

# 2020 GLOBAL ACTIVITIES REPORT

## OTROS MUNDOS A.C.



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The year 2020 was marked by the **Covid-19** crisis along with confinements, illnesses and death, as well as social and economic crisis throughout the country. Chiapas was no exception, in addition to the climate crisis caused by heavy **rains** and **hurricanes** whose effects were unprecedented. Amid all this, and despite the fact that all kinds of activities were suspended, the team at Otros Mundos continued working.

### DEFENSE OF THE LAND AND TERRITORY AREA

We carried out two Modules of the *Ejidal*<sup>1</sup> and Communal Popular School, which had the participation of members from ejidos and communities from some twenty agrarian nuclei. The activities aimed at sharing about the threats to the territories, as well as the legal tools and strategies for the defense of the collective property that is being threatened by megaprojects.



We held the ceremony for the second edition of the "Mariano Abarca" Environmental Defense in Chiapas Award 2020, which was awarded to the Popular Front for the Defense of Soconusco June 20 (FPDS, for its Spanish

<sup>1</sup>In reference to *ejidos*, a form of collective land tenure practiced in Mexico

acronym). This award is endorsed by 32 national and international organizations. On **March 2<sup>nd</sup>**, we commemorated **Berta Cáceres'** murder in the city's Central Square so as to keep alive the memory of Berta and of environmental defenders, human rights and nature.

In the same way, we commemorated **March 14<sup>th</sup>**, the **world day against dams**, through actions they were carried out in the Coastal region; where a constant presence of the resistance against hydroelectric plants in the region is maintained.



Otros Mundos' team facilitated analysis workshops about the extractive model and the educational process carried out by KINAL ANTZETIC, as well as others for pastoral groups from the Diocese of San Cristóbal de Las Casas in the Highlands Region.

## COMMUNICATION AND ANALYSIS AREA

We were able to increase traffic of Otros Mundos' website, with 134,405 visitors and 810,999 visits in 2020. We expanded our audience on social networks, with 13,035 followers (+708) and 12,653 "Likes" on Facebook (+383), 3,513 followers in Twitter (+489), as well as 138 subscribers on Telegram, 580 on YouTube and 1,209 views of the videos produced this year.

The invitations to our "Permanent Seminar on Sustainability" reach 423 people. Our monthly newsletter currently reaches 85 people. Unfortunately, due to the migration to a new server, some addresses were lost, but work is already underway to recover and increase the number of subscribers. In total, 11 monthly newsletters were sent out.

We are keeping up with our rhythm of 1 to 2 publications per day on the website, and the promotion of each publication on our social networks. We always share press

releases from our sister networks such as REMA, MAR, M4 Movement, FOE and ATALC; as well as important reports on issues related to defense of the territory, impacts of megaprojects and construction of alternatives.

Likewise, we publish and share press releases and statements from movements and organizations that we support, such as the statement from the last module of the *Ejidal* and Communal Popular School: [Declaration for the Defense of the \*Ejidal\* and Communal Territories of Chiapas.](#)



We continue to advocate on central issues and broadcast campaigns such as [March 14](#): World Day of Action in Defense of Rivers and Against Dams, and [September 21](#), International Day of Struggle against Monocultures of Tree Plantations.

We also disseminated messages about the [World Summit on Development](#) and our position that it should focus on human rights, as well as the [Tenth Anniversary of the Third World Meeting of People Affected by Dams](#) in the community of Temacapulín, Jalisco.





We premiered the series "Voces en Resistencia<sup>2</sup>", a series of testimonies from people who defend life and the territory from megaprojects. In the [first episode](#), participants of the first *Ejidal School* tell us why the defense of the territory is so important. And in the [second one](#), a

ZODEVITE member tells us about the socio-environmental problems in the Zoque area of the state of Chiapas.

We also made videos addressing various topics and proposals we support and advocate for, in order to generate a change from and for the people and communities such as the [School of Energy Justice](#), [Ejidal and Communal Popular School](#), [Túmin Chiapas](#), [Solidarity-based Economy](#). Poultry



promoters, an alternative in times of Covid, is something that we will publish in early 2021. Together with the Community Alternatos area, we made two videos about energy alternatives and the installation of a family biodigester that will also be available in early 2021.

