

U.S. Involvement of Water Sanitation in El Salvador

Emilio Lau
Liberty University
Dec 22, 2022

Under the current tenure of President Nayib Bukele of El Salvador, it has been reported that a record low of homicides had occurred for the month of October during 2022. “With 20 days without homicides, October becomes the third safest month in the country's history, preceded by July and August of this year, which each had 21 days without murders. For President Nayib Bukele, these historical figures in the sustained drop in homicides reflect the forcefulness of his government's security strategy.”¹ This breaks the decade pattern of constant violence that has plagued many neighborhoods in El Salvador. The post peace arrangement in El Salvador after the 12- year civil war between the U.S backed nationalist party and FMLN had led to a void for false peace to take place.

The *American Anthropologist*, which is an organization of anthropologists discussed that: after the accords, El Salvador became one of the world’s most violent countries “not at war,” with an average of 80 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 1994–1997 and 105.5 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2015. It has one of the world’s highest rates of femicides. 13.5 femicides per 100,000 women in 2018, representing 12 percent of the total homicides committed.²

The adjustments President Bukele has brought to El Salvador will assist the military, law enforcement and the people to have national fervor once again for their country. Being a gradual process, Nuevo's Ideas, the non-partisan political party that has appealed to the Salvador masses for an alternative policy from the four-decade political rulings of the post-civil war politics. In the U.N 2022 assembly, President Bukele stated, "We need to be recognized for our right to be free,"³ relating to the noteworthy achievements of the Territorial Control Plan that was implemented in the beginning of his administration. El Salvador has positioned itself to be in a place of infrastructure development that will have permanent ramifications, compared to previous administrations. However, with the U.S administration not entering current diplomatic talks due to humanitarian issues towards incarcerated gang members that have troubled the innocent communities for decades. David Wilezol, a senior fellow for U.S Foreign Policy at the American Foreign Policy Center states:

White House officials didn't meet with El Salvadorian president Nayib Bukele on his February trip to Washington, D.C. Bukele has still not received a call from the president or the vice president, even though Kamala Harris's portfolio includes addressing root causes of migration from El Salvador. Instead, the Biden administration has sanctioned officials around Bukele, criticized his government, and tried to dictate the composition of

1. Gobierno De El Salvador, “Historic Drop in Homicides Leaves October as the Third Safest Month in the Country's History,” accessed Dec 22, 2022 <https://www.presidencia.gob.sv/baja-historica-de-homicidios-deja-a-octubre-como-el-tercer-mes-mas-seguro-en-la-historia-del-pais>.

2. R. Elizabeth Velásquez Estrada, “Intersectional Justice Denied: Racist Warring Masculinity, Negative Peace, and Violence in Post-Peace Accords El Salvador,” *American Anthropologist* 124, no. 1 (2022): 39-52.

3. CE Latin America Migration English, “President Nayib Bukele before world leaders: "We need recognition of our right to be free, "accessed Dec 22, 2022 <https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66FF-JYW1-DYY9-02X5-00000-00&context=1516831>.

the country's judiciary branch. It's true that Bukele has undermined democracy in some key ways. But if Biden snubbed him on the basis of not respecting democracy, then why did the president meet with President Erdogan of Turkey or Vladimir Putin?⁴

Should the Biden Administration consider the potential diplomatic friendship that could exist between Washington and San Salvador, being that other Central American countries have taken corruptive avenues to a degree that does not promote anti-corruption in their institutions. But a common denominator between the Central American countries is that they are all high contributors towards the southern border crisis conflicting with U.S interests. There has been unprecedented numbers of illegal migrant crossing who have exposed the weakness in the Biden administration. "According to Andrew R. Arthur, a former immigration judge, shares that 17,000 Border Patrol agents are so overwhelmed by apprehending and processing nearly 6,000 illegal border crossers a day that they have failed to perform the purely ministerial task of sending copies of the Notices to Appear (NTA) that initiate removal proceedings to appropriate immigration courts."⁵ El Salvador and other certain fellow Central American countries have had high numbers arriving in caravans due to government corruption, crime activity and even lack of proper resources. Water is a critical resource for families to maintain basic sanitation and run common entities for cooking and clothing maintenance. Businesses in the neighborhoods rely on clean water for the function of operating as an establishment. Now with vulnerable community members, whenever water is not accessible, the immediate solution would be to retrieve it from the river, which can be unclean and unsafe. With that constant uncertainty, many Salvadorians are prompted to make the decision to join transnational routes that many other others in neighboring countries are pursuing, so that the attainment of settling in the U.S can be fulfilled.

