

LATIN AMERICA WORKING GROUP

*Action at Home for
Just Policies Abroad*

2019

ANNUAL
REPORT



NO HUMAN
IS ILLEGAL

What a year. The White House tried to dismantle every avenue for asylum seekers from Central America, pushing the U.S. border south. Tens of thousands of migrants and refugees, many children and families, wait in dangerous zones along Mexico's northern border. The U.S. government suspended aid to address migration from Central America while turning a blind eye to corrupt governments there.

As we faced an avalanche of actions to strip rights from migrants and refugees, we laid the basis for a more humane future. We reached out to new members of Congress who cared about the rights of indigenous, Afro-descendant, and LGBTQ+ rights under attack. We joined forces with environmental groups to address deadly threats against environmental defenders. We made sure that the United States maintains support for Colombia's peace accords. And we helped the House pass the Dream & Promise Act, ready to help Dreamers and TPSianos tomorrow.

Even in tough times, we can forge ahead, with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Haugard". The script is fluid and cursive.A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yareli Cruz". The script is highly stylized and cursive.

Cover: *Rally in support of DACA outside the Supreme Court.*

PHOTO BY LILY FOLKERTS.

WHO WE ARE

The Latin America Working Group aims to ensure that U.S. policies advance human rights, peace, and social, environmental, and economic justice in Latin America and the Caribbean. To achieve this, we work with coalition partners in the United States and Latin America to educate policymakers and the public and to mobilize a diverse and powerful grassroots base to achieve change.

The Latin America Working Group (LAWG), a 501 (c) 4 nonprofit, carries out advocacy and grassroots education. The Latin America Working Group Education Fund (LAWGEF), a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit, sponsors educational events and publishes reports. In this year's activities, lobbying tasks were carried out by LAWG and educational tasks by LAWGEF.



Human rights defenders after a meeting on child migrants.

PHOTO BY LAURI ALVAREZ.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS*

AFL-CIO

AFL-CIO Solidarity Center

Alianza Americas

Alliance of Baptists

Amazon Watch

American Friends Service Committee

American Jewish World Service

Americans for Indian Opportunity

Augsburg University Center for Global Education and Experience

Bread for the World

Center for Economic and Policy Research

Center for International Environmental Law



Lauri, Lily, and Andrea with former interns Alexa and Sheradyn at a protest in front of CBP.

PHOTO BY LAURI ALVAREZ.

2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Defending the Rights of Migrants and Refugees

- Galvanized action to oppose the White House’s efforts to shut the door to asylum seekers and forged strategies with allied organizations on the devastating impacts of U.S. policies, including the so-called “safe third country” agreements forcing asylum seekers to first seek refuge in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.
- Educated policymakers and the public about the need for protections for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) beneficiaries and the Dreamers, **contributing** to the House passage of the American Dream and Promise Act. Held briefings to lift up the stories of TPS beneficiaries and published a **primer** on the dire consequences that ending TPS would have on Central American countries.
- Coordinated efforts to oppose the “Remain in Mexico” policies to force asylum seekers to wait in Mexico, **educating** policymakers, media, and grassroots audiences on the negative impacts. Submitted documentation on the dangers that migrants face in Mexico as part of lawsuits that temporarily halted “Remain in Mexico” implementation.

- Mobilized **support** to push back against the administration's efforts to prolong the detention of migrant children and increase funding for border militarization and deportation forces.
- Participated in an observation mission to Mexico's southern border to **document** the humanitarian crisis and the lack of access to protections facing Central American migrants.
- Organized delegations of migrants' rights defenders from Mexico and Central America to update policymakers on the root causes of migration and the violation of migrants' rights due to increased enforcement.



Daniella and Lauri with a Mexican and Central American delegation outside the Capitol.

PHOTO BY ADRIANA GUADANA-HUIZAR.

Center for International Policy

Church World Service

Colombia Human Rights Committee

Cuban American Alliance Education Fund

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
Global Mission

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
Washington Office

Global Exchange

Global Health Partners

Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA

Institute for Policy Studies

Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights

International Labor Rights Forum



Andrea and Antonio protesting the murders of social leaders in Colombia.

PHOTO BY ANTONIO SAADIPOUR.

Promote Peace

- Created with Colombian and U.S. human rights, Afro-Colombian and indigenous partners “A Wake Up Call: Colombia’s Peace at Risk” and used as a teaching tool with policymakers. Successfully advocated for maintained U.S. aid for the peace accords.
- Organized meetings for Colombian human rights activists and social movement Defendamos la Paz with policymakers and the public to increase support for implementation of the peace accords and protection for social leaders at risk.
- Co-sponsored with the Alliance for Peace Building and other partners the Washington, DC opening of El Testigo, a documentary on war and peace in Colombia through the eyes of award-winning photojournalist Jesus Abad Colorado, who was present at the opening.
- Organized support for a dear colleague letter led by Rep. McGovern and signed by 79 members of Congress urging support for peace accords with strong impact in Colombian media.

