

Antipode Scholar Activist Report

Re-membering rebellion in the forgotten East? Knowledge coproduction as a necessary link in the De/fence of Ch'orti' territory

Funds dispersed July 2015, Report turned in October 2017

[1] Title of Project: Re-membering Rebellion in the Forgotten East: Knowledge Coproduction as a Necessary Link in the De/fence of Ch'orti' Territory.

Changes between original approved project and present moment in italics

	Organiser 1	Organiser 2	Organiser 3	Organiser 4
Name	Jennifer J. Casolo	Lesly Ramírez	Jacobo Omar Jerónimo	Peter Marchetti Raph
Position	Associate Researcher, Geographer (unpaid) and <i>Advisor-(paid)</i>	Masters Student (unpaid) <i>Project Coordinator-(paid)</i>	General Coordinator	Director, System of Financial Development
Department	<i>Institute of Research and Social Outreach about Sociocultural Diversity and Interculturality</i> <i>Vice Presidency of Research and Social Outreach</i>	Health and Nutrition <i>The Alliance for Access to Universal Public Health-ACCESA</i>		Vice Presidency of Research and Social Outreach
Institution / Organisation	Universidad Rafael Landívar <i>(did consultancy on Ch'orti' traditional ecological knowledge with the Inter - American Development Bank at the request of Nuevo Día (April-July 2017)</i> Volunteer Asociación Indígena Campesina Nuevo Día	Universidad Autónoma Nacional San Carlos ** past Programme Coordinator Asociación Indígena Campesina Nuevo Día	Central de Organizaciones Indígenas Campesina Ch'orti', Nuevo Día	Universidad Rafael Landívar <i>(will do consultancy with the Inter - American Development Bank at the request of Nuevo Día (Fall 2017-Spring 2018).</i>
City	Guatemala City and Camotán Chiquimula	Camotán, Chiquimula	Camotán, Chiquimula	Guatemala City
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[ii] A succinct summary of the major achievements of the project—its participants, activities supported, its contribution to radical geographic scholarship and practice, its outcomes and legacies

Introduction

Most succinctly, the Antipode Scholar Activist Grant contributed directly to the largest restitution of communal indigenous lands in the history of Guatemala, a restitution that effectively stopped/stops any and all megaprojects/extractive industries (present and future) from gaining a foothold in the Jocotán municipality (county) and sets a precedent for future restitution of indigenous communal lands. On July 12, 2017, the Third Chamber of the Civil and Mercantile Court of Appeals in the Appellate Tribunal of the Guatemala Court of Appeals, ordered that the Registry of Property nullified all inscriptions of land registered that impede the recovery of lands, effectively instituting the restitution of 286 square kilometres of land, as Ch'orti' communal land and establishing that no land in the entire municipality of Jocotán (and slightly beyond) can be sold, exchanged or developed without the approval of the Ch'orti' community. See www.fger.org/2017/07/17/pueblo-chorti-recupera-territorio/

The grant helped make possible the crafting of the litigation strategy, negotiation and socialization meetings (in conjunction with the broader political strategy of resistance and protest), and the creation of expert historical geographical testimony in support of the case and the support of a legal archive for six Ch'orti' communities. More importantly, perhaps, the process of community re-membling, education and organizing around the litigation and in articulation with ongoing threats/opportunities set out ripples that are changing the region and even the country.

1. That process led **first to a temporary staying order/protection (April 2016) that stopped all building or fundraising related to the El Oregano 120 megawatt hydroelectric dam project**, lessening the threat. and created the conditions
2. The re-membling, education, and socialization process around the litigation **has strengthened immeasurably the interest and commitment of men, women, and youth to re-member the past and defend the present**, not only in the six communities named in the case, but in multiple communities in neighbouring Olopa and Camotán municipalities. In Olopa, nine communities have now declared themselves indigenous communities (Step 2 in the process).

In the process, four Ch'orti' youth from the lead community **were trained in computer software use** as a precursor for carrying out the originally proposed project as part of the curricula of the soon to be founded Ch'orti' university.

Further the process of organizing and collective strategizing for successful litigation, created the conditions for the following outcomes:

1. Capacity on the part of Guatemalan Ch'orti' leaders under the umbrella of Nuevo Días, NGO- the Indigenous Campesino Association Nuevo Día and the later formed bi-national Consultative Council **to negotiate with Honduran Ch'orti' leaders, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Tropical Centre for Agronomical Research and Study** so that a project for the protection of traditional ecological

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knowledge originally approved without consultation **be restructured**, resulting in multiple decolonizing practices and outcomes that reverberate with the original goals of the project.

