

# CONVIVENCIA

2021

A virtual convening of campesinas cultivating, harvesting, and transforming





### CONVIVENCIA

## CAMPESINAS CULTIVATING, HARVESTING, AND TRANSFORMING

**VIRTUAL CONVENING | APRIL 16 - 19, 2021** 



For me the Convivencia is very important, because in this space we, campesinas, realize that we are not alone, that we have allies all over the country, that we can fight injustice together, and we can move in the same direction with the same goal, together - for justice!

- Beatriz Gatica, Mujeres Divinas and Board Member of Alianza Nacional de Campesinas

The 2021 Convivencia was funded by support from EarthJustice, V-Day, The NoVo Foundation, Women Donors Network, Líderes Campesinas, ASISTA, Rural Coalition, and Farmworker Justice

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, Inc. would like to thank the 85 campesinas who took time from their jobs and families to participate in the 2021 Convivencia and share their life experiences, needs and concerns, and recommendations.

We also want to extend our gratitude to the more than 20 staff from our member organizations and other volunteers who helped to facilitate some of the sessions, take notes, help record the proceedings, and prepare participants to hold virtual meetings with congressional representatives.

We are grateful for the logistical support that VALORUS (formerly CALCASA), Futures Without Violence, Migrant Clinicians Network (MCN) provided and to EarthJustice, Farmworker Justice, ASISTA, Rural Coalition and Líderes Campesinas for their helping us co-facilitate and prepare for the legislative meetings.

Special thanks go to Congressman Dr. Raul Ruiz (D-CA), V (formerly known as Eve Ensler), founder of the One Billion Rising movement and V-Day, and Susan Swan, Director of V-Day, for their wonderful video statements of support and commitment to Alianza's work.

We would also like to recognize the hard work of our staff, our Executive Director, as well as members of our Board of Directors for working on this report, with a very special thanks to the author of this report, Ana Orozco, to the editor, Adelita M. Medina, and to Sheila Quintana for the design and layout.



Alianza's mission is to unify the struggle and promote the leadership of campesinas (farmworker women and girls) in a national movement to create major visibility and advocate for changes that ensure their human rights.

Alianza was officially founded in 2011, after the initial proposal for a national alliance by and for campesinas emerged from a conference organized in the Coachella Valley in 1991. At this time, those who later founded Alianza were involved in local campesina organizing efforts in California with Mujeres Mexicanas and Farmworker Justice. The aim of building a national alliance was to bring unity and coherence to a growing, but greatly under-supported and underrepresented movement of women farmworkers, most of whom are immigrants, migrant guestworkers, or refugees.



For additional information: www.alianzanacionaldecampesinas.org

### Follow us on social media:

- facebook.com/CampesinasUnite
- **f** @campesinasunite
- @campesinasunite

### ALIANZA NACIONAL DE CAMPESINAS, INC

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

05	Letter from the Executive Director
08	Executive Summary
13	Historical Context of the Alianza Convivencia
16	Ongoing Challenges & Conditions in Campesina Communities
19	2021 Convivencia Summary & Outcomes
22	Immigration
27	Pesticides & Environmental Justice
33	Violence Against Women
38	Labor Rights
43	COVID-19 and Campesina Communities
47	Conclusion & the Future of Alianza's Work
51	Endnotes

Note: In an effort to continue to challenge the legacy of patriarchy in all that we do, we use the term "campesinxs" to refer to a group of mixed gendered farmworkers, or "campesinx" to refer to a singular farmworker without reference to gender. When we use the singular "campesina" we are specifically referring to a woman farmworker, and when we say campesinas we are referring to many women farmworkers. We have used the term campesino or campesinos a few times throughout the report to refer to a male farmworker or many male farmworkers, or to quote the official title of an organization like Teatro Campesino.

Throughout this report we make reference to both "members" and "member organizations." Participants of the Convivencia were mostly individual members of our member organizations (the majority of whom are campesinas) as well as the staff of our member organizations. We consider the individual members of our member organizations to also be members of Alianza. When we say "members" in this report, we are referring to the participants of the Convivencia, as well as our member organizations.

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR, MILY TREVIÑO-SAUCEDA



### **Greetings familia!**

Greetings familia! I hope this message finds you and your loved ones well and healthy. As I write this letter for the opening of the Convivencia 2021: Campesinas Cultivating, Harvesting, and Transforming Solutions Report, I am reminded that our Convivencia was originally planned to take place in person in 2020. However, due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, we were not able to meet in person and had to postpone the gathering. Eventually the Convivencia transitioned to an online virtual convening, which took place in April 2021. We also had to shift the focus of our work to respond to the immediate health and economic needs made worse by the pandemic.

Today, more than a year later, we are still grappling with the consequences of the pandemic, which continues to disproportionately affect low income, Black, Brown, Indigenous folks, and other people of color (POC), including migrants and immigrants. Together with our member organizations, we are ensuring that farmworker families and communities have access to the most up to date information on the pandemic. and that they are able to get tested and vaccinated without fears related to immigration status. We have also been engaging in mutual aid efforts with our member organizations to distribute food, potable water, and PPE to the communities we work with, which are largely low-income undocumented immigrant communities. Because undocumented essential workers have largely been excluded from federal COVID relief efforts and assistance, Alianza and many immigrant rights organizations have advocated strongly for the vaccine to be made available for all workers regardless of status. Yet, federal and state efforts still lag behind when it comes to ensuring their outreach is culturally responsive and linguistically accessible, highlighting the importance of the work that Alianza and our members have been doing to meet these needs.

Since our last Convivencia in 2018, Alianza has accomplished many of the goals we set for our work at the time, and won many victories. You can read about our achievements over the last three years, none of which could have been accomplished without the leadership and participation of our members, at <a href="www.alianzanacionaldecampesinas.org/achievements-2018-2021">www.alianzanacionaldecampesinas.org/achievements-2018-2021</a>. Also, since the last Convivencia, there has been a transition in our federal leadership. As a result, we have seen some immediate changes in the federal response to the pandemic and our communities have achieved some important victories within the first few months of the new presidency. Because of ongoing efforts from organizations like Alianza and ally organizations advocating for immigrant rights, the new administration took immediate action on some of the policy issues we have been insisting on for years.

The following is a list of some of the advancements we have seen since the Biden administration took office, thanks to our organizing efforts, our members' efforts, as well as efforts of so many organizers and organizations fighting for immigrant rights:

- In February of 2021, the Biden Administration announced the U.S. Citizenship Act, a bill that would establish an expedited pathway to citizenship to undocumented farmworkers, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, and people with Temporary Protected Status (TPS)This is a direct result of the organizing efforts of Alianza, our member organizations, and ally immigrant rights organizations across the country.
- In March of 2021, the Citizenship for Essential Workers Act was introduced. If approved, this bill would create an expedited pathway to citizenship for over 5 million undocumented essential workers, including campesinas and other women workers throughout our farm and food systems. Alianza Nacional de Campesinas took part in drafting and revising the text language of this bill.
- The Asunción Valdivia Heat Stress bill was introduced to direct the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue an occupational safety and health standard to protect workers from heat-related injuries and illnesses.
- Undocumented immigrants waiting to receive U Visas, because they were victims
  of crimes/abuse, and are cooperating with the police in the investigation of the
  crime, now will receive a work permit as well as protection from deportation while
  they await their U Visa approval. This is an important victory for survivors of
  domestic or intimate partner violence.

The challenges of this pandemic are many as are the needs. In addition to responding to the new challenges that the pandemic provoked within our communities, Alianza and our member organizations have continued to address the ongoing issues that continue to affect campesinxs such as pesticides exposure, heat stress, sexual harassment and violence in the fields and our communities, as well as the lack of labor rights for workers in the agricultural sector. Through our 15 member organizations working locally in communities across the country, we will continue to center the voices of campesinas in the national discourse related to farmworker and immigrant justice, offer support and help mobilize resources, help ensure that campesing families have access to vaccines and medical care, and push for the inclusion of campesina workers and families in economic relief packages. We continue to invest in caring for our communities, supporting community led mutual aid efforts and we continue to work towards realizing our vision of drastically transforming our food systems so that those of us, on which this system depends, are never considered disposable. The conversations that took place and the feedback we received from our members during this convening will help inform the future of our work.

As always, united in the struggle, por la participación de campesinas en liderazgo!

Mily Treviño-Sauceda

**Executive Director** 

Alianza Nacional de Campesinas

Mily Teriño-Ganceda



### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, Inc. is a national member-led alliance of 15 grassroots farmworker organizations across 11 states and the District of Columbia. Member organizations advocate for the civil, constitutional, and human rights of campesinxs (farmworkers) who form the backbone of our nation's farm and food systems. Collectively our member organizations represent more than 800,000 campesinas and their families nationally. Also, through our member organization, the Rural Coalition, we are a member of the international farmworker's alliance, La Via Campesina, which defends and advocates for food sovereignty, and works to end violence against women across the globe. Alianza was founded by and for campesinas (women farmworkers).

Alianza member organizations are the core drivers of our work; our members are Alianza. It is critical that we maintain communication with them as well as their individual members. Therefore, the Convivencia, similar to a member assembly, plays a critical role both in facilitating direct communication between Alianza, our member organizations and their members (the majority of whom are campesinas), as well as directing the future of our work. This report documents the deep analysis of the challenges campesinas face, the reflections, and the possibilities and solutions that came from campesinas during the Convivencia. The recommendations that emerged from the conversations that took place among our members during this convening will help inform the future of our work. Our Convivencias always have the purpose of generating and offering solutions, including policy advocacy, that protects and promotes the health, safety, dignity, and human rights of women farmworkers.

