



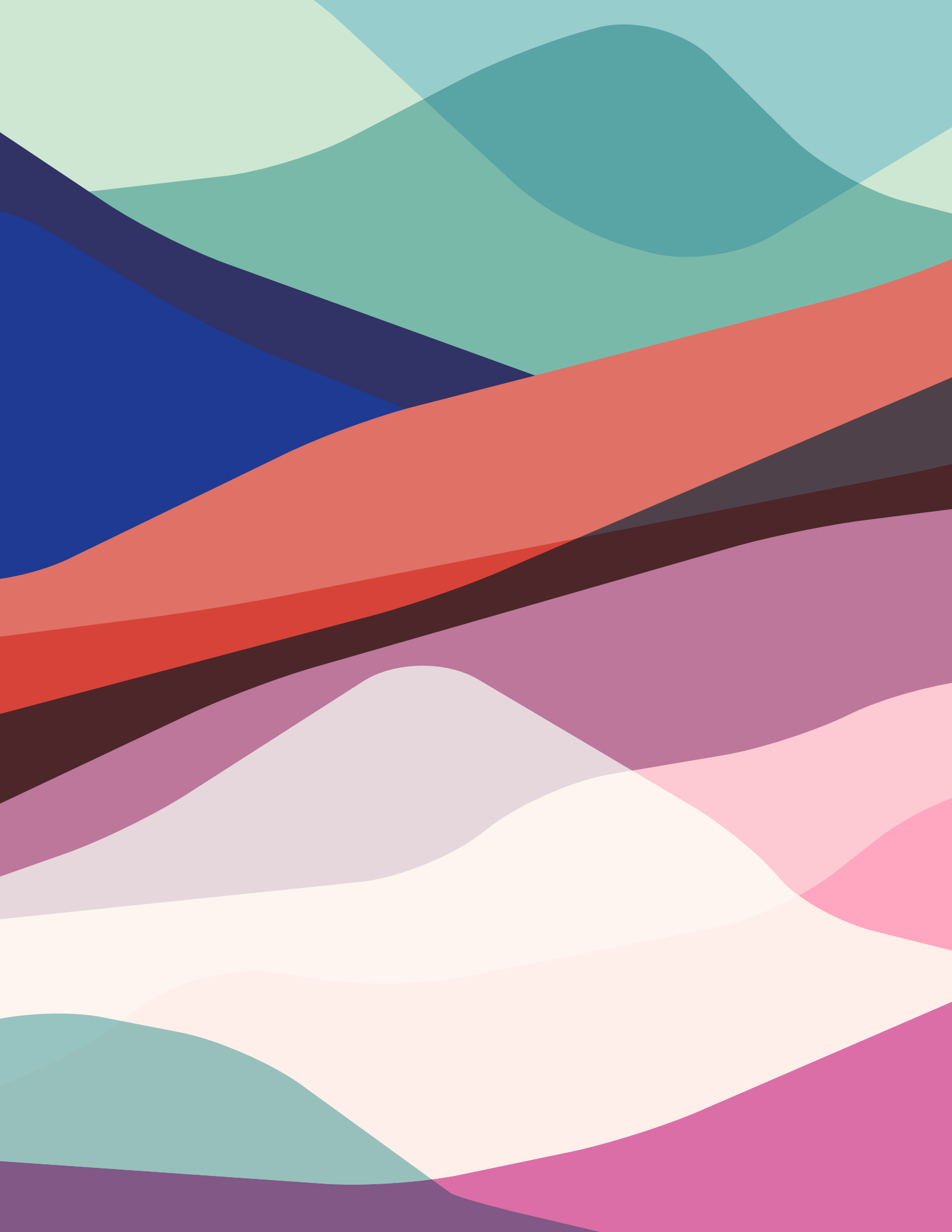
Partnerships, Programs, & Practices for Systemic Change

UUSC's Human Rights
Impact in FY2020



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ABOUT THIS REPORT

As a United States-based nonprofit, we have an obligation to challenge the dominant systems that created the need for our organization's existence in the first place.

We occasionally fall short and may sometimes lose sight of this responsibility, but it is and must be our North Star. Because systemic change at the structural level is about the redistribution of wealth and power, it must be led by strong grassroots movements. **Therefore, organizations like UUSC have the most impact by supporting the grassroots movements and activists around the world who are challenging systemic oppression and working towards systemic alternatives.**

Last fall, UUSC released our [first comprehensive impact report](#), using the general framework of "Strengthening Grassroots Movements for Systemic Change" to describe the impact of UUSC's and our partners' human rights work in 2018-19. This year's report, highlighting our collective impacts over the course of fiscal year 2020,¹ builds on the framing from our previous report, **tying examples of our work to several specific indicators of systemic change and movement-building** from the perspective of an international human rights organization and funder.

Included below are descriptions of the indicators we chose for this report, along with our analysis.

¹ July 2019 through June 2020.