- a. The coproduction among the Ch'orti' on both sides of the border of a **“Protocol for the systematization of Traditional Ecological Knowledge”** as part of the IADB Project entitled “Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples in the border region of Honduras and Guatemala”. The protocol effectively begins the process of gatekeeping by establishing the acceptable methodology, parameters and intellectual property rights surrounding the 2015-2017 (now extended to 2018) Project (Protocol developed in Fall 2016 and final draft approved January 2017).
 - b. Nuevo Día spearheaded the negotiation with the IADB and CATIE so that the budget of the project above be restructured, guaranteeing the bank **maximum of 30% of the total project grant being dispersed directly to the Ch'orti' organizations and communities.**
 - c. The Honduran organizations are using their funds for a community radio station and educational materials on Ch'orti' ecological knowledge for the schools.
 - d. Nuevo Día is using the money for a **Ch'orti' research and research production centre** that i). Trains youth with cameras, video, tape recorders and computer software so that they can continue researching and or making understandable to the majority, Ch'orti' ecological knowledge (spiritual and material) and the historical process of dispossession and defence around it, and ii). Is a place where community members and/or scholars can come to learn about the Ch'orti'.
 - e. Nuevo Día worked with the other two Ch'orti' organizations to negotiate that part of the funding be used to send Ch'orti' leaders from the three **groups to UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at UN Headquarters in New York (April-May 2017)** where they made alliances with indigenous organizations across continents
 - f. Nuevo Día negotiated that **Jennifer Casolo be the “research consultant” for the phase of systematization of ecological knowledge** on the Guatemalan side of the border (April –July 2017), named *Kamorjse xe najpik kamener*, “we gather what we have already forgotten, what is ours”; and that **Peter Marchetti be the outreach consultant for the Knowledge Platform phase of the project** which establishes alliances with Universities and think tanks to collectively propose and negotiate policies and projects related to Ch'orti' territory (next phase).
 - g. Nuevo Día led the critique of the draft systematization, **eliminating language that portrayed the Ch'orti' as vulnerable victims of inexorable** processes.
 - h. With Nuevo Día, the systematization done by Jennifer Casolo reached a conclusion that will help to reshape/reconceive how proposals are made and/or received— a shift from negotiating efforts to alleviate poverty or the effects of climate change on “subsistence producers”, to strengthening the **“unity in difference” of cosmovision and practice of rural ch'orti'**: gathering forest products, replanting/transplanting and diversified farming at the heart of Ch'orti' cosmovision and practice”.
2. Groundwork laid for Nuevo Día to **begin the Ch'orti' University**, in coordination with the already existing Maya Kaqchikel University, Ixil University and the Intercultural University of Guatemala. Nuevo Día has asked the organizers: Lesly Ramirez, Jennifer Casolo and Peter Marchetti to participate in this endeavour and seek to restructure the original Antipode Scholar Activist proposal as part of the curricula. Latest date for launching, February 2018.

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3. A path and participants for **further litigation to reclaim communal Ch'orti' lands**.
4. A **non-profit litigation consortium** that uses the collective organizing, multi – directional, multi-participant strategy that was successful in the first case to address indigenous and community based claims at multiple scales drawing on creative deployment of civil and human rights discourses and accords (in process).

What the above outcomes mean is that the decolonizing option and the commitment to start from *senso comune* that motivated the original Antipode proposal allowed it to morph in relation to shifting threats, demands and opportunities. While, the funds themselves formed part of a more general “pot” and truthfully responded to the direst moments, when other funds were not available, the spirit of the proposal, the priorities that it captured: youth, de/fence of territory, a NO to extractive knowledge, neither victims nor criminals was and is present the entire journey.

In terms of *geographic praxis and scholar activism* the litigation process and the expert testimony were developed in direct conversation with the dissertation, non-published dissertation research and ongoing research of Organiser 1, Jennifer J. Casolo. First, the process brought together geographic research (documentation of historical processes of dispossession and defence of Ch'orti' lands and forests through a lens of racialized dispossession, colonial and liberal capitalist processes of accumulation and histories of resistance), with legal testimony and political action (road blocks, assemblies, community gatherings, marches to demand an end to extractive policies). Second, the grant helped lay the social consensus, intellectual and political alliances, and basic groundwork for the future establishment of a Ch'orti' University that will have as its essence what in the North we define as scholar activism, basically because it is conceptually unacceptable for Nuevo Día and the Maya-Ch'orti' communities it walks with to separate them.

Neither the broader litigation team, nor the organisers of this project have yet been able to analyse fully what it means that the courts of the nation-state upheld a colonial land title, especially since the strategy to get to that decision meant legalizing indigenous governance structures under the nation state. Moreover, Nuevo Día is part of a national coalition that spent 2016 trying to negotiate a law for legal pluralism and more broadly the construction of a plurinational state. How these efforts might relate to the historic land victory and future litigation is unclear. What is clear is that the process both re-membered and co-produced knowledge on “Ch'orti' territory”.

