

MIGRANT JUSTICE TOOLKIT.

*Coast Salish Migrant Summit,
October 2025*

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credits



This toolkit is based on the documentation of collective conversations among migrant justice organizers during the Migrant Summit held in Vancouver, Coast Salish (British Colombia) in October of 2025.

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Toolkit Lead: Evelyn Encalada Grez

Toolkit Lead Assistant: Lucy Hardman

Toolkit Graphic Design: jade guthrie

Toolkit Reviewers: Regina Baeza Martinez, Cenen Bagon, Byron Cruz, Kendra Strauss

Notetakers: Angela Bohorquez Oviedo, Bella Dansereau, Linh Le



The BC Migrant Summit was held on the unceded traditional territories of the **x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.**

As racialized im/migrants and former refugees, we acknowledge we are guests and settlers on these Indigenous lands while carrying our own histories of colonization and forced displacement from the Global South. We are committed to Indigenous sovereignty and land back in so called "Canada" and throughout our precious planet.

**land
acknowledgement**



Purpose

This toolkit is intended to serve as a historical record and resource for knowledge sharing based on the Migrant Summit that took place between October 17-19 of 2025 in so-called Vancouver.

The idea of this summit surfaced in conversation and engagement with migrant community organizers about the need to have structured time to solidify and liaise with grassroots migrant rights organizations to strengthen the movement at a time of growing anti-immigrant backlash, authoritarianism, and emboldened white supremacy.

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We thank all **in-kind funders** such as British Columbia General Employees' Union (BCGEU) for providing their office space to hold the summit and the Anti Fascist Media Initiative (AFMI) for creating and donating the art included in this toolkit.

Migrant Summit Coordinating Committee

Evelyn Encalada Grez, SFU Labour Studies, Justicia for Migrant Workers ON & BC

Regina Baeza Martinez, Justicia for Migrant Workers BC

Byron Cruz, Migrant Journeys

Ingrid Mendez, Migrant Workers Centre

Nicolas Serrano, Bici Libre, member organization of the International Migrants Alliance

Cenen Bagon, Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights

Chris Sorio, Migrante Canada

Ismail Askin, Worker Solidarity Network

Migrants' Prayer for Fallen Workers

Beloved sisters, brothers,

We gather in remembrance of those
who left their homes
with courage in their hearts and labor in
their hands,
but never returned.

We remember the workers who built
lives across oceans,
who cleaned, cared, planted, harvested,
and healed —
whose sweat watered foreign soil,
whose names are often forgotten by
the world they helped sustain.

We remember by name those who have
passed in struggle and in their work.



This toolkit is a spark. **Your action is the fire.**
Inspiration alone does not change the world.
Action does.
Teach. Protect. Organize. Lead. Mentor. Record.
Fund. Fight. Love.
Justice for All. Solidarity Across Borders.
Power to the People.



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BC migrant summit: context

01

“The times we are in are tough. As migrants, we are targets of scapegoating by governments and corporations...”

- Nicolas Serrano (*Bici Libre and International Migrants Alliance*)

We are living in a time of global polycrisis with the escalation of wars, violence, and genocide along with the destruction of the planet and of wealth concentration among a handful of billionaires. Emboldened by the ideology of the far-right, governments and political parties across the world are blaming im/migrants, refugees, and stateless peoples for socio-economic crises rather than the tenets of global capitalism itself. The expansion of ICE and the immigration industrial complex in the USA, growing xenophobia in the Global South, and the criminalization of search-and-rescue missions for seaborne migrants and refugees from the African continent in the Mediterranean are some examples.

Canada is not immune to this contemporary fascist global tide. There has been a concerning rise of anti-immigrant and racist sentiments in the last few years that have erroneously blamed racialized im/migrants for a range of social problems, ranging from the housing crisis to unemployment. Yet as a white-settler nation-state, Canada has historically differentiated between desirable white citizens and racialized others, who, despite building the nation, have never fully belonged to it nor reaped the benefits of their own labour. The Canadian nation-state was violently imposed and constructed by Indigenous land dispossession and im/migrant exploitation, which are processes that continue to this day.

While racist policies and laws are not new, the introduction of Bill C-12 and Bill C-2, whether passed or stalled, reveals a deepening political will to erode im/migrant workers' rights, safety, and security, with consequences that extend to all working people. For the first time, the federal government can cancel work permits and visas for entire groups of people without individual assessment or the right to appeal, simply by declaring it in the 'public interest', a term the bills leave undefined. Refugee claimants who have been in Canada for more than a year, including survivors of gender-based violence and people whose home countries became dangerous after they arrived, will no longer receive a hearing before an independent legal process. Instead, they face deportation based on a paper review with no right to appeal.

