

Practitioner in Residence Program 2023-24 Report

The Practitioner in Residence Program is a component of the DePaul Migration Collaborative's Reframing Refugees Project. This initiative invites experts on migration, mobility, and human rights to address migration challenges, and inform policies. Practitioners in Residence gain access to DePaul resources and have the opportunity to influence various migration-related discussions. The residency lasts 3-6 months and promotes practical solutions for contemporary migration issues.

DMC: Who We Are

The DePaul Migration Collaborative engages scholars, practitioners, students and alumni to find solutions to society's most pressing problems in the areas of migration, mobility and human rights. The Collaborative leverages the power of interdisciplinary scholarly collaboration to pursue dynamic, community-engaged projects, advocacy and research, while establishing innovative learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students who will become the field's next generation of leaders and problem-solvers. These efforts will allow the Collaborative to advocate for and contribute to better public policy, stronger communities and a more just society.



**Supporting Innovation in
Migration**



**Advocating for
Justice**



**Educating for the
future**

PIR Expectations

Original Research

- Data analysis and visualization
- On site visits and survey reports
- Ethnographic studies
- Legal and Policy Analysis
- Collaboration with community based organizations

Connect with DePaul Community

- Guest lecture in relevant courses
- Speak at University-wide events
- Engage students

Community Collaboration

- Consult with nonprofit leaders and other professionals
- Share research and findings with local organizations
- Attend relevant events

Generate Recommendations

- Publish final research
- Disseminate research results to groups that will benefit from such knowledge
- Provide recommendations for improved practices
- Identify replicable models

Table of Contents



Meet the DMC Practitioners

Page 3-4



PIR Research Assistants

Page 4



Event Summaries

Page 6-10



Outcomes

Page 11-14



Thank You Message

Page 15



MEET THE DMC PRACTITIONERS



Rob Paral

Demographic Researcher and
Public Policy Consultant

Title of Project: *Achieving Strategic
Forced Migration Policy in Illinois*



Dr. Elizabeth Kennedy

Social Scientist and Country
Conditions Expert Witness

Project: *Research that Increases
Asylum Access for Salvadorans,
Hondurans and Guatemalans in
the Chicago area*

DMC

Rob's Final Report and Bio: [RP Final Report
\(Updated 3 31\).pdf](#)

Elizabeth's Final Report: [EK Final
Report Website.pdf](#)



Rob Paral is a demographic and public policy consultant with specialties in immigrant, Latino and Asian populations; community needs for health and human service programs; and Midwestern demographic change. Rob's project focused on developing a report on Illinois capacity to resettle migrants and the state's response to recently arrived forced migrants included achievement and potential avenues for improvement. Within his report, Rob highlights recommendations for future Illinois policy. To accomplish his goal Rob traveled throughout the city of Chicago, Springfield, IL and El Paso, TX to interview administrative and legislative budget experts relevant to the report and interviewing immigration attorneys and advocates.



Elizabeth G. Kennedy, Ph.D. is a 2023-2024 DePaul Migration Collaborative practitioner in residence, 2023-2024 Fulbright Scholar to El Salvador and LAPOP's 2023-2024 Honduras expert. Her project focused on preparing expert witness affidavits on the country conditions of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala alongside create training materials and guidance for immigrant advocacy organizations in connection with each of the country condition reports. Her project also prioritized coordinating alongside the DMC to make these expert witness reports available to legal service providers for use in support of asylum applications.



Rosbel Garza-Hernandez, DePaul LAS '25, joined the DMC in November 2023 as PIR Rob Paral's research assistant. During his time, Rosbel delved into data collection, thematic coding and qualitative data analysis. He was tasked with reviewing immigration news and existing programs/services throughout the Chicago area for migrants of different statuses. He also researched around a decade's worth of funding appropriations, categorizing the history of how money was spent on migrant programs. He then transitioned to collecting census data on populations and tracking changes in immigration demographics in Chicago. When asked about his experience, Rosbel expressed an appreciation for the trust and ability to take initiative in his research support role. He also highlighted the networking opportunities and the excitement in contributing to a published report.



Angelique Lara, DePaul LAS '27, began working for the DMC in January 2024 as Elizabeth Kennedy's Research Assistant, Angelique was tasked with creating English and Spanish language glossaries, editing, and formatting for all Salvadoran and Honduran country conditions and some Central American Monitor reports. Gigi was also given the opportunity to meet members of the Central American Monitor and the Senior Program Manager for Kids in Need of Defense.

