

A nighttime aerial photograph of Guatemala City, showing a dense urban landscape with numerous buildings and streets illuminated by city lights. The sky is dark with some light clouds. The text is overlaid on the lower left portion of the image.

NAVIGATING DONORS & THE STATE: POWER DYNAMICS IN GUATEMALAN CIVIL SOCIETY

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RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To investigate how national-level non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Guatemala navigate the power dynamics that exist with two different actors: 1) government and 2) international donor organizations.

Two questions guided this research:

- 1) To what extent do national NGOs in Guatemala influence the public sector by pushing for policy and structural reform?
- 2) How do partnerships with international donor organizations either empower or constrain Guatemalan NGOs?

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION





10 in-depth interviews, lasting from 45-90 minutes, with the executive directors of national-level NGOs.



The directors I interviewed worked at a wide range of organizations.

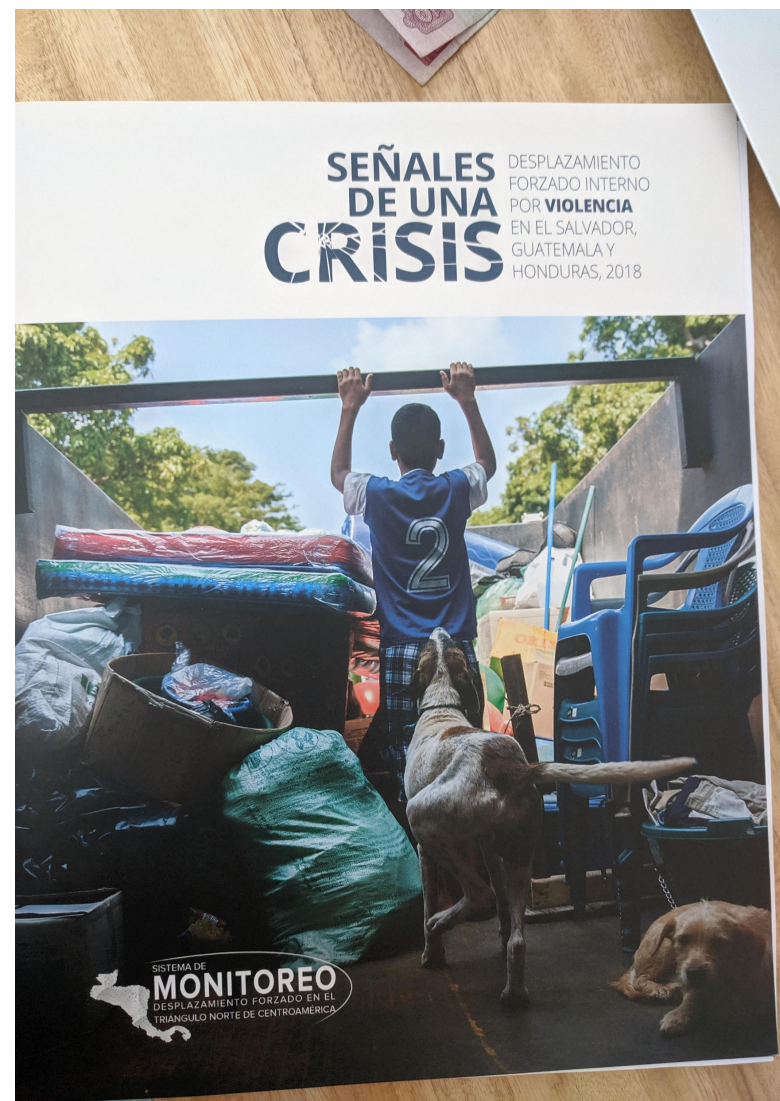


Only inclusion criteria were that the organization be a registered entity *within* Guatemala, not an international entity that originated elsewhere.



Organization	Thematic focus
Asociación BPD – Bienestar, Progreso, Desarrollo	Health, food security & civic participation
Asociación de Mujeres Ixpiyakok	Health, food security & civic participation
Asociación Pop No'j	Migration & indigenous rights advocacy
Comité de Iglesias Evangélicas de Guatemala	Food security & civic participation
Cristosal Guatemala	Migration & human rights research & advocacy
Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales	Social sciences research
Fundación Doulos	Urban education & youth leadership
Instituto Centroamericano de Estudios Sociales y Desarrollo	Migration research & advocacy
Instituto de Aprendizaje para la Reconciliación Social	Antiracism dialogue, peace & reconciliation education
Wuqu' Kawoq	Public health care & research





PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

“Some mayor offices are willing to work with us, and others see us as a ‘rebel’ – saying we stir up people to make political demands.”

“We don’t see local government as a source of conflict – we just see that they lack funds and capacity, so they are usually grateful for our partnership.”

“The state is a source of conflict, yes. But part of our strategy is how to turn the state into a partner.”

- How do you see your organization’s relationship with the local, regional or national government?
- Do you spend time on advocacy?
- Is the government more of a partner or a source of conflict?
- Do you think your NGO has had an impact on any local, regional or national policy issue?

“NGOs are the only ones doing what the state is supposed to be doing – supporting people to organize and have their voice heard.”

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: DONOR RELATIONS

“International funding supports whatever is ‘in style.’ So if you find a way to align with their topics, you can get funding.”

“Our greatest weakness is that we are completely dependent on international NGOs for funding.”

“It’s like you’re no longer doing your work, but instead, you’re just writing proposals and filling out reports that no one actually reads.”

“The best donors are those that understand ‘flexibility’ and allow for adjustments along the way in budgeting and programming.”

- What funding sources are you aware of that are available? International? National?
- What types of funding are you currently receiving?
- What types of projects/programs have gotten the most funding and from whom?
- What are the requirements of donors of you?
- Are there sources of funding that you are aware of but that you do not pursue? If so, why not?



NEXT STEPS?



¡GRACIAS! THANK YOU!