Photos: The Communications person at Nuevo Día is presently accompanying Organiser 3 in presentations in Spain and Geneva. As soon as she returns, we will send the photos mentioned above on the timeline. I am including the link to Nuevo Día's Facebook Page which shows the Public Hearing (July 7), the final ruling July 12, and the subsequent Press Conference July 17 . As well as the initial Assembly (March 8, 2016) when the six communities signed the legal demand.

https://www.facebook.com/pg/nuevo.dia.org/posts/?ref=page_internal

Below we explain in more detail:

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a. Participants

Planned	Actual Participants
8 young researchers, ideally 4 women and 4 men, from 8 communities in three Ch'orti' municipalities	Four youth from Las Flores, Jocotán, computer training for 3 months.
Leaders from CCCH Governing Board, Intercommunity Indigenous Council, Women's Network and Village Leaders	Leaders from CCCH Governing Board, Intercommunity Indigenous Council, Women's Network and Village Leaders. Five to six key Ch'orti' leaders who participated in the litigation meetings in the capital city: Luis Ramírez Ramos, Damaso Aldana Garcia, Juana Maria Ramos, Faustino Amador Raymundo, Eulogio Ramírez Garcia and, Fermin Garcia Ramírez
Scholar Activist PhD (Organiser 1)	Scholar Activist PhD- research and write historical geographical expert testimony (Organiser 1). Responsible for coordinating the production of written academic and popular materials in relation to both the struggle for the restitution of colonial lands and the process of coproduction in the systematization of Ch'orti' ecological knowledge. Has been asked to do two other expert testimonies: one for the Q'eqchi' in Izabal and one for the Bajo Aguán in Honduras. Has not been able to respond to the demand.
Scholar Activist Masters Student (past Programme coordinator for New Day) Organiser 2	Scholar Activist Masters Student (past programme coordinator for New Day) Organiser 2 (first six months of project). Will be part of Ch'orti' University
Political Coordinator Nuevo Día CCC (Organiser 3)	Political Coordinator Nuevo Día CCC (Organiser 3) Key participant in achieving the ripple effects, turning the temporary protection order into a platform for building a clear vision of reclaiming knowledge, knowledge production, territory, and transborder alliances. Nuevo Dia's success in staving off extractive industries through the combination of organized resistance and litigation has given it a leverage to defend other positions.
University Outreach Liaison (Organiser 4)	Editor of expert testimonies and participant in litigation strategy. (Organiser 4). His major outreach role will begin in the next months both with support for the Ch'orti' University and with helping to develop the knowledge platform
Representatives Guatemala Honduran Universities and Research Institutes	Association of Maya Lawyers and Notaries NIM AJPU - -crucial for developing the legal brief part of the litigation strategy and representing the Ch'orti' claim in court. At this point, few other representatives of

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	research institutes or universities have been brought in, but that is exactly the next step with the Knowledge Platform related to the Systematization of Ch'orti' Ecological Knowledge, and in that sense –a secondary outcome.
Representatives of Honduran Ch'orti'	As part of i) the process of negotiating changes in the Project Protection of Ch'orti' Ecological Knowledge, Nuevo Día deepened its relationship with two Honduran Ch'orti' organizations: CONIMCHH and CONADIMCHH. In addition to continuing to work together on the Knowledge Platform, this alliance has deepened Honduran interest in examining the colonial land titles on their side of the border. Further Nuevo Día has offered that their youth may attend the Ch'orti' University
Visiting Scholars from the Global North	In relation to the restitution process in general Nuevo Día has a relationship with scholars from the UK. At this point, they participated in the production of an expert report funded by the Open Society Foundation before the Antipode funds were dispersed.

b. Activities supported:

The threat that changed the project

The Hydroelectric Project el Oregano was authorized by the Ministry of Energy and Mining (MEM) of Guatemala in April of 2011. It is a megaproject of the enterprise “Las Tres Niñas”, created in 2007 for a 120 MW hydroelectric dam that would use the water flow of the Rio Grande between the counties (municipios) Zacapa (Zacapa) and Jocotán (Chiquimula). The continued and intensifying efforts to disposses Ch'orti' of communal lands (water, forest, productive and residential land) by the Tres Niñas S.A. hydroelectric project, the arrest of Ch'orti' leaders and the intensifying death threats against leaders including Organiser three, Omar Jerónimo shifted the activities of the project after four months from training youth researchers to supporting the political and legal actions necessary for the restitution of Ch'orti' communal lands and thus the nullification of any rights to the megaproject.