"Knowing that I was helping contribute to the greater good. Being a part of the research was extremely rewarding in that I was helping make important information accessible to those who need it"- Angelique Lara

Research Assistants





2023-2024 PIR Events

January 25, 2023

Country Conditions Expert Witness Training

What to expect of reports

- ↳ Can build over time and tailor to different cases
- ↳ Attorneys are usually willing to assist as much as you'd like them to do*
- ↳ Introductory paragraphs
- ↳ Background and Qualifications
- ↳ Opinions
- ↳ Case Facts
- ↳ Actors: authorities, death squads, organized crime, private individuals
- ↳ Types of violence
- ↳ Targeting
- ↳ Lack of internal flight alternatives
- ↳ Harms to deportees
- ↳ Current administration

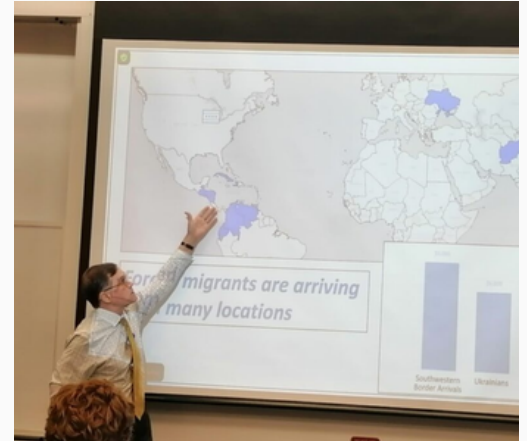


This training led by Dr. Kennedy was created for faculty members from across the Chicago area to learn how they can support asylum seekers through expert witness testimony. As a recognized expert witness in the country conditions of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, Dr. Kennedy addressed the role country conditions experts play in immigration court proceedings and their significance in asylum outcomes. The training was especially necessary for faculty who hope to assist those seeking asylum but did not have particular knowledge of the asylum court system processes. Faculty attended from **DePaul, Northwestern, and UIC**.

In her presentation, Dr. Kennedy detailed how to connect with asylum seekers, how to translate country condition research into parts that can be used in the asylum process, and what to expect when testifying in the courtroom. This interactive session not only equipped faculty members with practical knowledge but also fostered connections between those in the field reinforcing the DMC's goal of addressing migration through interdisciplinary collaboration. Dr. Kennedy also provided her contact information and a willingness to guide such faculty on their journey to becoming expert witnesses.

FORCED MIGRATION TO CHICAGO: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW.


On Tuesday, January 30th, the DMC hosted a thought-provoking panel discussion addressing the multifaceted issues surrounding recent migrants to Chicago. The panelists included DMC Practitioners in Residence Rob Paral and Dr. Elizabeth Kennedy alongside Laura Rodríguez-Presa from the Chicago Tribune, and Breandán Magee, Senior Director of Programs for the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR). DePaul's Dr. Jesse Mumm of the Latin American and Latino Studies Program moderated the event. The event explored reasons migrants may flee their home countries, migrant experiences at the US-Mexico border, the journey of migrants being bussed to northern cities, and the unique situation of Ukrainian refugees in the Chicago area. Panelists and participants explored areas of tension including insufficient housing and shelter as well as the impact of current federal and local immigration policies. The panel highlighted the indispensable role of nonprofits in responding to these challenges, providing essential advocacy, resources, and legal services. This event not only offered valuable insights into the current migration events but also fostered an open dialogue on the legal aspects, enhancing participants' understanding of the broader context.





“Taking on Asylum Cases” A Series

November-February



Working with Country Conditions Experts

- Provide research on one topic or various topics, often according to current academic or policy debates
- Answer questions related to a case or cases based upon that research
- In-depth knowledge of the country, its society, resources, data and the like
- Likely won't know different court's and Circuit's interpretations or precedent decisions or PSGs
- Most focus on just one or two issues or regions
- Mutually respectful collaboration

Throughout a series of events hosted by DePaul's Asylum and Immigration Legal Clinic (AILC) and the DMC, Dr. Elizabeth Kennedy, led a series entitled “Taking on Asylum Cases: Focus on Country Condition Research, Experts, and Asylum Claims.” Each training focused on a single Central American Country: Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. At the events, Dr. Kennedy delved into the current socio-political and judicial landscapes of each country, equipping attendees with crucial information for crafting comprehensive country conditions reports for asylum applicants.