For migrant workers, a single refused work permit application can now strip them of legal status overnight, leaving them unable to work, access health care, or challenge employer abuse. These changes don't just harm im/migrants, they weaken labour protections for everyone by driving the most vulnerable workers underground, where they cannot report wage theft nor unsafe conditions without fearing deportation. Fewer rights for a group of workers lowers the bar for the rights of all workers. In sum, these bills along with inconsistencies of immigration and labour policy at federal and provincial levels of government threaten to further entrench worker precarity, create more undocumented workers, and deny im/migrant workers their basic rights. Precarity of life and work are predominantly experienced by racialized workers from the Global South who have been forced to migrate for survival.

With this awareness in mind, more than twenty grassroots organizations and dozens of activists, academics and community-labour organizers met on October 18th and 19th in the headquarters of the BCGEU in Vancouver, in the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, to share their perspectives and experiences in providing support to migrant workers in Canada. During this time, participants engaged in a critical analysis of the migrant justice movement's capacities, as well as the challenges faced in the current context of anti-immigrant backlash. To ensure a safe space for dialogue, the summit was invite-only but opened with an engaging public forum on Friday, October 17th.

The goals of the summit were:

- To liaise with grassroots migrant rights organizations to strengthen the movement at a time of growing anti-immigrant backlash, authoritarianism and emboldened white supremacy.
- To strengthen relationship building and dialogue among migrant grassroots advocacy organizations.
- To contribute capacity building to amplify the demands of the migrant justice movement in the province.
- To mobilize resources from the University into community grassroots initiatives.

Participants engaged in a series of group discussions, workshops, and presentations over a vast array of topics. We nourished our bodies and spirits with delicious food reflecting our cultures and made space for connecting.

This toolkit is meant to summarize the main lessons of the Summit, synthesize key themes and share strategies for activists and organizers. Furthermore, the toolkit endeavours to provide additional resources and a directory of participating organizations to facilitate collaboration and future organizing efforts.

BC migrant summit: context

day one

STATUS FOR ALL

@armi.yan

9:00AM-9:30AM	arrivals and refreshments
9:30AM-9:40AM	land acknowledgment and welcome
9:40AM-10:30AM	introductions
10:30AM-10:45AM	coffee break
10:45AM-12:15PM	open discussion: what are our shared struggles? how do we do our work?
12:15PM-1:00PM	lunch
1:00PM-3:00PM	lessons from the USA (<i>joined by organizer from National Day Laborer Organizing Network, on zoom</i>)
3:30PM-3:40PM	body break
3:40PM-5:00PM	art workshop: lessons from Lapu-Lapu, theatre of the oppressed
5:00PM-6:00PM	community dinner

day two

9:00AM-9:30AM	arrivals and refreshments
9:30AM-10:45AM	open discussion: ethical research
10:45AM-10:50AM	body break
10:50AM-12:00PM	workshop: grant-writing
12:00PM-1:00PM	lunch
1:00PM-2:30PM	lawyers forum: organizing with the law
2:30PM-3:30PM	discussion: what's next?
3:30PM	final community action



summit program

lessons from Lapu-Lapu: an art workshop

On the first day of the Summit, we came together to participate in an interactive art workshop facilitated by **Diane Zapata of Migrante BC** and **Erie Maestro**. This workshop was intended to process the Lapu-Lapu Festival tragedy on April 26, 2025, during which 11 people were killed and more than 30 injured at a Filipino festival in East Vancouver. Many of the Summit attendees, including Zapata herself, witnessed the violence and loss of safety firsthand. The aim of the workshop is to create a space where people feel embraced by the community and to restore a sense of safety that was lost. The session began by inviting participants to acknowledge the grief, anger, and pain experienced by the community. The lives lost were named and honoured, and the participants were encouraged to reflect on their personal reactions, its impact on their immediate communities, and their relationship to the space where the tragedy occurred.

The participants then engaged in a collective mapping activity using the metaphor of a tree. Three questions were posed to participants:

1. **What are the root causes of the massacre?**
2. **What keeps us strong and holds our communities together?**
3. **What are acts of care, solidarity and remembrance that can help us heal?**

The activity concluded with a brief reflection on which part of the tree participants felt most connected to.



Migrante BC is a grassroots, volunteer-led organization of migrants from the Filipino community and allies in solidarity. Their advocacy centers on the rights and welfare of migrant Filipino workers in BC including fair wages, Status for All, justice for victims of trafficking and criticizing the Philippines' system of export-labour. **For workshop inquiries please contact: [dianezapata "dot" migbc "at" gmail "dot" com](mailto:dianezapata@migbc.com), or [migrante "dot" bc "at" gmail "dot" com](mailto:migrante@bc.migbc.com)**

1. Participant recognition of structural and systemic issues. The participants identified systemic factors underlying the tragedy like underfunded social and mental health services, police militarization, colonial and inequitable healthcare systems, and precarious immigration. Many emphasized how isolation and alienation contribute to vulnerability within migrant and marginalized communities too.

