

Are Migrant Remittances a Positive Influence in a rural town of Guatemala?

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Abstract

Emigration from small towns in Guatemala to the United States (U.S.) has become a journey that males ultimately have to make in order for their family, and consequently the community, to progress. After my field research, I concluded that transnational migration is playing a vital role in the economic and social advancement of many rural towns in Guatemala; Zunil is one example. Zunil today is rich due to the cultivation of vegetables and the remittances the residents rely on from relatives in the U.S. Although emigration has affected Zunil negatively, today the positive outcomes from the remittance economy can outweigh the negative. This has been seen in the last ten years through various personal, family and community investments. During this time the money, which will be referred to as dollars or remittance, has been and continues to be sent to Zunil, and invested in infrastructure, small businesses, stores, family needs, religious celebrations and education. The field work done in Zunil will demonstrate how the investments as a result of the emigration from the town to the U.S. at the cost of the negative affects has improved the appearance of the town, the education of the children, the tourism and the confidence of the people.

Methods Employed:

Arriving in Zunil for a month of field work was an opportunity that I needed to take full advantage of by organizing my time there and becoming a member of my host family. Fortunately I was able to do both. I conducted structured interviews as well as helped prepare dinner by making *maiz tortillas*¹ on a daily basis with my host grandmother who spoke mainly Quiche. Although my topic changed a week into my field work, my methods for my field work in Zunil generally stayed the same: I listened to the stories of those I met, figured out who key leaders in the community were, set-up interviews with community leaders and knowledgeable people on my subject, and then I re-interviewed those who had the most to say on the subject or were most acquainted with the effects of immigration. First, I listened to learn what was important for the individuals and the community and made connections to the emigration effects. The primary leaders in town were the directors of the two cooperatives, the judge, the priest, and the presidents of community projects, such as my host father, who was president of the portable water project. They are the leaders because they have the power of the law, authority and are familiar with the community of Zunil. The community leaders then directed me to other people in town who had been directly impacted or would be able to give me more information than they had.

My field research was done from February 1st through February 28th of 2006. During this time I had the opportunity to have many casual conversations, which gave me the different perspectives of the residents in terms of my project, but I was also able to conduct formal interviews. The formal interviews were with the following people: Felix Magdiel Sontay Chavez, Juez de Pas de Zunil, Domingo Poclol, in charge of one of the two internet places in Zunil, Luis Humberto Colop, the director of *El Bienestar Cooperativa*, Padre Mario Tobar, Zunil's priest, Inez Ventura Chay, the wife of an immigrant currently in Oklahoma, Bernabe Mateo Xicay, employee of the *Santa Ana Cooperativa*, Pedro Quixtan Poz, president of the Portable Water Project, Juana Beatriz Quixtan Chay, resident of Zunil, Eric Gualberto Escobar Morales and Esmeralda Calderon de Leon, residents of Zunil, and Juan Gabriel Quixtan Chay, currently residing in Oklahoma. With the exception of two whom I interviewed, the priest and judge, they were all born in Zunil and reside there, unless otherwise mentioned.

¹ maíz tortillas- corn tortillas

My original research plan was to delve into the different opportunities women in Zunil had in comparison to the opportunities women had in the five surrounding *aldeas*². However, after arriving in Zunil and staying in one of the most beautiful houses there, I soon realized that I was more interested in transnational migration. I arrived in Zunil not knowing what to expect because I thought there would be more of a language barrier than I encountered. The first day I arrived I talked on the phone to one of my host brothers who is currently in Oklahoma and financially had helped build the house which I would call home for a month. Every family in Zunil has a relative or knows of someone who is in the U.S., making dollars, remittances, and sending them home. Aside from knowing all this, I was still going to study the opportunities of the women, but then a couple of young *Zunileros*³ influenced me and I changed my project. I met them right after I had climbed *el volcán Santa Maria*⁴. When we arrived at the top, frozen and exhausted, they welcomed us and invited us to share their fire. Then they asked us where we were from and we responded, the U.S. The youngest must have been nine and he instantly said " *Oh si aya queremos ir!*"⁵. This quickly helped me decide that I wanted to explore emigration from Zunil to the U.S. If the influence of immigration was even prevalent at one of the highest volcanos in Guatemala, then it was certainly having an even greater influence in a town such as Zunil.

