

Tzikin Fenix Tzikin Phoenix

“Tzikin” in most Maya languages means bird, who knows of no migratory boundaries. The Phoenix (Fenix in Spanish) in many traditions is a metaphor for hope and faith that should never be lost, regardless of the obstacles.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The creation of a non-profit non-governmental organization in the United States with a counter-part in Guatemala is needed in order to provide support for the return and reintegration of Guatemalan deportees. In 2006, 18,366 Guatemalans were deported to Guatemala,¹ and 2007 estimates of the number of individuals deported are greater than 24,000.² The name of this entity is: Tzikin Fenix.

The driving force behind this initiative has been the General Consul of Guatemala to Miami, the Hon. Beatriz Illescas Putzeys, after experiencing - first hand - as Consul first in Houston, Texas and then in Miami, Florida, the personal stories and great suffering the deportees are enduring.³

There is an immediate pressing need to help address the problems facing Guatemalan nationals deported from the U.S.A. by assisting them in their return and helping them reintegrate into productive lives in Guatemala.

Tzikin Fenix's work consists of **FIVE** main areas of assistance:

- 1) Preparation of a safety-net in the event of deportation through financial education, and "return savings" or "emergency insurance";
- 2) Information, telecommunications and transport support immediately prior to and following deportation;
- 3) Vocational support, including financial literacy, financial access, facilitating or creating employment opportunities, small business education;
- 4) Family reunification assistance for those whose families are split due to deportation;
- 5) Data Collection on deportees by working with existing research organizations that may already be collecting data on deportees including names, numbers, contact information in Guatemala, information on children left behind in the United States, as well as identifying the number of deportees with felony convictions that are returning.

The non-profit will work independently of the Guatemalan and United States Governments but will work in partnership, cooperation and transparency with the

¹ Source: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

² Source: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala.

³ See Appendix A for Statement of General Consul Beatriz Illescas Putzeys.

Governments of both the US and Guatemala, non-governmental organizations, universities, research institutes and private sector agencies that can assist in fulfilling its mission.

II. STATEMENT OF NEED

According to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 18,366 Guatemalans were deported to Guatemala in 2006, and from January - July 2007, 11,458 were deported.⁴ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Guatemala estimates that the number of individuals deported from the US in 2007 is greater than 24,000.⁵ The growing number of deportees presents an alarming issue for Guatemala. The lack of employment opportunities in the country coupled with the dearth of policies or programs to help deportees, means that they struggle on their own to reintegrate and start productive lives away from crime.

For the deportees, the return to their homeland brings with it a myriad of pressing social issues. Many of the deportees have been living outside Guatemala over ten years and are very vulnerable upon their arrival to Guatemala City, a city which they often do not know since much of the undocumented migration from Guatemala to the U.S. has been from remote Departments such as Huehuetenango.

Often deportees arrive to Guatemala City with no money and no knowledge as to how to make it back to their villages and homes. Many times, there is no home to return to, as migrants either have been out of the country for a decade or more, or sold their land and homes to finance their trip to the US. Some Guatemalan community leaders in Palm Beach County have reported that deportees are being robbed and women raped as they journey back to their homes. Many deportees arrive in Guatemala City on "jet pats" military planes - often their first time flying - after days or months of lingering in detention centers in the U.S. with no access their families or ways to communicate with them. Many deportees, often women, arrive in Guatemala alone without their United States-born children, who are left behind, as the parents struggle to secure a foothold in Guatemala before uprooting their US citizen children to join the parent(s) in an unfamiliar land. The current plight of the deportees is one of much suffering, demanding immediate attention.

Many Guatemalans are deported after experiencing minor issues with the law in the United States such as driving without a license or other misdemeanors. Many other Guatemalans have been and continue to be deported for felonies (i.e. gang or drug involvement). These deportees pose local social and criminal problems and serious issues contributing to the strengthening of transnational gangs. This group needs particular attention in tracking them and creating socio-economic rehabilitation programs for them. Tzikin Fenix will focus on ways to effectively capture and document this existing population in order to work in specific programs for their rehabilitation and re-integration.

