Culture in Context

BECA Volunteer Training Curriculum

Leader's Guide

This curriculum was developed for use by BECA volunteers (that's you) in BECA's Culture in Context course. Through videos, books, articles, guest speakers, and case studies, you will learn A LOT of information this year about the political, social, economic, and cultural realities in Honduras and the world. We hope you find this information interesting and the activities engaging. However, our goal is not that you would graduate this course with a bunch of quick-facts and head knowledge. Our goal is that you would leave this program with a better understanding of the interconnectedness of the world and a better idea of where you fit in it.

In line with BECA's mission, this curriculum was developed so that by the end of the year-long course, volunteers will…

- Gain a contextual understanding of Honduran culture within the community, as it relates to bigger picture social, political, and international movements
- Build skills to further their own cultural awareness, both during and after their time on the ground
- Analyze their unique social position, as well as that of their home culture, as it relates to economics, gang culture, immigration, and related topics that connect with the cultural context in which they live
- Be exposed to opportunities and experiences that help them better understand how to move forward in supporting social justice for Hondurans

Accomplishing these goals will require much more than articles and speeches. It will require *you* to:

- Engage in the materials and conversations with a self-reflective, open-minded attitude
- Ask tough questions that do not have clear answers
- Suggest additional topics or current events that you want to learn more about
- Take what you learn in the course into your daily life to see how it fits
- Put yourself out there. This may mean going on home visits, attending a religious service that you've never been to before, doing personal research to form an opinion on Honduran politics, volunteering with another organization in the country, or simply saying "yes" whenever the opportunity arises to learn something from the people around you.

Through *your* individual experience and *our* group conversations, we believe that each of us can gain a more complex understanding of this community, of the world around us, and of our place in it all. Welcome to the course.

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Schedule & Objectives

The curriculum topics and learning objectives below are organized into five suggested time periods based on (1) the various stages of culture shock, recognizing that some of the heavier topics might overwhelm volunteers early on while they are still adjusting, and (2) the relevance of certain information during certain time periods (culture and communication before school begins, holidays and traditions around the same time as the September holiday break, etc.)

Training (July – August)

- Gang Activity & Membership
    - How did gangs originate? Which gangs are active in this community?
    - What does gang involvement look like in this context? Who is involved in gangs? Why?
    - What is being done to combat this? Who is working to end gang violence and how? What are some challenges in working to end gang violence?
- Education Inequality & School Systems
    - What is the Honduran school system like?
    - What is BECA's goal in offering bilingual education? Why?
    - What power does education have to change communities and countries?
- Culture and Communication
    - How do communication and social norms differ here compared to my own community?
    - Is there a generational or urban/rural divide in local cultural norms?
    - How do I respect the new culture without knowing everything about it? How can I engage in learning more about it?

Parcial I (September – October)

- Holidays and Traditions
    - What are important holidays in this country and other countries represented within the group?
    - What do these celebrations tell us about what the culture values?
    - What traditions are different from what I am used to? What similarities are there?
- Machismo and Gender Inequality
    - What is machismo? In what ways do I notice this manifested in this context?
    - In what ways can I relate with my experience of gender inequality in my own country?
    - How does machismo affect children?
    - How do we teach children equality in the classroom?
- Globalization
    - How has globalization affected my own experience?
    - What are the benefits of globalization?
    - What are some of the concerns and challenges of globalization?
    - Does globalization affect urban areas and rural areas in the same way?

Parcial II (November – December)

- Immigration
    - Why do so many take the risk of migrating to the United States?
    - What realities do migrants face on the journey?
    - How does immigration affect families in this community?
- Religion
    - What religions exist in the community and country?

- How do we see religion play out in day to day life? How does it affect and create culture?
- How is religion treated differently here than what I am used to?

Parcial III (January – March)

- Privilege
  - What is white privilege? How is it recognized?
  - What are some misconceptions about white privilege?
  - How do I experience my privilege in this context?
  - How does recognizing my privilege affect how I see, interact with, and serve those that do not carry the same privilege that I do?
- Poverty: Roots, Reasons, Cycles
  - How do we define poverty? Why does it matter how we define it?
  - In what ways have I witnessed the cycle of poverty?
  - Is anyone to blame for poverty or is it inevitable?
- Poverty: Global/Local Solutions
  - Which is more important: addressing global and large-scale poverty or local poverty?
  - How do different types of organizations work in conjunction to alleviate poverty?
- Poverty: Manifestations in Cofradía
  - Why are people in Cofradía poor?
  - Why are some people in Cofradía poorer than others? What different nuances of poverty have I noticed?
  - In what ways are the people in Cofradía wealthy? What have we learned from them?
  - Is there danger in comparing the poverty of different groups?

Parcial IV (April – June)

- Environmental Issues: Water
  - Does water carry a greater significance here than what I am accustomed to? In what ways? Why?
  - Why are water disputes so often associated with indigenous rights?
  - Is water a human right? Why or why not?
- Inequality
  - What effect does inequality have on a society?
  - What is wealth disparity like within Honduras?
  - Is inequality a problem in my home country? What examples of inequality have I witnessed in my home country?
- What Next
  - How does what I have learned this year affect my life moving forward?
  - How will this experience motivate me to continue serving the marginalized and underprivileged?
  - What are some ways I can continue to positively impact this community and country once I leave?

Culture and Communication

Pre-Session Questions

1. List three reasons you think culture might affect communication.
   a)
   b)
   c)

2. Can you think of an example of a time when you experienced miscommunication due to cultural differences? Was the experience funny/awkward? What did you learn from it?

Introduction

We all know that communication is important. Chances are, all of us here value cultural diversity as well. But cross-cultural communication is *difficult*, no matter how much experience we have. Most of us probably understand that different cultures have different values, but what we sometimes forget is that cultural values are present in every little part of daily life. For example, generally speaking, in Canada, not removing your shoes before you enter someone's house is offensive. In the United States, cutting someone off in traffic is considered rude. In China, maintaining eye contact with strangers is considered bad manners. Culture influences everything.

Learning to navigate cultural differences is essential to positive communication between us and our students, their parents, and the Honduran staff at our schools. More importantly, learning to communicate cross-culturally is imperative for the relationships among *us* as a multi-cultural team. We all come from different backgrounds, experiences, cultures, and countries. Healthy relationships start with healthy communication, where we seek to understand each other, to be patient with each other, and to have grace for each other when miscommunications do happen.

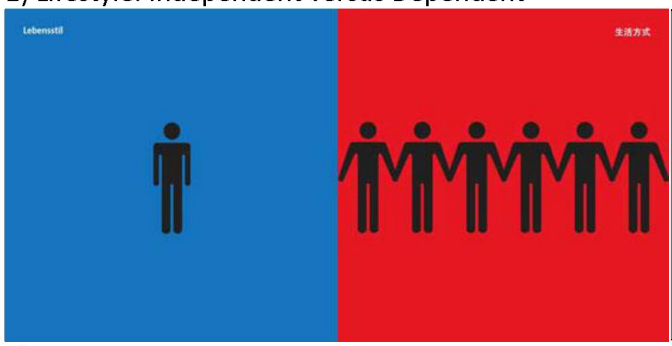
This week, we'll watch a TED talk about cross-cultural communication and complete an activity in which we analyze differences among different cultures[1]. *Remember*: cultural norms are not inherently *good* or *bad*, just *different*.

Activity

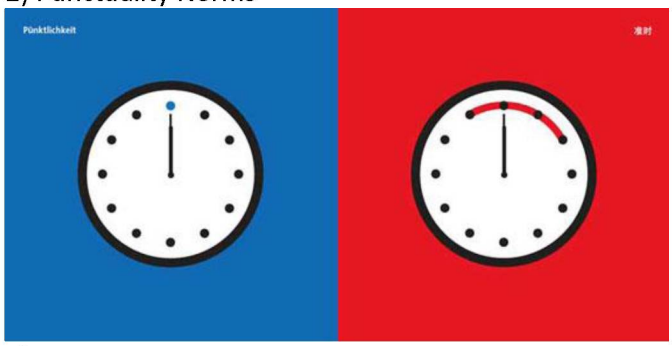
Yang Liu, a Chinese artist living in Germany, created graphics of the differences between various social and cultural norms in China and Germany[2]. After reflecting on her illustrations, fill in the adjacent boxes with illustrations (or written examples) to describe the differences between your home culture and your perception of Honduran culture. If you are Honduran, compare your culture with your perception of the culture of someone else on the BECA team.

Germany **China** **Honduras** _____

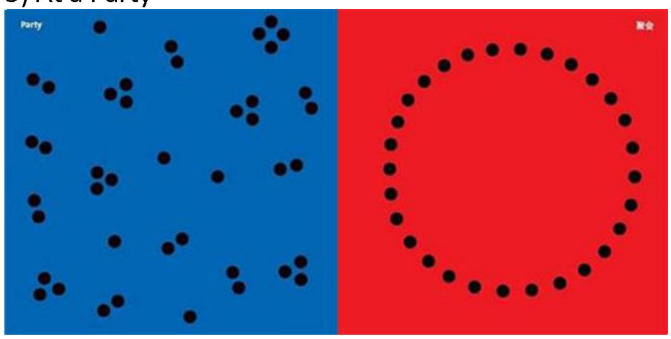
1) Lifestyle: Independent versus Dependent



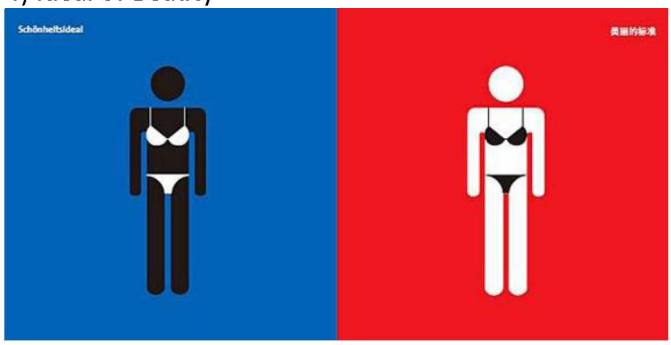
2) Punctuality Norms



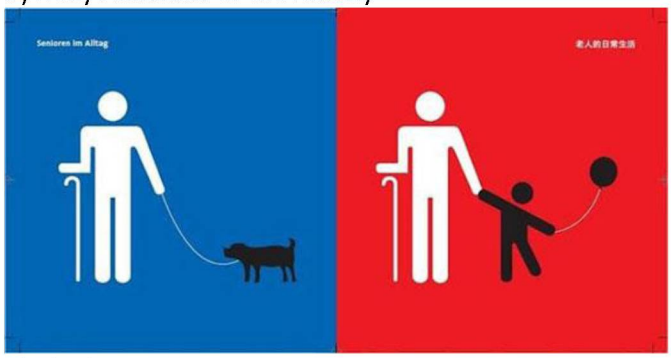
3) At a Party



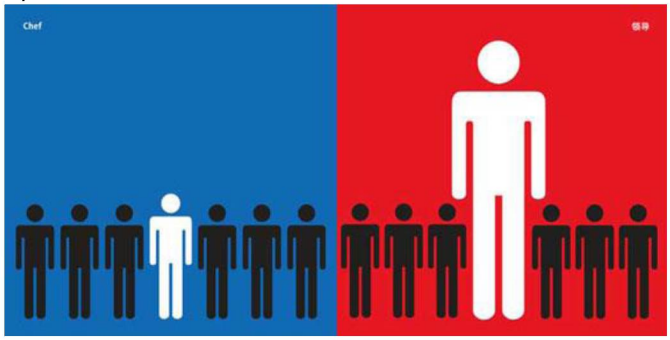
4) Ideal of Beauty



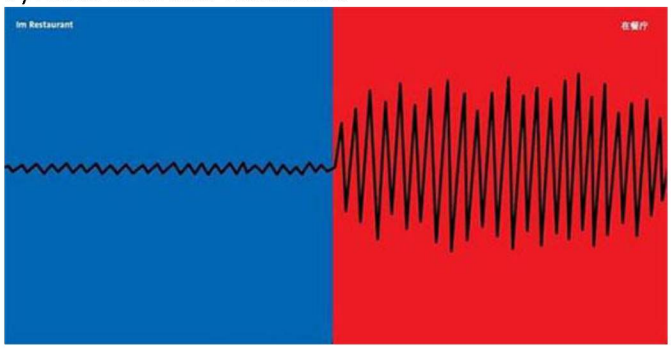
5) Daily Activities of the Elderly



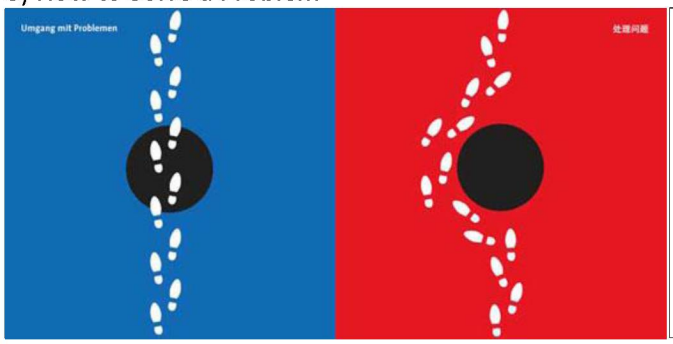
6) The boss



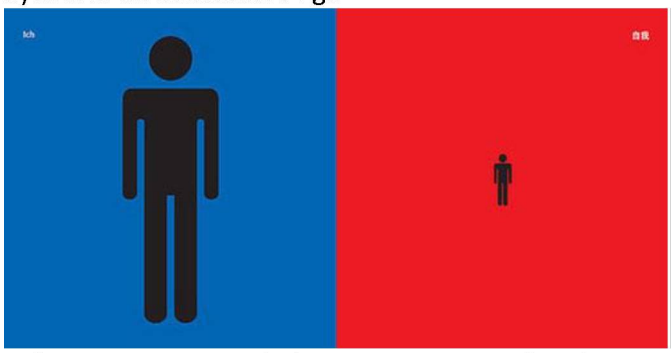
7) Noise level at a restaurant



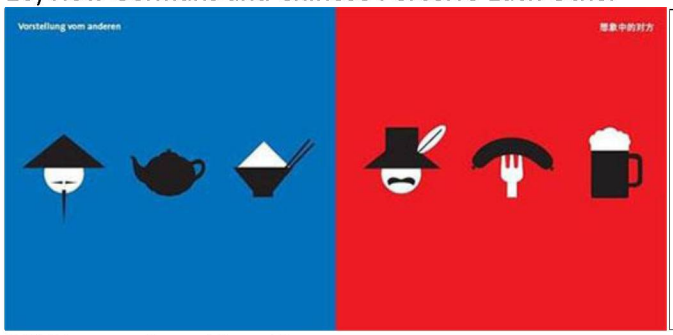
8) How to Solve a Problem



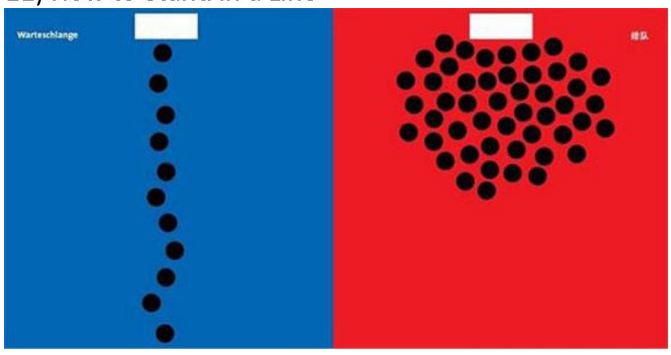
9) Size of an Individual's Ego



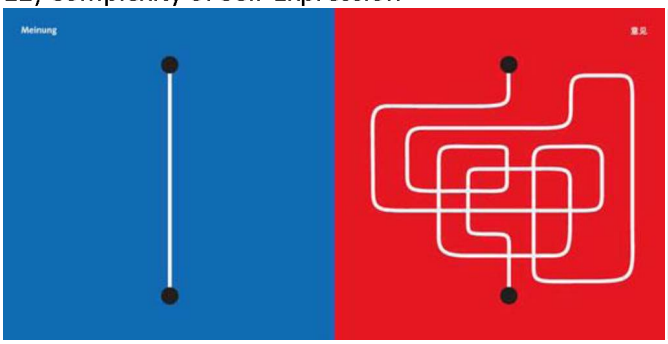
10) How Germans and Chinese Perceive Each Other



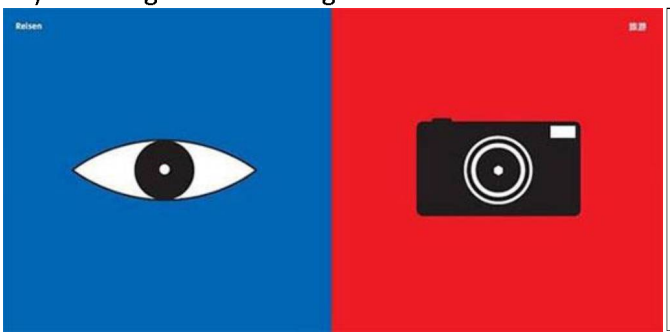
11) How to Stand in a Line



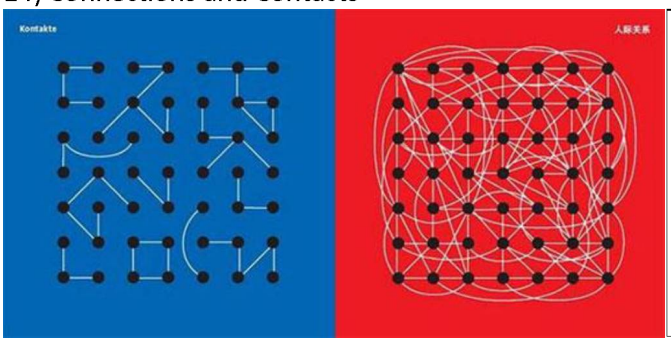
12) Complexity of Self-Expression



13) Traveling and Recording Memories

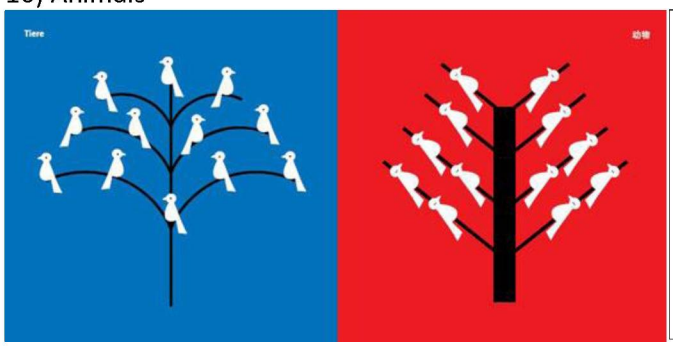


14) Connections and Contacts

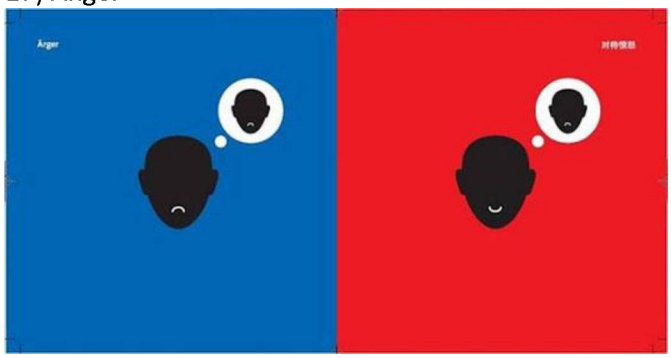


15) Daily Meals

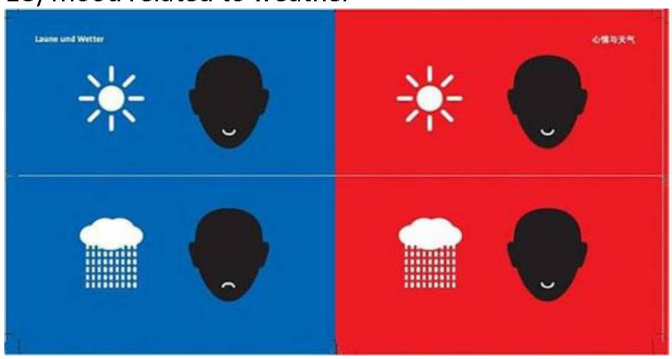
16) Animals



17) Anger



18) Mood related to weather



For Further Thinking:

1. What cultural differences can I think of that were not included in the activity above?

2. Does communication differ generationally? Does it differ between urban and rural settings?

3. What cultural differences can I imagine causing conflict this year as a BECA teacher?

4. How can I respect a different culture without knowing everything about it? What if I mess up?

Leader's Guide

Flow

- Volunteers respond to Pre-Session Questions individually and read introduction ***(4 minutes)***
- Group Share ***(2 minutes)***
- Leader introduces topic, acknowledging the multi-cultural quality of the team and highlighting the opportunity to work in such an environment. Acknowledge that some cultural differences might seem funny to us at first, and that's ok, as long as we all agree that cultural differences are not inherently *right* or *wrong*, just different ***(2 minutes)***
- Watch TED Talk about cultural communication ***(15 minutes)***
- Activity ***(15 minutes)***
- Group Discussion – on activity or on For Further Thinking questions ***(Remaining)***
- Closing – working with a multi-cultural team *is* a huge advantage, but it is also very difficult. Make sure we are all sharing and engaged in learning from each other, celebrating each other's holidays, and engaging in each other's traditions (and food!).