During the El Salvador presentation, Dr. Kennedy focused on the impacts of gender and age have on families living in El Salvador under gang dominated areas. For the Honduras training, Senior Program Manager for KIND (Kids in Need of Defense), Marna Shorack, who is working on international programs reuniting migrant families separated under the Trump Administration flew in and co-presented with Dr. Kennedy. Shorack focused on describing threats to youth. Meanwhile, Kennedy covered topics such as sexual violence, the impacts specific to indigenous groups, and the inability and unwillingness for the state to protect its citizens. Attendees were able to ask specific questions related to their work. The last event in the series, covered the rate of homicides and lack of investigation of them in the state alongside trends in post-deportation harm and spoke of threats to residents.

The series was attended by 107 practitioners representing 39 organizations. These events were practical sessions designed to empower local nonprofit legal partners in their efforts to assist asylum seekers effectively. Each session not only shed light on the prevailing conditions in the respective countries but also provided guidance on how to navigate the complex process of finding specific local source materials (news sources and twitter) for an asylum case.

December 10-15th

First Hand Research at the Border

Day 1

Visited Border
Servant Corps
and USCIS
Office

Day 2

Conducted
Research on
Shelters, Detention
and Policies

Day 3

Visited Bus
Stations
and Met
with NGOS

Day 4

Met NGOs
and Observed
Immigration
Court

Day 5

Visited
Shelter,
NGOs, and
Attorneys

Day 6

Visited
Shelters



Rob Paral visited the U.S Mexico border in El-Paso, Texas from December 10-14th, to observe the process in which migrants are boarded on to busses and sent to sanctuary cities. During his visit to El Paso, Rob observed the operations at the Border Servant Corp (BSC) office, where migrants using the CBP One app get their photos taken, a process he found that aids migrant's eventual filing for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). Rob also attended a Catholic mass at Sacred Heart church, learning about the church's support for migrants.



Rob witnessed the bus boarding process at the Amtrak station, where migrants lined up for destinations such as Chicago, New York, and Salt Lake City. He observed Texas emergency management staff organizing the migrants and preparing bus manifests, which are sent to the city of Chicago.



Throughout his visit, Rob met with various organizations and individuals, including the Border Servant Corps, Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services, Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center, Hope Border Institute, International Rescue Committee, and local shelters. He also met with DePaul Alum, Melissa Untereker (DePaul Law '06). These meetings provided insights into the policies, challenges, and support systems for migrants.



Zaid Salem

**Central America
Monitor:
Groundbreaking Data on
El Salvador, Guatemala
and Honduras**

February, 20, 2024



On February 20, the DePaul Migration Collaborative hosted a panel of distinguished international researchers to discuss the work of the Central American Monitor. The speakers included Dr. Elizabeth G. Kennedy who provided context to the discussion and opened the floor to discuss the role of the Central American Monitor and its importance in data collection. Another speaker Laura Andrade, the esteemed Executive Director of the Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública (IUDOP) at the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (UCA) in El Salvador, shared critical perspectives derived from her organizations extensive social research. Afterwards, Lissette Vasquez, as the Executive Director of the Myrna Mack Foundation, contributed profound insights into impunity, rule of law, and human rights in the region. Lastly, Migdonia Ayestas, serving as the Director of the National Violence Observatory at the University Institute of Democracy, Peace and Security, offered data and analysis on criminality and violence in Honduras. Dr. Kennedy coordinated with each speaker and the DMC flew them to Chicago and provided an interpreter for this bilingual discussion. The Central American Monitor is a collaborative research project spearheaded by the National Autonomous University of Honduras, the Myrna Mack Foundation in Guatemala, and the Central American University José Simeón Cañas in El Salvador. This initiative aims to track progress, setbacks, and stagnation in seven critical areas—human rights, justice, security, and transparency among them. Dr. Elizabeth Kennedy and her esteemed colleagues presented a sample of the project's data, providing attendees with nuanced insights into current events in each country and their implications for migration to the US and other destinations. **More than 70 students, staff and faculty attended the presentation.** The event served as a platform for informed discourse and an example of collaborative action toward advancing human rights, justice, security, and transparency in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.



Stakeholder Roundtable: Response to Illinois Migration and Report Findings

March 14, 2024



With the release of his newest report, "Building a Plane While It's Flying": Illinois Confronts a New Era of Forced Migration" DMC Practitioner in Residence, Rob Paral, led a fruitful discussion with non-profit leaders and representatives of the City of Chicago. Rob Paral's report is a demographic analysis of Chicago's recently received forced migrants from regions like Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Venezuela amongst others with recommendations in how the state can better serve its new neighbors. Each participant shared their opinions on the report and offered their expertise, experiences, and action taken by their organizations. Over **30** individuals participated to brainstorm what is next for Chicago. They concluded by acknowledging that this work is not just about new arrivals, but all marginalized communities in Chicago: state, city, and local programming must reflect this. They explained how there is a need for new innovative tools to assist in communications and cross-organization collaboration and coordination. Participants also highlighted that this discussion requires additional input from the migrants themselves and seek to include our new neighbors in future program analysis.