The report does not attempt to evaluate or quantify. It aims to uplift concrete examples of how UUSC and our partners have engaged in the long-term work of changing systems and strengthening grassroots leaders, organizations, and movements in the pursuit of systemic change across our primary areas of work.

Key Definitions

Movement-Building: strengthening grassroots activists and organizations working for justice.

Systemic Change: advancing justice by addressing the interconnected conditions – at the individual, community, institutional, or structural level – that enable and perpetuate oppression.

Systemic Alternatives: comprehensive solutions rooted in alternatives to oppressive systems (including, but not limited to capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy, and white supremacy).

In the area of **Migrant Justice**, we learn how:

- A Nicaraguan feminist collective has developed community-based practices to support campesina farmers against the backdrop of political violence.
- UUSC's partners, allies, and members have contributed to a grassroots movement to expand accompaniment and resist criminalization in the American South.
- UUSC and our partners continue to fight the Trump administration's racist family separation policies while advocating for permanent protections for undocumented immigrants.
- A Guatemalan nonprofit helps reintegrate Indigenous Mayan youth separated from their families after being deported from the United States.



In the area of **Climate Justice**, we hear about:

- A Texas tribe's resistance to a harmful fracked gas terminal and its ongoing advocacy and litigation against the U.S. government.
- An "alternative" space—one by and for Indigenous leaders—alongside official international climate negotiations that were abruptly moved from Chile to Spain.
- First and Indigenous peoples' submission of a complaint to the United Nations Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons.

And in the area of **Crisis Response**, we cover:

- The justice and accountability movement in Burma, including a burgeoning youth-led movement within the Rohingya diaspora community.

Systemic Change Indicators Used In This Report

Symbol	Systemic Change Indicator	Analysis: How Does this Indicator Relate to Systemic Change?
	Facilitating meaningful access to decision-making power	Historically, interlocking systems of oppression have conspired to exclude impacted communities from participating in the decisions that affect them most. Supporting their participation in key decision-making spaces is one small way we begin to address historic inequities and integrate the critical perspectives of frontline communities into policy discussions.
	Fostering connections to build and strengthen movements	Robust and interconnected social movements are critical to systemic change. Yet, the organizations and activists on the frontlines of this fight are often overworked, on the verge of burnout, and/or lack the resources necessary to build movements. UUSC helps fill this gap by facilitating the creation of interconnected spaces and covering the costs associated with participating in them.

	Providing flexible, responsive, and trust-based support	Providing flexible, responsive, and trust-based support to our grassroots partners is an example of decolonization. It recognizes the expertise of those on the frontlines and acknowledges that our partners are best positioned to determine how our support can be most useful. Their ability to change course as challenges arise and opportunities emerge is critical to our collective success.
	Following the leadership of those most impacted by injustice	Following the leadership of those most impacted by injustice helps build and strengthen movements and directly challenges systems of oppression by supporting the leadership of communities who have historically been denied their rights, equal access to resources, and participation in decisions affecting them and their future. Partnering with such “directly led” groups ensures that our programs and strategies have the most impact because they are informed and led by those most proximate to the harms we are addressing together.
	Leveraging all of our resources to go beyond the grant dollar	Achieving positive changes in the world will require the redistribution of financial resources to grassroots organizations and movements. We maximize our impact by supplementing redistributive funding with support for activism, justice education, research, and other forms of partner and movement support.
	Supporting grassroots solutions that challenge oppressive systems	Systemic solutions will never come from our institutions. One of the ways UUSC contributes to systemic change is by partnering with groups and movements directly confronting oppressive systems and imagining and implementing their own alternatives.
	Dismantling and replacing harmful laws, policies, and narratives	Changing laws, policies, and narratives are hallmarks of the kind of powerful movements necessary to change systems and immediately improve people's lives.

Acknowledgements & Disclaimers

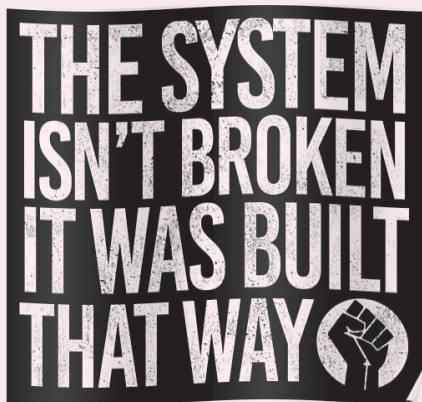
None of the stories that appear in this report would exist without UUSC's grassroots partners around the world. We understand we are actors in an ecosystem, and that our impact is interdependent. For the purposes of demonstrating UUSC's contribution, we have situated these stories within the larger systemic

change framework described above. We believe this shows how UUSC's work can strengthen the frontline work of grassroots movements to dismantle systems of oppression over the long-term. This framing is not, however, meant to suggest that our partners necessarily articulate our support in this way.