Activity

- Decide how you want to split up groups:
    - Same cultural ONLY – see how Hondurans perceive the differences between them and Americans and vice versa
    - In groups with people from different cultures
    - Individually
- Give brief instructions and/or have someone read the Activity introduction
- Do the activity
- Each group chooses three to present or talk about

Materials

- Pens/Markers
- Laptop/Speakers

Education Inequality & School Systems

Pre-Session Questions

1. What is the purpose of education?

2. What effect does resource availability h whether or not this purpose is accomplish

Quick Facts on Honduran Education System

- Schools in rural areas group grades together – sometimes a community has one teacher for all of primaria
- Typical class sizes in public schools are between 30 and 50 students
- Since teachers are in short supply, many schools split up the day to accommodate twice as many students. This means that many children either go to school in the "morning shift" or "evening shift," and is likely why you see kids in uniforms walking or bussing home from school at 5 and 6 o'clock at night
- Many teachers have more than one teaching job – Efer at Santa Monica and Mr. Kevin at SJBS, for example
- Tuition at high-profile bilingual schools ranges upwards of 84,000 lempiras per year – the equivalent of $4,000 USD – for students in primaria[3]. SJBS primaria tuition is about 10,800 lempiras per year – about $460 USD – for those not part of the Becado Scholarship Program[4].

Group	School Type	Grades	2008-2012 Statistics[5]
Primaria	Escuela	1-6	95.3% attendance
Secundaria	Ciclo Común	7, 8, 9	47.7% attendance
	Bachillerato/Carrera • Técnico • Ciencias y Letras • Computación	10, 11 (sometimes 12)	

Education Inequality is a Global Issue[6, 7, 8, 9]

EIS, San Pedro Sula

Redwood City Elementary, California

Surrey, BC, Canada

San Antonio de Cortes, Honduras

How important do you think access to resources is to giving students a good education? Why?

Not Important ⟷ Very Important

Resource inequality is just one type of educational inequality. What other types can you think of?

What difference does education equality make? Why is it BECA's goal?

Observations

	This Public School	My Public School	My BECA School
Teachers			
Students			
Families			
Facilities			
Atmosphere			

Post Field Trip Questions

1. What stood out to you at the school? What were some of the big differences you noticed between this school and the one you went to growing up?

2. What kinds of challenges do teachers face at that school?

3. What kinds of challenges do you expect to face as a teacher?

4. What does BECA do to ensure that students receive a high-quality education?

5. What can *you* do to ensure that you are offering a high-quality education to your students?

Leader's Guide

Note: This session can be structured a variety of ways. Feel free to utilize just parts or all of the material, or add your own as well. Below are two suggestions.

1. School Field Trip – 2 sessions

a. Schedule a visit to a local public school.
b. Instruct volunteers to be on the lookout to observe each of the categories listed in the graphic organizer.
c. After the field trip, give volunteers 10-15 minutes to fill in the observation sheet.
d. During the *next* Culture in Context meeting, start from the beginning of the lesson with the Pre-Session Questions. Have volunteers read the Quick Facts together.
e. Have volunteers get into groups to share their observations from the field trip and discuss the Post-Field Trip questions.
f. Discuss the experience as a group

2. Session Only – 1 session

a. Volunteers independently answer Pre-Session questions and read Quick-Facts.
b. Discuss Pre-Session Questions in the Group
c. Have volunteers review Inequality photos and discuss the questions in groups of two
d. Group Discussion
e. To close, ask "what kinds of challenges do you expect to face as a teacher this year?"

Materials

- Pens/Pencils

Environmental Issues: Water

Pre-Read: Why Water? – Excerpt from *Liquid Relations*[10]

"Water, a simple and familiar feature of our daily life, is in fact a highly complex phenomenon with multiple aspects. Water occurs in many forms: precipitation (snow, sleet and rain), snowmelt, glaciers, rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and other surface waterbodies, groundwater aquifers (shallow and deep; active, trapped and fossil), springs, wetlands, soil moisture and atmospheric moisture (leaving aside the oceans)…Though all water constitutes a unity, different forms of water have distinct characteristics; give rise to different issues in the context of utilisation and management; and the governing laws are different. In its occurrence water is highly variable…Water is an essential life-support substance, even more essential than food, and almost as important as air. Water is also needed for cooking and cleansing (one's person, clothes, habitat). These may be clubbed together as 'basic water requirements'. Water for irrigation and water for industrial uses (process, cooling, steam generation) are inputs into economic activities. Water for the generation of hydroelectric power is a special category; in a sense it is a raw material, but it does not get consumed in the process: it is a special variant of water for industrial use. Water is also a medium for navigation; here again it does not get consumed, but a certain level of flow has to be maintained, and this may limit the availability for other uses. Water for municipal uses such as sanitation or firefighting or in hospitals can be regarded as a 'social good'. Incidentally, water supply and sanitation are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. We cannot talk about water without talking about sanitation. Water has also (partly) a destructive aspect in the form of floods. Water plays a role (or roles) in, and is an inextricable part of, our society, culture and history (think of the Thames, the Seine, the Rhine, the Danube, the Nile, the Indus, the Ganga, the Brahmaputra, the Mississippi, the Amazon, and so on, and the related countries and continents); and it is also regarded in many cultures as a sacred resource or as a divinity in itself. Water sustains not merely human life, but also the lives of animals and birds; and it sustains and is sustained by the ecological system of which it is an integral part. It plays a crucial role on Planet Earth."

Introduction:

Water is something many of us take for granted. Many of us probably grew up never worrying about whether or not the faucet would turn on when we went to brush our teeth in the morning, or if our pets or livestock would have enough water to drink to survive, or if our neighbors would cut off our water supply so that they could earn money by selling it, or the possibility that we would be forced to move due to the relocation of a nearby lake or the flooding of a newly constructed dam. Each of these are realities that many people in Latin America and throughout the world face today. Water is an environmental issue; it is a religious issue; it is a socio-economic issue; it is a human rights issue.

This week, we'll watch a short documentary about Berta Cáceres, the Honduran activist who was assassinated on March 3rd, 2016 for her commitment to protecting indigenous rights[11]. Cáceres worked for decades fighting for environmental, cultural, and subsistence rights for the Lenca people in southern Honduras[12]. She was a founding member of the organization called *Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras* (COPINH), which continues fighting for water and land rights of indigenous groups in Honduras.

While watching this video, pay attention to injustices that are mentioned and the implications of water injustice for people groups in this country.

Notes

Leader's Guide

Flow

- Read the front page together; have volunteers split off into groups of two to discuss a little bit about what they read ***(5 minutes)***
- Play Documentary ***(10 minutes)***
- Group Activity: Mind-mapping ***(15-20 minutes)***
- Follow-up Conversation ***(Remaining)***

Activity

- Tell volunteers that we will be doing a Mind-mapping exercise, also known as a thought web. Each group will be given a large sheet with a topic in the middle and some guiding questions. Their task is to fill out a web of things that cause, affect, are related to, or are affected by the central topic. The idea is to get as many ideas as possible out on the paper, and to make as many connections as possible.
- To begin, split volunteers into three small groups, and assign them a Mind-map topic.
- The Mind-map topics should be:
    - **WATER INJUSTICE** // What does water access or injustice affect? Why is water important? What relies on access to water?
    - **WATER RESPONSIBILITY** // Who perpetuates water injustice or inequality? Who are the players involved? Does it affect certain groups disproportionately?
    - **OTHER INJUSTICES** // What other injustices are tied to or related to water injustice? What types of water injustices are there?
- Encourage volunteers to think outside the box, and for everyone to grab a pen and participate.
- After conversations die down, have groups present their posters.
- If time permits, follow-up with open discussion or with these questions:
    - What connections can we make between these posters? (put them together and allow volunteers to draw the connections
    - Is water access a human right?

Materials

- Downloaded video
- Laptop/Speakers
- Pens/Markers
- Butcher Paper or Poster Paper
- Tape/Sticky Tack to hang up posters

Gang Activity & Membership

For Further Thinking

1. What do you know about gangs in Central America? For those who have already lived in Cofradía, what are some things that first-year volunteers should know?

2. Where did gangs originate? What is the gang connection between the United States and Honduras?

3. What is the community's attitude toward gangs?

4. What are some of the perceived positive and negative factors of gang membership?

5. What are the biggest challenges in combatting gang activity?

Leader's Guide

Options for this session

- Watch and analyze the movie "Sin Nombre" which chronicles the journey of a young girl from Tegucigalpa in route to the United States and a young man fleeing his gang in Mexico[13]. While fictional, this film introduces viewers to the convoluted realities of gang membership in Central America. Use the For Further Thinking questions or have an Open Discussion
- *Carefully select* and invite a guest speaker – emphasis on *carefully*. As gangs are a *big* taboo in Cofradía, speaking about them could be dangerous for those in the community and for BECA volunteers. Some safe suggestions: Jessel Recinos (local community activist and previous gang member) or Nick Durda (previous BECA volunteer studying gang violence in Central America).
- Read one of the articles in Appendix and use the For Further Reading questions as a guide for discussion

Globalization & Identity

1. What is globalization?

"Where globalization means, as it so often does, that the rich and powerful now have new means to further enrich and empower themselves at the cost of the poorer and weaker, we have a responsibility to protest in the name of universal freedom" – Nelson Mandela [14]

"Outsourcing and globalization of manufacturing allows companies to reduce costs, benefits consumers with lower cost goods and services, causes economic expansion that reduces unemployment, and increases productivity and job creation." – Larry Elder [15]

Pre-Session Questions

Introduction

"Globalization refers to the processes by which people across large distances become connected in more and different ways," and it extends to every part of life[16]. Economic ideologies globalize when governments in developing countries design their budgets, tax systems, and economic policies around the Western capitalist model. Religions globalize when missionaries travel to rural parts of Guatemala to make converts. Media globalizes in line with the globalization of technology, allowing some of our students to be more informed about US election news than we are. Cuisine globalizes when KFC and Popeyes become the most popular fried chicken shops in San Pedro Sula. Power globalizes when foreign governments take sides in civil wars, offering military and financial support to the side that aligns with their own priorities (for example, US involvement in the Nicaraguan civil war[17]). Globalization is a fact of life, though the seemingly-unstoppable force frightens many. In the wave of globalization, do cultural values get lost? Is globalization just a fancy word for Westernization? Do the benefits of globalization benefit all or just the powerful? Will globalization eventually erase diversity? If the answer to any of these is yes, is there anything we can realistically do about it?

2. What are some examples of globalization that you have experienced?

The goal for today's lesson is not to answer all or even any of these questions – yet. Our goal is to make connections between our experiences and the reality that globalization is at work all around us.

Graphic Organizer – _____

Essay Title

Important Points

Purpose of the essay

Aspect of globalization addressed

Connections

Summary

Notes

Leader's Guide

Flow

- Volunteers complete Pre-Session Questions and read Introduction (5 minutes)
- Group share about responses ***(3 minutes)***
- Activity ***(35 minutes)***
- Group Discussion ***(Remaining)***
    - Is globalization good or bad?
    - How do you think globalization affects this community?

Activity

- Explain that volunteers have two essay options to read. Tell them to form four groups of equal sizes ***(1 minute)***
- Assign essays based off group preference ***(1 minute)***
- Explain that after reading independently, they will fill out their Graphic Organizers together. They will present their essays at the end of the session ***(1 minute)***
- Allow volunteers to complete these tasks – the essays are *long,* so provide ample time. Encourage discussion among group members. ***(25 minutes)***
- Groups present their essays based off their Graphic Organizers ***(7 minutes)***

Materials

- Pens/Pencils
- Highlighters

Holidays & Cultural Traditions

How many traditions, holidays, or cultural practices do you know from each culture?

Honduras	USA			

Tradition/Holiday Name: _____ _____
English Spanish

How it originated:

Countries it is celebrated in:

Description of tradition/associated practices:

What's meaningful about this tradition?

What questions do you have about the tradition?

Tradition/Holiday Name: _____ _____
English Spanish

How it originated:

Countries it is celebrated in:

Description of tradition/associated practices:

What's meaningful about this tradition?

What questions do you have about the tradition?

Tradition/Holiday Name: _____ _____
English Spanish

How it originated:

Countries it is celebrated in:

Description of tradition/associated practices:

What's meaningful about this tradition?

What questions do you have about the tradition?

Tradition/Holiday Name: _____ _____
English Spanish

How it originated:

Countries it is celebrated in:

Description of tradition/associated practices:

What's meaningful about this tradition?

What questions do you have about the tradition?

Leader's Guide

Flow

- Introduce the topic. Clarify that we're taking part in cultural *exchange*, which means every person in the group has traditions and culture to share. We want to share our culture as we ask others to do so as well. ***(2 minutes)***
- Activity ***(35 minutes)***
- Group Discussion ***(Remaining)***
    - What are some of the weirdest traditions you've experienced?
    - Are there any traditions from your culture that you think others might find weird?
    - What traditions or holidays are you most excited to experience this year? (This also applies to Hondurans celebrating American holidays and traditions)

Activity

- On a piece of cartulina, make headings of all the cultural heritages represented (for example, US, Honduras, Nicaragua, etc.)
- Have volunteers form groups of 2 or 3 to try to see how many holidays, traditions, etc. they can think of for ALL of the cultures on the poster. ***(5 minutes)***
- As a group, add all the traditions to the board under the corresponding cultural group ***(5 minutes)***
- Divide all the traditions on the list among groups, and tell them they are going to complete a research project, filling out the pages in their workbooks. ***(15 minutes)***
    - They may use phones, laptops, books that are lying around, OR – preferably – the expertise of the people from that culture that are in the room. Encourage them to move around and do mini interviews with each other.
- Groups present to each other what they discovered ***(10 minutes)***

Materials

- One piece of cartulina
- Markers
- Pens/Pencils

Immigration: The Journey & the Facts

Pre-Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think so many take the risk of migrating to the United States?

2. Why do you think immigration has become such a charged topic in many parts of the world in recent years? Do you have strong feelings about immigration one way or the other?

Today we'll watch a documentary called "Beyond Borders: American Migrant Crisis," which follows a group of young Hondurans from San Pedro Sula on their journey to cross the United States border.

Immigration Facts:

Border Violence

- Heightened border patrol in recent years has resulted in the doubling of the border-crossing death rate, from about 200 per year to over **400 deaths each year**[19]
- **6,600 bodies** were recovered on the US-Mexico border between 1994 and 2012[19]
- If captured, undocumented immigrants are **often held in detention facilities *indefinitely***[19]

Who are undocumented immigrants?

- An estimated **66% of unauthorized immigrants** in the United States in 2014 had been living in the country for at least a decade[20]

The cost of becoming a legal resident

- The average cost to file a petition for **a Green Card is $1,490**[21]
- The average cost for an immigration **lawyer to file the petition is between $6,000 and $10,000**, though "low-bono" immigration lawyers charge around $3,000[21]

The residency wait

- As of November 1st, 2016, the US recorded **4,367,052 people *with priority status* on the waiting list** to receive a Green Card; Mexico alone accounted for 1,309,282 of the live applications in the waiting phase[22]
- The Immigration and Naturalization Act currently allows for **675,000 permanent residencies granted to immigrants per year**, with certain exceptions for close family members. Regular family visas are limited to 226,000 per year[23]
- To apply for residency in the United States, you must either (1) have **family** legally living in the country, (2) be sponsored by an **employer**, or (3) be selected from an annual lottery for a **"Diversity Visa"**[24]

Typical "Green Card" Pathway for a Honduran with an immediate family member in the US[25]

- Family member in US…
  - **petitions** the US government for Green Card for family member, called a "Petition for Alien Relative"
  - **provides proof** of his/her own legal residency
  - **submits legal evidence** of family relation (birth certificate, marriage certificate, etc.)
  - *Note: submitting the petition correctly is nearly impossible without legal representation*
- U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) **denies or accepts petition**. If denied, reasons are provided to the petitioner and options for appealing the decision are discussed
- If accepted, National Visa Center (NVC) receives submission and **forwards petition to Honduran consulate**
- Family member in US **pays fees to NVC and waits**. Type of family relation determines priority of case for a visa.
- When visa is available, immigration-applicant goes to US consulate in Tegucigalpa for an **immigration interview**
- Consular office in Tegucigalpa **decides if applicant is eligible** for visa
- If eligible, applicant **receives visa packet**, which must be presented, unopened, upon entry into the United States.
- **Green card is shipped to immigrant** by mail to their new US address

Discussion Questions

1. What are your initial reactions to the film?

2. What parts of this video do you think kids in Cofradía can relate to? Not relate to?

3. What are other reasons people migrate?

4. How is Honduras portrayed in the video?

5. Can you think of any examples or stories you've heard from people in the community regarding immigration to the United States? What have your students said regarding immigration?

6. What is your reaction to the immigration system, the challenges and opportunities it offers to the Honduran community?

Leader's Guide

Flow

- Volunteers complete Pre-Session Questions. Consider having them do this before the session or during dinner, as this session may run long. ***(3 minutes)***
- Watch documentary. ***(30 minutes)***
- Volunteers pair up to answer Discussion Questions ***(5 minutes)***
- Group Discussion ***(Remaining)***

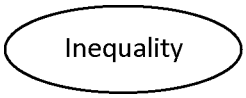
Materials

- Laptop/Speakers
- Pens/Pencils

Inequality

Pre-Session Activity

1. Make a mind-map of the words that come to mind when you hear the word "inequality"



2. Can you think of an example of inequality that you have seen in this community?

Introduction

The most recent available research estimates that at least 60% of Hondurans live below the internationally defined poverty line, which is $1.90 USD – about 45 lempiras – per day[26]. By this point, we are all familiar with some of the poverty that our community experiences. We have also experienced some of the wealth in the area as well, including our conference experiences at EIS and La Lima Schools. For comparison – a full year's tuition at SJBS costs parents around $500 USD for those not part of the scholarship program[4]. A full year's tuition at EIS costs more than $4,000 USD[3]. For a country with 60% of its population making less than $1.90 a day, this educational cost is absurd. The difference in cost between our schools and the elite schools in the city exemplifies a national and global issue: inequality.

When we think of inequality, sometimes we focus on income and material inequality. We may think of political movements such as "The 99%" and the associated parties and policies. We may also think of inequality as a secondary concern next to extreme poverty. Inequality has become a politically, emotionally charged discussion topic that is often dismissed as unfortunate but not priority. This week, we'll watch a TedTalk from public health researcher Richard Wilkinson[27]. In his presentation, he explains the data on the effects of inequality on a society. As it turns out, inequality is more of a determining factor of the health and happiness of people in a society than GDP, economic trends, or even overall poverty. While watching the video, fill in the guided notes to use for our discussion afterwards.

Guided Notes: Circle or fill in the correct answer

1. GNP has **large effect / no effect** on life expectancy.
2. The more unequal countries do **better / worse** on all social problems.
3. GNP is **closely related to / not related to** child wellbeing.
4. About 15% of the population in unequal societies feel they can _____ people. At the more equal end, about 65% of the population feel they can _____ people.
5. Rate of _____ illness goes from 8% in equal societies to 26% in more unequal societies.
6. More unequal societies have a higher rate of people in _____ and are more likely to support the _____ penalty.
7. Social mobility is much higher in more _____ societies.
8. "If Americans want to live the American dream, they should go to _____."
9. What we're looking at is general social _____ in unequal societies.
10. Norway and Japan are extremely different, but are both on the extremely _____ end of the spectrum.
11. It doesn't much matter how you get your greater equality; it matters that you get there _____.
12. It's not just the _____ who are affected by inequality.
13. Sweden does better than England all across the social hierarchy in the rate of _____ mortality.
14. In unequal societies, we worry more about how we're _____ and _____ by others
15. There are _____ studies of health in relation to income inequality; these results are not confined to the countries in this study.
16. The reason why _____ becomes more common in unequal societies is because people are sensitive to being looked down upon.
17. The take home message is that we can improve the real _____ of human life by reducing the income levels between us.

For Further Thinking

1) What stood out to you in the video? What surprised you?

2) What were some of the different social issues that the speaker said are negatively affected by inequality?

3) What did you notice about the US placement on the graphs? What are your thoughts on where the US came in on those statistics?

4) What connections can we make between inequality and the social issues we see in this community?

5) What ways can you think of that inequality can be decreased in this community/country?

Leader's Guide

Flow

- Volunteers answer the first two questions, making a mind-map or word-web for "inequality" and recalling examples of inequality which they have seen in Cofradia. ***(3 minutes)***
- Read intro aloud. ***(2 minutes)***
- Watch TedTalk + Activity. ***(20 minutes)***
- Discuss Questions in partners. Discuss as a whole group. ***(Remaining)***

Activity

- During the video, have volunteers fill in the Guided Notes as they watch the video.
- At the end, give them 2 minutes to read through the notes with a partner before beginning to discuss the For Further Thinking questions.

Materials

- Laptop + Speakers
- Pencils/Pens

Machismo & Gender Inequality

Pre-Session Questions

1. How have you witnessed gender inequality in your hometown/country?

2. How have you witnessed gender inequality here in Cofradía?

Partner Activity

Similarities_	Differences

Machismo is…

_____

_____

For Further Thinking

1. What stood out to you in the article? Did anything surprise you?

2. What gender roles are evident in this community? What are women expected to do/be? What are men expected to do/be?

3. Are culturally accepted gender norms inherently bad?

4. How do we – either consciously or subconsciously – reinforce gender stereotypes in our classrooms?

5. How can we promote gender equality in our classrooms?

Leader's Guide

Flow

- Volunteers answer Pre-Session Questions individually ***(2 minutes)***
- Partner Activity ***(8 minutes)***
- Introduce the article, and have volunteers read it independently ***(10 minutes)***
    - An article is included in the Appendix for this session, but the questions have been left open-ended in the case that the leader wants to use one that is more current
- Volunteers pair up to answer the Post-Session Questions ***(10 minutes)***
- Group Discussion ***(Remaining)***

Activity

- Volunteers select a partner
- Using their thoughts from the Pre-Session Questions, partners discuss the differences and similarities between gender inequality in Honduras and in their hometown/country.
- Volunteers fill out T-chart.
- Partners discuss what they think machismo is, and write their own definitions
- After it appears most pairs are finished, ask for a couple partners to share their definition of machismo.