Cities & Migration: Plans, Policies, and Action

April 11, 2024

Symposium

The DMC's 2024 Cities and Migration: Plans, Policies, and Action Symposium took place on April 11th and hosted over 130 professionals, students, attorneys, direct-service providers, and policy makers gathered to discuss the role of cities in migration at this hybrid event.

Throughout the day, guests picked between seven incredible panels that explored issues facing migrants in urban communities. These panel discussions offered perspectives on migration's complexities, spanning legal hurdles, access to shelter, educational challenges, healthcare access, data management, and workplace rights.

Elizabeth and Rob spoke at the Data Panel and attended other presentations throughout the day. They presented alongside a member of the City of Chicago Committee for Immigrant and Refugee Rights Chief of Staff. During the Data Panel, Dr. Kennedy discussed her fieldwork in Central America, highlighting the challenges in documenting forced migration due to crimes often going unreported and the lack of state support for citizens. Rob Paral addressed the difficulties in tracking migrant populations in Illinois, critiquing the gaps and inconsistencies in data collection and emphasizing the potential of new data sources like immigration court records. The panelists collectively stressed the need for improved data governance, the role of academic partnerships, and the criticality of qualitative data in understanding and addressing migration challenges.

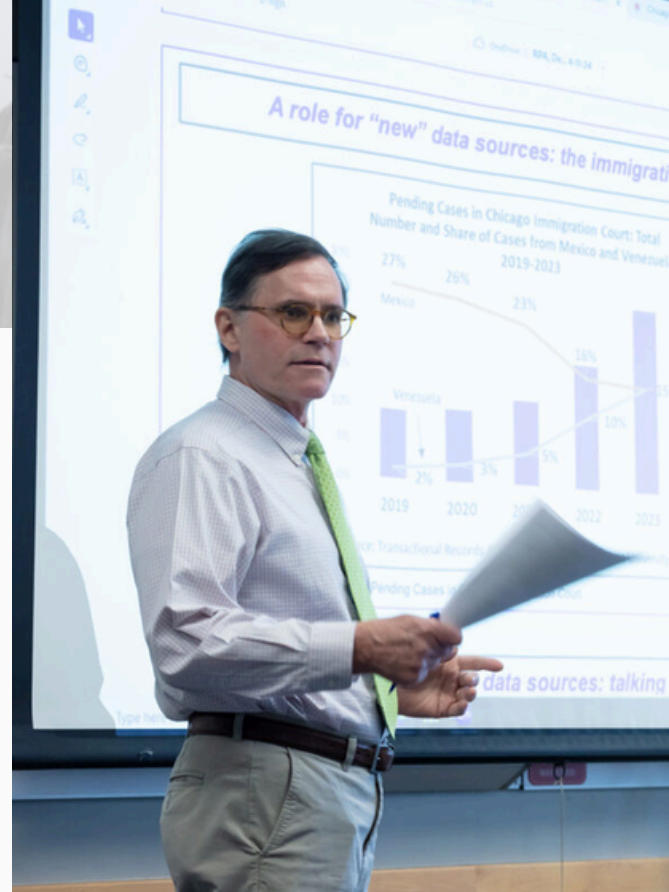


Image 1, PC Jonathan Michael Castillo; Image 2, PC Kit Wiberg, Image 3, PC Jonathan Michael Castillo

Project Accomplishments

For the first round of the Practitioner and Residence Program, both Practitioners engaged students, faculty, and migrant serving organizations. Each person spoke in 6 classes and spoke at multiple university wide events. They engaged stakeholders and experts from all over the U.S. and they provided written accounts of their findings which can be accessed on the DePaul Migration Collaborative website. Below is a snapshot of what they were able to accomplish during their residency.

