. The project conducts legal observation at the ports of entry, know your rights presentations, and legal screenings throughout the many shelters in Tijuana. For many years they have documented human rights violations committed against asylum seekers at the port-of-entry and inside immigration detention. The project's work has

been cited by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Human Rights First, and numerous regional, national, and international publications and media outlets.

The Border Rights Project is housed at **Enclave Caracol**, an anarchist community center that hosts a Food Not Bombs chapter and a variety of other community programming, including free lectures, classes, and exhibitions. The space also houses a volunteer-run medical clinic organized by San Diego Border Dreamers, that runs in coordination with the legal services team. Through this partnership, asylum seekers receive legal support, a daily warm meal, information about shelters and other resources, and access to medical care all under one roof.

I received my volunteer training including giving the Credible Fear Interview and trauma informed interview techniques. We learned about the injustices faced by asylum seekers including the Mexico Protection Protocol that sends vulnerable people back to Mexico to wait for the asylum proceedings. And, we spoke in detail about the illegal wait-list that now requires asylum seekers follow, but it is riddled with corruption. During the training, we also discussed family separation, and I think we need to start calling it what it is, kidnapping. I continue to struggle with this strategy of taking people's children, further traumatizing them, and without a process for reunification. and was assigned to document testimonies in preparation of the credible fear interview, the official request for asylum.

What is a Credible Fear of Persecution?

A “significant possibility” that you can establish in a hearing before an Immigration Judge that you have been persecuted or have a well-founded fear of persecution on account of your race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion if returned to your country.

I was trained to:

- Understand how trauma that may impact how well they do at their Credible Fear Interview
- Use tactics to address trauma with asylum seekers in order to document the critical details
- Ask questions to get to legally relevant information for their case in a way that builds trust and supports dignity

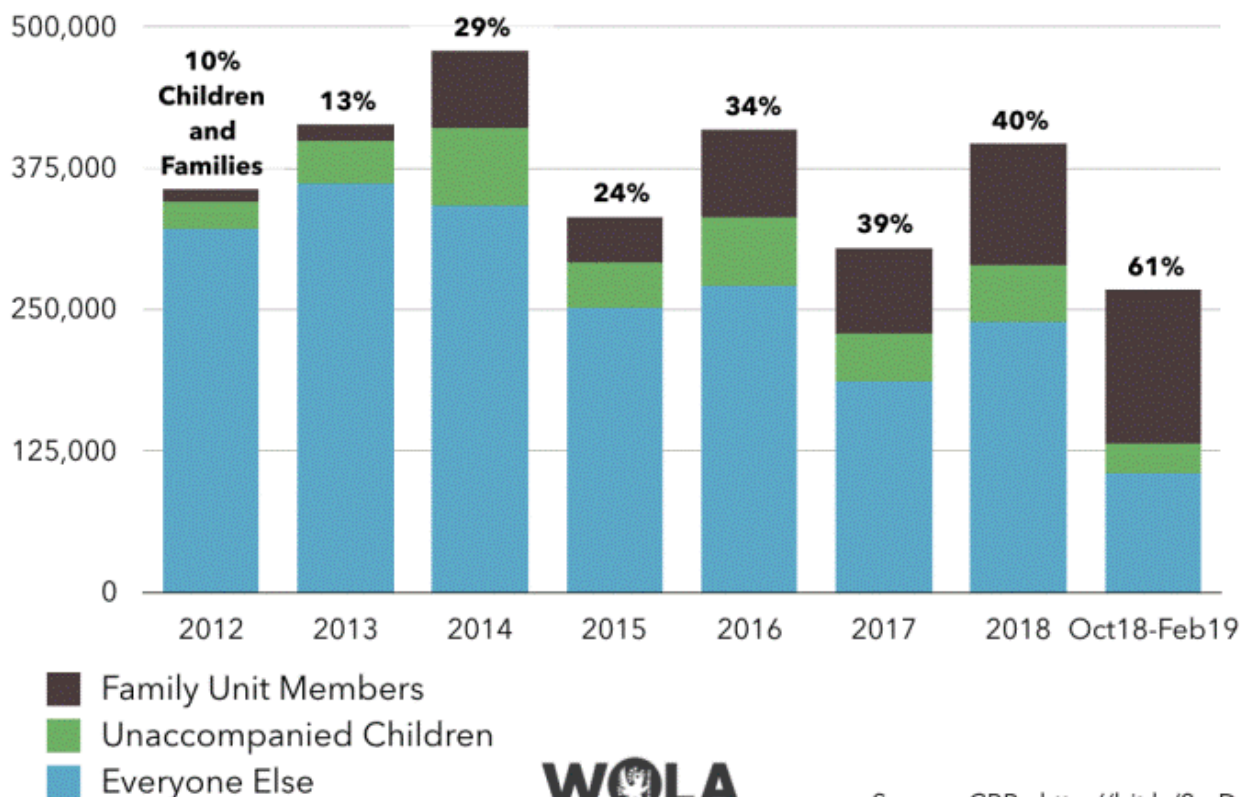
I documented the horrific things that happen to people in extremely violent regions including torture, kidnapping, the disappearance of loved ones, attempted murder, murder of loved ones, sexual assault, and this grim list goes on. My job was to accurately document these heinous acts, but really, I felt like I was there to share my humanity. I was also assigned to Chaparral, the port of entry between Tijuana and San Ysidro, to observe and document border violations, as well as provide outreach for our program. A port of entry, by law, is a designated location to be able to request asylum. However, this is made nearly impossible with the illegal wait-list.

I find myself struggling to write about these experiences because of the level of trauma and dangerous conditions in Tijuana for migrants. The situation is unsafe for vulnerable migrant populations, especially unaccompanied youth and parents with children. In order to capture the severity of the crisis, I have summarized these experiences in a series of Lessons Learned.

Understanding Asylum in the US- Lessons Learned at the Border #1: Who is Coming?

The number of single adults being apprehended at the border remains near 50-year lows. The typical migrant is no longer an adult traveling alone, but families with children or unaccompanied youth. This is a vulnerable population who, for the most part, are deliberately seeking out U.S. border security authorities and asking for protection. Sensationalized news coverage about caravans overwhelming the southern border is being used to promote fear, and in turn, justify militarization, further traumatizing this vulnerable population. In contrast, as volunteers, we met families with free meals, provided childcare, helped with documentation, offered legal support, referred to social services, and provided medical care. We can choose to see the situation, either through the lens of fear or humanity, with tear gas or love.

The Proportion of Children and Families, Among Apprehended Migrants, Keeps Increasing



Understanding Asylum in the US- Lessons Learned at the Border #2: Illegal Protocols

While post #1 mentioned there is an all-time low of people seeking asylum at the southern border, for the first time ever, 61 percent of all migrants apprehended by Border Patrol are children, and parents with children. This proportion was never as high as 10 percent before 2012. The Humanitarian Crisis is two-fold. First, we are seeing a historical number of vulnerable populations seeking our protection. Second, the US is NOT following Federal Asylum Law in very significant ways, adding chaos, corruption, and violence to an already dire situation. Specifically, "La Lista" an asylum wait-list, and the Migrant Protection Protocols are illegal practices, breaking both US and International Laws. Popular rhetoric continues to support inhumane treatment of asylum seekers for "illegally" crossing the border, yet the very system they are trying to navigate is illegal. I saw, with my own eyes, the corruption and despair both of these illegal practices create. I will add more information in the comments. One action that can take place right now is to contact your elected officials to demand that we put an end to these illegal practices and follow the law of the land! Photo: Families wait at "El Chaparral," a border crossing near San Ysidro, California, to hear which names are called from the asylum waitlist. (Shannon Dooling/WBUR)



Understanding Asylum in the US- Lessons Learned at the Border #3: Why are they Coming?

