

HORIZONS OF FRIENDSHIP Horizons NEWSLETTER

Fall 2021

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO END POVERTY IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO

Creating Opportunities to Stay at Home



Women's collective in Chiapas, Mexico provides sustainable opportunities for families at home.

Over the past year and despite heavy lockdowns and border closures, migration in Central America has increased. In the United States, a record number of children travelling alone were apprehended in March 2021, marking the highest apprehensions in any single month in the last 15 years.

The United Nations bodies have tried to map intentions of migration and reasons for this. In January, the UN's World Food Program found that 15% of people surveyed in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Honduras were making concrete plans to migrate – compared to 8% in 2018.

Many of those surveyed cited violence and lack of effective government protection as the driving reason for migrating, but others pointed to poor access to water and food, inadequate or poor health facilities, lack of education or resources for their children and lack of livelihood opportunities.

A separate survey by the UN's Refugee agency found that 20% of migrating families from the region left because of violence, including death threats, extortion, and recruitment by criminal groups. Many women also noted that increased levels of domestic violence and little to

no support or protection from authorities forced them to not just leave their homes but at times cross international borders to avoid their perpetrators following them.

Displacement and migration is not just about numbers. It reflects the difficult position many women, men and even children are in as they move across unprotected borders, ready to do anything to survive. Many migration programs focus on limiting their movement, but not providing viable options for their survival, and more importantly, for them to thrive in their home.

The right not to migrate and the right to sustainable development is at the heart of Horizons' work. Whether supporting food security projects in Chiapas, Mexico, the rights of workers and safe livelihood options for women in Nicaragua or improving access to water in Southwest Costa Rica, Horizons' work is founded on the belief that all people have the right to remain in their home if they choose.

While seemingly small, these community driven initiatives are after all identified by our partners as essential to providing a life with dignity to many.

The right to not migrate is not founded on the belief or fear that migration is harmful. All humans by nature are migrants – we move, and we seek opportunities to survive, explore and live sometimes within or outside our home.

Rather, Horizons and our partners hope that whatever each person chooses, we can help co-create sustainable pockets of hope in communities so that children, women and men have a choice to migrate or not migrate. Thanks to Horizons' supporters we are able to build on this vision and help partners create better opportunities for all.

Horizons Supports El Salvador Initiative

In El Salvador, which has high migration rates because of extreme violence and poverty, a new project co-funded by the German government aims to protect nearby biodiverse forests, develop a poverty reduction strategy, and create eco-livelihood opportunities by working with local farmers.

Our partner ACUDESBAL will be implementing this extensive project and Horizons will provide financial and institutional support to them as part of a unique opportunity. This is another key step towards supporting sustainable development initiatives that enable the right of many community members to not migrate.



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Escaping Oppression: Patricia Rebolledo's Story



Patricia Rebolledo, Horizons' Executive Director and summer student Megan Botha prepare to deliver care packages to migrant workers.

Few of us could easily imagine the circumstances that would cause us to flee our home country and embark on the harrowing journey to establish ourselves in another, but a recent conversation with Horizons' Executive Director Patricia Rebolledo revealed some of them:

"Our family home in Chile was searched during a coupe d'état and my brother was taken and severely tortured.

We had to get out. I was 20 and he was only 18."

For Patricia, leaving was about survival, escaping violence, and feeling safe. She went where she could, where she would be admitted, and where she could keep her family together. For her, the experience had the added heartbreak of leaving loved ones behind, the insecurity of having to rebuild her life in a strange place with a

new language and culture, and the difficult search for belonging.

"When you arrive in another country you are nobody. No past. No family. You have to start over with all your traumas."

This disorienting experience has guided and informed Patricia's international development work at Horizons and given her a unique empathy for the migrant experience. She knows that while migrants may wish to remain in their communities, conditions must change to make this a possibility.

For those who migrate, support is critical to keep them safe and to help them settle. The same is true for migrant workers who come to Canada in the summer to help our farmers. This is why Horizons places such a high value on providing friendly, warm and welcoming services to help migrant workers feel at home and find the services they need while here.

