



Our 2019 Accomplishments

Racial justice, cross-border organizing, and international accompaniment give rise to a brand new GAP in 2020

2019 saw a backlash against historical memory and heightened border and mega-project militarization, forwarded by powers whose influence can be traced back to the Internal Armed Conflict. In response, NISGUA doubled down on racial liberation, horizontal exchanges between Indigenous Peoples, and the foundation of our work: accompaniment of defenders of life. In the context of capitalist colonialism and global fascism, our work showed us that a new path is necessary, giving life to an accompaniment program resourced to take on this violence with innovative forms of organizing.

PRESENTING:

GAP INTERNACIONALISTA!

After nearly thirty years of accompaniment, we are re-launching our **Guatemala Accompaniment Program (GAP) as an *internacionalista* volunteer program** to connect cross-border movements for Indigenous sovereignty and immigrant justice.

See more on the back page



Indigenous connections:

Cross-border pollination

This year, we held an organizer space between ACODET (resistance against Xalalá Dam), Anti-Colonial Land Defense (water protectors against Line 3 Pipeline), and Frontera Water Protection Alliance (water protectors in El Paso, TX). The following day, ACODET presented their statement on free, prior, and informed consent with signatures from 15 Indigenous tribes and organizations, as facilitated by NISGUA. Additionally, our webinar about the Maya Achi sexual violence case with Breaking the Silence (BTS) educated audiences in the U.S. and Canada about this historic struggle by Indigenous women survivors of sexual violence.

2019: YEAR AT A GLANCE

Accompaniment of

295

defenders of life in Guatemala

We accompanied 23 at-risk transitional justice & land defense groups. Despite threats, **activists have continued**, citing accompaniment as one of their key tools for safety.

Our partners from across Turtle Island tell us that Indigenous cross-border exchanges build a **stronger, safer movement** by mutually-resourcing defenders of life.

Exchanges between

224

Indigenous leaders



“Organizations like NISGUA have been **fundamental and strengthening** for our struggles in defense of life and our human rights.”

-Marta Muñoz, Peaceful Resistance against Escobal Mine

Grassroots education in action! Our **original articles and translations** provide timely information and analysis directly from our Guatemalan partners for a diverse global audience.

98

Blogs and reports published

Cover image: Women in Copal AA share with representatives of the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN). Left-hand image: NISGUA and BTS staff interpret for Gloria Reyes (lawyer, Rabinal Legal Clinic) and Paulina Alvarado (survivor and case witness).

Indigenous connections: Delegations with NMSU and IEN



NISGUA collaborated with former accompanier Kayla Myers (Eastern Shoshone Descendant) and New Mexico State University (NMSU). Including a visit to Copal AA, lessons on Guatemalan history from genocide survivors, and workshops on Indigenous leadership, **this delegation resourced the next generation of Indigenous leaders to have an internationalist lens in their organizing.**

NISGUA facilitated an exchange for the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), **“an alliance of Indigenous peoples whose mission it is to protect the sacredness of Earth Mother from contamination and exploitation by strengthening, maintaining and respecting Indigenous teachings and natural laws.”** The trip was in service to IEN’s commitment to global grassroots environmental organizing, Indigenous women’s leadership, and grassroots feminism aligned with Indigenous cosmivision.



Cross-border education: NISGUA featured in CALDH’s CREOMPAZ report

Strategic and responsive communications on landmark cases is an essential component of monitoring legal process led by social movements. This year, our report on CREOMPAZ (bit.ly/CREOMPAZ) was featured prominently in a Center for Human Rights Legal Action (CALDH) photo exhibition publication.

“It was the most comprehensive resource on the case we could find.”

-Edith López, Communications Coordinator for the CREOMPAZ case

Successes in racial justice: GAP cohort 2019

In 2017, we launched our Racial Justice Framework, a declaration of our long-time commitment to racial liberation. One of our benchmarks was to increase the participation of Indigenous and POC accompaniers and delegates. Along with two all-Indigenous delegations in 2019, **we welcomed our first majority Latinx GAP cohort**, who will be integral to the creation of *GAP Internacionalista!*



MEET OUR 2019 COHORT

Top image: Diné delegates hold their flag representing the Navajo Nation in Copal AA. Photo credit: Chantelle John. Middle image: The IEN delegation with ACODET organizers after their conversation about the struggle against the Xalalá Dam.

Promoting safety and dignity for Guatemalan defenders of life



This year, the Morales administration and Guatemalan Congress took a variety of steps to ensure impunity for crimes of the past and attack historical memory. This regressive work included a proposed Amnesty Law to protect and even free war criminals. In response, **NISGUA provided accompaniment to groups under threat, organized grassroots education, and mobilized our base to call their Congresspeople in rejection of the Amnesty Law.** After massive national and international outcry, the Guatemalan Congress postponed voting on the proposal.