So, who are these asylum seekers, anyway, and what do they want? The number of asylum requests by Central Americans is rising because Northern Triangle countries (Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador) are experiencing record levels of violence. They rank in the top 5 most dangerous countries in the world. For example, Honduras has a murder rate 800% higher than the US. Contrary to popular rhetoric, they are not coming to take advantage of the asylum "loophole" (which, by the way, doesn't exist!), but quite literally trying to save the lives of their children. I documented trauma stories for a week. I will never forget the mom whose husband was killed and daughter kidnapped, never to be seen again. She fled to save the life of her only remaining child. I worked with the medical doctor to corroborate the wounds on a father who was kidnapped and tortured. I saw his blackened toes, the scars on his arms and legs, his deformed nipples. I was asked to translate the medical report of a woman whose neck was cut and left to die. But she didn't die, she survived and fled. She took off a choker necklace to reveal the scar, thick, jagged, angry. But what broke me into a million pieces, was seeing the sheer terror in their eyes as they shared their trauma. I cannot hear one more time that asylum seekers are undeserving of our protection or compassion. These are human beings who have already experienced violence beyond our comprehension. What we do now, as a society, is truly a matter of life or death.



Understanding Asylum in the US- Lessons Learned at the Border #4: Not a US Problem.

Popular rhetoric claims the US is not responsible for the violence in these Central American countries, and, therefore, shouldn't be burdened with the responsibility of caring for asylum seekers. There are many things to unpack in this kind of thinking, but I'm just going to address one, the violent aftermath of US interventions in the region.

Historically, US policies, including economic and military interventions, have played a major role in the violence that we see today throughout Central America. Here are just a handful of many examples of US policies that have had a direct impact on the crisis we see today. (And, because I can't help myself... even if we feel we haven't personally contributed to or benefited by the violence, think bananas, it's still a flawed belief: If we feel we are not the cause of a problem, we are then exempt from participating in the solution. Really?)

Guatemala's long civil war can be traced back to the US backed 1954 coup against a democratically elected president, Jacobo Árbenz, followed by decades of military rule. The Guatemalan military, supported financially and strategically by Washington, was responsible for genocide. An estimated 200,000 people were killed between 1960 and 1996. A US backed military coup, placed General Ríos Montt in charge, who, on May 2013, was convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity, and was sentenced to 80 years imprisonment. I was in Guatemala in the early 90s collecting testimonies from this violence. Story after story of mass murders, entire villages burned...scorched earth.

The violence in El Salvador can also be traced back to a civil conflict in which the US trained and funded the militarization of what would become known as death squads, destroying the economic base of the country and any hope for democracy. Gangs have taken advantage of this instability, prospering in these impoverished conditions, which would have otherwise been controlled by a healthy civil society. It's also critical to note that gangs are largely a US import. MS-13, frequently referred to by Donald Trump as attempting to infiltrate the US to justify mistreatment of migrants, was formed in Los Angeles. Their origin story is well researched.

Honduras experienced much of the same militarization as Guatemala, protecting US interests including The United Fruit Company as early as 1911. In 2009, Manuel Zelaya, Honduras's reformist president, was seized by the country's military. The Obama administration refused to call it a coup or intervene, which allowed for an insurgence of militarization in the country. Organized crime spread through the country and the murder rate soared. Within a year, Honduras was the most violent country in the world not actually at war.

In sum, centuries of US military and agribusiness interventions in Central America are a direct result of the border crisis today. So, yes, the US has a responsibility to not only help those seeking our protection, but also commit to

the long-term stabilization in Central America through the democratic values we claim to hold so dear. You reap what you sow.

Watch:

SamanthaBee

How US Meddling in Central America Created the Modern-Day Border Crisis | Full Frontal on TBS

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFBkN9M_Tk0&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR3WQV8eYgCZO7LpMqaD9SBD5tm7Uml9u6Jf6HZI7SX7iUx2iNatipJ7D1E

Understanding Asylum in the US- Lessons Learned at the Border #5: If not the US, where?

But what if the US simply doesn't have enough resources to bring so many asylum seekers into the fold? Let's take a look at some numbers for perspective. There are 25.9 million refugees in the world—the highest ever seen; 41.3 million internally displaced people; and of this number, 3.5 million are asylum-seekers. If not here, then where are they going?

Countries with much smaller GDPs than the US are taking more responsibility for the refugee crisis worldwide. For example, Lebanon, which has accepted just over 14 percent of its population in asylees, has a per capita GDP of \$8,400—7 times less than the United States—but it has accepted asylees at 73 times the rate of the United States. To that, 49 other countries had higher rates of acceptance of asylum seekers than the United States did. The average rate of acceptance for the top 50 countries was 1.2 percent of the population—six times higher than the U.S. rate. Living in Denmark and volunteering for their refugee resettlement program as a young person, I learned that these countries not only accept more asylees, but they also have programs that support their successful integration into society including language classes, cultural activities, health care, career training and employment, and housing. The country invests in their refugee populations at the point of entry in order to successfully contribute to society within 5 years. I can't help but wonder what the Danish model might look like in the states. Could true refugee resettlement help our economy grow, and add to the quality of life for all, in contrast to the traumatic, dehumanizing, and illegal practices currently taking place?

In sum, the US has enough resources to take the few who are currently seeking asylum at our border and in the detention centers, and then some, and by that, I mean a lot more. So, if the pitifully low number of asylum approvals in the US isn't about lack of resources, then what?



Understanding Asylum in the US- Lessons Learned at the Border #6: One Family's Story

As my 6th and final post about Lessons Learned at the US-Mexico border, I am sharing a heartfelt story about one family's experience seeking asylum in the US. To protect the family, I have omitted details. I want to share this story last, to show that even though it might feel insurmountable to challenge these oppressive systems, we can make a difference in small but significant ways.

On the day I was assigned to Chaparral, the port of entry between Tijuana and San Ysidro, I was tasked to observe and document border violations, as well as provide outreach for our program. I arrived before 7am to an already long line of asylum seekers waiting to hear if their numbers from the illegal wait-list would be called that day. There were several languages spoken including Spanish, English, French, and Russian. Most were families.

Each number represents 10 people total, so if 3 numbers are called, in theory, that would represent 30 people able to cross the border into US custody on that specified date. I could write all day about the corruption of the *pinche lista*, but I only want to share enough so that what happens next makes sense. The numbers hadn't been moving more than 1-3 each day for the past several weeks. In fact, on World Refugee Day, not one single number was called. This particular day, the last number called was 2685, just two numbers in total from the day before, which should represent 20 people. (The last number given out that day was 3516, and it takes 2-3 months to wait for your number, if it is ever called, and now, numbers higher on the list are being sold for \$1000, just for some perspective.) I watched a family walk up to the front of the line and present a small piece of paper, presumably their number. They were pulled to the side of the line. The border closed and that same family pushed their way back into the crowd, in tears, and hunkered down by the side of the road.

My heart ached seeing their despair so I waited for my moment to approach. After a few minutes, I walked over with another volunteer and we introduced ourselves and our organization. We learned that while their number had been called that very day, there were only 4 people in their group, mom and three children, (Dad went missing a few months prior.) so they would not be allowed to enter without the other 6 for a total of 10. (If you are wondering, at this point, what the heck is going on with these numbers, you would not be alone. The list is a chaotic mess exasperating misery and despair.) They had already waited 2 months for their number to be called, the day their dad disappeared, they came and got the number. They were desperate to secure safety.

I asked the ages of the children. When I learned that two of the three would be treated as adults in the US, in other words, separated and detained alone, I recommended they come see us that afternoon, as their number was likely to be called again the very next day.

To my great relief, I saw the family at registration. They got a meal, learned about the asylum-seeking process, and were then assigned to an intake person. The eldest daughter came to me. Because I am trained to assess learning disabilities, it became readily clear that while the daughter was chronologically an adult, she did not have the cognitive capacity to be separated from her mother, let alone navigate the immigration system on her own. The mom, during her own interview, disclosed that her daughter never passed the 2nd grade. She could not go unattended to stores, use money, or otherwise perform daily life skills without support. The mom did not have any documentation about her daughter's special needs, and, therefore, there was nothing to be done, she would be separated from her mom, and possibly returned to Mexico alone.

