



Ang Migrante

Official Newsletter of Migrante - Alberta

Mig AB renews fight for people's rights in 3rd assembly

True to its vow to fervently uphold migrants and people's rights, members of Migrante Alberta renewed its fight in its assembly held online.

On May 29, some 40 members of the group gathered online via zoom. This is Migrante Alberta's 3rd assembly since its inception in 2013.

The group reviewed its activities since its assembly held in 2019, held every two years, highlighting many campaigns which successfully addressed the needs of migrants in Alberta.

The assembly also saw the election of its new members of its executive committee, namely: Jay Zapata, Cynthia Palmaria, Clarizze Truscott, Nova Porquia, Connie Monana, Ruben Acosta and Novie Mae Sambat. The officials will announce designations in a week. A new position, Member at Large, has been announced.

Through the years, the group has won campaigns that have benefited the community. It led the demand for Consular office in Alberta that is now benefiting thousands of community member. Migrante also spearheaded the McKenna Campaign that granted children of undocumented parents access to healthcare and many more.

"Yet it does not stop there, as needs arise, we continue to educate, organize, lobby and fight," said..

The onset of the pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of the migrant workers here in Canada. Many migrant workers have lost their jobs and have faced uncertainties with their immigration status. The Duterte administration also has failed to



Members of Migrante Alberta renew their vows in serving the people.

respond to the needs of the people both in the Philippines and to the Filipino people abroad.

Migrante Alberta stepped forward to raise the concern and have helped the community through distribution of relief goods, providing information sessions on rights and welfare, coping with mental health during the pandemic through the Serve the People Brigade.

"We also rallied for healthcare for all, demanding access to healthcare including migrants with precarious status and the undocumented. We are also lobbying for them to have

access to services in Edmonton City through the Access Without Fear campaign," said the group.

Migrante Alberta has co-sponsored a campaign for careworkers calling for landed status now for all care workers in the country, removal of English language requirements and education accreditation.

In 2018 following the arrest of a former Filipino MLA on immigration fraud, Migrante led anti-trafficking campaign; campaign against unscrupulous immigration consultants.

Migrante Alberta also have joint in the Global campaign to highlight the demand for better job, services and Oust Duterte.

Migrante Alberta was founded in August 2013 in Edmonton. It is a non-profit organization that advocates the rights and welfare of Filipino migrants here in Alberta.

It collaborates on national campaigns and supports advocacy and cooperates Internationally in fighting for rights and justice.

- NOVIE MAE SAMBAT

Migrante organizer receives social worker award

- LEN JERUSALEM

Migrante organizer in Calgary Nellie Alcaraz, is this year's John Hutton Award recipient from the Alberta College of Social Workers (ACSW).

The award recognizes a registered social worker in good standing who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession of social work and the community through social action and policy, ACSW's online page said.

The college recognized Alcaraz' recent efforts in mobilizing social workers and other community members to respond to the urgent need of temporary foreign workers employed at meat packing plants in Alberta.

"Nellie continues to shine the light on racist policies and injustices faced by temporary foreign workers and migrants, in doing so, paving the way to further policy level change. Nellie's work is truly inspirational and impactful," ACSW's page read.

Meanwhile, Alcaraz who has a master's degree in social work, has had a research she co-authored published in the Journal of Human Rights and Social Work, which tackled the struggles and lived experiences of non-status migrants in Canada.

"I (hope) that the research can be used to mobilize the community to advance the rights and welfare of precarious migrants," she said.

Nelly as she is fondly called, lives with her husband, Jay, also a Migrante organizer, with their son in Calgary.



Migrante International Expresses Solidarity with the Palestinian People and Demand the Safety of Filipinos Affected by the Escalating Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

This conflict is the result of seventy three years of the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine supported by the United States, the Central European Powers and their allies.



May 15th, 2021 marks 73 years since the illegal occupation of Palestine by Israeli Forces and Colonial Settlers, which is called Nakba, or the day of shame.

Migrante International supports the struggle of the Palestinian people against the settler colonialist regime of Israel.

We blame Netanyahu and the Israeli Zionists for systematically escalating the conflict these past few days by allowing armed Israeli settlers to forcibly displace the peaceful Palestinian community in Sheikh Jarrah in Jerusalem, for the burning of the Al Aqsa Mosque and other holy sites, for the bombing and massacre of the civilian people of Gaza by the Israeli Forces, and the police tolerating the systematic mob attacks by Israelis against Palestinian neighbourhoods.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Filipinos are caught in the conflict and are fearful for their lives and safety. We demand quick and decisive action by the Duterte government to ensure the safety of Filipinos by organizing speedy evacuation and repatriation from critical areas. An immediate comprehensive response plan is needed to ensure the safety and protection of our Kababayans.

This conflict is the result of seventy three years of the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine supported by the United States, the Central European Powers and their allies. For seventy three

years since Nakba, the Israeli regime has driven more than 500 peaceful Palestinian communities and installed armed Israeli settlers. They established a system of Apartheid against the Palestinians and depriving them of their civil and political rights. This must stop!