The 2021 Convivencia was one of our largest gatherings of farmworker women, with 85 campesinas and over 20 staff members from our member and partner organizations. Over the course of four days, we discussed the challenges and opportunities related to our four priority areas: Immigration, Pesticides & Environmental Justice, Violence Against Women, and Labor Rights, as well as recommendations related to the coronavirus pandemic.



The final day of the Convivencia was dedicated to virtual legislative visits with 31 members of the House of Representatives and 20 members of the Senate. During these visits, campesinas shared testimonies about their realities and work experiences with their local elected officials to better inform and guide campesina-centered public policies and practices. The following are some of the highlights and recommendations that came out of these discussions.



### **IMMIGRATION**

- A common theme that ran throughout all of the discussions related to immigration
  was citizenship. Our member organizations are actively involved in campaigns and
  coalitions, along with Alianza, to demand a just, equitable pathway to citizenship
  for farmworker women and families, and all 11 million undocumented people living
  and working in the U.S.
- Campaigns for citizenship have taken on a new focus in light of the current global pandemic. Alianza Nacional de Campesinas took part in drafting the Citizenship for Essential Workers bill which was introduced in the House and Senate earlier this year. Now we, along with our member organizations, are doing what we can to see that this bill gets passed.
- Members also advocated for undocumented essential workers being eligible for benefits and COVID relief while we wait for the passage of comprehensive immigration proposals, such as the Citizenship for Essential Workers Act or the U.S. Citizenship Act.



### **PESTICIDES & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

- Members advocated for protective measures to be implemented in the fields to
  protect workers from the spraying of pesticides, as well as the enforcement of
  existing protective laws. Members also requested more trainings on safety and
  precautions related to pesticide usage.
- Members also advocated for protections for whistleblowers. All too often, campesinxs are afraid to speak up about the violations they personally suffer and/or witness when it comes to the use and spraying of pesticides in proximity of workers.
- Ultimately, Alianza, our member organizations and their members advocated for an end to the use of any toxic pesticides as a means of protecting workers, consumers and the land. This would be a first step towards our larger vision of a just transition to completely sustainable agriculture and away from the current agribusiness model which is exploitative to workers as well as the land.



### **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

- Conversations related to violence against women are very difficult. It is estimated
  that nearly 80% of women farmworkers have experienced some form of sexual
  violence on the job and one third of campesinas also experience violence in their
  homes. Members shared their personal stories as well as recommendations as to
  how to continue the work to end gender-based violence.
- Members advocated for an end to the bureaucratic and legal barriers for immigrant and undocumented survivors and their families to access safety and support.
- Members also discussed the need to challenge the normalization of violence
  against women, particularly in their own communities, agreeing that everyone has
  to play their part in challenging and dismantling patriarchy and toxic masculinity
  whenever and wherever it shows up. It was suggested that Alianza continue to
  develop educational materials and trainings for members around ending gender
  based violence.
- Some more immediate recommendations that were repeated throughout the four days were: to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, and a call to remove the statute of limitations on reporting sexual assault and intimate partner violence.



### **LABOR RIGHTS**

- A recurring recommendation that came from our members related to labor rights
  was that the agricultural sector should be held to the same federal fair labor
  standards as other labor sectors.
- Now that campesinxs are considered "essential workers," it is imperative that they
  be treated as such and be given the same access to government support
  regardless of immigration status, as they continue to work during a global
  pandemic.
- Members demand accessible information in multiple languages about their rights as agricultural workers. Worker protection laws in the agricultural sector vary from state to state. Members also requested more know your rights trainings specifically about labor rights for agricultural workers.



- For the last year and a half, Alianza and our member organizations have been
  organizing food, water, household products, and PPE drives, as well as fundraisers
  to help campesinxs pay their rent and utilities. Fundraisers were organized because
  the majority of campesinx have not received any stimulus checks during the
  pandemic. Campesinxs have not stopped working during the pandemic to feed the
  nation, however many have not had enough to feed their own families and have
  not received any of the relief benefits from their state or federal government.
- Members recommend that COVID-19 protective measures be enforced by local agencies and state governments in the agricultural sector.
- Member organizations have been organizing testing drives since the start of the
  pandemic and are now working with doctors and local clinics to bring the vaccine to
  campesinxs working in the fields. Alianza and our member organizations are
  involved in a six month campaign in 20 states to counter the misinformation about
  the vaccine and to ensure that campesinxs have safe access to the vaccine without
  immigration status related fears.

### CONCLUSION

Convivencias are an essential part of our movement for campesina justice. These gatherings are crucial for the development of our work and they serve to deepen our relationship with our members and to help us develop strategies to advance our goals related to our four priority areas. Throughout the year we engage with our members in a variety of ways, through monthly workgroup calls, webinars, food drives, ongoing campaigns, and local in person trainings and direct actions. Convivencias are an opportunity for Alianza to engage with members on a deeper level. This report summarizes all of the recommendations that came from our members during this Convivencia. These recommendations will be incorporated into our future work and strategies. This report also summarizes the current actions that we and our member organizations are taking to advance our priorities, as well as the victories we have achieved since our last Convivencia in 2018. We are grateful to our funders and supporters who helped make this year's Convivencia possible, to our allies in the struggle for farmworker justice, and to our member organizations for their unwavering commitment to ensuring the visibility of campesinx labor, and their advocacy for campesina human rights and dignity.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE ALIANZA CONVIVENCIA

Campesinas are among the most exploited, undervalued, and least protected workers in our country, they have also proven to be brave, resilient, resourceful, and innovative when engaged as advocates and organizers pushing for systemic changes that will protect and promote their dignity and human rights, and that of their families and communities. An intrinsic and major part of Alianza's work is the role that campesinas exert in all of our member organizations as founders, leaders, agents of change, advocates, and drivers behind our advocacy, organizing, training, and mentoring efforts.

Convivencias are a key component of our work. They are centered around member engagement and member guidance of our work. During our first Convivencia, held in 2013, members helped to select Alianza's four priority issue areas: immigration, pesticides & environmental justice, violence against women, and labor rights. Members also suggested the creation of four workgroups to focus on the priority issue areas, the idea being that members can offer ongoing input into the goals and the agenda of Alianza's work related to these four priority areas.

During the second Convivencia, held in 2018, members were adamant about getting the necessary funding to establish the infrastructure of Alianza.



As a result, Alianza was able to secure funding to hire staff for the first time. Creating an Alianza team has made it possible to advance our work and priorities, and has led to <u>recent victories</u> that have helped effect real changes in our communities.

The term Convivencia, or "coexistence" in English, does not simply refer to a conference or a meeting, it goes deeper than that. Convivencia is the action of being in community together. The term conveys communication, mutual respect, and community support. Our Convivencias are opportunities for members to connect, reflect on our work, make recommendations, and renew their own commitments to the work. Members also have the opportunity to engage with specially invited guests as well as their elected officials during these assemblies. It is also an opportunity for the staff and board of Alianza to reflect on our work and evaluate the effectiveness of our strategies and responses to the needs of our members and to other challenges campesinas face on a national level. While we understand that many of the challenges campesinas face today are unfortunately the same challenges that our communities faced 10 years ago (when Alianza was officially founded), we also understand the importance of ongoing engagement, opportunities for deep conversations, and listening sessions with our members, so that they can share their current experiences as campesinas, and any new or worsening challenges that may be emerging in their communities.



Alianza's first Convivencia was held in 2013.

## THIRD NATIONAL CONVIVENCIA: CAMPESINAS CULTIVATING, HARVESTING, AND TRANSFORMING



Alianza initially planned to hold its third Convivencia in April 2020, in Washington, D.C., but because of the pandemic, it was postponed until April 2021 and had to be convened virtually.

Despite the transition to an online convening, we had the most participation yet, with over 100 participants including campesinas, Alianza board and staff members and staff from our member organizations. We also had participation from ally organizations like VALORUS (formerly CalCASA), Futures without Violence, and the Migrant Clinicians Network. During the last day of the Convivencia, when we met with elected officials, we were joined by EarthJustice, Farmworker Justice, and ASISTA, all of whom helped to support our demands. The fact that it was a virtual Convivencia made it possible for more campesinas to participate. Given that the majority of farmworkers are undocumented or working with very restrictive work visas, some members have not been able to travel to participate in past Convivencias.

This third Convivencia took place amid a wide-range of ongoing challenges and concerns that confront campesinas and their families across the country and which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.



## ONGOING AND AGGRAVATED CONDITIONS AND CHALLENGES CONFRONTING CAMPESINA FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

An estimated 2.5 million farmworkers are employed annually in the production of plant and animal commodities in the United States [1]. The farmworker population is predominantly Latinx (83%) and largely immigrant, with 69% from Mexico. This population has limited English proficiency, and in some cases, limited Spanish proficiency because their native languages include various indigenous languages or an afro descendant language like Haitian Creole. Many have limited formal education, low levels of literacy and high rates of poverty. Roughly half of farmworkers are undocumented immigrants and mixed status families are very common [2]. These statistics are constantly evolving as we continue to learn more about the farmworker population.

According to the National Agricultural Workers Survey, women are increasingly represented in the agricultural labor force and now comprise approximately 32% of the farmworker population [3]. That means that some 800,000 farmworker women and girls, some as young as 10, work in agricultural fields, plant nurseries, packing houses, and dairies across the U.S. But despite the indispensable work of planting, picking, and packing fruits and vegetables that people consume daily, campesinas toil in the shadows of society in isolated locations that are out of sight and out of the minds of most people. Although they make a huge contribution to our economy, and are now deemed "essential workers," campesinas are among the most exploited, undervalued, and least protected workers in our country.