Direct use of Antipode funds

--General strategy that guaranteed the broader outcomes and possible legacies

- i. Support (stipend) for labour of Omar Jerónimo and to a lesser extent, Lesly Ramirez, as community liaisons, activist researchers and in the case of Omar, ultimately negotiator and strategist. Omar Jerónimo received the greater amount of money because of the shift in the immediate direction of the project of Knowledge Coproduction as a Necessary Link in the De/fence of Ch'orti' Territory and because Nuevo Día asked Lesly Ramírez to take over other tasks in the organization given her speciality in health and nutrition (see part 3)

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- Lesly Ramírez: August – November 2015
- Omar Jerónimo: August 2015–August 2016

Note: the work of Omar Jerónimo included meetings with lawyers and advocates in relation to: a. the litigation strategy for the restitution of land; b. the defence and appeal of Ch'orti' leaders from Olopa (22 people) criminalized and Jocotán (2 people criminalized and imprisoned as political prisoners) for opposing extractive industries in their counties; as well as meetings with community leaders, the Intercommunal Council, possible funding sources for legal fees, as well as socialization work with all six Ch'orti' communities filing the case: Las Flores, Matazano, Guareruche, Suchiquer, Pelillo Negro, and Ingenio Guarequiche.

--Training Ch'orti' youth

- i.* Twelve full days of classes for three months in Word, Excel, PowerPoint for 4 Ch'orti' youth (three young women and one boy) as a precondition set by the lead community for training youth as researchers. Augusto to October 2015. What is important about this shift is that the youth themselves demanded “technical” knowledge before learning qualitative research. Food, lodging, transportation for youth and stipend for teacher, Norma Sancir.
- ii.* Preparation of pedagogical route, strategy and materials for training of eight youth. Travel, food and lodging for Lesly Ramírez (four meetings).
- iii.* Travel, food and lodging for 5 – 6 Ch'orti' traditional leaders to meetings of litigation strategy and legal case development:
 - to Jocotán Chiquimula: 4 trips 2015-2016,
 - to Guatemala City: 3 trips 2015 – 2016

--Litigation strategy for restitution of Colonial claim to Ch'orti' land through appeal for legal protection.

- i.* Meeting of Intercommunal Indigenous Council to ratify litigation strategy as a priority.
- ii.* Support for “Great Assembly of the Intercommunal Indigenous Council, plus national and international guests (over 1000 people) in Las Flores, Jocotán for the signing of the legal brief/appeal for legal protection of Ch'orti' lands
- iii.* Photocopies of legal brief (3 expert testimonies, photographic copies of historical archive and legal presentation) to present case.
- iv.* Transportation support for Ch'orti' leaders to present case and ask for a temporary staying order on activities pertaining to as part of March for Water, Mother Earth, Territory and Life (a national protest uniting rural and urban, feminist, campesino, student indigenous and autonomous collective forces). Indigenous peoples and campesinos walked to the capital from April 11 to April 22, 2016.

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On April 22, 2016, Thousands marched and gathered in the capital city, Guatemala City. That same day the Ch’orti’ leaders from the Intercommunal Indigenous Council of Jocotán (who had walked for a week) presented the writ of amparo (the appeal for legal protection) to the Third Chamber of the Civil and Mercantile Court of Appeals in the Appellate Tribunal of Guatemala Court of Appeals.

Direct use of donated funds/labor mentioned in Antipode Scholar Activist Project

--Litigation Strategy: December 2015 to April 2016)

- i. Participation in litigation strategy development (Peter Marchetti and Jennifer Casolo)
- ii. Expert historical geographical testimony: Dispossession and Defence of Ch’orti’ Territory by Jennifer J. Casolo April 2016 (based on her PhD dissertation, but with additional archival research) –approx. 200 hours of new work.
- iii. Editorial support on expert testimony of Jennifer Casolo (geographical) (Peter Marchetti) (approximately 25 hours of work)
- iv. Summary of expert testimony for Public Hearing July 2017 (Jennifer Casolo) (approximately 15 hours of work)

A succinct comparison of activities programmed and related activities carried out:

Activity Programmed	Activity Carried Out
New Day Board of Directors, Intercommunity Indigenous Council, New Day’s Women Network: Collectively establishing the research questions of most interest in the defence of territory, in relation to the histories of dispossession and repression as well as histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2016--New Day Board of Directors, Intercommunity Indigenous Council, New Day’s Women Network: Ask that Jennifer Casolo and Peter Marchetti prioritize supporting the litigation strategy to reclaim 286 square kilometers of communal land, making void the sale of land and the granting of concession to the JONBO Tres Niñas hydro-electric Company.
Preparation of Pedagogical of Materials for Young Researchers (basics skills, theory-method, Historical Memory Modules drawn from Casolo’s dissertations and early anthropological studies (Girard and Wisdom)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesly Ramirez and Jennifer Casolo study the materials of from other experiences and begin to map out the route and methodology for the trainings as well as the possibilities to consult for each module. • The early work of Ramírez and Casolo will feed into the pedagogical strategy for the soon to be established Ch’orti’ University. • At the request of the Intercommunal Indigenous Council, Jennifer Casolo changes her focus, uses her dissertation as the base material and does additional archival and secondary source research to produce a Geographical Expert testimony (attached) in support of the full litigation strategy which includes an