Even after the 1992 Peace Accords, the rest of El Salvador as a national entity was not unified in redevelopment. Human capital and public investment was prolonged for several years for the entire country. "Overcoming these obstacles and unifying the Northern Zone with the rest of the country became a national priority. A comprehensive development program was needed to enable the region's people to fully participate in El Salvador's growth, the benefits of regional integration, and the economic opportunities brought about by free trade agreements. The five-year Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact provided a historic opportunity to fulfill these goals and revive El Salvador's economic development."⁶ Created by the U.S. Congress in January 2004 with strong bipartisan support, Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is U.S. government assistance in action, benefiting both developing countries and the American taxpayers. With the U.S government being an accountable and providing partner,

4. David Wilezol, "Biden is losing Latin America," *Washington Examiner*, September 24, 2021, <https://www.afpc.org/publications/articles/biden-is-losing-latin-america>.

5. Nolan Rappaport, "5 Unintended Consequences of Biden's Immigration Policies," *The Hill*, October 25, 2022, <https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/3702991-5-unintended-consequences-of-bidens-immigration-policies>.

6. Millennium Challenge Corporation, Closed Compact Report: El Salvador, accessed Dec 22, 2022, <https://www.mcc.gov/resources/pub-full/closed-compact-report-el-salvador>.

business growth in the private sector in El Salvador will begin of journey of retaining its citizens from desiring to leave. The compact was implemented by FOMILENIO, an institution established by the government of El Salvador as a requirement of the compact. The government of El Salvador and MCC expect over 706,000 people to benefit over 20 years from this investment.

However, reopened again with, MCC and the government of El Salvador entered into force a compact agreement on September 9, 2015, to invest up to \$277 million in regulatory reforms, education, and logistical infrastructure, with the goal of promoting economic growth and private investment in the country. This fund that has a record of results within the country, increased water access and sanitation is a key priority so that human right objectives can be fulfilled for the U.N sustainable development goals as well as the civil development of the country. El Salvador Investment Compact (EIC) will benefit from water sanitary objectives when it partners with a private entity such as Ecofiltro, because of the social entrepreneurial concept it introduces to the poverty-stricken Northern Zone of El Salvador, even though the Bukele presidency still has to prove its humanitarian credibility before the Biden administration.

“Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right.”⁷ Pope Francis mentions within the context of *Laudato Si* the sacredness of water and the mistreatment, privatization and mismanagement of it will hinder poor populations around the world. Water is a part of human survival which cannot be overlooked, symbolizing new life and rewashing from past life. U.S humanitarian aid must take into consideration the policy of financing means for countries such as El Salvador to maintain access to clean water in its neighborhoods that typically join the statistical other groups of migrants towards the U.S.

Being in the 21st century and its geopolitical dynamics, China has become that counter measure global superpower towards the U.S. Its objective has been to outperform U.S interests through economy, technology and even military. China for the past several decades has been a solution for many struggling economies in Latin America, and many of many of its economies have been lured into the Chinese economic mechanism of economic trap debt. Now with “El Salvador, events suggest that the United States’ lack of policy coordination contributed to President Nayib Bukele’s decision to maintain ties with Beijing after his predecessor, Salvador Sanchez Ceren of the opposition Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) party broke off ties with Taipei.”⁸ China’s Belt Road Initiative has prevailed where the Trump administration came shorthanded with Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) countries. With China focusing on domestic issues that LAC countries are in a bind for, has made it appealing towards China more advantageous. The Trump Administration took the stance of minimizing aid towards the triangle countries in due to failure of mutual compliance of limiting illegal immigration crossing. That’s why currently there is a minor diplomatic rift between due to the differing regions for objectives towards China plan for trade domination. Now with the Biden

7. Sr Bernadette Mary Reis, “World Water Day: Contribution of Pope Francis and the Holy See,” *Vatican News*, March 2018, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2018-03/pope-francis-holy-see-world-water-day.html>.