As threats and violence increased in the context of a court-ordered consultation of the Xinka People around the Escobal Mine, NISGUA provided emergency responses and urgent actions. When a pro-mining mob in Jumaytepeque attacked the Xinka Leadership Council and criminalized Xinka Parliament lawyer Quelvin Jiménez, **NISGUA staff was present to provide physical accompaniment, coordinate emergency advocacy, and dispel state lies about Quelvin's arrest.** In the days after, with the Coalition Against Mining Injustice in Guatemala (CAMIGUA) we coordinated a letter to the Guatemalan government with signatures from 65 organizations demanding justice for the attacks.



Politicizing major current events through the lens of Indigenous sovereignty

1 A NYT journalist told us that our reporting on the **militarization of Huehuetenango** was some of the only that directly covered analysis from Indigenous and local people.

Our coverage of the **safe third country agreement** highlighted not only the way it endangers immigrants, but also violates Indigenous territory. **2**

3 We translated urgent information about the **state of siege** into English and explained why it is an extractivism-motivated invasion of Maya Q'eqchi' territories.

NISGUA ORGANIZES IN THE BAY

This year, NISGUA deepened relationships with immigrant justice and Indigenous organizers. **We saw two major victories:** Governor Newsom signed AB32 - a huge step toward ending private detention in CA, and the CA Superior State Court of Alameda denied another attempt to develop a mixed-use building on the sacred Chochenyo Ohlone Shellmound. **Organizing works!**



Successes in racial justice: GAP Scholarship Fund led by Christina Reyes raises \$7000+

“Being an accompanier is different when you have directly experienced the effects of U.S. imperialism all over Central America. I am going into this work already knowing that the topics and issues I am prepping to tackle will push me into deep reflection and might isolate and trigger me in ways that white U.S. accompaniers could never understand. But it also means that the information and connections made through GAP will hopefully be able to reach communities that can utilize them fully here in the U.S. and elsewhere.” -Christina Reyes (they/them)

Top image: People affiliated with the Association for Justice and Reconciliation (AJR) carry signs rejecting the Amnesty Law at a protest. Middle image: Land defenders read the Xinka Parliament's statement on discrimination and irregularities in the consultation process. Bottom image: The 2019 GAP cohort and NISGUA staff Bridget and Sarasuadi hold artwork by artist Michah Bazant reading "Save the West Berkeley Shellmound" at the sacred site.

WHERE WE'RE GOING:

In 2020, NISGUA will relaunch our accompaniment program as **GAP INTERNACIONALISTA!**

Collaborating with former companions, activists, and partnering organizations, our new program will:

1 Organize to **link campaigns** led by Guatemalan social justice movements with their counterparts in the U.S. and expand opportunities for volunteers to organize;

Strengthen **relationships in communities**, deepen existing partnerships, and maintain historic principles of accompaniment; **2**

3 Generate **horizontal exchange** between communities in the U.S. and Guatemala that are impacted by the same global systems of oppression.



“We thank NISGUA for having always visited us in our communities. They have also learned from us. We have lived together with them. They have walked through mud and fallen many times... So we are really thankful that companions have come from other countries to visit us where we live... And we need more accompaniment! **When companies and the government see that international people are present in communities, they realize that we are not alone.**”

-José Gómez, ACODET coordinator

COMING UP IN 2020:

Tour with Association Pop No’j

Our 2020 tour will facilitate direct exchanges between Association Pop No’j and Indigenous leaders, immigrant rights activists, and organizers in the U.S.



Who: Association Pop No’j resources and accompanies Maya communities in the development of political, socioeconomic and cultural capacities. One of their focuses is migration & its impact on Indigenous youth and families.

When: April 2020

Where: Las Cruces, NM; Albuquerque, NM; Tucson, AZ; Los Angeles, CA



How can you support?

- Donate TODAY as a one-time or sustaining donor and designate your gift to GAP *Internacionalista*.
- Start a Sponsoring Community to directly fund volunteer stipends and our new home-base in Guatemala.
- Direct your Donor Advised Fund (DAF) or IRA contribution to NISGUA to support program start-up costs.
- Make an in-kind donation. Contact us for more information!

Top left: Rene Ann Goodrich speaks about the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women crisis at a NISGUA screening of 500 Years, a documentary about the struggle for justice after the Maya genocides. GAP Internacionalista will continue to connect movements across borders. Middle image: A person with a sign that reads “We want justice, no more silenced women” at an AJR march. Bottom image: The IEN delegation with Pop No’j representatives after a meeting about immigration.