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	Anthropological Expert Testimony, and a Documental Archive Expert Testimony.
Receipt of proposals, evaluation and final selection of 8 young research candidates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four young research candidates are selected from the community of Las Flores, which is the community that spearheaded the litigation strategy to train first in basic computer use.
Creating geographies of commitment. The young researchers will act within the framework of a social contract among themselves, their families, their village and the CCC with four-party signed commitments for engaged research: young researchers, their families, local community leadership, CCCH Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This method will be revisited for the inscription of students in the Ch'orti' University.
Execution of Classroom/field work modules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This method will be revisited for the inscription of students in the Ch'orti' University.
Field Visits to other sites of community based research and/or research action on historical memory	Ch'orti' leaders have visited the Ixil University, the Maya Kaqchikel University and the Intercultural University, as well as anti-extractive struggles in Cahabon, Huehuetenango, San Miguel Ixtahuapan, and Xalapa (Xinka). Other funds were used for these trips, but the Antipode \$ supported Omar Jerónimo's participation...in relation to both defence and thriving of territory and establishing the Ch'orti' University as a support for that process.
Preparation and broadcasting of radio Programmes of Ch'orti' historical geographies	None, planned for coproduction with youth using IADB project
Final Dossier (Evaluation of training Programme, final thesis, mediated version as pamphlets)	Next step: mediated handbook and or video of reclaiming Ch'orti' territory and one of Ch'orti' ecological knowledge.
Final Alliance Building conference to construct the contours of a proposal for a transborder research-activist centre.	The Ch'orti' established the Consultative Council with members of the three Ch'orti' organizations (Nuevo Día and two in Honduras) to oversee the Systematization of Ch'orti' Ecological Knowledge, this Council, with five members, youth and adults, men and women, almost all Ch'orti' from the three organizations are the seed of further structuring of crossborder alliances.

[iii] A candid consideration of the major problems/difficulties encountered

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It has been a tumultuous two years. From June to August of 2015, Guatemalans spent their Saturdays protesting the corrupt government of ex. Army Colonel, President Otto Pérez Molina. He and most of his cabinet stepped down at the end of August, and despite pressure from the Left to postpone elections, a questionable candidate running on the slogan “Neither corrupt nor thief was elected”. Now the Plaza is full again, this time demanding the new president’s resignation (for corruption). The four organisers tried to carry out the project amidst local threats, national turmoil, and the hardship of the everyday. By November of 2015, it was clear that we had three immediate obstacles to carrying out the proposal as written:

- 1) Process and priorities:** The historical process of development style interventions in the region where promised are repeatedly made and rarely fulfilled has created a “take what you can, when you can” common sense that has proven to be a constant barrier to alternative strategies and processes.

One of the ways that Nuevo Día has learned to navigate this situation is to create a back and forth in the proposal creation process, where in the first phase, they do not let the communities (and even sometimes mid-level leaders) know that the possibility exists, so that if there is no funding, no one feels betrayed.

In that sense, the organisers needed to go to the Intercommunal Council with the proposal and have them approve and or make changes to it before any of the other steps take place. Lesly Ramírez and Jennifer Casolo worked for two months discussing possible routes and methodologies to propose to the Council and asked for a meeting in September or October 2017 (they only meet once a month)

By that time, however, the threat of the hydroelectric company, trying to buy off community leaders was growing and Nuevo Día had just gained legal recognition of the Ch'orti' communities and their Ancestral councils –***their priority was moving forward on the litigation strategy and on the legal cases of the Ch'orti' political prisoners and despite a commitment to the Antipode project, they had to dedicate their time to the case.***

- 2) Employment conflicts:** Two of the four organiser’s had job changes that affected their ability to move forward with the project. Because of a lack of qualified people willing to work under the harsh and threatening conditions in the Ch'orti' East, Nuevo Día asked Lesly Ramírez (also life partner of Omar Jerónimo) to assume two unplanned tasks: the gender coordination of a newly approved project of around the Central American Strategy for Rural Territorial Development and for follow up with the legal victory that Nuevo Día and the coalition of Guatemala without Hunger had achieved in 2014 suing the Guatemalan state for violation of the Human Right to Food. And the University Rafael Landívar hired Jennifer Casolo in September 2015 as Advisor to the Vice President of Research and Social Outreach. While Jennifer Casolo’s job was part time, it was difficult to coordinate her schedule with Lesly Ramirez’s and with the Ch'orti' leaders.