8. Ricardo Barrios, “Reimagining U.S. Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean in Response to a Risen China. In: Carr Jr., E.A. (eds) *From Trump to Biden and Beyond*,” (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan 2021):45- 56.

Administration, as part of its economic rebalance, the United States should collaborate with the region to set rules and standards (e.g., environmental standards, labor standards) and support countries' efforts to promote their adherence."⁹ The U.S must realize that Chinese influence is inevitable and must work with that. Those labor standards will set the difference regarding the view on human rights, since the Chinese are typically not premier advocates for the advancement of global human rights. Also bringing in allies, e.g., Japan and Korea,¹⁰ from outside the region will give LAC countries an opportunity to develop networks with other economically established Asian markets that are democratic in practice and ideologically. El Salvador under the Bukele presidency must be an ally during these geopolitically dividing times, which means the Biden administration must give attention to its domestic needs. Of course, not solve every effort, because that would not be productive for U.S Foreign policy either to be stretched out.

With the investment of water sources, that aids a utility component within El Salvador so that many citizens who are in the economic outskirts may once again have access to necessities. Those who are in uninhabitable spots of their communities find hope in U.S infrastructure, which leaves U.S taxpayers having to carry the financial burden of compensating for increased medical fees, food distributions and educational funds for migrants and families with diverse age distributions. There can be counteractive legislation to solidify the border however, the Biden administration is dismantling Trump imposed regulations towards the immigration crisis, unfortunately provides migrants with false hope and a dangerous route before them.

Due to a differing stance on domestic politics, the Biden Administration terminated the Asylum Cooperative Agreements with "El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The ACAs allowed migrants to seek protection within the region by facilitating cooperation between the United States and host nation governments or international organizations to expand their systems for offering humanitarian protections. This policy also discouraged migrants from making the dangerous journey to the U.S. southern."¹¹ Even with the controversy that it brought under the Trump administration, it was a diplomatic mechanism helping the U.S and triangle region countries mitigate solutions on how to tighten illegal immigration. That is why country development from a humanitarian perspective is critical, but now severed diplomatic relations between both regions, progress is hindered. The U.S. State Department mentions in line with the President's vision, we have notified the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras that the United States is taking this action as efforts to establish a cooperative, mutually respectful approach to managing migration across the region begin. Transfers under the U.S.-Guatemala Asylum Cooperative Agreement had been paused since mid-March 2020 due to COVID-19, and the agreements with El Salvador and Honduras were never implemented. This reasoning does not provide a substitute for the diplomatic bridge between the countries, therefore leading to future discouragement for possible solutions. With the statement coming out in 2021,

9. Barrios, "Reimagining U.S.," 58.

10. Ibid.

11. U.S. Department of State, Suspending and terminating the Asylum Cooperative Agreements with the Governments El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, accessed December 22, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/suspending-and-terminating-the-asylum-cooperative-agreements-with-the-governments-el-salvador-guatemala-and-honduras>.

there has been no course of action to reengage with the triangle region countries. With the global economy going through a recent post-Covid reset on labor and market opportunities, which has led to limited opportunities for citizens of these countries, numbers have not decreased. While at the same time, the Biden Administration has implemented in refugee admission policies such as the Build Back Better Act, which has a goal to allow 7 million unauthorized immigrants eligible to become for protection from deportation, work permits and driver's licenses. Recently in the news, Title 42 was recently lifted due to the court's order.