Economic Exploitation

Economic exploitation is one of the major problems campesinas face. While women in all industries are paid less than their male counterparts, campesinas are paid well beneath the minimum wage. They are exempt from overtime protections available to most workers under the Fair Labor Standards Act and typically get no sick, holiday or vacation days. They are also denied the right to unionize. Wage theft is also common; campesinas are often paid for fewer hours than they work and are sometimes cheated out of pay for produce that they have harvested. In addition, it is not uncommon for a campesina to be paid on her husband's or male family member's paycheck, ultimately netting zero income for herself. This illegal practice robs women of financial autonomy, giving their husbands or partners an unjust amount of power, and making them more vulnerable when domestic violence occurs.

Exposure to Toxic Pesticides

Exposure to toxic pesticides is a major threat that campesinas confront on a regular basis. Each year, there are an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 cases of physician-diagnosed pesticide poisoning among U.S. farmworkers, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Studies have also linked pesticide exposure to infertility, miscarriages, birth defects in babies, and other reproductive health problems.

Harsh &
Dangerous
Working
Conditions

Campesinas work long hours in all kinds of weather, including extreme cold in northern states and extreme heat in the summers. Advocates have started pushing for a heat stress standard and legislators have introduced legislation to address the dangers of chronic heat exposure, including providing workers with water, shade, and rest periods. Now, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many workers lack soap, water, sanitizers, and masks. Many are unable to practice safe distancing due to the nature of their work.

Workplace Gender-Based Violence Workplace violence, including sexual harassment and sexual assault, perpetrated by bosses, company owners, and co-workers occurs often, and while the exact numbers may not be known, it is believed that thousands of campesinas in this country have been sexually harassed and/or assaulted in the fields, packing houses, dairies and other isolated places where they work. One study showed that 80 percent of those surveyed reported having experienced some form of sexual harassment [4]. As mentioned above under the "Economic exploitation" section, it is a common practice for employers to pay a woman's salary on her husband's paycheck or on the paycheck of a male family member, which is economic violence against women.

Threats of Deportation

Threats of Deportation. Because many campesinas are undocumented and often the sole caretakers of their children, the constant threat of being dismissed from a job or being deported if they dare to complain makes them hesitant to speak out when their rights are violated or to take legal action to stop the exploitation and violations. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to hold the perpetrators accountable or to obtain remedies for the women. Employers often retaliate against women who come forth to report workplace abuse. In one investigation, headed by PBS (Frontline), civil court documents reviewed showed that in cases where female workers made complaints to company management, up to 85% faced retaliation – such as being demoted, fired, or further harassed.

Lack of Health Insurance & Access to Health Care Only a small percentage of farmworkers have health insurance. Most cannot afford medical care. They have no paid sick leave, and therefore, cannot stay home even if they become ill with COVID-19. Many have no place to quarantine themselves or their family members. Undocumented workers cannot access workers compensation for being injured on the job, and if they cannot perform the demanding physical requirements of farm work in the fields - due to an injury sustained while on the job - they run the risk of losing the job.

Substandard Living Conditions Many farmworker families lack decent, safe, and sanitary housing. Because they lack adequate wages and access to social safety nets, many live in low-income areas lacking in basic services such as potable water, electricity, paved roads, proper drainage, and waste management/sewage systems. Others live in crowded houses, apartments, motels, trailers, or makeshift shacks. Growers who hire seasonal workers may get a house certified for 12 or 15 workers and pack in 20 or more.

Covid-19 Challenges The COVID-19 pandemic has created a host of challenges for campesina communities. During this year's Convivencia we held sessions specifically about the challenges and possible solutions. Already dealing with the precarious economic situations and dangerous health conditions described above, campesinas now find themselves in even more dire situations. Ironically and sadly, although they plant, harvest, and pack the food on everybody's tables, many have been unable to feed themselves and their families during this time of crisis. Others are unable to pay rent and utilities, unable to get the COVID vaccine, or healthcare if they become ill. Most have no paid sick leave or medical coverage. If they get sick they continue to work for fear of losing their jobs or losing pay.

As the only national organization founded for and by campesinas, Alianza aims to provide a leadership role in helping to end all forms of exploitation and abuse perpetrated against this essential group of workers. Our underlying approach includes identifying, promoting and supporting the leadership of campesinas as thought leaders, agents of change, advocates, and drivers behind the organizing efforts needed to achieve gender equity and put an end to gender-based violence in the home, places of work, and in our communities.

### 2021 CONVIVENCIA SUMMARY & OUTCOMES

During this year's Convivencia, members participated in 12 sessions that focused on various topics, related to our four priority areas, as well as the ever-emerging challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.



### **IMMIGRATION**

Comprehensive immigration reform, policy related to migrant and guest workers - including H2-A visas, and policy towards immigrants seeking sanctuary, as well as U visas, for people who have been victims of crimes in the U.S.

### PESTICIDES & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Worker Protection Standards (WPS), illnesses and health effects of pesticides exposure, policy related to pesticides usage, alternatives to toxic pesticides, and sustainable agriculture.





### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Including domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment and assault in the workplace, gender discrimination, and sexual abuse of minors.



#### **LABOR RIGHTS**

Health and safety in the fields, labor and employment standards, minors working in the fields, equal pay and treatment, as well policy and advocacy related to fair labor standards in the agricultural sector.

### COVID-19 AND CAMPESINA COMMUNITIES

Safety precautions in the fields, access to COVID testing and vaccine, and access to & recognition in federal COVID relief packages.



These sessions were opportunities for campesinas and other member organization participants to get to know one another or re-visit one another virtually, in small groups. They had the opportunity to share their daily struggles in the campos (fields), at home, and in their communities in times of Covid-19, and how they have been coping with them. Members were able to connect and network with one another across cities and states and know that they are not alone in their struggles. For example, members who are organizing against the usage of pesticides while working in the fields in California and Oregon have the opportunity to talk to other members in Florida, Arizona, and Upstate New York organizing the very same campaigns in their communities. As members share about their experiences working as campesinas during these times, they start to realize how common their struggle is across the farm and food systems in this country.

Prior to the start of these smaller group discussions, participants were greeted by some of our strongest allies and supporters. During the opening of this year's Convivencia we were joined by special guests Congressman Dr. Raul Ruiz and playwright/activist, founder of the organization V-Day and the One Billion Rising movement, "V" (formerly known as Eve Ensler), as well as Susan Swan, Director of V-Day. All shared their appreciation for the work led by Alianza's members as well as a commitment to uplift and support Alianza's political priorities and agenda.

### **Small Breakout Group Discussions**

While each session had a different topic, all sessions involved small break out group discussions to allow for more intimate and in-depth conversations to flow amongst members. Members were asked to respond to the following same set of questions in every session:

- 1. What are some of the problems, challenges and needs campesinas face related to the theme of today's session?
- 2. What are some of the actions that your organization is mobilizing to confront these challenges or problems? What are the challenges to accomplishing your goals that you or your group are facing in your workplace? What changes have you seen so far?
- 3. Based on what we have already shared, what recommendations would you share with the government, or with government agencies, communications outlets, your organization, Alianza, and with all the women and youth at this Convivencia to garner support over the next couple of years and to effect change related to the themes discussed today?
- 4. What do you or your organization commit to doing with Alianza in order to advance these recommendations? And what do you need from other organizations and members to advance these themes/recommendations?

### **Participant Visits with Congressional Representatives**

During the last day of the Convivencia, campesinas and other participants met virtually with their congressional representatives to share the challenges and problems that affect campesinas and to suggest actions that can be taken to address them. We held virtual legislative visits with 31 members of the House of Representatives and 20 members of the Senate. Several of the campesinas shared testimonies about their realities and work experiences. The sharing of personal campesina testimonies with congressional representatives and government agencies has proven to be a very effective educational and inspirational tool.

Convivencia participants also strategized around how to address these issues in their own communities. Members were thoroughly engaged throughout the entire Convivencia and left with a feeling of hope and possibilities after four days of building and strategizing together, and lobbying their local elected officials. The following is a summary, divided by priority area, of all that was discussed and suggested by our members throughout the sessions.

### **IMMIGRATION**

With immigrants making up close to 75% of the population working in our agriculture and food systems, immigration and immigrant rights are extremely important issues for Alianza and our members [5]. While the meat, fish and agriculture industries are necessary for our collective survival, jobs in these industries continue to be some of the lowest paid jobs in the labor force nationwide.

Because so much of this labor force is made up of immigrants, mostly undocumented, this particular workforce is extremely vulnerable to exploitation. Last year, for the first time ever, farmworkers and food systems workers were finally recognized by the federal government for their invaluable contribution to this country. They are, and always have been, essential workers. However, due to their immigration status, most were left out of the COVID relief packages under both the Trump and Biden administrations. Alianza has always been and continues to be an advocate for immigrant rights, for a safe pathway to citizenship for all, including for farm and food systems workers and their families.

The following is a summary of the topics discussed during the Convivencia in relation to immigration, immigrant rights, and the risks and challenges facing immigrant and undocumented farmworkers, as well as a series of actions members are currently taking to confront these challenges, followed by recommendations and commitments to advance just immigration policy.





### Challenges

In addition to the challenges outlined above, related to immigration status and policy, members shared a whole host of challenges related to their immigration status that affects not only their work situation, but also their living situation, their health and their ability to navigate through and function in society.