This simply couldn't happen! We joined forces with our KICKASS immigration lawyer. She had a friend and colleague who might, just might, perform a psych eval over FaceTime. And, guess what, that is exactly what happened! We set up in the medical clinic, actually, a tiny little room off to the side where they keep herbal medicinal like teas and tinctures. The mom and I opened up the mason jars to identify herbs as the spotty WiFi finally allowed us to connect. Mom was first interviewed and then the daughter followed. While waiting for the written evaluation, we prepared the family for what was to come next in their process.

The next day, documents in hand, prepared and ready, the family was able to cross. They were immediately placed into US Custody and detained in what is referred to as the *hiler*, or, icebox, where asylum seekers are kept until they are released, usually on bond (\$1500 to \$7500 by the way! Where is that money going, one might/should ask.), sent to detention centers, or returned to Mexico. (A note about the *hiler*, it is kept very cold. A person must take off their first layer of clothing as part of processing. We tell people to wear their warmest layer closest to their skin. The lights are bright and never turn off. The food is minimal. Families are often separated. Once detained, one never knows when they will be released.)

It is bittersweet when someone crosses because, on the one hand, endured and sacrificed so much to get to this point, but then, so many bad things can happen once they enter into US custody. I hoped they would find caring people along the way. However, I didn't know those caring people would be once again myself and my travel buddy!

So, tell me, what do you think the odds are that the very day we returned the San Diego airport, we would run, quite literally, into this family? It was like a family reunion, hugs and cries of disbelief. They were hungry, penniless, still in the same clothing, wearing their ICE required ankle monitors (They would end up having to cut their only pair of jeans in order to change their clothes.) They confirmed the conditions of the *hiler*, cold, unable to sleep with the lighting, filled with desperation. However, the psych eval allowed the daughter to stay with her mom, and while the son was separated (we had prepared him for this), they were released together. This was the best possible outcome.

Their documentation had been taken by ICE, including their ID, so they weren't sure if they would be able to fly. Their sponsor, a family member in the US, was in the process of buying their tickets to their new home. We shared a meal, figured out the tickets, and ran to catch our own flight home.

The prospect of this family winning their asylum case is low. Their case is scheduled to be heard in a state that rejects 95% of asylum cases. Even though requesting asylum is within the federal domain, there is no national standard. While the family still has a long and difficult road ahead, and the odds are stacked against them, they said in a text that they are so grateful to live without fear, under the protection of the United States of America.



Understanding Asylum in the US- Lessons Learned at the Border #7: “Safe Third Country”?

Let's get the first point out of the way. The new executive rule barring anyone who travels through what is called a “safe third country” from applying for asylum in the US is ILLEGAL. Period. The second point, this ban further jeopardizes the safety of vulnerable populations, but especially children. Mexico is not a "safe country" nor is Guatemala or other countries in the region. Of the testimonies I documented at the border, a third were asylum seekers from Mexico who also experienced extreme trauma and systemic violence.

I will share one testimony, of many, that captures the severity of this new ruling: She escaped her country in Central America and entered Mexico at the Tapachula Port of Entry where she received a humanitarian visa, giving her legal status in the country. (Mexico is generous with their humanitarian visas.) She started to rebuild her life in Mexico, but the violence caught up with her. The gangs that had threatened her life, found her, killed her friend, cut her neck and left her for dead in the streets. I saw the newspaper clippings of her murdered friend, and I saw her jagged scar. How she survived, is a miracle. She is now seeking asylum in the US because she cannot secure safety in her new country. However, this new ruling will deny her the right to request asylum as she is now in a "safe third country". She feels she is living on borrowed time, twice having escaped death. She doesn't think she will survive a third attempt on her life and she already considers her children orphans. Is this really who we have become as a nation?



I left the border with an overwhelming sense of despair. Seeking asylum is a legally protected right under US national and international law. The constant attempts through executive orders to make asylum seeking a criminal act and impose policies that make it an impossibility makes this human right a crime. Separation of Families, detention centers with infinite release requirements, camps that inhumanely treat, abuse, and traumatize children, Mexico Protection Protocol (Also referred to as the Mexico Persecution Protocol, the wait-list, and the list goes on as the administration continues to impose new restrictions to the asylum process. How is it possible that a person is defined or labeled as illegal, when they find themselves in a system that is riddled with intentional illegal activity and abuse. Is it not, then, the system that is illegal and not the person? Immigration Lawyer, Meghan Moore said it best:

It feels like I'm battling a huge fire that the fire department itself set, and that fire is burning my clients and their families alive, and that all of the sudden the fire department simultaneously changes the rules of nature so that water doesn't actually put out fire anymore; closes the fire department doors permanently and hides all the hoses; and sets more fires each day. Yet, I have to find a way to put out the fire.

Nicole Ramos, our immigration lawyer at Al Otro Lado put it this way, “Practicing in Tijuana at this point is akin to being a lawyer in the middle of a zombie apocalypse.”

Aliscia Niles is at Tijuana Border Crossing / La Línea.

June 23 · Tijuana, Mexico ·

Here are some images from today. While I try to process the heaviness of the situation at the border, it is undeniably clear that something is very broken to allow this much suffering.



Recommendations for Lane Community College

- Recommit to our sanctuary status by sending a strong message that LCC is a safe space.
- Provide Know your Education Rights training and workshops for staff/students
- Build Trauma-Informed support systems across functions and discipline
- Sponsor LCC team to support Al Otro Lado work
- Host campus-wide speakers, workshops, and trainings to understand the asylum crisis, and stay current on executive changes.
- Build certificate programs such as paralegal in immigration to support local caseloads.
- Assess/reflect on our role as a community leader, what does it mean to be the community's college?

Phase 3: Understanding Asylum - Guatemala

Inquiry: Why, now, after decades since the signing of the peace accords, are thousands of Guatemalans fleeing their homes to join the caravans now moving away from their land?

In 1992, Guatemalan refugees, living in exile over the past decade, escaping the violence of civil war, decidedly walked out of the resettlement community of La Laguna, Quintana Roo, Mexico, and down a dirt road in the direction of their homeland. The promised buses that were to return them home had not arrived on the appointed day, and the people could wait no longer. They told me, "*Somos hombre de maíz, queremos regresar a construir nuestro país. No podemos esperar otro día más. Nuestra tierra nos está llamando.*" We are people of the corn; we want to return and rebuild our country. We cannot wait another day. Our land is calling us home. And at that, we set off, on foot, until we arrived to another refugee camp, gathering in numbers. The following day, 76 buses arrived, returning our caravan of 2,500 repatriates with the shared vision of rebuilding their communities despite the ongoing violence. I turned 22 during the month-long caravan, in the role of a peace observer, assigned to my group of 40 people, families, per the terms of the United Nations repatriation agreement. My sabbatical work returns to this decided moment, when families started the long caravan home on foot. Why, now, after decades since the signing of the peace accords, are thousands of Guatemalans fleeing their homes to join the caravans now moving away from their land? The answers are intertwined in our shared present and past.



First Return of Guatemala Refugees to Repatriated Lands in Quiche, Guatemala, 1992.

Phase 3 of my sabbatical takes me back to Guatemala, to understand why thousands of Guatemalans are joining caravans north. My proposal to volunteer and conduct research with 32 Volcanes was approved. This afforded me the opportunity to work directly with families in communities that have been impacted by the migration north. My methodology involved interviewing key experts including mothers participating in 32 Volcanes Nutrition Programs and Medical Clinics, visiting communities impacted by migration, and attended workshops and cultural competency trainings.

Background - Why Guatemala?

Dr. Bienvenido Argueta with the Department of Education and Faculty of Humanities, is a national expert on Guatemalan Migration. In his speech in Eugene, Oregon, August, 2019, he addressed the question:

Why are Why are Guatemalans joining caravans?

Dr. Argueta presented the following data to provide a comprehensive picture of the challenges Guatemala faces.

