

Learners Without Borders

**El Salvador Chess Education Service Trip with Voices on the Border
July 21st - August 1st, 2016**

Mission Overview

Need to be Addressed

Parents and youth in the Bajo Lempa region of El Salvador report that local youth lack adequate opportunities to develop the skills necessary to become strong leaders. They seek to engage youth in positive activities so they will be less likely to consider migration or get caught up in El Salvador's violence. Teachers have identified the need to organize chess clubs that will allow youth to develop leadership skills and give them another reason not to migrate. They believe that chess will help their students think logically, learn to concentrate, and develop problem-solving skills. Unfortunately, teachers lack the training and resources to start chess clubs.

Plan and Goals

A delegation of Learners Chess coaches and high school aged Learners Chess leaders from Albuquerque will travel to the Bajo Lempa Region of El Salvador to host a 10-day chess education program to engage in the following activities:

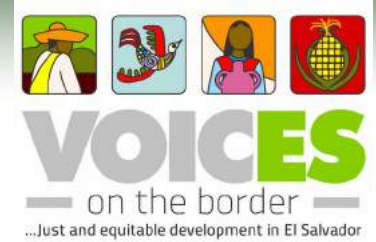
1. Hold a weekend long intensive chess camp Saturday/Sunday to teach youth and teachers the basics of chess.
2. Hold a daily after-school chess program during the week for youth and teachers.
3. On the following Saturday, host a day-long chess event and celebration that includes a mini chess tournament.

Help us get to El Salvador! Donate online at: learnerschess.org/learners-is-going-to-el-salvador/

Or send a check to:

Learners Chess
532 Adams NE
Albuquerque, NM 87108

(see reverse side for information about Bajo Lempa and Voices on the Border)



About Bajo Lempa of Jiquilisco, Usulután

The Bajo Lempa region of Usulután is a group of 40 or more rural communities located just north of where the Lempa River empties into the Pacific Ocean. In addition to having some of El Salvador's most fertile farmland, the Bajo Lempa is home to one of Central America's most pristine mangrove forests and most important wetlands.

Most communities settled in the region after El Salvador's civil war ended in 1992 and subsist by farming. Residents of the Bajo Lempa have a long reputation as being the most organized and progressive communities in country, even if they are amongst the poorest and most marginalized.

In 2014-2015, El Salvador's notorious street gangs waged a battle for control over the Bajo Lempa: one gang taking over one set of communities and the other gang taking over another. At the end of last year, the police and military moved into the region arresting many gang members and droving the rest back to urban areas such as San Salvador. **Fortunately, peace has once again returned to the region and life is back to normal.**

Voices on the Border, www.votb.org

Voices on the Border is a U.S.-based 501(c)3 organization that has worked in El Salvador since 1987. At the beginning of the war, which began in 1980, more than 10,000 Salvadorans fled their communities and established a refugee camp just across the border in Colomoncagua, Honduras. In 1987, the Salvadoran, Honduran, and U.S. governments pressured the refugees to relocate to a remote jungle in Panama, but the refugees instead wanted to repatriate. A group of concerned U.S. citizens organized Voices on the Border to provide them with much needed material and political support. The governments continued to pressure the refugees, but finally in 1989-1990 they returned to EL Salvador and established Ciudad Segundo Montes in the mountains of Northern Morazán.

When the war finally came to an end in January 1992, more refugees returned from Nicaragua, Panama, and elsewhere in Honduras, while former combatants put down their guns in hope of building a new life. Many of these refugees and former combatants settled in the Bajo Lempa, and asked that Voices on the Border accompany them in the process, and of course we said yes

Voices on the Border continues to support and accompany these same communities in Northern Morazán, and the Bajo Lempa of Usulután. It is a small organization with a very experienced staff, close ties to the communities, and unique methodology that allows them to be quite effective. Since 2013 Voices on the Border has operated a Grassroots Resource Center, which has two main programs. One is a Civil Society Training Center that focuses on building the local capacity of community leaders in the communities we serve. The second is a Research Institute that provides these community leaders with the information and analysis they need to make good decisions about the issues that affect them.

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(see reverse side for an overview of our mission)