

## ADDRESSING THE CHILD MIGRANT CRISIS: Five Ways We Make A Difference

Dear Cristosal Supporters,

Recently President Obama and members of Congress issued statements concerning the tens of thousands of unaccompanied minors from mostly Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras who have crossed the U.S. border in recent months and the resulting humanitarian crisis. Because of this crisis, North Americans are beginning to understand the plight of children escaping extreme violence, and to see immigration reform as more complex than simply an issue of border security and foreign worker visas. In fact, quite rightly, many people have linked the surge in unaccompanied minors to the deteriorating social, economic and security situation in Central America's Northern Triangle.

Sadly, violence and forced emigration are everyday problems affecting Salvadoran families and communities - problems that lend urgency to Foundation Cristosal's human rights and community development work. It is our hope that this newsletter serve as a call to action. Listed below are five ways in which Foundation Cristosal's work supports peace and development in El Salvador. We ask you to share this information on social media and among your friends and families, as well as support our programs to directly address this crisis.

Sincerely,

Noah Bullock  
Exec. Dir. Foundation Cristosal

### 1. One-on-One Advising for Victims

Families targeted by gangs and organized crime in El Salvador have few options for safe relocation or police protection. They also have even less information to help them make potentially life-or-death decisions, with no government or social programs set up in-country to assist them. Cristosal's Human Rights Office is the ONLY program in El Salvador that provides one-on-one advising to victims of violence or threats of violence, helping them make informed decisions about how to protect themselves and their families.



*José López, Director of the Human Rights Office, consults with residents of Las Anemonas outside the Ministry of Public Works.*

### 2. Transforming the Root Causes through Community Development

In [addressing](#) Central American leaders, Vice President Joe Biden said, "the United States recognizes that a key part of the solution to this problem is to address the root causes of this immigration in the first place... so the people can stay and thrive in their own communities." Cristosal's Community Development Program directly addresses the root causes of this crisis by building local development processes from the bottom up, empowering people as citizens to forge stable and profitable livelihoods critical to constructing a peaceful and democratic society.



*Women in Las Anemonas, one of Cristosal's partner communities, attend a meeting of the savings, loan and consumer cooperative.*

### 3. Ensuring Access to Justice

Stability and security in El Salvador is dependent on a transparent and functioning justice system. Yet the number of unresolved cases and outstanding allegations continue to [increase every year](#), with 900 in 2010, 1,000 in 2011 and 1,085 in 2012. Cristosal's Office of Human Rights works to reverse this trend, providing legal assistance and advising to victims of violence, working with them to effectively seek recourse for crimes committed through the Salvadoran legal system. In this process, citizens learn the means and methods of holding their justicial system accountable.

### 4. Advocating for Reform in El Salvador

In response to this crisis, the [United States](#) is pressing Central American leaders to act to address the issues that are causing the dramatic increase in migration. Cristosal is working with other civil society organizations in El Salvador to pressure Central American governments to officially declare a humanitarian crisis and coordinate immediate actions for mitigation, including medium-and long-term strategies to resolve the root causes.



*The Presidents of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras met last Friday to discuss the crisis.*

### 5. Advocating for Action in the U.S.

Though current US law contains special protections for unaccompanied minors additional financial and legal assistance is needed to ensure these children receive the help they are entitled to. Cristosal is supporting the [plan](#) presented by Sens. Menendez, Durbin, Hirono, and Reps. Gutierrez and Roybal-Allard to Address the Humanitarian and Refugee Crisis on the Southern Border and in Central America and is advocating for the U.S. to approve a temporary protection status for Central American minors that have viable claims to humanitarian protections under international law.



### What You Can Do:

You can join us in our efforts to address the current humanitarian and refugee crisis in the U.S. and in Central America by making a contribution to our human rights and community development programs. We also invite you to raise up your voice and call on your government to take action.

**TAKE ACTION ►**

### For more Information:

An [LA Times article](#) breaking down some of the most frequently asked questions about the crisis.

A [PBS article](#) outlining some of the current conditions in Central America that are causing people to migrate to the United States and the dangers they face in their attempts to do so.

A [White House fact sheet](#) explaining current policies to address the influx of migrants, as well as a breakdown of the aid to be given to Central American countries.

A [Blog in the Christian Science Monitor](#) from Mike Allison, an associate professor in the Political Science Department at the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania, discussing measures beyond aid to help the crisis.