



Approaching Social Justice

Application

As a social worker, part of my Code of Ethics is to fight for social justice. I wanted to fight for these Salvadorans. I wanted them to receive some form of justice for all of the injustices that they have faced. I went on a study abroad trip with a group of social work students from Ferris State University in May of 2014. We did many things to help the Salvadorans see that we cared about them and that we would fight for them to receive social justice. The first thing we had to do in order to help them receive justice was to actually listen to their accounts of what had happened during the civil war.

The stories were too gruesome and horrific to include in this poster. The images we saw were too graphic to display either, however, seeing these things made me realize how much the Salvadoran people went through. Their government was unjust to them. The United States government funded these unjust human rights violations, and the United States citizens were blind to this. In order to fight for social justice for a population, one must immerse themselves in the culture and learn from its members. In the top right photo we were learning about machismo and how it affects the men and women in El Salvador. In the bottom right photo we were meeting with a gang community. This gang community created a no violence treaty and had started a greenhouse project, but police still raid their community, because they are labeled as a gang.

I was placed in a site placement in the only human trafficking shelter in Central America. The girls approached life with such a positive outlook. It was inspiring. Even though they had not received justice for the wrong-doings against them, they still held smiles on their faces. The criminal justice system in El Salvador contains corruption which leads to many human trafficking offenders to not be prosecuted. This is demonstrated clearly in the case of human trafficking. This is the only human trafficking shelter in Central America, and there are only 18 girls living there currently. Learning first-hand from these communities makes fighting for social justice much easier.

One learns what a community needs from the people of that community. One cannot simply guess what is needed. Creating social justice for Salvadorans in two weeks is completely unrealistic, but showing that we want to fight for them and that we care about the injustices that they faced is the first step for them to receive some sort of justice. There are many organizations that fight for Salvadorans to receive justice that we became involved with while there, and plenty of organizations that we did not get involved with that are unifying for justice.