- Members report fear of retaliation if they speak up against abuses. Campesinxs
  fear losing their jobs, which means not being able to feed their families. They also
  fear being reported to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). There is a
  constant presence of fear while working in the fields, this fear is exacerbated
  when ICE raids take place in the surrounding area, when there are immigration
  checkpoints on the way to work, and when rumors circulate about fellow
  campesinxs being picked up by ICE.
- Misinformation about immigration laws is very common in campesinx communities. Word travels fast in these communities about laws related to work, housing, healthcare and childcare. Because of a long history of punitive and inhumane immigration policies and practices in this country, fear is ever present amongst immigrant communities (as mentioned above). Fear leads to rumors and cautionary stories rooted in real life scenarios. The quick spread of misinformation is not intentional, but common.
- There are several language barriers to accessing important information in the fields. The majority of campesinxs do not speak English. While Spanish tends to be the dominant language in campesinx communities, safety precautions and workplace rules are often shared by managers in English and through signage written in English. In addition to language barriers to English, there are also barriers to Spanish language information. There are more and more campesinxs working in the U.S. who do not speak English or Spanish, but speak their indigenous languages, mostly from Guatemala and Mexico. There are also campesinxs who speak Garifuna from Central America and farm workers who speak Haitian Creole.
- Because of these language barriers, many campesinxs report a fear of answering questions by employers. The thinking is that when in doubt, it is always better to stay silent, which can lead to aggravating employers and supervisors, and more retaliation.
- Members report a need for a worker representative or a worker advocate in the fields, someone trustworthy with experience in labor rights who can hear their complaints, and not threaten campesinxs with dismissal from the job, or reporting them to ICE for speaking up about abuses.
- Campesinxs take risks just driving to and from work in states where undocumented people are denied driver's licenses. If they are pulled over for a minor traffic violation they could be reported to ICE. Police often work in collaboration with ICE.
- Not only do undocumented campesinxs suffer abuse and exploitation from their employers and supervisors, but they also suffer from lateral violence from coworkers who do have papers; this is especially true for women farmworkers.
- It can be challenging for campesinxs to organize in the fields because of so much fear of retaliation and losing jobs or deportation.
- Some members reported having to work while knowing their children are being held in detention centers without knowing how or when or if they'll be reunited.

#### **Current Actions**

By being involved in Alianza and with our member organizations, individual members are actively engaged in various campaigns for just immigration reform. Members are vital to our campaign work. We rely on members to share first hand experiences with the elected officials and government agencies responsible for enforcing immigrant and worker protections and who have the power to create new protections.

- Members organize informational campaigns by sharing pamphlets about immigrant rights, and labor rights for folks with various work visas and for undocumented folks. These pamphlets contain the phone numbers of our member organizations as well as trusted local immigration lawyers. They also provide information about DACA and how one can apply or what sort of protection DACA can provide.
- Alianza and member organizations joined EarthJustice in a lawsuit against the U.S.
   Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for violating the Freedom of
   Information Act (FOIA) by withholding requested agency records regarding the
   expansion of a migrant child detention facility in Tornillo, Texas. This facility closed
   in January 2019, amidst health and safety concerns due to nearby toxic superfund
   sites. This site is still operational for adults in detention.
- Members organize advocacy campaigns to demand permanent protections and a pathway to citizenship for campesinxs and their families, and all 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S.
- Being a part of Alianza helps members ensure that they have the most up to date information relating to immigrant rights, farmworker rights as well as information regarding COVID-19 and vaccines.
- Being a part of Alianza helps member organizations vet allies and immigration information received from other campesinxs in the fields, from employers and managers. It also helps confirm information related to COVID protections, regulations and vaccines.
- Members organize informational campaigns through social media as well as
  mainstream media, sharing the most up to date relevant information for
  immigrant campesinxs. Members have relationships with local popular radio
  stations where they share accurate information about immigration and labor law,
  and they share the most up to date information about any recent changes to laws
  and regulations.
- Members organize community meetings and informational workshops about immigration law and the rights of agricultural workers. Trusted immigrant rights attorneys are invited to share the most up to date information with campesinxs during these meetings.
- Knowing that COVID relief packages from the state and federal government will not reach undocumented communities, members organize food and PPE distribution events in their respective communities.

- In addition to organizing in the fields amongst campesinas, members also organize the youth in their communities, so that they too can advocate for themselves and for their parents. Members have also organized youth to lead campaigns to shut down the detention centers where child immigrants are being held and to demand their reunification with their parents.
- Earthjustice lawsuit related to immigration.

#### **Recommendations**

Members shared their recommendations for what actions the government and government agencies, communication outlets, as well as to Alianza can take to protect campesinxs in the fields and about what a just immigration policy would look like.

- Government officials and lawmakers should visit the fields in person and witness first-hand the work that goes into cultivating and harvesting the land, so that the entire country can eat. This real life experience should be what informs their policy proposals.
- Members demand a just federal immigration reform, and a guaranteed pathway
  to citizenship for campesinxs and all 11 million undocumented immigrants. They
  recommend that the government expand Temporary Protective Status (TPS) to
  more immigrants, especially from countries that have been the victims of U.S.
  extraction and exploitation for decades.
- Members want to see citizenship for all who have received Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and who have started the process of applying for DACA and expand the program to cover more applicants.
- Members recommend organizing national communications campaigns using social media and mainstream media that emphasize the fact that campesinxs not only feed the nation through their daily hard work, but also contribute financially to social programs in this country.
- Taxes are withheld from undocumented immigrants in all sectors of the workforce; however, these same undocumented workers will never be able to benefit from these social programs as long as they are barred from citizenship.
- Members recommend that their organizations and Alianza should continue to prioritize language justice in organizing practices, and make efforts to reach the non-Spanish speaking indigenous campesinx community. Creating more info graphics in printed communications would be helpful so that important information is easier to understand regardless of the language one speaks.
- Members suggest prioritizing efforts to organize the Indigenous campesinx community and to support relationship building efforts between Spanish speaking campesinxs, and campesinxs who speak an Indigenous language or other languages.
- Alianza and member organizations should organize a national campaign for driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants at the federal level.

### **Commitments and Next Steps**

Members shared the commitments they are willing to make regarding the recommendations they offered. Alianza will take the recommendations shared above and incorporate them into our work planning and strategic planning process later this year.

- Members commit to more participation in their organizations and with Alianza to be better informed about the issues that affect their communities, so that they can be better leaders and organizers.
- Members commit to support their organizations in reaching the larger campesinx community and to be an active liaison between the community and their organization.
- Members commit to recruiting more campesinas to join their organizations.
- Members commit to sharing the information they receive from Alianza and their organizations with their fellow campesinxs and others in their communities.
- Commit to respond to calls to action from their organizations and Alianza and show up for actions.
- Members commit to participate in organizing efforts around a particular policy recommendation or initiative.





### **PESTICIDES & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

Agriculture and food systems are an integral part of any society. It is one of the most important systems necessary for communities and societies to function and survive. These are also precarious systems that are vulnerable to climate, plagues, and infestations of pests. In addition to concerns about immigration status and abuse from employers related to immigration status, the usage of pesticides and the related adverse health effects is a top concern for farmworkers and Alianza members.

Unfortunately, much of our agricultural systems rely on pesticides to keep away fungus, blight, animals, insects and other invasive plants, despite the extremely dangerous effects on the people exposed to them, and <u>numerous studies</u> that have shown that heavy pesticide usage can actually exacerbate these threats to produce.

Though toxic pesticides are not the only means to protect our produce, they have unfortunately become normalized in industrial agricultural practices. As a result of our unnecessary dependence on pesticides, farmworkers are exposed to dangerous levels of toxins and carcinogenic chemicals on a regular basis. Many have developed serious health problems as a result. Many farmworkers live on or very near the fields where they work, which means they are exposed to the spraying of pesticides even when they are not working. Research has found that pesticides exposure results in developmental delays amongst children [6].

The following is a summary of the concerns our members shared during the Convivencia related to the usage of pesticides, as well as a list of actions they have been taking to combat the usage of pesticide, and recommendations and commitments to future actions.





### **Challenges**

Members shared the current challenges and struggles they face related to pesticides exposure. Some of what we heard was a mention of the ongoing challenges that have existed for some time, and some information was completely new to us.

- Exposure to pesticides has been linked to various cancers. Some pesticides used in agricultural fields are neurotoxins and can cause brain damage, and some are teratogens, which cause damage to an embryo or fetus.
- Supervisors and field managers do not enforce rules and regulations related to
  pesticides exposure. They pressure workers to start picking crops as soon as
  pesticides have been sprayed, while the leaves and plants are still wet. This goes
  against pesticides guidelines that say workers should wait several hours before
  returning to work once pesticides have been sprayed.
- Supervisors also lie about what pesticides are being used, saying they are nontoxic or organic. Many supervisors refer to the pesticides as "medicine for the plants," implying and misleading campesinxs into thinking that they are actually healthy.
- Many fields are surrounded by residential communities. Most campesinxs live near
  or on the agricultural sites and are exposed to the pesticides 24 hours a day, even
  when companies spray at night.
- Children at the nearby schools are exposed to pesticides drifts when they are sprayed during the day. In communities surrounding the fields, there are very high numbers of children with learning and developmental disabilities, as a result of pesticides exposure.
- When pesticides are being sprayed while campesinxs are working, many have no
  idea what is being sprayed, or what chemical they are being exposed to. Many
  have reported feeling ill shortly after being exposed to pesticides, including
  experiencing symptoms of nausea, headaches, dizziness, rash, and feeling faint.
  Many campesinxs have developed skin conditions as a result of prolonged
  pesticides exposure.
- Many pregnant workers continue to work throughout their pregnancy in order to survive. There are no extra precautions around pesticides usage when pregnant women are working in the fields, nor are pregnant women offered any protections or special accommodations at all. Many people who have worked while pregnant have suffered miscarriages or have given birth to children with birth defects or developmental delays.
- While there may be a lot of consumer demand for organic produce for the sake of the individual consumer's health, there are not many examples of consumer campaigns of solidarity with the campesinxs to demand an end to spraying toxic pesticides all together or at least while campesinxs are in the fields.
- While most campesinxs know it is unsafe to immediately return to work after
  pesticides have been sprayed, many have no choice but to immediately start
  working again because they are paid by the hour or by the weight of what they
  pick for the day.