One of the problems I faced when doing my field work in Zunil was that everyone I encountered with first-hand knowledge had a success story from the U.S. I know this is not the case because others in town were able to tell me stories of failures in the U.S. or negative effects due to emigration. Most people wanted to talk about immigration as being positive and were not very willing to talk much about the negative effects they thought it was having on their family or Zunil. Those I was around, or was directed to, had everything going for them and had the privilege of being positively affected. It was difficult not to get both the negative and positive effects from those who had been directly affected, but the time allotted for my field work also made this difficult. There was also a language barrier when I wanted to speak to my elders. I was also not able to get concrete data on the number of immigrants from Zunil and this was because there is no control in numbers, according to the judge. It was also difficult to find out the amount of remittances a family usually receives, but there is literature with approximations, which I will mention in the body of the paper.

² an *aldea* is a village

³ *Zunileros* are those who reside in the town of Zunil. This is according to Pedro Quixtan Pos, a Zunil resident.

⁴ *el volcán Santa Maria* is a volcano that is south of Quetzaltenango.

⁵ *Oh si aya queremos ir!* - This means "oh yes there is where we want to go!"

Immigration was a topic that many Zunil residents were willing to talk about and I definitely appreciated that. My host family was also affected which gave me the opportunity to talk and electronically interview my host brother, an immigrant who is currently in the U.S. from Zunil. I was in fact able to openly discuss immigration experiences easier than most people and did not have to beat around the bush with anyone because I was able to relate to them: my parents emigrated to the U.S. from Mexico. This made it easier to talk to people and encouraged me to ask more personal questions.

Introduction

Zunil is a small town with approximately 15,000 inhabitants and with more than 2,000 currently immigrants in the United States.⁶ This is why; the dollar or remittance economy has become one of the most influential components in the economic and social aspects of Zunil, a rural town in Guatemala. The dollar has become more evident on a daily basis as emigration from the town to the U.S., has rapidly increased. Aside from the negative repercussions of emigration, Zunil has found remittances from the U.S. to be a venue for the advancement of the town in several aspects, from the betterment of the infrastructure to the establishment of community locales. Not every town in Guatemala is in the same situation as Zunil is. In Zunil, the remittance economy, the U.S. dollar, that is being contributed from Guatemalan immigrants is being used for the progression of the rural town with a cost.

The Cost of Emigration

There are many negative effects because of emigration in the rural towns of Guatemala. These effects were not seen as much in Zunil, but they were said to be present. My first day in Zunil, during dinner, my host sister told me that her three brothers were in the U.S., but they did not leave any responsibilities, so they were a different case. In other cases, families fell apart and children were left without a father; growing up these children made poor decisions which led to them becoming criminals (Field Notes, Feb 1st 2006). The first few informal interviews I held with leaders in the community also reiterated that immigration had negative impacts.

For example, the judge said that although his office only saw two or three cases a year, immigrants in the U.S. were accused of abandonment of the home and adultery (Felix, Interview Feb 15th 2006). Abandonment of the home is literal, when men leave and decide not to come back, then the children are raised in single parent homes. One of the mothers said that it has been hard for her to discipline her 8 year old son because she can not scream at him and then no one is around to go with her to the doctor when he is sick (Ventura, Feb 15th 2006). Abandonment also means that they do not provide the mother with financial support to raise the children. In other cases, the woman who was left in Zunil decides to be unfaithful to the husband in the U.S. and then his parents file a case of adultery in the town (Felix, Interview Feb 15th 2006). These are some of the reasons that families fall apart, and, while children might grow up with everything they always wanted, they do not have the male authority or figure they needed, especially the boys.

Another influential part of the community is the church, which is why the father Mario was a great help in my field work. I first realized that he had a lot of knowledge of what the Zunil immigrant went through during a sermon he gave. The sermon was about the portable water project of the *aldea* of *Chuimucubal*, which a lot of immigrants were involved in when they were in Zunil. He said that some of the immigrants in Miami who he knows have lost sight of why they left in the first place (Field Notes, Feb 9th 2006). In his interview he clearly demonstrated that although transnational migration did have positive effects, he felt there were more negative effects. Other effects he was aware of were the loss of indigenous identity, the unwillingness to speak the language (in this town, Quiche) when they return, AIDS, and adolescence in jail for cases of DUI (driving under the influence). He also agreed with the judge on his views of negative effects (Padre Mario, Interview Feb 16th 2006). All of these negative effects are on a social level, but not so much on an economic level.