Rob Paral's project focused on demographic research, policy analysis, and migrant programming. His final report directly addresses the complexities of migration to Illinois and it advocates for the needs of migrants examining state and local responses. To inform his work, Rob conducted interviews, reviewed data, visited shelters, studied the bussing from Texas, supported the Resurrection Project workshops, and provided insights and recommendations through his final report

Rob engaged with classes and students to contextualize migrant needs through presentations and discussions. In December, he visited El Paso, meeting with alumni, advocates, and organizers to learn firsthand about the process Texas uses to send migrants north. In March, he brought together Chicago activists to discuss problems and solution making. Through his endeavors, Rob amplifies voices, fosters dialogue, and advocates for meaningful action in addressing migration challenges.



115 People Received Rob's Final Report

21% Of Recipients Are Involved with Public Policy

Elizabeth Kennedy's project aimed to provide resources for asylum claims from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. This led to her creating multiple country conditions reports for specific identities such as female, children, LGBTQIA+, indigenous populations and more. To accomplish this goal, Dr. Kennedy worked with organizations from each country and continued research directly in Honduras. Her expertise in conducting trainings, such as the one designed for faculty members from esteemed institutions like DePaul, Northwestern, and UIC, aimed to inform others of how to become expert witnesses in asylum cases.

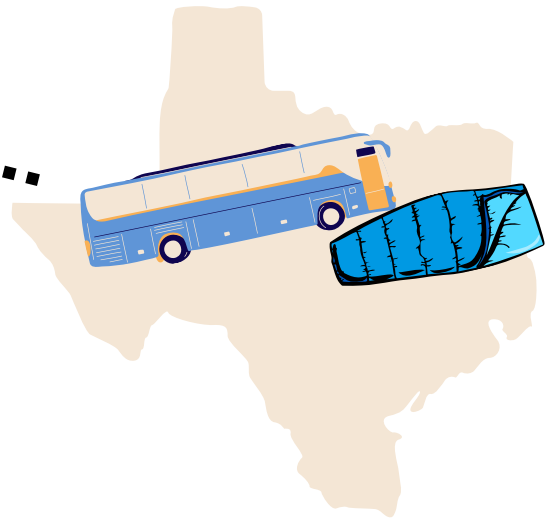
Dr. Kennedy also gave presentations for the DePaul Asylum Clinic to share specific country knowledge that could assist asylum claims and she provided support on **107 cases** by sharing reports or being on call to testify. Her efforts fostered community and practical learning, offering guidance on navigating the intricate asylum court system and processes and teaching students about the realities of Central American asylees.

Sample Representative Organizations in Attendance of Events

- ASCEND JUSTICE
- CENTRO ROMERO
- FAMILY FOCUS
- ERIE NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE
- HANA CENTER
- HANUL USA
- HEARTLAND ALLIANCE
- LEGAL AIDE CHICAGO
- MANO A MANO
- MIDDLE EASTERN IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE ALLIANCE
- METROPOLITAN FAMILY SERVICES
- NATIONAL IMMIGRANT JUSTICE CENTER
- NORTH SUBURBAN LEGAL AID CLINIC
- POLISH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
- THE RESURRECTION PROJECT
- THE IMMIGRATION PROJECT
- VIETNAMESE ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS
- WORLD RELIEF

Project Outcomes: Rob Paral

Research in Texas



Conducted Research at **3 Shelters** and **2 Bus Stations** in El Paso, Texas



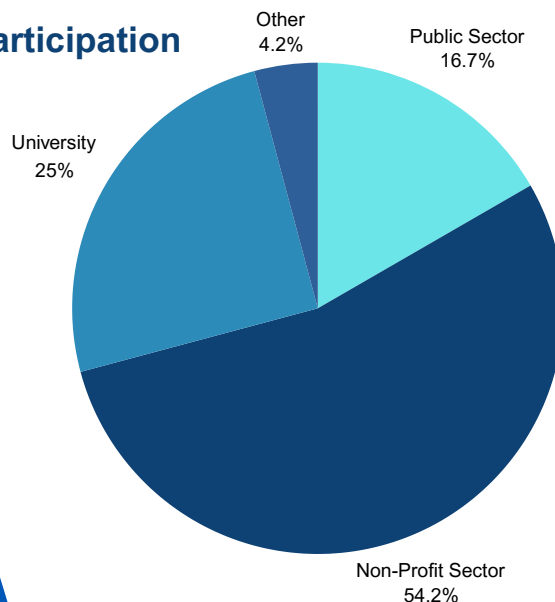
“Beyond opening the morning with a context of our crisis and reality, you stayed to answer questions and accompany our other presenters. Your knowledge, insight, and wisdom contributed to the core of this annual social justice training.”- Karl Nass, DePaul Mission and Ministry

Rob presented at 2 Division of Mission and Ministry Events including a 1-Day Service Immersion and a social justice training where he spoke with over 120 student leaders and student volunteers.