- Campesinxs are not given protective gear to protect from the sprays. They have
  to layer up in hopes that several layers of clothing will protect them. They still
  layer up during the hottest days of the summer which leads to heat exhaustion
  and heat stroke, and in some cases even death.
- Because so many campesinxs are undocumented they do not know where to go to seek help if they become sick from pesticides exposure. They do not have health insurance or fear accessing health services because of their immigration status
   [7]
- So many are afraid to speak up when they know that supervisors are breaking laws and regulations related to pesticides usage. They are afraid of retaliation, which is a common practice among employers.

#### **Current Actions**

Our member organizations are leading awareness campaigns about the dangers of pesticides and demanding much stricter regulations regarding the use of pesticides. The work our members are leading is crucial to accomplishing the goal of eventually eradicating the use of toxic pesticides, and crucial to the success of more short-term goals like enforcing existing regulations and providing protective gear to campesinxs.

Alianza and our members have been organizing an annual awareness campaign around the dangers of pesticides. We call this the "Morralitos campaign." Morral is the Spanish word for satchel or a tote bag. Campesinxs typically use these bags to collect the fruits and vegetables they pick. This campaign originally started in 2009 and was first organized by our member organization Líderes Campesinas. Members draw/paint infographics on these morralitos that demonstrate the dangers that pesticides pose to campesinxs. Members then hang the morralitos in places where their colleagues and other members of their communities can see them.







 Members organize social media campaigns with infographics on the dangers pesticides pose to people, and also how folks can protect themselves in their homes and in the fields.

- We distribute <u>informational pamphlets</u> about the dangerous health effects of pesticides on campesinxs and children. These pamphlets include written information as well as infographics. They also distribute refrigerator magnets with this information so that campesinxs can take them home and share with everyone in the household. This is important because people who live in the same house as someone who works in the fields can be exposed to the toxins that stick to the clothing of campesinxs. Infographics help demonstrate proper safety precautions once one returns from these fields.
- Members organize in person training sessions (pre-COVID) in the fields with campesinxs about safety practices, as well as how to properly clean skin, irrigate eyes, and wash clothing after pesticides exposure.
- Some members have been organizing research campaigns with local universities on the quality of drinking water in communities surrounding the fields to test the toxicity of the water. Test results have shown high levels of arsenic in the water of several farming communities in California. This has led members to organize their own potable water distribution events in these communities as well as informational sessions on the dangers of drinking tap water in these communities.
- Member organizations joined EarthJustice in <u>a lawsuit</u> against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) when the agency delayed (without any indication of when they would revisit) ending or limiting the use of chlorpyrifos on food and food products. We won! This ruling is a huge victory for children campesinxs, and communities across the country.
- Alianza and member organizations also joined EarthJustice in a lawsuit to challenge the <u>EPA's move to get rid of "Application Exclusion Zones,"</u> which is one of the few protections for workers when it comes to the spraying of pesticides in the fields.
- Members are organizing small training sessions amongst each other about sustainable agriculture and how to cultivate healthy fruits and vegetables without the usage of toxic pesticides. While the long-term goal of Alianza and our members is to eventually eradicate pesticide usage from the agricultural sector, this goal will take years to achieve. In the meantime, we can put into practice our visions for the future in our backyards and in community gardens around the country.
- Member organizations with existing access to community gardens are reaching out to various independent and small local farms for donations of native seeds or no GMO seeds for community gardens.
- Our members are working towards a just transition to sustainable agriculture versus the current agribusiness model which is exploitative to the workers and extremely dangerous to the wellbeing of the planet.
- Members distribute protective gear to campesinxs and explain the importance of
  wearing the gear to protect from pesticides, even when working in high
  temperatures. They also explain that instead of taking protective gear off when
  working in the heat, campesinxs can demand water breaks and shade stations
  throughout the fields, to minimize the dangers of heat stress while working.
- Some of our members are collaborating with other organizations to help distribute information about pesticides in languages other than Spanish and English.

#### **Recommendations**

Members shared their recommendations about how Alianza can support their local efforts to inform their communities about the dangers of pesticides, as well as asking local government agencies to enforce existing regulations. They also shared their recommendations for how to achieve the longer-term goal of transitioning away from the use of toxic pesticides altogether.

- Members recommend committing to campaign work for a just transition to sustainable agriculture versus the current agribusiness model which is exploitative to the workers and extremely dangerous to the wellbeing of the planet.
- Supervisors should allow community based organizations like ours to inform the campesinxs about the dangers of pesticides and how to protect themselves.
- Companies should also provide the protective gear so the campesinxs don't have to rely on donations or spend their own hard earned money.
- Organize information campaigns in the schools surrounding the fields about how to protect children from pesticides drifts, also to gain support for our anti-pesticides campaigns.
- Government agencies in charge of making laws regulating pesticides usage should center the voices of campesinx, those MOST affected by toxic pesticides, when making decisions about the legality of pesticides usages, when to spray and who is responsible for enforcing protections.
- Members demand the eventual eradication of the most toxic poisonous pesticides once and for all, on a federal level.
- Existing laws protecting workers from pesticides should actually be enforced. Some states do have laws that say spaying cannot be done while workers are working or that workers cannot immediately go back to work after spraying but these laws are rarely enforced
- There should be protections for workers who report violations of these laws.
- More resources should be made available for sustainable agriculture, for community gardens.
- More resources for organizers who go directly to the fields to share important information about the dangers of pesticides and how to protect oneself.





### **Commitments & Next Steps**

Members shared their commitments to uphold the recommendations they made, and their commitments to continue to support the organizing efforts of their organizations to curb pesticides usage.

- Members commit to continued support of informational campaigns about pesticides.
- Members commit to organize "train the trainers" sessions so that farmworkers can inform one another about regulations and the dangers of pesticides.
- Commitments were made to look for community spaces to develop community gardens and food distribution sites that use natural pesticides.
- Members commit to organize informational workshops about how to grow in small plots of land or inside the home so that campesinxs know they can grow their own food at home even if they do not have access to land.
- They commit to organizing more food distributions from community gardens or food exchanges amongst campesinxs who grow at home.
- Organizing more informational sessions at schools, so that teachers and children know how to protect themselves at schools and in their homes, when pesticides are sprayed at nearby fields. Also, school workshops can serve to recruit allies in their anti-pesticides campaigns.
- Members commit to recruiting local colleges and universities to conduct studies on the quality of the soil and toxicity of the produce and water systems near the fields.

### **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

As mentioned earlier in this report, it has been estimated that <u>80% of women farmworkers</u> have experienced some form of sexual violence on the job. In addition to the sexual harassment and violence many campesinas face in the fields, one study found that about <u>one third of women farmworkers</u> also suffer domestic violence in the home. It is because of statistics like these that the core of Alianza's work is centered around advocating for and with women farmworkers, and ending gender based violence.

We understand that in order to achieve this goal, we must have an intersectional approach, therefore we focus on four interdependent priority areas. What distinguishes Alianza Nacional de Campesinas from other farmworker rights organizations is that we focus on women farmworkers and the unique challenges that women farmworkers face due to patriarchal values that govern our society. Alianza has worked for many years to challenge gender based violence against women farmworkers, including sexual harassment, sexual assault and domestic violence.

Because so many of our members are survivors of gender based violence and discrimination, their activism around these issues is grounded in personal experiences. Alianza and our members have first-hand knowledge of the long lasting, often generational harm that violence causes individuals, families and communities. The following is a summary of the challenges, proposals, and commitments related to gender based violence, discussed during the Convivencia.



### **Challenges**

Members shared the struggles they face as women farmworkers. Many of the challenges they named have been ongoing for decades. Other challenges are more recent, and many are related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- As mentioned in the section on immigration, most campesinxs in this country are immigrants, many of whom are undocumented, and as a result many suffer exploitation and various abuses on the job, from the withholding of payment, to exposure to toxic pesticides, to being worked overtime without overtime pay to sexual harassment and violence.
- Supervisors often take advantage of women farmworkers' fears related to their immigration status to sexually harass, extort and rape.
- All participants in this year's Convivencia shared that too many women
  farmworkers like themselves fear reporting abuse, sexual harassment or rape,
  because of fear of retaliation from the perpetrators, often their supervisors, and
  sometimes their fellow campesinxs. They fear losing their jobs and fear that
  seeking legal support will result in their immigration status being revealed, and
  that they could be deported.
- Fear related to immigration status also makes it difficult for campesinas to
  organize to protect themselves and to show force against sexual harassment and
  violence in the fields. Many campesinas fear getting involved in organized efforts
  to advocate for themselves because of economic dependency on their job, being
  undocumented, not speaking English and sometimes not speaking Spanish either,
  they feel trapped. Also, because many undocumented immigrants arrive to this
  country indebted to the guides who brought them over, they have the added fear
  of violent retaliation from their debt collectors if they lose their job and suddenly
  can't make their payments anymore.
- Language barriers also create challenges to trust building amongst campesinas.
   This makes it difficult to organize around the issues that particularly affect women in the fields.
- Campesinas often hear from family and friends who have experienced similar violence and harassment in the field that they are better off not speaking up, that this is just the nature of the work, and one must learn to endure the hardships.
- Members recognized the challenge of machismo, or toxic masculinity, as very
  prevalent in the countries they come from, as well as here in the U.S. This makes
  many feel like standing up for themselves or challenging this culture in the
  workplace, is almost an impossible feat.
- In addition to the misogyny amongst farmworkers and from employers in the
  agricultural sector, racism also exacerbates existing gender inequalities and
  gender based violations. Many indigenous women who do not speak Spanish or
  English are targets of sexual violence from supervisors as well as their campesino
  peers.