2. Shared experiences of grief, fear, and trauma. The participants expressed grief, anger, fear, and collective trauma from the Lapu-Lapu Day tragedy. Several responses referenced intergenerational trauma and the emotional impact of witnessing violence within one's community.

3. Community care as a source of strength. The participants highlighted compassion, solidarity, and mutual care as key sources of resilience. Relationships with family, friends, faith communities, and chosen family were identified as essential supports, alongside practices of collective grieving, listening, and holding space for one another.

4. A desire for collective healing spaces. The participants emphasized the importance of creating spaces for healing and reflection, such as community gatherings, healing circles, memorials, and opportunities for dialogue and artistic expression.

5. Commitment to collective action and safer communities. Participants expressed a desire to transform grief into collective action while continuing to honour the victims and support affected families. Examples of this could be community organizing, advocacy for better healthcare and mental health resources, stronger public safety measures, and increased solidarity across communities.

lessons from Lapu-Lapu: emergent themes and observations



Theatre of the Oppressed invites participants to move into their bodies and beyond intellectual analysis, exploring safe and empowering ways to respond to tragedy and conflict that honour our voices. It also helps us practice ways we can be agents of positive and effective change against oppressive behaviours, structures, and systems.

Theatre of the Oppressed was developed collectively in Brazil in the 1970s and 80s, led by dramaturg Augusto Boal. The main purpose of Theatre of the Oppressed is: "to remove from the spectator, the condition of being just a 'spectator.'"



In this short workshop, Angelo Moroni introduced participants to "Image Theatre," the core technique of Theatre of the Oppressed. In Image Theatre, participants use their bodies to create meaningful personal images, which become part of a collective composition – many individuals responding together to a shared issue. In this case, we were responding to the Lapu-Lapu tragedy in Vancouver, BC.

Angelo has been facilitating Theatre of the Oppressed for 20 years, and practising for 30. He has facilitated countless workshops at universities, community centres, cultural centres, conferences, and events – for diverse communities such as: immigrants, unhoused communities, women, people with disabilities, the incarcerated, groups in support of Palestine, youth, and children.



Email: angelo "dot" e "dot" moroni "at" gmail "dot" com
Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/angelo-moroni-9889938a>

theatre of the oppressed

ethical research discussion

07

Conducting research with migrant workers can be extractive and harmful. While we need to collect data about our communities and document the precarity they are subjected to by state policies, research is not always conducted with respect and understanding of workers' lives. Researchers need to consider the risks workers take to speak with them. Research should not be limited to advancing academic metrics and careers but aligned with migrant workers' needs and visions for justice.

This session focussed on the dynamics of power of the research process and presented three examples of research with and on migrant workers. Guiding questions for folks to consider as they listened to presentations: **Is doing research with migrant workers ethical? How can it be done in a way that is grounded in community, and respects work done by community?**

These three projects explore different approaches to pursuing policy research to advocate for migrant workers' rights. The projects differed in scope, method, and goals. While Genen and Regina focused on caregivers and agricultural workers respectively, Lucy focused on participants in the Temporary Foreign Worker Program as a whole. Below is a short summary of each presentation:

- **Preventing Precarity: Employment Insurance Access for Migrant Workers – Lucy Hardman**
 - This policy research project explores the intersection of Temporary Foreign Worker Programs and workers' access to employment insurance benefits. The goal of research is to show interactions of two federal policies that restrict access to benefits for certain groups of workers and what the Federal Employment Insurance Policy Directorate can do to increase access for migrant workers.
 - Read the full report [here](#).
- **Everything I know is Canada: Migrant Farmworkers and the Making of Homes Across Borders – Regina Baeza Martinez**
 - This project involved a qualitative exploration of how migrant workers create a sense of home and belonging in spaces that deny them permanence. Through original fieldwork and data collection, the research shows the ingenuity, relationship building and solidarity that migrant workers cultivate on the farms in which they work, and how their lived experiences are in contrast with federal policy that insists they are just temporary workers and denies them rights.
 - Read the full thesis [here](#).
- **A Decade of Migrant Care Worker Programs: Addressing racism and precarity in Canada – Genen Bagon & Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights**
 - This work is a review of how federal programs for care workers and caregivers have fallen short of their promises to grant participants permanent residence and renders them vulnerable to multiple forms of precarity. The project systematically evaluates a decade's worth of immigration pathways and generates evidence-based solutions to address domestic workers/caregiver precarity.
 - Read the full report [here](#).

A lively discussion followed, guided by the following questions:

- Is research useful for the migrant justice movement?
- What kind of research is useful? What kind is not?

