

What We Accomplished Together in 2011

NISGUA's collective accomplishments in our interwoven program areas are made possible by the dedication and creativity of our counterparts, international coalition partners, local Sponsoring Communities, current and former accompaniers, activists, foundations, and individual supporters. We take a moment to celebrate our advocacy, education and accompaniment work, in which you all play a crucial part.



AJR member Julia Cortez speaks to the press.

Photo: Kevin Hayes

JUSTICE & ACCOUNTABILITY

Supporting Guatemalans seeking justice for war crimes and other precedent-setting cases.

In 2011 we:

- ◆ Called on Guatemalan authorities to respect the rights of the AJR and CALDH, the judicial process, and international accompaniment of the genocide cases in an international letter campaign and online petition signed by over 700 of you to date. NISGUA also **raised the profile of the genocide cases** through targeted media work and increased information sharing.
- ◆ Joined 45 organizations and more than 200 individuals in **demanding justice for the February murder of Victor Leiva**, an artist, youth rights activist and founding member of *Caja Lúdica*.
- ◆ Called for improved protection and monitored follow-up with the Committee of Victims in El Jute following a March attack against key witnesses in the 2009 successful prosecution of those responsible for the 1981 forced disappearance of eight community members.
- ◆ Worked closely with US coalition partners to **pressure the US government to prioritize human rights, the declassification of Guatemalan military archives, and a more just immigration status for Guatemalans living the US.**
- ◆ Supported community members from El Estor in organizing an exhibit commemorating the 1978 Panzós massacre and in following up on Canadian lawsuits against two mining companies for the 2009 murder and 2007 rape of community members.
- ◆ Distributed timely analysis for the 2011 elections in Guatemala, as well as background on former General and current President-elect Otto Pérez Molina.
- ◆ **Advocated for the protection of community members organizing against mining** in the western highlands, through urgent alerts and incident documentation used by national human rights entities.
- ◆ Provided critical accompaniment for witnesses and advocates during this year's precedent-setting trials, including the Dos Erres massacre case and the genocide case against former high-ranking military officials and a former president. **NISGUA also observed proceedings in the case of Lisandro Guarcax, a teacher, artist and spiritual leader murdered in 2010.**

GUATEMALA ACCOMPANIMENT PROJECT

Accompanying Guatemalans in efforts to promote peace and justice, working toward our own transformation.

As part of the ACOGUATE project, we:

- ◆ Trained, placed and supported 9 accompaniers, who **provided 63 months of accompaniment to 15 cases in 13 departments of Guatemala**. In Guatemala, NISGUA facilitated 11 workshops on anti-oppression, security and the Ixcán region.
- ◆ Strengthened our collaboration with other international accompaniment organizations, through regular strategy-sharing calls with US-based groups, an exchange in Honduras, and **a joint US training with the Honduras Accompaniment Project** of the Friendship Office of the Americas.
- ◆ Supported accompaniers engaging in critical media work. Former accompaniers published **two opinion pieces in local press and an in-depth report on referendums in Indian Country Today**. We also expanded our presence in social media networks and posted 65 articles on our blog. NISGUA accompaniers wrote English subtitles for a Caracol Productions documentary on the 2011 evictions in the Polochic Valley, during which three people were killed and hundreds left without homes or crops for this year.
- ◆ Offered information and materials for **speaking tours and house parties in 13 states organized by former accompaniers, network activists and Sponsoring Communities**
- ◆ Coordinated a two-month photo documentation project by photographer Kevin Hayes.
- ◆ Welcomed two new Sponsoring Communities to our national network: Guatemala Education Action Project (GEAP) in Los Angeles; and the Wyoming Guatemala Accompaniment Project (WYGAP).
- ◆ Coordinated with the GAP Council and the LAGOS Sponsoring Community in organizing the annual GAP Gathering in Minnesota. As always, the Gathering was **a powerful experience in community building, reflection, and strengthening our commitment to solidarity work**. We hope you will all join us in 2012!
- ◆ Expanded our organizing base through the volunteer GAP Council and regional representatives across the US. **Contact us to connect with organizing in your area!**

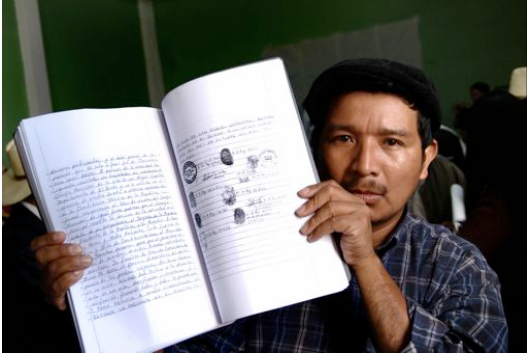


Accompaniers attend a hearing at the military hospital. Photo: Kevin Hayes

“International accompaniment organizations are vital to the work of Guatemalan human rights defenders. They not only accompany us in high-risk situations but are also witnesses to the violent context in which we live and work. ... The truth will always come to light, and ...international accompaniment organizations will play a part in the construction and protection of that truth.” - Claudia Samayoa, UDEFEGUA

Accompanying Struggles for Environmental Justice, Labor Rights, and Accountability for War Crimes

Groups include: Association for Justice and Reconciliation (AJR); Association for the Integral Development of San Miguel Ixtahuacán (ADISMI); Association of Communities for Development and the Defense of Land and Natural Resources (ACODET); Association of Families of the Detained and Disappeared in Guatemala (FAMDEGUA); Center for Human Rights Legal Action (CALDH); Committee of Victims in Choatulum; Committee of Victims in El Jute; Community Studies and Psychosocial Support Team (ECAP); Departmental Assembly of Huehuetenango (ADH); Farmers' Committee of the Highlands (CCDA); Grupo Sotz'il Jay; Historical Memory Initiative; Nueva Linda Pro-Justice Movement; Petén Distributors Employees' Union (SITRAPETEN); Rabinal Peoples' Law Firm; Association for the Integral Development of the Victims of the Violence of the Verapaces, Maya Achí (ADIVIMA); Witnesses in Dos Erres and Plan de Sanchez legal cases



Community member holds up referendum results. Photo: Graham Hunt

CROSS-BORDER CONNECTIONS

Connecting people across borders, linking shared struggles and pockets of hope across the globe.