- COVID-19 has increased the number of incidents of domestic violence. Due to lockdowns and work and school closures many folks have been stuck at home for weeks, and months. Many immigrants live in multiple family households where even if some still go out to work in the fields (the agricultural industry never stopped or slowed during the peak of the pandemic) others in the household were more present at home. Incidents of physical and sexual abuse at home increased as a result. Many of our members also reported that some campesinas have not been able to access COVID testing, treatment, or care because their spouses or partners have prevented them from doing so, worsening the disproportionate toll of the pandemic shouldered by the many farmworker women and girls throughout our food system.
- No childcare is provided for farmworkers, and many cannot afford childcare.
  Many children over the past year have been alone most of the day in the homes
  because of school closures. Some members have reported that some campesinxs
  are forced to bring children to work because they cannot find or afford childcare.
  This can lead to minors actually working in the fields, exposed to the elements
  and pesticides alongside their parents, or in some cases children are left in the
  cars while their parent, or caretaker works in the fields.

#### **Current Actions**

Members shared the actions they have taken to challenge sexual harassment and violence in the fields. This work is the most dangerous for campesinas, as standing up for themselves and reporting abuses by employers and fellow campesinos often results in retaliation and they risk losing their jobs. These actions are more risky than taking a stand for general labor rights or against the use of pesticides. We are committed to supporting our members every step of the way as they continue to speak out against gender based violence in the agricultural sector.

- Members shared that many are involved in communication campaigns that inform women of their rights in the workplace, and also offer information about where women can seek culturally relevant help in their language, where they live.
- Some of our member organizations connect women to shelters or programs for survivors of domestic violence.





- Members have long employed the popular education tool of community theater, rooted in the tradition of Teatro Campesino, as well as the cultural practices from our home countries in Latin America. Participating in theater helps break taboos and frees campesinas to open up a dialogue about issues that are challenging to talk about. Participation in skits and vignettes helps members express their fears and their lived experiences without necessarily having to share the details of their personal experiences. This practice helps women know they are not alone.
- Every October, Domestic Violence Awareness month, members organize an awareness campaign about the prevalence of intimate partner violence in our communities, similar to the Morralitos campaign. During this month, members create decorative messages on aprons (mandiles or mandilitos in Spanish) about the dangers of domestic violence, or they write messages of solidarity, or informational messages with DV hotline numbers and info on where to seek help.
- All members participate in our national awareness campaigns raising awareness around gender based violence. We participate with our members annually in the international One Billion Rising campaign led by V-Day, the organization founded by playwright and activist V (formerly known as Eve Ensler). We join millions of women and people around the world to demand an end to gender based violence and exploitation. Other annual campaigns that our members engage in to raise awareness around gender based violence, root causes and solutions are the Campesinas Rising campaign, and the communication campaign on November 25th, the international day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.
- Members do outreach in the fields and bring written information and infographics about how to report sexual harassment and violence in the workplace, where to go to seek help, and the addresses and contact info of local organizations that support women survivors of sexual violence.
- Alianza has joined forces with Future without Violence to create safety cards for campesinas. These cards have important information about where to seek help in the case of intimate partner violence or sexual violence in the workplace.

#### **Recommendations**

Members shared their recommendations with Alianza about how we can better support their organizing efforts in the fields with other campesinas around the daily sexual harassment and violence that takes place in the fields. They also offered policy recommendations to elected officials regarding the issue of gender based violence.

- Alianza should support a national communications campaign sharing first hand testimonies of women who have experienced sexual harassment on the job and who have survived sexual violence in the fields.
- Congress should increase the number of U visas to be granted to applicants.
   There is currently a limit of 10,000 U visas to be issued each year, with a backlog of 250,000 people waiting to be approved for a U visa. These are people who are living in fear of retaliation from those who abused them, and in fear of possible deportation while they wait years for approval of their application for the visa.

- Women in general need more protective regulations in the workplace, but particularly in the agricultural sector.
- Government agencies that exist to help and support survivors of domestic violence need to eradicate the bureaucratic and legal barriers for immigrant women to receive help and services.
- Everyone needs to do their part to challenge the normalization of violence against women and girls, especially against immigrant women and women of color.
- Organize communications campaigns that expose the realities of the dangers women face in the agricultural sector
- Congress needs to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.
- There should be no time limits on when women can report rape or report physical abuse in the home. If a woman is living with her aggressor it may take some time to get away and get to a safe place to be able to report without retaliation.
- Member organizations require more funding and resources to reach more women farmworkers, to collect more testimonials, to provide more trainings in safe locations for campesinas about what to do if they are the target of sexual harassment and abuse at work.

# **Commitments and Next Steps**

Members renewed their commitments to the organizing work required to address the root causes of gender based violence. Members drew inspiration from one another to continue this work even when times get tough and there seems to be no end in sight of all the challenges women face in our communities, homes, and in the fields. Alianza is committed to supporting the organizing efforts of our members. We are committed to organizing more training sessions for staff and members to help us better tackle the issues and challenges we face as women, as campesinas, and as community leaders.

- Members commit to organizing more information sessions with their peer campesinas about their rights as farm workers, and about how to speak up and report when they are the targets of sexual harassment and violence, and where to go to seek help.
- Members commit to being a support to their peer campesinas, and help connect them to support systems
- Members commit to organizing more know your rights sessions amongst campesinas and to challenge the normalization of violence against women in their communities.
- Members commit to challenging misogyny and patriarchal practices and beliefs in their families, homes and communities.
- Members pledge to break the silence around gender based and sexual violence.

# **LABOR RIGHTS**

Labor rights represent the intersection of all four of our priority areas. A farmworker's immigration status affects how they are paid, how they are treated on the job, and their willingness to advocate for themselves at the workplace. A farmworker's gender compounded with immigration status can make the working situation much worse.

Women are paid less than their male counterparts in all sectors of agriculture and food systems. Women are also subject to sexual harassment and rape in the fields by both their supervisors and fellow campesinos. The spraying of fields with pesticides while people are working is a direct violation of labor laws in some states, or an indication of a lack of comprehensive labor protections for all sectors of the workforce in other states. Pesticides exposure makes the workplace a serious health hazard for farmworkers and makes schools and local residencies hazardous places for the communities surrounding the fields.

The following is a summary of the challenges related to labor rights, as well as recommendations, commitments and proposals discussed by our members during the Convivencia.





# Challenges

Members shared the challenges they face when advocating for their rights as laborers. They also shared the challenges around knowing what rights they have as immigrants or undocumented immigrants in the agricultural sector, as some labor stands differ for the agricultural sector. They also shared their experiences with racism and sexism when it comes to pay, overtime, or work availability.

- Campesinxs get paid very little for the very physically demanding and often dangerous work that they do, and they rarely get paid over time. Wage theft is rampant, again because so many farmworkers are undocumented, employers rely on the fear of farmworkers to prevent them from taking any action against these practices.
- The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938 originally excluded the agricultural sector from adhering to the standards outlined in the bill, that is until 1966. Now the FLSA applies the minimum wage provisions to most agricultural workers. Farmworkers who are paid on a piecework basis rather than an hourly basis are entitled to receive the minimum wage. However, the overtime pay provisions of FLSA, are still not applicable to farmworkers [8].
- Women campesinas are paid less than their male counterparts for the same work for the same amount of time.
- Campesinxs do not receive paid sick days, paid time off, or vacation days. Women do not receive maternity leave.
- There are not enough, or in some cases no bathroom or lunch breaks permitted
- There are not any cooling stations or shade for workers during extreme heat.
- Water is not provided to workers, even in extreme heat
- There is no information readily available in their native languages for farmworkers about their rights as workers, or about how to file a complaint, with whom, or where to seek support
- Undocumented campesinxs do not qualify for unemployment or workers compensation, cannot retire and receive a pension, despite paying into social security throughout the entirety of their career as a farmworker.
- Campesinxs cannot take time off to see a doctor. In COVID times campesinas have
  to choose between paid work hours during the day or time off to get a COVID test
  or the vaccine, without receiving pay for the time they were not in the fields, even
  when employers require employees to provide proof of vaccination.
- In some states, there are no labor laws that protect farmworkers. In states where these laws do exist, they are rarely enforced.
- Important information regarding work policies and safety procedures are not available in the language that campesinxs need. This important information is needed in Spanish as well as indigenous languages from México and Guatemala.
- Employers and supervisors often get away without paying the full hours someone worked, taking advantage of worker fear related to immigration status.
- Women, more often than men, do not receive full pay for all the hours they worked
- Workers are treated as dispensable. If workers begin to organize to demand better treatment and pay, they are threatened with dismissal from the job, threatened with deportation, and threatened with replacement.
- COVID safety guidelines are rarely enforced, campesinxs have been at high risk throughout the pandemic and continue to be at the frontline of risk for COVID variants

#### **Current Actions**

Members shared what actions they are involved with in their communities related to labor rights, what organizing strategies they are implementing in their places of work, what has been effective, and what have not been so effective.