⁴ Refer to "Leveraging Remittances for Families and Communities," Hearing before the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere of the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, October 2007, available <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/38140.pdf>.

⁵ The Consul General of Guatemala in Miami estimates that 100-150 Guatemalans are deported from the U.S.A on a daily basis.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Overview

Overall the project will provide the following five areas of support:

1.) "Emergency Savings" or "Emergency Insurance":

- Facilitating savings into an emergency fund or purchase of an "emergency insurance" in the event of deportation, such that migrants living without documentation in the United States can put aside money that they can access if they are deported or upon voluntary return to Guatemala.
- Provide financial literacy and training about savings, loans, investment, remittances, opening small businesses.

2.) Information and emergency assistance prior to and immediately following deportation:

- Information:** Providing information in detention centers, on planes and/or upon arrival about types and sources of assistance available to deportees;
- Emergency Insurance:** Access emergency insurance at airport upon arrival, to cover costs of calls over 5 minutes, purchase cell phones upon arrival and cover travel costs to their home.
- Telecommunication:** facilitating deportees' ability to call relatives upon return through emergency funds with which can buy phone cards or mobile telephone(as above) or, in cases where deportees do not have that, by providing 5 minute phone cards for calls to family members.
- Transport:** Coordinating/supporting transport from airport in Guatemala City back to towns of origin for those that do not have emergency insurance to cover such costs.
- **Emergency Shelter:** Partner with local NGO's , churches and other migrant organizations on the ground to provide shelter and food for deportees with no home in Guatemala to return to.

3.) Vocational support:

Establish **Employment and Entrepreneurship Centers** (hereinafter EEC's) in Departments of Huehuetenango, San Marcos, Quetzaltenango and El Quiche to provide services to deportees, returnees and remittance recipients in order to:

- Provide financial literacy and training about savings, loans, investment, remittances, opening small businesses.
- Facilitate financial access;
- Facilitate or create employment opportunities through vocational training, job creation, etc.;
- Provide trainings and consultation in establishing small businesses;
- Promote and help create links between Guatemalans who did not leave and deportees with Guatemalans in the Diaspora to work on Diaspora-Homeland projects.

4.) Family reunification and reintegration:

- Establish database of separated family members;
- Coordinate with ICRC to trace and reunite separated family members;
- Create a list of *pro bono* and legal services attorney's in States in the United States with Guatemalan populations to assist in family reunification matters.
- Work with deportees and their families around issues of reintegration, including counseling to deal with issues arising from long term separation, family dynamics, intra-family violence and alcoholism.
- Coordinate with non-governmental organizations in Guatemala and in those Departments dealing with such issues.

5.) Data collection/Database

- Partner with research organizations that may have already been collecting data on deportees, to create a data base of all past and present deportees: names, addresses, place of origin, immediate family location, cell phones, e mail addresses with particular attention to capture the same for deportees with felony convictions.

Implementation

Specific steps of establishing the center and developing its programs are detailed below. They include:

The first step will be to create a 501(c)(3) in the United States and a counterpart to it in Guatemala. The U.S. non-profit, will be based in Miami, Florida given its proximity to Central America and access to the Consulates whose offices are in Miami. The US office will work with the cooperation of the Guatemalan consulates in the United States.

The Guatemalan counter part, will be based in Guatemala City. It will establish a small office, working also from a satellite office in the airport in cooperation with the Government of Guatemala to meet and work with deportees.

Staffing: The 501(c)(3) in the United States will hire an Executive Director, a Project Manager, a Grants administrator and an administrative assistant. Tzikin Fenix will also engage the help of University students who will work in this effort as interns. In Guatemala City, there will be an Executive Director a Project Manager, two case workers and a bilingual Administrative Assistant. The Guatemala City office will also engage University students as interns. An effort will be made to fill the positions of case workers with interns as well. The non-profit will establish Employment and Entrepreneurship Centers (EECs) in the Departments of Huehuetenango, San Marcos, Quetzaltenango and El Quiche, where many deportees originate. Each EEC will have 2-3 staff people (to manage the center and its funding, develop and implement programs, coordinate with other programs and provide necessary administrative support).