Materials

- Pens/Pencils
- Highlighters

Poverty Part I: Roots, Reasons, Cycles

Pre-Read Questions

1. What is Poverty? What do you think of when you think of "the poor"?

2. Is all poverty equal? For example, do you have different attitudes toward poverty in the United States versus poverty in Cofradía? Why?

Introduction: *Material or More?*

People from the Global North* tend to think of poverty in purely physical terms: as lack of water; lack of education; lack of food; lack of sanitation; lack of health services. While these are all significant components of poverty, if that was all there is to it, the over 350 billion dollars that the US spends on charity *each year* should have eradicated poverty long ago[28]. Yet while the number of those who live in absolute poverty – people living on less than $1.90 USD per day – has significantly decreased worldwide over the past decades, many still live in impoverished conditions, materially or otherwise[26].

Why haven't the billions of dollars invested into the eradication of poverty vastly improved the situations of the world's poor? Many development professionals argue that turning the focus directly to changing the methods of charity and development is putting the cart before the horse. They believe that the problem with much of Global North aid and development initiatives is that they focus on the wrong things. When poverty is defined as mere material lack, the obvious solution to the problem is more materials. But is there more to poverty than just not enough "stuff"? Does providing food, water, and education for poor people *really* alleviate their poverty?

This week, we'll read an excerpt from Bryant L. Myers' book, *Walking with the Poor*, in which he questions the material perspective and explores a whole-person perspective on poverty[29].

*The term "Global North" refers to countries in the northern hemisphere that are economically more developed than most countries in the southern hemisphere (the Global South)

Post-Discussion Questions:

1. What, if anything, would you add to your pre-read definition of poverty after reading and discussing different ideas of what poverty involves?

2. Can you think of examples in which you have seen each of the different aspects of poverty manifested in this community?
    a. Material Poverty
    b. Physical Weakness
    c. Isolation
    d. Vulnerability
    e. Power

3. What are some points of difference, similarity, and connection between poor people here and poor people in your hometown?
    a. Difference:
    b. Similarity:
    c. Connection:

4. What do we mean when we reference the "cycle of poverty"? Why do you think some people "escape" the cycle while for others it continues for generations?

5. Do you agree with Bryant that viewing poverty as purely materialistic is dangerous? If not, why? If so, what are some ways that we – as a group of primarily foreigners teaching English to our students – can avoid or minimize becoming what Bryant calls development Santa Claus'?

Leader's guide:

Flow

- Opening Activity ***(10 minutes)***
- Volunteers read the article and answer the questions independently. ***(12 minutes)***
- Discussion Activity ***(15 minutes)***
- Open Floor/Group Discussion ***(Remainder)***

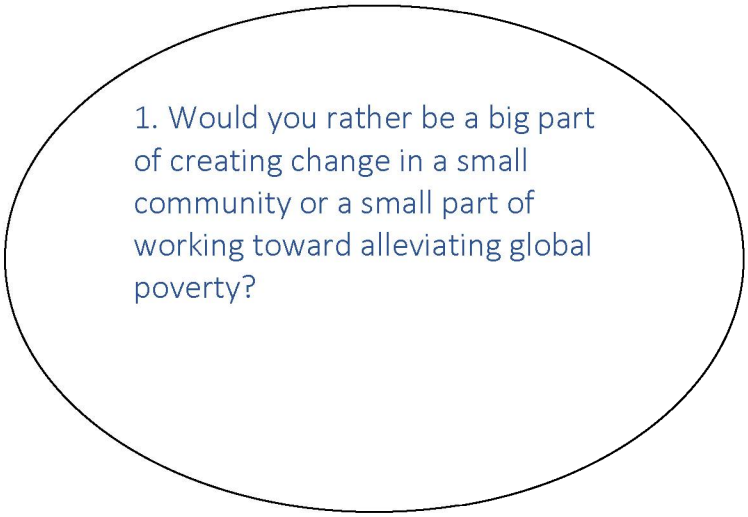
Activities

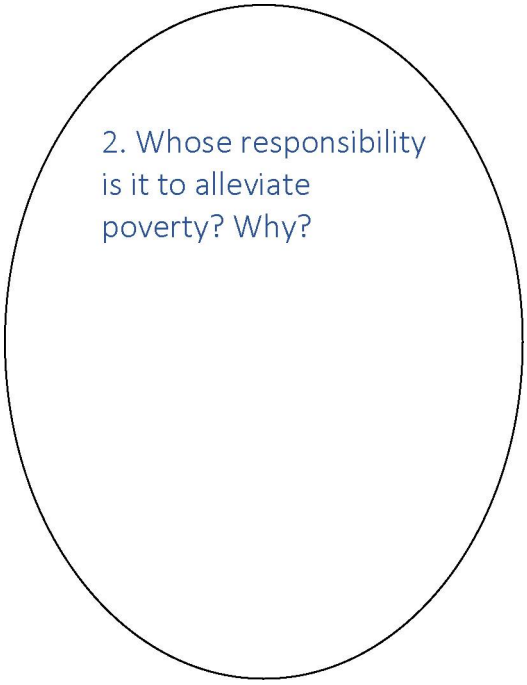
- ***Opening Activity:*** Poor, Rich, and Middle Class Posters (or construction paper with those headings on them taped around the room).
    - Before beginning the session, have volunteers write down as many words that they can think of on sticky notes to put on the posters (or below the heading papers) for what it means to be poor, to be rich, and to be in the "middle class."
    - When they are finished, ask them to spend a few minutes completing the Pre-Read questions independently and read the introduction
    - Read all the sticky notes as a group and discuss patterns
- ***Discussion Activity:***
    - Have volunteers choose a partner and let them discuss question number one for ~2 minutes. When the timer goes off, volunteers find a new partner to discuss question 2, and so on.

Materials

- Sticky Notes
- Construction Paper
- Timer
- Pens/Pencils

Poverty Part II: Global & Local Solutions





Pre-Discussion Questions:

Introduction:

In our last session, we talked about why the language we use to define poverty is important, and some of the reasons that people are poor. This week, we'll talk about different approaches to reducing poverty.

If you do a Google search for "solutions to poverty," you'll find loads of articles, interviews, videos, and websites claiming to have found *the* solution to global poverty. Some claim that we just need to give our funds directly to the poor instead of creating more programs. Some claim that promoting capitalism and big business will cause market "trickle-down" to lift the poor out of poverty. Some claim that education is the answer; others that healthcare is the answer; others that political rights are the answer. Some groups get even more specific, stating that bed nets or children's vaccines or small-business training is *the* answer.

If anything, this vast array of opinions on the "solution" to global poverty proves one thing: there are *a lot* of people trying to solve poverty in *a lot* of different ways. Some of these people are presidents of massive organizations or social enterprises; others are advocates and government officials fighting for equality and human rights; others are short-term volunteers like ourselves trying to make a difference in the lives of a few children in a small community. So which approach works best?

The goal for the material today is not to argue about which approach is best – local or global, entrepreneurial or educational, hand-out or partnerships, international agencies or small local projects. Our goal is to explore these different approaches and to seek to understand their value, particularly in relation to our context here in Honduras.

ACTIVITY // Organization: _____

(1) Summarize the organization, its focus, and its goals

(2) Describe the method(s) they use. Are they more personal or global? How can you tell?

(3) List questions you have about the organization, what they do, or their strategy for poverty reduction

(4) What are your thoughts on this approach? Would you want to be a part of this organization? What is important about what they do?

For Further Thinking…

- What part do education and training play in raising income levels?
- What do you think of the idea of giving money directly to people living in poverty?
- In your opinion, other than education, what other approaches to poverty alleviation could Cofradía benefit from?
- Do any of these organizations have secondary motivations? Do you think it matters?

Leader's Guide

Flow

- Volunteers take 3-5 minutes to answer the Pre-Discussion Questions and read the introduction to themselves ***(5 minutes)***
- Play short Cornell Video[30] – Introduce it by telling volunteers that though it is a promotional video for a university, we are watching it to start thinking about unique ways that people address poverty ***(7 minutes)***
- Activity (see below) ***(20-25 minutes)***
- If time remains after activity, allow volunteers to discuss For Further Thinking questions with someone sitting near them. If time is short, focus on the Cofradía question. Discuss as a group ***(Remaining)***

Activity

- Number off to create five groups
- Explain that each group that they will be doing a case study. Each group will be assigned a one-page summary of the mission, vision, and activities of an organization that seeks to alleviate poverty in Honduras. If they wish, they may use their phones to look up additional information. As their pages instruct, their goal is to (1) sum up the information they learn about the organization, (2) describe how they seek to alleviate poverty, (3) make a list of questions you have about the organization, what they do, or their strategy for poverty reduction, and (4) discuss why they do or do not think this is a good approach to alleviating poverty in this context – what are the implications? What are the long-term effects?
- After ~15 minutes, have groups present their findings. Allow other volunteers to ask questions at the end of the presentations
- Open discussion – which organization was most interesting to you? What other organizations have you heard of that work to alleviate poverty in a unique way?

Materials

- Pens/Pencils
- Laptop/Speakers

Poverty Part III: Cofradía

Pre-Session Questions

Most of the families we know in Cofradía have food and shelter and, at the schools we teach at, a quality education. What, then, causes us to think of this community as "poor"? From our perspective, what are they lacking?	*Why* are people in Cofradía poor? What are the causes?
Why are some people in Cofradía poorer than others?	How have you witnessed the class system at play in Cofradía?

Introduction

The past few sessions, we have talked a lot about poverty—how we define it, what causes it, how we end it. We have addressed some aspects of poverty in Cofradía, but sometimes our perspectives as outsiders limit us. We also want to recognize that we have just as much—if not a whole lot more—to learn from the community as they have to learn from us. They are experts in where they are from, and we want to learn as much as we can from their wisdom.

This week, we'll look directly at poverty in our community through the eyes of someone *from* the community. But first, use the following table to write out some questions you may want to ask the speaker. Topic ideas are listed in the left column if you need help getting started, but feel free to come up with your own.

Topic Ideas	Questions
Speaker's story/experience	
Change over time	
Causes/Effects	
Solutions	

Notes // Speaker _____

Leader's Guide

Flow

- Pre-Session Questions. These could be done in a variety of ways.
  - Assign this page as homework the previous week. Tell volunteers to come to class with this page completed, and encourage them to spend time putting thought into it.
  - Have volunteers complete this page before or during dinner, before the speaker begins.
  - Complete the page as a group or in pairs at the very beginning of the session
- Explain the discussion parameters to volunteers—for example, guest speaker will introduce self and make any comments, *then* the floor will be open for questions.
- Guest speaker presents.

Preparation Suggestions

- Asking a community member: explain to her/him that BECA volunteers meet once a week to learn more about Honduran culture and their student's values, beliefs, and backgrounds. Right now we are discussing poverty, and we believe that the volunteers would extremely benefit from her/his perspective on poverty in Cofradía.
- Give a suggested outline/suggested questions to the speaker, especially if you are afraid that they may get off track easily and talk the whole night (following page).
- Make it clear to the speaker that the meeting will only be 45 minutes long. Consider placing a clock somewhere in the room, so both the speaker and volunteers are aware and considerate of time constraints.
- Invite speaker to join the team for dinner
- Ensure that someone is prepared to translate on the night of the meeting. Make sure a notebook and pen available for that person.

Reunión Sugerencias

1. Su experiencia/su historia. Donde nació usted, como era su niñez, su familia, su educación, como se conocieron usted y su esposo, donde ha trabajado, etcétera

2. ¿Qué significa “la pobreza”?

3. Explica un poco sobre la pobreza del país y/o de Cofradía, y su experiencia con la pobreza

4. A usted, ¿qué cree que ayudaría bajar la pobreza aquí?

5. Otro

6. Preguntas del equipo BECA

Privilege

Pre-Session Questions

1. What does "white privilege" mean to you?	2. What are some examples of what privilege looks like?

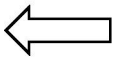
Introduction

White Privilege. A thousand words and phrases swirl into our heads when we hear those two words. For many of us, those phrases may include *Black Lives Matter; Liberalism; Racism; Injustice; Radicalism*. We may have a basic idea that white privilege means that white people have it better off than people of other races. But we may also have questions about that. *What about my white friend who grew up in a trailer park and never made it past 10th grade? Or what about the Latino CEO of that one company or those Black actors that are making millions? Or what about my white dad who started with nothing but worked hard his whole life to allow me to go to university and spend a year in Honduras? Are we trying to say that what he accomplished for his family was handed to him?* In a word, no. However, white people as a group have distinct privileges and advantages in global society that have been centuries in the making. Saying that your white dad had an advantage is not saying his work did not merit his success. Rather, it is saying that the Black man who worked just as hard for his family yet did not encounter the same success *didn't* get what his work merited.

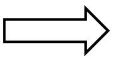
So why this conversation? Because our privilege affects our relationships with others – particularly others of different races. Many of us are new to this culture and have different backgrounds and skin colors than people in this community do. For those of us in this category, we want to explore how our privilege may inadvertently affect our perception of others, as well as how our privilege may affect how others view us. For those of us who do not carry white privilege, we want to reflect on how we perceive those who do have privilege and how that perspective reflects back on us.

This week, half of us will read "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" and half of us will read "Why it's so hard to talk to White People About Racism." When you are finished, take some time to complete at least 4 of the tasks in the chart below.

Why it's so Hard to Talk to White People about Racism



Circle Your Article



Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

Can someone be racist and a good person? Why or why not?	Highlight any statements in the article that surprised, offended, or bothered you. Reflect on why.	How often do you think about your race?
In what ways does your race affect your experience in BECA?	How do you think your race influences your interactions with those of a different race? For example, how do you think race might play into your interactions with parents?	Why might it be useful to learn about privilege?
What are some privileges that white people have that your students do not have?	Is privilege wrong?	If we recognize our privilege, what are we supposed to do about it? What ideas do you have for how to use our understanding of our privilege, or of the privilege that others carry?
What's the difference between an *individual* racist and a racist *system*?	Write a list of at least three things that could go in your invisible knapsack.	Write down two questions or concerns you have about what you read

Responses

Conclusion

As we end, a word of encouragement: each one of us is on the right track. In the book *Being White*, Paula Harris and Doug Schaupp explain some steps that white people can take toward more just relationships with communities of color. One important step is called displacement, and every person on the BECA team has taken this step in one form or another. The authors write:

> "[When] the white person chooses to put herself in a context where people of color are dominant in number and culture and whites are in the minority, we call this *displacement*. Maybe she joins an Asian-led campus [group]; maybe he goes to live and work on a reservation…In this stage, the white person can learn to see whites and people of color in groups. He starts to see our respective racial and cultural systems and how they truly function. The key word in displacement is learning to submit and becoming a student of nonwhite cultures. The white person learns the other culture—celebrations, conflict-resolution styles and so on—and begins having productive, healthy conflict…"[31]

Living in an unfamiliar culture and being part of a multi-cultural organization and community means that all of us have taken this brave step toward reconciling privilege with the reality that those around us experience.

Leader's Guide

Flow

- Volunteers answer questions independently and read introduction ***(4 minutes)***
- Think-Pair-Share ***(2 minutes)***
- Leader introduces topic, acknowledging that it is controversial. Quickly set up discussion boundaries: Respect each other's experiences and opinions, use "I think" and "I feel" statements; questions are good, attacks are bad; etc. ***(2 minutes)***
- Activity ***(30 minutes)***
- Closing: ***(5 minutes)***
    - Have a volunteer read the conclusion aloud
    - Open floor discussion on the question: "What steps can I make toward better understanding of those with different experience of privileges than myself?"

Activity

- Divide groups into two (by numbering off, for example) and assign one of the articles to each group
- Have volunteers read and work on activity table independently for at least 10 minutes or until it seems everyone has completed a few
- Have them get in groups of three, ensuring that both articles are represented in their groups. Have each group summarize each article to other group members
- Have them discuss different questions on the table amongst themselves
- Group discussion: Open floor. Encourage the development of thoughts, using questions such as:
    - What stood out?
    - What bothered you about that?
    - What surprised you?
    - Explain what you mean by that response?
    - Can you give an example?
    - Does anyone have a different perspective/experience?

Materials

- Highlighters
- Pens/Pencils

Religion in Cofradía

Pre-Discussion Questions

1. How do you think learning about religions practiced in Cofradía could be beneficial for us as teachers and foreigners?

2. What role does religion – a specific one or religion in general – play in Honduran society?

3. How is religion here and attitudes toward religion here different than in the US?

Introduction

Religion tends to be a pressure point for many people. Both those on the extremely religious end of the spectrum and those on the anti-religious end can feel tense when the topic arises. Our discussion today, however, is unrelated to whether we think religion is good or bad. The purpose of our conversation is to learn more about the different religions in this community so that we can better understand our students, the culture, and the values of the community in which we live.

To do this, we will do case studies on five different religious groups that are prominent in Cofradía: Evangelical Christianity, Catholic Christianity, Jehovah's Witness, Mormonism, and Garifuna religion. As your group researches, consider the following:

- How many students or community members do we know that are part of this religion?
- How does this religion interact and engage with other religions?
- What are the differences and similarities between this religion and others?
- How might this religion affect students in our classrooms?

Be prepared to present your findings to the group.

Leader's Guide

Flow:

- Volunteers read and respond to the pre-discussion questions ***(2 minutes)***.
- Open floor to discuss questions ***(5 minutes).***
- Leader reinforces that conversation is *not* about if religions are good or bad, but about better understanding the community in which we live

- Read introduction aloud ***(1 minute)***.
- Activity ***(15-20 minutes)***.
- Group Discussion ***(Remaining)***.

Activity:

- Split up team into 5 groups. Assign each group a religion.
- Tell the groups that they will be doing a case study. Encourage groups to do their own research on their phones or laptops and using prior knowledge.
- They may find and present any knowledge they wish to. They may use the questions in the introduction for ideas on how to get started.
- After about 10 minutes, have each group present. Encourage questions and discussion during presentations.

What's Next?

Pre-Session Questions

1. What are some of the most memorable cultural or social lessons you have learned this year?

2. Thinking back to when you arrived, how has your perspective changed in the past year? This could be related to culture, politics, being a teacher, your view of your own strengths and weaknesses, etc.

Introduction

As the year comes to a close, it's time to reflect not only on what happened this year and what we learned, but also on how what we learned will carry us forward. This applies to all of us—Hondurans and internationals, returners and those going home—because all of us are entering a season of transition. And the stress of transition can inspire all sorts of emotions—anger, frustration, sadness, confusion, guilt, fear. Transition can make us question why we chose the path that we did, giving us a "grass is always greener on the other side" mentality. Cultural transition can be especially difficult, as we struggle to fit back into our home culture, speak our native language, and try to rationalize the wealth and comforts of our homes with the realities that we became accustomed to in Cofradía.

Today, we'll focus on predicting some of the challenges and emotions we'll face during our transition, and reflecting on the impact that we're leaving on the community. Our reading from the American Psychology Association was written by members of an international aid organization called SalusWorld. The authors confront some of the unique psychological challenges that volunteers face during and after spending time living and working abroad. How many challenges can you relate to?

Discussion Questions

1. What stood out to you in this article?	
2. What was one of the biggest challenges or difficulties you faced when you arrived in Cofradía?	
3. What do you anticipate will be your biggest challenges or difficulties as you return home?	
4. How would you sum up your impact on the community?	
5. If you are returning home, what are some ways that your impact on the community will continue?	
6. If you are returning, what are some ideas you have to deepen your impact next year?	

Leader's Guide

Flow

- Volunteers answer Pre-Session Questions individually and read the Introduction ***(5 minutes)***
- Volunteers pair up to read the article; have them highlight anything they find interesting, funny, or surprising. ***(5 minutes)***
- Discussion Activity ***(17 minutes)***
- Open Floor ***(Remaining)***

Activity

- Volunteers take time to complete the discussion questions independently ***(5 minutes)***
- Volunteers pair up with a new person and discuss questions 1 and 2 ***(3 minutes)***
- Those two volunteers pair up with another group to form a group of four, and discuss questions 3 and 4. ***(4 minutes)***
- The group of four pairs with another group of four to make a group of 8, and discuss questions 5 and 6 ***(5 minutes)***

Materials

- Pens/Pencils

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Appendix

The Northern Triangle: The Countries That Don't Cry for Their Dead[32]

By Suchit Chavez and Jessica Avalos

In the past three years, 48,947 people were murdered in the Northern Triangle, the most violent region of the world, which is home to Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. In those three years, these countries achieved convictions in 2,295 cases, representing an impunity rate of 95 percent for homicides. This is the reality for thousands of victims in the region: states that neither guarantee justice nor programs that provide special attention to the victims of this excessive violence.

***

When they killed my girl, she was two years old, and I was 16. She was my first and only daughter. That day we were going to a vigil. We were walking down the street. When we passed by an area filled with mareros [gang members], a man came out who was kind of drunk. Behind him came another with a gun, and he started to shoot. The girl was walking next to us. When I turned to look behind, because it sounded like firecrackers, one was shooting at the other. We wanted to go, but a bullet had already hit my little girl. Her father picked her up in his arms. We didn't even see how it hit her. She was still alive, but she died as we were walking. It would have been worse to see her suffer. These things happen.

> ***The following are excerpts from an article that originally appeared in La Prensa Grafica and was translated and reprinted with permission. See the Spanish original here.***

Later we heard they had arrested that guy, but who knows if it was the same one, because they got a bunch of them. Who knows if he is in prison. And is it going to come out in the paper that I am living here today? Very dangerous, better not even mention my name, or where we came from. Since October, I have been here. It is more peaceful here, not like in Mejicanos, although nowadays it's nearly the same everywhere.

(The two-year-old girl was caught in the middle of crossfire in Mejicanos, in San Salvador. The mother of the girl, who is now 17, is awaiting her second child. She is five months pregnant.)

***

The Northern Triangle epithet was originally applied for commercial purposes, far from what it has now come to stand for: a synonym for violence. El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras began to be known as the Northern Triangle after May 12, 1992, following the signing of a trade agreement in Nueva Ocotepeque, Honduras. However, the name became popular years later, in 2001, after the beginning of the Free Trade Agreement with Mexico.