- We learn about labor law in our perspective states in the Labor Rights workgroup made up of other Alianza members, which meets monthly. We apply what we learn into our organizing efforts in the fields
- We exchange organizing strategies in these workgroup meetings and learn from one another
- The struggles that we share in these meeting has a direct influence on Alianza's policy strategy
- We organize educational workshops and meetings with our peer campesinas to inform each other about our rights as laborers
- Alianza member organization, Centro de los Derechos del Migrate (CDM), developed a comprehensive report after much investigation and direct communication with farmworkers working on H2A visas, an immigrant guestworker program. Ripe for Reform by CDM offers an alternative model for a fair international worker program, one "that shifts control over the labor migration process from employers to workers, elevates labor standards for all workers, responds to established labor market needs, respects family unity, ensures equity and access to justice, and affords migrant workers an accessible pathway to citizenship."
- Members join their organizations on advocacy trips to the state capitol to advocate for workers' rights, better protections for undocumented and farmworkers, and to advocate for pending bill that would better their living and working conditions
- Members advocate for themselves and their peers in the fields for implementation of worker protections that they know exist in their states. Protections from heat exposure, from pesticides, from COVID-19, and from abuse.
- Member organizations connect their members to labor rights and immigration attorneys.
- Members have organized marches in their towns and cities demanding that women campesinas get equal pay too their male counterparts
- Members participate in nationwide awareness campaigns about pay disparities in the agricultural sector, like the annual Latina Equal Pay Day awareness campaign that happens every October 29th.
- Members organize with their peers to demand an end to salary robbery, first
  educating their peers that not receiving full payment for all the hours worked or
  all of the produce harvest is salary robbery and is illegal.
- Through direct organizing, undocumented immigrants and farmworkers achieved the right to driver's licenses in the State of NY. Our member organizations, Mujeres Divinas and Workers Justice Center of NY played an integral role in making this happen

#### Recommendations

Members offered recommendations to Alianza about how we can better support their local organizing efforts. They also shared their recommendations for the state and federal government regarding fair labor practices and including the agricultural sector.

- Better communications from state governments and agencies in multiple languages about worker protections and worker rights law in that state so that campesinxs know their rights
- Fundraisers to support the legal cases campesinxs have open related to workplace exploitation or abuses.
- More spaces are needed for informational workshops. It is difficult to have these sorts of conversations in the fields when supervisors are listening.
- The agricultural sector should be held to the same fair labor standard as every other sector of the labor force in this country.
- Minors should not be allowed to work (be exploited) in the fields. This means
  changing the labor laws related to minors working in the agricultural industry. If
  campesinxs were eligible for financial assistance from the state and federal
  government, they wouldn't have to rely on minors in the family to also work in the
  fields to help make ends meet.
- Members want to be treated as essential workers; not just told they are essential workers in public service announcements from the government.

# **Commitments and Next Steps**

Members shared what commitments they are willing to make to support the recommendations they offered. They also recommitted to the work they are currently involved in with their member organizations locally. Alianza will take the recommendations shared above and incorporate them into our work planning and strategic planning process later this year.

- Members commit to being "portavozes" in their jobs, to share information with their fellow campesinxs about their rights as laborers
- Members recommit to active participation in Alianza's Labor Rights workgroup
- Members commit to continue organizing efforts amongst their peers for overtime pay, for breaks, for shade and for access to potable water.
- Members commit to building relationships with other organization in their communities that work with labor lawyers and are focus on labor rights and fair wage campaigns

# Victories Related to our Advocacy around Labor Rights in the Agricultural Sector



The Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division adopted new <u>emergency workplace rules</u> to protect workers whose workplace requires them to perform covered work activities while exposed to extreme heat, 80 degrees Fahrenheit or above. While this is a temporary requirement for all employers, it is a necessary one, and considerations are being made for more long term protections for workers. Protections include providing shade, intervals of paid rest, and free and easy access to cool water.



Florida Agriculture Commissioner, Nikki Fried, announced the creation of Florida's first Farmworker Advisory Council under the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. This council will ensure that those who feed the population of Florida, will have a voice on the Florida Cabinet. The council, made up of farmworkers and advocates, will advise local and state leaders on issues like COVID-19 testing, vaccine access and heat illness in the community.



In the spring of 2020, California Assemblymembers Robert Rivas (D-Hollister) and Eduardo Garcia introduced the <u>first-in-the-nation</u> <u>farmworker relief package</u> to protect the health, safety, and economic security of the state's nearly 800,000 farmworkers and their families. Several of the package's bills were passed unanimously by the California State Legislature; and of these, two were <u>signed into law by Governor Newsom (D-CA)</u> in September 2020. In November 2020, California's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA), adopted an emergency temporary standard (ETS), providing for general and industry-specific guidance on comprehensive infectious disease exposure control plans to keep workers safe during the coronavirus pandemic.

# **COVID-19 AND CAMPESINA COMMUNITIES**

The global pandemic of COVID-19 has affected every part of the globe. Our work was tremendously impacted by this pandemic, particularly the Convivencia, which is one of the few opportunities our members have to come together and connect face to face. Since the spring of last year, 2020, Alianza has had to act quickly as possible to adapt to the ever changing conditions of our work and of the work of campesinxs, due to the pandemic. Like any natural disaster, this pandemic has had an even more devastating effect on the poor, Black, Indigenous, other POC, women, LGBTO+ folks and immigrants.

The campesinx community, while deemed essential for the first time in the history of this country, were left out of the first wave of COVID relief efforts, campesinxs had some of the most difficulties is "social distancing" due to the nature of the work, and difficulties in accessing COVID testing. COVID-19 death rates were highest among Black and indigenous communities, Latinx communities, and immigrant communities. We saw a sudden spike in anti-Asian hate crimes in response to this pandemic and we saw the selfishness of an individualistic society where those with the resources hoarded food and supplies, while others were left with nothing. Much of our work over the past year has either shifted to focus on COVID relief efforts with our members, or has taken on a COVID lens like some of our policy initiatives.

We have always pushed for a pathway to citizenship to be included in any immigration policy proposal, but now we have been specifically highlighting that campesinxs are essential workers and all essential workers should have an expedited pathway to citizenship. We have more recently worked with members to support and promote their vaccine drives. We have dedicated communications campaigns to inform members that the vaccine is safe and so far proven effective in preventing COVID related deaths, and about how to access the vaccine.





# Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic hit the campesinx community particularly hard. This is a workforce that cannot work from home, a workforce that the entire country depends on for survival, so they cannot stop working, and because so many are undocumented most of this workforce has been excluded from government covid relief efforts. Members shared the challenges they faced over the last year related to the pandemic.

- No personal protective equipment in the fields
- Many fields are extremely remote, so it is difficult for campesinx to travel to stores or grocery stores to buy their own PPE without transportation
- There was a lag in communications around the pandemic. The fields where many work are very isolated. Information arrived late in comparison with other cities and towns.
- Some supervisors forbid medical professionals from entering the fields to inform the farmworkers about the pandemic and how to protect oneself
- It is nearly impossible to physically distance oneself from others in the fields
- Due to school closures many campesinxs were faced with the difficult decision of choosing between going to work or staying home and possibly losing their jobs as a result, to stay home with their kids.
- Many campesinxs faced and continue to face evictions if they lost their job due to personal illness or to stay home and care for a sick loved one. Even with eviction moratoriums during the height of the pandemic, few landlords respected this law, especially with undocumented tenants.
- The first food banks that started to pop up in communities as a response to empty supermarkets would operate during the hours when most campesinxs were working, few could access these resources.
- Spread of misinformation downplaying the severity of the situation or spreading fear related to the vaccine.
- Campesinxs going to work sick because of fear of losing their jobs if they stay home
- Many people lost their jobs during the pandemic for various directly related reasons. Most do not qualify for unemployment and are still looking for work.
- Campesinxs are often told to go and get the vaccine during their breaks, but when they return to work, they're not allowed back in, and they have lost a whole day's work and pay.

#### **Current Actions**

Members shared the direct actions they have taken over the past year, in their communities to address and respond to the new challenges posed by the global pandemic.



- Members report organizing outreach efforts to inform campesinxs about the
  severity of this pandemic and how to protect themselves on the job. Also, these
  outreach campaigns inform campesinxs of their rights related to the pandemic,
  and what to do if they or someone close to them gets infected, and what safety
  precautions to employ for people sharing their living space with multiple families,
  as is the case with many campesinxs.
- Members organize food and PPE distribution events for campesinxs and immigrant communities. Our members work hard to collect food, water and PPE donations or financial donations to support these drives, which take place in various states on almost a weekly basis.
- Member organizations have teamed up with local clinics, doctors and hospitals to bring vaccines to the campos / fields. Many vaccine drives have been organized by our members where vans and trucks bring vaccines to campesinxs working in the fields, information is offered about the safety and importance of the vaccine, and campesinxs are encouraged to get vaccinated on the spot.
- In addition to bringing vaccines to the campos, our members have teamed up with local clinics to organize vaccine drives in public areas, parks, plaza or malls, so that folks can easily access them without needing an appointment.
- Member organizations distribute information in the campos about where to get vaccinated in the community, and information dispelling myths about the vaccine, explaining that it is safe, and also that immigration status does not matter, and health insurance is not needed.

#### **Recommendations**

Members not only shared their recommendations, but their demands of the government, that all "essential workers" receive COVID relief support regardless of immigration status, and that all essential workers be offered a safe pathway to citizenship.

- Member organizations report needing more funding to support food and PPE drives, as well as to support vaccine drives.
- Demand that local state and federal agencies enforce COVID regulations and provide free and safe access to the vaccine.
- Organize more food and vaccine drives during hours that campesinxs can access them
- Get more information to campesinxs about the accessibility of the vaccine. Let them know that their immigration status does not matter and that they do not need to show proof of insurance. Also, it is important to let campesinxs know that they may be asked for ID or for insurance and that it is perfectly acceptable to say that they don't have it. Too many campesinxs immediately walk away at the question, without realizing that they can be honest about not having U.S. ID or insurance. Also in this same vein vaccine clinics, pharmacies and hospitals need to be required to comply with laws that say no one can be turned away from getting the vaccine for lack of health insurance or U.S. issued ID.