The Executive Director to run the U.S. operations and coordinate with the Guatemalan counterpart and the Director to run the Guatemalan operations have already been identified. They are two individuals with extensive experience in public policy, NGO work and great experience and credibility in the fields of human rights, indigenous rights and gender issues. Their resumes are included in the appendix.

A webpage will be immediately developed and constantly updated for both the U.S. and Guatemalan counterpart.

The five core types of assistance the Tzikin Fenix will provide are detailed below.

I. Pre- and Immediate Post-Return:

The pre- and post-return assistance is comprised of several parts:

- A. Developing a Return Savings Fund (*Emergency Fund*), in partnership with business sector partners, that deportees and returnees can access upon return;
- B. Providing financial access education to Guatemalan migrants in US;
- C. Providing immediate assistance and information to deportees, including referrals to necessary services and connection to Employment and Entrepreneurship Centers in their Departments of origin, where relevant;

Each of these components is detailed below:

A. Return Emergency Fund:

Work with Money Transfer Operators (MTO's), banks and insurance companies to develop an Emergency Insurance that will work in the following way.

This Emergency Fund can be purchased by Guatemalans in the United States as a safety net in the event that they are deported. Likewise, if they choose to return to Guatemala they can also access this funding. While in the US they can open emergency returns savings accounts for the sum of at least \$150, or buy insurance that would provide them with at least that amount, that they can access at the airport in Guatemala. This Emergency Fund will cover the costs of buying calling cards or a mobile phone, and their transport back to their homes and cover at least some other immediate basic expenses and needs. This will address the present situation where deportees arrive in Guatemala City with no money and no access to their family members.

Product design details of the emergency insurance will have to be worked out with the relevant banking or insurance agencies, however guiding ideas can include: emergency fund should be valid in perpetuity; the migrant can only access the funding upon return/deportation to Guatemala or after five years have lapsed whether in Guatemala or the US; emergency funds should accrue interest, preferably at an above average rate to make it more attractive. If the technology is available these funds should also be accessible using mobile phone technology.

This Emergency Fund will be promoted at all Guatemalan Consulates in the United States and the information shared with all Guatemalan community leaders in the United States via e mail and promoted at all Labor Centers in the United States with Guatemalan populations as well as tapping into local Spanish language media and Maya language radio that can distribute the information about the availability and need of such emergency insurance.

Guatemalans that purchase the Emergency Insurance will, in turn, be taking a first step toward financial access and literacy. This includes critical ideas about how savings and insurance can help provide a safety net in the event of catastrophic events, in this case deportation.

B. Financial Access Education

Financial Access Education will be promoted at all Guatemalan Consulates in the United States, by providing courses and brochures to be found at the Consulates or be given at the Mobile Consulates. They will include information about the importance of purchasing an Emergency Fund in case of deportation, opening bank accounts, etc. (though at the moment opening a bank account in the United States is not a real solution to many Guatemalans that are in the United States without documentation). In many cities across the Country, Guatemalans are prey for violent crimes against them because they carry cash with them. Many police departments across the Country have concluded that if Guatemalans would use local banks to place their money they would not be targeted as much as they are now. Despite recommendations by law enforcement in the United States, Guatemalans do not open bank accounts because they fear that if they are deported they will not be able to access their accounts. U.S. Banks that are trying to make inroads with this population, like Bank of America have not developed any program to deal with this concern. If mobile phone technology can enable them to save money in local Guatemalan banks, education can focus on this as an alternative to US banks where they are unable to open accounts.

An educational information video will be made to be shown at all Guatemala consulates in the United States while people wait to obtain their passports or resolve matters. The video will stress the importance of purchasing the Emergency Fund as well as the importance of accessing banks, when available, or other financial institutions to both save and transfer their money.

This same information will be distributed as well at all labor centers in the United States working with this population and shared with Guatemalan community leaders nationally, as well as using the Spanish language media and existing Maya language radio shows.

C. Immediate Assistance and Information

The U.S. office will immediately prepare a brochure with essential information that will be given to all the deportees on their flight back to Guatemala. On their flight back in the jet pats, along with the informational brochure, deportees will be given 5-minute calling cards which will either be donated or provided by the Government of Guatemala. Alternatively, upon their arrival in Guatemala deportees will immediately access the emergency fund or deportation insurance they purchased in the US for the purpose of purchasing more calling cards, a cell phone and pay for their transport back to their homes.