Thirteen years have passed, and this commercial alliance has given way to another source of fame. During 2013, the Northern Triangle was again the most violent region in the world. Again. The United Nations had already given it this label a year earlier, when the homicide rate, which serves as an indicator of violence levels, rose above 50 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants.

In just 2013, there were 15,328 homicides in the Northern Triangle. When the perspective is widened to include the years 2011 through 2013, the figures paint a picture of a Central American cemetery: 48,947 tombs in those three years. Due to the multiplicity of homicides, the Northern Triangle has stopped naming its victims, and now just counts and accumulates them.

Each country, to a greater or lesser extent, has contributed to this quota. In Guatemala, for example, there were 18,450 homicides between 2011 and 2013. The Public Ministry's (MP) secretary of criminal policy, Alejandro Rodriguez, provided an example of how Guatemalans have trivialized the homicides and the violence. According to Rodriguez, since 2009, when Guatemala had a murder rate of 46 per 100,000 residents, the Guatemalan newspaper Nuestro Diario (Our Daily) has been called by the nickname "Muerto Diario" (Daily Deaths).

"They changed the name to Muerto Diario because only photos of dead people appeared," Rodriguez said on February 11, 2014 from his office in Guatemala City. He then paused, reddened, and laughed sharply.

***

In the following days, it bothered me to see other people happy. The people were not at fault, but I was bitter and deeply resentful. I was protesting to God. I said: "God, why? I put you in charge of them every night: 'God, I entrust you with my sons, you see them, I do not.'" I spent about three months not wanting to know anything about God. I kept asking myself: why at that age, why like that? It hurt me so much to think about what my little boy might have felt, what pain. As a mother, one says, "Shit! My son has fallen!" and lifts him up, and even if it's just saliva, you give it to them. And I wasn't with him at that moment.

(Olinda Escobar, mother of Cristofer Lopez Escobar, murdered on January 22, 2011 in the El Calvario Bethesda church, located in the municipality of San Miguel Petapa, Guatemala. The 20-year-old Cristofer was murdered while participating in a wake for one of his best friends.)

***

In total, 9,464 people were murdered in El Salvador between 2011 and 2013, a time period that encompasses the gang truce initiated in March 2012, the pact that President Mauricio Funes has refused to recognize as his own strategy. The truce, while considerably decreasing the number of homicides in El Salvador, has not managed to halt the violence. What's more, murders have again begun to rise, despite the agreement, since July 2013. This fact led Rigoberto Pleites, the director of the Salvadoran National Civil Police (PNC), to announce on March 3 this year that the "truce technically no longer exists."

Over those same three years, the Salvadoran courts handed out 490 sentences for homicide cases, according to figures provided by the Attorney General's Office -- 490 sentences. This is equal to slightly over five percent of homicides committed in those same years. A quick calculation leaves little room for optimism: the impunity rate in El Salvador stands at over 94 percent.

***

That night he sent me a message. At about 8:20pm, he wrote saying I should tell mom and dad that he was going to come home late. That they shouldn't worry, everything was okay. At around 9pm, I heard the shot. When we walked out, there was a terrible gathering. They were putting him in a car, but he didn't fit. So they took him out and put him in a pick-up truck; even now we don't know who it was that

brought us. My parents stayed behind, because when my mother arrived on the scene she was so shocked she could not move. A cousin and I got in the truck to take him to the hospital. He practically had a bullet here and his eyes were closing... but he was alive because... well, we are Christians, and I was begging God so much to give us the strength to resist. So, he was alive because he had me by the hand, he was holding it so tight. And we arrived that way to the hospital.

(Claudia, the sister of a young man murdered in La Libertad on February 11, 2011, who asked not to be identified. She saved the last message her brother sent to her phone for two years -- the same one that she mentions in this story. She finally lost it because her telephone broke.)

***

Next to the morgue in Honduras' capital city of Tegucigalpa, there is a funeral home. It is a branch of the Los Olivos funeral home, which has been operating for 40 years. That office has been in place for 14 years. The smell of decay enters in waves into this room where the varnish of the coffins shines. According to Marta Ordoñez, one of the people in charge, the majority of the services are for homicides. "The violent deaths are mainly caused by drug traffickers," she said. The work is never scarce here.

Etelinda Lopez, a pathology assistant with Honduras' forensics institute, said that of every 10 bodies brought to the morgue, between seven and eight are for violent deaths. And while she admitted that the state had a duty to the victims' families to provide them with a more dignified treatment (Honduras, like Guatemala and El Salvador, lacks a special victims unit), she said her work was affected by scarcities. Sometimes they do not even have gasoline for the vehicles to transport the cadavers. Forensic Medicine only has three offices where they perform autopsies in the entire country: Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula and La Ceiba.

"Not all of the [cadavers from] violent deaths are autopsied, because in some cases, we don't have a way to transport the bodies. We are a regional office that is responsible for the entire central, south and eastern regions of the country. And within these regions, there are some particularly violent areas, like Olancho, where there is a great resistance to having bodies transported to Forensic Medicine," said Lopez. For some cases, then, no autopsy occurs. If this does not happen, then there is no document establishing whether the death was due to homicide or not. And if this is not established, then the murder will certainly not be prosecuted. In Honduras, according to figures from the Supreme Court of Justice, for every 100 homicides, the perpetrators are sentenced in just three cases. That is to say: the impunity rate in the most violent country in the Northern Triangle is 97.44 percent.

In Honduras, 21,033 people have been murdered in the past three years, from 2011 through 2013. This represents an average of 19 people killed violently each day. A large number of these people are shot, according to statistics from the Violence Observatory of the University Institute of Democracy, Peace and Security (IUDPAS) at the National Autonomous University of Honduras. This, in practical terms, means a flood of images of people shot, dismembered and strangled on the Honduran television news channels, under titles such as "bloody spell." There are many scenes in the Bajo Aguan region, in San Pedro Sula and in Tegucigalpa with victims for whom no responsibility is established in most cases. There are, even, distinguished reporters in the Forensic Medicine morgue. If there is ever a day when there have not yet been any murders, one is certain to occur shortly.

"The problem is that when the state doesn't investigate or prosecute, they open up the opportunity for people to arm themselves first, to take justice into their own hands. When we don't demonstrate the reality and we are not transparent in telling it [how it is], this gives rise to people feeling that there is

impunity. But later, they [feel that they] need to take justice into their own hands," said Migdonia Ayestas, director of the Violence Observatory.

***

The person who killed my son already had been watching him, and shot him from behind. A neighbor, who lived about four houses down from mine, had sent him to buy cell phone minutes. When he returned, this person shot him from behind. The child wanted to defend himself because he had already been shot in the hand. If they had hit him from the front, maybe they would have injured him, but would not have killed him. But they shot him in the head. They shot him with so much hate... he had gunshots in his back and in his head. It is hard. Believe me, it is hard. I try to move forward, because I have my other son, but my life has been definitively changed. Before, I opened the store from Monday to Sunday and I only went to sleep in the house on weekends. My mom took care of them for me from Monday to Friday, but ever since that happened to my son, I realized it is not worth it and I no longer work Saturday or Sunday.

(Edith, who chose to use this name for the story, the mother of a 15-year-old youth murdered in Soyapango on December 19, 2010. Edith's son was in ninth grade.)

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"Chilling police corruption," read the cover page of the Honduran newspaper El Heraldo on February 5, 2014. This special report referred to 202 police investigated for the crimes of corruption, hired killings and drug theft. It also mentioned that some police, instead of being removed from the force and prosecuted, had been retired "with honors" from the National Police. The stamp of drug trafficking is pervasive in the imagery of Honduran violence, just as the gangs are in El Salvador.

Honduras' Attorney General Oscar Chinchilla had little problem admitting this. "We have to in some way strengthen the situation of our country in regard to the control and entry of drugs. Not all homicides are caused by drug trafficking, but a significant portion of the violence is generated by this problem," said the official.

In a February 7 interview that took place in his Tegucigalpa office, Attorney General Chinchilla did not provide a percentage for the effectiveness of investigations, nor did he give the number of prosecutors assigned to the Life Unit, created in 2013 specifically for cases of violent deaths. He also failed to provide the case load number for each prosecutor. Honduras (this he did confirm) has 619 prosecutors spread throughout all of the country's units. If all of these prosecutors were dedicated only to investigating homicides, in order to resolve the 21,033 cases between 2011 and 2013, each one would have to have a case load of 33.

***

When my husband stopped in the entryway, the life went out of me. I looked at him crying. Oh, God, I lost him then! My son, who didn't buy anything if I didn't approve. When my son lived here, my husband said: "The two sweethearts are chatting," because he told me everything. He was a son... And he never left his church. And his brothers either... I still question it, and ask myself, "Why?" The thing is, here there is no justice. There is no justice.

(Yolanda Avila, 62-years-old, mother of Erick Alexander Martinez Avila, murdered on May 7, 2012 in Tegucigalpa, at the age of 33. The first time Yolanda saw her husband cry was when they killed his son. They had been married for 36 years.)

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The Violence Observatory where Migdonia Ayestas works is part of the National Autonomous University of Honduras. The university president is Julieta Castellanos. Her son, Rafael, was murdered in Tegucigalpa in 2011.

Ayestas, the director of the Observatory at IUDPAS in Honduras, said that the Security Ministry has denied them, since July 2011, some homicide statistics to which only the police have access. The observatory uses the media's bloody accounts to make up for the official underreporting, but there is a problem:

"If we don't register a homicide, if a family member or my family member didn't get registered, obviously [the murder] doesn't exist. They are still alive. Or disappeared. But that person died. There is evidence that they were buried, that they have a name, a last name, a sex, a context in which it occurred," said the IUDPAS director.

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Yes, they shot me in the back too. It was December 7, 2011. We were going about our normal affairs as a couple. It was a good day, because I had been out of work. I was doing consultancy work at the time. With consultancy, sometimes there is work, and sometimes there isn't. For him it was a good day, because it was the day for him to collect the modest, very modest, salary that he received as an adviser. And I had just gotten a new consultancy job. What I mean to say is, it was a day filled with happiness for us. And we were going down the street and they shot at us en route. They shot at him. I didn't notice, because they shot me too. We crashed into a post. But my husband was already half dead. I crashed because I saw that he was mortally wounded. While I was looking at him, immediately, as if by magic, the police appeared. The police were watching over things. Or, I mean, everything was very well guarded. I think it was a crime that was totally... It wasn't the police that killed him, but the police made sure the murder turned out well.

(Hilda Calderas, 56 years old, wife of Alfredo Landaverde, an expert in anti-drug matters and former security adviser, murdered on December 7, 2011 in Tegucigalpa, at the age of 71. Before beginning the interview, she paused in silence for a moment, while the pianist from the Honduras Maya Hotel played the song "Hello Dolly," which he always used to play when they entered that hotel. This is where they were married on February 5, 1981, exactly 33 years before this interview.)

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El Salvador has a National Victims' Attention Office, which was created in 2011. This office, which is attached to the Security and Justice Ministry, has 20 employees and an annual budget of $172,000. Those 20 people attended 143 people last year, mainly victims of domestic violence, human trafficking or threats. Not one single family member of a homicide victim.

"This is the first time that the security framework has included the issue of responding to all of the trauma that El Salvador's victims suffer, because this had always been left to the side. The office is

starting with the stage of providing psychological, legal and social attention to the victims. It will need a lot more money to be able to help homicide victims," said the Victims' Attention director, Fatima Ortiz.

The unit calculated how much money it costs the country to provide attention to each victim. Attending a rape or sexual assault victim, for example, entails a cost of $5,000, which includes: legal and psychological counseling, supplies, accommodations and transport for six months. They have estimated that attention to victims of violence averages around $3,500. They would need at least $8.7 million to attend at least one family member (mother, son, wife, husband) of all 2,499 victims of homicide in 2013.

"One of our objectives is to 'restore the social fabric,' because we know that if not, the sickness will continue, but also when we began they gave us an incredibly broad mandate: homicides, all crimes. We know we will have to narrow it down. I think it will be part of the new government that ultimately makes that type of decision," said Ortiz.

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InSight Crime. 23 April 2014. <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/the-northern-triangle-the-countries-that-dont-cry-for-their-dead>.

Killers on a Shoestring: Inside the Gangs of El Salvador[33]

By Oscar Martinez, Efren Lemus, Carlos Martinez and Deborah Sontag.

SAN SALVADOR — On a sultry evening in late July, the Salvadoran authorities executed their very first assault on what they called the financial cupola of Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13, the largest of the ruthless gangs that have made El Salvador the murder capital of the world.

Until that point, the National Civil Police had followed an almost choreographed routine, again and again, as they sought to cripple the gangs economically. In the dead of night, often accompanied by television cameras, officers would batter down the doors of ramshackle houses in marginalized communities and then arrest and put on display a cluster of tattooed and half-naked men.

Between 2012 and 2015, the total amount confiscated in these showy anti-extortion raids was $34,664.75 — an absurdly tiny sum considering that the United States has designated MS-13 as a global criminal organization on a par with the Zetas of Mexico, or the Yakuza of Japan.

On July 27, however, in a mission baptized Operation Check, the authorities shifted gears. They deployed 1,127 police officers to raid scores of supposed gang fronts, including car dealerships and bars, motels and brothels.

With great fanfare, they presented to the news media rows and rows of impounded buses and cars, along with 77 suspects identified as the financial operatives of MS-13 and their collaborators. Among them were the supposed C.E.O. of the street gang, Marvin Ramos Quintanilla, and two other leaders portrayed as controlling millions and possessing luxuries unimaginable to the destitute gang members beneath them.

But the presentation was something of an exaggeration, as are many official characterizations of the gangs whose criminal sophistication and global reach tend to be overstated by authorities frustrated that they cannot vanquish them. For instance, that supposed chief executive officer hardly lived like a kingpin; he leased a squat concrete house with a corrugated roof in a neighborhood where rents rarely reach $400. He owned an old Honda Civic and a Nissan van.

In collaboration with The New York Times, El Faro, a digital newspaper based in San Salvador, sought to pierce the secrecy surrounding the finances of the gangs that terrorize El Salvador, which is experiencing a level of deadly violence unparalleled outside war zones: 103 homicides per 100,000 residents last year, compared with five in the United States.

With an estimated 60,000 members in a country of 6.5 million people, the gangs hold power disproportionate to their numbers. They maintain a menacing presence in 247 of 262 municipalities. They extort about 70 percent of businesses. They dislodge entire communities from their homes, and help propel thousands of Salvadorans to undertake dangerous journeys to the United States. Their violence costs El Salvador $4 billion a year, according to a study by the country's Central Reserve Bank.

And yet, the reporting determined, MS-13 and its rival street gangs in El Salvador are not sophisticated transnational criminal enterprises. They do not begin to belong in the same financial league with the billion-dollar Mexican, Japanese and Russian syndicates with which they are grouped. If they are mafias, they are mafias of the poor. El Salvador has been brought to its knees by an army of flies.

By the Numbers: Gangs of El Salvador

MS-13's annual revenue appears to be about $31.2 million. That estimate is based on information in the 1,355-page file of Operation Check, to which El Faro got exclusive access. Wiretapped conversations reveal that the gang's national leadership ordered its 49 "programs," or chapters, to turn over all the money earned in a single, typical week, which happened to be in April. It collected $600,852.

It sounds like a lot of money. But if divided equitably among the estimated 40,000 members of MS-13, each gang member would earn $15 a week and about $65 a month. That is half the minimum wage of an agricultural day laborer.

But the gangs — MS-13 and its main rival, the 18th Street gang — do not distribute their proceeds equitably. They use them to pay for lawyers and funeral services, for weapons and munitions, and for the support of those serving long prison terms and their families. Theirs is a criminal subsistence economy; even many of their leaders are barely solvent.

"That the authorities call them 'businessmen' — either their intelligence is invalid or it's pretty crude," said Rolando Monroy, a former Salvadoran prosecutor who oversaw money-laundering investigations until 2013. "The gangs are like an anthill. They are all after the same thing: something to eat."

Unlike other groups considered global organized crime syndicates, the Salvadoran gangs do not survive on the international trafficking of cocaine, arms and humans. While they dabble in small-time drug dealing, gun sales and prostitution, they engage primarily in a single crime committed over and over within Salvadoran territory: extortion.

Inside El Salvador, they hold the reins of power largely because of a chilling demand repeated — or implied — daily across the country: Pay or die.

"Look, the thing is we're not joking around," said one threat in childlike handwriting delivered to a bus owner recently. "Get something together. If not, we are going to burn one of your new minibuses." It was signed by the 18th Street gang: "18 sends its best."

A Message Written in Lead

At 4 p.m. on a summer day in 2015, two young gang members intercepted a businessman as he was returning home from work. "I have kids. Calm down, please," he managed to say before the youths grabbed him, threw him to the ground and shot him: in a shoulder, in the stomach, and twice in the face.

They were delivering a message written in lead.

"It was because of the extortion, not for any other reason," the man's son said.

The man owned a bus. His son, who also owned a bus, said his father, tired of being extorted, had finally stopped making his $1 daily payment to the gang three weeks before his death. It murdered him because of $21.

Among Salvadoran businesses, transportation companies, whose vehicles crisscross gang territory, have proved especially vulnerable to extortion. Over the last five years, it has been more dangerous to drive a bus than to fight gang crime: The gangs have killed 692 transportation workers — and 93 police officers. (This is according to an analysis of internal government data that, like most data in this article, is not considered public information but was obtained by El Faro.)

Genaro Ramírez, the owner of a large bus company and a former member of Congress, calculates that he has handed over $500,000 in gang extortion payments over the last 19 years. “It’s a matter of survival,’’ he said. “When they tell you they are going to kill you, you don’t have a choice.”

Between 2013 and 2015, the National Police received 7,506 reports of extortion, which the authorities see as just a small fraction of the total. In the same period, some 424 gang members were convicted of this crime, most of them low-level people who made the pickups and were caught with the cash.

The payment of extortion by bus companies is so commonplace that some have employees whose principal role is to negotiate with the gangs, which are continually raising their rates and demanding extras like Christmas bonuses or buses to take them to the beach or to the funerals of associates.

The only transportation company chief who has refused to be extorted — and has made his refusal public — is Catalino Miranda. Mr. Miranda owns a fleet of several hundred buses.

Since 2004, the gangs have killed 26 of his employees. But he refuses to reconsider his position.

“As I told one of them,” he said, referring to a gang representative, “go ahead and kill them. This cannot continue for a lifetime.”

Mr. Miranda spoke in his office, with a 9-millimeter pistol lying atop a mess of papers on his desk, and rifles and flak jackets piled in a corner. He spends $30,000 a month on security, he said. He has cameras posted in all his buses and stations, and eight security guards, armed with assault weapons, who patrol the gang zones his buses move through.

When his employees are killed, he hires private detectives to investigate, because “the state does not have the capacity to protect witnesses.”

“They use you,” Mr. Miranda continued, “and they abandon you.”

Resisting the gangs is not an option for small-business owners, however. Many of them live in gang-controlled neighborhoods themselves and cannot escape the pressure to pay. That was the situation for the bus owner killed in the summer of 2015.

The bus owner’s son, who is 38, spoke of his father’s death in an open-air restaurant beside the Pan-American Highway. The son carried a pistol — he always has one by his side, even when he sleeps, he said — and sat facing the entrance, with his back to a ravine, so he could track comings and goings.

Like most businessmen who recounted their experiences with shakedowns, the man spoke on the condition of anonymity. His father was one of 154 transportation workers who lost their lives to gang-run extortion rings in 2015. To talk is to risk becoming another statistic.

It all started one afternoon in 2004, he recounted, when a couple of teenage gangsters boarded a bus on their route. The youths demanded the driver's license and registration, reviewed the documents and then handed the driver a disposable phone before jumping off.

After the shaken driver returned to the terminal, the phone rang. The voice on the other end laid out the terms of their new relationship: $10 a week not just for the one bus but for each of the 10 buses on the route.

The man, his father and the other bus owners held an emergency meeting to discuss whether to report the demand to the police.

Many victims do not bother. Extortion investigations require them to make payments to the gangs while the police watch and collect evidence. But the gangs almost always find out, and the victim is threatened or killed before the investigation is completed.

Even so, the men decided to call the police. Soon, two detectives stationed themselves inside their terminal and, posing as bus owners, negotiated a rate with the gang: $1 a day per bus.

Over the next three years, the police arrested three gang leaders, including one who lived next door to the man's father. The investigation expanded to other crimes and dragged on. The bus owners kept paying extortion.

The situation deteriorated. Between 2004 and 2012, MS-13 killed five bus drivers on their routes and one of the police investigators assigned to their case. In 2012, the gang tried to kill the man himself, surrounding his house, he said at the restaurant.

After his father's murder, the gang increased its extortion on the route — to $1.50 a day.

The man sold his bus.

Little Devil of Hollywood

When the Salvadoran authorities draw a flow chart of MS-13's organizational structure, they always put a mug shot of El Diablito de Hollywood, the Little Devil of Hollywood, at the very top.

Hierarchically, El Diablito — Borromeo Henríquez Solórzano, 38 — is as far above "homeboy" as one can get. If gang leaders are enriching themselves at the expense of the rank and file, Mr. Henríquez should be the wealthiest capo di tutti. And yet.

In the late 1970s or early 1980s, Mr. Henríquez and his family fled the Salvadoran civil war along with thousands of their compatriots who resettled in Los Angeles neighborhoods dominated by Mexican gangs. Mara Salvatrucha was born there and then.

At the end of the 1990s, as part of an anti-gang offensive and a crackdown on "criminal aliens," the United States shipped planeloads of gang members made in the United States back to El Salvador and other Central American countries. El Diablito returned to his homeland in one of those waves of deportation.