We have improved our relationships with local, national and international media, and our list of contacts in the press has increased from 149 contacts to 202, 51 of which are international.

We continue supporting the Popular Front in Defense of Soconusco "June 20" (FPDS) in its fight against mining. We commemorated


ALERTA


La empresa minera El Puntal S.A. de C.V. y el Gobierno de Chiapas amenazan a defensores y defensoras ambientales de Acacoyagua, Chiapas.







23 de marzo del 2020

with them the [World Day in Defense of the Rivers and Against Dams](#) on the [Cacaluta River](#); and we also made a [video](#) about it. This year they received threats, and we launched an alert together with them: [Mining company El Puntal S.A. de C.V. and the Government of Chiapas threaten environmental defenders in Acacoyagua](#).



The Mexican Network of People Affected by Mining also spoke out: [State and Federal Government once again threaten the Territories and Communities of Chiapas](#). On their 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of struggle, we made a [commemorative video](#).

With regards to the case of anti-mining defender Mariano Abarca's murder, the 11th memorial was celebrated with the second issue of the ["Mariano Abarca" Environmental Defense in Chiapas Award](#), given to the [Popular Front for the Defense of Soconusco June 20 \(FPDS\)](#). We streamcasted via Facebook Live, achieving an impact of 2,929 views.



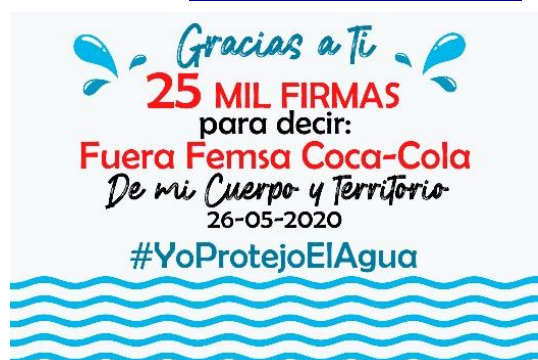
Thanks to the mindful and supportive work of journalists from Chiapas and Mexico, the award ceremony has been echoed in local (Chiapas Paralelo, Cuarto Poder, Gabriela Coutiño, El Siete de Chiapas,) as well as national media (Contralínea, Proceso, La

Jornada, La Broken chair). In the same way, 3 videos were made about the [Mariano Abarca 2020 Award](#); a speech by a woman from the FPDS and another video with words from its members.

Together with the area of Defense of the Land and Territory and members of the Platform for the Human Right to Water in Chiapas, we published a statement in favor of the revocation of the concession for water use to



Femsa-Coca Cola in Chiapas, in response to the [petition](#) made by the Municipal Trustee. The [Water for San Cristóbal](#) #YoProtejoElAgua campaign was launched, as

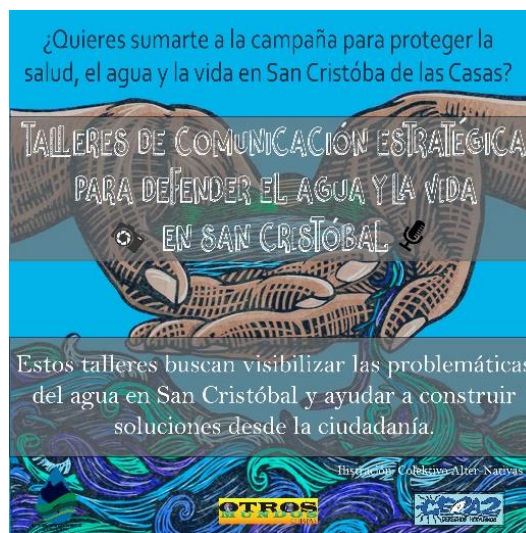


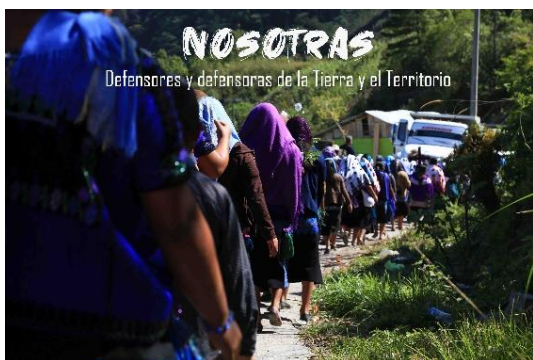
well as a petition in the Change.org platform to collect signatures requesting CONAGUA to suspend said concession, [gathering over 27 thousand signatures](#).