Economically, there are also negative effects in terms of workers' remittance. According to Kane, workers' remittance is the amount of money "that migrants earn abroad and then send home to their families and communities," (Kane, 1995: 34, as cited in Orozco, 2003: 43). Remittances from the U.S. greatly influence the economy in the town of Zunil. A negative affect of a remittance economy is from Keely and Tran, who say that "remittances increase dependency, contribute to economic and political instability, and development

⁶ This is according to Pedro, a Zunil resident.

distortion, and lead to economic distortions that over-shadows a temporary advantage for a fortunate few,” (Keely and Tran, 1989: 500). Although remittances do impact the economy of many rural towns, the contributions and positive influences can over-shadow the negative affects, which will be discussed later in this paper.

Reasons for Emigrating

The reasons for emigrating from Zunil and other rural towns in Guatemala vary from immigrant to immigrant even if they are from the same town. According to Pedro, who was my host dad, and who is actively involved in the community, there are about 3,000 immigrants in the U.S. who were residing in Zunil (Pedro, Interview Feb 23rd 2006). He, himself, has three sons who are now in Oklahoma. They did not leave because they were starving, but they did leave for financial reasons.

Zunil residents mentioned three primary reasons for emigration. First, the immigrants wanted their families to progress. Although they were not starving, they were not able to advance, because they were trying to make ends meet. For example, Ventura said that her husband was making some money for their family to eat by cultivating and selling on the coast, but they wanted to build a house (Ventura, Interview Feb 15th 2006) and they would never have enough money for that if he had stayed in Zunil. Victor Montejo assures that in the U.S., immigrants make 40 times more money than they do in Guatemala as peasants (Motejo, 2000: 236). This is a statistic that many Zunileros would be inclined to agree with.

Some families found themselves in debt, as was the case of the Quixtan family. They were considerably wealthy, so they began to build the foundation of a house, but then they fell into 90,000 *quetzals* (Q) of debt, which is \$12,000.⁷ This coerced their youngest son, Marco Antonio, to leave for the U.S., and now he has been there for six years (Pedro, Interview Feb 23rd 2006). Surprisingly, another reason an immigrant who is currently in the U.S. said he left was because he wanted to visit the U.S. His idea was not to stay in the U.S. for very long, but once he got there he realized that his parents had always given him everything he needed and he

had never learned to value it, so he would now work to help them out. He did not have to leave because his family needed money, he already had two brothers working and sending money home, but he wanted to go (Juan, Email response Feb 22nd 2006). In Zunil, residents wanted to emigrate due to the economic and social progression they desired, the debt they unexpectedly fell into and some simply wanted to go.

This may be the case for most people in Zunil, but not everyone. Others may have gone because of economic necessity, an emergency or a dream. As scholars Conway and Cohen state, "Mexican families and households appear to be increasing their dependence on international migration to the United States as a survival strategy." (Cohen, Conway, 1998, pg 26). This can also be the case for rural towns in Guatemala, making emigration a strategy to survive, because most of Guatemala lives in poverty. According to Guatemala's economy in 2004, more than 75% of the citizens live below the poverty line (CIA, 2005). Many rural towns may not have the fountain of work that Zunil provides, and therefore the people are starving and their only alternative for survival is emigrating from their land. Others may have to leave in an emergency, as in the film *El Norte*, where they left because otherwise they would have been killed by the army (*El Norte*, 1999).⁸ In some cases, some leave because it is a trip they always wanted to make; they feel that the United States will give them everything they have always wanted, although the reality is different many times.

The Fountain of Work in Zunil

Zunil residents before they emigrated were not starving because Zunil is a prosperous town with the rich cultivations of carrots, lettuce, cauliflower, broccoli, potatoes, cabbage, turnips and flowers, which is one of the main sources of income (Field Notes, Feb 8th 2006). Other sources of income come as a result of tourism: the mercado, the pick-up trucks and the women's cooperative (Santa Ana Cooperative) are also able to provide stable jobs. The mercado is open everyday for business and the tourists go daily to take pictures of the indigenous vendors or to purchase other Guatemalan souvenirs on Monday, Zunil's market day. There is also an established pick-up truck service. This service is also offered daily, and it takes many tourists to the *Fuentes*

⁷ *Quetzals*- Guatemalan currency. The exchange rate compared to the dollar is 7.5 Q for one dollar.