Population explosion:

- Ages 0-29 make up 66% of the population. This is a very young population in Guatemala, even in comparison to the make of other Central American countries
- Guatemala has a population that is 8 times (16 million) more than Oregon (4 million)

Poverty continues to rise:

- Since 2014, poverty increased to 59.3% of the population and continues to see an upward trend
- Of these 60%, 23% live in extreme poverty
- Only 40% of the country is not poor
- Poverty trends increase according to culture, rurality, and ethnicity

In response to the data, Dr. Argueta states, “*The increase in population and poverty is the equivalent of a Humanitarian Crisis.*”

Education Data and Poverty

- In a recent study, 80% of youth stated that work is a priority over education.
- 28% of young people have thought about migrating
- We have seen that at least 75% of youth no longer live with a parent because the parent has migrated for work. There are approximately 35% of youth who lives with grandparents, uncles, older siblings, because their mothers have to work. There aren't any adults who are concerned for their wellbeing. School does not offer the best conditions, and teachers do not have the training to support them.

"Lo que tenemos en realidad son marcos de una descomposición social solo comparables a lugares donde el conflicto armado fue muy severo. What we have in reality is the social decomposition only comparable to places where the armed conflict was very severe. "

Main message: Democracy can only function with education.

In addition, Guatemalans are migrating because:

- There is a long history of social and racial class hierarchy
- Armed conflict - 30 years Civil War
- Lack of employment/opportunity - has led to deforestation and destruction of the environment
- Drug trafficking, organized crime, gangs
- Humanitarian crisis in the entire North Triangle of Central America
- International policies that exacerbate the crisis

Dr. Argueta concludes that without education, there is no democracy, "What we really have are frames of social decomposition only comparable to places where the armed conflict was very severe." He is concerned that Guatemala's long civil war history, coupled with current climate, social, and political makers, will lead to a new armed conflict. A war over land has already broken out in at least one community, is this one of many dominoes that leads Guatemalan back into civil unrest?

“Los jóvenes tienen dos opciones: ser víctimas o victimarios.

Youth have two options: to be victims or to victimize.”

-Dr. Bienvenido Argueta

US Response: *A Safe Third Country?*

Let's get the first point out of the way. The new executive rule barring anyone who travels through what is called a “safe third country” from applying for asylum in the US is ILLEGAL. Period. The second point, this ban further jeopardizes the safety of vulnerable populations, but especially, children. Guatemala is not a "safe third country" nor are other countries in the region.

Guatemala is a sovereign country with their own constitution to uphold. When their congressional court and congress hold their president accountable to the constitution, that is called democracy, a democracy they modeled after the US. To interfere with another nation's democratic process, threats of bans and tariffs, in order to override their constitution, what is that called? Is that diplomacy? To punish a country already in crisis is only going to make

matters worse. Almost half the children in Guatemala under 5 years old are chronically malnourished. Guatemala's rate of chronic childhood malnutrition is the fourth highest in the world (UNICEF). Poverty is an epidemic affecting the majority of Guatemalans. The poverty rate in Guatemala is very high. According to the World Bank, 59.3 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. In addition, 23 percent live in extreme poverty. This is not a safe nation and they cannot possibly buffer the US, the wealthiest country in the world, from dealing with the reality impacting our region.

During my sabbatical in Guatemala, this the topic of “safe third country” came up daily. The Guatemalan people find it absolutely ridiculous that they should be saddled with the social, economic, and political responsibilities of the US, the nation, they see as one of the causes of their impoverished civil society, if not, the main reason. I was told that while people in the US may not be aware or informed about the long history of US corporate greed supported by military invasions, the people of Guatemala continue to live with the direct consequences of US intervention. It is, furthermore, offensive to public society that Guatemala should become the designated US concentration camp, through bullying tactics and threats by the Trump Administration. What Guatemalans seek from the US, is not what is being offered. They do not want militarization at the borders, they do not want tariffs, or other political threats. They need food, water, in the true sense of the word *humanitarian aid*.



Guatemala is not a Concentration Camp

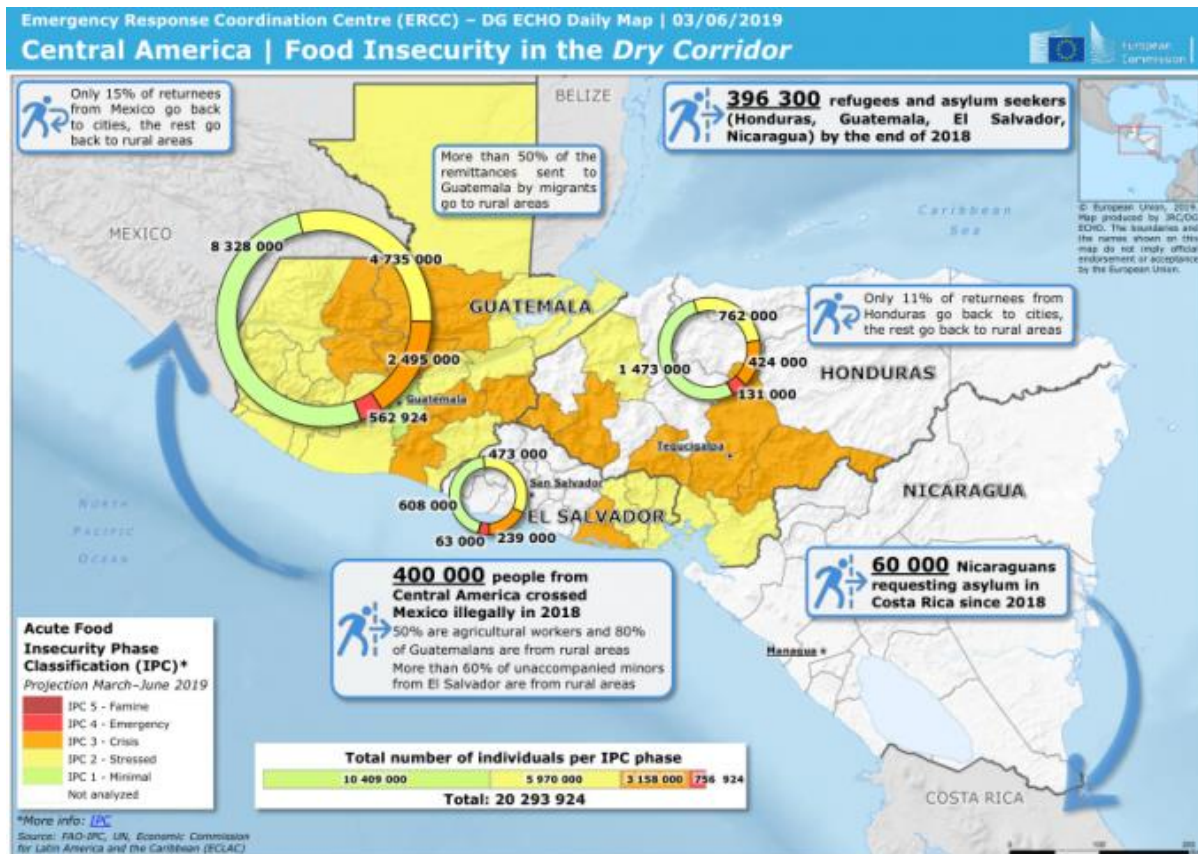
Climate Refugees

I would be remiss if I did not bring climate refugees into the scope of this report. Worldwide, 70.8 million people around the world have been forced from home. Among them are nearly 25.9 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18. This is the highest number of displaced people since the UN the highest number in the UN refugee agency's almost 70 years of operations (UNHCR 2019).

Often overlooked due to other social and political markers, climate change is impacting migration throughout Central America. Demographers and migration scholars argue that world wide migration patterns over the past 50 years can be traced back to climate change. In particular, environmental change may threaten people's livelihoods, and a traditional response is to migrate. Migration and Global Environmental Change Future Challenges and Opportunities report states that the impact of environmental change on migration will increase in the future. Environmental change will also alter populations' exposure to natural hazards, and migration is, in many cases, the only response to this. For example, 17 million people were displaced by natural hazards in 2009 and 42 million in 2010, and this has continued to increase over the last decade.