He was just a teenager, but in that era coming from Los Angeles conferred status in the branch of Mara Salvatrucha that had sprouted in El Salvador. (Loosely affiliated but largely autonomous branches now exist in other Central American countries and in pockets of the United States outside California.) It was like arriving with a seal of "original product," and El Diablito, clever and garrulous, quickly parlayed that into a position of power.

Prison, where he was sent in 1998 after getting a 30-year sentence for homicide, only solidified his stature.

Soon after he was first locked up, Mr. Henríquez summoned the leader of one of Mara Salvatrucha's most powerful cells to visit him in prison, the leader related in an interview. At that time, the gang had no reliable revenue stream, though members sold drugs on street corners, committed petty robberies and demanded small handouts from bus drivers. But Mr. Henríquez had a moneymaking plan, he told the leader.

El Diablito said he wanted to institutionalize extortion nationwide, the leader related. He was insistent that the leader accede to the plan, or quit: MS-13 would tolerate no dissidents. The leader communicated the new directive to his troops. A few years later, the leader quit and emigrated to Washington, D.C., where he now owns a small business in a Salvadoran neighborhood.

Like El Diablito, most of the national gang leaders operate from behind bars. Through ready access to cellphones and private visits with lawyers, they retain tight control of their organizations — the money the gangs earn and the havoc they wreak.

This became chillingly apparent in 2012 when the government was negotiating a truce with the gangs and Mr. Henríquez was emerging into the public eye as a spokesman for MS-13. The leaders sent out an order from behind bars: Stop killing. And from one day to the next, homicides dropped 60 percent to a level that, with small variations, was maintained until the government's negotiations with the gangs, which were highly unpopular, ended two years later.

During the truce, a team from El Faro was allowed to interview gang leaders in the Ciudad Barrios jail, which was dominated by MS-13. For over a decade, the gangs have been separated by institution to reduce internecine warfare; this has had the unintended effect of strengthening them by uniting rather than dispersing their leadership.

Dressed gang-fashionably in baggy, black athletic attire, Mr. Henríquez insisted that he survived on money sent by relatives in the United States and by a brother who sold used cars in El Salvador.

"Do you realize it is difficult to believe that one of the most visible leaders of MS-13 does not derive a penny of his income from illicit activities?" a reporter from El Faro said.

Mr. Henríquez paused, then responded: "My money does not come from extortion." But he was pressed: What about illicit activities more generally? El Diablito answered with a derisive smile: "It doesn't come from extortion." And all the other gang leaders laughed, cryptically.

That year — 2012 — the United States Treasury Department designated MS-13 as a transnational criminal organization, alongside four criminal syndicates: the Zetas, the Yakuza, the Russian Brothers' Circle and the Italian Camorra. It was the first street gang that had ever received that designation.

The next year, the Treasury put personal sanctions on Mr. Henríquez, which had the effect of forbidding Americans to do business with him and authorizing federal investigators to freeze his financial assets.

No evidence has surfaced that any of Mr. Henríquez's properties or assets in the United States were frozen.

Sanctions were also placed on El Diablito's wife, Jenny Judith Corado. The Salvadoran government arrested her in 2013 and accused her of belonging to a Mara Salvatrucha extortion ring. It could not prove her connection to the ring, however; she was freed and ordered to turn over the money that a judge considered the provenance of extortion: $50.

Now, Ms. Corado does not appear to be enjoying a life of luxury or even comfort. With her children beside her, she spends her days hawking used clothing and lingerie from a stall constructed of tin cans in the busy public marketplace of San Salvador.

In the news conference announcing Operation Check (as in the chess move), the authorities spoke of gang leaders' "luxuries," their "investments" and their "various millions of dollars."

"These leaders are living a different life than the gang members beneath them," Douglas Meléndez, the attorney general, said. "The gang members beneath them should know."

It was a communiqué directed at the street, at those rank-and-file gangsters who put their lives on the line for little tangible reward: While their leaders may have been preaching a doctrine of brotherhood, they were secretly enriching themselves at the expense of their brothers, their soldiers, their homeboys.

The luxuries, however, consisted of 22 imported but used cars, each valued at about $8,000. The confiscated cash amounted to $34,500. And the investments numbered three: a taqueria and bar in Soyapango, a working-class community in the San Salvador metropolitan area; a vegetable stand in a rural marketplace; and a highway restaurant that is decorated with a deer's head, offers karaoke and has three waiters who primarily serve buckets of beer bottles.

The gangs' credo of fraternity and equality does not allow for any personal gain at the expense of the brotherhood, and they at least theoretically enforce it brutally. "He who makes himself rich at the expense of the street is going to die," a leader of the 18th Street gang said in an interview.

So even a vegetable stand is a risky venture, and the wiretapped conversations in the Operation Check file reveal that some gang leaders went so far as to pay extortion fees to their own gangs on their private businesses in order to hide their involvement with them.

Howard Cotto, the general director of the National Police, estimated in an interview that 50 to 70 gang leaders, including Mr. Henríquez, have accumulated some money or business interests. But only enough, he said, to permit their families to escape "conditions of poverty, overcrowding, unhealthy conditions and sheet metal" and have a chance at a future.

"I cannot say the leaders are living in places of luxury," he acknowledged.

Most of the leaders, in fact, are expected to spend the rest of their lives in prison, either in solitary confinement or in malodorous cells shared with dozens of others.

'Keep Two Bucks'

One day in 2014, an imprisoned leader of the 18th Street gang who goes by the alias Chiki was issuing instructions to a low-level gang member identified as Shaggy.

Speaking by phone from the Izalco penitentiary, Chiki, who was serving time for extortion, ordered Shaggy to make a pickup of an extortion payment. It was $100 from an operation in Colonia Rubio in the department of La Unión. And, though Shaggy risked up to 20 years in prison if caught, there was something special in it for him, Chiki said.

"Keep two bucks so you can get yourself something to eat," Chiki said, in what turned out to be a wiretapped conversation. He added: "And tell El Demente," the Demented One, "to give you some custards for your kid."

Chiki, whose real name is José Luis Guzmán, was the third in command of the 18th Street gang's Southerners faction in eastern El Salvador. Another prison wiretap recording showed an even higher-level 18th Street leader, Carlos Ernesto Mojica, getting involved in negotiations with a chicken vendor who sought to lower her monthly extortion payment to $200 from $400.

The New York Times and El Faro

The New York Times collaborated with El Faro, an award-winning digital newspaper, to produce this investigation into the political economy of El Salvador's ruthless street gangs.

That these leaders were overseeing such small-bore operations typifies the pettiness of gang business. While officials publicly portray the gangs as international criminal syndicates and narco-gangs, law enforcement records and data tell a different story — as do some authorities when speaking privately or in one-on-one interviews.

In the four years before Operation Check, the biggest sum collected in a police anti-extortion raid was $6,377; some raids netted only $5.

"I have never had a case involving the quantity of money necessary to maintain organized crime," said Nora Montoya, a judge who has handled gang extortion cases for decades.

Similarly, Mr. Cotto, the police director, said the term "narco-gang" was "sensationalism" and could be misinterpreted as suggesting that Salvadoran street gangs were working directly with the Gulf Cartel or the Zetas in the transshipment of drugs from South America to the United States.

"This is not the case. It is definitely not the case," he said.

Although Salvadoran gangs sell drugs, they do it like street-corner dealers, not international operatives. From 2011 to 2015, the National Police seized 13.9 kilograms of cocaine from gangs; that was less than 1 percent of the total seized. Three-quarters of the gang members prosecuted on drug charges over the last few years were charged with possessing less than an ounce.

A veteran cocaine dealer in San Salvador said serious drug-trafficking organizations wanted nothing to do with the street gangs, which are considered unreliable and volatile.

“The wholesalers I work with would not sell to the gang guys,” he said. “They don’t trust them.”

Over a decade ago, the police confiscated an account ledger from José Luis Mendoza Figueroa, a founder of MS-13, that contained no evidence of any drug business. Instead it showed weekly receipts that averaged $14 from the 19 “cliques” — the smallest gang units — he controlled, and trivial outlays for bullets ($8), taxis ($25), Christmas dinners, liquor and “$50 for the homeboys in prison.”

A couple of years ago, federal agents seized a similar ledger from the treasurer of the Park View Locos clique of the MS-13 in Usulután in southeast El Salvador. A log of one day’s expenses showed $30 for a cellphone chip, $10 for “mujer chief” (the chief’s wife or woman), $35 for “another woman” and $10 for food, with $29 listed as the balance.

The notebook also contained the gang member’s grandiose musings: “The day I die I want to be remembered as a strong street-level soldier, a committed delinquent, and at the hour that the shots ring out, I want to be marked ‘present.’”

Grunts Seeking Respect

According to an internal code, only leaders can speak on behalf of the 18th Street gang. But in the rural department of La Paz, one of the most violent in El Salvador, a 15-year-old gang member clambered to his feet from an old mattress on the dirt floor of a mud-walled house to defy that rule. He had agreed to grant an interview on two conditions: that his identity be protected, and that breakfast be provided.

The boy, gangly and pimply, is a fledgling member of the 18th Street Revolutionaries, a faction of the 18th Street gang, and he works as an extremely small-time roadside extortionist. He collects $15 monthly from each of three food trucks that rumble through his district carrying chewing gum, Pepsi sodas and Bimbo bread. He then turns over the proceeds to the leader of his clique.

“All the loot goes to weapons,” the youth said; he himself was awarded a 9-millimeter pistol and many nights takes it out on “patrol.”

Like so many young recruits, the teenager is an obedient soldier who risks his life to protect his territory without earning a penny from his organization. It is a bargain for the gang leaders who manage the gang economy: tens of thousands of grunts who are not seeking personal profit, only respect and a sense of belonging.

One of 14 children, the boy never went to school and does not know how to read or write. He probably could have found work in the nearby sugar-cane fields, where, even if conditions were miserable, he would have earned $100 a month. But, feeling bullied and vulnerable at 13, he believed that gang membership would give him something less tangible but more valuable at that age.

“I was a kid: I was stupid,” he said about joining. “A bunch of crazy guys were messing with me because I was a kid, smacking me in the head, knocking me around. It made me think: I have had enough. Since I joined up, nobody screws with me.”

The department of La Paz, with all its sugar-cane production, is fairly lucrative for the gangs. The Federation of Associations of Sugar Cane Producers said in June that its members had paid $1.5 million in extortion fees over a recent five-month period.

But none of that trickles down to the rank and file. So in order to survive, the boy runs his own little racket on the side: “private extortion,” gang members call it. His particular clique forbids members to extort their neighbors. Instead, he collects and pockets “rent” from a few poor businesses on the periphery of his clique’s zone.

He said he netted $40 a month — “only enough for what I’m going to eat.” Despite his age, he is mostly left to fend for himself by a hapless mother with too many mouths to feed.

While the teenage gang member talked, three of his little siblings circled the breakfast — scrambled eggs, beans and plantains — that waited in cartons on the floor. He gave his younger brother permission to open a carton. The little boy, who had matted hair and a dirty face, let out a squeal of delight, and proceeded to attack the meal with his hands.

In two years of gang life, the teenager has already witnessed and participated in significant bloodshed. He said he had been involved in two “collective homicides.” In both cases, members of a rival gang had dared to breach the invisible border that separates MS-13 from 18th Street territory. One man was looking to buy some marijuana; the other to meet girls at a village festival. They were killed for their defiance.

In the spring, the 26-year-old leader of the teenager’s clique — whom he knew as Shadow — died in what the police described as a clash between the authorities and gang members. The boy was not present, but he had witnessed the deaths of three other clique members in February in another encounter described as a clash, he said.

The boy said none of his homeboys had been carrying weapons that winter day. Hiding in a trash pile, he watched as the police killed his friends, teenagers like him, and then, he said, placed guns around their bodies to make it look as if they had fallen in crossfire.

Two neighbors who are not gang members supported his version of events in interviews, and it is not far-fetched: El Salvador’s attorney general for human rights has 31 open cases against the police for alleged summary executions of 100 gang members over the last year and a half.

The day of that interview and in follow-up conversations throughout the summer, the boy made it clear he was scared of the police. Since February, officers had been stopping by his house from time to time, and he had spent much of his time hiding from them in the mountains.

“I need to save money to get out of here,” he said. “If they catch me, they’re not going to let me live.”

They did catch him, in October, and arrested him for extorting $40 — his private extortion — from a local merchant. He was jailed, and faces up to 15 years in prison.

Failure of the 'Iron Fist'

As violence peaked in 2015, reaching levels unseen since the aftermath of El Salvador's long and brutal civil war, entire communities abandoned their homes because of gang threats. It became such a recurring phenomenon that television channels interrupted their programming to broadcast live the precise moment in which dozens of families fled, on foot or in pickup trucks tightly packed with suitcases, mattresses, chickens and pigs.

Having failed to guarantee them daily security, the police nonetheless supervised their moves. Pedro González, the chief of the anti-gang unit, showed up at one mass exodus, from a condominium building in suburban San Salvador. After imploring residents in vain to stay put, he led them in an alternate response.

"It doesn't matter who here is Catholic or evangelical, let us raise a prayer," he said. "That is the most important, let us turn to God."

Over the years, the Salvadoran authorities have tried to quash the gangs with military might, to prosecute them into oblivion, to banish them with lengthy prison terms and, briefly, to negotiate with them. (The dialogue was corrupted by, among other things, the secret efforts of the two major political parties to court the gang leaders' electoral support at the same time.)

When the government ratcheted up its "iron fist" approach last year, three gangs, working in coordination, responded with a show of force. On a Sunday night, they distributed written and oral messages to bus owners and employees: "He who takes out a vehicle tomorrow is going to end up glued to his steering wheel." To underscore their seriousness, they killed a driver and burned three microbuses as a warning.

The next day, six drivers who had disobeyed their order were killed. The authorities sent soldiers and tanks into the streets, and deployed government vehicles to substitute for the buses, but the gangs succeeded in almost completely paralyzing San Salvador's transportation system for four days. Some 1.3 million Salvadorans were affected; many high schools and universities suspended classes and the economy suffered an $80 million loss, according to the Chamber of Commerce. It was a ruthless show of force.

This year, with Operation Check, the government conducted one of its most professional law enforcement efforts to date, and comments by senior officials suggested a new willingness to approach the gangs as a complex phenomenon with deep roots in the profound inequalities of a country where a third of the population lives in poverty.

Yet by hyping its findings, the government continued to misrepresent the gangs as sophisticated criminal organizations, ruthlessly driven by a thirst for financial gain. And though in Operation Check it acknowledged a distinction between the culpability of leaders and rank-and-file members, that distinction was lost on the street.

The authorities have continued to treat all gangsters as mortal enemies and have doubled down on their use of force. Some 424 gang members had died in confrontations with the police this year as of September.

“If the use of force is not the correct path in this moment, at this stage, at this juncture, then what is?’’ Óscar Ortiz, the country’s vice president, asked in late October.

The government cites as evidence a recent drop in murders: 4,431 by mid-October, compared with 5,363 by that point in 2015. But that is still the second highest toll since 1995.

In Operation Check, the government sought to sow dissent in gang ranks by portraying the leaders of MS-13 as self-interested profiteers. Afterward, a written message sent out from a Mara Salvatrucha-dominated prison demanded that “justice” be meted out to those revealed by Operation Check to have betrayed the gang, according to an American official in El Salvador who monitors the gangs.

As of yet, though, there do not seem to have been any revenge killings, internal purges or mass defections.

For a gang member tired of the gang life, at any rate, there is nowhere to go. Those who are not incarcerated are marked, quite literally with tattoos, for life. There are no rehabilitation centers where they can seek refuge, no programs to reintegrate them into society and no gang-prevention initiatives aimed at high-risk youths.

The only alternatives appear to be those that gang members themselves spray-paint on walls throughout the country: “Jail or the Cemetery.”

Martinez, Oscar et al. “Killers on a Shoestring: Inside the Gangs of El Salvador.” *The New York Times*. 20 November 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/21/world/americas/el-salvador-drugs-gang-ms-13.html?_r=0>.

How Sushi Went Global[34]

A 40-minute drive from Bath, Maine, down a winding two-lane highway, the last mile on a dirt road, a ramshackle wooden fish pier stands beside an empty parking lot. At 6:00 p.m. nothing much is happening. Three Bluefin tuna sit in a huge tub of ice on the loading dock.

Between 6:45 and 7:00, the parking lot fills up with cars and trucks with license plates from New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine. Twenty tuna buyers clamber out, half of them Japanese. The three Bluefin, ranging from 270 to 610 pounds, are winched out of the tub, and buyers crowd around them, extracting tiny core samples to examine their color, fingering the flesh to assess the fat content, sizing up the curve of the body.

After about 20 minutes of eyeing the goods, many of the buyers return to their trucks to call Japan by cellphone and get the morning prices from Tokyo's Tsukiji market – the fishing industry's answer to Wall Street – where the daily tuna auctions have just concluded. The buyers look over the tuna one last time and give written bids to the dock manager, who passes the top bid for each fish to the crew that landed it.

The auction bids are secret. Each bid is examined anxiously by a cluster of young men, some with a father or uncle looking on to give advice, others with a young woman and a couple of toddlers trying to see Daddy's fish. Fragments of concerned conversation float above the parking lot: "That's all?" "Couldn't we do better if we shipped it ourselves?" "Yeah, but my pickup needs a new transmission now!" After a few minutes, deals are closed and the fish are quickly loaded onto the backs of trucks in crates of crushed ice, known in the trade as "tuna coffins." As rapidly as they arrived, the flotilla of buyers sails out of the parking lot – three bound for New York's John F. Kennedy Airport, where their tuna will be airfreighted to Tokyo for sale the day after next.

Bluefin tuna may seem at first an unlikely case study in globalization. But as the world rearranges itself – around silicon chips, Starbucks coffee, or sashimi-grade tuna – new channels for global flows of capital and commodities link far-flung individuals and communities in unexpected new relationships. The tuna trade is a prime example of the globalization of a regional industry, with intense international competition and thorny environmental regulations, centuries-old practices combined with high technology; realignments of labor and capital in response to international regulation; shifting markets; and the diffusion of culinary culture as tastes for sushi and Bluefin tuna, spread worldwide.

Japan's emergence on the global economic scene in the 1970s as the business destination du jour, coupled with a rejection of hearty, red meat American fare in favor of healthy cuisine like rice, fish, and vegetables, and the appeal of the high-concept aesthetics of Japanese design all prepared the world for a sushi fad. And so, from an exotic, almost unpalatable ethnic specialty, then to haute cuisine of the most rarefied sort sushi has become not just cool, but popular. The painted window of a Cambridge, Massachusetts, coffee shop advertises "espresso, cappuccino, carrot juice, lasagna, and sushi." Mashed potatoes with wasabi (horseradish), sushi-ginger relish, and seared sashimi-grade tuna steaks show Japan's growing cultural influence on upscale nouvelle cuisine throughout North America, Europe, and Latin America. Sushi has even become the stuff of fashion, from "sushi" lip gloss, colored the deep red of raw tuna, to "wasabi" nail polish, a soft avocado green.

Japan remains the world's primary market for fresh tuna for sushi and sashimi; demand in other countries is a product of Japanese influence and the creation of new markets by domestic producers looking to expand their reach. Perhaps not surprisingly, sushi's global popularity as an emblem of a sophisticated, cosmopolitan consumer class more or less coincided with a profound transformation in the international role of the Japanese fishing industry. From the 1970s onward, the expansion of 200-mile fishing limits around the world excluded foreign fleets from the prime fishing grounds of many

coastal nations. And international environmental campaigns forced many countries, Japan among them, to scale back their distant water fleets. With their fishing operations curtailed and their yen for sushi still growing, Japanese had to turn to foreign suppliers.

Jumbo jets brought New England's Bluefin tuna into easy reach of Tokyo, just as Japan's consumer economy – a byproduct of the now disparaged "bubble" years – went into hyper drive. The sushi business boomed. During the 1980s, total Japanese imports of fresh Bluefin tuna worldwide increased from 957 metric tons (531 from the United States) in 1984 to 5,235 metric tons (857 from the United States) in 1993. The average wholesale price peaked in 1990 to 4,900 yen (US$34) per kilogram, bones and all, which trimmed out to approximately US$33 wholesale per edible pound.

Not surprisingly, Japanese demand for prime Bluefin tuna – which yields a firm red meat, lightly marbled with veins of fat, highly prized (and priced) in Japanese cuisine – created a gold-rush mentality on fishing grounds across the globe wherever Bluefin tuna could be found. But in the early 1990s, as the US Bluefin industry was taking off, the Japanese economy went into a stall, then a slump, then a dive. US producers suffered as their high-end export market collapsed. Fortunately for them, the North American sushi craze took up the slack. US businesses may have written off Japan, but Americans' taste for sushi stuck. An industry founded exclusively on Japanese demand survived because of Americans' newly trained palates and a booming US economy…

In New England waters, most Bluefin are taken one fish at a time, by rod and reel, by hand line, or by harpoon – techniques of a small-scale fisher, not a factory fleet. On the European side of the Atlantic, the industry operates under entirely different conditions. Rather than rod and reel or harpooning, the typical gear is industrial – the purse seiner (a fishing vessel closing a large net around a school of fish) or the long line (which catches fish on baited hooks strung along lines played out for many miles behind a swift vessel). The techniques may differ from boat to boat and from country to country, but these fishers are all angling for a share of the same Tsukiji yen – and in many cases, some biologists argue, a share of the same tuna stock. Fishing communities often think of themselves as close-knit and proudly parochial; but the sudden globalization of this industry has brought fishers into contact – and often into conflict – with customers, government, regulators, and environmentalists around the world.

Two miles off the beach in Barbate, Spain, a huge maze of nets snakes several miles out into Spanish waters near the Strait of Gibraltar. A high-speed, Japanese-made workboat heads out to the nets. On board are five Spanish hands, a Japanese supervisor, 2,500 kilograms of frozen herring and mackerel imported from Norway and Holland, and two American researchers. The boat is making one of its twice-daily trips to Spanish nets, which contain captured Mediterranean tuna being raised under Japanese supervision for harvest and export to Tsukiji.