The stories contained in this report highlight when UUSC has done more than solely provide financial resources. This does not imply that UUSC's contributions were – or ever could be – as important as the work of frontline communities or our partners themselves. Ultimately, it is our partners and their communities who have the final say about our partnership and what it has meant to them and their struggles.

In the spring and summer of 2020, as COVID-19 continued its spread around the globe, our world changed. It changed even more as uprisings took hold to protest the police murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many other Black people before and after them. Much of our work and the work of our partners shifted in response, as we have adapted to new ways of living, working, and being.

The responses of Black-led movements to the most recent examples of state-sanctioned violence against their communities **highlight the clear connection between the long-term organizing of grassroots movements and the potential for systemic change.**



Credit: siggyspatsky

"THE PROTESTS ARE BUILDING ON THE INCREDIBLE GROUNDWORK OF A PREVIOUS ITERATION OF THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT... [THIS] EXPLAINS WHY ACTIVISTS AND ORGANIZERS HAVE SO QUICKLY BEEN ABLE TO GATHER SUPPORT FOR DEMANDS TO DEFUND POLICE, AND IN SOME CASES INTRODUCE IDEAS ABOUT ENDING POLICING ALTOGETHER. THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO QUICKLY LINK BLOATED POLICE BUDGETS TO THE ATTACKS ON OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR, AND TO THE LIMITS ON CITIES' ABILITIES TO ATTEND TO THE SOCIAL CRISES THAT HAVE BEEN EXPOSED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC."

— Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *How Do We Change America?*, *The New Yorker*, June 2020

Both crises and the responses thereto have reaffirmed our approach to the work and the way we frame our impact—even as we continue to make meaning of them and reckon with how we are called to respond. **Our response must include, first and foremost, an earnest examination of our own complicity in the systems of white supremacy and colonialism.** Then, we must begin to dismantle the policies and practices that perpetuate these systems within our institutions. This work is complicated, without a clear endpoint or guide, and must go beyond public statements and institutional commitments (including this one!). It is also work that is long overdue both in our sector and at UUSC.

Finally, the descriptions in this report borrow liberally from the written reports of our partners and UUSC staff. Without those descriptions, this report would not be possible. Thank you to everyone who contributed to it, knowingly or otherwise!

Stories of Our Collective Human Rights Impact: **SPARKING A YOUTH-LED MOVEMENT FOR JUSTICE FOR THE ROHINGYA**



In late 2019, UUSC and our partner, the Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK), brought together a group of Rohingya youth from around the world for a three-and-a-half day “International Rohingya Youth Conference” in London, the first such convening of its kind internationally.

The aim of the convening was to cultivate and mobilize a movement led by young members of the large Rohingya diaspora community. **In a powerful display of inter-ethnic solidarity, Rohingya leaders were joined by activists from the Karen, Kachin, Burman, Tibetan, and Uyghur communities, united in their demand for justice and an end to human rights violations in Burma.**

The group of young activists participated in strategy sessions related to the pursuit of account-

ability for military crimes against ethnic minorities across Burma, building solidarity with those Rohingya still in Rakhine State as well as those in refugee camps in Bangladesh, and creating an inclusive movement led by young people in the diaspora. These strategy sessions were coupled with trainings in narrative change, movement-building, and power analysis, led by activists from the allied Tibetan and Uyghur movements.

Several of the themes and calls to action that emerged from this convening affirmed UUSC's



long-term strategy in Burma and will inform our advocacy and partner support moving forward.

First, there was clear support among the group for international justice mechanisms and legal proceedings that UUSC, our members, allies, and partners have been advancing for years (see our “At A Glance” graphic).

At the convening, there was also an acknowledgement of the systematic and long-term nature of the Burmese military’s crimes and persecution against all of the country’s ethnic minorities, as well as the understanding that the long-term struggle for justice and accountability must be comprehensive. In the words of one participant, there is no “one size fits all” form of justice for international crimes. Engagements with international justice mechanisms must therefore be expanded to include restorative and transitional justice efforts that directly support grassroots survivors, refugees, and internally-displaced communities in Bangladesh, Burma, and beyond. This recognition affirms the long-term nature of UUSC’s work with grassroots partners on the ground in Rakhine State, which have been working to strengthen civil society, develop local leaders, and support peace-building in inter-ethnic communities.

“THE ROHINGYA COMMUNITY HAS FACED EXCLUSION, MARGINALIZATION, AND DISCRIMINATION IN NEARLY EVERY ASPECT OF ITS EXISTENCE, AND ONLY THROUGH ACTIVE SUPPORT AND CULTIVATION OF ROHINGYA LEADERS CAN THE COMMUNITY FINALLY REALIZE JUSTICE, EQUALITY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS.”

— Rohingya activist, Tun Khin

Since the 1990s, UUSC has been one of only a handful of organizations in the world funding grassroots organizations in Burma bringing a human rights lens to the persecution of the Rohingya. At our London convening, these emerging movement leaders pointed to the critical need for this approach, strongly recommending that NGOs and other actors ensure their programs aimed at assisting Rohingya communities are in fact *led by* Rohingya organizations and individuals – particularly youth and women – and that these groups have opportunities to meaningfully engage in broader policy conversations.