A statement by DHS states:

The United States will continue to fully enforce our immigration laws at our border. In response to the court's order, the Department of Justice is filing an unopposed stay motion. The delay in implementation of the court's order will allow the government to prepare for an orderly transition to new policies at the border. But to be clear, under the unopposed motion, Title 42 would remain in place for some period. During the period of this freeze, we will prepare for an orderly transition to new policies at the border. "We know that smugglers will lie to try to take advantage of vulnerable migrants, putting lives at risk."¹²

It is incalculable to determine the sheer consequences that southern states across the U.S will experience. This also leaves the U.S vulnerable towards migrants who come with ill intentions to harm others, for those who are apart of crime-ring organizations as well as transport drugs towards state lines. Human smuggling is also a consequence of increased illegal immigration. The paper will not dive into specific measures on how to prevent these incriminating acts of abuse but how the U.S can aid water development for El Salvador's vulnerable infrastructure, which fuels migrants from certain regions to flee. There are many factors that motivate migrants to make the decision to leave and the lack of quality of water sources is not a determined ultimatum. But water quality, being a critical component of any country's infrastructure, is a critical determining factor for the hygiene of communities and function of local business. The U.S State Department must use the leverage it holds to partner with already working solutions within El Salvador to increase support for the corresponding positive impact. This paper will develop solution for what the U.S can do in short term or long-term goals to spark community development, under a government that has limited means of administering a national agenda.

President Nayib Bukele has made significant growth with a national wide territorial security plan, but with a country that is redeeming itself from a four-decade failure of domestic politics between FMLN and ARENA, restoration and infrastructure growth has lagged quite drastically. With immigration concerns that plagued the U.S Southern Border, the Biden Administration must reevaluate immigration policy so that border portal can operate at normal levels but also for Northern triangle countries such as El Salvador to have less contributing numbers towards migration chains. How can the U.S expect Central American countries to be

12. Homeland Security, Statement from DHS on Decision Regarding Title 42, accessed December 22, 2022, <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2022/11/15/statement-dhs-decision-regarding-title-42>.

more active in lessening migration numbers if the Biden Administration is becoming steadily more tolerable towards less border restrictions?

The MCC and its water initiative has already proved itself to work in the rural areas that are still recovering from decades of failed development projects and lack of funding from local department heads MCC states:

The Northern Zone of El Salvador contains half of El Salvador's poorest municipalities and suffered more damage from the country's internal conflict during the 1980s than any other region. Economic and social indicators in the Northern Zone are currently worse than the national average: In 2007, 44.7 percent of households in the Northern Zone were poor, compared with the 34.6 percent national estimate; 17.2 percent of households in the region lived in extreme poverty in 2007 compared with 10.8 percent at the national level. Human capital development is also lower in this region than in any other. The average level of schooling in El Salvador was 5.9 years in 2007, while the average in the Northern Zone was only 4.3. The percentage of illiterate people in the Northern Zone was 18.3 percent in 2007 versus an 11.1 national average. The goal of the Compact is to reduce rural poverty by increasing regional economic growth through a five-year program of strategic investments and technical assistance in various sectors.¹³

To increase that economic growth through the citizens within these regions must show that time and money was saved throughout the process of sanitary water installment. "MCC's \$449.6 million El Salvador Compact (2007-2012) funded the \$16.6 million Water and Sanitation Sub-Activity to increase the human and physical capital of residents of the Northern Zone to take advantage of employment and businesses opportunities by providing new or improved piped water and latrines to households. This included installing piped water connections to 8,168 households along with latrines where needed."¹⁴ The goal is to lower the time tasked to collect water, improve the health state of community members and increase household budget while at the same time gaining increased improved access to water and sanitation. Those benefits have been recorded are included:

Increase household income/consumption by at least 15%. Increased potable water consumption to 177 liters per person per day. Reduce morbidity from water-related illnesses, for example reducing diarrhea rates from 8.5% to 0%; and Reduce the time and cost spent on seeking or purchasing water, for example reducing average time collecting water from 4.58 hours per week per household to 0 hours per week per household, and the cost of water from 1.68 \$ per cubic meter to 0.43\$ per cubic meter. Other potential impacts of the WSS included improvements in education, measured as attendance and enrollment of children originating from decreased coping cost of carrying water an doing

13. Miguel Almanzar, Maureen Cropper and Raymond Guiteras, *Impact Evaluation of the Rural Water and Sanitation Projects in Northern El Salvador* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 2014) 5-42.