In 2011 we:

- ◆ Mobilized and informed NISGUA's base during our April 2011 tour with 37 events in 16 cities. Featuring an activist from the Tz'ununija' Indigenous Women's Movement, the tour illuminated Guatemalan women's efforts to hold transnational companies accountable for the local impacts of metal mining. **The tour connected Tz'ununija' with over 600 people in our base, raised \$1,500 for their program work in Guatemala, and collected over 400 letters** calling on Guatemalan authorities to respect indigenous rights. We also had the honor of facilitating an exchange between Tz'ununija', women affected by the Marlin Mine, and women from Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards affected by coal mining.
- ◆ Conducted workshops with 5 delegations visiting Guatemala.
- ◆ Coordinated a six-month photo documentation project on community organizing in defense of natural resources by former accompanier Graham Hunt, with the critical support of Copper Country GAP. **Graham worked closely with organizers in Quiché on popular education materials and documented 18 events in which indigenous communities reiterated their right to free, prior and informed consent.** Graham's incredible work can be viewed on NISGUA's blog, in the international photo exhibit Water, Rivers, and People (<http://www.aguariosypueblos.org/en/>) and in his "In Defense of Life" video photo essay. Contact us for a digital copy of Graham's photo essay.
- ◆ **Built on our ongoing relationship with the Immokalee Workers Center**, connecting issues such as the Guatemalan genocide cases with local struggles through the community radio programs.
- ◆ Presented at an event organized by the California-based organization Women2Women. NISGUA coordinated with the group in **raising over \$1,500 for the Survivors Foundation's work** to stop violence against women and children in Guatemala.
- ◆ Provided resources and **facilitated the participation of our partners in five Meso-American and Latin American conferences for mine and dam-affected communities** meeting to strengthen cross-border communication and strategies.
- ◆ Connected youth affected by mining and a Canadian artist, who collectively painted a 20-foot banner displayed outside Goldcorp's annual shareholders' meeting.



Protestors outside Goldcorp's annual shareholders' meeting hold a banner painted by Guatemalans living in mine-affected communities and Canadian allies. www.goldminingart.com Photo: François Guindon

TRADE & GLOBALIZATION

Challenging unjust policies on trade, migration and natural resources.

Together in 2011 we:

- ◆ Strengthened our work with the **Coalition against Unjust Mining in Guatemala (CAMIGUA)** to leverage direct pressure on Goldcorp and the governments of Guatemala, US and Canada to respect indigenous rights and the environment. NISGUA facilitated communication with partners, conducted interviews and organized coalition trips to Guatemala.
- ◆ Monitored and documented the Guatemalan government's administrative steps to comply with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) precautionary measures, calling for the suspension of the Marlin mine until the environmental and health impacts can be addressed.
- ◆ In organizing for Goldcorp's Annual General Meeting of shareholders (AGM), NISGUA conducted outreach with Goldcorp's top 20 institutional investors and developed an online action to encourage the approval of a shareholder resolution calling for the implementation of the IACHR precautionary measures. Goldcorp's Executive Vice President responded directly to action participants to refute the coalition's points. Coordinating closely with CAMIGUA and the Vancouver-based Mining Justice Alliance, **NISGUA participated in 12 events the week of the AGM, developed and distributed educational materials, supported the production of a video screened at events, and facilitated the participation of the Western People's Council legal team member, Benito Morales.**
- ◆ Provided invaluable logistical support, accompaniment, interpretation, and connections to: 1) **Tufts University Global Development and Environment Institute's study on the environmental and economic impacts of the Marlin mine;** 2) Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's report entitled, "Unfinished Business," on nickel mining in Guatemala; 3) **An independent project that established community radios in mine-affected communities in San Marcos;** 4) A community health study in San Miguel Ixtahuacán.
- ◆ Encouraged US Representatives to endorse a Congressional letter expressing concern for human rights violations and environmental degradation related to the Marlin mine.
- ◆ Facilitated communication and **recorded oral histories of women affected by mining** for an upcoming book on human rights in the global market by publisher Voice of Witness.
- ◆ Observed and documented seven community referendums on mining and dams.



Participants celebrate after finishing the painting of a 20-foot banner for Goldcorp protests.

Photo: Melanie Schambach

ABOUT NISGUA

The US-based Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA) employs strategic, creative, and coordinated grassroots activism and advocacy to pursue justice for war crimes, to change harmful U.S. policies, and to promote sustainable communities in Guatemala. NISGUA provides human rights accompaniment to Guatemalans whose work puts them at risk of threats and attacks, especially witnesses involved in high-impact human rights cases and community groups and leaders defending their rights in the face of natural resource extraction.

www.nisgua.org / organizer@nisgua.org