Four themes emerged:

Concerns

- Research is harmful because it can be extractive. The ways in which researchers collect data can be traumatizing for workers. Some researchers mine the suffering of workers for personal gain and the “benefits” of research are never seen by the community
- Experiences that are not “captured by” research can be invalidating of those experiences and used to reproduce oppressive power structures
- Government/decision makers prioritize empirical research (data/stats) over experiences, which can be sterilizing and dehumanizing of workers’ experiences
- Research can homogenize workers’ experiences and identities (migrant workers are not a monolith)
- Academia & the funding world can be an extension of colonial systems that harm migrant workers



Benefits

- Research is a tool/strategy that is available to the movement that can affect positive change and document struggles; it can help us know what strategies are working and where there are gaps
- Funding for research can be redirected and sourced back into the community (i.e. SFU funding part of the Summit)
- Participating in research can be an opportunity for connection and knowing that we are not alone in the struggle
- Research that has a clear purpose for community wellbeing embedded into the study design can bring positive change



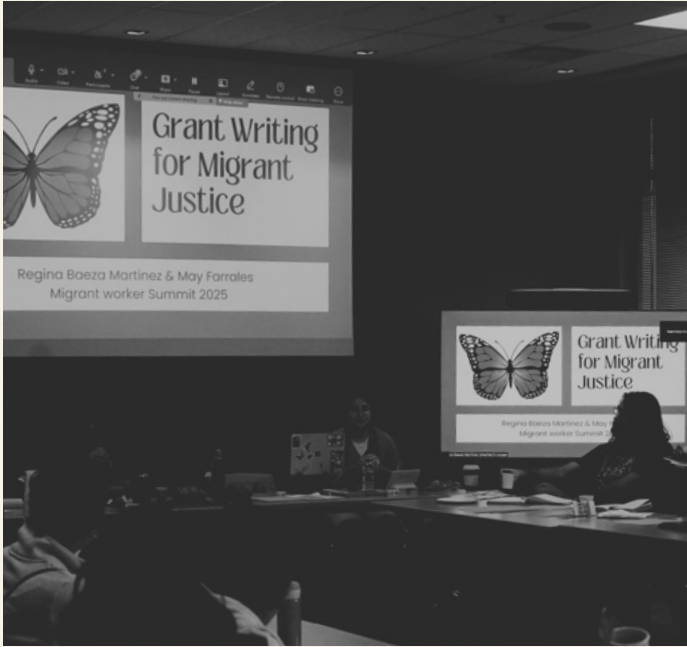
Researcher biases and constraints

- Academics and researchers are workers too and operate within capitalist systems, and they are constrained by power hierarchies
- Many academics are also activists and organizers attempting to contribute to the migrant justice movement within the structures of the university
- Funding/grants enables what kind of research can be done
- Some projects will never be funded
- Some researchers will always be seen as less than or biased by their peers for their interest and involvement in social justice & equity issues
- Researchers can become deradicalized because they are forced into the systems of academia and must sanitize messages to get funding and to get published
- Organizer/activist researchers may be pulled away from community work in the early stages of their careers as they work towards tenure (permanent position at the university after proving themselves with sufficient academic publications)

Recommended strategies

- Be aware of academic jargon/language - Is your writing accessible? Consider your audience and try not to make assumptions about everyone's starting point of knowledge and understanding
- Be mindful of workers' voices, be respectful and honour the effort behind their participation
- There is a culture of fear and workers might be afraid to share their experiences
- Consider how your research can be used by the community. Does it reflect the needs of the community?
- Go beyond policy recommendations and also consider how your research can be taken up by migrant justice movement
- How can you decolonize the research at all steps of the process from conceptualizing and choosing a method, to collecting data and writing and sharing the findings?
- Before participating in a project, ask questions!
- Develop your own relationships with migrant workers and the migrant justice movement based on reciprocity and respect

grant-writing



workshop

Accessing and securing funding to conduct multi-pronged migrant justice work is a recurring challenge, particularly for many of our organizations that are grassroots and community-based. This grant-writing workshop, developed and facilitated by Regina Baeza Martinez and May Farrales, was central to the skills and resource building purposes of the Migrant Summit.

Regina and May first surveyed the group about their experiences with grant applications and their concerns. Participants found the process intimidating due to pressure to articulate a clear project vision. Many noted that application language privileges those with certain educational backgrounds, making it inaccessible to others. Participants also cited funder biases and the need to sanitize language (e.g.: avoiding terms like "advocacy") to be competitive. Beyond the labour required for the initial application, compliance and reporting obligations consume significant time and effort. In addition to this, the group also highlighted the problematic nature of invasive funder requests for participant names and immigration statuses, and the fragmented funding landscape.

Moreover, participants noted that no centralized database exists, and some foundations operate by invitation only. We heard that funding typically comes from three sources: government, private foundations, and universities (e.g., Vancouver Foundation, City of Vancouver Social Policy Grant, Community Action Initiative, Freedonia, and arts councils).

1. Do research about your audience or funder. Ask yourself:

- Who is this grant for? What language should you use? What are the funder's strategic objectives? Will your funder's demands require you to make compromises about your project? Will these compromises threaten the safety of migrant workers?

2. Understand your project's scope and timeline and if it is compatible with the funder.

- While you do not need to know every single detail, and can change things as you go along, before creating the application, ask yourself if the demands of the funder meet the demands of your project.

