

# POV Community Engagement & Education

## DISCUSSION GUIDE



### Águilas

a film by Kristy Guevara-Flanagan and Maite Zubiaurre

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## ÁGUILAS

Along the scorching southern border in Arizona, only an estimated one out of every five missing migrants is ever found. *Águilas* is the story of one group of searchers, the *Águilas del Desierto*, composed largely of immigrant Latinos. Once a month this group of volunteers—construction workers, gardeners, and domestic laborers by day—sets out to recover the missing, often reported to them by loved ones thousands of miles away.

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This guide is an invitation to dialogue. It is based on a belief in the power of human connection and designed for people who want to use *Águilas* to engage family, friends, classmates, colleagues, and communities. In contrast to initiatives that foster debates in which participants try to convince others that they are right, this resource envisions conversations undertaken in a spirit of openness in which people try to understand one another and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and actively listening to one another.

The discussion prompts are intentionally crafted to help a wide range of audiences think more deeply about the issues in the film. Rather than attempting to address them all, choose one or two that best meet your needs and interests. And be sure to leave time to consider taking action. Planning next steps can help people leave the room feeling energized and optimistic, even in instances when conversations have been difficult.

For more detailed event planning and facilitation tips, visit <https://communitynetwork.amdoc.org/>.

## LETTER FROM THE FILMMAKERS

My scholarly work on border art, migration, and forensics led me to the Águilas del Desierto (Desert Eagles) and their heroic humanitarian mission. The Águilas are Latinx immigrants of humble means who at least once a month travel in their trocas [pickup trucks] from San Diego, California, to the Arizona desert, and search on foot for the remains of missing migrants. I joined Águilas del Desierto in 2016 and have since then had the privilege to witness how their selfless devotion brings peace of mind to grieving families in Mexico and Central America. The desert is a vast cemetery where the fresh bodies and dried bones of migrants lie exposed under the scorching sun. By venturing deep into the wilderness of the borderlands and searching for the remains of missing migrants, Águilas del Desierto lay bare the tragic reality of migrant death. And it is the enormity and injustice of this widespread though barely acknowledged tragedy along the border that compelled me to go beyond scholarly writing: In search of a more efficient tool able to raise awareness about migrant death and also highlight the heroic humanitarian work of Águilas del Desierto, I approached Kristy, my colleague at UCLA, and that is how our documentary came about.

--MAITE ZUBIAURRE

When Maite first described her work with the Águilas del Desierto, I was immediately captured by the Sisyphean task of toiling against the enormity of the border crisis. Who are these people so committed to such thankless work? I thought the search itself would be a very resonant way for people to reflect on border issues outside of mere statistics and numbers, in an immersive kind of way. I was also drawn to the counter-narrative of the Águilas themselves. We often see images of activists who are college-age, white, and educated. But here was a group that had grown organically, in response to an injustice that affected them intimately, and coming from very humble origins. I was immediately drawn to that part of the story.

I gathered a small crew and set out with Maite to join them just a few days before Christmas. We met the Águilas pre-dawn at a lonesome gas station in the small town of Gila Bend. After driving all night from their homes in Southern California and sleeping in their cars, the Águilas welcomed us to the group and discussed their routes for the day. As we headed toward our search destination, our caravan grew: Mexican and Dutch journalists arrived to walk with the organization; college-student volunteers who had heard about them from their Facebook page joined; a canine rescue unit coming back from fire sweeps in Northern California accompanied the group for the first time. The Águilas, accepting of young and old, veterans and newbies, cannot keep up with the requests for missing migrants.

## LETTER FROM THE FILMMAKERS

We ended up filming two searches, one in a temperate November and the other in a lethally hot July. Each time the pace was rigorous. The desert appears flat, but cholla, rocks, and surprisingly wide ant hills make for difficult terrain. It is hard to keep up, and as a film crew, we lost each other many times, camera and sound completely out of sync. At the end of each day, we gathered together and made camp. We ventured out into the desert again the next morning to squeeze in a few more search hours before everyone headed back home, many to work early Monday morning. As arduous as it all is, the Águilas remain focused on the travails of the migrants themselves, hopeful to reunite families with their lost ones.