One of the reasons these types of strategic convenings are so critical is because they have the

At A Glance: Progress Made in Advancing Human Rights in Burma




This year saw perhaps the most significant developments in international justice in a generation—all of which related to the movement for justice and accountability for the Rohingya. These are remarkable and historic steps toward justice for a movement in which UUSC and our partners have been key advocates for years!

-  The UN Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) launched its official activities with a sizable budget.
-  The International Criminal Court (ICC) opened an investigation into the forced deportation of the Rohingya to Bangladesh.
-  The Republic of Gambia filed a first-of-its-kind complaint against the Burmese government at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).
-  UUSC partner, Tun Khin, brought a case against the Burmese military in Argentina under the principle of universal jurisdiction.

potential to establish lasting relationships among activists and allies. In the official [statement](#) following the convening, our partner, Tun Khin, summarized the events this way: "Young people are united in their calls to end all abuses against Rohingya," he said, "and for those responsible to be brought to justice. It is time for the world to listen and take action." UUSC hopes to build on this momentum and to continue to support this emerging movement in whatever ways we can.

Our New Partners

UUSC has several new partners as a result of this convening, including:

-  The Alternative ASEAN Network of Burma (UUSC's 2020 "Innovation Fellowship" awardee).
-  The Rohingya Human Rights Network.
-  Other civil society organizations across the diaspora, which cannot be named for security reasons.

These and other new Burma partnerships established this year bring our total number of partners working on the Rohingya crisis to 11!

One way we have already done this is by resourcing grassroots human rights documentation among Rohingya refugee communities to contribute to international justice and accountability processes. Another is by supporting our partners to prepare submissions to the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review ("UPR") process, which examines the human rights performance of all U.N. Member States. UUSC hired a local expert to work with several of our partners to prepare submissions to the UN Human Rights Council, and our long-time partner, [Progressive Voice](#), offered two training sessions on the UPR process to refugees from Karen, Karenni, Kachin, and Shan refugee camps to increase their knowledge and engagement, and worked alongside them to prepare a joint submission.

The joint UPR submission led by our partner BROUK was the first of its kind and included contributions by 14 Rohingya organizations.

BROUK is hoping to build on the UPR report through more joint efforts among various Rohingya activists around the world.

Stories of Our Collective Human Rights Impact:

OPPOSING THE OIL & GAS INDUSTRY'S INVASION OF NATIVE LAND AND SUPPORTING THE RIGHT TO RESIST



Emboldened by the Trump Administration's enthusiastic embrace of extractive capitalism and its systematic dismantling of legal or policy impediments to the industry, oil and gas companies in states like Minnesota, Texas, and Wisconsin have intensified campaigns to build pipelines and other infrastructure that will poison Indigenous communities' resources and despoil sacred land in their territories.

“OUR LAND, OUR AIR, OUR WATER, OUR CLIMATE, AND OUR PEOPLE ARE THE ‘CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE’ WE NEED TO PROTECT — NOT LNG.”

— Carrizo Comecrudo Tribe

In tandem, legislation has been introduced across the country to criminalize nonviolent resistance to these destructive projects.

This year, [UUSC and its members began working](#) alongside Indigenous communities resisting the violence and injustice of extractivism and the corresponding legislation, all in deference to the knowledge these communities possess in protecting sacred land.

The Carrizo Comecrudo/Esto’k Gna Tribe of Texas has defended its land against militarization, desecration, and environmental racism for years. Last fall, for instance, the Tribe took the Trump Administration to court after the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) reneged on a promise not to build a wall over sacred burial grounds owned by the Tribe. Now, the Tribe is fighting corporate attempts to build Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) export terminals on the land of their ancestors.

These pipeline projects will expose local residents to toxic fumes, damage the environment, and further contribute to the climate crisis. Moreover, one of the proposed LNG terminals is slated to be built over part of the Garcia Pasture—a site sacred to the Esto’k Gna and one recognized in the National Register of Historic Places. Yet, under a new “critical infrastructure” law in Texas, Tribal members and their allies demonstrating near the LNG project will face criminal charges.

In February, a small UUSC grant provided general operating support for the Tribe so that it could continue to hold resistance camps on the southern border in opposition to these pipelines, and to

provide support for the Tribe’s ongoing advocacy efforts. In June, UUSC supplemented this support to the Tribe, helping ensure its protection of sensitive digital information as its lawsuit against the federal government continues.

In May, in partnership with UUSC, other Tribes in Texas and Arizona, national partners, and frontline advocates, the Carrizo Comecrudo Tribe held a historic Tribunal for Human Rights to hold LNG Texas accountable for Indigenous rights violations. Grounded in a Native perspective, the two-day Tribunal examined past, present, and future harms to the Esto’k Gna caused by extractive industries and border militarization.