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3) Economic and political crises: Despite having some funding to move forward on the litigation, the money raised for the litigation strategy did not stretch. In this sense, the ability of success in the litigation strategy to help set in motion the other goals and objectives laid out by the Antipode Proposal seemed ample justification for shifting the use of some of the funds (See below), especially when it was absolutely necessary to cover the costs of Omar Jerónimo and the Ch'orti' leaders and it was clear that we would have to delay starting the project. Moreover, the number of political agenda items at multiple scales that Nuevo Día in general and the Intercommunal Indigenous Council were juggling was getting difficult to handle, and death threats to leaders (including Omar Jerónimo were intensifying).

Thus, given that Jennifer Casolo (with her new position) could not participate as needed in both the litigation strategy and the training of Ch'orti' youth, in December 2015, the organisers agreed that the priority for the scholar activism of Jennifer Casolo, the coordination of Omar Jerónimo, and added support of Peter Marchetti needed to go for the litigation strategy (both education and organizing in the communities as well as gathering the evidence needed for the case). It is the litigation strategy and how it fed into the Protection of Ch'orti' ecological knowledge, as well as the findings, organization and unexpected outcomes that the two entail which is the heart of the report above.

In August 2016, a year and a month after the funds were dispersed, Jennifer Casolo wrote Antipode about a delay in reporting. At that time, her hope and plan was to a. begin the project slowly---putting aside part of her own salary to carry it out and co-writing an article for Antipode that reflected on “flexible support” and the gains that had been made in a year. That plan, however, was shifted.

Shortly after that correspondence, Nuevo Día decided to negotiate and try to rework what they saw as an extractive knowledge project being promoted by the InterAmerican Development Bank “Protection of Traditional Ecological Knowledge on the Guatemalan-Honduran Border”. The Organisers' decided that it was necessary to follow that project through and use it for both educational material and economic resources to move forward with the training of Ch'orti' youth and the establishment of any kind of transborder alliance.

In the period from August to December 2016, Nuevo Día coordinated with the Honduran Ch'orti' organizations to achieve the changes in the project that were mentioned in the last section of this report: protocol and direct support for organizations.

In February of 2017, Nuevo Día asked Jennifer Casolo to assume responsibility for the systematization of Ch'orti' knowledge on the Guatemalan side of the border, carrying it out in a way that trained the local staff as well. Problems created multiple delays and led to administrative changes in the project (Another article to write!), but ultimately the crunched timeline (1 month between May and June 2016) prevented Jennifer Casolo from doing the collective methodology that she and Nuevo Día had talked about. The four Organizers again agreed that the most important element was to get the ecological knowledge documented and analysed as a future negotiation and educational tool. Casolo co-wrote the official report, and then shared with the Ch'orti' on both sides of the border, other findings that were more philosophical and did not make it into the official report that focused on “Ch'orti' food systems”.

As the report was being drafted, the six Ch'orti' communities of Jocotán were called for the Public Hearing and five days later (July 12) the historic verdict was announced.

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We tell this interconnected story of organizing, research, negotiation and litigation to make the point that **only now: two years after the grant was received are its ripples really visible**. We kept delaying turning in a final report, because the strategic litigation case, the protocol and the systematization of Ch'orti' "traditional" ecological knowledge had all prepared the ground for either carrying out the original proposal or launching the Ch'orti' University which would be an expanded version. Still we wanted to have either an article or a mediated handbook to turn in. Unfortunately, despite our collective intellectual and political resources, we have been a team where economic precarity has weighed in, both on the use of Antipode funds and on human time. Perhaps we should have known this, but as four people who continually believe that scholar activism is not only possible, but absolutely necessary for social change, we took the risk from the Global South.

Risks that don't always play out: None of us have been able to prioritize writing (other than the expert testimony), no popular writing or analysis has been produced at this point. Neither PhD, Jennifer Casolo or Peter Marchetti, have employment that at present recognizes their own research and writing as part of their required labor production. Further, while there is a desire to prioritize Antipode because of the grant, immediate political and academic debates in Guatemala and Honduras could benefit from writing in Spanish. Lesly Ramírez needed to take full time employment outside of Nuevo Día in August of 2016, and is still struggling to finish her Masters. And Omar Jerónimo continues to not have a formal salary while being a key indigenous leader in the country and beyond.

We feel confident that during the next six to nine months will include the creation of mediated and academic work, and within a year we will be seeing the production of the Ch'orti' youth.