The brochure will also contain the contact information of the Guatemalan office of The Non-for –Profit and the contact information of soon to be created Employment and Entrepreneurship Centers in areas of the country that send most of the undocumented migration to the U.S- such as the Departments of Huehuetenango, Quetzaltenango, San Marcos and El Quiche.

Given that a great number of the deportees are illiterate, a video will be created, to be shown in the flights back to Guatemala that will let the deportees know that there are resources available in Guatemala once they arrive.

Upon their arrival in Guatemala, the deportees will be received by the project's Case Workers and interns such as social work students working with the Guatemalan counter part. We will approach the Guatemalan Government about providing a room at the airport where the deportees will receive information about transport home and the types of assistance available to them. During this briefing, they will be urged to contact the Employment and Entrepreneurship Centers to be created as a necessary component for their reintegration.

At this private room designated for the returning deportees at the airport, the contact information of each deportee will be taken, particularly those deportees who have children left back in the United States to assist in future family reunification. The Guatemalan office will have to coordinate with the U.S. counterpart as to this issue and create and develop a network of immigration attorneys in the United States that will be able to assist, either *pro bono* or via reduced fee in the reunification of the separated families. They will also be asked if they are computer literate and if they are, they will be told to check the website of the NGO that will always have updated information. Creating a data base of deportees is critical in order to ensure their reintegration into the society.

Telephones will be available in this designated airport room and deportees will have with them 5 minute calling cards made available to them boarding the flight back to Guatemala. The donation of 5 minute calling cards will be very helpful, yet often 5 mintues will not be sufficient time for returning nationals to arrange their return to their homes.

Tzikin Fenix will seek to work with the private sector, particularly MTO's and

Banks with offices in United States and Guatemala to create an “Emergency Fund” to be purchased in the United States, whereas if the National from Guatemala is deported, he/she will have access upon their arrival at the airport to a certain amount of money that will allow them to buy a cell phone, calling cards and arrange their private transfer back to their homes.

The MTO’s and Banks will have an office at the Guatemalan airport where they will provide this type of emergency insurance to the deportee. These financial companies, at the airport, will also provide the purchaser of such services written information of the vocational centers, the contact information of Tzikin Fenix and financial services that such private company can provide the new arrival to begin a new life in Guatemala. For example, the MTOs or Banks will develop programs to be given at the vocational Employment and Entrepreneurship Centers geared to financial literacy programs and financial access, which is an urgent challenge.⁶

For those deportees that have no family members picking them up, a bus will take those that have a place to return to the bus terminal. For those deportees that have no family or home to return to, the Guatemalan counter part will work with NGO’s and Churches in Guatemala that provide temporary shelter for those deportees in need of it.

All deportees who have a place to return to will be given information about how to safely get to the bus terminal, particularly vulnerable individuals (women, children) who will be accompanied directly to the bus terminal if necessary. Costs of transportation to the bus terminals will be covered by individuals through their emergency fund; or through the Guatemalan Government as in kind assistance; or from the private industry in effort to build philanthropic traditions; or if no better solution has been found Tzikin Fenix will cover these costs in the meantime.

Tzikin Fenix will direct deportees to its Employment and Entrepreneurship Centers (EECs) where new arrivals will find assistance and guidance as to how to set up a small business, micro-enterprise as well as have access to a list of employment opportunities, in Guatemala, or in other countries if available.⁷ More details are provided on the EECs below.

IV. Employment and Entrepreneurship Centers

The Employment and Entrepreneurship Centers (EECs) will be established in migrant places of origin such as the Departments of Huehuetenango, San Marcos, Quetzaltenango and El Quiche. The EECs have multiple goals. They will not only provide the tools for the recent arrivals to begin a new life in their homeland, but it will be a place where the “unbanked will begin to be banked”- a critical step for

⁶ See Leveraging Remittances for Families and Communities, p. 23, <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/38140.pdf>.

