

CLOSE THE CAMPS AFFINITY GROUP (CCAG)

This affinity group is focused on the issue of climate change and immigration, with specific emphasis focused on the travesty happening at our southern border. It reframes the four XR demands to speak to the intersection of climate change and immigration/migration, and addresses the issue from the bottom-up. That is, CCAG centers – in its actions as well as framing - the experiences of those who are most affected and most burdened in order to speak to the intersecting systems of domination at work.

Below is a suggested narrative by which to ground the work of this AG.

XR DEMANDS

1. Tell the truth

Migration from Central America is driven by a number of factors, not the least of which is climate change. As Ben Enrenreich notes in “Open Borders Must Be Part of Any Response to the Climate Crisis, “severe drought in Central America has been pushing Hondurans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans north through Mexico to the United States.” Our government must tell the truth about the causes of migration, instead of fomenting xenophobia and racism in response to this crisis.

Indeed, our government must own up to the fact that the United States is primarily responsible for the emissions that are changing our climate and making Central Americans’ ability to grow crops and live off their land increasingly difficult. Our government is responsible for trade pacts that paved the way for monoculture agribusinesses that destroyed livelihoods as well as soil. And the violence and persecution that many Central Americans are also fleeing are rooted in United State foreign policy – namely, in the proxy wars this nation conducted throughout the Cold War, as well as in our drug wars which were a fundamental component of what we considered our strategic interests in both Central and South America. As Latin American studies professor Elizabeth Oglesby observes, “hundreds of thousands of people were displaced in the 1980s” – a period of intensified US interference in Central America. “People were fleeing violence and massacres and political persecution that the United States was either funding directly or at the very minimum, covering up and

excusing.” All of these problems our nation executed through a politics of race that cast Central Americans as the Other upon whom we could impose our way of life.

Telling the truth about climate change, then, means telling the truth about the crisis at our border as one thoroughly entangled in our racialized energy, foreign, and economic policies toward Central America.

Telling the truth also means acknowledging that just, life-affirming alternatives to our racist, militarized framework exist; that these alternatives are realistic and achievable; and, that we have the capacity to care for one another across borders and as global citizens.

2. Net Zero by 2025

If we are going to achieve net zero emissions by 2025, we must support and help to create a global green new deal – which means we must look beyond, if not eschew altogether, a nationalist framework. We cannot achieve net zero emissions thinking that the master’s tools will dismantle the master’s house, i.e., that the “prevailing paradigm” which “perpetually constructs a hyperreality of divisions, borders, and boundaries around projected externalisations of the ‘Other’” will save us (as Nafeez Ahmed observes).

In fact, the opposite is true: “Solidarity across all geopolitical boundaries –with one another and against the tiny segment of the planet’s population that is profiting from our demise – is our only hope,” as Enrenreich contends. “Borders can offer no ‘security,’ only a plan for murder-suicide, a delusion that gets more deadly with each passing day.”

The nationalist violence at the border is the prevailing paradigm at work. As such, it stands in the way of net zero emissions.

3. People’s Assembly

The government’s action on climate change must be overseen by the people. This means that the government must submit to the people’s oversight of immigration policy (especially asylum), the government’s treatment of migrants, and the government’s foreign policy actions in Central America and beyond.

4. Just Transition

Climate change reparations and a just transition must involve a transformation of our nation's militarized, national security framework – a framework that falls most heavily on the nations of the global south. We recognize the climate debt we owe as well as the proxy war debt that has created instability throughout the global south.

OUR MISSION

It is not enough simply to talk about the intersections of climate change and immigration. We must organize like it matters, and in ways that create relationships with people in our communities who are already working on this issue and that build capacity within XR to address this issue powerfully on an ongoing basis. To this end, we will:

1. determine who in the community is working on immigration/border/ surveillance, etc.
2. investigate/become conversant on immigration/border/ surveillance, etc.
3. investigate/become conversant in how immigration/migration and climate change intersect
4. produce literature, flyers, etc. that explain the intersection
5. conduct internal XR trainings
6. reach out to those already working on immigration/border/ surveillance, etc., in order to dialogue on the work that they are doing, on what they need and how we can help, on the ways the issue intersects with climate change, on the possibility of doing collaborative events/actions together in ways that a) support the work they are doing, b) educate the community on the intersection, and 3) create solutions.
7. participate in and support actions created by those who have been working on the issue.

These are only a few of the things CCAG will undertake.

Structure

CCAG will take on a structure that best suits the needs of those who participate, so what's included here is merely a proposal. However, the Intelligence/Analysis function listed below should be viewed as crucial. [This section borrows from Nonviolent Struggle: 50 Crucial Points by the Center for Applied NonViolent Action and Strategies – CANVAS]

I. Administrative/Human Resources (Team 1)

- recruits/sustains volunteers (keep folks engaged)
- outreach/interaction with allies [engagement team]
- internal training [affinity group members as well as XR]
- role rotation coordination

II. Logistics/Operational (Team 2)

- needed materials
- fundraising/budget
- meeting spaces
- action planning/staging

III. Intelligence/Analysis (Team 3)

- information/data collection
- issue framing
- knowledge production
- internal curriculum creation/study groups
- resources
- research on targets for action

IV. Coordination/communication (Team 4)

-team that works to coordinate between and among participating groups, and when this will be done

-internal and external communication /responsibilities [internal: informing volunteers of ag needs, plans, meetings, report-backs at general meetings, coordinators][external: media, public, etc.]

These teams should be ongoing and membership rotated.

Sources

Below are a few readings that will help with the framework and analysis necessary to begin this important work (it will be updated and expanded on an ongoing basis):

1. ANALYSIS

“Open Borders Must Be Part of Any Response to the Climate Crisis”

<https://www.thenation.com/article/climate-change-refugees-open-borders/>

“War, Empire and Racism in the Anthropocene”

<https://www.resilience.org/stories/2019-07-01/war-empire-and-racism-in-the-anthropocene/>

“The Violence Central American Migrants Are Fleeing Was Stoked by the US”

https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/qvnyzq/central-america-atrocities-caused-immigration-crisis

“Anything Goes: The Dangers of Linking Climate Change to National Security”

<https://www.commondreams.org/views/2009/08/27/anything-goes-dangers-linking-climate-change-national-security>

2. ACTIONS

“What You Can Do to Close the Camps”

<https://www.yoppvoice.com/single-post/2019/06/22/What-You-Can-Do-to-Close-the-Camps>

Enclave Caracol: Call for Volunteers

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXBJ4IyWr9g&fbclid=IwAR2Ojti7fgPKRO257XIC_gkR7C8_h8naOLuCpYlrluYnPw6fAbYHtRSA8n8

Who Is Making Money From CBP in Your State?

<https://readsludge.com/2019/06/27/who-is-making-money-from-cbp-in-your-state/>

“Climate change was manufactured in a crucible of inequality, for it is a product of the industrial and fossil-fuel eras, historical forces powered by exploitation, colonialism, and nearly limitless instrumental use of ‘nature’” (Chris J. Cuomo).

Climate change continues to be manufactured in a crucible of inequality. Let us then organize in ways that address this fundamental truth about our crisis.

-Alycee Lane