We at Migrante International demand the immediate cessation of hostilities and Israeli bombing of Gaza, the withdrawal of the illegal Israeli settlers in Palestinian communities, the release of political detainees, and the return of occupied territories to Palestine. We demand the immediate action of the UN Security Council and the withdrawal of support by the United States, Europe and their Allies to the illegal Israeli regime. We support the International Criminal Courts investigation of Israeli War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity in Gaza and Occupied Palestine.

Lastly, on this, the day of Nakba, we support the struggle of the Palestinian people to return to their communities as guaranteed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3236 that reaffirms the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and the right of Palestinians to return to their homes and property.

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addition to her making rice cakes to sell.

Leno was able to find work in Dubai and was able to send them money for rent and expenses for their daughter who, as of this writing is still not eligible to receive any benefits from the Canadian government.

Her experiences widened Liezl's awareness on the plight of undocumented workers and their families. She was able to connect with other migrants like her who are also trying their best to survive.

Liezl has received acknowledgement from the government that her H&C application is now being processed. While waiting for approval, she spends her extra time helping other undocumented workers like her raise money by doing garage sales donated by kind- hearted Canadians.

She also lends her voice to Migrante Canada's #StatusForAll campaign for regularization for all migrant workers, campaign to

remove the restrictive requirements that prevent migrant workers like her gain permanent status.

She said this is her way of paying forward the good deeds that she received from other people. She appreciates the help activists from Migrante Canada provide in helping undocumented workers like her, instead of devoting their time, money and resources to enjoy life in Canada. She herself has found a new advocacy when she started helping other migrant workers fight for their rights and welfare.

Liezl remains hopeful that eventually, her and other undocumented migrants will achieve their dreams of finally reuniting with their families. As of this writing, Liezl's daughter will turn 5 years old this year and expected to attend nursery classes this coming fall.

She and the others are still hopeful policy changes in immigration will favour her sector which will give equal opportunities for all, provide humane conditions and respect for workers and migrants rights.

Migrante AB births online education series amid pandemic

- Len Jerusalem

Over the past year, Migrante Alberta, in partnership with Alberta Workers Association for Research and Education (AWARE) has been holding migrants connections and education series entitled Connect-ED online.

Connect-ED provides education, connections and awareness of migrant matters and experiences such as immigration, labour issues and rights, mental health, housing, etc.

In 2020, connect ED topics included Labour Rights, Immigration Policies, Updates on Immigration Changes and Policies on TFWs, Precarious Workers and Precarious Housing: dialogue and stories of housing struggles in the migrant worker community, and TFW Current Immigration and Labour Updates on Labour Rights.

This year, the themes that have been covered so far include Migrants' Mental Health in Times of Covid-19, Occupational Health and Safety. Also, Our Families, Our experiences: a discussion around the struggles of migrant farm workers and their families, and Experiences of Migrant Working Women as Caregivers: a sharing of experiences in times of covid-19.

Speakers included UFCW Representatives, Student Legal Services of Edmonton, Alberta Workers Health Centre, Amexcal, AWARE, advocates, and migrant workers themselves who courageously shared their experiences, struggles, and stories. More Connect-ED will be hosting more online forums for the next months to come.

Connect-ED

TFW Current Immigration & Labour Updates

LABOUR RIGHTS

Dec 28, 2020 at 2 PM

Zoom Link: [us02web.zoom.us/meeting/81969578104](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81969578104)

MIGRANTE
alberta



Ang Migrante
is the official newsletter of
Migrante-Alberta

MIGRANTE-Alberta is an organization working for the rights and welfare of Filipino migrants and immigrants in Alberta through various initiatives such as organizing, education, training and advocacy. Under the alliance Migrante-Canada, we work closely with other migrant groups in Montreal, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, BC, and the Maritimes. We are a member of Migrante International - a global alliance of Filipinos abroad with strong presence in Asia, the Americas, Europe and The Middle East.

[Migrante-Alberta Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/groups/migrantealberta/)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/migrantealberta/>

[Consular Service Facebook page:](https://www.facebook.com/albertaconsul)

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Kwento at Litrato project lands in Alberta Views

- Len Jerusalem



Migrante's Kwento at Litrato project landed in a May edition of the Alberta Views, a magazine that provides in-depth analysis of Alberta issues.

Staff writer Tadzio Richards wrote the article entitled: "More Than Cheap Labor, the lives of Filipino workers in Alberta as shown in their photo." Migrante Canada director Marco Luciano spoke throughout the article, shedding light on the issues of the temporary foreign workers.

The project featured amateur photos taken by 22 participants who took photographs about their experiences in migration in 2019. The project aimed to create visibility for the sector.

Migrante Int'l asks for support for community pantry

The inspiration conceived by Maginhawa Community Pantry has spread throughout the country with more than 300 in various regions and provinces excluding NCR. Damayang Migrante, a project developed last year to respond to the immediate needs of displaced, stranded and distressed OFWs affected by the COVID19 pandemic has now set up pantries in 7 different communities in the country.