End the Embargo on Cuba

- Released an updated **Cuba Advocacy Toolkit**, an activists' guide to taking action to end the travel ban and trade embargo against Cuba. The toolkit empowers individuals and groups to use their travel experiences to make a real effort to change U.S. policy toward Cuba.
- Activated Cuba policy advocates via LAWG's End the Embargo on Cuba Facebook page and LAWG's Cuba advocacy email network, gaining **support** for bills to lift the travel ban.
- Coordinated with faith-based leaders on efforts to end the embargo through sign-on letters and grassroots action, and coordinated with policy partners on a strategy to educate Congress on ways to transform U.S. policy toward Cuba through congressional action.



Musicians in Cuba.

PHOTO BY PAUL ANDERSON.



Makeshift Clothesline after a long day's work.

PHOTO BY PAUL ANDERSON.

Jesuit Conference of the United States and Canada

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)

Lutheran World Relief Office of Public Policy

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Mennonite Central Committee

Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate,
Justice and Peace Office

National Security Archive

Oxfam America

Peace Brigades International, USA

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

Quixote Center



Lisa and Daniella with LGBTQ+ activists from Red Lésbica Cattrachas in Honduras.

PHOTO BY LISA HAUGAARD.

Upholding Justice, Defending the Defenders

- Educated policymakers and the public on rights-based solutions to the root causes of forced migration from the Northern Triangle of Central America, with a collaborative and comprehensive set of recommendations and a simple Do's and Don'ts on How to Address the Root Causes of Forced Migration from Central America.
- Coordinated delegations with families of the disappeared and human rights defenders from Mexico to educate policymakers on the progress and challenges in addressing human rights violations under a new Mexican Administration.
- Led a training on U.S. policy advocacy at a gathering of human rights defenders from across Latin America in Mexico City.
- Organized support for a worldwide march in defense of Colombian human rights defenders at risk for their lives.

Supporting Communities' Land, Environmental, and Economic Rights

- Organized support for resolutions and a congressional letter on the Brazilian government's actions putting the Amazon and indigenous, Afro-Brazilian, LGBTQ+, and environmental activists at risk.
- Collaborated with a network of environmental groups on best practices on how to carry out advocacy to protect environmental defenders at risk around the world.
- Organized support for a congressional letter urging respect for union leaders and workers' rights in Honduras. Published an action alert on the third anniversary of the murder of Honduran defender Berta Cáceres, urging justice for Berta.



Antonio at a protest against the fires in the Amazon.

PHOTO BY ANTONIO SAADIPOUR.

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

Sisters of the Good Shepherd/National Advocacy Center

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

United Church of Christ

United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society

US-Cuba Cultural Exchange

Washington Office on Latin America

Witness for Peace

Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective

* This list includes some of the groups participating. Participation does not imply endorsement of all LAWG/LAWGEF efforts. Decisions to endorse statements and campaigns are made on a case-by-case basis by each participating organization.



*LAWG Staff: Daniella Burgi-Palomino, Lauri Alvarez, Lisa Haugaard, Antonio Saadipour.
Not Pictured: Mavis Anderson.*

PHOTO BY ALYSON WOOLLEY

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to the following for their contributions to LAWGEF's public education work: Foundation to Promote Open Society, Ford Foundation, HIP-CAMMINA, Moriah Fund, Stewart Mott Charitable Trust, Holthues Trust, Oxfam America, United Church of Christ, AFL-CIO, Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, Lutheran World Relief, and Washington Office on Latin America.

Many thanks to the following for their contributions to LAWG: Open Society Policy Center, Church World Service, ELCA Global Mission, Mennonite Central Committee, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Alliance of Baptists, and Presbyterian Church USA, as well as to the other partner organizations and many generous individuals contributing to both organizations.

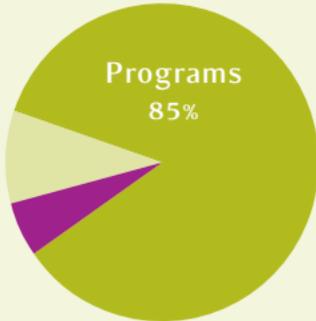
Finances

LAWGEF's income of \$235,824 in 2018 came from foundations as well as from individual donors and nongovernmental organizations. Expenditures for 2018 were \$317,279. Income was supplemented by the second half of a two-year grant received in 2017. Contributions to LAWGEF are tax-deductible.

LAWG's income of \$113,666 in 2018 came from contributions by funders and coalition partners, including humanitarian agencies, nongovernmental and faith-based organizations, and individual donors. Expenditures for 2018 were \$100,129. Contributions to LAWG are not tax-deductible.

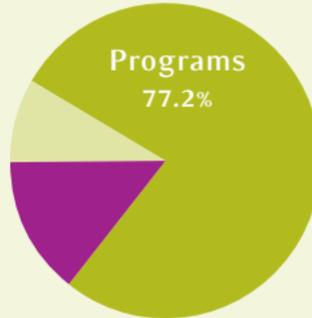
LAWGEF 2018 Expenses

Fundraising
9.2 %
Management
5.8 %



LAWG 2018 Expenses

Fundraising
8.4 %
Management
14.4 %



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See our website to:

- Join our e-alert lists to learn ways to take action for just U.S. policies;
- Help power our work by making a contribution.

*Action at Home for
Just Policies Abroad*



Mural of handprints of LGBTQ+ migrants hosted by Asociación LAMBDA, Guatemala City.

PHOTO BY LISA HAUGAARD.