Community Engagement



Education



Host Families



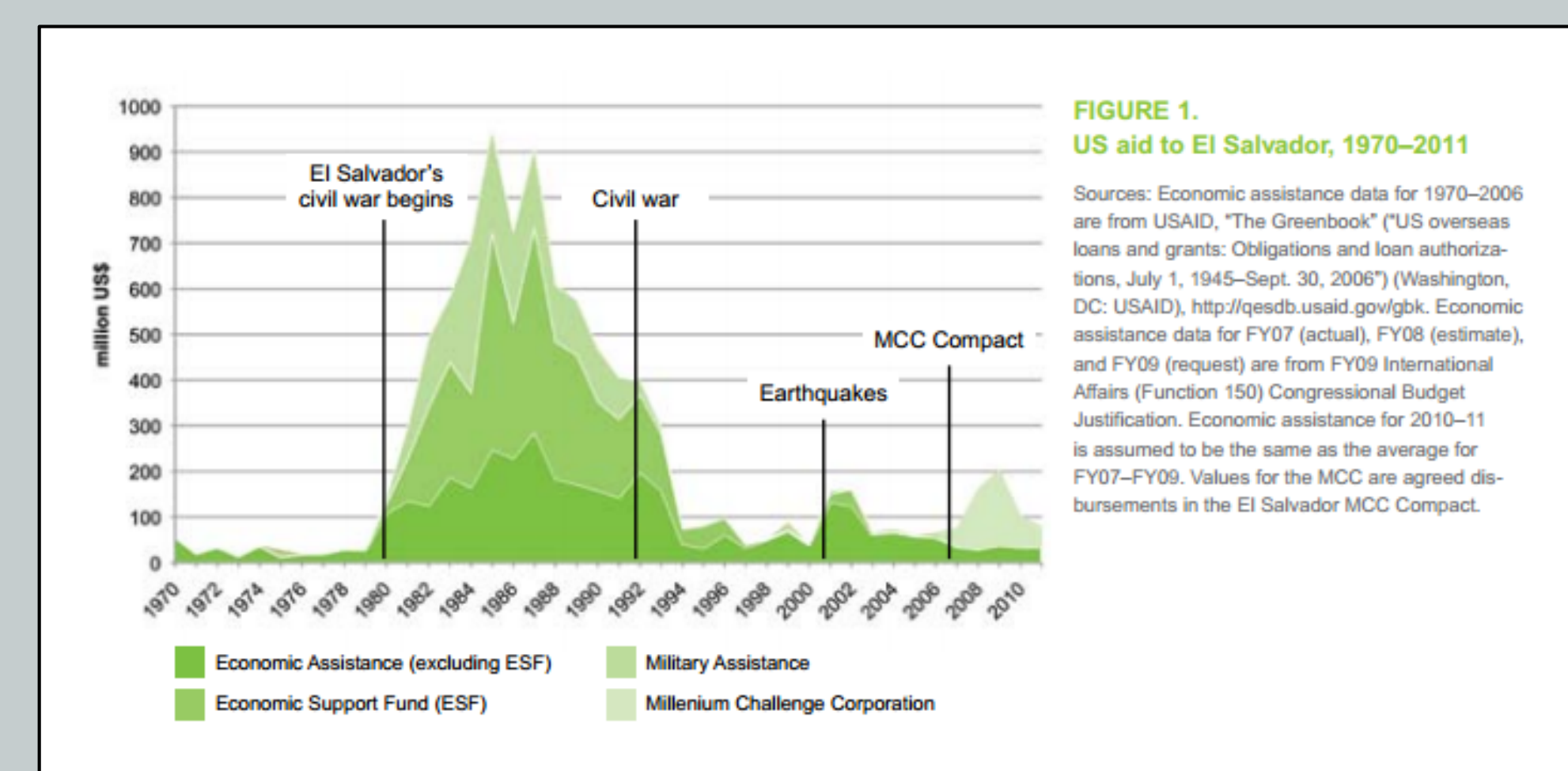
Social Justice

❖ All human beings are entitled to equal social, political, and economic privileges

Key areas of concern:

- Widespread corruption
- Weaknesses in the judiciary and the security forces that contributed to a high level of impunity
- Abuse, including domestic violence, discrimination, and commercial sexual exploitation against women and children
- Isolated unlawful killings and cruel treatment by security forces
 - Lengthy pretrial detention
- Harsh and life-threatening prison conditions
- Restrictions on freedom of speech and press
 - Trafficking in persons
- Discrimination against persons with disabilities and persons with HIV/AIDS
- Widespread discrimination and some violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons
- Child labor and inadequate enforcement of labor laws also were problems

EL SALVADOR 2013 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT. (2014, March 21). Retrieved February 23, 2015.

