**Part A. Final Written Report**

**Section 1: Narrative**

Colectivo Ix Colibrí, initially named Casa Colibrí, aims to provide support to vulnerable populations in Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala through psychological services, educational workshops, and community spaces. This collaboration was created in 2019, after Connor and Heta visited Santiago Atitlán with a group of students examining community health theory and practice in Philadelphia and Guatemala. When Heta returned for a longer period of time to conduct diabetes related research, she noticed themes of violence resurface in interviews with patients. Violence in Guatemala, a country which suffers from high femicide and homicide rates, persists due to its history of conflict and genocide, most recently the Guatemalan Civil War (1960-1996), and cultural normalization of violence against women (machismo and patriarchal structures) and indigenous persons. Pressed to figure out a way to address this salient issue, she met Juanita Chiviliu, a local licensed psychologist, director of the school Puerta Abierta, and future community partner. Juanita, Heta, Connor, and partners Lia and Mari Chiviliu discussed their hopes of creating a safe community space for people to receive support and education. These hopes became a reality with funding from the Projects for Peace grant: during the summer of 2021, with virtual support from partners affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania, we opened a staffed, on-site location run by community partners in Santiago Atitlán. Through partnerships with local NGOs and community groups (Mayanza, Puerta Abierta, Ruk’u’x, and Hospitalito Atitlán), Colectivo Ix Colibrí was able to assess community priorities in education, then deliver workshops, create space for processing, and provide psychological services for these different groups. No other fund-raising efforts contributed to our project.

The efforts of Colectivo Ix Colibrí this summer were greatly aided by the time and planning that organizers did last summer, when the project was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Last summer, Connor, Heta, and Juanita met for visioning meetings, to discuss the aims of the Collective, brainstorm topics for videos and workshops, and create a series of videos (available in Spanish, English, and Tz’utujil) on different types of violence. The pandemic had a great impact on the hopes, priorities, and execution of our plans, not in the least because of the postponing of the project timeline. While this did pose some challenges, it also worked to our advantage in some ways: with more time to plan and limitations on safe activities, we moved our focus to creating an accessible online community and presence. In some ways, our work started with the videos we began to release last fall, and continued to create this summer, in which we covered topics like emotional abuse, workplace violence, and the “iceberg” of interpersonal violence. These videos provided a base of information for workshops with groups of young people, which covered topics such as emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and healthy communication. As the summer unfolded, it became clear that the priorities Colectivo Ix Colibrí identified last summer did not reflect the evolving community needs during the ongoing pandemic. As coronavirus cases shot up in Santiago in July and August, we shifted our focus to training teachers and others who work with children -- through several virtual and distanced in-person workshops, we discussed how best to support emotionally vulnerable children, especially when children have limited support in their home environments, how to facilitate peaceful and healthy communication in the classroom, and other topics.
Although Heta and Connor were unable to travel to Guatemala to provide in-person support, Colectivo Ix Colibrí was able to open a physical office space through which the organization ran workshops and therapy sessions. Juanita provided some therapeutic services, and was supported by her sister, who is also a Tz’utujil- and Spanish-speaking licensed therapist, as well as by Spanish volunteer Alba, who assisted over the course of a month. Alba, who was able to travel from Spain to Guatemala to safely assist in-person, also recorded the Spanish-language version of an informational advertisement which we plan to run on local television channels in (with Juanita’s version in Tz’utujil) this fall. The ad covers healthy relationships and communication, with some practical tips that the group came up with in response to concerns we encountered in workshops.

The virtual medium was both challenging and rewarding. While Heta and Connor were not able to travel and help with on-site tasks (from larger responsibilities like finding an office location to smaller ones like cleaning and closing up at the end of the day), the fact that the pandemic had already introduced virtual meetings and workshops as a somewhat normal accommodation during COVID made it such that even off-site, Connor and Heta could be of use. The distance and time difference sometimes made it difficult to plan when to meet, but virtual meetings made it possible to expand our offerings without needing to limit size or audience due to COVID safety concerns.

Overall, Colectivo Ix Colibrí hopes to continue to expand the reach of its workshops and training to include more children/young adults, community workers, teachers, and parents as well as continue to cover additional themes through more videos, informational advertisements, and printed materials. At the same time, we hope to provide more psychological services and address stigmas against mental health. The ultimate goal is to convert the current office center into a safe home. In doing so, Colectivo Ix Colibrí aims to reduce rates of violence within the community, thereby contributing to peace, by de-normalizing abuse and conflict and educating the local population about ways to manage their emotions and sustain healthy relationships. Peace, to us, can only exist when individuals are able to communicate and express conflict in ways that build up communities rather than dividing them. Although this summer we were able to begin the process of raising awareness and providing education, by expanding our outreach, we hope to multiply the ways in which we can contribute to peace within Santiago Atitlán.

Being a part of Colectivo Ix Colibrí, especially during the pandemic, has opened our eyes to the type of flexibility required in community work. Understanding shifting priorities and being in tune with local needs made us both more sensitive and empathetic listeners, skills that we will continue to carry with us. Simultaneously, witnessing the willingness of many partner organizations to assist in the project as well as the community’s interest in participating in workshops and seminars gave us hope that cultural shifts are possible when individuals decide to come together.

In sum, “Immersing ourselves in a community ravaged by violence but yet so willing to change and so rooted in each other reminded us of the resilience of the human spirit.” Quote by:

- Heta Patel (hpatel2017@gmail.com)
- Connor Hardy (connorscarletthardy@gmail.com)
Section II: Photographs

Alba recording the Spanish ad, September 2021

Still from a workshop with Ruk'u’x, June 2021

Workshop about healthy relationships and positive communication with children, 20 mothers present for 2 session, August 2021