We also knew we wanted to incorporate the voices of the migrants in some capacity early on. We had hoped to film this in more of a documentary context, with the Águilas receiving the calls and us filming how that part of the work they do happens. When we started to edit, however, we realized there was a lot to be gained by staying in the realm of the desert and the search the entire time. As a filmmaker, I am a fan of the disembodied voice and have used that a lot in my work. In this instance, I liked the idea of audiences actively using their imaginations to conjure who is speaking. We have to imagine who these people are, where they are coming from, and, ultimately, how they must feel. And, of course, it is cyclical. We begin and end with their cries for help. They are innumerable. And they will continue until policies change.

-- KRISTY GUEVARA-FLANAGAN

## KEY PARTICIPANTS

**Águilas del Desierto (Desert Eagles):** Águilas del Desierto is a humanitarian Latinx search and rescue group that since 2012 has remained faithful to its mission of searching for missing migrants in the Arizona, California, and Texas borderlands, and to bring some solace to families and communities in Mexico, Central America, and the United States.

## KEY ISSUES

*Águilas* is a documentary meant to reach out to a wide audience and is particularly useful to people interested in the following topics:

- Migrant death
- Migration
- U.S.-Mexico Border
- Child Migration (Children in Migration or Mobility)
- Latinx Communities
- Social and Racial Justice
- Activism in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands
- Empathy and Solidarity
- Agency
- Socially-Engaged Filmmaking

## Contemporary Migration and the Detention Through Prevention Policy

Migration is a human right. Migration is also one of the most impactful and rapidly growing global phenomena of the 21st century. According to the [U.N. International Migration 2020 Report](#), “Growth in the number of international migrants has been robust over the last two decades, reaching 281 million people living outside their country of origin in 2020, up from 173 million in 2000 and 221 million in 2010. Currently, international migrants represent about 3.6 percent of the world’s population, [with] two thirds of all international migrants [living] in just 20 countries. The United States of America remains the largest destination, hosting 51 million international migrants in 2020, equal to 18 percent of the world’s total.” The dream of a better future, poverty, violence, and climate change are among the main causes that compel people to leave their countries of origin. With regard to climate change and migration, the World Bank warns that “reduced agricultural production, water scarcity, rising sea levels and other effects of climate change could cause up to 216 million people to leave their homes and migrate within their own countries by 2050.”<sup>1</sup>

At the U.S.-Mexico border, the number of detained migrants is on the rise. According to an article by NPR published on October 23, 2021, “The Border Patrol recorded nearly 1.7 million migrant apprehensions at the Southern border over the past year — the highest number ever, eclipsing the record set more than two decades ago.”<sup>2</sup> While detention numbers can be used to measure migrant influx, they are not infallible. It is important to remember that 25 years ago, prior to increased surveillance and militarization of the border, migrants were able to cross much more easily, without being detained, and so these numbers are historically skewed. Additionally, the migrant population has changed, often dramatically, in recent years: whereas in the past the “typical” migrant was a Mexican or Central American male, now many more migrants from other countries of origin (e.g., Haiti, Latin American countries such Colombia and Perú, and India) are crossing and dying along borders. Finally, many more women and children are migrating from Mexico and Central America, often in big groups with the goal of seeking asylum in the United States.

As reported in the news, not only adults and families, but also unaccompanied Central American and Mexican children fleeing poverty and threats of violence in their home countries attempt to cross the border in search of the mythological “American dream.”

1 AFP. “Climate change to force mass migration; 216 million around globe could be forced from their homes,” Global Times, September 14, 2021, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202109/1234247.shtml>.

2 Rose, Joel. “Border Patrol Apprehensions Hit a Record High. But that’s only Part of the Story.” NPR, October 23, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2021/10/23/1048522086/border-patrol-apprehensions-hit-a-record-high-but-thats-only-part-of-the-story>.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sarah Pierce from the Migration Policy Institute summarizes, “More than 102,000 unaccompanied children (UACs) from Central America and Mexico were apprehended by U.S. Customs and Border Protection at the U.S.-Mexico border between October 1, 2013 and August 31, 2015. The rapid influx of child arrivals in the spring and summer of 2014, which caught the attention of a concerned public and policymakers, briefly overwhelmed the systems in place for processing and caring for these children.”<sup>1</sup> The arrival and detainment of unaccompanied children at the U.S.-Mexico border has not stopped since then, and there were spikes in 2014 under President Obama; in 2019 under President Trump; and yet another recent spike, in 2021, under President Biden. In August 2021, 18,534 Central American and Mexican minors were detained at the U.S.-Mexico border.<sup>2</sup>

