



**American Friends
Service Committee**

Working for change

AFSC in Latin America and the Caribbean



AFSC has been present in Latin America and the Caribbean since 1927, walking alongside local partners to address issues such as poverty, inequity, social exclusion, violence, migration, and forced displacement.

Photo: Omar Ponce/AFSC

Our strategy

We focus on issues of migration and internal forced displacement, populations requiring international protection, and returned and deported individuals by:

- Accompanying migrants to promote positive change under hostile and violent conditions.
- Researching, documenting, and disseminating information about the realities migrants face in their journey.
- Advocating to transform the narrative, political and legislative frameworks, and practices that stigmatize, criminalize, and harm populations within the context of human mobility.
- Strategically aligning work to meet immediate needs with long-term approaches to address the structural causes of migration.

We work at the local and grassroots levels by promoting the participation and leadership of women, youth, the LGBTQ-I community, and other vulnerable groups that face discrimination. We provide conflict analysis, promote a culture of peace, and support civic engagement and community organizing.

Vision

A just, peaceful, and sustainable world free of violence, inequality, and oppression.

Mission

Guided by the Quaker belief in the divine light of each person, AFSC works with communities and partners worldwide to challenge unjust systems and promote lasting peace.

Our work

- Regional Human Mobility and Migration
- Shared and Sustainable Peace
- Strategic Humanitarian Support

Where we work

AFSC works in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and with strategic alliances in Haiti and Honduras.

Regional Human Mobility and Migration Program

AFSC builds positive change in the narratives, practices, and political and legislative frameworks that have generated hostile conditions for migrants and forcibly displaced populations. We strengthen networks, collectives, civil society, and grassroots organizations by documenting and sharing the experiences of displaced populations

and communities. We promote human rights by placing key messages before the public, government institutions, and other stakeholders.

With allies, we monitor the human rights situation of individuals under a mobility context in the region by documenting the circumstances and needs of migrants.



Mexico

Together with ally organizations in the region and AFSC programs in the United States, we provide research, documentation, and advocacy on migrant detention in border contexts. We are present in Tijuana, Baja California (northern border), and San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas (southern border).

AFSC is part of the Transborder Migration and Gender Table (Mexico chapter), Work Groups on Migratory Policies in Mexico, the Promoting Group against Migratory Detention and Torture, the Human Rights Monitoring and Observation Collective in south-east Mexico, the Migratory Monitoring and Observation Collective in Tijuana and the 1597TJ Collective.



Guatemala

In Guatemala, AFSC works to strengthen and accompany civil society networks and organizations in political advocacy. We facilitate intersectional spaces for dialogue, generate strategic information, and promote collaborative work among civil society organizations on behalf of migrant populations.

AFSC is part of the Migratory Issues Civil Society Coordinating Group, the Transborder Migrations and Gender Table (Guatemala chapter), the Regional Network of Civil Organizations for Immigration (RROCM) – Guatemala chapter, and the Coalition of Civil Society Organizations for Cooperation and Asylum Agreements.



El Salvador

In El Salvador, AFSC promotes political advocacy among civil society organizations working to address internal forced displacement due to generalized violence.

We draft and publish annual reports on internal forced displacement for the Global Migration Forum, create open spaces for dialogue among civil society and government agencies, and promote exchanges with asylum judges in other countries to demonstrate the need to provide asylum status to Salvadorans.

AFSC is a member of the national chapter of the Regional Network of Civil Organizations for Migrations (RROCM) and the Civil Society Roundtable Against Forced Displacement due to Violence in El Salvador.

The Shared and Sustainable Peace Program: A focus on youth

AFSC's work in shared and sustainable peace promotes accessible and safe spaces where young people have the freedom to assemble, express themselves, and participate in activities related to their own diverse and particular needs and interests, as well as in decision-making processes that promote their well-being.



Guatemala

Since 2012 AFSC in Guatemala has created accessible and safe spaces for advancing human rights. We work with youth to develop civic skills and promote their participation in political systems to transform narratives that oppress, stigmatize, and exclude them.

We work together with grassroots organizations and our partners in Guatemala that use participatory methodologies and activism—art as activism—as emancipation tools for youth.

In Guatemala, AFSC works with Youth for Life (JoVi), Ixil Youth Network Chemol Txumb'al, Comunicares and the Ministry of Social Welfare.



El Salvador

Since 2014, AFSC has focused on the urban and semi-urban areas of Mejicanos and Tonacatepeque. We see youth as agents of change, and we support them in learning how to create safe, self-caring spaces where they are able to express themselves without being judged or repressed.

Through partnerships with Nuevo Amanecer de El Salvador Association (ANADES) and the Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad (CIS), we work with the Sol Mayor Collective in Mejicanos and the Juvenil Vertientes Romero Collective and the Pioneras de Paz Collective in Tonacatepeque.



Art as a transformational tool

Through art, youth explore power relationships at the cultural and structural levels and become change agents within their community.

Inset photos (L to R): David Tobasura/AFSC, Beth Rooney/Pozen Family Center for Human Rights, AFSC, Oceano Azul Photography, Omar Ponce/AFSC, Omar Ponce/AFSC. Background photos: Omar Ponce/AFSC (facing page), AFSC.



Photo: Luis Ochoa

Strategic humanitarian support

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed and precipitated an acute humanitarian crisis in communities throughout the region. The state of emergency declared by many countries has also allowed governments to push forward policies that would ordinarily be met with resistance. For example, forced and violent evictions of rural communities have increased to make way for extractive industries and others seeking to take the land.

Where we have strategic partnerships, AFSC is responding to the resulting humanitarian crises on

multiple levels. To reduce the community transmission of the virus, we have provided basic health protection kits and first aid care supplies. Where people have been forcibly evicted, we have also provided materials to rebuild homes, basic household goods, water containers, and food.

Our approach is one of solidarity that lasts beyond immediate needs and is strongly linked with our work toward just responses to forced displacement and migration and just and sustainable peace.

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