While this is beyond the scope of this report, climate change cannot be ignored as a leading cause of migration. It is also important to place things into a larger context, because, as we see in US policies and public opinion, it is easy to blame countries like Guatemala, for creating their own internal problems. However, if we can understand climate change as a worldwide phenomenon, requiring millions of people to migrate, the hope, or at least my hope is that we can start to really address these issues in a more comprehensive and appropriate way, and not tear gas and "Safe Third Country" policies that only exacerbate the crisis.

In 2014, a group of agronomists and scientists came together to form Climate, Nature, and Communities of Guatemala. They produced a report cautioning lawmakers about the region's susceptibility to climate change. They found that three hurricanes caused damage that cost more than the previous four decades' worth of public and private investment in the national economy. Extreme-weather events were just the most obvious climate-related calamities. There were increasingly wide fluctuations in temperature—unexpected surges in heat followed by morning frosts—and unpredictable rainfall. Almost half a year's worth of precipitation might fall in a single week, which would flood the soil and destroy crops. Grain and vegetable harvests that once produced enough food to feed a family for close to a year now lasted less than five months. The report concluded: "Inattention to these issues can drive more migration to the United States and put at grave risk the already deteriorating viability of the country."



However, comprehensive asylum reform is possible, not through bullying tactics, but supporting real efforts to address poverty at the source. The third and final phase of my sabbatical takes me to Guatemala where I volunteered with 32 Volcanes to support and learn about their efforts to rebuild communities impacted by the reaches of poverty. My work involved volunteering for two of the projects, The Nutrition Program, and The Family Support Center. I also attended all program meetings, cultural competency trainings, interviewed staff and founders, and interviewed mothers who participate in their programming. Finally, I visited and interviewed the Colectivo Vida Digna team, a program that supports deported youth.

The volcanoes will be there when we are no longer here, and that is what we hope will happen with our work: that it will be a seed that will sprout in more worthy and just futures for all. -Founders of 32 Volcanes



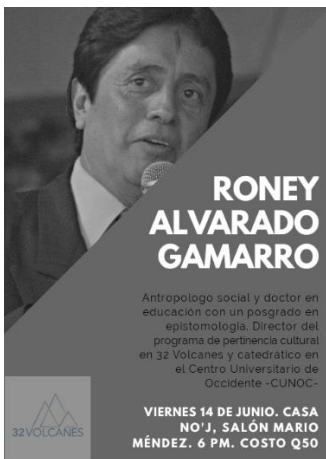
32 Volcanes

Founded by Dr. Carmencita Benitez de Alvarado and Dr. Roney Alvarado, 32 Volcanes is a new Guatemalan non-profit organization promoting sustainable change through their educational, health, nutrition, and environmental projects in the Western Highlands of Guatemala. The founders of 32 Volcanes bring 26 years of building sustainable communities and was formed with the intention of promoting integral social projects in diverse communities in Guatemala. What makes this

nonprofit unique is their commitment to form a mutually responsive collective in partnership with communities that receive support. This is their key to long-term sustainability; they are compelled to collaborate in partnership with local communities in order to promote equal rights and dignity of all people and ways of life in Guatemala.

32 Volcanes Slogan: Memory / Dignity / Future

Founder, Dr. Carmencita Benitez stated in an interview, “We will grow with community work, empathy, and thought toward the service of our country. We work for human rights and social justice with processes that highlight dignity, promote happiness, and the spirit of individual and collective life. Our vision is to build networks of mutual support for a sustainable world for all forms of life.”



A requirement for volunteering with 32 Volcanes is attending a ten-hour cultural competency training led by Dr. Roney Alvarado, Social Anthropologist, PhD in Education, and postgraduate in Epistemology. In this mini-course, Dr. Alvarado deconstructs the colonized mindset through history, theory, religion, culture, and Western ideology's pursuit for power and dominance. He decidedly states, since the Dark Ages, power has been gained and maintained through a campaign of fear and ignorance, “power needs fear and ignorance to exist.” Stereotypes that grew out of the Dark Ages, continue to exist today, perpetuating the colonized mindset: The Devil, White Supremacy, Patriarchy. The “colonizer project” was founded on these fear and ignorance campaigns, using religion as the catalyst, to “save souls” but, in actuality, to dominate and maintain power. Dr. Alvarado concludes by challenging his participants to self-reflect on this one question, in order to start deconstructing our colonized minds: Why are you here? What is your purpose for volunteering with 32 Volcanes? ‘Deconstruct your purpose, and reconstruct your world view.’



What is impacting Guatemala's Migration?

In an interview, Dr. Carmen Benítez, Medical Doctor and Program Coordinator of 32 Volcanes, stated that the ultimate goal of 32 Volcanes is to keep people in their communities so that they do not feel that their only option for survival is to flee to the north. “Why are people leaving? The very basic answer is that there isn't any food or water. Of course, there are more complex reasons including gender inequality, the legacy of colonialism: racism and discrimination, and climate change. We can't ignore that one in ten people in Guatemala are vulnerable to climate changes. We must talk about food sovereignty, because this is the path that will lead us to health, dignity and a future.”

She went on to explain that climate change and global warming increase food insecurity and as a result, migration, creating more climate refugees. 32 Volcanes is committed to addressing this global crisis by “creating community, integrity and food sovereignty for all humans and protect life and ecosystem on this planet.”

Referencing the 2019 UN World Food Report, Dr. Benítez stated, “As of June 2019, millions of people in drought-ravaged parts of Central American are facing crisis-level food insecurity, and 700,000 are at "famine" levels. The UN World Food Program says the drought, which began in 2014, is directly tied to higher migration from the region. In emergency surveys, people living in the Dry Corridor told UN officials that a lack of food was the primary driver. Poverty, unemployment and violence were also reasons people left the area — all three rights being linked to drought. These are climate refugees.”

Dr. Benítez brought to my attention the contradiction between policy and consequence. “The recent announcement of the Trump administration's end to asylum protections for Central American migrants by the country that has contributed most to the global climate crisis shows their refusal to deal with the consequences.”

She concludes that food sovereignty is the answer to addressing these larger issues and with integrity and sustainability in collaboration with communities, “let's rebuild forests of food; everybody stands; no one will be left behind, no more migration because of poverty or violence, conflict of water or climate refugees.”

32 Volcanes Nutrition Program



Nutrition Clinic

Approximately 100 babies per month between the ages of 6 months and 36 months and their mothers in Llanos del Pinal, Buena Vista, La Victoria, Xeabaj II, and Pujujil participate in the Nutrition Program. The program provides monthly education classes, height and weight checks, nutrition consults, various nutritional supplements, and immediate medical treatment.

The babies and toddlers are particularly vulnerable to digestive and respiratory illnesses. They are especially vulnerable due to conditions of extreme poverty and their precarious living conditions. In addition to the common illnesses in Guatemala, there has also been an increase in illnesses that are harder to diagnose and treat. The program continues to need additional funds for lab tests, specialist consults, and treatments.

Children suffering from malnutrition are at risk of dying in their early years. If they survive, they can experience up to 40% less structural brain development once they reach their first 1,000 days of life. This, in turn, means that they often learn more slowly and earn less from their labor. Moreover, they are at greater risk of suffering from long-term chronic illnesses. In simple but profound terms, malnutrition compromises a country's most important asset for growth and development: its people. In Guatemala, the productivity as a future worker of a child born today is 54% lower than it would be with full health and education (World Bank Report 2019).

I participated in the program in Buena Vista, a Maya-Mam community of around 500 families in the department of Quetzaltenango in Guatemala's Western Highlands. The team included three local doctors, a nurse, a public health promoter, and the program coordinator, and a lead community member. We packed up the program van with mobile clinic supplies and headed west for about 40 minutes. Upon arriving, families were already waiting outside, a total count of 35 mothers and their babies were seen that day.

The pediatrician informed me that the program started in Buena Vista with just 5 moms and their babies. Over the past several years, community members have seen a significant difference in the growth and development of the children participating in the program, and have since been a max number. We unloaded the mobile clinic and quickly set up three stations: a triage clinic to treat babies with immediate health concerns, the baby wellness area to

take measurements and assessment growth/development, and the station that provides highly dense nutrition foods for baby and mother.