These are all “cold” numbers and predictions, but behind the statistics, there is the lived reality of human suffering and struggle. There is also a longstanding history of countries fervently (and often violently) opposing migration—and the United States is one example. In 1994, the U.S. Border Patrol put forward the immigration enforcement strategy and set of policies known as Prevention Through Deterrence. As a note sponsored by the humanitarian group No Más Muertes/No More Deaths explains, “Prevention Through Deterrence... sought to control the Southwest border by heightening the risks associated with unauthorized entry. To do so, the agency concentrated enforcement and infrastructure to reroute migration away from urban ports of entry and into wilderness areas. By pushing traffic into remote and hostile terrain, the agency speculated that border crossers would now find themselves ‘in mortal danger’ when attempting to enter the United States without authorization. The increased danger was intended to then deter other people from considering the journey, with the overall goal of preventing migration.” The group’s assessment of the “success” of such deterrence-based preventive policies is somber: “Over the past 20 years, Prevention Through Deterrence has caused 7,000 known deaths and countless more disappearances [it is estimated that for every body found, there five more the borderlands will never give back]. It has failed to halt the mass movement of people without papers into the U.S. interior. However, it has succeeded in proliferating border deaths, disappearances, and informal economies of violence, converting the region into an increasingly deadly arena.”<sup>3</sup>

1 Pierce, Sarah. “Unaccompanied Child Migrants in U.S. Communities, Immigration Court, and Schools.” Policy Briefs, Migration Policy Institute, October 25, 2015.

2 Hesson, Ted, and Mica Rosenberg. “Explainer: Why More Migrant Children Are Arriving At the U.S. Mexico Border. Reuters, March 18, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-children-explainer-idUSKBN2BA11B>.

3 “Tell Congress: End Prevention through Deterrence & Operation Streamline.” The Action Network, <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/tell-congress-end-prevention-through-deterrence>.



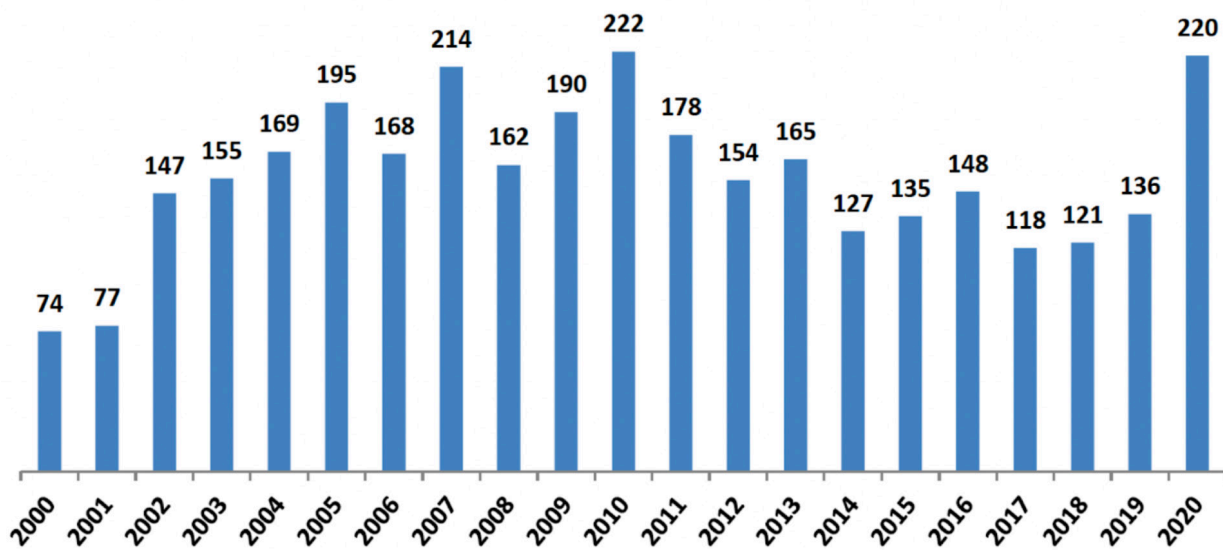
## Migrant Death: The Southern Arizona Case

The southwest border is a 1,954-mile-long, increasingly weaponized stretch that separates the United States from Mexico. It crosses four border states and diverse and distinct topographies and landscapes. This stretch of land from Texas to New Mexico, Arizona to California, includes the wide and dangerous Rio Grande; expansive cattle ranges surrounded with barbed-wire; vast deserts that are not always flat, but often endless successions of rolling hills; and imposing mountains darkening the horizon.