⁸ *El Norte*-The North, it is a movie.

Georgninas, residents to the city or the workers to their cultivations. There are also two prosperous cooperatives. While *El Bienestar* only provides services to the residents, on the other hand, the *Santa Ana Cooperativa* offers services from teaching to weave to selling phone cards. The cooperative is also where many of the tourists come to do the bulk of their souvenir shopping. As I was hanging out in the cooperative, one tourist was shopping there and was telling her husband that they needed to take several table runners for her mom and neighbors; among the several *tejidos*⁹ they were already taking (Jot notes, February 19 2006). This makes the cooperative a central location for income. Residents can become associates, sell in the store, handle the family remittance service, teach weaving on a *telar* or learn to weave in order to sell their own *tejidos*, *huipiles* or *cortes* in other *mercados*.¹⁰ The bulk of the income comes from the cultivation of vegetables. After harvesting, they take their vegetables and sell them on the coast, in the Zunil market or in other nearby markets. Zunil has several venues for income, so the question then becomes, why do residents decide to emigrate to the U.S.?

Zunil Immigrants in the U.S.

Not all Guatemalan immigrants travel to the U.S., approximately 3% live in Mexico or Canada, (IOM, 2004). Most of the Zunil immigrants do live in the U.S; some live in Oklahoma and Miami, while others live in California or North Carolina (IMO, 2004). For the purpose of this paper, I will be referring to immigrants in the U.S. who live in Oklahoma and Miami, but not for any specific reason, they were just whom I contacted first. After a long journey to cross two borders, the Mexican and then U.S. border, to get to their destination, immigrants follow those from their own town. They help them find work and they use each other for support. Other scholars also support this: "the job [immigrants] hold in the U.S. (typically a dishwasher in an Asian cuisine restaurant) often becomes the "property" of a family or network of cousins," (Cohen and Conway, 38: 1998). For instance, in Oklahoma eight Zunileros live in one house and all work in the restaurant industry. One in particular arrived after his brother. According to his father, Pedro, he was washing dishes when he arrived, and now Juan (his son) says he is a chef's assistant, but is still in the same industry. He says that he misses his

⁹ *Tejidos*- weavings

¹⁰ *Huipiles*- an indigenous blouse: *cortes*- an indigenous skirt: *mercados*- markets

parents and the freedom he had in Zunil, but now being in the U.S. he is able to send money home to help out his parents (Juan, Email Response Feb 22th 2006). Many immigrants who go to the U.S. have a responsibility to make the dollars and help improve the situations at home, which is also the case for Zunil immigrants.

Remittance Economy

Remittances make up a significant amount of the economy in many parts of the high lands in Guatemala. Remittance as defined earlier as the money that migrants send back home, which was estimated to be \$2.6 billion in 2004, (USSAID, 2005: 1). They directly impact many households, because "the average monthly amount sent, \$270, represents 1.23 times the country's per capita GDP. Families in Guatemala for example use 41% of the remittances for food and 59% for other things. Additionally the families in Guatemala who receive remittances also spend 70% more than those families who do not (IOM, 2004). Remittances are also a source of income that can compete with the 9.1% inflation rate in Guatemala (CIA, 2005). This is also supported by the United States Agency International Development (USSAID), who states "the statistical results show that migrant earnings respond positively and significantly to inflation above any other indicator," (USSAID, 2005). This demonstrates how vital remittances have become for many Guatemalans and for their survival or advancement as the case for Zunil.

In Zunil, I found that remittances are what families get monthly from their loved ones in the U.S. As Ventura said her husband sends her \$1000 a month, which is about 7,500 Q (Ventura, Interview Feb 15th 2006). In Zunil families do not solely rely on them on a daily basis, but for greater investments. As the case for the Quixtan family, the two sons send the family about \$300 a month, unless they ask for more but it is not for basic needs (Pedro, Interview Feb 23rd, 2006). The two cooperatives receive "*remesas familiares*" among the many others in Quetzaltenango, and last month for about 160 users, more than \$43,000 or 322, 500Q was sent to Zunil (Luis and Bernabe, Interviews Feb 16th and 20th 2006). Zunil residents have been counting on and continue to count on the remittance economy, in Zunil dollars, for the progression of their town.