My assigned role was to provide a nutrition lesson to the moms. I decided to pick a universal struggle that mom's around the world share: How do we get our kids to eat less sugar! We shared our concerns about sugar, and how, sometimes, we just cave in, especially when it is easily accessible and often the least expensive snack option. We discussed the benefits of fruits as an alternative to something sweet and went around the room sharing our favorite fruit. This was a fun and engaging activity, with a lot of laughter, as the activity turned into a competition about which fruit would be the most popular. Papaya won. In the end, we talked about how to make fruit more fun for our children, and share ideas such as making a fruit salad and letting our kids pick out and prepare the fruits. We also talked about how to prepare some of the fruits like strawberries, that often carry bacteria that can make children very sick. Mari, the community leader, then translated the lesson into Mam, and we ended with an applause for the entire team.



Dr. Germain performs the Wellness CheckUps including weight, length, and head measurements. All data points are entered into the child's profile and charted to monitor growth and development, follow up with a treatment plan as needed.



Teaching a Class about Nutrition: How to Reduce Sugar in our Child's Diet



Mari, the Community Leader, helps translate treatment plans into Mam. When children turn three, and have met all wellness benchmarks, they graduate from the program. Stimulation toys are brought with the mobile clinic to assess motor and cognitive skills.

For the past five years, the Buena Vista Nutrition Program has alleviated malnutrition by 97%. This staggering improvement is true for the other three communities that benefit from the program. What this means for the community is that children now have the capacity to learn, to develop properly, and ultimately grow into adults who have the skills and capacity to continue to teach healthy and sustainable practices to their children to come. The program is in the beginning stages of setting up community gardens in each of the Nutrition Sites. This will increase access to local, affordable, healthy foods, and increase food sovereignty, the fundamental goal of the program. This is comprehensive asylum reform at the core.



Two healthy graduates from 32 Volcanes Nutrition Program. They were my volunteers and future leaders of the community.

32 Volcanes Centro de Apoyo Familiar -CAF- Family Support Center



The Family Support Center (FSC) is located in Llano del Pinal, a K'iche' Mayan community south of Xela near the Santa Maria Volcano. The FSC is an after-school program and childcare center for approximately 32 children. Most of the children come from single-parent households in which the mother is working to support the family. In many cases the fathers have migrated to the United States or other parts of Guatemala (and are not sending money home). Other mothers are widows. Many of the families have experienced domestic violence and alcoholism. Local staff meet monthly with the mothers to discuss various

educational, public health, and social issues. The FSC employs former FSC participants and scholarship students and other staff from the community to provide quality services to the families who utilize the Family Support Center. Educational support is one of our primary objectives. Most of the children attend school in the morning and arrive for a hot, nutritious lunch.

I was invited to teach a nutrition lesson to the three different grade levels. I differentiated a bilingual literacy activity to meet the needs of each grade level with the topic of Fruit Salad. In each class, we discussed the benefits of eating fruit instead of candy. Most of the students were well informed about the damage sugary foods can cause to their teeth, growth and development, and overall health. The lesson asks us to help a chef make a fruit salad. For the Pre-Kinder class, we identified fruits and then they were able to create their own fruit salads, filled with their favorites. The older children added on reading and language components including English and their community's native language, K'iche. Supporting K'iche is a primary objective of the FSC. Each child presented their masterpiece to their classmates. The literacy component of the lesson included each child making their own mini-book to take home. The was the final objective, the kids were to ready their books, and share their favorite fruit salad with the parents. I would not be exaggerating if I didn't hear "We get to take this book home?" at least 20 times, so excited to share their stories to their moms.

I spoke with the three teachers for each of the classes about their work and their hopes for the program and the children they support. What struck me most is that all three teachers were children in the Family Support Center and later earned scholarships to get their degrees in Education and Early Childhood Education with the goal to return to teach the next generation of Llanos children. They are true role models and leaders in the community as they are showing a new path, education, that leads to a healthy and sustainable life, rather than heading north, as

their only option. The teachers shared in our interview that this work is truly from the heart, and they see their mission to help their students overcome the barriers brought on by poverty and lack of opportunity.



The Pre-Kinder Class and their Mini-Books!



K-3 Students working on their fruit salad mini-books!



Older kids proudly presenting their mini-books



Dental decay is a result of malnutrition. FSC children are fed nutritious meals and learn about dental hygiene and making healthy choices. With my own eyes, I observed FSC children with stronger, healthier teeth compared to their peers who are not in the program.

I'm including the following poem by Carmen Lucía Alvarado, Editor/Owner of Catafixia Editorial. She is an award winning author and he wrote the following poem in response to an activity the children at the Family Support Center participated in. The children were asked to draw a picture showing what they liked most about living in Llano del Pinal. The response of one child captured the desperation to leave their homes for the north.

I Just Drew the Road to the North

By Carmen Lucía Alvarado

The Palajunoj Valley is a plain that extends to the foot of the Volcano Santa Maria and the Cerro Quemado in Quetzaltenango. There you will find various villages, one of which is called Llano del Pinal. On this very plain was the first battle between the Spanish and the Maya Quiches. There watered the founding blood of this country and dramatically and violently engendered the first mestizos that would later become Guatemala. Today Llano del Pinal is a village with serious economic and social problems, which make it an extremely hostile place. Consequently as if in a catapult, the people in massive numbers are annually migrating to the USA.

I know well the work done by 32 Volcanes. One of their most symbolic and constant projects is the Family Support Center in Llano del Pinal which cares for the social and academic development of at least 40 children. A few days ago the children did an exercise in which they were asked to draw what they like most about living in Llano. One of the children handed in a picture that obviously had nothing more than roads. When asked about his drawing, he answered, "Well, there is nothing good in Llano; I just drew the road to the north."

The migration is a constant and dramatic current, not because of the fact that the exodus looking for the promised land is extremely dangerous, but rather because of the almost genetic conditions of the people that decide to leave. Being that this country is one that has extreme deficiencies in guaranteeing the basic conditions of a dignified life, logically the result is that the people have to leave their land, family, culture, and world view in search for a solution, apparently the only solution. When I say the circumstances are almost genetic, I refer to those little children, who have not even reached half way through primary school, in the middle of overwhelming difficulties, but yet they are clear that what they must do with their life is a journey, they must leave.

Annually hundreds of families disintegrate in the search for the promised land. A promised land where racism and inequality continue to consume them, a promised land that does no more than return a few dollars in exchange for excessive work. The result, hundreds of houses with second stories, 4x4 pickup trucks, and a lot of kids that dream of crossing the border, abhorring all that they are dreaming to be another. Most likely they will do it, undertaking this journey regardless of the risks, because something they have clear is that life, the dream, is not in their birth place.

Various kids that attend the Family Support Center have lost family members to migration, their parents have died in the attempt, others go and don't return. With luck some families will receive remittances. Another child after handing in his drawing, in which the migrants can be seen sitting on the roof of a moving train, explained that "The dads leave to earn money so that later it will not be so hard for his kids." (This boy's father died trying to cross the border.)

The landscape entering Llano del Pinal is impressive, in front you see the Volcano Santa Maria like a sentry, an ancestor, a monument to memories. I think of the children that are born in front of this volcano, born with the destiny of misery, malnutrition, lack of education, excessive work, and the constant risk of living on the most hostile edge of life. I see the fog that constantly descends on the valley, I think about time, the centuries, the thousands and thousands of souls that have been born before that blue volcano that cuts through the sky. I think of the beauty of this landscape and the dramas which it harbors. I imagine Santa Maria as a giant with eyes slumbering with time, with her perfect triangular form, seeing through the centuries how they form, between the blood and abandonment, those unstoppable journeys from a fatherland that gush from its primal wounds.