14. Millennium Challenge Corporation, *Increasing Water And Sanitation Access In El Salvador*, accessed Dec 22, 2022, <https://www.mcc.gov/resources/doc/evalbrief-040917-slv-water>.

laundry outside the home and the decreased incidence of water-borne diseases; impact heterogeneity across gender and socio-economic status will be explored.¹⁵

After seeing the results of MCC funded programs can do those live in extreme poverty, the question comes, what is the longevity behind the implementation of the MCC funds? “Households did shift the source of the water consumed to household taps rather than less convenient sources like a public well—households were 30 percentage points more likely to use tap water for drinking and cooking relative to the comparison group. Prior to the project, baseline sanitation levels were high with over 80 percent of the treatment area having private sanitation facilities. After the project, the probability of having improved private sanitation increased slightly by about 3 percentage points. However, relative to the comparison group, children between the ages of three to six years old were 16 percent more likely to use sanitation facilities frequently after the project.”¹⁶The use of sanitation and seeing the fruits of the investment is encouraging for the U.S Congress to see that its efforts can transform a community into by one infrastructure component at a time. With younger aged recipients of the study, its noted of their desire for utilization of clean water to provide clean water access for themselves. This can be a catalyst for the parents to realize that if their children are keen on access to clean water on more consistent basis, this should encourage families to make investments.

However, there have been challenges due to the impact of the investments such as one household receiving different benefits in their pre-existing circumstances pipe situation. One household without piped water is expected to have the same impact as projects that help households with connections get more out of a service they already have.¹⁷ This opens doors for discrepancies and future confusion of funding placement if not distinguished in the beginning. Not all the expected benefits of the water and sanitation program are relevant for all households.

Whereas increases in income or reduction in water collection costs might be seen in all households, changes in school attendance rate relate primarily to households with school age children, and changes in morbidity and health expenditures from water and sanitation-related illnesses are expected to arise disproportionately in households with young children.¹⁸ Again addressing the challenges of an investment within a community but the outside help comes from the U.S, who is addressing multiple foreign national objectives on multiple scales while overseeing the vulnerable community members with a general stroke of also fulfilling regional Latin America priorities. Details will be overlooked the more specific an issue needs to be addressed. Also with contraceptives and health learning not as readily accessible as in other Western countries, unrestrained birth numbers become a factor.

5. 15. Almanzar, Cropper and Guiteras, “Impact Evaluation of the Rural Water,”

16. Millennium Challenge Corporation, “Increasing Water”, 2.

42. 17. Almanzar, Cropper and Guiteras, “Impact Evaluation of the Rural Water”,

18. Ibid.

“El Salvador Investment Climate Project is designed to boost the productivity of the tradeable sector through increased private investment. The project includes the Regulatory Improvement Activity (RIA), which designates \$6 million in funding toward cutting bureaucratic red tape and improving the quality of regulations that affect investment and business in El Salvador.”¹⁹ This private investment component is what separates the MCC from other foreign aid entities, and the success it has had so far is no coincidence with the factor of also partnering global brands in the community. The Investment Climate Project also includes two sub-activities, the El Salvador Investment Challenge (ESIC) Sub Activity and the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Sub-Activity. The ESIC Sub-Activity features \$75 million in funding for public goods capable of leveraging private investment. The Fondo del Milenio II (FOMILENIO II) oversees all compact investments and activities in El Salvador.”²⁰ Even after FOMILENIO ended, the continuation of it saw the promise of what El Salvador can potentially bring to the table compared to other Central American countries. Support from El Salvador’s president helped secure legislative approval for the country’s first PPP. In Guatemala, a lack of political support from the executive branch and legislature for the first PPP led MCC to cancel its assistance.²¹ What President Bukele is doing with Nuevos Ideas, his political party, is bringing practical ideas to country. It’s a platform that is not associated with the left factions or right factions, which has also brought international attention when compared to the hindrance of executive branches in other Latin American countries.

“FOMILENIO II’s enhanced outreach efforts and simplified application process starting in 2016 led to a healthy pipeline of eligible projects. By 2019, the fund had allocated its entire budget of \$75 million in eight public goods focused on infrastructure, including roads, customs office improvements, and water and sanitation projects.”²² This presents the opportunity for private companies to push their agenda and encourage the U.S and Salvadorian government to open talk for a company that fulfills the need for the public sector have a need addressed while allowing financial investment in their communities. Especially for private businesses that geared for water sanitation. Instead of providing foreign aid, a business can instead stimulate economic growth while also providing a service that meets the critical needs of water health.