3. Consider your project goals.

- What do you hope to achieve with this funding? What is the desired/intended impact? While funders expect things to change, you need to be proactive and try and anticipate challenges.

4. Before starting, what are the obligations associated with this money?

- For example, will the reporting requirements pose harm to participants? This is especially important to consider for migrant workers.

5. Build a cohesive narrative from start to finish.

- Funders do not want to be surprised by budget line items that you have not discussed in the rest of the application

6. Be persuasive! Show WHY you are the right organization to address this problem.

- Use an assertive language
- Include rich details
- Compelling statistics or stories of the impact of the problem. Why is this a problem that the funder should care about?
- What about your organization gives you "an edge" to address the problem?

recommended strategies for grant- writing



During the workshop, everyone broke up into small groups and did a hands-on activity and pretended to write a grant sample for a project. Some folks made up a project while other folks used an example from their own lives.

Activity prompts:

1. Read the call for proposals. Revise key words, and integrate the language that is in the posting into your grant proposal. Use language from posts in your application!

2. Identify the problem and explain why this issue is a problem. Convince the funder of the necessity of the issue. So what?

3. How will your project address this problem? Link project operations with desired outcomes.

4. Describe the project activities. What work is involved? Who is involved? How to measure success and effectiveness?

5. Identify the impact. Ensure alignment between project activities and goals

6. Construct a budget – be realistic! The budget should reflect actual costs. Ensure there is alignment between proposed expenses and what the funder says it will cover. You need to show that your expenses are necessary to achieving the overall goal.

grant-writing activity

Vasanthi Venkatesh, Associate Professor, Faculty of Law-University of Windsor, Migrant Farm Workers Legal Clinic

Chris Ramsaroop, Co-founder & Organizer, Justicia for Migrant Workers ON, Migrant Farm Workers Legal Clinic

Jonathan Braun, Legal Director, Migrant Workers Center

Amanda Aziz, Staff Lawyer, Migrant Workers Center

Susanna Quail, Labour Lawyer, Board Member of the Migrant Worker Centre

Facilitator: **Jerika Caduhada**



Contradictions of the law and social justice organizing

- *"Law is not justice. Justice can be found in the streets"* (Jerika)
- Lawyers work within a system where what is "just" and what is legal are not the same thing – the legal system is intentionally unjust, yet it is embedded in the movement
- Lawyers must balance professional regulations, the demands of the workers they represent, and the competing goals of both individual cases and the broader movement
- What's best for one worker may conflict with systemic change. For example, workers usually want to settle their cases, but settlements can harm the broader movement
- The movement's goal: create systemic change for all workers
- The legal profession's top-down model should shift to one where lawyers work alongside migrant workers as partners, recognizing them as community members with their own expertise, not passive clients dependent on legal help

lawyers forum: organizing with the law

Lawyers' role in the movement

- Lawyers must challenge the assumption that they serve the state. Instead, they should openly commit to serving workers and the broader migrant justice movement
- Effective legal advocacy depends on understanding migrant workers' lived experiences, not just their legal cases
 - Lawyers should approach this work from a position of solidarity with the movement, centering workers' voices
- Lawyers can use their expertise and privilege to make law more accessible, bridging the gap between law and justice for workers
 - They can interpret "legalese" and processes that are opaque to most
- Lawyers have a responsibility to help workers understand that the system itself is built on racist and exploitative foundations – they shouldn't present law as neutral
- Legal cases can shift public opinion and strengthen support for workers, especially as xenophobia and scapegoating increase
 - Cases are also movement tools, not just individual remedies
- Lawyers can facilitate relationships between workers and grassroots organizers
- This expertise is one tool that can be leveraged within the movement, not just as a service you are providing, but as a means to advance the cause
- Lawyers' privilege and expertise can also hinder the movement – when lawyers are automatically deferred to as authorities, their conflicting obligations can undermine movement goals

Recommended strategies

- Lawyers should ask themselves: does my involvement serve this movement?
- Workers often assume lawyers can solve their problems, but law isn't always the answer – it's important to recognize that sometimes even the best legal strategy still won't deliver justice
- Go beyond explaining rights, showing workers what the law fails to do:
 - Educate about the gap between rights on paper and rights in practice
 - Help workers learn their rights, then learn how the law won't protect them
 - Explain the difference between what's legal and what's just
 - Make clear that winning a case doesn't mean justice
- Be transparent with workers:
 - Tell workers how long the process actually takes
 - Be honest about what workers can realistically expect during the process
 - Educate workers on the options they have available to them
- Leverage legal knowledge to help workers escape the system
- Don't just provide legal services – use clinics to build trust and relationships, connect workers to each other and to organizers, and strengthen community power

summit catering and cuisines

The catering for the event was intentionally selected to showcase the culinary traditions of attendees and to support local businesses in the community. Food is more than just sustenance. It is political, and it is resistance. It is “culture, craving, habit and identity”, and the multi-cultural menu nourished our bodies during the event.

