

Restoring Hope

ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF MIGRATION



IN GUATEMALA, Maily Lucia (above) lives with her mother and older sister. Before your love provided education for the women in her village, Maily's mother was unable to farm and use agriculture as a means to support her family. Your generous gift will help us reach farther so that children across Central America will have healthy, nutritious meals each day.

Across Central America, a host of factors are driving high levels of migration, especially among youth. Research indicates that grinding poverty and lack of economic opportunities are the major push factors, but violence and political instability are also key drivers of migration. Back-to-back hurricane systems Eta and Iota that followed similar destructive paths across the region in 2020, as well as the heavy toll of the COVID pandemic, have only further exacerbated the dire situation for many Central Americans.

But that's not the whole story.

IN EL SALVADOR, Williams (below, left), a 30-year-old father of two, was able to earn a diploma in cocoa production and has started his own chocolate business. Williams buys fermented cocoa beans, toasts, grinds and mixes them with sugar and spices to make a delicious product. His wife, Margarita, and their two children help to package the chocolates. The love of congregations like yours paid Williams' tuition expenses and now Williams can provide for his family.

IN HONDURAS, Dilcia (above, right), 21, learned the basics of coffee cultivation and is working on her family's farm, hoping to become part of the next generation of agricultural entrepreneurs. Dilcia watched many of her peers leave for urban areas in search of more stable income opportunities, but because of congregations like yours, Dilcia is able to attend technical trainings and learn the skills she needs to remain home and be successful.

Both Williams and Dilcia felt compelled to leave everything they had and knew in search of a better life, but the love and generosity of congregations like yours is restoring their hope for a future where they are now — a future where migration isn't their only option.



Oscar Leiva Martinez for LWR



Thousands of young adults across Central America lack these kinds of economic opportunities. But your love can make a real difference. **Your congregation can reach our neighbors before they leave home by giving the gift of hope through education for young adults like Williams and Dilcia.** ■



Mail your congregation's gift to:

Lutheran World Relief, PO Box 17061
Baltimore, MD 21297-1061

or give online at lwr.org/congregations.

📍 In El Salvador, I SEE HOPE

a Reflection by Carolyn Barker-Villena, Senior Regional Director, Latin America

Whenever I return from visiting our neighbors in Central America, I can't stop thinking about the places I visited and the people I met — **people not despairing but filled with hope and working to improve their lives and their communities.**

In their faces I see so much hope for a life that would sustain them and their families. The same hope I see in the eyes of children, women and men attempting to cross the border into the US, seeking asylum. **All the young people I meet in El Salvador, one of three countries that make up the Northern Triangle, are clear that they want to remain in their homes and avoid the treacherous journey north.** But a history of gang violence, weak government presence, corruption and limited job opportunities makes that desire to stay in their country all the more challenging.

No matter what you believe about the border crisis, we can all agree that Salvadorans should have a real chance to thrive in their home country. And that the youth of El Salvador, with their hope and desire to grow old at home, are worth investing in.

This is not an easy task and not one that can be done alone. It takes congregations like yours working in partnership with organizations like Lutheran World Relief, alongside local and international governments. It is through these partnerships that we have seen the social fabric of communities strengthened and thousands more Central Americans earning enough income to support their families.

Yes, people continue to migrate. And yes, there is still a long way to go until El Salvador and its neighboring countries in

the Northern Triangle, Honduras and Guatemala, are stable enough to ensure their own people's future. **But your love — our love — must persist in the Northern Triangle as we address the root causes of migration. Real change takes time and commitment.**

We all have the same hope for our children: a future.

By supporting Lutheran World Relief, your congregation's love can invest in making your neighbors' hope for a future at home a real possibility. ■



Carolyn Barker-Villena congratulates a new graduate in El Salvador who earned a diploma in cocoa management. The education program teaches the basics of cocoa cultivation, export and entrepreneurship.