“The ESIC model will generate increased private-sector investments in the post-compact period, thus increasing employment in El Salvador and ultimately leading to a more competitive

19. Ivonne Padilla, Randall Blair, and Patricia Costa, “El Salvador Investment Climate Project,” *Mathematmatica* (June 25, 2020): ix.

20. Padilla, Blair, and Costa, “El Salvador Investment”, ix.

21. Millennium Challenge Corporation, *Mobilizing Private Investment In El Salvador And Guatemala*, accessed Dec 22, 2022, <https://www.mcc.gov/resources/doc/evalbrief-031822-slv-gtm-investment>.

22. Ibid.

tradeable sector in the long term.”²³ A future business that is willing to partner with the ESIC model is also placing itself in competition towards other business that have claimed that their product is the ultimatum for a vulnerable community’s growth. But what will distinguish a potential one from other ones is the full engagement of public sector, such as Administración Nacional de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (ANDA), which is the Salvadorian government’s national agency to water sanitation and leads a pivotal role in regulating water quality for the safety of the citizens nationwide. “By all stakeholder accounts, ESIC represents a large innovation in the identification of public goods. The novelty of the tool lies in both the rigor with which public investments are selected and the fund’s ability to identify public goods that benefit firms as well as neighboring communities. The fund is unique in that it provides multiple benefits—something of a “win-win-win” for companies, communities, and the tradeable sector at large in some select cases.”²⁴ ANDA being the governmental face for water sanitation in El Salvador must seek ways to partner with profitable entities that share the vision of providing the people with an affordable and purified water product.

Alvaro Figueredo, who is the founder of Iskra Innovation and co-founder of Experimenta Lab. Also currently works as Innovation and Technology Transfer Director at Universidad del Valle de Guatemala. Co-author with Alvaro of “Conceptualization of Community-Based Entrepreneurship: A Case Study of Ecofiltro in Guatemala” is Rashedur Chowdhury, an Associate Professor at Southampton Business School, University of Southampton, and a Batten Fellow at University of Virginia.²⁵ Ecofiltro meets the requirements and purpose of what ESIC asks, and with their inclusion it will expose angles of development that have not been considered before. Ecofiltro “...has a very clear social objective: To reach 1 million rural Guatemalans with clean water by the year 2020...[It] will always use financially sustainable methods to reach this goal and [we] will always remain open to sharing [our] production process and marketing tactics with any outside group that wants to solve the water challenging...”²⁶ Ecofiltro having its roots in Guatemala is promising because of the similar geographic and economic conditions both countries are in which makes a comparison tangible, with the hope of implanting a similar vision in El Salvador, especially in the northern zone.

“Philip Wilson, the executive director, came to the conclusion that the water problem, the fact that clean water is lacking in many people's rural homes, could not be effectively solved by the reliance on donations that existed when he started as director. . He decided to turn Ecofiltro into a company with social responsibility, a "social business" that would focus on a hybrid approach to the problem in which the sales of the filters in urban areas would serve to finance the

23. Padilla, Blair, and Costa, “El Salvador Investment”,12.

24. Ibid.

25. Alvaro Figueredo and Rashedur Chowdhury, "Conceptualization of community-based entrepreneurship: A case study of Ecofiltro in Guatemala," *European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology in Practice* 2, no. 11 (2019): 77-101.

26. “Who We Are”, Corporate Website, Ecofiltro, last modified August 2015, <http://www.ecofiltro.com/en>.

distribution of the filters in rural areas for a price.”²⁷ This concept is unique because it’s a product that engages the resource funded urban public directly with the rural population through a product that provides essential needs for all audiences, as well as bring a sense of ownership.

