

Organizing Experiences in Mexican and Salvadoran Hometown Associations- 1st Part: Transnational Advocacy and Civic Participation

Friday May 11th



Summary of Panel Discussion and Workshop:

1. What do the groups/federations/clubs do?
 - They promote group identity (oaxacan identity, michoacana etc.)
 - Help the migrant community in the U.S.
 - They hold discussion forums in both the U.S. and the home countries.
 - They create a presence in the city where they reside so that their voice is influential
 - They create alliances with other groups
 - They are involved in the development of communities in the home country, country of origin.
 - They educate the migrant community in decision making regarding local projects
 - They work with municipal governments in the home country
2. How do these clubs create political advocacy?
 - Lobbying through contact with congressmen, visits, calls or letters to the congressman
 - Hold forums on the importance of voting
 - They form PAC's (Political Action Committees)
 - Hold forums about immigration reforms and the need to include migration in new legislation
 - They work with the governments of the home country
 - They hold events to promote an immigration reform such as massive marches
3. There is also a relationship that forms between these groups and political parties of both sending and receiving countries.

Principal Points of Agreement and Recurring Themes:

- It is difficult to balance the needs of the group with the relationship with governments and political parties.
- The challenge of making people involved in civic participation
- The importance of alliances (Church alliances was mentioned)
- The need to better document remittance usage, with transparency if the money is used for projects
- Different groups have different focuses—some are focused on local development in the home country, while others are more focused on cultural identity in the U.S communities

Measures Proposed:

- The importance of developing productive projects which guarantee employment in the communities of the home country