Behind the guard boats that stand watch over the nets 24 hours a day, the headlands of Morocco are a hazy purple in the distance. Just off Barbate's white cliffs to the northwest, the light at the Cape of Trafalgar blinks on and off. For 20 minutes, the men toss herring and mackerel over the gunwales of the workboat while tuna the size (and speed) of Harley-Davidsons dash under the boat, barely visible until, with a flash of silver and blue, they wheel around the snatch a drifting morsel.

The nets, lines, and buoys are part of an almadraba, a huge fish trap used in Spain as well as Sicily, Tunisia, and Morocco. The almadraba consists of miles of nets anchored to the channel floor suspended from thousands of buoys, all laid out to cut across the migration routes of Bluefin tuna leaving the strait. This almadraba remains in place for about six weeks in June and July to intercept tuna leaving the Mediterranean after their spawning season is over. Those tuna that lose themselves in the maze end up in a huge pen, roughly the size of a football field. By the end of the tuna run through the strait, about 200 Bluefin are in the pen.

Two hundred fish may not sound like a lot, but if the fish survive the next six months, if the fish hit their target weights, if the fish hit the market at the target price, these 200 bluefin may be worth $1.6 million dollars. In November and December, after the Bluefin season in New England and Canada is

well over, the tuna are harvested and shipped by air to Tokyo in time for the end-of-the-year holiday spike in seafood consumption.

Inside the Strait of Gibraltar, off the coast of Cartagena, another series of tuna farms operates under entirely different auspices, utilizing neither local skills nor traditional technology. The Cartagena farms rely on French purse seiners to tow captured tuna to their pens, where joint ventures between Japanese trading firms and large-scale Spanish fishing companies have set up farms using the latest in Japanese fishing technology. The waters and the workers are Spanish, but almost everything else is part of a global flow of techniques and capital: financing from major Japanese trading companies; Japanese vessels to tend the nets; aquacultural techniques developed in Australia; vitamin supplements from European pharmaceutical giants packed into frozen herring from Holland to be heaved over the gunwales for the tuna; plus computer models of feeding schedules, weight gains, and target market prices developed by Japanese technicians and fishery scientists.

These "Spanish" farms compete with operations throughout the Mediterranean that rely on similar high-tech, high-capital approaches to the fish business. In the Adriatic Sea, for example, Croatia is emerging as a formidable tuna producer. In Croatia's case, the technology and the capital were transplanted by émigré Croatians who returned to the country from Australia after Croatia achieved independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. Australia, for its part, has developed a major aquacultural industry for southern Bluefin tuna, a species closely related to the Atlantic Bluefin of the North Atlantic and Mediterranean and almost equally desired in Japanese markets.

Globalization doesn't necessarily homogenize cultural differences nor erase the salience of cultural labels. Quite the contrary, it grows the franchise. In the global economy of consumption, the brand equity of sushi as Japanese cultural property adds to the cachet of both the country and the cuisine. A Texan Chinese-American restaurateur told me, for example, that he had converted his chain of restaurants from Chinese to Japanese cuisine because the prestige factor of the latter meant he could charge a premium; his clients couldn't distinguish between Chinese and Japanese employees (and often failed to notice that some of the chefs behind his sushi bars were Latinos).

The brand equity is sustained by complicated flows of labor and ethnic biases. Outside of Japan, having Japanese hands (or a reasonable facsimile) is sufficient warrant for sushi competence. Guidebooks for the current generation of Japanese global wandervogel sometimes advise young Japanese looking for a job in a distant city to work as a sushi chef; US consular offices in Japan grant more than 1,000 visas a year to sushi chefs, tuna buyers, and other workers in the global sushi business. A trade school in Tokyo, operating under the name Sushi Daigaku (Sushi University), offers short courses in sushi preparation so "students" can impress prospective employers with an imposing certificate. Even without papers, however, sushi remains firmly linked in the minds of Japanese and foreigners alike with Japanese cultural identity. Throughout the world, sushi restaurants operated by Koreans, Chinese, or Vietnamese maintain Japanese identities. In sushi bars from Boston to Valencia, a customer's simple greeting in Japanese can throw chefs into a panic (or drive them to the far end of the counter).

On the docks, too, Japanese cultural control of sushi remains unquestioned. Japanese buyers and "tuna techs" sent from Tsukiji to work seasonally on the docks of New England laboriously instruct foreign fishers on the proper techniques for catching, handling, and packing tuna for export. A Bluefin tuna must approximate the appropriate kata, or "ideal form," of color, texture, fat content, body shape, ad so forth, all prescribed by Japanese specifications. Processing requires proper attention as well. Special paper is sent from Japan for wrapping the fish before burying them in crushed ice. Despite high shipping costs and the fact that 50 percent of the gross weight of a tuna is unusable, tuna is sent to Japan whole, not sliced into salable portions. Spoilage is one reason for this, but form is another. Everyone in the trade agrees that Japanese workers are much more skilled in cutting and trimming tuna than Americans, and no one would want to risk sending botched cuts to Japan.

Not to impugn the quality of the fish sold in the United States, but on the New England docks, the first determination of tuna buyers is whether they are looking at a "domestic" fish or an "export" fish. On that judgement hangs several dollars a pound for the fisher, and the supply of sashimi-grade tuna for fishmongers, sushi bars, and seafood restaurants up and down the Eastern seaboard. Some of the best tuna from New England may make it to New York or Los Angeles, but by way of Tokyo – validated as top quality (and top price) by the decision to ship it to Japan by air for sale at Tsukiji, where it may be purchased by one of the handful of Tsukiji sushi exporters who supply premier expatriate sushi chefs in the world's leading cities.

Such mystification of a distant market's motivations for desiring a local commodity is not unique. For decades, anthropologists have written of "cargo cults" and "commodity fetishism" from New Guinea to Bolivia. But the ability of fishers today to visualize Japanese culture and the place of tuna within its demanding culinary tradition is constantly shaped and reshaped by the flow of cultural images that now travel around the globe in all directions simultaneously, bumping into each other in airports, fishing ports, bistros, bodegas, and markets everywhere. In the newly rewired circuitry of global cultural and economic affairs, Japan is the core, and the Atlantic seaboard, the Adriatic, and the Australian coast are all distant peripheries. Topsy-turvy as Gilbert and Sullivan never imagined it.

Japan is plugged into the popular North American imagination as the sometimes inscrutable superpower, precise and delicate in its culinary tastes, feudal in its cultural symbolism, and insatiable in its appetites. Were Japan not a prominent player in so much o the daily life of North Americans, the fishers outside of Bath or in Seabrook would have less to think about in constructing their Japan. As it is, they struggle with unfamiliar exchange rates for cultural capital that compounds in a foreign currency.

The Global Financial Crisis and its Effects[34]

Malcolm Edey

A Brief Chronology

As is now well known, the immediate background to the crisis was the emergence of problems in the US market for sub-prime housing loans in the first half of 2007. Subprime loans, in US terminology, are loans that do not meet standard criteria for good credit quality, such as a sound credit history on the part of the borrower, good income documentation and/or a conservative loan-to-valuation ratio. Sub-prime lending became very significant in the United States from around the middle part of this decade; by 2006, these loans were around one-fifth of new housing lending and an estimated 15 per cent of the stock of housing loans outstanding in the United States.

An important feature of this period was the securitization of sub-prime and other loans by their original lenders and their subsequent sale to other investors. This occurred partly through conventional mortgage-backed securities but also, increasingly, through more complex products such as collateralized debt obligations (or CDOs), which came to play an important part in the spreading of the crisis CDOs work by layering the claims in a pool of mortgages into tranches, with the most senior tranches provided the most protection against potential losses. That structure enabled some of these securities to gain high credit ratings even when the average quality of the underlying loan was poor. In combination with their relatively high yields, these features made them attractive to investors. What was not well-understood, however, was that the layering structure could result in substantial losses, even to the senior tranches, in the event of a generalized downturn in the US housing market, which is what subsequently occurred.

When these problems first became apparent, in the first half of 2007, the effects seemed to be confined largely to the US financial sector. The first significant impacts on global markets began in August 2007. It was at that same time that the major French bank BNP-Paribas announced the suspension of three of its funds that were investing in US mortgage securities. That announcement drew attention to the fact that a number of European banks, or off-balance sheet vehicles associated with them, had invested heavily in these securities and could therefore be exposed to significant losses. Further, uncertainty about the size and location of these exposures, along with the general opaqueness of many of these securities, meant that financial institutions in general suffered a serious loss of investor confidence. The result was that risk spreads in global credit markets widened markedly, and banks found it more difficult, and more expensive, to obtain funding through financial markets. These developments placed already strained institutions under further pressure.

In the months that followed, the crisis widened as more information about the scale of losses was revealed. Some of the more significant developments were the run on the British bank Northern Rock in September 2007, which led to its nationalization; a string of large-scale losses announced by major banks and investment banks in the United States and Europe shortly thereafter; and the rescue of Bear Stearns in March 2008. The latter appeared for a while to mark a turning point, and for a few months market conditions began to settle down and credit spreads to narrow, although they remained well above their pre-crisis levels.

However, the crisis intensified sharply in September 2008, particularly following the failure of the US investment bank Lehman Brothers, which was the first time in the crisis that losses were incurred by creditors of a major financial institution. The Lehman collapse followed the effective nationalization of the two US federal mortgage agencies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac – that together had more than %5 trillion in mortgages under management or guarantee – a week earlier. These events were followed

in quick succession by the nationalization of the world's largest insurance company American International Group (AIG) along with a sitting of other announcements of the failure or near-failure of financial institutions in the United States and Europe. Uncertainty about the nature, scope and passage of the various proposed rescue packages through this period added to the general turmoil.
These events sparked a severe loss of confidence, not just in the financial sector, but also across households and businesses. In the weeks that followed the Lehman Brothers' collapse, world equity markets experienced extreme volatility, with prices falling in net terms to eventually reach levels around 50 per cent below their earlier peaks. It was also during this period that governments around the world moved to guarantee deposits and in some cases wholesale borrowing by their banks, in conjunction with a series of others measures designed to support their financial systems. The crisis also spread quickly to other vulnerable countries; towards the end of 2008, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced stabilization packages for Iceland, Pakistan and several Eastern European countries.

Underlying Causes

This brief chronology gives an idea of how the crisis happened in a mechanical sense, but does not address the deeper question of its underlying causes. This issue has been extensively debated over the past year – and no doubt will continue to be so for many years ahead – and hence our understanding of the roles and importance of each of the various factors is still developing. Nonetheless, at this stage the explanations have centered around three broad sets of factors, and it is probably fair to say that each played a significant role.

The first set of factors stresses aspects that have in fact been common to past financial bubbles, in particular the combination of cheap credit that increased demand for debt along with a general increase in the appetite for risk by potential lenders. Central to this linen of explanation is the low interest rate structure that prevailed in the major economies for much of the early part of this decade. The United States, the euro area and Japan all ran unusually low interest rates during the period. While the specific reasons for doing so vary amongst this group, and are still subject to considerable debate, they were partly related to cyclical economic conditions in those economies and, at a deeper level, to the large global savings imbalances that emerged around the turn of this decade. However, whatever the ultimate driving factor behind the low interest rates of that period, the low cost of funds contributed to an increasing demand for debt, especially by households.

This environment was also one in which perceptions of risk were declining, in part for sound reasons associated with strong economic growth, falling unemployment and rising house prices. More generally,, the low interest environment encouraged a 'search for yield' in financial markets, in which investors ought to increase returns by taking on more risk. This led to a significant compression of risk spreads cross a range of credit markets around the world. While a financial crisis was not inevitable in these circumstances, history suggests that this situation was conducive to a kind of financial cycle that can quickly get out of hand.

The second set of explanations focuses on features of the financial system that encouraged the particular types of risk-taking that were prevalent on this occasion, and which made this financial cycle different from earlier crises. Included in this confluence of events were the growth of the originate-and-distribute model in mortgage lending, the increasing use of structured securities such as CDOs, weaknesses in risk controls on those activities, and the unhelpful role played by credit-rating agencies in ensuring these products were marketable. Over time, conflicts of interest by loan generators and rating agencies became more prominent in a climate that was characterized by high optimism and rising leverage. The wide-spread sale of these products, both in the United States and abroad, set up the conditions for international transmission of the crisis once their values started to decline. This in turn led to a major reappraisal of attitudes to risk and willingness to lend. These effects were exacerbated by the

efforts of financial firms to quickly reduce the level of their leverage and exposures to risk, which contributed to an evaporation of liquidity in many markets.

The third (and related) factor concerns the ineffectiveness of regulatory regimes in containing the growth of financial risk-taking in the major countries. To give one example, the growth of the originate-and-distribute model can be seen in part as a response to capital adequacy regulations that gave banks an incentive to economise on capital by shifting their activities into off-balance-sheet vehicles. In this way, a set of regulations intended to contain a certain type of risk actually had the effect of shifting risk into unregulated vehicles, where it was not well controlled. While there is still much to consider in this area, it is apparent in retrospect that regulatory gaps had opened up in a number of areas as monitoring lagged the pace and complexity of financial innovation. This failure may have been exacerbated by the climate at the time, which was generally to encourage home-ownership rates and reduce regulation.

The Initial Economic Impact

The pace of global activity had already been softening before the most intense phase of the financial crisis began in September 2008. The large run up in home construction and dwelling prices in the Untied States had started to turn by mid-2006 – partly in response to rising policy rates – and this was dampening the overall growth of the US economy. The pace of activity had also started to soften for much the same reason in the United Kingdom. However, other parts of the world continued to look resilient through the first half of 2008. China and the other emerging economies in Asia and elsewhere mostly kept growing at a firm pace during that period, and world commodity prices were still close to their peaks.

However, with the deterioration in financial conditions following the Lehman Brothers' collapse in September, the level of activity in the major economies took a sharp turn for the worse In the climate of extreme uncertainty, business and consumer confidence collapsed. Household responded by cutting discretionary spending, especially demand for manufactured goods. The result was an exceptionally sharp fall in global industrial production towards the end of 2008, and significant contractions in GDP in most of the major economies. The downturn in the G7 economies intensified during the December quarter – especially in Japan – and spread to other parts of the world, including Asia, Latin America and eastern Europe. Some countries in east Asia saw GDP declines of more than 5 per cent in the December quarter. While the Chinese and Indian economies continued to expand through this period, their rates of growth were significantly reduced.

Several reasons have been proposed to explain this sudden and synchronized deterioration in global macroeconomic conditions. The first, which was already touched on above, was the wide-spread loss of confidence in the wake of the collapse of Lehman Brothers and the associated period of exceptional turmoil in global financial markets. This deterioration was clearly seen in survey-based measures of business and consumers confidence in the major economies. It is plausible that improvements in communication and the more rapid transmission of economic news contributed to making this swing in confidence more highly synchronized than in earlier major cycles. As a consequence of the deterioration in confidence, along with the decline in housing and equity wealth and rising unemployment, households around the world made a rapid re-evaluation of their spending plans, cutting back in particular on discretionary spending. Private consumption fell sharply in the industrialised and emerging market economies in late 2008. One very clear example was a sharp drop in the demand for cars, with sales in the major economies falling from their early 2008 levels by around 25 per cent. Similarly, business investment contracted in a number of countries in late 2008/early 2009.

A second factor, also related to the Lehman Brothers' collapse, was the further tightening of credit standards by lenders in the major economies and a marked additional increase in the price of risk.

This manifested itself, amongst other things, in disruptions to trade credit and insurance, and in a tightening of lending for consumer and business spending. Reflecting these developments, the pace of credit growth fell sharply in a range of countries in late 2008 or early 2009, although part of this is likely to have reflected a pull back in demand for credit. Adverse feedback loops appeared to be operating during this period as a weakening economy undermined asset prices, which further diminished confidence and the capacity of banks to lend.

Third, these effects seem to have been transmitted quickly around the world – especially to Asia – through the trade channel as businesses cut back on production in response to reduced orders. Falls in exports and production were particularly pronounced for certain manufactured goods such as cars, steel and electronics, and industrial production declined by exceptionally large magnitudes in countries where these types of goods are a large share in total production. More generally, firms around the world sought to economise on inventories in response to weaker expected demand and reduced availability of working capital. This effect appears to have been amplified by internal cyclical dynamics in some countries. In China, for example, the economy had for some time been growing at a faster-than-trend pace, and the authorities had already taken steps to rein in growth during 2007 and the first half of 2008, long before China's economy was affected by the decline in global trade as the rest of the world slowed.

Finally, part of the slowdown in the pace of global activity reflected the inevitable pullback in some sectors that had become overextended. The most obvious of these were the housing and financial sectors in the major countries, although the point could also be extended ot the high levels of household debt in many countries in advance of the crisis. Inevitably, the reallocation of resources within the economy following such adjustments has taken some time to run its course.

Policy Responses

While the financial crisis had a significant negative effect on the level of global activity, a number of forces have been working in the opposite direction and can be expected to support recovery over time The most important have been the wide ranging set of monetary, fiscal and other policy measures. These can be considered under two broad headings: those directed at the immediate issues of repairing damaged credit markets and restoring growth in demand and activity; and those directed at the medium-term agenda of reducing the risk of similar crises in the future.

In regard to the immediate issues, authorities in all the major economies took a range of steps to provide direct assistance to their financial sectors to offset the effective tightening of financial conditions faced by the private sector. These measures took several forms including central bank facilities to improve access to liquidity, targeted facilities to unclog credit in particular financial markets, direct injections of capital into financial institutions and the provision of various forms of government guarantees. In the United States there were significant measures to remove bad assets from the balance sheets of affected financial institutions and to purchase longer dated securities in order to support mortgage and private credit markets. Significant steps have also been taken internationally to provide official funds to emerging and developing countries in the period ahead, notably through initiatives of multilateral organisations such as the IMF.

Early signs were that these steps were contributing to an improvement in the functioning of financial markets. The extreme volatility that followed the Lehman Brothers' collapse began to ease in early 2009, and the availability of government guarantees enabled a recovery in bond issuance by banks around the world. This helped to put banks in a position where they could be more confident of their long-term funding. Nonetheless, these efforts are likely to take some time to be fully effective. In the interim, credit spreads have remained high and lending to date has still been hampered by the cumulative erosion of asset prices and its accompanying pressure on balance sheets.

In addition, interest rates in major and emerging market countries were cut sharply as the crisis unfolded. In some major countries, policy rates were reduced to close to zero and central banks moved to quantitative easing approaches to provide additional stimulus to particular markets and to the economy more generally.

Fiscal policy has also provided as substantial stimulus. Many countries, including all the large countries such as the Untied States, United Kingdom, Germany and China, announced major packages to support demand in 2009 and 2010. In total, discretionary fiscal measures announced since late 2008 provided for a stimulus of up to 2 per cent of the world GDP in 2009, as governments have stepped in to fill part of the contraction in private spending. This support has taken the form of direct financial assistance to households, tax reductions for business and direct spending by governments, such as for infrastructure projects. This is in addition to the effects of the automatic fiscal stabilisers – such as the typical reduction in the level of taxes paid by the private sector during downturns and the increase in unemployment benefit spending – which in some countries have also been very substantial.

In regard to the medium-term agenda, considerable work has been underway on reforming financial regulatory policies. At a broad level ,this word addresses an old issue: where (and how) to strike the balance between adequate government regulation that protects the economic system and allowing market innovation, in this case with respect to the financial sector. The overarching issue is the need to better contain financial risk taking, and to do so in a way that remains effective as the financial system evolves. Experience from the present crisis suggests that regulations aimed at containing risk-taking can result in risk being pushed out to the unregulated part of the system. It is also in the nature of markets that they will tend to innovate around regulations, and the nature of risk-taking will inevitably keep changing as financial systems get more sophisticated. This highlights the need for regulatory frameworks to be adaptable to changing circumstances. While there is still much to be considered in this area, better risk management techniques could include aspects such as requiring banks to hold more liquidity and capital and to adjust capital requirements over the course of the cycle, along with enhanced stress-testing models, greater transparency of financial products and ensuring appropriate incentives for rating agencies. Because of the interdependency among financial systems, it makes sense for these issues to be tackled cooperatively at a global level.

Making a noise about machismo in Mexico[35]

By Katy Watson

"Machismo has to die," chanted protesters as they walked through the centre of Mexico City last month.

Thousands of people came out onto the streets to say enough was enough.

The macho culture is all pervasive in Mexico and many of those at the march think its emphasis on male pride is a contributing factor in the high rates of violence against women that Mexico is experiencing.
It is estimated that **nine out of 10 women** have been subjected to sexual violence, whether on the streets or at home.

'Tired of the violence'

"I'm here because I'm tired of the violence against women in Mexico," said Ana Carlota Velazquez, a student.

"I'm tired of living it and hearing it happen to my friends, in the streets, on public transport, in university and at work."

The women were joined by thousands of men. Many were carrying placards.

"I need feminism too", read one. Another read: "Because she's my sister, my girlfriend, my wife."

Femicide

"We want to stay alive," other protesters shouted.

The extreme end of gender violence is femicide, the intentional murder of a woman because she is a woman.
It is a particular problem in Mexico. According to the country's National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Violence against Women (CONAVIM), on average **six women die a violent death each day** (link in Spanish) in Mexico.

Accurate figures are hard to come by. States differ in the way they collect data and in how honest they are with the figures.

Even CONAVIM admitted getting accurate data was a challenge.

This is made harder by the fact that it is hard to prove that a murder was committed because gender alone. As a result, femicides are massively under-reported.

In a country where up to 99% of crimes go unsolved, many victims' families often do not go to authorities for help because they believe it will not change anything.

Murdered in Mexico State

Ciudad Juarez used to be known as the most violent city in Mexico, a city where hundreds of women went missing.

But Ecatepec, part of poor Mexico State on the edge of the capital, has now surpassed the reputation Ciudad Juarez once had.