The Ecofiltro product contains 3 elements that provide the success and affordability for all the customers it comes across:

First element is mud and through it creates microscopic channels within the interior walls of the filtration unit and traps all contaminants that exist in the water, including solids, bacteria and parasites. Second element is Activated carbon, It is turned into activated carbon during the process, and this removes all bad odors, tastes and turbidity from the water regardless of its source (stream, river, well, lagoon or lake, and rain). Last is, Colloidal silver It is impregnated on the surface of the ceramic filter after it is sewn in the oven, it is an 100% effective bactericide. It is a bactericide used throughout the world to purify water and does not have any side effects. This works as a second protective layer to neutralize contaminants.²⁸

These earthy and natural resources is a creative approach towards the Guatemalan rural community as well as a potential well received product in El Salvador, because the health implications it brings without having to stress for products that tend to increase in price, especially if manufactured in the city. Giving away money and free sustainable projects is not truly solving the issue, as it only keeps the receiving population reliant on that specific charity.

For example, when they gave the filter away for free, sometimes they would find the filters being used as flower pots or rubbish bins, suggesting that they had not properly communicated the filter’s value to people. In addition, they used to look at the poor person with pity, rather than as a functioning and honorable buyer – a customer. These insights about low adoption and ‘pity-based’ philanthropy led them to shift their perspective: They evolved to utilizing the Ecofiltro as the main solution to the problem, while shifting to selling it instead of giving it away free.²⁹

This changes the stigma the urban community has towards the rural because the entrepreneurial opportunities awaited but mainly the rural communities have towards themselves and to once again foster an entrepreneurial spirit to once again not let their circumstances defy their future.

Recorded from March 4, 2020, from the aid of other NGO’s, four hundred and forty Ecofiltro plastic containers have been donated to those in the department of Libertad and Sonsonate. This means exposure has occurred for the country and that with the financial benefit that comes from ESIC, its expected that return will occur since the profitability relies on total community engagement to sell and purchase. “On March 19, 2020, 10 Automatic Barrel Ecofiltros to ANDA El Salvador. The Ecofiltros will be distributed in the epidemic care centers, so that those affected by the epidemic and the staff doctor have 100% pure water to face the

27. “Beginning”,Corporate Website, Ecofiltro SV, last modified 2020, <https://www.ecofiltrosv.com>.

28. Ibid.

29. Figueredo and Chowdhury, “Community-Based Entrepreneurship”, 89.

situation with better water quality, avoiding the cost of bottled water and favoring the health of the people who are transported to the quarantine centers.”³⁰ Living in a post-pandemic society, ANDA must take into the consideration of those who have lack of income to keep self-maintenance of public access to drinkable water. Therefore, a public investment into Ecofiltros will address a health, economic and society gap that will only exacerbate for ANDA years down the road.

However, with a promising proposal for ESIC to consider, there are political actors that can hinder PPP’s role to orchestrate a successful bidding between the public and private sector. executive branch, contracting institutions, the political party that held the presidency from 2009 to 2019—the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN)—and the Legislative Assembly and PROESA ³¹have separate agendas that can hinder this solution from ever implementing. Budgeting issues and more U.S involvement are debatable dialogues as well as political influence from China can hijack talks, due to potential previously held diplomatic talks.

Wilson in an interview in 2015 with the Wharton business journal of University of Pennsylvania stated “In this school cycle of, which just ended in October, we reached 822 rural schools and provided clean water to 173,000 rural school children. These rural school children became our ambassadors because part of the program in schools is we educate them on the importance of always drinking clean water, of not polluting the rivers and lakes.”³² This shows the fluidity of the value attached to the product, being that school children are the ones who will encourage their parents to pursue these Ecofiltros, so that they will have to yield towards polluted water as a drinking source. This will be a catalyst for community awareness for those in the northern zone of El Salvador and for the rest of the country.

President Bukele is an un-orthodox leader within the region; therefore citizens of other countries are gravitating towards appeal because his solutions are logical and not solidified with a controversial regime. However, solving the water quality crisis in El Salvador will not be the ultimatum for migrants to stay or immigrant, being that other critical factors are instrumental such as social, political and economic reasons. But water being a core function of any country's infrastructure impacts the quality of life, which has a correlating effect for the variables mentioned earlier. But due to complexity of the Latin America region with El Salvador still recovering from a four-decade rule of corruption, self-sufficiency is not realistic now. What the MCC has done so far in El Salvador has been foundational for the country to realize its unique potential compared to other Central American countries, however with recent controversial actions taken under the Bukele presidency, the Biden administration has been hesitant towards engaging in financial talks once again. With FOMILENIO II under pause, this hinders future growth for El Salvador, especially with business connections that can enrich both parties. As long as the water quality inequality crisis looms over the northern zone of El Salvador, national

30. “Beginning”.