Stakeholder Roundtable Participation



“This is one of the top 3 meetings I have attended this year!”- Participant



34 Interviews Conducted



26 Organizations Worked With



3 Universities Engaged



Project Outcomes: Elizabeth Kennedy

MUST READ



GOV.UK

“Country policy and information note: gangs, Honduras, November 2023”

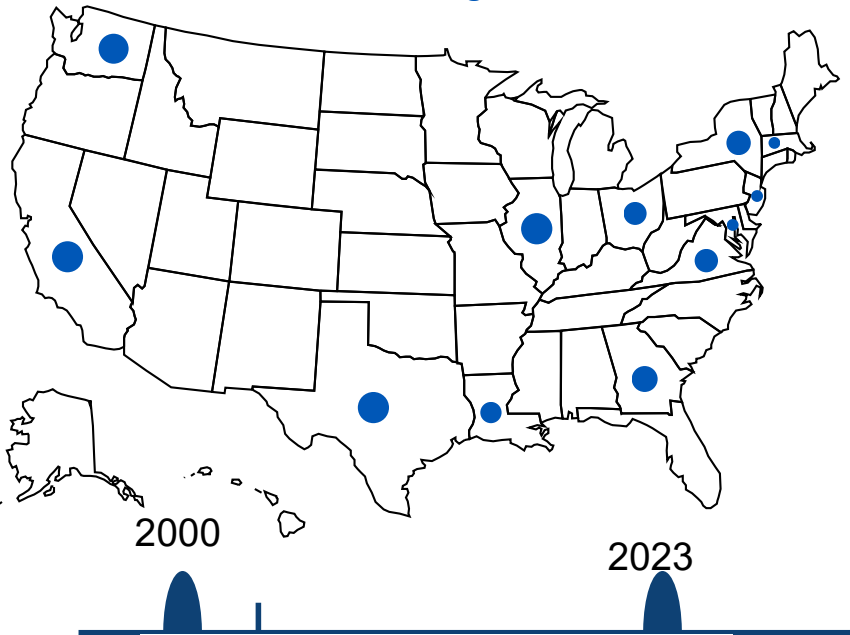
DePaul Newsline

“Social Scientist Uses Data To Help Migrants, Asylum Seekers”

Pulitzer Center Publication

“Migrants Face Uncertainty Throughout Journey-Even in the United States”

Worked with Researchers, Students, and Attorneys from following States:



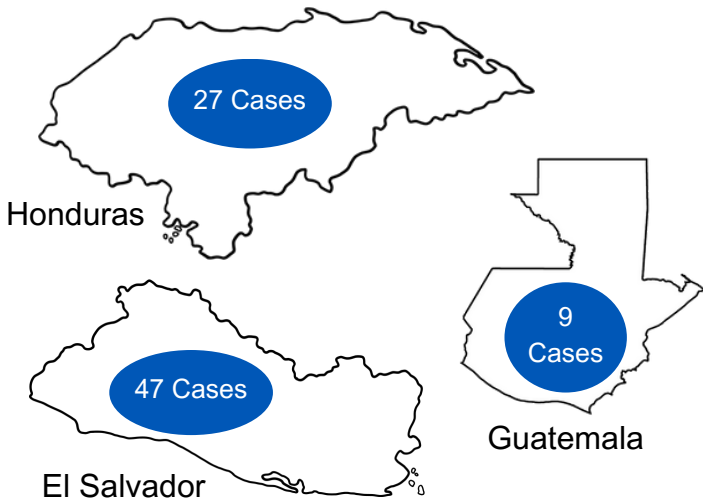
Synthesized Data, News, and Research from **165** Sources from **2000-2023**

Legal Work/ Case Support

Total Cases Worked on
107

Resource Recommendations

Over the span of six months, Elizabeth provided resource recommendations for cases from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras



Top Organizations Engaged

- Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública (IUDOP)
- El Instituto Universitario en Democracia Paz y Seguridad (IUDPAS)
- Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)
- Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP)
- KIND (Kids In Need of Defense)
- Fundación Myrna Mack



24 Cases On-Call to Testify For



6 Trial Prep Sessions Conducted



12 Researchers Engaged



21 Universities Engaged

The DePaul Migration Collaborative and DePaul University are grateful to Schreiber Philanthropies for their partnership and generosity.

Report By DMC Intern, Deeksha Chitturi and
DMC Staff Member, Dominique Cressler