Filipinx food

Filipino cuisine fuses culinary traditions from Indigenous groups and the colonial periods of the Spanish, Chinese and Americans. For lunch, participants enjoyed a customized combo that included jasmine rice, pancit with fishballs and veggies, chicken afritada (tomato-braised chicken stew with potatoes and vegetables) and chop suey, a mix of stirfried veggies. For dessert, we had Carioca, a deep-fried glutinous rice ball coated in sugar or caramel glaze. These boxes of food were proudly ordered from Pampanga's Best Cafeteria (4279 Fraser St, Vancouver, BC V5V 4G1).

Guatemalan Food

Tamales, made of corn dough with a filling and tomato-base sauce, are found throughout Mexico and Central America. Corn is an important part of Mayan identity, so tamales are a part of rituals and festivals. A local Guatemalan family prepared homemade tamales filled with options of pork, chicken or vegetables.

Palestinian Food

While Palestinian cuisine is highly regional, it highlights fresh vegetables, olive oil, lemon, sumac, za'atar, and flatbreads are common. Recipes persist despite the Nakba's displacement, IOF occupation and creation of the Palestinian diaspora and most recently the war in Gaza. Participants enjoyed a vegetarian spread which included falafel, hummus, Mujaddara (lentils & rice), salad, deep fried lemon cauliflower and more. This delicious catering was provided by Tamam Restaurant (2616 E Hastings St, Vancouver, BC V5K 1Z3).





day of the dead altars

Since the Summit took place in late October, an altar (ofrenda) was displayed throughout the event. Across Latin America and the Caribbean, honoring ancestors and loved ones is woven into many spiritual traditions. Guided by this lineage, Paola Quiros-Cruz curated an altar for the Migrant Workers Summit to honor migrant workers, migrant rights advocates, and those who are no longer with us, inspired by the Mexican tradition of Día de los Muertos. The multi-day celebration has its roots in Indigenous and mestizo culture, predating European invasion of the Americas. For the summit, the altar honours deceased migrant workers and their allies.

With the collaboration of Justicia Ontario and the Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights (CDWCR), Paola gathered photographs of migrant workers and advocates and placed them on the altar, giving names to faces, and dignity to lives and contributions that must not be forgotten. They brought together meaningful elements such as water, tequila, sweets, fruits, pan de muerto, flowers, shells, and candles, to pay homage to migrant workers who have come to this land, offering their labour, their hands, and their hearts so that many of us may live with the privilege of food on our tables and care in our daily lives. And yet, within an unjust system that benefits some while exploiting others, too many of their bodies are broken, and too many lives are lost.

Paola Quiros-Cruz, aka La Maga, is a queer, gender-fluid Colombian immigrant living on the unceded, stolen, and ancestral lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and səliilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. They identify as an art ritualist, roots and ancestors venerator, and collective conjurer. La Maga is all about putting ideas into action, creating spaces where voices and bodies are celebrated and honored, where belonging is something to be held and nourished, and where there is room to advocate for and honour our hearts, our joy, and our emotional grief. Follow them on Instagram at @lamagatierra.

The altar became a collective act of remembrance by inviting participants to bring an ofrenda. It was a space where naming, grieving, and honoring intertwined. Each offering was a gesture of solidarity, a way of connecting our shared humanity to the ongoing struggle for justice, and the altar stood as a space for remembrance, reflection, and collective care, holding, even if only for a moment, those whose labour is so often unseen, and so rarely protected. To create your own altar, a step-by-step guide can be found here on [Latinxvancouver4palestine's instagram](#).

Within the Latin American Left, to remember is to resist. Memory is a political act and forgetting and erasing are weapons of the oppressors. We asked working groups to share the names of martyrs from liberation movements not as tribute only, but as a way to give them a seat at our table and a place in our hearts. This is how we remember that our struggle is intergenerational and global:

Rogelia Cruz: Rogelia Cruz was a Guatemalan leftist activist who was active during the civil war during the 1960s. As a student, she was a member of the Juventud Patriótica del Trabajo and participated in the guerrilla front alongside communist party called Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo (PGT). She stood against the Guatemalan government and their atrocities committed against Indigenous Peoples in the country. Following a kidnapping after a traffic stop for her associations with PGT, her mutilated body was found. The former Miss Guatemala's death is a symbol of leftist resistance to the far-right dictatorship ruling Guatemala.



