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*We envision a world where the fundamental right to move is respected and appreciated by all.
Our view is that all human beings are entitled to respect, documents, and a process through
which to move, settle, and resettle in the world.*



Quarterly Newsletter | January 2022

2021 in Review: Steady Growth, Movement Building & Impact by the 1000s!

January 2022 Newsletter: 2021 in Review

We start the new year energized by our clients, community leaders and organizers. Together, we have been working tirelessly toward immigrant justice through all the lows and highs of our systems. Our community remains our steady beacon of light.

Here are just a few of our collective highlights from the last year.
Enjoy!



A Snapshot of Pangea's Work in 2021



Liked by big_s00z and 114 others

projectanar Today, we held a direct action at the Department of Homeland Security to advocate on behalf of the almost 40,000 at-risk Afghans who have filed for humanitarian parole. We urge DHS and this administration to use the discretionary power at their disposal and the increased staffing at @uscis to approve these applications. These at-risk Afghans' lives are at stake and the US owes it to them to extend them refuge, safety and human dignity within America's borders. Our delivery of boxes today to Secretary Mayorkas' home signify the human rights defenders, ethnic and religious minorities, women activists, journalists and so many others who deserve for their applications to be approved NOW.

Image from @ProjectANAR's policy advocacy on Instagram.

- **8,642 Afghans seeking humanitarian parole** supported with volunteers, trainings, and other resources through the formation of [Project ANAR](#)
- **700+ legal volunteers** working with Afghan refugees and [Project ANAR](#) were organized and connected to Afghans seeking

humanitarian parole

- **502 clients received full scope legal services**; we prepared many cases for court hearings that were canceled because of the pandemic and court closures
- **250+ organizations [coordinated to advocate](#)** for [humanitarian parole](#) for Afghans
- **133 asylum cases** were filed and prepared; although most of our court hearings were rescheduled due to the pandemic, our work on our asylum cases continued, sometimes putting in 2x as much time into each case
- **100+** clients and community members were **engaged in at least two one-on-one meetings** with Pangea organizers as part of our power building strategy
- **25** clients and leaders **detained** at the Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex immigration prison facilities were supported by organizers, media, and legislative meetings
- **11 pro se asylum seekers** were served in a pilot workshop for self-advocacy in immigration court with [DSCS](#); the first attendee who represented herself in her own case and completed it won asylum!
- **10 disability justice and immigration** groups [coordinated to organize](#) immigrants with disabilities
- **9 formerly detained clients** actively organized the #ShutDownYuba immigration prison campaign
- **2 circuit court wins** through negotiation and mediation with the government

Support our work <3

2021 Movement Building Highlights



- **We freed 9 immigrants** and emptied out the Yuba immigration detention facility!
- Pangea clients, advocates, and leaders with **Papeles Para Todos** organized:
 - To make multiple trips to **join protests in Washington, D.C.** demanding a pathway to citizenship
 - To [shut down the Golden Gate Bridge](#) and risk deportation to demand that Senate Democrats override the parliamentarian and provide citizenship for all in the Build Back Better Act
 - With 60 other organizations to form the Bay Area Coalition for Economic Justice and Citizenship, demanding that the Democrats enact the \$3.5 trillion **Build Back Better Act with [a pathway to citizenship for 11 million immigrants](#)**
 - A [car caravan](#) on Biden's inauguration day [demanding citizenship for all](#)

- A **march on May Day 2021** to [protest Biden's failed promise to enact citizenship within first 100 days](#)
- We organized community forums and rallies that ended San Mateo County's cooperation with ICE. After years of struggle and together with our partners in the San Mateo County Coalition for Immigrants Rights, we **finally secured a [sanctuary policy for San Mateo County!](#)**

Community Power & Legal Representation



Photo of Joe Mejia from UC Hastings College of Law panel discussion on mass incarceration (Feb. 2021)

How do you turn a losing case at the Ninth Circuit Court into a green card?

By being [Joe Mejia!](#) A renounced gang member and lawful permanent resident turned paralegal, poet, and activist, after nearly 10 years in prison and ICE custody. Joe was at the brink of deportation when he began working with Pangea on his case.

When we met Joe in 2020, he was at Yuba County Jail as an ICE detainee, and he had already gained respect as a leader organizing multiple hunger strikes in demand for humane treatment of detainees during the pandemic. Pangea supported his First Amendment right to protest the deadly conditions inside ICE detention and [six Pangea staff were arrested during a civil disobedience protest outside Governor Newsom's mansion](#) - an action that sought to give visibility to the hunger strike Joe organized inside ICE detention. Then thanks to the class action lawsuit in *Zepedas Rivas*, Joe was released from ICE detention, temporarily stopping his deportation.