*Effectively, **the immediate project we carried out was not the project that was funded**, yet it opened the pathway to be able to work in the future with many more Ch'orti' youth on the recovery and re-membling of histories and practices in a far more systematic and long-term way. More importantly, it guaranteed that the Ch'orti' communities of Jocotán would not face ongoing dispossession –material or cultural and it helped prepare Nuevo Día to establish cross border alliances that may have a long future in terms of working for climate justice and ongoing defence of territory.*

[iv] Plans for the future (1-3 years)

Scholar Activism:

1. Establish the University Ch'orti' as a national entity with binational reach, incorporating students from both sides of the border and building on some of the ideas laid out in the Antipode Proposal. Nuevo Día will establish and organisers will collaborate.
2. Develop a litigation strategy for other Ch'orti' communal lands (most likely Olopa), Jennifer Casolo will do another expert testimony.
3. Prepare for appeals to court ruling by business invested in the hydroelectric process.
4. Continue in November the cross-border IADB funded project of Protecting Ch'orti' Traditional Ecological Knowledge, developing:
 - a. Popular materials of the systematization process

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- b. Training youth in video, design, radio so that they coproduce the visual and audio materials for transmitting and building on the ecological knowledge
 - c. Work cross border to establish the Knowledge Platform and associated alliances as next formal phase in the process
 - d. Establish the Ch'orti' research training and documentation centre.
5. Develop a litigation and rights consortium of lawyers, scholars and activists to address key paradigmatic issues in Guatemala.

Academic writing (that all articles be co-produced)

1. In Spanish

- a) An article for the yearly journal XII edition of the *Revista Territorios*, published by the Instituto de Estudios Agrarios y Rurales [Institute of Agrarian and Rural Studies] –IDEAR-, de la Coordinación de ONG y Cooperativas – CONGCOOP to be co-written by Jennifer Casolo and Omar Jerónimo argues that the diverse ways that the Ch'orti' people have sought to protect their lands for agricultural production, orchards, forests, and water sources over the years questions the ways in which peasant struggle has been perceived in the Ch'orti' área and the “subject” of agrarian politics. The present process of defence of territory articulates this re-membering of the past with recent discourses and practices around climate change, legal and human rights. More clearly: Ch'orti' production and thus life, depends on maintaining a balance of forest and productive land, family and community labor, spiritual and material practice, hot/dry and cool/wet spaces and places. The promised article was due in September 2017.
- b) An article in the peer reviewed journal of the Universidad Rafael Landívar, *Eutopia*. This would be the piece on “Rethinking territory”—how the litigation process rekindled and reshaped conceptions and practices of racialized dispossession, coloniality, rights and territory, as well as breaking down the identity-class divide.

2. In English

Most important would be an article for Antipode. The truth is that things have changed so much that is hard to decide where to weigh in without making Nuevo Día vulnerable.

In August of 2016, Jennifer Casolo wrote to Andrew Kent of Antipode:

Together with the other project coordinators we are working on an article for Antipode about the trajectory of the project in conversation with the changing realities of activism in Guatemala (perhaps Central America). The article will also unpack how it is that the funds themselves were not spent exactly on the activities planned, and will explain the multi-scaled dynamics by which many of the activities have been reshaped or postponed in relation to contestation and maneuvering around a new International American Development Bank Project that suspiciously proposed similar activities for different ends with \$200,000 USD in funding.

We will think about praxis in relation to some of the arguments "The Revolution will not be funded", unpack strategies in relation to scholar activism and money, and discuss indigenous epistemologies in relation to how and why the project was changed.

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Given Nuevo Día's decision to negotiate with the IADB, we did not follow through with that article. While Nuevo Día's relationship to the IADB has changed, the basic writing tactic of following the money remains useful. One related possibility is to reflect on "flexible funding" in times of neoliberal accounting and to put that in conversation with some of the recent literature on corruption: how discourses around corruption (especially since the Guatemala people are about to bring down their third president (deservedly)...what are the conditions for flexible funding? when are budgets produced as non-negotiable? why? and with what stakes?

Another possible inroad is the creativity of Nuevo Día's "multiple fronts of struggle"—while they over extend, they are never fitting into the either/or of reform or revolution, but rather stretching the paradigms of struggle within the system, the system itself, and radical struggle.

There is a conversation here with decolonization, with Fanon, with rethinking territory—

---we need to meet as 4 organisers to rethink the article. As I mention above, that it is not present at the writing of this report.