Migrants encounter dunes and red mesetas, saguaros and organ pipe cacti, rugged mountain ranges, and the surreal scene of a border wall diving into the sea in San Diego, California. They also encounter a “wall” that is either non-existent (remote barren land doesn’t need a wall, for example, since it is in itself a lethal “horizontal” barrier) or a collection of different “models.” As the [USAToday Interactive Border Wall](#) map compellingly shows, the wall is made of long stretches of so-called “pedestrian fencing” (built to impede pedestrians from crossing) with gaps in between. This is particularly true in Texas: “The longest contiguous unfenced stretch of the border—more than 600 miles total—is in the middle of Texas. There is no major city here on either side of the border.” Besides pedestrian fencing (or long and numerous stretches of no fencing), the border is also peppered with so-called “vehicle barriers” meant to stop cars from crossing but unable to stop pedestrians from doing so. Lastly, of the three border states, Texas is the one that remains largely unfenced, because “of treaty provisions, private-property rights, litigation and floodplains. Fencing was easier to build in New Mexico, Arizona and California, where the federal government controls a 60-foot-wide strip of land adjacent to the border.”

At the U.S.-Mexico border, where there are no fences, nature often presents life-threatening challenges to migrants seeking asylum. The waters of the Río Grande are famously treacherous and numerous migrants die in them every year. And the deserts in Arizona, New Mexico, California, and Texas act as horizontal walls, more effective and lethal than their vertical counterparts. When the U.S. Border Patrol designed and implemented the Prevention Through Deterrence strategy, it leveraged the inherent danger of these natural landscapes and militarized urban ports of entry. This forced migrants to cross through more remote and unpopulated areas, which in turn has exponentially increased the risk of dying. Shortly after the implementation of this strategy, the Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner (PCOME) experienced the dire consequences of such lethal measures. Before 1994, the year the Prevention Through Deterrence set of policies was implemented, the number of migrants whose remains migrants arrived at the Tucson morgue would oscillate between 10 and 15 at most; however, by 2000, the number of bodies retrieved from the Arizona desert had skyrocketed.

## UBC Recoveries CY2000 - 2020



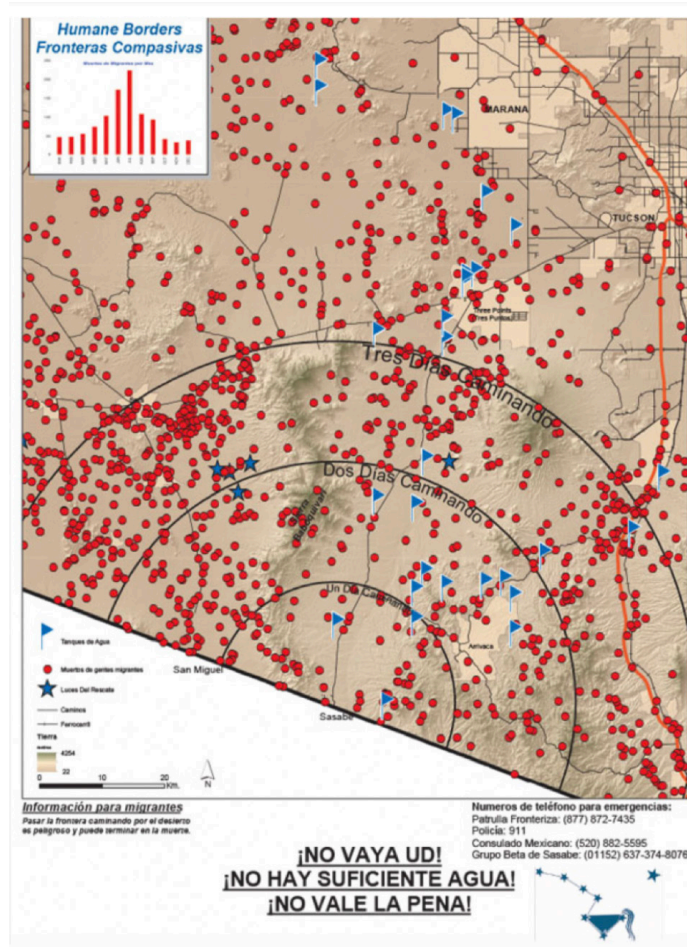
According to the PCOME, out of 3,275 recovered remains, as of 2020, 1,192 remain unidentified.