Photo source: El Mundo



Photo source: PCHR

Hind Rajab: Hind Rajab was a five year old Palestinian girl, sister, daughter, and friend who was forced to flee from her home in Gaza on January 29, 2024. An Israeli tank shot Hind's family car, killing everyone in the car except herself and her 15-year old cousin. Hind remained trapped in the car for hours while she waited for Palestinian Red Cross Society paramedics to rescue her when the army brutally targeted the car and the rescue ambulance. On February 3, the audio recording of her call to the paramedics was released, and Hind became a symbol for war crimes committed by Israel against Palestinians (genocide and targeting of medics), the double-standard of Western media coverage of the war, and lack of accountability for the IOF.

day of the dead: memory is political

summit

logistical lessons

funding and resources

- Pursue multiple funding sources proactively and proceed with planning regardless of immediate funding confirmation
- Adjust scope and activities based on available resources
- Prioritize in-kind support, particularly for venue arrangements
- Know your funders, use their language

event design

- Create intentional space for heart, mind, body and spirit to work together
- Nourish the movement – source culturally appropriate food from local community producers

event planning

- Allocate adequate time for collective planning and organizing
- Ensure programming reflects identified community needs
- Distribute leadership responsibility equitably by rotating facilitation and discussion leadership roles

strategic priorities

leverage existing strengths

- The movement has an abundance of strengths, including: research skills, artistic and theatrical expertise, legal advocacy capabilities, and grant writing and fundraising expertise
- We need to center migrant workers' experience, expertise, and voices in the movement

systemic change

- Moving forward, we must collectively seek to address systemic challenges, including: racist and colonial systems and structures; social alienation and isolation; employers' and state institutions' divide-and-rule tactics

movement-building

- Together, we must also seek to strengthen the role of community and connection within organizing spaces by:
 - Developing sustainable care practices for organizers
 - Addressing burnout and preventing organizer exhaustion

lessons

conclusions

with Chris Sorio



This toolkit is a compendium of our conversations and the collective knowledge we shared during the BC Migrant Summit. As organizers we are constantly learning and growing with our communities. Our task is to build a movement rooted in solidarity and grounded in community. One that is not just reactive, but visionary. A movement that unites migrants, refugees, undocumented peoples, Indigenous communities, and all workers struggling for justice.

Our collective struggle is also interpersonal. We must resist the infantilization of migrant workers and paternalism that embeds itself into service-delivery. While workers are regularly denied access to basic services on the basis of their temporary status, we must resist the provision of services rooted in a savior complex rather than solidarity, collaboration and respect. We must avoid perpetuating a cycle of forced gratitude for workers when organizing, and instead, encourage communities to expand and develop their own capacity and leadership.

Lastly, as organizers and workers alike we share in the struggles perpetuated by today's macroeconomic context. The rising cost of living, lack of affordable housing, employment precarity, and loss of safe spaces pose material, logistical and emotional challenges to the movement. These conditions make it hard to devote time and energy to organizing. Furthermore, it also impacts the public support for im/migrant workers' rights, ability to secure and maintain funding needed to do the work. Identifying priorities and resource allocation to the fight while also paying the bills remains a challenge.

We continue, not as victims, but as organizers, as builders, as dreamers of liberation.

The fight is long, but it is ours. And together, we will win.

next steps

with Evelyn Encalada Grez

Strengthening our movement and **building** toward the next Migrant Summit:

This first Migrant Summit was a success in movement building. Participants relayed the value of making time to share knowledge and to connect one-on-one across organizations, professions, and roles within the movement. We were joined by diverse organizers from not only British Columbia but also Ontario, and heard from organizing efforts in the United States to connect our knowledge and struggles. The Summit allowed us to strengthen our relationships, networks and build rapport, which are critical to social movements.



We also learned that together we have an abundance of capacities, resources, and skills in domains such as research, art, theatre, legal advocacy and grant-writing. Moreover, our commitment, knowledge and experience are all valuable resources for the migrant justice movement. We also share recurrent struggles based on racist, colonialist practices and divide and rule tactics by employers and the state. We also face mental health challenges as our communities and our own livelihoods are being threatened and attacked. But we have to press on and work together.

We look forward to the next Migrant Summit and working toward migrant worker justice. **Join us!**

In solidarity,
Evelyn

email: eencalad "at" sfu "dot" ca



APPENDICES.

for workers

[CDWCR Migrant Caregiver Manual \(2025\)](#)

[Migrant Worker Organizations in BC](#)

reports

[Amnesty International Report \(2025\):
Temporary Foreign Workers](#)

[BC Federation of Labour: Workers Rights in the
Gig Economy](#)

[UFCW \(2025\) Status of Migrant Workers in the
Agri-Food Sector in Canada](#)

[SFU \(2025\): Temporary Foreign Workers in
BC's Agriculture Industry: Learning from Lived
Experience](#)

[UBC's Global Migration Podcast](#)

[Understanding Precarity Resources](#)

multimedia

[UBC's Global Migration Podcast](#)

[Understanding Precarity Resources](#)

[Is Fascism Back?](#)

take action

[Workers Solidarity Network](#)

[Migrant Rights](#)

[Justicia 4 Migrant Workers](#)