The Necessity for Progression

In order for a rural town, such as Zunil to progress, the young men must take their destined journey to the north. Today, "almost every family has a son or husband working with out documents in the United States," (Montejo, 2000: 248). This was also the case for Zunil, there was not one person I encountered in Zunil the entire month that did not have a relative in the U.S., and one of the first immigrants says that emigration began the late 80's, (Eric, interview Feb 24th 2006). Although Zunil has a fountain of work, it does not match the dollars from the U.S. In Zunil one day of work in the fields cultivating makes 50Q a day, which is about \$6.67 a day. And an example of how much those who own the fields make is for cultivating carrots, about 1,500 Q are invested and 2,500 Q are made, this means the profit of three to five months is about \$133.33, which can be made in the U.S. in a couple of days.¹¹ Now let us say a family wants to build a house that lives in Zunil, and then it would take them about 35 years, with all their profit for one plot of land to build a house. This is because immigration has also inflated the prices of the land; *una cuerda de construcción* is about 1,500,000Q and in order to build a two story house it is about 500,000Q (Pedro, Interview Feb 23rd 2006).

The government is not doing much to improve the quality of life or the opportunities Guatemalans can take advantage of. Scholarship has concluded that "the continuing emigration of Latin America has historically been caused by ill-fated government policies addressing poverty in home countries, as well as by continued social inequality and repression in many Central American and Caribbean nations" (Orozco, 2002: 55). It is beginning to rely on remittances for families to improve their lives or survive instead of trying to solve the problem. The government needs to take action or towns such as Zunil will continue to feel that the only venue for progression is the trip to the north and the abandonment of their land.

In the case of Zunil; Positive personal, family and community contributions

Zunil has benefited from the remittances it receives from the north in several aspects. My field work in Zunil helped me conclude that the residents of the town in general do not have to leave because of economic

hardships, to the point that they do can not meet their basic needs. Although where it does happen and there is "social crisis and widespread deprivation, spending remittances on basic needs necessities like food, fuel, clothing and medicines cannot be easily dismissed as negative," (Conway and Cohen, 1998: 28). In Zunil this is no the case, but they do leave improve their quality.

The contributions as a result of emigration from Zunil to the U.S. have positively influenced the town. Scholars also acknowledge the positive impact migrant remittances have made in town of Mexico and Latin America. As Conway and Cohen state "spending remittances on children's health, education, and welfare is productive investment," (Conway and Cohen, 1998: 34). I also found the positive affects to be many, and in this section I will discuss as the personal/family and community contributions. After, demonstrating this I will also give the general view of emigration from the residents of Zunil.

Personal/Family Contributions

Immigrants from the U.S. are spending their money earned in various ways depending on if they are married or single. If they are single, they have more flexibility and less pressure to send home all their money. After paying the 40,000Q (after interests) for the *coyote*, they send money home to purchase land for their return or to build a house (Juan and Pedro, Interviews Feb 22nd and 23rd 2006). They also send things for there return, Juana's brother has sent over 200 CDs, Christmas toys and name brand jackets. They have been in the U.S. for about six years and have financially supported her studies to be a doctor for four years. Aside from sending her money for school, they have also sent her earrings, a watch, and jackets and helped her buy her *traje* and a computer (Juana, Interview Feb 23rd 2006). They also send remittances when there is a medical emergency and someone needs money for medicine. This is especially helpful when someone has a nervous breakdown, as in the case of one Juan's mother. She had to go to the doctor and did not have money at the time for medicine so she called on her sons to help her (Jot Notes, Feb 23rd). She could have waiting for harvesting to finish, but did not have the need.

On the other hand the immigrants who are married have a greater responsibility and usually send home as many dollars as possible. They have to look out for the future of their family; many Zunil residents leave when they are recently married or have just had a baby. While in the U.S. they send money home for basic necessities, but more for larger investments. The remittances are for purchasing land for the children, building a house, private education or education in general for the children, clothes and what the wife needs. For example although Ventura's husband sends remittances and a 27 inch TV, a stereo system, DVDs, and a microwave, he also bought her a *telar*¹², a weaving machine so she could also make a living back in Zunil. The machine was about \$200 and she was able to ask him for it after five years (Ventura, Interview Feb 15th 2006). This is one of many cases, where remittances help a family start a business.