When Águilas del Desierto find migrant remains on dusty desert soil, under the precarious shade of a palo verde or semi-buried in the loose sands of an arroyo, they immediately inform the sheriff, for the site is considered a crime scene until further determination. The sheriff then retrieves the body and the personal belongings on or around the remains; once the remains are at the morgue, efforts at identification begin. Forensic examiners and forensic anthropologists rely on different methods that include visual identification if the face is recognizable, and identification via X-rays, dental records, fingerprints, and DNA testing. Once a migrant is identified, the consular agency representing the country of origin of the deceased conveys the tragic news to the family and initiates the process of repatriation of the body.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Activism in the Borderlands: From the Sanctuary Movement to Águilas del Desierto

Marisela Ortiz, co-founder of Águilas del Desierto with her husband, Ely Ortiz, receives up to 30 calls each day from families in Mexico and Central America. She hears from mothers who share that their children are missing, that coyotes (people smugglers) left them behind. She consoles brothers and sisters who haven't heard from their siblings in months and who don't know what to do. Marisela is available day and night. She never turns off her phone and never ignores a plea for help. Once she has enough information to initiate a search and rescue operation, Águilas volunteers drive their trocas (pickup trucks) from San Diego, California, to southern Arizona. At least once a month they make the trip on Friday evening, sleep two or three hours in their cars or tents, and devote Saturday and Sunday to searching for missing migrants. They walk for eight to 10 hours on the harsh desert terrain, determined to help their migrant brothers and sisters, and to bring peace to families and loved ones. They have been participating in search and rescue operations since 2012, when Ely Ortiz found the lifeless bodies of his brother and cousin in the southern Arizona desert and made it his mission to create and lead Águilas.



Águilas, the PCOME, and the Colibri Center for Human Rights are part of a tight network of migrant support that is particularly rich in the southern Arizona desert and the Tucson area. A number of nonprofit organizations, such as No Más Muertes/No More Deaths, the Tucson, Green Valley, Ajo Samaritans, and Humane Borders/Fronteras Compasivas put out water, food, and clothing in the desert for migrants, report on violations of migrant rights and human rights, and even keep an interactive map on migrant death that is a search tool for families and friends looking for their loved ones. This tool, called the [Map of Migrant Mortality](#), was created by Humane Borders/Fronteras Compasivas and uses the data provided and routinely updated by the PCOME to signal with a red dot the exact geospatial location where migrant remains were found.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Artists, or “artists,” also heavily contribute to what a New York University initiative has aptly called the [ecologies of migrant care](#). When Tucson-based Colombian artist Alvaro Enciso saw the Map of Migrant Mortality for the first time in 2013, he began going into the Sonoran desert every Tuesday, rain or shine, to place crosses at the exact points where migrants had died. Other examples of awareness-raising artistic interventions in support of migrants are the [Migrant Quilt Project](#), created and directed by Jody Ibsen: every year (since 2000), female embroiderers make a memorializing quilt with all the names of the migrants whose bodies were found that particular year. Additional artistic interventions include Valarie Lee James’s Bordando Esperanza initiative that helps distribute and sell napkins, or bordados, embroidered by female asylum seekers at the border in Nogales; Tom Kiefer’s series of photographs of personal belongings of apprehended migrants that he was able to retrieve from the trash when he worked as a janitor at a Border Patrol detention center; Hostile Terrain 94 (HT94), a participatory art project sponsored by the Undocumented Migration Project (UMP) and led by UCLA anthropologist Jason de León—an installation of “over 3,200 handwritten toe tags that represent migrants who have died trying to cross the Sonoran Desert of Arizona” and that are then geolocated on wall maps at a large number of national and international institutions; and the installation [Mujer Migrante Memorial](#), a virtual and urban memorial in honor of female migrants whose bodies were recovered from the southern Arizona desert. MMM was created by Maite Zubiaurre (the co-director, co-producer, and co-writer of the documentary *Águilas*) in collaboration with graduate students from the Mellon-sponsored Urban Humanities Initiative at UCLA.

Lastly, it is important to note that the exceptionally rich and intricate ecologies of migrant care described above, and of which *Águilas del Desierto* is such an important component, firmly stand on an illustrious precedent: Tucson, Arizona, is not only the base of operation of contemporary activism in solidarity and support of migrants, but is also the cradle of the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s. A church in Tucson, Southside Presbyterian, famously became the temporary refuge to more than 13,000 migrants who were escaping the horrors of war and torture in Central America.