"My experience was very difficult, but people in the South today may face even more precarious conditions. I am grateful to Horizons for giving me a home in my new country. Together, we can support others in their journeys."



Ana Lucía Pérez is the coordinator of Children, Youth, and Women Programming for PIES de Occidente in Guatemala.

Gender-Based Violence in Guatemala: Our Partners' View

Here are her comments:

"Women in Guatemala make up more than half of the population, yet we live in a patriarchal society. Our bodies are owned by men. Many women still have to 'ask permission' from their husbands to exercise the right to sexual and reproductive health, specifically in family planning. When we do not follow society rules, we find ourselves in great peril.

"Guatemala has the third highest rate of femicide in the world. Violence against women and girls is not only a serious violation of human rights, but also prevents our full participation in society.

"Guatemala has made some progress towards eliminating violence against women by enacting several laws against femicide and trafficking, and is making efforts to prevent and respond to intra-family violence. However, it has not yet recognized the importance of immediate and timely support for traumatized women or swift justice in the courts.

"Eradicating violence against women and girls requires working hard to sensitize and strengthen the capacities of public health organizations and staff so they can deliver timely, trauma-informed and culturally relevant support for survivors. We must also continue to support new attitudes and behaviours among community members to build a more just, equitable and violence-free society."

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The three-year Safe Haven Project will be implemented at an existing shelter for survivors of sexual violence in Quetzaltenango with the aim of improving the health system and quality of care. Horizons and PIES are committed to providing individualized, trauma-informed care that is rooted in warmth, patience and cultural safety.

Supporting Vaccine Access in Northumberland County

Every year, Northumberland County becomes home to over 100 migrant farmworkers from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guatemala and Mexico. Women and men come to the area to work on apple, vegetable and dairy farms. Migrant workers have an opportunity to provide a stable income for their families back home and fill a critical labour gap in Canada's agricultural system.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought great challenges for migrant workers across Canada. But help is here. Vaccines are being widely distributed across Canada and Northumberland County, and everyone is lining up to get their jabs – including migrant workers. But there are still challenges.

“Over the past six months, we've had a couple dozen migrant workers reach out to us asking questions about vaccine safety and where to get vaccinated,” says Daniel Quesada, Community Outreach Officer for Horizons of Friendship.

“Most workers have been vaccinated, either through their employers and/or a pilot project at Pearson Airport in Toronto that vaccinates migrant workers upon arrival to Canada. But some workers are hesitant to get vaccinated.”

Misinformation about vaccine safety online is leading to vaccine hesitancy



across Canada. There are worries that vaccines might cause reproductive health issues or have long-lasting health effects. This is leading a lot of people – including some migrant workers – to question vaccines and/or reject them altogether.

“Using resources from the government of Canada, we've been tackling vaccine myths head on and referring migrant workers to health professionals to address their fears around vaccines,” says Daniel.

And it's been working. “We've been fortunate to change some workers' minds on the importance of vaccination. Our message is simple: vaccines are the single

most effective way to prevent death and severe illness from COVID-19. That's what we've been telling everyone. Even if we can change one person's mind, it is worth it.”

Supporting vaccine access and addressing vaccine hesitancy is just a small part of Horizons of Friendship's Migrant Worker Outreach Program that aims to support the health, legal and social status of migrant farmworkers across Northumberland County. If you want to learn more, or make a donation, visit our project page: www.horizons.ca/migrantworkeroutreachprogram.



Edin Gutierrez stands in front of the vaccine clinic shortly after receiving his first dose of Pfizer in Cobourg, Ontario.

Edin Gutierrez, a 31-year-old migrant worker from Guatemala working at a dairy farm in Northumberland County, was one of the workers Horizons of Friendship helped to access the COVID

A Dose of Pfizer for Edin

vaccine. With a young family, including a wife and two young kids back home, his two-year work contract here in Canada means the world to him. It will provide schooling supplies for his daughter, meals for his family and the opportunity to start a small business when he returns to Guatemala in the future.