As soon as Joe was released, the Ninth Circuit Court denied his final appeal. On the brink of deportation, our team of Pangea attorneys, paralegals, organizers, and community pulled all the stops for Joe: post conviction relief, an ineffective assistance of counsel claim against his prior attorney, motions to reopen at the BIA, a petition for rehearing at the Ninth Circuit, a Convention Against Torture claim for two countries (El Salvador and Mexico), and more. **And we won!**

Joe just had his green card reinstated this month!

Huge thanks to attorney Mike Mehr for vacating Joe's wrongful convictions and everyone in the immigrant rights community that helped Joe win his case so that he could remain in the United States with his U.S. citizen parents and sister. But the biggest thanks to Joe, whose savvy organizing and passion motivated all of us to fight with and for him!

Together and with persistence is how we turned a losing case at the Ninth Circuit Court into a green card!

Help us make more victories like Joe's possible!

Why Litigation Alone is Not Enough and What More is Needed



Two Pangea clients suffered major setbacks last year in decisions by judges on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit that misstated our clients' life-circumstances, minimized their constitutional rights, and allowed the government to deny our clients their day in court. The decisions reflected just how disconnected many judges - both Republican and Democratic appointees - are from the harmful day-to-day reality our clients face. Nevertheless, knowing that we cannot rely on these unelected judges alone, Pangea and our partners have been working with both clients on alternative avenues to remain in the United States, and both clients continue to fight their cases from outside detention. Additionally, we are:

- Working with advocates across the country to develop a coordinated legal response
- Organizing with community members to protect our clients' rights outside of courts
- Protecting our clients' family unity and preventing re-detention by ensuring access to know your rights information

2021 Policy Advocacy Highlights



In addition to movement building, community empowerment and legal representation, Pangea was busy in 2021 with a whole host of policy advocacy priorities. Here are some highlights:

- Worked with our AB 32 coalition to push federal politicians to **shut down detention centers, culminating in Representative Lofgren [leading 24 other representatives](#)** to call for the closure of ICE detention centers in California.
- Together with our partners at FREE SF and Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, we **advocated against the criminalization of migrant youth and we won!** We specifically fought against the SF City Attorney's [civil injunction](#) that singled out Honduran Transitional Age Youth in San Francisco to block their access to legal, social, and housing services based on their addiction to substances. The struggle is not over and we continue to advocate for community-based solutions, but so far we've won!
- **Detained leaders at private immigration prison facilities alert congressmembers of the egregious civil rights violations** by Immigration and Customs Enforcement together with GEO corporation, **demanding an immediate closure of these facilities.** We facilitated a powerful direct meeting of these detainees and congressional staffers!
- **Formerly detained community members and their families advocated directly with congressional representatives** for their release and demanded facility closures.
- We **advocated for the VISION Act** (AB 937), which nearly passed! It would have **protected immigrants** from being transferred from jail to ICE prison and **avoided double punishment** solely for being born outside of the United States. We will continue to advocate this year.

Other 2021 Highlights from the Expanding Pangea Team



*Top row images (left to right): Nilou and Dalia
Bottom row images (left to right): Vanessa and Eunice*

Finally, 2021 saw major expansions to our team, an office move, a new book on collective governance, and other changes in how we

aspire to live by our values:

- Pangea founder, Nilou, was awarded a BIPOC leaders fellowship and began authoring a book on collective governance and immigrant justice.
- Two of our beloved former interns, Dalia and Vanessa, came back to join our team as full time staff.
- We hired our first full time organizer, Eunice, who hit the ground running and already mobilized dozens of clients and families in her first 6 months!
- We moved to a new, bigger, and brighter office in San Francisco and are still close to the courts, ICE, and the asylum office.
- We created a new flexible schedule and hours policy, and we like it!
- We are now permanently on our 4-day workweek policy and have already seen staff wellness improve.

Here's to Solidarity, The Pangea Family

Bianca, Celine, Dalia, Esperanza, Eunice, Gladys, Jehan, Jessica, Luis Angel, Marie, Mariel, Nilou, Pete, Roxana, Sean, Vanessa, and Ximena



Pangea Legal Services is a registered 501(c)(3) organization, and donations are tax deductible. We will put every dollar of your generous contribution to work by providing direct legal services, policy advocacy, and legal empowerment for low income immigrant communities.

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