Subsequently, a new press release was published to exert social pressure: *The people has said: [Coca Cola out of San Cristóbal de Las Casas!](#)* .

An [infographic](#) was made on the same subject, which had a great impact on social networks. On Facebook alone 187,019 people were reached, with 24,497 interactions and 2,224 shares.

Similarly, an initiative for a series of [Strategic Communication Workshops](#) was launched to advocate for the Defense of Water in San Cristóbal, which will be resumed the following year.





Together with the Resistance against Criminalization Area, a series of videos was created: *Us, Defenders of the Land and Territory*, which compiles part of the psycho-social accompaniment process with defenders of indigenous and peasant organizations from Chiapas and Oaxaca.

This series is made up of 3 episodes: [Episode 1](#): The system we face, violence and criminalization, [Episode 2](#): Effects of socio-political violence and psycho-social support, and [Episode 3](#): Us.

Likewise, together with the area of Defense of the Land and Territory, the **Analysis Series "El Escaramujo"** has prepared, published and distributed 16 analysis papers addressing topics such as [What will we do after Covid-19?](#); [Radiography of Ejidos and Communal Assets](#); [Radiographies of Dams in Mexico III](#); [Dams in Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero](#); [The Struggle in Carrizalillo: Mining and Debt](#); [The Inter-oceanic Corridor, on Multilateral Banking](#) and the loans from the [World Bank to Mexico](#), as well as about [Free Trade Agreements](#), [Mexico and its Free Trade Agreements](#), [The Energy Transition](#), [MEXICO: WHAT IS THE NDC? The Mirage of the fight against Climate Change](#); [San Cristóbal de los OXXOs](#), and for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Túmin: [The Community Currency known as "TÚMIN"](#), and [X Anniversary of Solidarity-based Economy](#), among others.



EL ESCARAMUJO No. 108

LA MONEDA COMUNITARIA "TÚMIN"  
X Aniversario de la Economía Solidaria

Gustavo Castro Soto  
Otros Mundos A.C.  
5 de Noviembre 2020, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, México

We reactivated the information channels of the Latin American Network against Dams and in Defense of Rivers, their Communities and Water (REDLAR) through the creation of **social networks** and a **website**. Along with them, we are linking communications with the movements against dams, about their legal actions,

processes and search for alternatives. We began a training process in Strategic Communication with youth from *ejidos* in Oxchuc, to accompany them in their process of community self-government.

We maintained communication with the Mexican Network of People Affected by Mining ([REMA](#)) and generated more than 50 press releases condemning the extractive mining model, declaring our position in the face of topics and problems that unfolded. Along the same lines, we joined the [International Network "Yes to life, No to Mining"](#) in order to strengthen ties of solidarity with other movements from different continents.



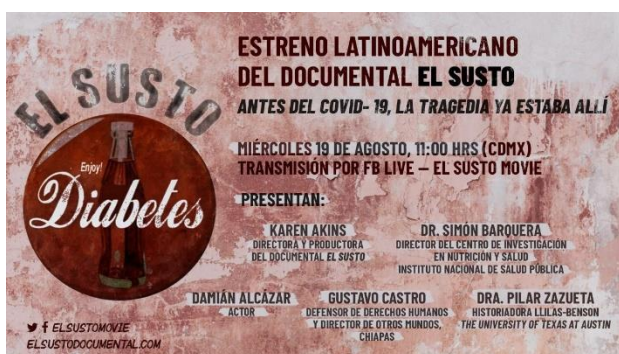
Our area also supported the demand for justice from the Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (COPINH, Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras) for the assassination of their coordinator Berta Cáceres on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016. We shared 20 [information and news reports](#) on this topic and we published a [declaration](#) within a global action In Memory of Berta. We organized a [commemorative event](#) in *la plaza de La Paz*<sup>3</sup> in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, marking 4 years since she was murdered.