One critical purpose of the Tribunal was to create a public record of harms. **The information gathered by the Tribunal will be used to lay the groundwork for legal actions against the oil and gas industry.**

In mid-July, UUSC supported the Tribe in [successfully placing an op-ed in The Houston Chronicle](#), the second largest newspaper in Texas and the largest in Houston. Historically, the Tribe has had a challenging relationship with the publication and its lack of balanced coverage of the Tribe’s advocacy. The Chronicle op-ed, authored by tribal leadership, represents the wisdom and integrity of the Tribe in its battle against Texas LNG and state laws criminalizing the right to resist. Significantly, the narrative in the op-ed is the Tribe’s; the opinion piece provides a humanistic view of the Tribe’s duty to its sacred land and shirks the corporate narrative that prioritizes fracked gas and toxic fumes over human life.

“WE ARE EXERCISING OUR INHERENT RIGHT TO DETERMINE WHAT IS GOOD AND WHAT IS NOT ALLOWED ON OUR LAND.”

— Carrizo Comecrudo Tribe

Stories of Our Collective Human Rights Impact:

WORKING TOWARDS SYSTEMIC ALTERNATIVES IN NICARAGUA



For the last four years, UUSC has partnered with Fundación entre Mujeres (FEM), a feminist organization with 25 years of experience working alongside rural women in Nicaragua to build and spread a *campesina* feminism “that allows women to reaffirm...their ways of being, thinking, [and] acting” within the context of multiple forms of structural violence.

This work is a continuous fight. It involves the resistance of several generations of women, on multiple fronts, struggling to build the lives, territories, and communities they want.

One form of this resistance is the work FEM has done to build a systemic alternative to the extractive, capitalist models of food

production that displace rural families and promote violence against women and the earth. FEM has developed a sustainable, feminist agroecological model that centers the sustainability of life in all its forms and respects the life of all species. This model is cooperative rather than individualist, providing the community with resources and access

to goods, not for personal enrichment but for the enhancement of the common good. FEM's agricultural production chains are not seen as capitalist models that dominate the producers, but are instead used to strengthen the cooperative economy and the autonomy of women. Twenty-five years since its founding, FEM is now a 300-member strong cooperative of women farmers.

As protests against the government of autocrat Daniel Ortega have spread throughout the country over the last few years, the violent [response of the state](#) has left hundreds dead and thousands injured, as well as hundreds arbitrarily arrested and prosecuted. In the midst of this crisis, the political violence has led to severe food shortages, physical insecurity, isolation, and deteriorating emotional wellbeing among the *campesina* women with whom FEM works.

In order to continue their work in this context and keep their communities safe, FEM told us they needed to supply their communities with medical supplies, engage in emergency mobilizations, and hold meetings in increasingly remote locations. In addition, because it was often too dangerous for the women to travel to FEM's office, they hoped to temporarily relocate part of their team.

With UUSC's support, FEM was able to secure their communities, staff were able to mobilize and support them, and organizational leadership was able to successfully relocate. **For now, FEM's critical systemic change work continues in Nicaragua.**

"[UUSC IS] VERY FLEXIBLE WITH FUNDING AND SUPPORT[ING] US IN ACTIVITIES THAT OTHER [FUNDERS] DON'T USUALLY SUPPORT, SUCH AS STRENGTHENING OUR ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORK, WHICH FOR US IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE ORGANIZATION'S SUSTAINABILITY."

—Diana Martinez, Codirectora of FEM



Credit: FEM

Stories of Our Collective Human Rights Impact: **SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS**



Last year, after months of careful and time-intensive planning, UUSC, several of our partners, and many of our allies around the world were scrambling.

The 25th round of the international climate negotiations (the Conference of the Parties, or COP) had been abruptly cancelled by Chile's President and the negotiations had been moved to Spain.

Ensuring that our partners have meaningful access to decision-making space like COP is a critical component of UUSC's impact, so our most immediate challenge was that Indigenous communities and civil society organizations from the Global South would not have the resources to travel to and participate in COP once the event was moved to Madrid. Importantly,

recent COPs had seen an increase in participation from Indigenous Peoples and their representatives; the relocation to Spain threatened to reverse the trend.

In strategizing how best to respond with Indigenous activists and their allies, what emerged was the need for support in hosting an "alternative" COP – one *by and for* Indigenous leaders – [called "Minga Indígena"](#) (the Minga), which would be held alongside the official site of COP 25. The [goals](#) of Minga Indígena were to uphold the right of Indigenous governments to represent themselves and meaningfully participate in decisions that

will affect their sovereignty and territories, which constitute 80 percent of the planet's biodiversity. Originally intended to bring together nearly a thousand Indigenous leaders in Chile, many of whom would be travelling over land from communities located across Latin America, the relocation of COP 25 from Santiago to Madrid meant that all the plans and resources the Minga *already* invested for the event had been wasted unless the organizers could afford to move the event to Spain.