[Migrant Farm Worker Awareness Week](#)

legal information

[Immigration and Refugee Legal Clinic](#)

recent immigration bills

**Bill C-12: Strengthening Canada's
Immigration System and Borders Act**

[Migrant Rights Network Brief Bill C-12](#)

[Canadian Council for Refugees Bill C-12
Brief](#)

Bill C-2: Strong Borders Act *(stalled)*

[Canadian Civil Liberties Association
Explainer of Bill C-2](#)

[Canadian Council for Refugees Key
Concerns Bill C-2](#)

grants

municipal (lower mainland)

[City of Vancouver Community Grants](#)

[City of Burnaby](#)

[Neighbourhood Small Grants](#)

provincial

[UBC Arts Council Grants](#)

[Creative BC Grants](#)

[BC Hydro](#)

[BC Government community Gaming Grants](#)

[WorkSafe BC](#)

federal

[Government of Canada Grants & Funding](#)

private/university

[The Vancouver Foundation Grants](#)

[VanCity](#)

[Canadian Women's Foundation Grants](#)

[The Law Foundation BC Grants](#)

This is not a leaflet. This is a call. The work begins when you leave this room. The spark we lit together must become a fire. Your hands, your voice, your courage — they are the tools.

1. Teach, mentor, grow. Bring one person into organizing this week. Share the knowledge you carry — rights, strategy, courage. Small circles, one-on-one teaching, conversations on the bus, at lunch, at home — every word is organizing. *“If you save one, you save a hundred.”*

2. Build leadership that lasts. Mentor, apprentice, pass down memory, skill, and courage. Document stories of struggle, victories, chants, and songs. Train the next generation — the movement must outlive us. Leadership is not a title. It is the lives you prepare to carry the fight forward.

3. Unite across work, land, and sea. Form solidarity networks: homecare, factories, farms, fisheries, streets. If one of us is attacked, all of us respond. Cross-workplace solidarity is power. Isolation is defeat. Together, we are unstoppable.

4. Protect, support, defend. Build mutual aid funds for rent, legal support, emergencies. Know your rights, share them widely, and prepare to act. When the state attacks, the community must respond — not with fear, but with action. No one fights alone. No one stands without support.

5. Preserve our stories, our culture. Record elders’ lessons. Preserve the songs, chants, and art of struggle. Use art, theatre, music, and media to tell our truth. History belongs to the people who fight. Guard it. Share it. Memory is power. Story is resistance.

6. Make real commitments. Write your personal pledge: what will you do this week? This month? This year? For example: *Mentor one organizer. Form a solidarity pact. Document an oral history. Raise funds for mutual aid.* Your pledge is your promise to the movement, to your community, and to yourself.

7. Build broad, inclusive solidarity. Include all migrant workers — land and sea, documented or not. Stand with Indigenous communities, unions, student groups, faith organizations. Organize around root causes: climate crisis, war, debt, extractive exploitation. Justice is collective. Justice is global. Justice is now.

migrant justice action toolkit: from summit to movement

bearing witness: prayer for workers lost

We remember those who died in silence
from sickness, from exhaustion, from accidents that could
have been prevented,
from despair carried in the long nights of isolation.
We remember those who passed far from family,
whose last breath was whispered not in comfort,
but in the language of survival.
We remember them
not as victims, but as the backbone of nations,
as builders of homes not their own,
as dreamers who carried love across borders.
Let us hold their memory as a promise:
That no worker shall die unnamed,
That no migrant shall live unseen,
That no sacrifice shall be forgotten.

May their spirits remind us why we fight —
for dignity, for justice, for a future where no one must leave
their homeland to live.
May their courage strengthen our hands,
our words, our organizing, our solidarity.

We pray not only for peace in their eternal rest,
but for unrest among the living —
the kind that moves us to action,
the kind that builds power from pain.

For every life lost to exploitation,
We pledge to fight harder.
For every dream cut short by neglect,
We promise to continue their journey.
For every migrant who never came home,
we will make this world their home.

May their **memory** be our **movement**.
May their **struggle** be our **strength**.
May their **love for life** be our **call to act**.
Amen.

bearing witness: prayer for workers lost

CDWCR

Fely (Felicita) Villasin
Coco (Columbia Tarape) Diaz
Ludy (Ludevina Padilla) Inting
Prod (Aprodicio) Laquian
Mark E. Thompson

Migrante BC

Juana Tejada
Leticia Sarmiento
Cicely Dulnuan

Farmerworkers in Ontario

Vincent Bruce
Antonia Becerril Jimenez
Omar Graham
Romario Morgan
Nolan Wilkinson
Omar Persaud
Barry
Aphichath Prapimon (Pom)
Tyrone Lee Jackson
Curtis Hazel
Bogart Manuel Lopez Martinez

Farmworkers in British Columbia

Carlos Tomas Aranda Burgoin

Advocate and Community Kitchen Leader in Vancouver

Araceli Orozco Segura "Chicharita
Valiente"