In general, all our communications aimed to uphold our feminist view and contribute to the dismantling of patriarchy. In line with this, we participated in and covered the [feminist march on March 8<sup>th</sup> in San Cristóbal de Las Casas](#), we



joined the collective action #El9NingunaSeMueve and we published a [statement](#) on the matter.

Our team participated as guests in several webinars; prominent among these were those discussing the energy transition with Rosa Luxemburgo Foundation, green capitalism with the Red de Monocultivos de Árboles (RECOMA)<sup>4</sup>, the extractive mining model and debt with Movimiento Haitiano contra la Minería<sup>5</sup>, and the 10th celebration anniversary of the III International Meeting Against Dams with REDLAR, Temaca Vive, IMDEC, and other organizations. We also did some research regarding the situation of solidarity in Mesoamerica along with JASS Mesoamerica. The book



Who Killed Berta Cáceres?, by journalist Nina Lakhani, [was presented](#); as well as the documentary [El Susto](#), by producer Karen Akins, and we participated in the prologue for the book *Extraer Justicia* by author Joan Kuyek about the effects of mining.

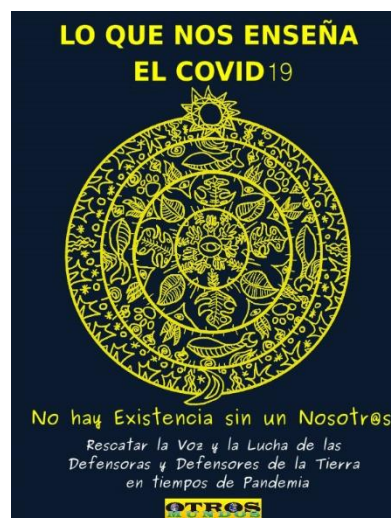
We inaugurated our Radio Show [El Escaramujo](#) which is transmitted on social networks with the opening debate being “Tumin, a Community-based Currency.”



The team at Otros Mundos responded to diverse **interview** requests with solidarity collectives, academics, dissertation authors, local and national press and radio, as well as from the US., Uruguay, Guatemala, and Honduras.

4 Network Against Trees Monocultures  
5 Haitian Movement Against Mining

Because of the COVID 19 pandemic, we carried out [illustrated analyses](#) of the aspects of the capitalist system this crisis has unveiled, as well as its vulnerabilities, the damage it causes, and its lack of social protection. Simultaneously, we sought to include the voice of defenders of the Land and Territory about the importance of resisting the accumulation system and defend life. This document includes [18 illustrations](#).



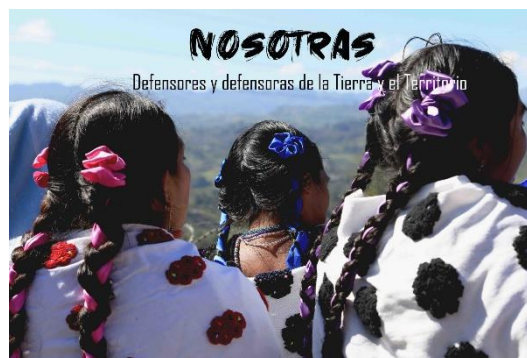
## DEFENSE AGAINST GREEN ECONOMY AREA

The **Resistance against Palm Meeting** was suspended, however it was only postponed and diverse resistance initiatives against palm oil from the states Campeche, Tabasco, and Chiapas, as well as from diverse regions in Guatemala and Honduras were contacted and re-articulated. The meeting will be reprogrammed once conditions are more favorable. We linked the RECOMA to act as one of the conveners of this re-articulation process against monocultures and in defense of forests.

## RESISTANCE AGAINST CRIMINALIZATION AREA

This year we held a new workshop on the Process of Psycho-social Support for Defenders of the Land and Territory as well as two follow-up visits. We elaborated a Participatory Research document about the psycho-social effects of sociopolitical violence and the importance of psycho-social support for defenders.

Based on this work, scripts for psycho-social support were prepared in preparation of 3 videos which emphasized the criminalization of women in the struggle for the defense of territories.



