

U.S. Trade Deals and Forced Migration

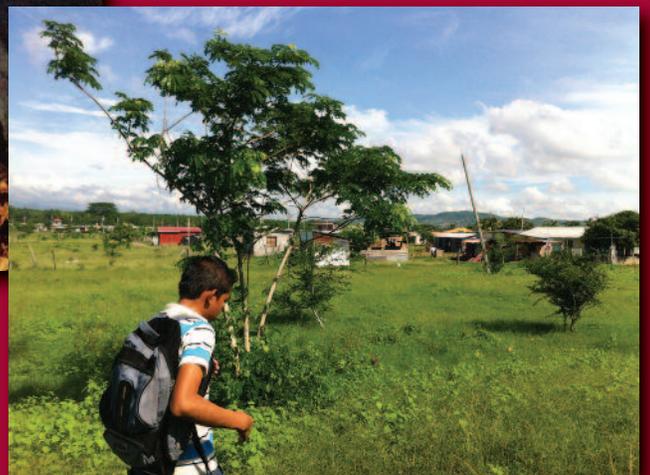
Trade and immigration are connected. One-sided trade deals like NAFTA and the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) are written to benefit multinational corporations while devastating families and local communities. It's clear that Mexican and Central American families will continue to flee their homes until they can live their lives without constant fear of violence, have access to decent work, and exercise their rights without retaliation.

After NAFTA came into force in 1994, nearly 2 million Mexican farmers were driven from their farms and out of business. US agribusiness, subsidized by U.S. taxpayers, sold corn in Mexico at extremely low prices, making it impossible for farmers in Mexico to compete.

Unable to survive, many crossed the border into the U.S. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, the annual number of immigrants from Mexico more than doubled from 370,000 in 1993 to 770,000 in 2000 — a 108% increase.

While half a million manufacturing jobs were created in Mexico from 1994 to 2002, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in 2008 said nearly three times as many farm jobs were destroyed. And those manufacturing jobs disappeared a few years later too, as corporations sought even cheaper operating costs in China.

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The same bad deal for small farmers played out under CAFTA and the Peru Free Trade Agreement. Under CAFTA, family farmers in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala have been overrun with subsidized agricultural imports from U.S. agribusinesses. The Pew Hispanic Center reports that the Central American share of undocumented immigration to the U.S. jumped from 12.1% in 2005 to 15.2% in 2012, an increase of 26% in seven years.

TPP Would Displace Even More Workers

By removing tariffs on textile imports from Vietnam, the TPP would displace an estimated 1.2 million workers in the CAFTA countries and Mexico along with approximately 170,000 in the U.S., said industry analyst Mary O'Rourke.

At a time when we are finally making progress on immigration issues, we don't need to provide Fast Track authority for a trade bill that threatens to accelerate mass-migration to the U.S. TPP would be bad for American workers AND for our neighbors to the south.

Maria Duque, Austin, Texas

Maria grew up in San Luis Potosi, Mexico. She came to the U.S. fifteen years ago.

"I came to the United States because my father supported our family by farming.... but after the free



trade agreement, my father couldn't sell his corn, or if he did, the price was very low. The price of corn had dropped....because after they signed the free trade agreement, Mexico began to import cheaper products from other countries. Nobody wanted to buy our products anymore. It became more expensive to plant and harvest the corn than sell it... so people no longer wanted to work the land. And this is how our community began to fall apart. There wasn't work; there wasn't a way to survive. From then on, many of our neighbors, the young people, they left our town.

We're only making them poorer, taking away any motivation to farm. This is what happened to my father. The reality is with free trade between the United States and Mexico; my homeland...what Mexico has exported was immigrants, workers, cheap labor."

Sister Simone Campbell, leader of Nuns on the Bus

"[NAFTA] was sold as the thing that was going to rejuvenate the economy and bring us all kinds of opportunities... the truth is that in Mexico many had to end up sending family members to the United States to try to make enough money to live. It created great instability and disequilibrium in rural areas. ... Every one of our sisters in Mexico knows someone who had to come to the U.S. to try to survive because NAFTA totally undermined the Mexican economy in rural areas." —Sister Simone Campbell, Leader of Nuns on the Bus.