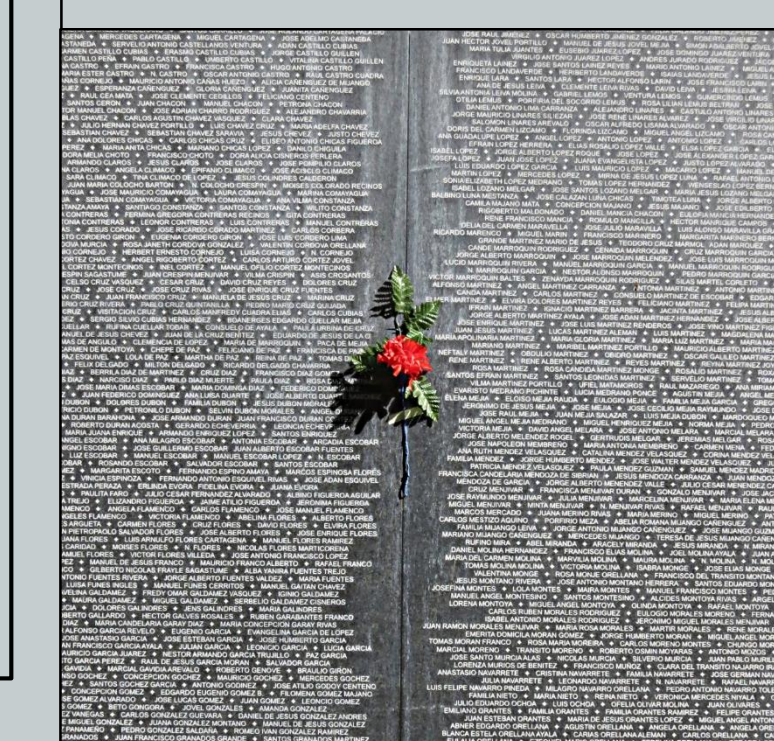
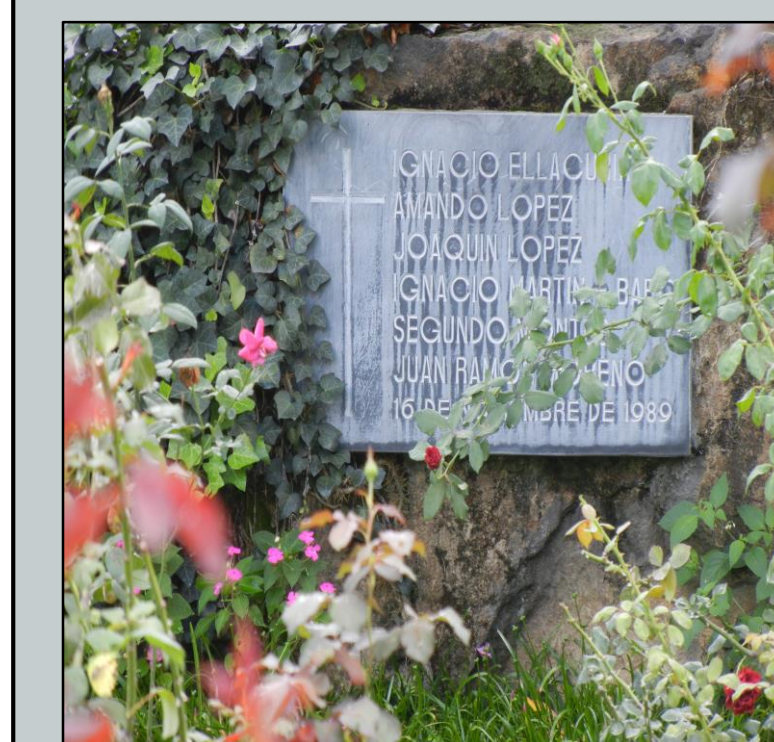
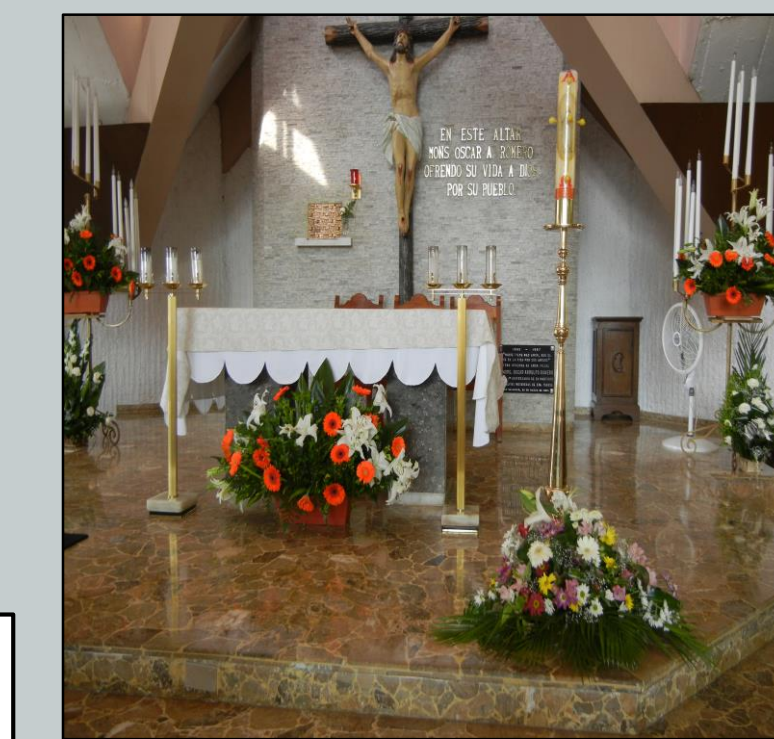


Smart development in practice: Field report from El Salvador. (n.d.). Retrieved April 8, 2015, from <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/assets/on3/files/fcld-report-from-el-salvador.pdf>

Justice systems currently set in place:

- A new independent Judiciary was created to insure justice.
- An ombudsman and a Truth Commission offered citizens a chance to report human rights abuses and address grievances.
- New elections allowed participation of opposition candidates.
- Candidates were allowed to have access to the media and the right to protection during campaigns.

Bell, O. (2013). Poverty and Gender Inequality in Post-War El Salvador. *Global Majority E-Journal*, 4(1), 27-39.



Methods of Receiving Justice:

Restorative Justice as defined by the National Institute of Justice, "gives priority to repairing the harm done to victims and communities, and offender accountability is defined in terms of assuming responsibility and taking action to repair harm".

Working Definitions of Restorative Justice. (2007, December 3). Retrieved February 20, 2015.

Retributive Justice is defined by Oxford Dictionaries as, "A system of criminal justice based on the punishment of offenders rather than on rehabilitation."

Definition of retributive justice in English. (2015, January 1). Retrieved February 20, 2015.

Criminal Conviction is to receive criminal punishment such as jail/prison time. This could also include probation or parole.

Organizations establishing change:

- ❖ U.S. El Salvador Sister Cities
- ❖ FMLN
- ❖ Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
- ❖ Habitat for Humanity
- ❖ World Food Programme (WFP)
- ❖ CISPES
- ❖ SHARE- El Salvador
- ❖ Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad
- ❖ Radio Victoria
- ❖ Centro Arte para la Paz
- ❖ Countless colleges including:
 - Ferris State University
 - Western University
 - Grand Valley State University