UUSC contacted one of the groups that was pooling funds and put together an emergency grant, ensuring that 19 Indigenous leaders could travel to and spend 10 nights at COP 25 in Madrid.

As we [noted](#) upon our return from Spain, the leadership of the Minga Indígena organizers was rewarded with success at COP 25. Minga participation in COP, which began by leading a "March for the Climate" with a delegation of hundreds of Indigenous leaders in the heart of Madrid, also included several side events on the many ways in which the climate crisis and climate solutions affect Indigenous Peoples everywhere, and packed events within the "[Green Zone](#)" of COP 25 – the primary space for civil society participa-

tion at the negotiations – during which Indigenous women shared stories from the frontline of the climate crisis.

The Minga showed the critical need for alternative spaces for Indigenous representation and was so successful that the organizers immediately began planning a follow-up at the next COP.

Our connections to the Minga Indígena team and other groups were only possible following years of relationship building with Indigenous communities doing this work. We met the Minga Indígena team, for instance, at the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues, with which we have engaged since the forum was created in the early 2000s.

UUSC staff were also able to travel to and participate in both the official COP events as well as the Minga. For example, we helped facilitate an NGO newsletter, which was widely circulated on the ground, and amplified the voices of our Indigenous community partners who had traveled with us to the negotiations. We also held a robust, highly-attended side event with our partners in order to **advance their advocacy priorities on the world stage.**



Credit: Minga Indígena/
Agustín Zamudio

Stories of Our Collective Human Rights Impact: **CREATING AN ALTERNATE NARRATIVE: THE CLIMATE CRISIS**



For the last few years, UUSC has worked closely with partner organizations and Tribal leaders in Louisiana and Alaska to call attention to the climate change impacts these communities are confronting. Hundreds of Indigenous peoples have been forced to either relocate to new lands or work tirelessly to determine solutions that will allow them to stay in their homes.

Unfortunately, the U.S. government has not worked collaboratively with these communities to address climate change impacts and has, in many instances, violated their human rights.





One tactic that emerged from a 2018 convening we hosted with more than 60 representatives from First and Indigenous communities was

to collectively draft a complaint to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the [Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons \(Cecilia Jimenez-Damary\)](#).

A broader goal of the complaint was to help shift the narrative surrounding the climate crisis by centering the voices and lived

Tribal Demands

The tribes requested that:

-  The U.N. push the U.S. government to allocate new funding to restore tribal lands and hunting and fishing areas.
-  Provide assistance to tribes currently working to stay in their homes despite rising sea levels.
-  Give aid to villages and tribes in Alaska and Louisiana that have been forced to relocate.
-  The U.S. government respect and recognize their sovereignty—for instance granting federal recognition—which would make it easier for them to defend their own interests and fight the oil and gas companies despoiling their lands.

“FILING A COMPLAINT WITH THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED [PERSONS] IS A VERY COMPLEX PROCESS. IT TRULY IS AN HONOR TO WORK ALONGSIDE THE UUSC TEAM. THEY ARE COMPASSIONATE, KNOWLEDGEABLE, TRANSPARENT AND DEDICATED. THEY’VE TRULY BEEN A BLESSING DURING SUCH A TRYING TIME.”

— Tribal Chief Shirell Parfait-Dardar, Grand Caillou/Dulac Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw

experiences of First and Indigenous Peoples.

The narrative put forward in the complaint details how First and Indigenous peoples, “face not only the crisis caused by human-caused greenhouse gas emissions like burning fossil fuels or deforestation, but also a combination of other devastating human-made disasters,” including levee construction, colonialism, and oil and gas exploration.

After it was filed, the complaint resulted in significant earned media, which the tribes shared heavily within their social media networks.

One chief explained how the media coverage went “viral” within the tribal networks. UUSC also partnered with Cultural Survival to publish an article highlighting the impact of the climate crisis on First and Indigenous Peoples, which was written by Chief Shirell Parfait-Dardar, chief of the Grand Caillou/Dulac Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Tribe in coastal Louisiana. UUSC has also received inquiries from academics hoping to share the complaint with their students and discuss whether it was something they could respond to and support at the UN.

In June, we were notified by the UN Special Rapporteurs’ office that they had accepted the complaint and completed their investigation. We now await their response.

Stories of Our Collective Human Rights Impact:
**STRENGTHENING AN IN-
CLUSIVE MOVEMENT
FOR PERMANENT PRO-
TECTIONS FOR UNDOCU-
MENTED IMMIGRANTS**



Last year, UUSC reported on its efforts to help pass the American Dream & Promise Act in the U.S. House of Representatives, "the first ever time a bill containing permanent protections for holders of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) has passed a chamber of Congress in any form."

UUSC and its partner at the [National TPS Alliance](#) have continued that fight this year.

For decades, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) has allowed hundreds of thousands of people from countries impacted by wars, natural disasters, and other crises to build lives in the United States. Now, more than 400,000 immigrants face

the threat of deportation and separation from their families due to the pending termination of TPS by the Trump Administration.

