

A nighttime aerial photograph of Guatemala City, Guatemala. The city is illuminated by numerous lights, creating a dense pattern of yellow and white dots against the dark blue night sky. In the foreground, several large, multi-story buildings are visible, some with classical architectural features like columns and arches. The buildings are lit up, and their shadows are cast on the streets below. The overall scene is a vibrant and detailed view of the city at night.

# 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

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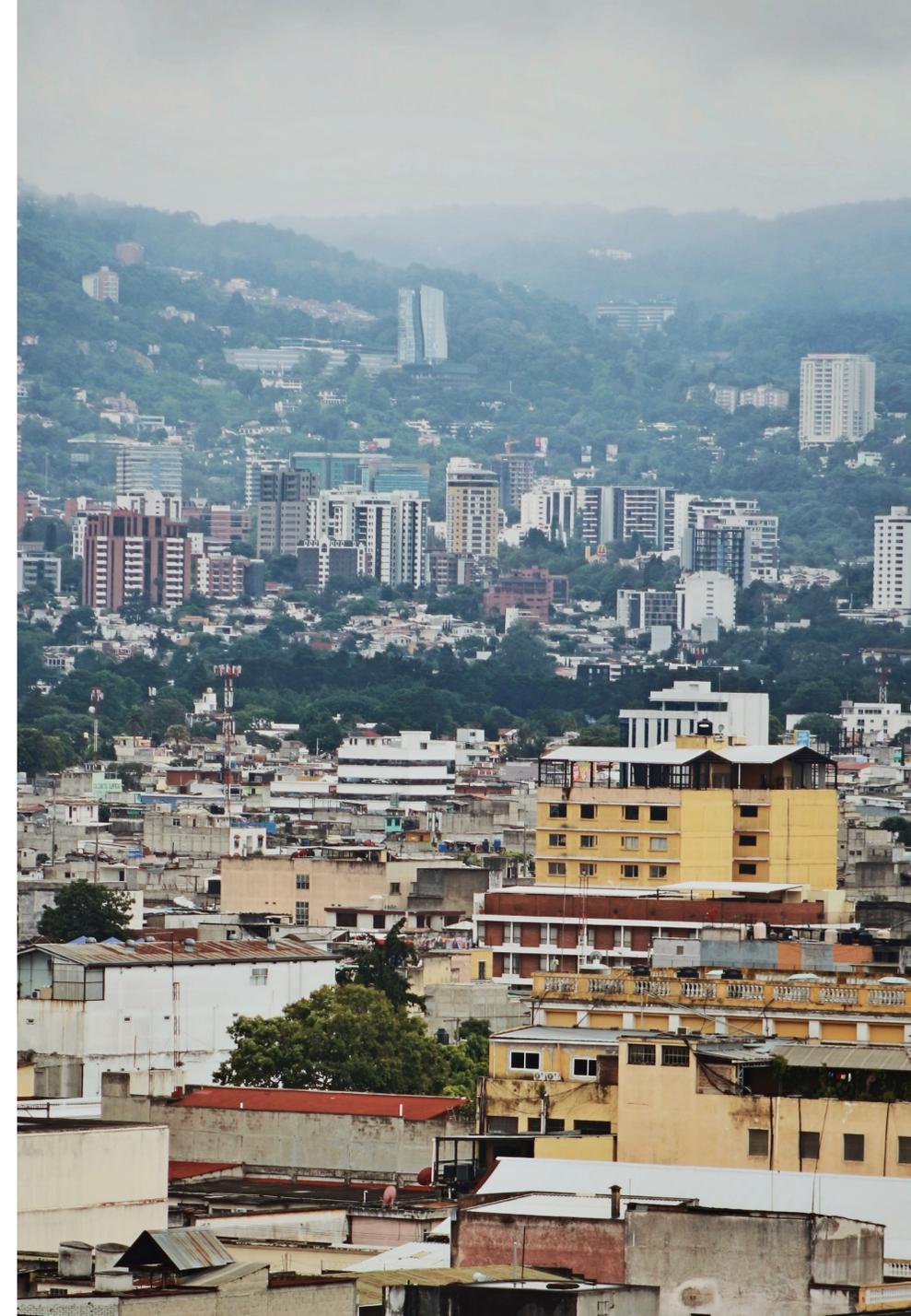
10 in-depth interviews, lasting from 45-90 minutes, with the executive directors of national-level NGOs.



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

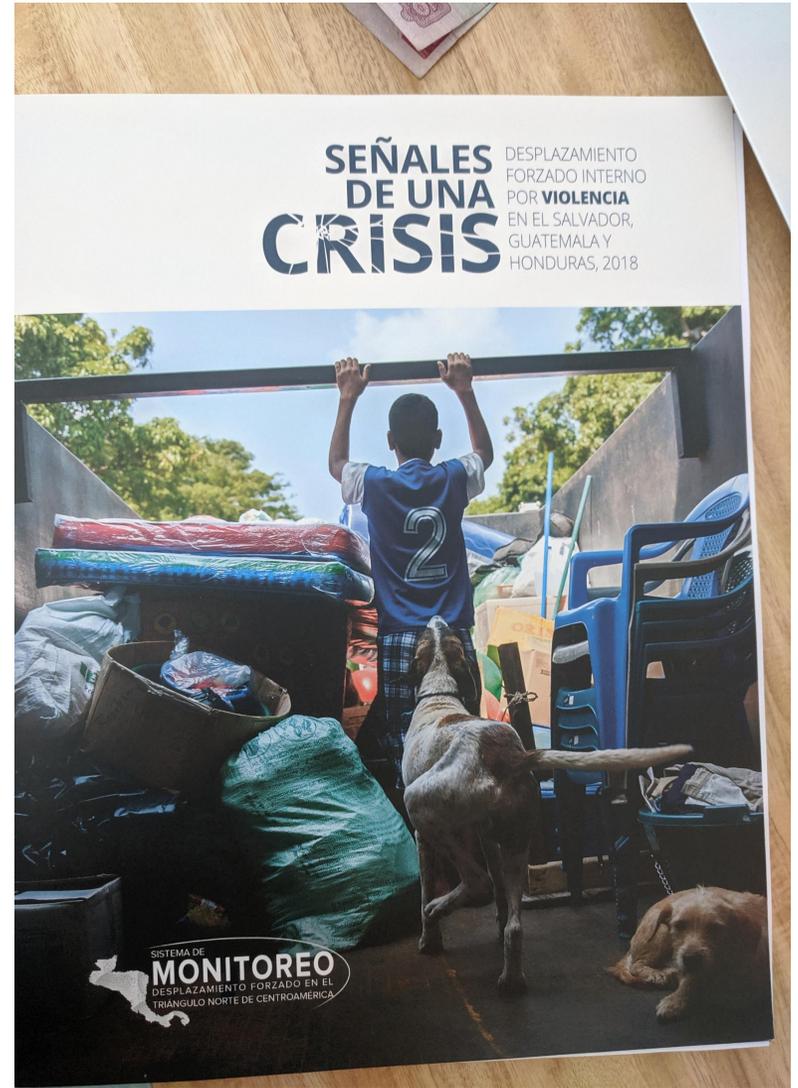
**Instituto de Aprendizaje para la Reconciliación Social**

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!** |