Background: Valle Palajunoj - Llano del Pinal

Llano del Pinal is located in the the Palajunoj Valley in the southwesterd part of the municipality of Quetzaltenango. Palajunoj means "among the ten wisdoms" where 75% of the rural population of the municipality of Quetzaltenango reside. The majority of the inhabitants in Llano del Pinal are engaged in agricultural work. The crops grown for markets primarily include vegetables while corn is grown for self-consumption. Most of the population is of K'iche 'origin and this is the primary language though many of the youth are now only speaking Spanish.

Llano del Pinal Interview: Mari

I have lived in Llano del Pinal all of my life. Spanish is the only language that I speak, but the older generation speaks K'iche and we are trying to teach our kids so we do not lose our language. I have three children, one is 6, one is 3, and the baby was born last September. My husband and I work long days in Xela, all day long. There isn't any work here in Llanos and so we have to go into the city to work. The hardest part about living in Llanos is that the economy is very limited, basically, there isn't an economy.

More than half of the population has gone north to try and enter the US to be able to send back dollars. My husband has tried to enter twice to be able to support our children. There is nothing more despairing than looking at your children, they need shoes, they are cold, they need things, and not being able to give them what they need.

He made it twice to the border but once he was met with tear gas, and another time, he was caught by border patrol and immediately deported. We are now in debt, thousands of dollars, because we had to pay the coyotes, it doesn't matter if you get in or not. You still owe the coyotes. We borrowed this money and now we owe so much, it's now even harder to support our family. My husband wants to try a third time but I tell him it's not a good idea, he's been lucky, he wasn't hurt on the journey and he didn't get jailed, and we owe too much money.

I want to be able to start a small business in Llanos so that we can make a living here, and not rely on dollars. However, we hear about people who make it to the US, and they send dollars home, and we see their children well fed and sheltered. It is hard to see this and not think, maybe we should try one more time.

What our community needs is economic development, we need investment into our local economy so that people can work here, live here, stay here. I want my children to get a university education, and we will do whatever it takes to help them. But then what? If there are no jobs, then what kind of future do they have in Llanos or Guatemala? If we had the funds, we would start our own business, we have many ideas, like a bakery would be good here so that people can get their daily bread here, and not have to go to the city. We want to stay in our community, but there is nothing here for us.

What I would like to say to those of you who are in the US and want to help, I think it is better to help communities like ours, instead of helping those who already made it to the US. They are the lucky ones, they are the ones who can get dollars to send home. We are the ones who need your help. We want to stay in our communities and make it better for everyone, but it feels impossible.

We are grateful that 32 Volcanes provides our children with a safe place to learn and develop at the Family Support Center. They are working hard for our children and they do this work with love. This type of support allows us to seek employment in the city without worrying about the safety of our children. We would like to see more economic development so that we do not need to leave our children. We want to stay here and rebuild our community, but we need help.

Background: Santa Catarina Ixtahuacan

Santa Catarina Ixtahuacan is a municipality in the Sololá department of Guatemala. It is located at about 7,500 ft in altitude in the steep mountains of the Sierra Madre range. The indigenous language is K'iche'. Most families rely on subsistence farming. An armed conflict between Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán and Nahualá began almost 20 years ago when about 200 square kilometers of land that the municipality of Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán ceded to the Chiquisís village, and continues today.



Santa Catarina Interview - Manuela Navidad

I am from a region of Solola that is at war, a war that has been going on longer than I have been alive. The conflict is between two neighboring towns, Santa Catarina and Nahualá. I am from Santa Catarina, actually, my family lives higher in the mountains in a village called Xeabaj. I call this a war because there are guns and grenades and as soon as one turns 18, you are formed to enter the militia, but you do not get any training. Our towns are fighting for a piece of land between our two towns. As populations grow, we need to be able to feed our families and in agricultural communities, we feed our families from the land. The only solution to this conflict is to request a government impact, but our requests fall silent on the officials. This is why my husband and I have moved away. We do not want our two young daughters to live in violence.

We moved to the city (Xela) to escape the war, and to try and have a better life for our children. My husband and I both grew up in home for destitute children in Salcaja, run by a German, I think his name is Rudolf Walter.

We grew up knowing what it means to be separated by our families, not being able to pick up the phone and ask for advice or just to hear our parents' voices. We already know the pains and trauma of family separation. We know what it means to live with violence. This is why we do not have a desire to travel north. My children are young, 1 ½ and 4 years old. Both have suffered from malnutrition but through the support of 32 Volcanes Nutrition Program, both children are improving. No, we are not going north, we are going to fight for our children here in Xela. We need education, to better prepare ourselves, so that we can better prepare our children. I want to get into the certificate program for baking and pastry so that I can take better care of my girls, and give them the future they deserve.

Colectivo Vida Digna Team Interview

Maria Garcia Maldonado, Lawyer

Carlos Escalante Villagrán, MSc, Coordinator, Cultural Observatory

Anna Aziza Grewe, MSW, Coordinator, Youth and Migration

On my last day, I had the fortunate opportunity to sit down and talk with the **Colectivo Vida Digna Team**. We discussed issues at the border, deportation, and the abandonment of culture/language/way of life for the false promises of the north. At Vida Digna, they recognize that migration is more complex than the decisions of individuals. The structural causes that spur migration are intimately linked to exclusion and displacement -- factors which compel people to leave their communities and countries of origin.

The Vida Digna Youth and Migration programming include:

- **Research and advocacy** by and for Mayan communities on issues of indigenous migration
- **Direct services** for unaccompanied migrant children returning to Guatemala, and for other young people and families affected by migration.
- **Coordination of educational groups** from abroad and hosting of postgraduate interns.

The young people who participate in Vida Digna's Youth and Migration program have been deported from the U.S. and Mexico. They are between the ages of 14 and 19 and are from the southwestern departments of Guatemala. Increasingly, however, the Collective supports even younger children. Their families are from different Mayan linguistic communities, with Spanish as their second language. "Coyotes," or guides, charge exorbitant fees to bring people from Guatemala to the U.S. border. Upon their return home, these young people face debts between \$8,000 and \$11,000 plus interest payments as high as 10% monthly. In the local economy, most families earn an average of \$250 per month. The demands of paying down migration debt limit young people's access to education. Before becoming part of the Collective, these young people haven't had the opportunity to complete secondary school.

Through the **Child Migrant Return & Reintegration Project (CMRRP)** --- a bi-national project with **Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)** --- the Collective has facilitated the reunification of more than 70 young people with their families in the departments of Quiché, Sololá, Totonicapán, and Quetzaltenango. The legal, social, emotional, and cultural impacts of deportation are significant and enduring. The Collective provides cultural support services in this critical time of transition.

Educational support to returned migrants and their families is essential to breaking the barriers to access of services and rights. Vida Digna establishes alliances with technical training institutes, adult education programs, and

cultural centers to provide essential educational and vocational training. In addition to helping with matriculation, Vida Digna offers tutoring and educational counseling. To date, the Collective has supported 72 young people in integrating into school and training programs.

Employment orientation is one of the Collective's most-requested services. Vida Digna aims to create dignified opportunities for young people



Vida Digna Participants and Staff: Youth and Migration Program

In response to increasingly restrictive migration policies in the U.S. and Mexico, Vida Digna shared they are reassessing their mission and program objectives. While changes have not been made public, they conclude that with these increasingly dangerous US-enforced policies, they are compelled to reassess and ultimately change the trajectory of their work, while continuing to support migrant children. There is a call for reassessment at all levels of asylum from local, national and international points of entry if this crisis is to be addressed in any real way.

Comprehensive asylum reform recognizes and addressing the core reasons why people leave their homes. Policies that continue to criminalize and punish people that seek protection, and life's very basic needs, food and water, will only exacerbate the problem, and possibly fuel a crisis that will be beyond the control of tear gas and militarization of borders, and definitely walls. In the US, it is our responsibility, since so many are impacted by what we do, or do not do, to demand our legislators to engage in a meaningful dialogue about comprehensive asylum reform so that families are not forced between two impossible decisions: watch my child suffer, or flee. Dr. Alvarado concludes, "the world is a pyramid of power, those on the bottom are currently being impacted by climate change, while those in the powerful top levels deny and disengage from the suffering of others. However, it won't take long for all levels to be impacted, the base will crumble, and all will fall." Together we rise, or together, we fall.