In September, we worked alongside our partners at the National TPS Alliance to mobilize more than one thousand TPS-holders and allies for an action to draw attention to a

critical court hearing in Pasadena, California, challenging the TPS cancellations. By connecting with the UU congregation in Pasadena, we encouraged congregants and allies to show up *en masse* for the demonstration at the courthouse.

The movement has also continued to push for a permanent legislative solution. Last year, our partner reached out to request that we collect hand-written letters to senators urging support for permanent TPS protections. Realizing that many of our members might still be unfamiliar with the TPS issue, we decided to pair the request for letter-writing by offering to help UU congregations across the country host screenings of "The Last Dream," a short documentary about a play co-created by the National TPS Alliance, which tells the story of the impact of the TPS termination on one Salvadoran family in Massachusetts.

UUSC created a [discussion guide](#) to use with the film and provided [resources](#) to support the [letter writing](#) campaign. As our partnership with the National TPS Alliance has deepened, they have continued to call on us with specific advocacy and communications requests, and we have done our best to be responsive in

every instance, creating and updating actions to support the American Dream and Promise Act, and creating and distributing a TPS policy brief and set of talking points as part of our August 2019 in-district Congressional lobbying toolkit.

To bolster the movement's infrastructure, UUSC also provided a grant to the National TPS Alliance, allowing it to bring together, for the first time, all 16 of its executive committee members for three days to get to know each other, develop their leadership skills, strengthen the work of the Alliance, and strategize about the future of the campaign for permanent residency and the immigrant rights movement as a whole.

"THE TPS COMMUNITY AND STRUGGLE IS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT, IN ORDER TO WIN, IMPACTED COMMUNITIES MUST LEAD. IT WAS BEAUTIFUL TO SEE A NEPALI TPS RECIPIENT LEADING AN ICEBREAKER WITH HAITIAN, SALVADORAN, AND HONDURAN TPS RECIPIENTS, OR A YOUNG HAITIAN TPS RECIPIENT SHARING HER STORY THAT CONNECTED WITH EVERYONE ELSE EVEN WHEN PEOPLE GREW UP SO FAR AWAY FROM EACH OTHER."

— Jose Palma, Coordinator
of National TPS Alliance



Credit: National TPS Alliance

Stories of Our Collective Human Rights Impact:
**SUPPORTING A
MOVEMENT TO EXPAND
ACCOMPANIMENT &
RESIST CRIMINALIZATION
IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH**



In 2020, UUSC's collaborative campaign with the [UUA](#), *Love Resists*, entered its third year funding local projects that build capacity for and mobilize UUs in solidarity with immigrant communities who are already organizing.

This fiscal year, we are supporting the [New Sanctuary Movement of Atlanta](#), working closely with Atlanta area UU congregations to build out their network, and [Apoyo](#), a dreamer-led committee closely affiliated with the UU Church of Hillsborough, which is defending community members against deportations and fighting against wage theft of undocumented workers.

In November, members of the Emerson UU Congregation in Marietta, Georgia, reached out to UUSC with concerns that a local business was trying to open a child detention center there. Alongside both new and long-time partners – New Sanctuary Movement of Atlanta and [Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights](#) (GLAHR), respectively – we prepared members of the

congregation to challenge the construction through appealing a zoning variance, bringing the issue to the City Council, and generating strong public opposition in advance of a Marietta City Council vote. UUSC also provided media coaching for a local UU minister who was interviewed live on the local National Public Radio station about the campaign just two days prior to the vote. As the day of the City Council vote approached, UUSC led a preparation session with the Emerson congregation and provided sources and data to support the coalition's arguments against the detention center.

When the time came for the vote, Marietta's City Council [unanimously opposed](#) the facility—the result of grassroots efforts and “strong solidarity[,] UU values, and support.”

The campaign to oppose the Marietta facility is a powerful example of how UUSC can help build and strengthen powerful coalitions of grassroots partners and interfaith allies.

Over the course of the last few years, the Emerson congregation has deepened its immigrant justice organizing and grown its relationship with our partner, GLAHR, “showing up to county commission and sheriff meetings about 287(g) [agreements regarding local law enforcement cooperation with ICE] and helping [GLAHR] distribute Know Your Rights cards.” With UUSC's funding, GLAHR co-convened coalition meetings and facilitated strategic planning to stop the renewal of 287(g) contracts in DeKalb and Cobb counties. GLAHR, Project South, UU activists, and other allies met with Cobb County Sheriff Neil Warren, providing reports and facts on how the 287(g) program harms immigrant communities, and showed up to testify at 12 separate Commissioners' meetings.

Members of the Emerson congregation have described how GLAHR has been “instrumental in helping us understand the history and current injustice of the criminalization and detention of immigrants in the United States,” and GLAHR has told us how deeply they appreciate the efforts of the UU congregations in Emerson and Roswell, Georgia, to support their work.