⁷ See Appendix A- where the General Consul of Guatemala in Miami has been exploring job opportunities for Guatemalan nationals fluent in English to work in cruise ships.

development.⁸ The EECs will provide the following services to returnees, deportees, as well as migrants' families who remained behind and other remittance receivers: employment and entrepreneurship programs; education and information about financial services; and psycho-social assistance in reintegrating into their families and communities.

These components are detailed below:

Employment and entrepreneurship programs

EECs will provide a range of employment and entrepreneurship services to help returnees and deportees as well as those who never left, including remittance receivers.

The EECs will provide trainings and ongoing consultation on starting a small business, whether with remittances received, or with savings upon return.

The EEC's will have a national job bank- asking local private companies to help in this effort- as well as opportunities abroad (cruise ships). The EEC's will promote local investment to create sustainable communities and to this end, the EEC's will have weekly workshops on matters concerning local development, access to loans, eco-tourism, micro enterprises, cooperatives and Diaspora-Homeland Partnerships. The EEC's will partner with local NGO's doing that same type of work in these Departments in order not to duplicate efforts but build on them.

Particular attention will be given to create programs geared to women deportees in these vocational centers. Migration trends have changed and many of the new immigrants to the United States from Guatemala are women.⁹

Education and Information about Financial Services

In those Employment and Entrepreneurship Centers the new arrivals will find information about the importance of savings and investment, and about financial services available to them by the private industry as well as information of the new initiatives by the new government of President Alvaro Colom, who has recently stated that the Credito Hipotecario de Guatemala has a program aimed at the returning immigrant.¹⁰

Psycho-social Assistance in Reintegrating into Their Families and Communities.

The EEC's will also seek to find partners in the region that can provide weekly or bi-weekly workshops geared at addressing issues brought on by undocumented migration, such as workshops to address intra-family violence, alcoholism, cultural

⁸ See Leveraging Remittances for Families and Communities, <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/38140.pdf>.

⁹ See Prensa Libre, http://www.prensalibre.com/pls/prensa/dentnoticia.jsp?p_cnoticia=190073&p_fedicion=111-12-07...

¹⁰ See Appendix B –Resumen Proyecto de Acciones Concretas del Nuevo Gobierno e la Unidad para la Esperanza (UNE) en apoyo de los inmigrantes y de la micro y pequena empresa.

identity, HIV/AIDS prevention and gang awareness. The EEC's will partner with the psychology and social work departments of local Universities or with NGOs already addressing these issues.

The EEC's will partner with NGO's, research institutes and both Guatemalan and U.S. Universities.

V. Data Collection

Data Collection on Deportees- Tzekin Fenix will create a database of all deportees with an effort to capture the data of those sent back because of felony convictions, and partner with local organizations working with this type of population. This will include partnering with a local research organizations that may have already begun to collect data on deportees and continue this work by continuing to collect data on current deportees to assist with family reunification matters, inform about EECs and capturing the information on deportees with felony convictions in order to tailor programs to this specific population. Possibilities for such partner research organizations are already being identified.

Deportees with Felony Convictions in the United States

According to the US State Department, during the period of 2004 - 2005, "the United States deported 9,487 Guatemalans, 2, 210 of which had a criminal record. There are few services provided to non-criminal deportees or returning migrants and none provided to criminal deportees, including convicted gang members."¹¹

Tzikin Fenix will seek to obtain information of nationals deported back because of felony convictions before they arrive to Guatemala. This population will be treated equally and with the utmost respect, yet they will be given information of programs that will be designed in partnership with local non-governmental organizations working with this criminal population. Not attending this population will alienate them and push them to a life of crime back in Guatemala, yet this population does need careful monitoring and special programs designed for their reintegration away from crime. A data base will be created specifically to quantify the numbers of deportees with felony convictions, the Departments from Guatemala they come from and thereafter create programs specifically geared toward their specific needs for reintegration, partnering with local NGO's and/ or with USAID programs to address this pressing issue demanding careful attention and solutions.