Popular or mediated writing and video:

1. In Spanish
 - a) The goal is to produce all mediated writing with Ch'orti' youth. Nevertheless, there may be a need to document in some simple form both the litigation process and the systematization of ecological knowledge in order to get feedback for the production of final materials. A decision still needs to be made on this process.
 - b) Produce a video related to both the historical disappearance or suppression of Ch'orti' knowledge and the knowledge of plants, weather, animals, that still exist---as a means of rethinking what the relationship between life, livelihood, and territory is.

Note: as the dissertation of Jennifer Casolo demonstrates, Nuevo Día's Assembly responds to problems and opportunities as they arise, weighing their potential for social change and how much they may or are affecting the local population, land, water, trees etc... We have not explained all of the struggles and processes in which Nuevo Día is involved: from harvesting rain water to holding assemblies on climate change, to burying the young girl whose life the State was bound to protect. It is this ability to be present, listen and to respond strategically—turning senso comune to good sense-- (not in an assistential way nor with plans to expand their grassroots base), that has allowed them to survive, grow, thrive, have real and lasting victories.

See Litigation timeline next page

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Timeline:

July 2015	Funds dispersed
August – October 2015	Computer training of four youth from Jocotán and Camotán municipalities. Expenses: transportation, food, lodging, stipend for instructor
August-October 2015:	Lesly Ramirez and Jennifer Casolo study documents preparing methodology and planning meeting with the Intercommunal Indigenous Council
September 2015	Jennifer Casolo begins paid employment at the University, Lesly Ramirez begins other employment with Nuevo Día.
September 2015	Last Ch'orti' community of Jocotán to form part of the litigation strategy, is recognized as an indigenous community and chooses its ancestral leaders.
December 2015	Nuevo Día determines litigation strategy as a higher priority than beginning formal process of training Ch'orti' youth.
January –April 2016	Litigation “clinic” meetings between Mayan lawyers, leaders of Nuevo Día, Ch'orti' leaders of the Intercommunal Indigenous Council of Jocotán
March 8, 2016	The Intercommunal Counsel of Maya Ch'orti' Authorities in Jocotán Chiquimula and the Central of Indigenous Campesino Ch'orti' Organizations Nuevo Día, Chiquimula, celebrate the Great Assembly of the Ch'orti' people to receive and safeguard the historic land title that shows that the communal lands have always belonged to the Ch'orti' people. All legal representatives of the six communities signed the initial brief for the court case. They also commemorated International Women's Day and the anniversary of a martyr in the region, killed for defending the rights and territory of the people. And they used the day to demand freedom for the Ch'orti' political prisoners who had tried to defend the territory from extractives industries and to demand that the Guatemalan state uphold the judicial ruling of the four women and five children who had demanded their Right to Food.
April 11, 2016,	The march for water, mother earth, territory, and life begins in the Western part of the country.
April 17-22, 2016	Members of Nuevo Día begin walking, converge on city April 22. Ch'orti' leaders present legal demand to court with press present
April 27, 2016	One Ch'orti' community member who had walked, Jesús Alvarez dies from secondary effects of dehydration and malnutrition.
July 2016	After a large gathering in opposition to mining operations turns violent, 21 Ch'orti' leaders from Olopa municipality (4 women and 17 men) are criminalized.
August 2016	9 communities in Olopa demand to be recognized as Indigenous communities, and are recognized on August 17 (step two for next litigation process)
July 2016 to Nov. 2016	Nuevo Día actively participates in the roundtable of dialogue with the theme: “Legal pluralism” which entails morning preparation with other indigenous

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	leaders around the country and weekly afternoon meetings, that end when the Congress votes against the reforms on November 20.
July 2016 - present	Struggle in the municipality of Olopa intensifies with Ch'orti' communities opposing the Mining g Company Las Manantiales that is operating without informed consent. Four women and seventeen men have been accused of multiple crimes against the Company as part of a strategy of criminalization of human rights defenders.
April 24 - May 1, 2017	Nuevo Día participates in the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at UN Headquarters in New York: the result of negotiation with the Inter-American Development Bank
May 16-17, 2017	The Assembly of the Ch'orti' campesino communities and organizations members of Nuevo Día where coproduction of knowledge and Ch'orti' knowledge related to Climate Change are discussed.
July 1-5, 2017	Jennifer Casolo prepares notes for the Public hearing on the appeal for legal protection
July 7, 2017	Public Hearing on appeal for protection of Ch'orti' communal land rights
July 12, 2017	The Third Chamber of the Civil and Mercantile Court of Appeals in the Appellate Tribunal of the Guatemala Court of Appeals, ordered that the Registry of Property nullified all inscriptions of land registered that impede the recovery of lands, effectively instituting the restitution of 286 square kilometres of land, as Ch'orti' communal land and establishing that no land in the entire municipality of Jocotán (and slightly beyond) can be sold, exchanged or developed without the approval of the Ch'orti' community.