



NISGUA

Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala

Our 2020 accomplishments

Deep roots weather the storm

Together with our partners, NISGUA was called to face the storms of 2020. Though we have been shocked by it all, we are also not surprised: communities at the frontlines of climate change and socioeconomic injustice have long predicted the environmental chaos and authoritarian violence we are experiencing. Today we take a collective breath and step back. Surveying all that has changed in this unprecedented year, **we are moved by what we have accomplished.** Join us as we share how we survived and thrived, aligned with our partners across Turtle Island.

“Reflecting on the history of our organizations, we remember you walking with genocide survivors together on our path towards justice.

NISGUA has played a fundamental role that has varied over time. We feel very accompanied by you; you are willing to join us, to support us by sharing our declarations and to take your own stand in solidarity as well.”
–Fabiola Garcia, Center for Human Rights Legal Action (CALDH)



YOU'RE INVITED: NISGUA's 40th anniversary launch!

NISGUA celebrates our 40th anniversary in 2021! We look forward to a year of organizing and remembering together.

On December 7 we will kick off this celebration with a virtual event featuring Guatemalan musicians and several of our esteemed friends and partners. **Join us!**

More info at: bit.ly/NISGUAEvent

2020 AT A GLANCE

\$48,695 in small grants from donors we passed through to our Guatemalan partners

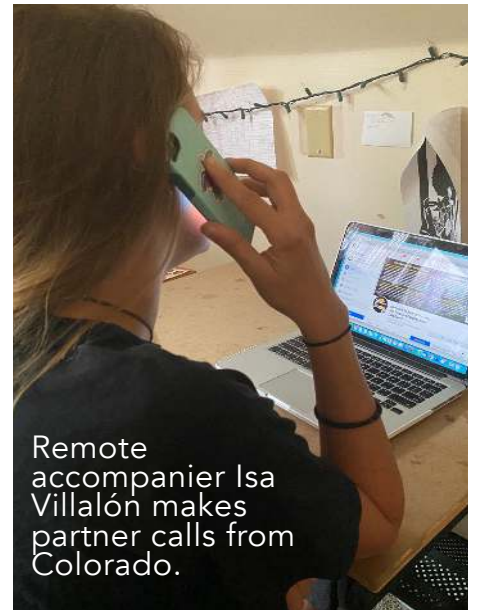
64 Guatemalan human rights defenders we directly accompany through our eight partner organizations

61 original reports, Solidarity Updates, blogs, and translations of partner statements

10,633 people who attended our online events, including two public webinars, private events with students, and presentations for congressional staff

GAP *Internacionalista*: A historic launch and a strong pandemic response

In 2020, we launched Guatemala Accompaniment Project (GAP) *Internacionalista*, a volunteer-driven accompaniment program to connect cross-border movements for Indigenous sovereignty and immigrant justice. Driven by generations of former accompaniers and our committed cohort in Guatemala, we saw the program's potential in action before the pandemic began. We quickly moved into a remote accompaniment model, based on weekly communication with our partners. With this model, we have been able to continue a constant context analysis, respond to partner needs from afar, and show our solidarity in this difficult time.



Remote accompanier Isa Villalón makes partner calls from Colorado.



“During this past year with NISGUA, I have had the chance to physically and remotely accompany members of the peaceful resistance against the Escobal mine. Through building relationships with them, I learned about a diversity of resistance strategies and leadership skills that have allowed me to contribute in meaningful ways to organizing spaces in the U.S.”

–Nicole Estrada, *Internacionalista* accompanier

REMOTE ACCOMPANIMENT A GLANCE

450 phone calls and digital contacts with our partners

9 virtual meetings with Guatemalan and international organizations to support their online actions

7 bilateral partner meetings to evaluate our remote accompaniment work

48 organizations that signed two letters we coordinated with the Guatemala Human Rights Commission (GHRC) that condemned the August technical coup and attacks on courts in Guatemala

7 trainings for *Internacionalista* accompaniers and NISGUA organizers

“We appreciate and value the commitment of many brave people from far away who stand in solidarity with the Indigenous peoples subjected to genocide, because condemning this type of crime is the duty of all humanity.”

–Association for Justice and Reconciliation (AJR)

Right: Former accompanier Michelle Suárez holds their sign commemorating the seventh anniversary of the historic genocide sentence against Efraín Ríos Montt.





No to the Asylum Cooperative Agreements (ACAs), deportations, and expulsions!