Irinea Buendia lives in Mexico State, not far from Ecatepec. She says her daughter Mariana was killed by her husband.

He had a history of violence and had threatened to kill her. But when Mariana was found hanged in the marital home, her death was recorded as a suicide.

"The first thing they say is 'what did you daughter do for him to treat her like that? What did she do to make him kill her?'," Ms Buendia tells me.

"But men don't own women. Just because there's a problem in a relationship or in a marriage doesn't mean that murder is the answer."

Therapy - is it hard to be a man?

On the other side of Mexico state, a workshop is trying to tackle the root of the problem.

A group of men - and two women - are sitting in a classroom, with a psychologist at the whiteboard.

"Is it hard to be a man?" he asks the class.

There is a real mix of responses from the participants. One breaks down as he tries to explain his point of view.

Another says no, if you know how to behave decently, it should not be hard at all.

One of the participants, Alberto Trinidad Martinez Nava, was sentenced to 28 years in prison for raping and killing two women.

He is now free and says his attitude has changed.

"It was all about me," he says. "Machismo - it was just me, me, me. I belittled women. I had that bad attitude that women would be under my control but I know that not to be true now."

'Violence is accepted'

"If we only focus on the victim, the perpetrator will continue to be violent in new relationships," says Marisol Zarco Reyes, a psychologist at Mexico State Council for Women.

"Sadly, perpetrators of domestic violence are born seducers so they finish one relationship and move on to the next so we saw the need to focus on them, too."

Image caption Alberto Trinidad Martinez Nava served a prison term for the rape and murder of two women

"Getting them to admit they are the perpetrators of violence is half the process," says Ms Zarco.

"Unfortunately in our society, violence is accepted. They are taught that violence is the way to keep power."

The issue of gender violence is a worldwide problem but Ms Zarco says there is a cultural problem particular to Mexico, too.

"Machismo is a hegemonic model of masculinity in Mexico," she says.

"The man who shouts, who has to hit people to show his power. Yes, there's machismo in Mexico."

'Ongoing struggle'

The workshop is part of a bigger initiative called Mexico State for a Life without Violence, which supports women who are vulnerable to domestic abuse.

According to a victims' agency run by the government, 90% of victims of sexual violence are women.

And for women like Ms Buendia, the struggle against the culture of violence goes on.

After five years of campaigning, the Mexican Supreme Court last year ordered her daughter's death to be re-investigated from a gender perspective.

It is a move that Ms Buendia thinks could be hugely significant for many other cases that have also not been investigated as femicides.

These are small steps in a country where a lack of resources - and many say a lack of will - have meant crimes against women have gone unpunished.

But they are progress nonetheless.

(Pulled from http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-36324570).

Un Techo para mi País[36]

MISIÓN

Trabajar con determinación en los asentamientos informales para superar la pobreza a través de la formación y acción conjunta de sus pobladores y pobladoras, jóvenes voluntarios y voluntarias, y otros actores.

VISIÓN

Una sociedad justa, igualitaria, integrada y sin pobreza en la que todas las personas puedan ejercer plenamente sus derechos y deberes, y tengan las oportunidades para desarrollar sus capacidades.

PROPÓSITOS

Superar la situación de pobreza en que viven millones de personas en los asentamientos informales.
Formar jóvenes voluntarios y voluntarias a través del vínculo con los y las pobladores y pobladoras de las comunidades.

TECHO is a youth led non-profit organization present in Latin America & the Caribbean. Through the **collaborative work of families living in extreme poverty with youth volunteers,** TECHO seeks to overcome poverty in slums.

TECHO'S model of intervention focuses on the most isolated slums in Latin America. The collaborative work of families and young volunteers who work to produce concrete solutions to the problems of poverty is the key driver of these interventions. TECHO promotes a continuous community strengthening process, with community development as the most essential component of the intervention model.

The initial phase of the intervention model consists of entering the slums and determining the issues that plague the families in need. Youth volunteers have their first glimpse of the realities that can be seen in the slums and work in the field in order to develop a diagnosis. Additionally, the volunteers strive to enhance the residents' leadership skills by promoting organization, participation, and shared responsibilities in the process.

In the second phase, in response to the identified needs of the community, there is an implementation and management of solutions in the areas of livability, education, labor and other existing problems. These solutions are developed through collaboration between young volunteers and local families, improving individual and collective capacities for community self-management. Young volunteers gain an acute awareness of poverty and its causes, which prompts them to act in order to generate real change.

Within this phase we emphasize the construction of transitional housing, which meets a need that is urgent and a priority in most slums. This creates a link of trust between the volunteers and the community since it is a concrete, tangible and achievable solution in the short term. The house built by TECHO is a pre-manufactured module of 162 square feet, built in two days with the participation of youth volunteers and families in the community. The construction creates an opportunity for people of varied socioeconomic backgrounds

to interact with one another, promoting critical reflection and concrete proposals on how to overcome poverty.

In order to deepen this process of community empowerment, a community-organizing committee is stablished. This is a meeting where community leaders and youth volunteers dialogue and discuss about possible solutions to the most pressing problems of the slum. TECHO focuses on the implementation of education and work plans, such as basic skills training and micro-credit for the development of small businesses. TECHO seeks to link communities with networks in order to develop other programs to meet community goals and generate new solutions.

As a third phase of the intervention, the application of lasting and sustainable solutions is promoted in slums. Such solutions include the regularization of property, basic services, housing, infrastructure and local development. TECHO advocates for families living in slums by linking them with government institutions, so they can demand their rights.

TECHO denounces the exclusion and violation of rights that exist in slums, and works to ensure that these problems are recognized by society and become a priority of the political agenda. Starting with the relentless and substantial labor efforts of youth volunteers and local families, the concerns of these communities are given a louder voice in society. Moreover, TECHO accumulates relevant data about slums and seeks to be part of public policy decision-making, promoting lasting structural changes that will contribute to the eradication of poverty.

(Excerpts pulled from www.techo.org)

UNICEF HONDURAS[37]

UNICEF works in 190 countries and territories to protect the rights of every child. UNICEF has spent 70 years working to improve the lives of children and their families. Defending children's rights throughout their lives requires a global presence, aiming to produce results and understand their effects.

UNICEF was created with a distinct purpose in mind: to work with others to overcome the obstacles that poverty, violence, disease and discrimination place in a child's path. We advocate for measures to give children the best start in life, because proper care at the youngest age forms the strongest foundation for a person's future.

We promote girls' education – ensuring that they complete primary education as a minimum – because it benefits all children, both girls and boys. Girls who are educated grow up to become better thinkers, better citizens, and better parents to their own children. We act so that all children are immunized against common childhood diseases, and are well nourished: no child should suffer or die from a preventable illness. We work to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS among young people because it is right to keep them from harm and enable them to protect others. We help children and families affected by HIV/AIDS to live their lives with dignity.

We involve everyone in creating protective environments for children. We are present to relieve suffering during emergencies, and wherever children are threatened, because no child should be exposed to violence, abuse or exploitation.

UNICEF upholds the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We work to assure equality for those who are discriminated against, girls and women in particular. We work for the Millennium Development Goals and for the progress promised in the United Nations Charter. We strive for peace and security. We work to hold everyone accountable to the promises made for children.

UNICEF en Honduras

Para la promoción y el cumplimiento de los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio, UNICEF en Honduras ha identificado sus prioridades con el objetivo de revertir las amenazas a las que se enfrenta el organismo en el país.

La salud, la nutrición, el desarrollo infantil temprano, el acceso a una educación de calidad, la protección de las niños y niños frente a la violencia y la explotación, la prevención de VIH / SIDA y embarazo adolescente, las políticas públicas y la participación y movilización social de la infancia son algunos de los fundamentos que conforman el Programa de Cooperación 2012-2016 entre el Gobierno de Honduras y UNICEF.

En la Estrategia para la Reducción de la Pobreza y el Plan de Educación para Todos para 2003-2015, el Gobierno estableció como objetivos la mejora de la calidad, la eficiencia y la equidad en la educación, la prioridad de la educación preescolar y los grados séptimo a noveno de educación básica.

Algunas actividades

Entre las actividades destinadas a consolidar la democracia, el Gobierno ha fomentado con el apoyo de UNICEF los Gobiernos Escolares, establecidos en la práctica mayoría de las escuelas y dirigidos por niñas en más de la mitad de los casos.

UNICEF ha coordinado la creación de Redes de comunicadores infantiles que promueven la participación y la movilización social. Aún con los avances, la participación social y política de la infancia y adolescencia, especialmente de las niñas, es limitada.

La publicación del Estado Nacional de la Infancia Hondureña 2007 hizo de muelle para que el Gobierno se decidiera a elaborar un documento sobre las políticas y asignaciones presupuestarias asignadas a la infancia y abrió el debate sobre políticas y presupuestos.

UNICEF ayudó al Gobierno a elaborar estrategias nacionales para hacer frente a la violencia relacionada con diferentes formas como pandillas, explotación sexual y trata de niñas y niños. Se reformó el Código Penal Hondureño para incluir el delito de explotación sexual, y se creó una dependencia del Gobierno nacional dedicada al procesamiento de crímenes contra la niñez.

Mediante el programa de desarrollo en la primera infancia PROACPIN, se redujo la tasa de mortalidad maternoinfantil, desnutrición y aumentar la matrícula preescolar.

El modelo de Escuelas Amigas que respalda UNICEF se aplica en decenas de centros educativos de distintos municipios, y varios de sus componentes ya se han incorporado en el Programa nacional de educación.

Durante la temporada de huracanes y tormentas tropicales en Honduras, UNICEF ha desempeñado un papel fundamental en la ayuda de emergencia y prestación de servicios de socorro -botiquines de higiene, medicamentos, agua y saneamiento y materiales de educación-.

(Excerpts pulled from www.unicef.org/honduras)

USAID HONDURAS[38]

USAID is the lead U.S. Government agency that works to end extreme global poverty and enable resilient, democratic societies to realize their potential.

We partner to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies while advancing our security and prosperity.

U.S. foreign assistance has always had the twofold purpose of furthering America's interests while improving lives in the developing world. USAID carries out U.S. foreign policy by promoting broad-scale human progress at the same time it expands stable, free societies, creates markets and trade partners for the United States, and fosters good will abroad.

Spending less than 1 percent of the total federal budget, USAID works in over 100 countries to:

- Promote broadly shared **economic prosperity**;
- Strengthen **democracy and good governance**;
- Protect **human rights**;
- Improve **global health**,
- Advance **food security and agriculture**;
- Improve **environmental sustainability**;
- Further **education**;
- Help societies **prevent and recover from conflicts**; and
- Provide **humanitarian assistance** in the wake of natural and man-made disasters.

In response to security challenges in the region, the United States and the governments of Central America have joined together to improve citizen security and the rule of law through the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI). Under the Initiative, USAID supports community-based efforts to prevent crime and gang activity, support highest risk youth, strengthen community-police relationships, provide school based violence prevention programs and life-skills training and vocational education to at-risk youth. Activities build community cohesion, strengthen local governance, improve physical and social infrastructure, and educate and empower youth to address the root issues that cause young people to become involved in criminal activities. Through partnerships with the Government of Honduras, local governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector, USAID efforts target select urban areas with the highest homicide rates.

Several areas that USAID focuses on in Honduras include:

- Transparency and Accountability of Public Institutions
- Elections
- Improved Delivery of Government Services at the Local Level
- Civic Awareness

Economic growth activities increase the incomes of poor rural households by linking small farmers to market opportunities. As a focus country under the U.S. Government's Feed the Future Initiative, USAID is helping Honduras to implement a food security program that serves as a cornerstone of poverty reduction efforts. USAID programs also improve the business environment, promote economic diversification, and increase investment and trade at the local, regional, and international levels to reduce poverty. Feed the Future work also incorporates nutrition activities to ensure that children under the age of five have the best start. Efforts also support the environment by strengthening protected area management, mitigating global climate change, and promoting renewable energy. Finally, USAID provides humanitarian assistance during natural disasters and finances training for emergency preparedness and response

USAID's education program assists the Ministry of Education's efforts to reform policies, especially in the development and implementation of academic standards, formative assessments, and standardized testing in public schools from first grade through high school. These efforts enable Honduran decision-makers as well as parents to know how their children and schools are performing. However, many primary school graduates are unable to continue their education because of a shortage of secondary school facilities. In addition to a strong focus on reading in primary school, USAID emphasizes learning opportunities for out-of-school youth and quality improvements in the formal education system.

Three main focuses of USAID/Honduras' education program include:

- Reforms to the education sector
- Alternative education
- Teacher training

National level investments will complement other municipal and local level investments that support increased capacity for auditing and oversight of public policies and programs. This is particularly relevant to improving the transparency of the security and justice sector and the management of public funds for social programs. For example, investments at the municipal level Western Honduras to strengthen public financial management systems, impact resource allocation and spending for nutrition and education services; which are also being supported with USAID funding.

Through these investments, USAID is strengthening democratic institutions, rule of law, and citizen participation in local and national government; broadening the participation of traditionally marginalized groups; reinforcing support for democracy; and leveraging efforts to improve community responses to citizen and food security.

(Excerpts pulled from usaid.org and usaid.org/honduras).

ProNiño USA[39]

ProNiño USA (PNUSA) is a 501(c)(3) non profit organization headquarted in Richmond, VA. It is composed of ordinary people attempting to achieve extraordinary things by “Creating Brighter Futures for Latin American Street Children." ProNiño USA and its partner organizations oversee, fund, provide and train volunteers for Fundación ProNiño, a residential facility for homeless boys ages 6 to 18, located in El Progreso, Honduras. Many of the boys are truly "homeless" before ProNiño and come from living on the streets; others are homeless in the sense that their families have shown such a level of neglect that the judicial system has relocated them to the ProNiño program. ProNiño has rescued, housed, mentored and educated hundreds of boys, working to break the cycle and culture of poverty, drug use, and hopelessness.

ProNiño developed multiple, progressive stages to address the children’s needs when they enter the program and as they transition into their lives as working adults. The stages were developed to address the diverse group of children ProNiño works with: children brought in from the street, court-ordered to attend ProNiño, or chose to come to ProNiño on their own accord. The two main campuses, Las Flores and La Montaña, provide homes for approximately ninety boys and are organized by age, maturity, and tenure at ProNiño.

Some boys come into Nueva Vida, our intake center, from a life of gang involvement, drug use, and sexual abuse. Others join the program with the baggage of emotional and physical neglect from their parents or families. It is our mission to ensure that every child has a smooth transition into ProNiño and begins working towards a better future. We are extremely grateful for the staff at ProNiño, who truly pour their hearts and efforts into providing the children with the path to a better life.

The campuses at ProNiño create a familial atmosphere, where the boys act as brothers as well as friends. The staff both teach the boys and provide parental guidance to the boys as they mature. We aim to provide the children with an environment fostering learning, discovering new talents, and flourishing into confident, prosperous adults.

In 2013, ProNiño accomplished one of the original goals of the foundation—to provide a transitional home for the boys graduating from the ProNiño program to adjust to life as working adults outside of the centers. The transitional home is an apartment in town, outside of both of the ProNiño campuses but still just a bus or bike ride away. With the help of the ProNiño staff, the boys living in the transitional home will look for employment, get their driver's license, set up their own bank accounts, pay rent, cook, and clean the house as if it were their own.

(Excerpts pulled from www.pronino.org).

LA CEIBA MICROFINANCE INSTITUTION[40]

We believe in a world in which the well-being of the client claims center stage in the microfinance community. We believe development requires an ethos that defends human dignity. We are here to put that ethos into practice – demonstrating what is possible when the client comes first. Client protection isn't enough, and nothing less than clients thriving will do. We measure impact in smiles and lasting friendships, and we aren't kidding about that. Progress is made over drinks and handshakes – enduring relationships are our collateral. We are here to stand by clients as sidekicks in their fight to end their own poverty. We are LA CEIBA – the vanguard of the client-centered method.

Many clients have low, irregular and unpredictable incomes. A mismatch, between immediate expenses and available income occurs frequently. In the midst of this challenge, clients may reduce their expenses by buying less food, skipping payments on water and electricity bills, or selling off productive assets.

We supply flexible, convenient, and reliable access to micro-credit so that our clients can smooth out their consumption. We do not ask for collateral, we provide flexible schedules and terms, and we remove conditions on loans. Our Personal Loans are just that: personal.

We offer a Subsidy Savings Program to encourage the habit of saving regularly. Our goal is to be a stepping-stone for community members who want to participate in the formal banking sector. This program is unique because it lets a client open a savings account in any bank they want and then receive monthly subsidies from La Ceiba.

When a client wants to open a savings account, we help them with the paperwork and cover the minimum deposit at the bank. From then on every time a client makes a deposit in their account, we'll subsidize it with a deposit of our own. At the end of each month we hold a group meeting. We check their deposit booklets and hold a discussion about the importance of savings.

(Excerpts pulled from www.laceibamfi.org).

BECA[41]

Bilingual Education for Central America exists to promote cultural exchange and affordable bilingual education. Our volunteer driven bilingual school model creates an environment in which Central American students learn from dedicated volunteer teachers, and those volunteers learn from the community in which they are immersed.

Our Vision

Despite being a region endowed with abundant natural resources and a vibrant culture, Central America has been marked by endemic poverty, income inequality, crumbling infrastructure, and a lack of quality educational and professional opportunities. BECA seeks to reverse these dynamics so that all Central Americans have the ability to express their full human potential.

BECA believes that the most efficient and self-sustaining means of allowing Central America to flourish lies in the provision of quality education for all. The positive outcomes of a healthy educational system are many: the development of critical thinkers and innovators, the creation of a class of skilled laborers, and the growth of a socially-conscious citizenry. BECA envisions a region where everyone will have access to quality education regardless of economic means.

To that end, we strive to collaborate with a vast network of schools that will graduate students who champion learning and literacy, challenge the status quo, and who embody a service-minded attitude to become persistent advocates for social change. Our goal is not to encourage students to pursue opportunities outside of Central America, but rather to empower and enable them to remain in the region by equipping them with the skills they need to access economic and social opportunity from within their native countries.

We are not so arrogant to think that we North Americans can solve Central America's problems unilaterally. We alone do not have answers to the region's challenges, which is why we hold collaboration with local partners as an article of faith. Only if we work together with respect, honesty, integrity, and equality, do we believe we will accomplish our goal of achieving a sustainable educational and economic transformation.

BECA's Commitment:

- Quality English-language whole-school curriculum (developed by BECA);
- Summer Training Institute for BECA Teachers;
- Pedagogical Training and Classroom Management Seminars;
- Cultural Immersion Workshops and Spanish Language Classes;
- Team Building Workshops;
- Ongoing network of professionals for professional development and support.

Our Partners' Commitment:

- Facilities - separate classroom for each grade and no more than 25 students per class;
- Specified percentage of scholarship students;
- Honduran teachers;
- Honduran Director;
- Administrative responsibility for school management and financial records;
- Permission to operate school on August - June academic calendar.

(Excerpts pulled from from www.becaschools.org).

Poverty and the Poor: What *is* Poverty?[42]

From *Walking with the Poor* by Bryant L. Myers

Poverty as Deficit

Poverty has been described in various ways and with increasing sophistication. It is important to articulate our view of poverty because our view of poverty strongly influences what we think transformational development is and how we should go about doing it.

In the early days of development thinking, people defined poverty as a deficit, things that were missing. Poor people do not have enough to eat, a decent place to sleep, or clean water. Their land is poor, there is no water for irrigation, roads are inadequate, and there are no schools for their children. This view of poverty encourages plans to provide the missing things; food, low-cost housing, and wells. The unspoken assumption is that when the missing things are provided, the poor will no longer be poor.

Another kind of deficit has to do with things people do not know or skills they do not have. Poor people may not understand the basics of nutrition, the need to boil water, the importance of child spacing, how to read the instructions on a pack of improved seeds. They don't know about sustainable agriculture, running small businesses, the importance of saving money. This view of poverty invites programming that features education and non-formal learning. It assumes that if the poor simply learn enough, they will no longer be poor. This is the classic response of modernity to social problems…

A final extension of this deficit idea of poverty is that the poor lack access. They do not have access to good land, a health system, markets, or credit. The underlying assumption is that if someone provides this access, then the deficit is corrected and people will no longer be poor.

These views of poverty are true, and, as far as they go, they are correct. People *do* need things – clean water, safe housing, and sufficient food. They do need education and training…people need access to resources that are not locally available or that are being withheld. However, limiting one's understanding of poverty to this deficit framework also creates some serious problems.

One problem has to do with the radical materialism of this view. Lack of things, ideas, and access focuses on things we can see, hear, and touch. While true, this is incomplete…Social issues of culture, religion, and power are obscured. This deficit frame invites a primarily materialistic view of poverty and people.

A second weakness resides in the kind of response that is invited if poverty is viewed as the absence of things, ideas, and access. The solution is to provide what is missing. This often leads the outsider becoming the development "Santa Claus," bringing all good things from the outside: food, well drilling, education, a working health system. The poor are reduced to passive recipients, incomplete human beings whom we make whole through our largess. This unwitting attitude of superiority has two very negative consequences.

First, this attitude demeans and devalues the poor. Sadly, our view of them can become their view of themselves – they are defective and inadequate…this attitude increases their poverty and tempts us to play god in the lives of the poor.

Second, our attitude about ourselves can become messianic. We are tempted to believe that we are the delivers of the poor, that we make their lives complete. We can inadvertently harbor a belief that we are the ones who save. Such an attitude is not good for our souls. Sadly, this view of deficit and response is often the default option of [the] wealthy…in the North who want to help the poor in the South.

Robert Chambers – Poverty as entanglement

Robert Chambers, a respected development practitioner at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex with extensive rural experience in Africa and India, is a champion of participation in development. Using the household as his point of departure, Chambers describes the poor as being entangled in a "cluster of disadvantage." The household is poor in terms of assets and is physically weak, isolated, vulnerable, and powerless. Chambers describes these dimensions of poverty as an interactive system that he calls the "poverty trap." Chambers' systems view of poverty has considerable explanatory power and aligns well with experience. Let's examine the respective parts.