Reviewed Literature and Resources

American Immigration Council. A Guide to Children Arriving at the Border: Laws, Policies and Responses, June 26, 2015, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/guide-children-arriving-border-laws-policies-and-responses>

National Immigration Justice. Unaccompanied Immigrant Children, 2016, <https://www.immigrantjustice.org/issues/unaccompanied-immigrant-children>

Humanium. A precarious journey: unaccompanied minor migrants of Central America, December 6, 2016, <https://www.humanium.org/en/unaccompaniedminorscentral-america/>

Plaza Pública. Bienvenido Argueta: “Los jóvenes tienen dos opciones: ser víctimas o victimarios” 14 de Julio de 2017, <https://www.plazapublica.com.gt/content/bienvenido-argueta-lo-jovenes-tienen-dos-opciones-ser-victimas-o-victimarios>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Children on the Run: Unaccompanied Children Leaving Central America and Mexico and the Need for International Protection, March 2014, http://www.unhcrwashington.org/sites/default/files/1_UAC_Children%20on%20the%20Run_Full%20Report.pdf

Elizabeth Kennedy, No Childhood Here: Why Central American Children Are Fleeing Their Homes, American Immigration Council, July 1, 2014, <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/perspectives/no-childhoodhere-why-central-american-children-are-fleeing-their-homes>

Rodrigo Dominguez Villegas and Victoria Rietig. Migrants Deported from the United States and Mexico to the Northern Triangle: A Statistical and Socio Economic Profile, Migration Policy Institute – MPI. Washington, D.C, September, 2015 <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/migrants-deported-united-states-and-mexico-northern-triangle-statistical-and-socioeconomic>

UNICEF. La infancia en peligro. Sueños rotos: el peligroso viaje de los niños centroamericanos a los Estados Unidos. August, 2016. https://www.unicef.org/honduras/sueños_rotos.pdf

ACNUR. Arrancados de raíz. Causas que originan el desplazamiento transfronterizo de niños, niñas y adolescentes no acompañados y/o separados de Centroamérica y su necesidad de protección internacional. August 2014.
<http://www.acnur.org/fileadmin/scripts/doc.php?file=fileadmin/Documentos/Publicaciones/2014/9828>

Asylum Seekers Struggle to Navigate Trump's Broken Border Policy, Madeleine, Wattenbarger, June 13, 2019<https://newrepublic.com/article/154181/asylum-broken-remain-mexico-policy>

Human Rights Watch. US: Children Face Deportation Without Lawyers International Law Requires Legal Counsel for Child Migrants. March 2014. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/03/14/us-children-face-deportation-without-lawyers>

Nina Lakhani. This is What the Hours of Being Deported Look Like. The Guardian, December 12, 2017.
<https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/dec/12/mexico-deportation-tijuana-trump-border>

WOLA, Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas. New Migration Numbers at US-Mexico Border Show a Growing Humanitarian Crisis. March 6, 2019.
<https://www.wola.org/analysis/new-migration-numbers-us-mexico-border-show-growing-humanitarian-crisis/>

WOLA, Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas. Fact Sheet: US Immigration and Central American Asylum Seekers. February 1, 2018..
<https://www.wola.org/analysis/fact-sheet-united-states-immigration-central-american-asylum-seekers/>

By Heather Timmons & Annalisa Merelli Safe Third Country: Trump's Latest Plan to Deny Asylum Seekers Protection is Illegal. Quartz, July 15, 2019
https://qz.com/1666449/trumps-safe-third-country-asylum-ban-is-illegal/?fbclid=IwAR1Oj89aNu9vLRkN4HsHRv4a99GitZWtVwSZ5A0JKAy_JzMtqqMVVCO42zg

NPR. Thousands Of Central American Migrants Stuck In Tijuana, Waiting To Seek Asylum, January 8, 2019 5:11 PM ET, Heard on All Things Considered.
https://www.npr.org/2019/01/08/683339670/thousands-of-central-american-migrants-stuck-in-tijuana-waiting-to-seek-asylum?fbclid=IwAR1p9Q37kO2Sw7u_Bko01Zp80eCDcs-9QRL_C371bdHyS4BJU0koX-UJKyE

Sarah Sherman-Stokes, USA Today. My Sharpie Marker Might be the only Thing Keeping Migrant Mothers and Children Together, April 14, 2019.

https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/voices/2019/04/14/kirstjen-nielsen-family-separation-immigration-border-column/3451161002/?fbclid=IwAR0KXILcK6wPBBy6V0PaDsQDqyfeIDeiTmLKAZy_oHwnMOOzfKbT2YTe3ECk

Ben Harrington Legislative Attorney Hillel R. Smith Legislative Attorney. "Migrant Protection Protocols": Legal Issues Related to DHS's Plan to Require Arriving Asylum Seekers to Wait in Mexico, Congressional Research Services, Updated May 9, 2019. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/homsec/LSB10251.pdf>

Gaby Del Valle. Mexico is Tired of Trump's Remain in Mexico Policy and they are Finally Doing Something about it. Vice News. Aug 23 2019.

https://www.vice.com/amp/en_us/article/vb5ea3/mexico-is-tired-of-trumps-remain-in-mexico-policy-and-theyre-finally-doing-something-about-it?fbclid=IwAR2yluBjc7pJLi45dZR33TwacFz3_IKGYzXVAY8DP5kV9-RmfYgURFeaacM

The Government Office for Science, London. Migration and Global Environmental Change Future Challenges and Opportunities, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/867migrationscience.pdf>

Johnathan Blitzer, How Climate Change is Fueling the US Border Crisis, New York Times, April 3, 2019

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/how-climate-change-is-fuelling-the-us-border-crisis>

Workshops/Visits

March 5, 2019 University of Oregon

Attended Presentation: Judge Yassmin Barrios.

Judge Barrios is President of Guatemala's High Risk Court Tribunals. She was the presiding judge in the case of General Efraín Ríos Montt, convicting the dictator for genocide against the indigenous Ixil Mayans of Guatemala. Judge Barrios will deliver her address, "Justice and Reparation in Guatemala: Challenges and Possibilities," in 156 Straub Hall at 6pm on Tuesday, March 5th.

Visit to Peggy's Family Center/Head Start Cottage Grove

Program supports moms with 0-PK children with literacy programming, nutrition, completing forms for OHP/Head Start, learning how to navigate community and US systems. Similar to a Newcomer Welcome Center for moms with young children.

Serving about 45 families

Visit with Michelle Hilton, secondary ELD teacher, Cottage Grove HS

April 18 Opening Doors Community Forum Participant and Panelist:

<https://www.lanecc.edu/pathways/opening-doors>

Opening Doors is an interagency community forum focusing on Career and Employment programs that serve first-generation adult immigrants. The event is free and morning coffee and lunch will be provided. Event Goals: ● Foster multi-agency collaboration, networking, and alignment of resources among organizations ● Improve overall awareness of existing services and opportunities ● Identify service gaps and barriers within Lane County ● Learn about best practices and identify common challenges ● Create a Resource Matrix to be shared with all agencies ● Develop a plan for ongoing networking and increase of services

August 7 Presentation Dr. Bienvenido Argueta and Daniel Domingo López, Guatemalan Department of Education

There will be a special event where three dignitaries from Guatemala are traveling to Oregon to help coordinate services to Guatemalan families and students. On Wednesday, August 7, 2019 there is a special invitation to attend an Interactive Workshop put on by an educational group from Guatemala. As our Guatemalan populations grow, it would be very beneficial for us all to attend this presentation and better understand the Guatemalan families and students. **1 - 4pm: Interactive Seminar.** Dr. Bienvenido Argueta and Daniel Domingo López, along with representatives from the Academia Maya, will be facilitating an interactive workshop for educators and community members on Guatemalan migrant education. Participants will leave with an increased ability to support and develop culturally responsive and sustaining learning structures in support of our Guatemalan students and families.