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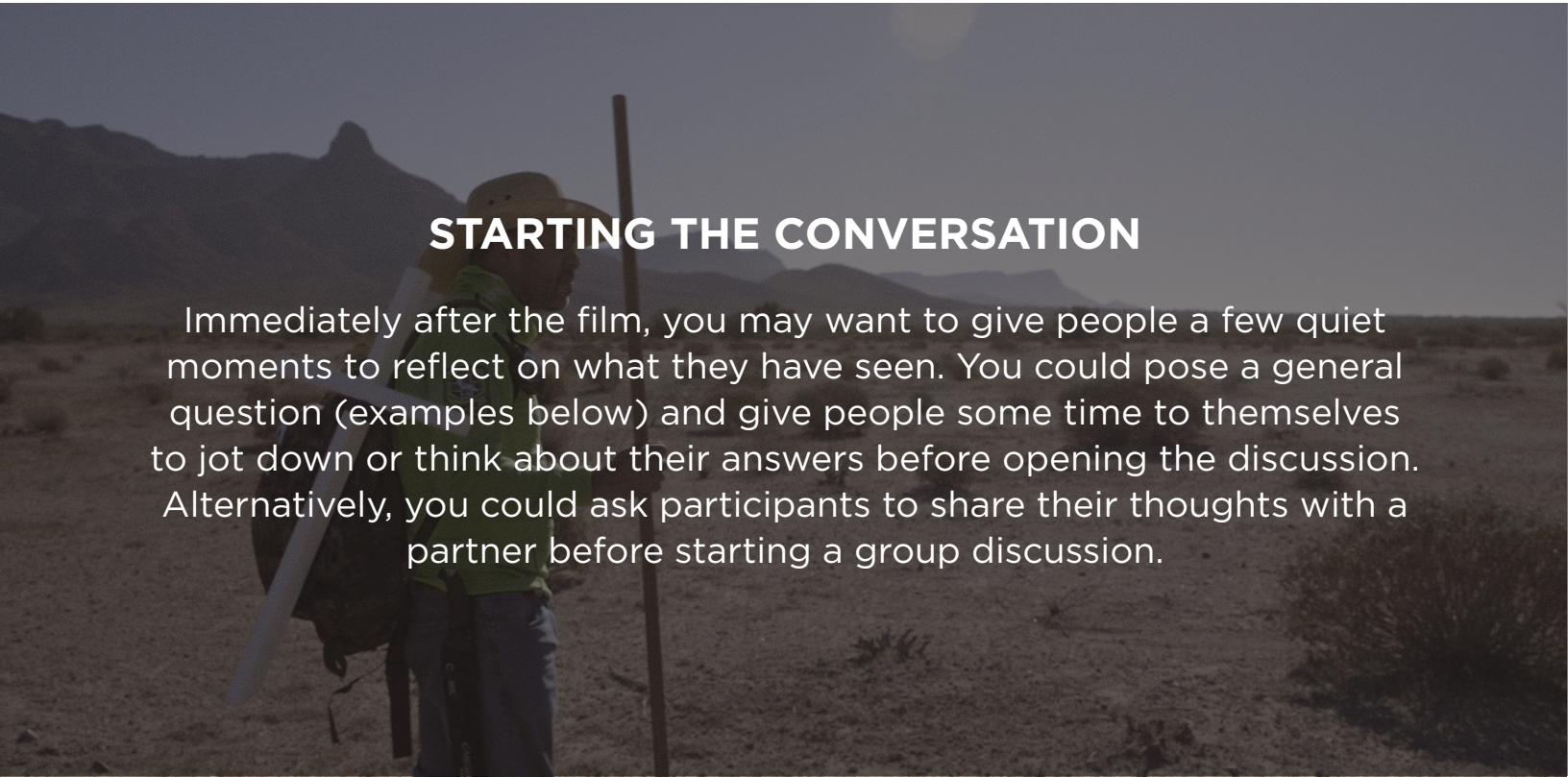
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## STARTING THE CONVERSATION



Immediately after the film, you may want to give people a few quiet moments to reflect on what they have seen. You could pose a general question (examples below) and give people some time to themselves to jot down or think about their answers before opening the discussion. Alternatively, you could ask participants to share their thoughts with a partner before starting a group discussion.