31. Padilla, Blair, and Costa, “El Salvador Investment”, 36.

32. Knowledge at Wharton Staff, “When Profit Powers a Clean Water Project for the Poor,” *A Business Journal From Wharton* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania, 2015).

unity will continue to lag. Ecofiltro is a possible solution of many but places the customer in the urban section responsible of the good to utilize to its potential and be a social entrepreneur within their community and help those who can only afford at Ecofiltro at low monthly payments.

Bibliography

Almanzar, M., Cropper, M. and Guiteras, R. *“Impact Evaluation of the Rural Water and Sanitation Projects in Northern El Salvador.”* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 2014) 5-42.

Ricardo Barrios. *“Reimagining U.S. Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean in Response to a Risen China. In: Carr Jr., E.A. (eds) From Trump to Biden and Beyond.”* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan 2021):45- 56.

“Beginning”, Corporate Website, Ecofiltro SV, last modified 2020, <https://www.ecofiltrosv.com>.

CE Latin America Migration English. “President Nayib Bukele before world leaders: “We need recognition of our right to be free. “Accessed Dec 22, 2022. <https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66FF-JYW1-DYY9-02X5-00000-00&context=1516831>.

Figueredo, Alvaro and Chowdhury, Rashedur. “Conceptualization of community-based entrepreneurship: A case study of Ecofiltro in Guatemala.” *European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology in Practice* 2, no. 11 (2019): 77-101.

Gobierno De El Salvador. “Historic drop in homicides leaves October as the Third Safest Month in the Country's History.” Accessed Dec 22, 2022. <https://www.presidencia.gob.sv/baja-historica-de-homicidios-deja-a-octubre-como-el-tercer-mes-mas-seguro-en-la-historia-del-pais>.

Homeland Security. Statement from DHS on Decision Regarding Title 42. Accessed December 22, 2022. <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2022/11/15/statement-dhs-decision-regarding-title-42>.

Knowledge at Wharton Staff. “When Profit Powers a Clean Water Project for the Poor.” *A Business Journal From Wharton* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania, 2015).

Millennium Challenge Corporation. Closed Compact Report: El Salvador. accessed Dec 22, 2022. <https://www.mcc.gov/resources/pub-full/closed-compact-report-el-salvador>.

Millennium Challenge Corporation. Increasing Water And Sanitation Access In El Salvador. Accessed Dec 22, 2022. <https://www.mcc.gov/resources/doc/evalbrief-040917-slv-water>.

Millennium Challenge Corporation. Mobilizing Private Investment In El Salvador And Guatemala. Accessed Dec 22, 2022. <https://www.mcc.gov/resources/doc/evalbrief-031822-slv-gtm-investment>.

Rappaport, N. “5 Unintended Consequences of Biden’s Immigration Policies.” *The Hill*. October, 25. <https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/3702991-5-unintended-consequences-of-bidens-immigration-policies>.

Reis, B. “World Water Day: Contribution of Pope Francis and the Holy See.” *Vatican News*. March 2018. <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2018-03/pope-francis-holy-see-world-water-dayhtml>.

U.S. Department of State. “Suspending and terminating the Asylum Cooperative Agreements with the Governments El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.” accessed February 6, 2021. <https://www.state.gov/suspending-and-terminating-the-asylum-cooperative-agreements-with-the-governments-el-salvador-guatemala-and-honduras>.

“Who We Are”. Corporate Website, Ecofiltro. Last modified August 2015, <http://www.ecofiltro.com/en>.

Wilezol, David. “Biden is losing Latin America.” *Washington Examiner*. September 24, 2021. <https://www.afpc.org/publications/articles/biden-is-losing-latin-america>.

Velásquez Estrada, R. Elizabeth. “Intersectional Justice Denied: Racist Warring Masculinity, Negative Peace, and Violence in Post-Peace Accords El Salvador.” *American Anthropologist* 124, no. 1 (2022): 39–52.