Once the programs are in place to address the most pressing needs (i.e. assistance to the current flow of deportees) Tzikin Fenix will begin to find ways to trace all those Guatemalan nationals that were deported in the last three years in order to reach out to this vulnerable population that received very little assistance in reintegration to their homeland. Tzikin Fenix will seek the assistance of all the Guatemalan Consul offices in

¹¹ Central America and Mexico Gang Assessment, Annex 2:Guatemala Profile
http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latin_america_caribbean/democracy/guatemala_profile.pdf.

the United States and research organizations to find ways to collect data on nationals deported the last three years and create a comprehensive data base in order to guide this vulnerable population to the Employment and Entrepreneurship Centers and other assistance provided by Tzikin Fenix.

Building professional capacity: training and consultation

Design and implementation components of these activities will require some specific training and ongoing consultation. The need for training is foreseen particularly in two areas: 1) Developing the airport reception and services of immediate assistance upon arrival; 2) Developing the EEC social and economic programmatic areas. It is critical that the EEC staff must be professionally able to develop and implement programs in the areas of employment and entrepreneurship. The four EECs will be established simultaneously so that staff can work together to develop the programs and receive trainings. This will have the advantage of being able to share and learn from each other's experience as they each develop the EECs, as well as bringing training efforts to scale so that all staff receive the same staff development and trainings considered necessary. It is assumed that some investment in staff development will be necessary as it is unlikely that it will be possible to find numerous highly qualified individuals immediately capable of designing and implementing this range of programming resident in the primarily rural and peripheral departments where the EECs will be established. EEC program sustainability can not just rely on importing the knowledge but must commit to long-term training and capacity-building.

The Center for International Migration and Integration (CIMI)¹² has agreed to partner on providing initial training and consultation in developing the core services of return reception and long-term socio-economic reintegration through the EECs. This will also include a study visit to Israel for key staff from Tzikin Fenix and its partner agencies. Main areas of focus include: 1) How new immigrants are received at the airport through a combination of Ministry of Interior officials and volunteer groups, which can provide a model for airport reception in Guatemala; 2) Professional programs in areas of employment and entrepreneurship including small business development centers; 3) Developing social services and programming for the integration of immigrants and returnees; 4) Developing and implementing diaspora-homeland projects and transnational cooperation.

Where possible Tzikin Fenix will also seek partners to provide regular workshops at each EEC center and will seek the help of Guatemalan Universities as well as Universities in the United States and elsewhere willing to provide training in entrepreneurship and assist with consultation to projects started.

¹² The Center for International Migration and Integration (CIMI) is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to the development of effective policies and practices in the fields of migration and integration. CIMI seeks to facilitate effective migration management through knowledge exchange, capacity-building and technical assistance to government and non-government agencies in developed and developing countries. See website www.cimi.org.il.

CONCLUSION

The creation of Tzikin Fenix to assist and reintegrate Guatemalan nationals that have been deported and continue to be deported in great numbers is an urgent matter. These returning nationals have to be reintegrated into their homeland, and assisted in re-establishing themselves socially and economically and away from crime.

The human suffering that has been documented by those that have been working with this population demands careful attention and solution(s) to a problem that has many social implications.

Tzikin Fenix will seek to assist returning Guatemalan nationals in their trip back home and help them in their reintegration through providing immediate short-term assistance upon arrival and long-term assistance in socio-economic reintegration through creating Employment and Entrepreneurship Centers (EECs) in areas in Guatemala with high emigration levels. The organization will also work in creating a data base and seek to help families that have been separated reunify by providing access to legal assistance in the United States and Guatemala to do so, and design programs for deportees with felony convictions.

The EECs will provide financial literacy and financial access, key components for development. Tzikin Fenix will work with both the USA and Guatemalan governments, other non-governmental organizations, universities, research institutions and the private sector, particularly, financial institutions.

Tzikin Fenix's work in Guatemala can soon thereafter be duplicated and expanded to address the needs of nationals of other Central American countries, Mexico and South America facing similar issues.

Prepared by Rebecca Bardach –CIMI- Center for International Migration and Integration in collaboration with Aileen Josepfs, Esq.- Honorary Consul of Guatemala in Palm Beach County Florida upon request from Ms. Beatriz Illescas Putzeys, former Consul General of Guatemala in Miami and now Consul General of Guatemala in Atlanta.