- Did this film generate any new thoughts or ideas or ask you to consider something you hadn't before considered about migration?
- What specific feelings did the film bring up for you? Do you remember what brought that feeling up? Why that particular scene?
- If you could ask anyone in the film a single question, what would you ask and why?
- Describe a moment in the film that you found particularly moving. What was it about that moment that was especially compelling for you?

## FACTORS INFLUENCING IMMIGRATION

The reasons for immigrating are sometimes divided into two categories: push and pull factors. Push factors are reasons that compel or push people to leave the area where they reside and pull factors are reasons that attract or pull people to move and settle in a particular area.

- What are some reasons influencing people's decisions to migrate to the United States?
- What are some of the reasons one may be pushed to migrate from their home country? What are some of the reasons one may be pulled to another country?
- Is the necessity of leaving one's home country always a choice? In what scenarios might a person need to leave?
- Migration is often understood as benefiting the immigrant, but in what ways do host communities also benefit from cross-cultural exchanges made possible through immigration?
- Throughout the 20th century in the United States, there's been tension between the rhetoric about immigration and the country as a site of refuge. Consider the text on the Statue of Liberty that reads "give me your huddled masses" alongside restrictive immigration policies (e.g., Chinese Exclusion Act of 1823). We are still seeing this tension today: Prevention Through Deterrence reroutes migration away from urban ports of entry into more dangerous wilderness areas, causing 7,000 known deaths and countless more disappearances. As a person living in the United States, how do you reconcile these contradictory ideas for yourself?

## MIGRATION AS A JOURNEY

- What are the various ways in which people come to the United States?
- In what ways did the film impact how you think about the journey of migration itself?
- What kinds of physical tolls do these kinds of journeys take? What might be some of the emotional, spiritual, or psychological tolls?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some different dangers a migrant in transit might face?
- In what ways is migration *into* the United States related to policies of the United States? What does this film reveal about this interplay between policy and migration?

**ACTIVISM AND ADVOCACY**

- When have you felt inspired to take action in the face of adversity?
- When have you spoken on behalf of someone who could not do so due to safety or other concerns?
- What are some ways art can be used as a mode of activism, engagement, and transformation?
- When you think about an “activist,” what type of person and/or scenarios come to mind?
- In what ways are Águilas del Desierto advocating on behalf of those who cannot? How would you describe their approach to advocacy and activism?
- Did any moment in the film inspire you? If so, which part?

**TAKING ACTION**

Here are ideas for you and your community to put your knowledge into action:

- Influence change and legislation by speaking to elected officials about migration policies, immigrant rights, and reform. Call the congressional switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected to your representative or senators.
- Volunteer with [Águilas del Desierto](#) or other organizations involved at the border such as [No Más Muertes/No More Deaths](#), [Ajo Samaritans](#), and [Humane Borders/Fronteras Compasivas](#). If you are not close to the U.S./Mexico border, volunteer with other groups that work on behalf of immigrant populations: [Al Otro Lado](#), [Catholic Charities Respite Center](#), [Espacio Migrante](#), [RAICES](#).
- Take the time to listen and learn. When the opportunity arises, listen to the stories of immigrants, whether that’s through literature, films, or conversations with immigrants in your family and local community. Listen to their stories. Learn about the challenges they face. Reevaluate your beliefs and assumptions.



**De León, Jason. [The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail](#). University of California Press, 2015.** Drawing on the four major fields of anthropology, Jason De León uses an innovative combination of ethnography, archeology, linguistics, and forensic science to produce a scathing critique of Prevention through Deterrence, the federal border enforcement policy that encourages migrants to cross in areas characterized by extreme environmental conditions and high risk of death.

#### **[Ecologies of Migrant Care](#)**

Ecologies of Migrant Care is an initiative of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics at New York University that aims to research, document, and make visible the region-wide humanitarian emergency that is resulting from the ongoing expulsion of refugees and migrants from Central America, and diverse and widespread responses to this situation by individuals, communities of faith, non-governmental organizations, and social movements across the region.

#### **[Hostile Terrain 94](#)**

Hostile Terrain 94 (HT94) is a participatory art project sponsored and organized by the [Undocumented Migration Project](#) (UMP), a nonprofit research-art-education-media collective, directed by anthropologist [Jason De León](#). The exhibition is composed of over 3,200 handwritten toe tags that represent migrants who have died trying to cross the Sonoran Desert of Arizona between the mid-1990s and 2019. These tags are geolocated on a wall [map](#) of the desert showing the exact locations where remains were found.