Staying healthy is a top priority for Edin, so he took the opportunity to ask Horizons to support him in the vaccination process.

“Edin didn't have the chance to get vaccinated due to conflicting schedules, but I saw a pop up vaccine clinic open up in Cobourg,” says Daniel Quesada. “So I picked him up one evening and we went and got him a dose of Pfizer at the clinic.” Horizons' staff provided transportation and translation services at the clinic and

booked Edin an appointment for the second dose.

“I want to thank Daniel and Horizons for supporting me in the vaccination process,” says Edin. “Getting the vaccine brings a great relief to me and my family back home in Guatemala. I'm one step closer to being fully immunized – and we're one step closer to ending this terrible pandemic.”

Horizons of Friendship remains committed to supporting the health status of migrant workers in Northumberland County. We continue to provide migrant workers with information packages on how to minimize exposure to COVID-19 at home and in the workplace, and to provide translation services in hospitals and clinics across Northumberland County.

Congratulations to Derek Blackadder!



Northumberland resident Derek Blackadder is the recipient of Horizons' 2021 Founders Award in recognition of his dedication to volunteerism and leadership, emulating the vision of Horizons' founders, Father Tim Coughlan and David and Christine Stewart.

A former academic and trade unionist with the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Derek spends much of his time running LabourStart, an online labour rights media organization. He is an active

volunteer for several local initiatives, including the Cobourg chapter of Amnesty International Canada and Peterborough-based RadioLabour. Derek is also the chair of the Northumberland Coalition for Social Justice, an initiative that works to unite various progressive organizations across Northumberland County.

Over the years, Derek has been an ardent supporter of Horizons of Friendship. In 2007, he travelled with Horizons to Nicaragua to visit our partner MEC (the Maria Elena Cuadra Working and Unemployed Women's Movement). He has also provided direct fundraising support for Horizons' maternal, newborn, and child-health (MNCH) project and other initiatives in the region.

Join us in congratulating Derek on receiving the 2021 Founders Award. Thank you, Derek, for your dedication to social justice issues in Canada and across the world.



In 1973, Father Tim Coughlan, and David and Christine Stewart founded the Help Honduras Foundation, an NGO focused on child sponsorship. After the devastating Hurricane Fifi hit Honduras in 1974, the organization quickly refocused its efforts on community reconstruction.

Bearing witness to war and extreme poverty in the early 1980s, the Help Honduras Foundation was renamed "Horizons of Friendship" with the mission of community development and expanding its reach to all of Central America & Mexico.

Alternative Donations: Memorial Fund and Bequests

A memorial gift or 'gift in honour' is a beautiful way to recognize and celebrate the memory of a loved one by carrying on their spirit through charitable giving. You can also choose to set up a bequest for Horizons of Friendship, donating a piece of your legacy through a will. These types of donations can serve as a testament to your life or that of a beloved family member or friend who has passed on. It may also be an appropriate way to express compassion for someone who is

experiencing a loss.

If you're interested in these alternative methods of donating to Horizons of Friendship, we encourage you to reach out to us at info@horizons.ca or call us at 905-372-5483 ext. 10.

The legacy you create through Horizons' memorial gifts will provide friends and family an opportunity for tribute, all while supporting Central American & Mexican communities for generations to come.



I want to help Horizons empower people in Central America and Mexico.

Gift Payment Options

I'd like to make monthly gifts
 \$50 \$100 \$150 \$ _____

I'd prefer to make a one-time gift
 \$50 \$100 \$150 \$ _____

I've enclosed a void cheque to start direct withdrawal for monthly giving

I've enclosed a cheque made out to Horizons of Friendship for a one-time gift

To make an online donation, go to www.horizons.ca

Visa MasterCard AMEX

_____ expiry _____
 account number

NAME ON CARD _____

SIGNATURE _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

Help the environment. Please correspond with me via email only at: _____