## COMMUNITY ALTER NATOS AREA

We reactivated and strengthened our Solidarity-based Economy initiative in the context of the pandemic by introducing [Túmin](#) as currency in different *barrios* and localities in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, including neighborhoods such as San Ramón, Cuxtitali, María Auxiliadora, Centro, Guadalupe, Fátima, Alcanfores, and others. We held assemblies and offered workshops and talks, eventually achieving the establishment of links with 10 localities in the city.



Over 200 partners, offering all kinds of products and services to sustain the economy of the *barrios*, as well as solidarity and trust, subscribed to the initiative. This, in turn, led to four producer markets. Additionally, educational material was developed.





In the face of deforestation, water problems and soil deterioration associated with it; as well as health problems for women associated to use of open stoves, we initiated the process of building up a network of families using biodigesters.

To do so, we carried out a series of workshops to share an **energy alternative** at a family scale through biodigesters, which are an appropriate technology system and produce high quality biogas and organic fertilizer. These systems are easily adapted to the needs and conditions of rural communities dedicated to production (not necessarily large-scale) of bovines, sheep, pigs and others, and who have a constant water supply. We held seven workshops in the localities of Nuevo Corral Chen, Chilil, Cajcam, and at Alter Natos Center to become familiar with the most frequently used energy systems and recognize alternative proposals for the generation of energy that have been possible in their contexts, as well as to present biodigesters as another possible alternative.



Two of these workshops were practical, one was an evaluation of an installation site and preparation of the terrain, and another one was on the installation of a geomembrane biodigester in Chilil.

Throughout this year, we have learned that in the face of a health and system crisis, urban populations go into deep crises, which has led us to seek for **urban alter natos**. While we stand by the demand for human rights, we must delve further in the construction of human rights by the people, the development of food sovereignty and urban alternatives. Thus, in 2020, we have initiated a process of organization of **urban livestock and vegetable promoters**. This, along with the solidarity-based economy



supported by the alternative currency **Túmin**, is aimed at improving living conditions in the *barrios*, and it is coordinated with 4 local organizations and a network of *Grassroots Ecclesial Communities* gathering around 500 families.

We held many virtual meetings to share analyses, organize the process, prepare materials, and share organizational criteria. Additionally, some in-person meetings were held for training in preventive medicine for the promoters in the participating *barrios*, as well as follow-up meetings with both families and promoters. The first network of 100 families from different *barrios* of the city was organized.



## ALTER NATOS CENTER AREA

In 2020 we concluded bioconstruction works on **Alter Natos Ecological Center**. Specifically, we finished the structure we call “**Casa para taller**” (Workshop House). We used the same **bioconstruction techniques** as we had in the



ecological center, except for the structure, which on this occasion was wood, wattle and daub and straw-clay walls, clay plastering, using *velanco* for interiors and *calficite* for exteriors, and pressed clay floors.



In spite of the pandemic, in Alter Natos we shared with different social groups and organization workshops among which were: **Escuela de Justicia Energética** (Energy Justice School), **Escuela Popular Ejidal** (*Ejidal* and Communal Popular School), an

energy self-sufficiency workshop, specifically dealing with biodigesters, and another with the **Comunidad de Aprendizaje** (COA, Community of Learning).

The Alter Natos Center team received training on natural-pigment-based paint and we observed a practice of “edible forest” in the Cajcam community in Comitán de Domínguez, Chiapas –an enriching experience which reinforced our knowledge of clay as a construction material and the alternatives that are constructed within our communities.



Throughout the year, improvements were made on the **hydraulic system** of the ecological center, including the construction of a 50,000 L geomembrane base, as well as the

construction and placement of canals for rainwater harvesting in the dome roofs and the shelter.

Maintenance of the rain and runoff water harvest ponds and adjustment of the biological filters were also a part of this. As part of the overall maintenance of the water system, the ponds were washed, water tank filters were changed, and water was chlorinated.



We concluded the tasks of varnishing the **shelter s** structure, a contention wall for the **grey water filters**, the **tire trail**, placement of clamps to prevent cracks in the bamboo, maintenance of downspouts and geocells of the **green roofs**.

As for the sanitation system, 14 dry toilets were built. Improvements were also made to the **electrical system**, by installing protectors for the motion sensors, as well as upgrades in the energy and illumination distribution network. To conclude, a protective tile roof was placed over a segment of the walls in the **perimeter fence** of Alter Natos.

