July 2016

We're excited to share the latest news from El Salvador with you! This month's update includes:

- **Big Advocacy Win!!**
- **Violence & Chocolate**
- **Cristosal @ the UN**
- **Fundraiser for an (Inter)Facelift**

But WAIT! Before you scroll, be sure to make your gift to support this critical work!!

We depend on gifts like yours - big and small - to respond quickly and creatively to the protection and program needs of Salvadoran communities.

**Will you join us today??**

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**ADVOCACY WIN!**

**PGR Signs Agreement with Cristosal - Becomes 2nd State Institution to Recognize Forced Displacement by Violence**

Victim Protection and Legal Assistance

On July 7th, Cristosal and the Salvadoran Public Defender's Office (*Procuraduría General de la República* or PGR) signed an agreement to partner on providing protection and assistance to families forcibly displaced by violence in El Salvador.
Salvador. The agreement also includes special provisions to attend to the protection needs of women, children, adolescents and youth.

The PGR is now the second state institution after the Ombudsman's Office for Human Rights (PDDH) to publicly recognize forced displacement by generalized violence in El Salvador and to take specific actions to attend to and protect the victims of this phenomenon. There is not, however, government-wide recognition, severely limiting programs and funding for victim protection.

In general, the PGR is responsible for providing legal assistance and representation to citizens, especially those who are economically or socially vulnerable. The PGR and PDDH, together with the Attorney General's Office or Fiscalía, make up the Public Ministry, which is charged with protecting citizens' interests before the state itself. It is especially significant that now 2 of the 3 institutions of the Public Ministry publicly recognize forced displacement and the need for increased protections in El Salvador for citizens fleeing violence.

Cristosal's Chief Program Officer, Celia Medrano, and the newly elected Director of the PGR, Sonia Cortez, sign a partnership agreement to address the protection needs of vulnerable populations displaced by violence in El Salvador.

New Research on Violence and Chocolate: Addressing the
Cristosal’s Center for Research & Learning is currently working with the non-profit Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to study how violence impacts their current cacao development project along the coastal region of El Salvador. The 5-year project, called the "El Salvador Cacao Alliance," hopes to establish new cacao agroforestry systems on at least 10,000 smallholder farms in up to 83 municipalities throughout the country.

In general, violence and crime often damage trust and social ties within communities. Movement between communities or gang territories can be restricted even for non-gang members, with NGO staff forced to pay extortion fees to enter communities (if not blocked entirely). To-date, most violence prevention efforts have often been isolated, focusing largely on youth rather than the broader community context. Existing research also tends to focus on urban centers with few resources dedicated to analyses and services in rural areas.

Despite recognition of widespread violence in El Salvador, there is little
understanding of how this violence has impacted community development projects nationally, and what strategies agencies can use to mitigate these impacts. This study hopes to develop strategies that NGO's can use as a model to mitigate or navigate the effects of crime and violence where they work.

Cristosal Brings Central American Refugee Crisis to UN Hearings in NYC
Victim Protection and Legal Assistance

On July 18th, Cristosal presented at the UN Multi-Stakeholder Hearings in New York City to call member states' attention to the refugee crisis in Central America, and their responsibility to ensure that victims’ rights are respected at the national and regional level.

Cristosal was invited to participate as the regional representative for Central America, speaking on behalf of 44 civil society organizations who make up the Central American Regional Coordinating Group (Grupo Articulador Regional or GAR). The GAR has been working now for two years to develop and strengthen a regional protection system for victims of violence in Central America.

Cristosal's goal at these meetings is to advocate for recognition and concrete actions to address the refugee crisis in Central America in anticipation of the upcoming September 19 UN Summit on Refugees and Migrants where governments will
A special thank you to the Episcopal Diocese of New York for making Cristosal's participation at the hearings possible!

Regional Leader Raises Funds for an (Inter)Facelift!
Regional Leadership

We want to make a special shoutout to one of our superstar regional leaders Audrey Denney, who last month blasted past her $3,000 fundraising goal in support of Cristosal's new and improved website. The site is now scheduled to go live at the end of August 2016!

While we anxiously await the new site launch, check out Audrey's video campaign by clicking the video above! And if you or your community are interested in starting your own fundraiser for a Cristosal project, let us know! Contact us directly at info@cristosal.org or give us a call at (315) 307-0005.

A special thank you to Audrey and all those who gave in support of the new website!! We couldn't have done it without you!

Every gift makes a difference. Will you join us today?
Yes, I Want to Make My Online Gift Now!