For instance in Zunil migrant remittance also helped to start a long lasting business. Although it has only been in existence for two years in March, Domingo says they could not have opened the internet locale without the dollars his younger brother made in the U.S. He would also not be earning a degree in computer science at the University. He was able to open up the family business with 60,000 Q and then his brothers also financially helped him with 450Q a month for school, until the internet started making business (Domingo, Feb 15th 2006). This has helped the family rise above their previous economic situation and feels hopeful for the future.

Community Contributions

Although personal and family contributions also affect the town as a whole, there are more cases of economic leading to social improvement in Zunil. The first immigrants also started the first hardware shop and others who have returned have established bathroom and gas services, stores and become associates of the community cooperatives. For example Eric, who is now a citizen of the U.S., returned three years ago after ten years in California. He now provides a successful bathroom service and he also door delivers on his motorcycle the cheapest gas around. Eric also rents to two businesses and with all this he makes about 6,000Q a month, \$800 (Eric, Interview Feb 25th 2006). This is more than many make, and he was to accomplish this with dollars

¹² *Telar*- a weaving machine

from the U.S. In Guatemala there are at least 25,000 homes that started business with migrant remittances, (IOM, 2004). New businesses are not the only way remittances help the community.

Additionally to many new businesses, immigrants also send money for "charitable aid....infrastructural improvements to pave the home town streets, create parks, build sewage treatment and water filtration plants, buy or maintain cemetery plots, or build health care facilities," (Orozco, 2002: 48, 49). Father Mario mentioned in a sermon that many of the immigrants in the U.S., who are especially in Miami and Oklahoma, continue to support the portable water project (Jot Notes, Feb 8th 2006). This project is beneficial for the town of Zunil, because they are able to water their vegetables with cleaner water, as a result producing better vegetables and selling a better quality. Another way they support the community is by sending money to the seniors who have no one that supports them and they also send remittances for Zunil's yearly celebrations. Immigrants understand how important it is to celebrate, in Zunil it is, *Santa Catarina de Alejandria*¹³, so they unite in the cities where they live and send money for the music (Pedro, Interview Feb 23rd 2006). Even though this is an essential part of the celebrations, without the aid of the remittance then it would be difficult to have.

One last contribution that the immigrants provide is the money for more of Zunil's residents to have the opportunity and go to the U.S. They send remittances home and then their family members loan it out with an 8% interest. Because they want to go they borrow the money with the intention of helping their families and Zunil continue to progress. Also, scholars who have identified the negative affects of migrant remittances, also point out that " [remittances] improve income distribution and quality of life beyond what other development approaches can deliver, " (Keely and Tran, 1989, 500). This means that for development to be an option for their families and town, they would have to go to the U.S. for dollars. The contributions help the young ones get an education, the town become more modern and technology savvy and the residents have better services and opportunities, positively influencing Zunil.

Perspectives from Zunil residents

The residents of Zunil, although having some negative things to say, felt that in general emigration had been positive for their family and community. My first formal interview was with the judge, who was aware of the negative aspects of emigration, but he said that he saw a economic development, which helped families fix their houses, buy better clothes and the have more for their families (Felix, Interview Feb 15th 2006). Since the houses are better the residents paint them with bright colors for pride. The father also felt that now there were more opportunities for the children of the immigrants and they could buy land to cultivate after their return (Padre Mario, Feb 16th 2006). Others said that now more young *Zunileros* were deciding to pursue careers and almost all children attended school. Pedro said that he saw this happened maybe five years ago, there are from 15 to 20 graduates yearly (Pedro, Interview Feb 23rd 2006). Now the immigrants in the U.S. are advising their family in Zunil that they should get educated. This is one of the most significant encouragements.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a month of field work in a rural town of Guatemala has helped differentiate that a remittance economy is necessary for some towns as it helps others, such as for the progression of Zunil. The cost of emigration for Zunil is not higher than the benefits it provides. Zunil's residents leave for a different reason than many expect because of the high poverty rate in Guatemala. There are not many opportunities to progress and many dream of having a nice house and the things they want. Zunil residents realize that the U.S. has been there answer for the progress of their family and town. Although there are many negative affects, the economies of towns like Zunil are using the remittances to improve their town in several aspects, from educating the residents to modernizing the town. All the contributions immigrants have made are positively impacting their families and helping them dream of a better Zunil, tomorrow.

¹³ *Santa Catarina de Alejandria*- This is the Saint of Zunil.

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