“People flee Guatemala due to the violent imposition of resource extraction without consultation. Now, the state wants to deport asylum-seekers to Indigenous territory without consultation. The state does not care for Guatemalans, how will it care for migrants that the U.S. wants to throw away?” –Rubén Herrera, Departmental Assembly of Huehuetenango (ADH)

Rubén Herrera, revolutionary, water protector, and long-time NISGUA comrade passed away on July 27, 2020. He will be remembered as the intellectual author of a campaign that helped bring the ACAs from relative anonymity to a central conversation in the halls of power.

After the ADH identified the ACAs as their main priority for U.S. advocacy, we expanded from accompanying their protests and translating their statements to **building a powerful cross-border campaign and coalition to fight the ACAs**. In response to new attacks on asylum-seekers and migrants, the coalition pivoted to **also fight against the Trump administration’s deportations and expulsions** during the pandemic.

The **ACAs give the U.S. power to transfer asylum-seekers to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador** if the transferee is not from the country where they’re sent. The claim is that asylum-seekers should seek asylum in one of these countries, **despite their inability to care for and process asylum seekers**.

“Normal” deportations of migrants already violate human rights; **pandemic deportations export COVID-19** to countries with under-resourced medical systems. Between March and October 2020, the **U.S. deported 63,000 people to Latin America and the Caribbean**.

Using the pandemic as an excuse, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) **effectively closed the U.S. asylum system in March**. Flagrantly violating refugee law by denying due process, DHS expelled 143,000 asylum seekers – **8,000 of whom were unaccompanied minors** – between March and October.

THE CAMPAIGN AT A GLANCE

- 2061** petition signatures calling for Congress to defund the ACAs
- 6** opinion pieces submitted to local newspapers across the country
- 7** major events for congressional staff, schools, and the public. All included Spanish/English interpretation and one webinar offered live closed captions
- 41** Central and North American organizations in the campaign coalition
- 31** one-on-one meetings with congressional offices

“NISGUA has played an important role in developing and continuing the campaign against the ACAs. This achievement led us to recognize the ability of diverse people from various organizations dedicated to both regional and international migration to cooperate on shared goals. Despite the distance the pandemic has caused, we advanced our strategies and strengthened networks of solidarity to defend the rights of people and communities.” –Silvia Raquec, Association Pop No’j



Mutual aid in challenging times: Pandemic resource mobilization

The pandemic called on us all to support neighbors both near and far away. Though NISGUA does not focus on economic aid, **this year demanded that we swiftly distribute resources from the Global North to our partners in Guatemala.** Thanks to anonymous donors and a partnership with the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), **we moved over \$48,000 to Guatemalan social movement organizations.** These funds benefitted everything from urgent emergency food and sanitation supplies to programs that support women's organizing.



Right: An AJR organizer helps a community member put on a mask. Photo credit: AJR.



“Our relationship with NISGUA has allowed us to expand and deepen our organizing in Guatemala, particularly our work on Indigenous feminisms and land defense. NISGUA helped us to disperse our COVID relief in a way that we are confident the funds go where they are needed, quickly and with transparency. We love the integrity of NISGUA and it helps us organize because there’s already trust and we can get to the work.”
—Simone Senogles, Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN)

Xinka resistance against the Escobal mine: A model for Indigenous struggles

For over three years, the Xinka people have used a **combined strategy of legal and direct action to stop operations** at the infamous Escobal silver mine, now owned by Pan American Silver. **For nearly a decade, NISGUA has accompanied the resistance** during legal proceedings, massive grassroots mobilizations, and, now, a court-ordered community consultation.

39 months since the mine was suspended by Guatemalan courts

9 educational or advocacy events by the Xinka Parliament that we accompanied or supported in 2020

“The whole world is confronting a serious crisis from COVID-19, because of this we thank NISGUA for their constant demonstrations of solidarity with our Xinka communities.” —Xinka Parliament

Right: Vico Carrillo holds his sign in solidarity with the Xinka People.



After 15+ years, our beloved Bridget Brehen is transitioning out of her staff role. **Bridget made unparalleled contributions to our work in Indigenous sovereignty, racial justice, horizontality, trust-based relationships, and so much more.** We wish her all the best as Director of Resource Mobilization at Grassroots Global Justice Alliance (GGJA).

“I have profound trust in NISGUA. While I am sad to leave this amazing team, I now joyfully become another member of the network. Together we will demand a future in which we can all thrive, breathe, and be in right relationship with the earth.”

—Bridget Brehen