As UU activist Helen Hobson put it, “[t]he combination of partner relationships, local and national support, and a strong base of knowledge and organization within the congregation, meant that we were ready and able to act” to oppose the proposed Marietta facility. Following the success of this action, the Emerson congregation and their allies are poised to mobilize “the next time or at the next place to resist cruel and inhumane immigration policy.”



Credit: GLAHR

Stories of Our Collective Human Rights Impact:
**DISMANTLING RACIST
IMMIGRATION POLICIES &
REUNITING FAMILIES**



As we [reported last year](#), our partners [Justice in Motion](#) and [Al Otro Lado](#) have been on the frontlines of the fight against the Trump administration's racist immigration policies from the very beginning—most notably those that have resulted in the separation of immigrant parents from their children.

Throughout this crisis, Justice in Motion and its UUSC-supported Defenders Network, "have been instrumental in reunifying deported parents with their children in the United States," while Al Otro Lado has helped bring dozens of parents deported without their children back to the border and supported them in their applications for asylum. Though the crisis of family separation has largely faded from the news, for

Justice in Motion, Al Otro Lado, and other allies in the movement, the fight has not let up.

In January of this year, for instance, our partners' tireless work made national news when nine parents who were deported from the United States without their children were finally allowed back on American soil, "in a historic, court-mandated return." In the ruling that allowed the parents' return to the U.S., a federal judge found

that the Trump administration had coerced hundreds of parents into waiving their asylum rights. Thanks to what the judge called [our partners' "Herculean" effort](#) to track down the deported parents, they could finally be reunited with their children.

As a part of this reunification effort, Al Otro Lado called on us to help find sponsors for the deported parents who were trying to return to the United States. Through our new [Congregational Accompaniment Project for Asylum Seekers](#) (CAPAS) – an initiative that grew out of a collaboration among several organizations (including [Freedom for Immigrants](#), [Showing Up for Racial Justice](#), [Pueblo Sin Fronteras](#), [Love Resists](#), and [Innovation Law Lab](#)) to assist people in migration from Central America by recruiting and supporting individuals and families to open their homes as sponsors of asylum seekers –

UUSC found and connected several families with hosts for sponsorship. More broadly, the CAPAS program has supported over a dozen UU congregations working collectively to support arriving asylum-seekers in one or more host homes among the congregation's members.

As Justice in Motion explained to us earlier this year, they have also “worked to facilitate access to justice for deported families separated by the U.S. government” by helping them bring legal claims against the government itself. To assess the viability of these claims, Justice in Motion has leveraged the growing Defender Network, including defenders in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, to conduct screening interviews with more than 40 families. Justice in Motion has also connected deported parents and children with lawyers in the U.S., who are working with the Defenders to support the families throughout the lengthy cross-border legal process.

Stories of Our Collective Human Rights Impact: **ACCOMPANIMENT & REINTEGRATION IN GUATEMALA**



For the last four years, UUSC has provided Asociación Pop No'j with unrestricted support to return and reintegrate migrating children and adolescents to Guatemala, where corruption and impunity are rampant and the state is unable or unwilling to respond to the needs of the people.

This year, for example, Pop No'j accompanied nearly 100 returned children and adolescents, most of whom were Indigenous, in the process of reunification with their families and reintegration into their communities.

Fifteen of these children had previously been detained and separated from their families under the Trump administration's 2018 "zero tolerance" policy. Upon their return to Guatemala, Pop No'j helps connect these children with resources related to trauma recovery and physical health support, and assists families in paying down debt taken on to pay for their journeys—one of the

most significant burdens for families, many of whom have had to mortgage their homes, land, or incurred other debt to pay for the trip.

"[AS] [T]HE DETERIORATION OF CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRY CONTINUES...THE APPROACH TO MIGRATION CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM CONSIDERATIONS ON THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT."

—Pop No'j

In September 2019, UUSC joined Pop No'j in a delegation to Washington, D.C., to bring together grassroots organizations working on migration from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and the United States. **Over the course of three days, UUSC's partners and other civil society leaders from the region met with Congressional offices** to advocate for the rights of migrating youth from Central America and oppose U.S.-backed so-called "safe third country" and "Remain in Mexico" agreements externalizing U.S. border control and returning people to danger. UUSC provided financial, planning, and on-the-ground support to the delegation to maximize the impact of their visit.

Since that time, Pop No'j has continued to resist oppressive U.S. anti-immigrant policies, playing a lead role in the advocacy campaign to end so-called "safe third country" agreements between the United States and governments in the region.

"UUSC IS ALWAYS THERE WITH SUPPORT IN THE MOMENT IT IS MOST NEEDED. IT IS VERY MEANINGFUL THAT THERE IS SOMEONE FOLLOWING OUR STRUGGLES, CONCERNED FOR US DURING OUR DIFFICULT MOMENTS, AND WILLING TO SUPPORT AND GUIDE."

*— Juan José Hurtado Paz y Paz, Director,
Asociación Pop No'j*





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