#### **[Map of Migrant Mortality](#)**

With the help of the Pima County Medical Examiner's Office, the nonprofit humanitarian organization Humane Borders/Fronteras Compasivas has created a continuously updated map of migrant deaths. The map is interactive and searchable. It shows the exact location where migrant remains have been found, and also the name and gender of the deceased, when known and once family has been notified, date of discovery, and cause of death, if known.

#### **[Mujer Migrante Memorial \(MMM\)](#)**

MMM is a real and virtual installation that honors the lives and deaths of female migrants whose remains were recovered from the Arizona desert. The installation took place on June 19, 2021, at [The Wall that Gives/El muro que da](#) in Venice Beach, California. The virtual installation includes an extensive narrative on migrant death in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands; an interactive map; and a poem that honors female migrants in English, Spanish, and a number of indigenous languages (Nahuatl; Mixtec; Purepecha; Tzotzil, and Zapotec).

**Nazario, Sonia. [Enrique's Journey: The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with His Family](#). Random House, 2007.**

*Enrique's Journey* recounts the unforgettable quest of a Honduran boy looking for his mother, eleven years after she is forced to leave her starving family to find work in the United States. Braving unimaginable peril, often clinging to the sides and tops of freight trains, Enrique travels through hostile worlds full of thugs, bandits, and corrupt cops. But he pushes forward, relying on his wit, courage, hope, and the kindness of strangers.

#### **[Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner \(PCOME\) Annual Report 2020](#)**

Every year, the PCOME publishes an extensive report that includes a detailed section on undocumented border crossers whose remains have been found in Pima County and the southern Arizona desert.

**Urrea, Luis Alberto. [The Devil's Highway: A True Story](#). Back Bay Books, 2008.**

In May 2001, a group of men attempted to cross the border into the desert of southern Arizona, through the deadliest region of the continent, a place called the Devil's Highway. Fathers and sons, brothers and strangers, entered a desert so harsh and desolate that even the Border Patrol is afraid to travel through it. Twelve came back out.

## DISCUSSION GUIDE WRITERS

**Kristy Guevara-Flanagan, MFA | Águilas Director, Writer, Producer**

Kristy Guevara-Flanagan is an associate professor at UCLA, where she heads the documentary track. She's been making documentary films focusing on gender, the Latinx community, and representation for over two decades. Her first feature-length film, *Going on 13* (2009, Tribeca, PBS), covers four years in the lives of four adolescent girls. Guevara-Flanagan also produced/directed several short films, including *El Corrido de Cecilia Rios* (1999, Sundance & Sundance Channel), which chronicles the violent death of a 15-year-old girl. Her feature *Wonder Women! The Untold Story of American Superheroines* (2013, SXSW, *PBS Independent Lens*) traces the evolution and legacy of the comic book hero Wonder Woman and features Lynda Carter, Lindsay Wagner, and real-life superheroines Gloria Steinem and Kathleen Hanna (*Bikini Kill*, *Le Tigre*.) The film garnered numerous awards and is one of the highest grossing films in educational distributor New Day's catalogue. Guevara-Flanagan's work has been funded by ITVS, Sundance, Tribeca Latino Public Broadcasting and California Humanities. She has served on juries for several organizations, including Sundance's Documentary Grant, ITVS, California Humanities, and the Peabody Awards.

**Maite Zubiaurre, PhD | Águilas Co-Director, Writer, Producer**

Maite Zubiaurre has a PhD in comparative literature from Columbia University, New York. She is a professor of European languages and transcultural studies, Spanish and Portuguese, digital humanities, and urban humanities at UCLA. Before joining UCLA, Zubiaurre taught at USC, UNAM (Mexico), ITAM (México), and the University of Texas, Austin. She is the author of numerous publications, the most recent an award-winning monograph on the cultural representations of contemporary refuse (*Talking Trash: Cultural Uses of Waste*, Vanderbilt University Press, 2019). She is presently leading a collaborative interdisciplinary project on migrant death and border activism and art titled *Forensic Empathy* that includes artistic interventions, a scholarly monograph, a digital map, and a feature documentary in the making. Filomena Cruz is Maite Zubiaurre's alter ego as a visual artist and activist.

**Discussion Guide Producer, POV**  
Courtney Cook, PhD | Education Manager