- Some states require some form of "valid ID" to receive the vaccine, including ID from a person's home country, however the term "valid" can disqualify some forms of identification, for example expired documentation from a person's home country. Due to the pandemic, consulates and embassies from Latin America in the U.S. closed for almost a year, leaving a backlog of hundreds of thousands of people unattended during that time. Now that the consulates have re-opened, appointments for passport renewals or identification renewals aren't available until 2022 or 2023 in some cases. This leave thousands of people with expired or "invalid" government issued identification papers.
- Cautionary practices need to be reinforced in the fields, no one should be working without masks, we need shade and water breaks to not get overly exhausted. With Covid on the rise again, we cannot afford to be careless.

# **Commitments and Next Steps**

Members shared their continued commitments to supporting their communities in these difficult times. They are committed to combating misinformation about the virus, and about the vaccine. They are also committed to continuing demands that the vaccine be made available to their communities even in the most rural of areas.

- Members commit to continue organizing food, water and PPE distribution events to campesinxs.
- Members commit to continue organizing vaccine drives and bringing the vaccine too campesinxs in the fields.
- Also, members commit to disseminating important information about COVID and safety precautions with their co-workers in the fields.
- Members commit to leading by example in the fields. They will continue to wear face masks, keep a safe distance from others and regularly wash hands and disinfect gear.
- Members commit to sharing the most up to date and accurate information about COVID and all the variants.
- Members commit to combating myths and fear related to the vaccine.

# **Victory for our COVID Related Work**

Alianza and five of our member organizations received an \$8.1 million grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), to help build COVID-19 vaccine confidence and bolster vaccinations in underserved communities. Alianza, in partnership with five of its member organizations (Campesinos Sin Fronteras, Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Farmworker Association of Florida, Líderes Campesinas, and the Rural Coalition), and the Migrant Clinicians Network, are creating a workforce of community outreach and community health workers that is reaching farmworker and other migrant, immigrant, and rural families; as well as Native American and Black farming communities in 20 states and parts of Puerto Rico who are part of Rural Coalition.

# CONCLUSION AND FUTURE OF ALIANZA'S WORK

We learned a great deal from our members during this Convivencia, as we do during every Convivencia. This year we had more member participation than in previous years, which meant richer and more complex conversations with our members. We learned that more members (with some technology training) can participate in these gatherings virtually because travel restrictions do not hold them back. This gives us some food for thought for future Convivencias. We will consider incorporating a virtual component to our future in-person Convivencias in order to ensure more member participation.

In the previous sections of this report, we shared the recommendations that came from our members related to our four priority areas and to our work related to the COVID pandemic. Later this year, Alianza will be engaging in a strategic planning process to map out the direction and goals of our work for the next two years. The suggestions, points of concern, and recommendations that emerged from this Convivencia will serve to inform our strategic planning process. The following is a categorical summary of those recommendations and how we might incorporate them into our future work.

# **Policy & Advocacy**

- Members recommended continued advocacy for a pathway to citizenship to be included in any policy related to essential workers and Covid relief on a federal level.
- Members insisted on the inclusion of agricultural workers in federal labor protections.
- We should continue to push for the approval of the Asunción Valdivia Heat Stress bill, for the U.S. Citizenship Act, the Citizenship for Essential workers act, and the Protecting Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence Act.
- Members recommended that we continue to push for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.
- We will work to deepen our relationship with ally organizations advocating for the inclusion of gender justice policy in any policy related to immigrants and farm workers.
- We will push for robust, federal workplace health and safety protections, and labor and employment safeguards.
- We will continue to insist on strengthening pesticide protections for farmworkers and push for the approval of the Protect America's Children from Toxic Pesticides Act of 2020, Ban Toxic Pesticides Act of 2019, and the Protect Children, Farmers, and Farmworkers from Nerve Agent Pesticides Act of 2019.

# Organizing

- We heard the need for trainings on how to organize, so that members can learn
  how to better promote their local priorities and reach their goals of winning more
  protections for farmworkers, including worker's rights protections, overtime pay,
  breaks, protections from pesticides, and to be included in the Fair Labor
  Standards Act, not just state to state protections, which are rarely enforced.
- We heard many stories and reflections about the challenges of organizing in the fields, one of which is a language and cultural barrier. Most active Alianza members are monolingual Spanish speakers or are bilingual in English and Spanish. Very few speak an indigenous language or an afro-descendant language, however there are some members of our member organizations, or potential members who speak a language other than Spanish or English. In addition to advocating for language justice in the fields we would like to organize "train the trainer" sessions where we focus on culturally relevant and sensitive organizing tactics to reach the indigenous and non-Spanish speaking campesinx population.
- Members recommend that our organizing priorities revolve around our policy demands. We need to strengthen our organizing strategies to ensure the approval of the bills we are supporting. Members are committed to continuing to pressure their local elected officials to support our policy demands.
- In addition to maintaining our policy agenda at the center of our organizing efforts, we will continue to organize against patriarchal practices and norms in the fields and in our communities. We successfully challenge these norms when we start with ourselves and commit to unlearning oppressive ideas about gender role hierarchies. This practice will remain at the heart of our organizing work.
- As the pandemic continues, members are committed to continuing their organizing efforts to ensure that safety precautions are enforced in the fields where campesinx work, and that campesinxs have access to the most up to date information on safety precautions, as well as vaccine access.

# **Training & Technical Assistance**

- We heard time and time again throughout the Convivencia that members are hungry for more capacity building trainings, political education trainings, know your rights trainings, as well as technical assistance. We will be organizing more online training sessions that members can access, and we plan to also invite our member organizations to lead training sessions for their fellow members, on their organizing strategies, or their areas of expertise. When it is safe to do so again, we will also be organizing in person training sessions with our members.
- In addition to organizing more training sessions, we will also provide technical assistance and mentoring to our members so that they can become effective spokespeople, advocates, peer trainers, and drivers behind the organizing efforts to achieve our policy goals.

- Since we are a member based organization, and our members are grassroots organizations, our training method is to ensure that we train our board members and our own staff, who will then lead training and technical assistance sessions for the staff of our member organizations, who in turn will offer training sessions and culturally relevant outreach to their individual members, mostly campesinas. Not only will our trainings be related to our organizing strategies for our policy goals, but they will also be trainings to support our longer term goals, for example we will continue our trainings around sustainable agricultural practices and ending gender based violence. Some successful training methods that we have employed in the past include house meetings, art projects, teatro (skits, vignettes), and the use of fotonovelas.
- We will continue our existing training programs around pesticides safety, with the goal of reaching the non-Spanish speaking campesinx community by working with campesinx who speak an indigenous or afro-descendant language as well as Spanish and/or English.

#### **Communications**

- We want to organize more awareness campaigns using social media and mainstream media were repeated suggestions from members throughout the Convivencia. Specifically, it was recommended numerous times to create an awareness campaign that visually demonstrates the hard work, extreme working conditions and violations that campesinxs endure to feed the nation. And to underscore the point that while campesinx have taxes removed from their earning, they have never and still cannot access government support programs.
- Language justice was another issue that was brought up multiple times by our members. More and more immigrants are arriving to the U.S. who speak only an indigenous language, many come from an agricultural background and end up working as farm workers when they arrive to the U.S. It is imperative to all of our organizing efforts that we reach this community, this means we will have to increase our budget for interpretation and translation services to include multiple languages, and that we should develop more infographics that do not rely on written language to convey important information especially when it comes to sharing information about protecting oneself from COVID or pesticides exposure. In the beginning of language justice, we want to commit to implementing more language justice practices in general at Alianza, this means working with language justice cooperatives and incorporating language justice plans into all of our member gatherings, in person or virtual.
- Communications campaigns about existing programs for agricultural workers like the "Blue Card" program and how to apply for these programs. Demystify the online process, build up confidence in the application process so folks who are eligible feel better about the process of applying.

We are committed to our members and their concerns and recommendations and will incorporate their input and feedback into our annual campaign work, policy and communications work. And we will invest in staff trainings and convenings to ensure that internally, we all understand how to respond to the needs of our members and communities, and that we all are moving in the same direction with our work. This report is dedicated to our members. We are grateful for their continued commitment to this work and for their leadership. We hope to honor our commitment to our members and let this report inform our work over the next 2 years until the next Convivencia in 2023.

## ¡Unidxs en la Lucha!

### **Alianza Nacional de Campesinas**









#### **Endnotes**

- 1. Workplace Safety & Health Topics: Agricultural Safetyhttps://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/aginjury/default.html
- 2. Martin P, Taylor JE. Ripe with change: Evolving farm labor markets in the United States, Mexico, and Central America. Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute. February 2013. Retrieved from https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/RMSG-Agriculture.pdf
- 3. Hernandez T, Gabbard S. Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 2015-2016: A Demographic and Employment Profile of United States Farmworkers. 2018; U.S. Department of Labor. Retrieved from https://www.doleta.gov/naws/research/docs/NAWS\_Research\_Report\_13.pdf
- 4. National Farmworker Ministry: Women in Agriculture. Retrieved from http://nfwm.org/farm-workers/farm-worker-issues/womens-issues/
- 5. Farmworker Justice: Selected Statistics on Farmworkers (2015-16 Data). Retrieved from http://www.farmworkerjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/NAWS-Data-FactSheet-05-13-2019-final.pdf
- 6. Beyond Pesticides. Retrieved from https://www.beyondpesticides.org/resources/pesticide-induced-diseasesdatabase/learningdevelopmental
- 7.A Report on Phase One of the COVID-19 Farmworker Study (COFS). Accessed July 2021 at http://covid19farmworkerstudy.org/survey/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CA-COFS-Phase-One-Final-Report.pdf
- 8. Farmworker Justice: U.S Labor Law for Farmworkers. Retrieved from https://www.farmworkerjustice.org/advocacy\_program/us-labor-law-for-farmworkers/