Material poverty: The household has few assets. It has very limited or no savings or livestock. Its housing and sanitation is inadequate. It has little or no land, and, if it has land, it cannot prove title to it.

Physical weakness: The household members are weak. They lack strength because of poor health and inadequate nutrition. The majority of the household are women, the very young, and the very old.

Isolation: The household lacks access to social services and information. It is often remote—far from main roads, water lines, and even electricity. It lacks access to markets, capital, credit, and information. Children do not have access to quality education.

Vulnerability: The household has almost no buffers against emergencies or disaster as it cannot afford to save. The family is vulnerable to cultural demands, such as dowry and feast days, that soak up savings.

Powerlessness: The household lacks the ability and the knowledge to influence the life around it and the social systems in which it lives.

Chamber's systems approach to poverty is a powerful tool. The interconnection among the five elements of his poverty trap is an important feature. Each is linked to and reinforces the others. A problem in one area means problems in another, and it is easy to see how the result can be greater and increasingly intractable poverty.

Two of Chambers' system elements—vulnerability and powerlessness—merit further descriptions. Chambers identifies four elements that contribute to the vulnerability of poor households. First, they are subject to *social conventions* such as dowry, bride price, feast days, weddings, and funerals. While these are examples of the importance of celebration and ritual, these social requirements may also deplete the assets of the poor by creating a permanent demand for moneylenders, whose usurious rates ensure permanent poverty…Second, natural or manmade *disasters* expose vulnerability. The poor have no reserves, and disasters push them to do things they might not wish to do, such as sell land, livestock and sadly even their girl children. Third, *physical incapacity*—sickness, childbearing, and accidents—increases vulnerability as the physically weak cannot work. Fourth, there are *unproductive expenditures* for things like drink, drugs, unproductive assets (like radios, shoes, or clothes), and poor business investments. Finally, there is the *exploitation* that takes advantage of vulnerability. Exorbitant interest rates, trickery, coercion, intimidation, and blackmail are used by the powerful (often the non-poor in poor communities) to take what little a poor household has—its assets and even its labor….

This is the point of departure: Poverty is a result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable.

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack[43]

By Peggy McIntosh

"I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group."

Through work to bring materials from women's studies into the rest of the curriculum, I have often noticed men's unwillingness to grant that they are overprivileged, even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged. They may say they will work to improve women's status, in the society, the university, or the curriculum, but they can't or won't support the idea of lessening men's. Denials that amount to taboos surround the subject of advantages that men gain from women's disadvantages. These denials protect male privilege from being fully acknowledged, lessened, or ended.

Thinking through unacknowledged male privilege as a phenomenon, I realized that, since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there are most likely a phenomenon of while privilege that was similarly denied and protected. As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see on of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage.

I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untutored way to ask what it is like to have white privilege. I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools , and blank checks.

Describing white privilege makes one newly accountable. As we in Women's Studies work to reveal male privilege and ask men to give up some of their power, so one who writes about having white privilege must ask, "Having described it, what will I do to lessen or end it?"

After I realized the extent to which men work from a base of unacknowledged privilege, I understood that much of their oppressiveness was unconscious. Then I remembered the frequent charges from women of color that white women whom they encounter are oppressive. I began to understand why we are justly seen as oppressive, even when we don't see ourselves that way. I began to count the ways in which I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence.

My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. My schooling followed the pattern my colleague Elizabeth Minnich has pointed out: whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow "them" to be more like "us".

I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions which I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographical location, though of course all these other

factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can see, my African American coworkers, friends and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place, and line of work cannot count on most of these conditions.

I usually think of privilege as being a favored state, whether earned or conferred by birth or luck. Yet some of the conditions I have described here work to systematically overempower certain groups. Such privilege simply confers dominance because of one's race or sex.

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.

2. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.

3. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.

4. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.

5. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.

6. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.

7. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.

8. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.

9. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.

10. Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.

11. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.

12. I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals,the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.

13. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.

14. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.

15. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.

16. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.

17. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.

18. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge," I will be facing a person of my race.

19. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.

20. I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people of my race.

21. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, out numbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.

22. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having coworkers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.

23. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.

24. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.

25. If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.

26. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in flesh color and have them more or less match my skin.

I repeatedly forgot each of the realizations on this list until I wrote it down. For me white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one's life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own.

In unpacking this invisible knapsack of white privilege, I have listed conditions of daily experience which I once took for granted. Nor did I think of any of these prequisites as bad for the holder. I now think that we need a more finely differentiated taxonomy of privilege, for some of these varieties are only what one would want for everyone in a just society, and others give license to be ignorant.

I see a pattern running through the matrix of white privilege, a pattern of assumptions which were passed on to me as a white person. There was one main piece of cultural turf; it was my own turf, and I was among those who could control the turf. My skin color was an asset for any move I was educated to want to make. I could think of myself as belonging in major ways, and of making social systems work for me. I could freely disparage, fear, neglect, or be oblivious to anything outside of the dominant cultural forms. Being of the main culture, I could also criticize it fairly freely.

In proportion as my racial group was being made confident, comfortable, and oblivious, other groups were likely being made unconfident, uncomfortable, and alienated. Whiteness protected me from many kinds of hostility, distress, and violence, which I was being subtly trained to visit in turn upon people of color. For this reason, the word "privilege" now seems to me misleading. We want, then, to distinguish between earned strength and unearned power conferred systematically. Power from unearned privilege can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate. But not all of the privileges on my list are inevitably damaging. Some, like the expectation that neighbors will be decent to you, or that your race will not count against you in court, should be the norm in a just society. Others, like the privilege to ignore less powerful people, distort the humanity of the holders as well as the ignored groups.

We might at least start by distinguishing between positive advantages which we can work to spread, and negative types of advantages which unless rejected will always reinforce our present hierarchies. For example, the feeling that one belongs within the human circle, as Native Americans say, should not be seen as privilege for a few. Ideally it is an unearned entitlement. At present, since only a few have it, it is an unearned advantage for them. This paper results from a process of coming to see that some of the

power which I originally saw as attendant on being a human being in the U.S. consisted in unearned advantage and conferred dominance.

I have met very few men who are truly distressed about systemic, unearned male advantage and conferred dominance. And so one question for me and others like me is whether we will be like them, or whether we will get truly distressed, even outraged, about unearned race advantage and conferred dominance and if so, what we will do to lessen them. In any case, we need to do more work in identifying how they actually affect our daily lives. Many, perhaps most, of our white students in the U.S. think that racism doesn't affect them because they are not people of color; they do not see "whiteness" as a racial identity. In addition, since race and sex are not the only advantaging systems at work, we need similarly to examine the daily experience of having age advantage, or ethnic advantage, or physical ability, or advantage related to nationality, religion, or sexual orientation.

Difficulties and dangers surrounding the task of finding parallels are many. Since racism, sexism, and heterosexism are not the same, the advantaging associated with them should not be seen as the same. In addition, it is hard to disentangle aspects of unearned advantage which rest more on social class, economic class, race, religion, sex and ethnic identity than on other factors. Still, all of the oppressions are interlocking, as the Combahee River Collective State-ment of 1977 continues to remind us eloquently. One factor seems clear about all of the interlocking oppressions. They take both active forms which we can see and embedded forms which as a member of the dominant group one is taught not to see. In my class and place, I did not see myself as a racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth.

Disapproving of the systems won't be enough to change them. I was taught to think that racism could end if white individuals changed their attitudes. But a white skin in the United States opens many doors for whites whether or not we approve of the way dominance has been conferred on us. Individual acts can palliate, but cannot end, these problems.

To redesign social systems we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these taboo subjects. Most talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to be now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist.

It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly inculturated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that democratic choice is equally available to all. Keeping most people unaware that freedom of confident action is there for just a small number of people props up those in power, and serves to keep power in the hands of the same groups that have most of it already.

Though systemic change takes many decades, there are pressing questions for me and I imagine for some others like me if we raise our daily consciousness on the perquisites of being light skinned. What will we do with such knowledge? As we know from watching men, it is an open question whether we will choose to use unearned advantage to weaken hidden systems of advantage, and whether we will use any of our arbitrarily awarded power to try to reconstruct power systems on a broader base.

(Pulled from http://www.winnipeg.ca/clerks/boards/citizenequity/pdfs/white_privilege.pdf).

Why It's So Hard to Talk to White People About Racism[44]

By Dr. Robin DiAngelo

I am white. I have spent years studying what it means to be white in a society that proclaims race meaningless, yet is deeply divided by race. This is what I have learned: Any white person living in the United States will develop opinions about race simply by swimming in the water of our culture. But mainstream sources — schools, textbooks, media — don't provide us with the multiple perspectives we need. Yes, we will develop strong emotionally laden opinions, but they will not be informed opinions. Our socialization renders us racially illiterate. When you add a lack of humility to that illiteracy (because we don't know what we don't know), you get the break-down we so often see when trying to engage white people in meaningful conversations about race.

Mainstream dictionary definitions reduce racism to individual racial prejudice and the intentional actions that result. The people that commit these intentional acts are deemed bad, and those that don't are good. If we are against racism and unaware of committing racist acts, we can't be racist; racism and being a good person have become mutually exclusive. But this definition does little to explain how racial hierarchies are consistently reproduced.

Social scientists understand racism as a multidimensional and highly adaptive system — a system that ensures an unequal distribution of resources between racial groups. Because whites built and dominate all significant institutions, (often at the expense of and on the uncompensated labor of other groups), their interests are embedded in the foundation of U.S. society. While individual whites may be against racism, they still benefit from the distribution of resources controlled by their group.

Yes, an individual person of color can sit at the tables of power, but the overwhelming majority of decision-makers will be white. Yes, white people can have problems and face barriers, but systematic racism won't be one of them. This distinction — between individual prejudice and a system of unequal institutionalized racial power — is fundamental. One cannot understand how racism functions in the U.S. today if one ignores group power relations.

This systemic and institutional control allows those of us who are white in North America to live in a social environment that protects and insulates us from race-based stress. We have organized society to reproduce and reinforce our racial interests and perspectives. Further, we are centered in all matters deemed normal, universal, benign, neutral and good. Thus, we move through a wholly racialized world with an unracialized identity (e.g. white people can represent all of humanity, people of color can only represent their racial selves). Challenges to this identity become highly stressful and even intolerable. The following are examples of the kinds of challenges that trigger racial stress for white people:

- Suggesting that a white person's viewpoint comes from a racialized frame of reference (challenge to objectivity);
- People of color talking directly about their own racial perspectives (challenge to white taboos on talking openly about race);
- People of color choosing not to protect the racial feelings of white people in regards to race (challenge to white racial expectations and need/entitlement to racial comfort);

- People of color not being willing to tell their stories or answer questions about their racial experiences (challenge to the expectation that people of color will serve us);
- A fellow white not providing agreement with one's racial perspective (challenge to white solidarity);
- Receiving feedback that one's behavior had a racist impact (challenge to white racial innocence);
- Suggesting that group membership is significant (challenge to individualism);
- An acknowledgment that access is unequal between racial groups (challenge to meritocracy);
- Being presented with a person of color in a position of leadership (challenge to white authority);
- Being presented with information about other racial groups through, for example, movies in which people of color drive the action but are not in stereotypical roles, or multicultural education (challenge to white centrality).

Not often encountering these challenges, we withdraw, defend, cry, argue, minimize, ignore, and in other ways push back to regain our racial position and equilibrium. I term that push back white fragility.

This concept came out of my on-going experience leading discussions on race, racism, white privilege and white supremacy with primarily white audiences. It became clear over time that white people have extremely low thresholds for enduring any discomfort associated with challenges to our racial worldviews. We can manage the first round of challenge by ending the discussion through platitudes — usually something that starts with "People just need to," or "Race doesn't really have any meaning to me," or "Everybody's racist." Scratch any further on that surface, however, and we fall apart.

Socialized into a deeply internalized sense of superiority and entitlement that we are either not consciously aware of or can never admit to ourselves, we become highly fragile in conversations about race. We experience a challenge to our racial worldview as a challenge to our very identities as good, moral people. It also challenges our sense of rightful place in the hierarchy. Thus, we perceive any attempt to connect us to the system of racism as a very unsettling and unfair moral offense.

The following patterns make it difficult for white people to understand racism as a system and lead to the dynamics of white fragility. While they do not apply to every white person, they are well-documented overall:

Segregation: Most whites live, grow, play, learn, love, work and die primarily in social and geographic racial segregation. Yet, our society does not teach us to see this as a loss. Pause for a moment and consider the magnitude of this message: We lose nothing of value by having no cross-racial relationships. In fact, the whiter our schools and neighborhoods are, the more likely they are to be seen as "good." The implicit message is that there is no inherent value in the presence or perspectives of people of Color. This is an example of the relentless messages of white superiority that circulate all around us, shaping our identities and worldviews.

The Good/Bad Binary: The most effective adaptation of racism over time is the idea that racism is conscious bias held by mean people. If we are not aware of having negative thoughts about people of color, don't tell racist jokes, are nice people, and even have friends of color, then we cannot be racist. Thus, a person is either racist or not racist; if a person is racist, that person is bad; if a person is not racist, that person is good. Although racism does of course occur in individual acts, these acts are part of a larger system that we all participate in. The focus on individual incidences prevents the analysis that is necessary in order to challenge this larger system. The good/bad binary is the fundamental misunderstanding driving white defensiveness about being connected to racism. We simply do not understand how socialization and implicit bias work.

Individualism: Whites are taught to see themselves as individuals, rather than as part of a racial group. Individualism enables us to deny that racism is structured into the fabric of society. This erases our history and hides the way in which wealth has accumulated over generations and benefits us, as a group, today. It also allows us to distance ourselves from the history and actions of our group. Thus we get very irate when we are "accused" of racism, because as individuals, we are "different" from other white people and expect to be seen as such; we find intolerable any suggestion that our behavior or perspectives are typical of our group as a whole.

Entitlement to racial comfort: In the dominant position, whites are almost always racially comfortable and thus have developed unchallenged expectations to remain so. We have not had to build tolerance for racial discomfort and thus when racial discomfort arises, whites typically respond as if something is "wrong," and blame the person or event that triggered the discomfort (usually a person of color). This blame results in a socially-sanctioned array of responses towards the perceived source of the discomfort, including: penalization; retaliation; isolation and refusal to continue engagement. Since racism is necessarily uncomfortable in that it is oppressive, white insistence on racial comfort guarantees racism will not be faced except in the most superficial of ways.

Racial Arrogance: Most whites have a very limited understanding of racism because we have not been trained to think in complex ways about it and because it benefits white dominance not to do so. Yet, we have no compunction about debating the knowledge of people who have thought complexly about race. Whites generally feel free to dismiss these informed perspectives rather than have the humility to acknowledge that they are unfamiliar, reflect on them further, or seek more information.

Racial Belonging: White people enjoy a deeply internalized, largely unconscious sense of racial belonging in U.S. society. In virtually any situation or image deemed valuable in dominant society, whites belong. The interruption of racial belonging is rare and thus destabilizing and frightening to whites and usually avoided.

Psychic freedom: Because race is constructed as residing in people of color, whites don't bear the social burden of race. We move easily through our society without a sense of ourselves as racialized. Race is for people of color to think about — it is what happens to "them" — they can bring it up if it is an issue for them (although if they do, we can dismiss it as a personal problem, the race card, or the reason for their problems). This allows whites much more psychological energy to devote to other issues and prevents us from developing the stamina to sustain attention on an issue as charged and uncomfortable as race.

Constant messages that we are more valuable: Living in a white dominant context, we receive constant messages that we are better and more important than people of color. For example: our centrality in history textbooks, historical representations and perspectives; our centrality in media and advertising; our teachers, role-models, heroes and heroines; everyday discourse on "good" neighborhoods and schools and who is in them; popular TV shows centered around friendship circles that are all white; religious iconography that depicts God, Adam and Eve, and other key figures as white. While one may explicitly reject the notion that one is inherently better than another, one cannot avoid internalizing the message of white superiority, as it is ubiquitous in mainstream culture.

These privileges and the white fragility that results prevent us from listening to or comprehending the perspectives of people of color and bridging cross-racial divides. The antidote to white fragility is on-going and life-long, and includes sustained engagement, humility, and education. We can begin by:

Being willing to tolerate the discomfort associated with an honest appraisal and discussion of our internalized superiority and racial privilege.

Challenging our own racial reality by acknowledging ourselves as racial beings with a particular and limited perspective on race.

Attempting to understand the racial realities of people of color through authentic interaction rather than through the media or unequal relationships.

Taking action to address our own racism, the racism of other whites, and the racism embedded in our institutions — e.g., get educated and act.

"Getting it" when it comes to race and racism challenges our very identities as good white people. It's an ongoing and often painful process of seeking to uncover our socialization at its very roots. It asks us to rebuild this identity in new and often uncomfortable ways. But I can testify that it is also the most exciting, powerful, intellectually stimulating and emotionally fulfilling journey I have ever undertaken. It has impacted every aspect of my life — personal and professional.

I have a much deeper and more complex understanding of how society works. I can challenge much more racism in my daily life, and I have developed cherished and fulfilling cross-racial friendships I did not have before.

I do not expect racism to end in my lifetime, and I know that I continue to have problematic racist patterns and perspectives. Yet, I am also confident that I do less harm to people of color than I used to. This is not a minor point of growth, for it impacts my lived experience and that of the people of color who interact with me. If you are white I urge you to take the first step — let go of your racial certitude and reach for humility.

(Pulled from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/good-men-project/why-its-so-hard-to-talk-to-white-people-about-racism_b_7183710.html).

Reentry Trauma: The Shock of Returning Home[45]

By Gwen Vogel, PhD, Justin Stiebel, JD, and Rachele Vogel, MA

SalusWorld is an international NGO focused on healing the scars caused by human rights violations worldwide. We provide education, training, and conduct research focusing on trauma, PTSD, depression, anxiety, and responses to stress, trauma and torture. We partner with community based organizations, working together to implement mental health treatment services in a culturally appropriate manner. In addition to training and capacity building initiatives, we are an NGO for NGOs, recognizing the effects of vicarious trauma on humanitarian workers and the need for debriefing for healthy reintegration.

> *"The hardest part about reentry is that people seemingly do not care how my life had been transformed and reconciling that with the people and things that had remained the same at home."*
>
> ~ Aid Worker, Uganda

Humanitarian aid workers respond to isolated and protracted instances of disasters in unpredictable environments. The cycle of cultural adjustment begins with a plan to work internationally and continues through return home. Culture shock and reentry shock are not isolated events but rather part of the total adjustment process that stretches from pre-departure to reintegration at home.

Research suggests there are evident secondary effects of working with traumatized populations. This secondary effect has been referred to with a myriad of names, but the most common referent is "vicarious traumatization" (McCann & Pearlman, 1990). While the prevalence of Posttraumatic stress disorder in aid workers is similar to that of the general population, this fails to display to full extent of working with traumatized populations in global humanitarian disasters (Kessler, Sonnega, Bromet E, Hughes, & Nelson, 1995).

Aid workers often show signs of vicarious trauma at subclinical levels in a manner similar to emergency personal who suffered exposure to a disaster or other work trauma (Marmar, Weiss, Metzler, Ronfedlt, & Foreman, 1996). They also deal with unique layers of stress as professionals accustomed to western comforts: the change to living in a foreign environment is quite shocking. Suddenly, workers become the living face of their organization 24-7, their behavior directly impacts the reputation of their organization, and every move they make is subject to intense scrutiny. This claustrophobic environment is further magnified by location restrictions due to security risks.

Following the end of an overseas contract, aid workers return home exhausted from the strain and stress of working abroad and uncertain of what to do with the new profound and unsettling knowledge that human beings and Mother Nature often do not act humanely. A need for "down time" is complicated by the myriad of issues that must be faced upon returning home, these changes are often misunderstood or ignored at home.

International aid workers often feel guilt upon leaving their treatment locale and have few avenues to discuss and process the work performed abroad (Hearns & Deeny, 2007). Reintegration processes need to be established to best support the psychological health of an individual returning from abroad. These processes need to address changes in an individual's altruistic identity that occur in working on a humanitarian mission and the personal vacuum that is created upon leaving that

environment (McCormack, Joseph, & Haggar, 2009). Returning workers often report feeling that seeking help would show personal weakness (Kaur, 1996) or trivialize the plight of the populations they worked with (Grant, 1995).

As the end of a contract draws near, workers often feel a variety of mixed emotions. Aid workers want to have helped, to be missed, to stay longer, to depart gracefully, to be told their work was valued, and, upon return, to be able to effectively communicate how their work changed them. One returnee explained, "Living and working abroad has a deep, profound effect on a person - an effect one doesn't realize until they return home and find themselves desperately hanging on to what they have left behind." (Aid Worker, Liberia) However, at home, behavioral changes are often more readily apparent than inner transformation.

The environmental change of returning home can result in odd behaviors. "It's so tough to return to your own 'reality' and realize that you don't necessarily agree with your life or your culture or the values underlying it." (Aid Worker, Sudan) Returning aid workers have refused to buy furniture for their apartment because the communities left behind could not afford it, slept in hammocks outside because of a need for space, or slept in a sleeping bag atop a western mattress after weeks of doing so outdoors. These changes are often tied to personal struggles with frustration and guilt over the large number choices they have for everything while the communities they left have few resources...

The adventure of international aid work is not a cursed fate. Our responsibility as a community is to identify and limit the risks and harms of humanitarian service. SalusWorld attempts to do this and understands that international humanitarian crisis situations are as horrifying for the local population as for the national and international staff there to offer support and services. It is difficult to be intimately intertwined with personal suffering without returning home with that weight.

(Pulled from http://www.apa.org/international/pi/2011/12/trauma.aspx).