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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 | July 2021

New Superstar Staff & Next Level Immigrant Justice

**We are so excited to introduce you to our
growing team!**



Eunice Hernandez, Community Organizer – a former San Jose-based community organizer and artist, Eunice is now organizing Pangea's currently and formerly detained clients to foster community power and end immigrant detention.



Vanessa Godinez, Attorney – a former superstar summer intern at Pangea and attorney at the Bronx Defenders in New York, Vanessa is back at Pangea, bringing her experience and passion for crim-imm issues.



Dalia Nava Jacobo, Paralegal – a prior year-long superstar DREAM SF fellow at Pangea, Dalia has returned to Pangea with several years of paralegal and interpreter experience under her belt. Pangea is thrilled to finally have Dalia back!

**Pangea founder selected as one of 12 BIPOC
leaders & “Pioneers in Justice”**



We are also thrilled to introduce you to the amazing class of the [Levi Strauss Foundation's Pioneers in Justice](#), including our very own, [Niloufar Khonsari](#). She will be part of the first cohort centered on femme, non-binary, and women leaders.

(Pioneers from top left to right): Sammie Ablaza Wills, Zahra Billoo, Cat Brooks, Maria Noel Fernandez, Tinisch Hollins, [Niloufar Khonsari](#), Camille Llanes-Fontanilla, Lorena Melgarejo, Isa Noyola, Imani Rupert-Gordon, Aria Sa'id, Marlene Sanchez

Check out the superpower of this group!

Continuing in Legal Struggles in the Midst of Sweeping Positive Immigration Changes



Administrative Wins!
Mary* finally gets employment authorization!

Some cases are moving along swiftly and seeing the benefits of administrative improvements. For example, U visas are now being

granted deferred action more expeditiously while individuals wait for processing. This allows us to apply for employment authorization and valid social security numbers with our clients who previously would have had to wait several more years.

Mary was ecstatic when she heard the news! She had routinely called her Pangea attorney every month for the past several years to check-up on her U visa, and weekly these past few months since we told her that we were approaching her application's processing time.

Mary is a single mother and she and her family have gone through terrible violence and trauma, here and abroad. She can now apply for work authorization after 16 years in the country. Her daughter who arrived as an unaccompanied minor at the age of 10 and turns 16 this month, is a big step closer to terminating her removal proceedings, and Mary's youngest son who is still in Guatemala is that much closer to reuniting with his mother and sister.

*Name has been changed



When we fight we win! Appellate Victories!

Thanks to the relentless legal advocacy and community pressure from advocates at Pangea, the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies, and others across the country, *Matter of A-B-*, *L-E-A-*, and *A-C-A-A-* have been vacated! This means that the prior administration's malicious efforts to heavily restrict asylum have been overturned!

First, in June 2018, then Attorney General Jeff Sessions decided *Matter of A-B-*, which vacated earlier precedent confirming that domestic violence survivors could qualify for asylum. In the decision, Sessions sought to proclaim that generally, cases involving domestic or gang violence would not qualify for asylum. In July 2019, then Attorney General William Barr broke from decades of precedent to decide in *Matter of L-E-A-* that harm to an individual because they belonged to a certain family would not qualify for asylum protection. This decision was inconsistent with decades of law and UN guidance finding that harm to members of a family group was a quintessential reason for qualifying for asylum. Finally, in September 2020, Barr improperly certified Pangea's client, Aida, under *Matter of A-C-A-A-* to himself after she had already won asylum, prevailed on the government's appeal, and received her legal documentation. Aida survived years of gender-based child and domestic abuse, and had fled to the U.S. for safety. *Matter of A-C-A-A-* overturned Aida's grant of asylum and made it dramatically harder for asylum seekers to win their cases on appeal, because it required the Board of Immigration Appeals to re-examine every aspect of the case, rather than focus on the issues the parties

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disagreed on. Appeals are normally limited to these disagreements in order to allow each party to focus its resources on the most important issues. In essence, the decision made it harder for asylum seekers to win their case, and once they win, harder to defend against a government appeal.

Pangea, the Center for Refugee and Gender Studies, and CLINIC led an effort to [urge the current Attorney General to vacate](#) these improvidently issued decisions. Collective pressure on the Biden administration led U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland to [vacate](#) the Trump-era rulings (*Matter of A-B-*, *Matter of L-E-A-*, *Matter of A-C-A-A-*) that restricted asylum protections for people escaping gender-based violence, gang brutality, and persecution against families.



Aida (center), Pangea attorney and Aida's legal representative Jehan Laner Romero (far left), and community members and allies after Aida won asylum (2019).



ICE continues to deport individuals who will face violence and death in their countries of birth, and our laws enable that – but we're committed to changing them.

[Check out William's story here!](#)

[Read William's Story](#)

Here's to Solidarity, The Pangea Family

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



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