"It is shameful that the NTF-ELCAC has not done anything to help the poor despite billions of pesos in its budget. It is time to defund and abolish this vicious government agency and channel the money to provide much needed financial assistance to families in need," Migrante International chairperson Joana Concepcion stressed. Migrante International is calling on all Filipino migrants to support the community pantry initiative and more importantly to help set up their own community pantries in partnership with their families in any area in the country.



- Migrante International

The Hows of the Undocumented: Liezl's Story

- RUBEN ACOSTA

Liezl (not her real name) worked as a factory worker in Taiwan for 6 years together with her boyfriend Leno. The two decided to apply for work in Canada before their contract ended in 2014, and 2013, respectively. Leno was able to get a LMIA using a placement agency in Taiwan, paying 10,000 USD. He arrived in Canada in 2013 and worked as a fast food service crew in Calgary. Liezl also paid 7000 CAD for her own LMIA using another agency in Taiwan.

Before she went home to the Philippines after her contract ended in Taiwan, she was able to get a positive LMIA from a cleaning company in Edmonton. She applied for a Canadian work permit which was approved.

In 2014, massive layoffs became common in Alberta as a result of recession from the dropping global oil price. Liezl's prospective employer turned its back and did not proceed with hiring her. In the same year, the "4-in, 4-out" rule forced thousands of foreign workers to return to their home countries, while other Filipino TFWs stayed knowing returning to the Philippines would be worse.

In June 2014, Liezl followed Leno in Calgary, hoping to find a job in order to pay her huge debt. Six months after she arrived, they got married and together with 3 other TFWs rented a house in northeast Calgary. Liezl did odd jobs wherever available while looking for a new LMIA to update her work permit.

Leno on the other hand, continued to work in his job which did not qualify for the provincial nominee program, as he was not considered "skilled". Before Leno's contract expired in July 2016, the fastfood company offered to promote Leno into a supervisory position, with conditions that Liezl will continue to work for them and shoulder the fees associated with the new LMIA application and interviews. This meant expenses of up to 7,000 CAD out of pocket.

On the other hand, the agency advised the couple to submit a work permit application for Leno, to note with LMIA "to follow", and for Liezl to apply for an open work permit before her work permit ended in June 2016. A month later, Leno's application was denied and he was ordered to leave Canada.

The bitter news came the next day when they received a positive LMIA for Leno valid for six months. But since his work permit application was refused and there was an order to leave, the agency advised Leo to go home and assured him that the agency will apply for another work permit while he is in the Philippines. The couple was promised that he would be able to return as a TFW because of the approved LMIA.



(Photo lifted from The Atlantic). Undocumented immigrants face harsh punishments from the authorities, including jail and deportations.

Consequently, Liezl's application for open work permit was also denied. By this time, Liezl was already three months pregnant and her work permit expired in June 2016. The 90-day restoration period allowed Liezl to stay for another 3 months. This time, she applied for a temporary resident visa as suggested by the agency.

During her pregnancy, Liezl was diagnosed with gestational diabetes. Not having a status meant Liezl had to pay out of pocket for her medical expenses – up to \$850 per visit, until she gave birth to her daughter in November, 2016.

Furthermore, a month after giving birth she had an appendicitis which required a surgery and a hospital stay for two weeks. In addition to her delivery, her hospital bills amounted to \$50,000.

Her landlady took care of her daughter until she was discharged on Christmas day that year. As she wasn't able to find work, her landlady taught her to make rice cakes to sell to friends just to get by. As this was not enough income, there were times when she did not have rent money but her landlady let her and her baby stay.

An immigration consultant tried to apply for a new work permit for Leno while he was in the Philippines but was denied for the second time, despite an active LMIA that was about to expire December 2016.

It was also during this time that Liezl learned about

Migrante Alberta's campaign for children of undocumented parents to receive provincial health care regardless of the status of the parents.

She had planned to go home to the Philippines with her daughter in January 2017 but the refusal of Leno's work permit application changed her plans. With Leno not having the chance to return to Canada, Liezl chose to stay with her baby, given the worse situation they are going to face in the Philippines. An immigration lawyer was referred to her and she was advised to apply for H&C and paid the lawyer 500\$ every meeting to discuss her application. She trusted the immigration lawyer, paying thousands of dollars for another shot at living in Canada.

Years passed but this move did not bear any outcome for Liezl. In fact, the lawyer deceived her once Liezl called IRCC and was dumbfounded to find out no application was ever submitted under her name. The lawyer who blamed IRCC for the "lost application" later on retired.

The onset of the Covid 19 pandemic made life worse for Liezl and her daughter. They had to rely on friends' support to survive as businesses closed and made it more difficult for Liezl to find work.

It was during this time that Migrante reconnected with her. Migrante's Serve The People program involving relief aids to migrant workers in Alberta especially to those who were affected by job losses and undocumented workers, she was able to receive rice, sardines, noodles and bread weekly or whenever available. The relief goods somehow helped them survive in



"I LOST MY STATUS 8 YEARS AGO NOT BY CHOICE BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN I SHOULD ALSO LOSE MY RIGHTS TO ALL OPPORTUNITIES"

An undocumented Filipina in Edmonton with her child

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