

IBBY /REFORMA

Children in Crisis Book Project

**What is happening to children at the
USA-Mexico border in 2023**

2014 McAllen Texas



Background

- In 2015 a joint delegation of REFORMA librarians and IBBY members from US, Mexico, Canada went to try and ascertain what was happening to unaccompanied children arriving in the US.
- From this was born the REFORMA Children in Crisis project



FACT-FINDING VISIT TO THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY 2015

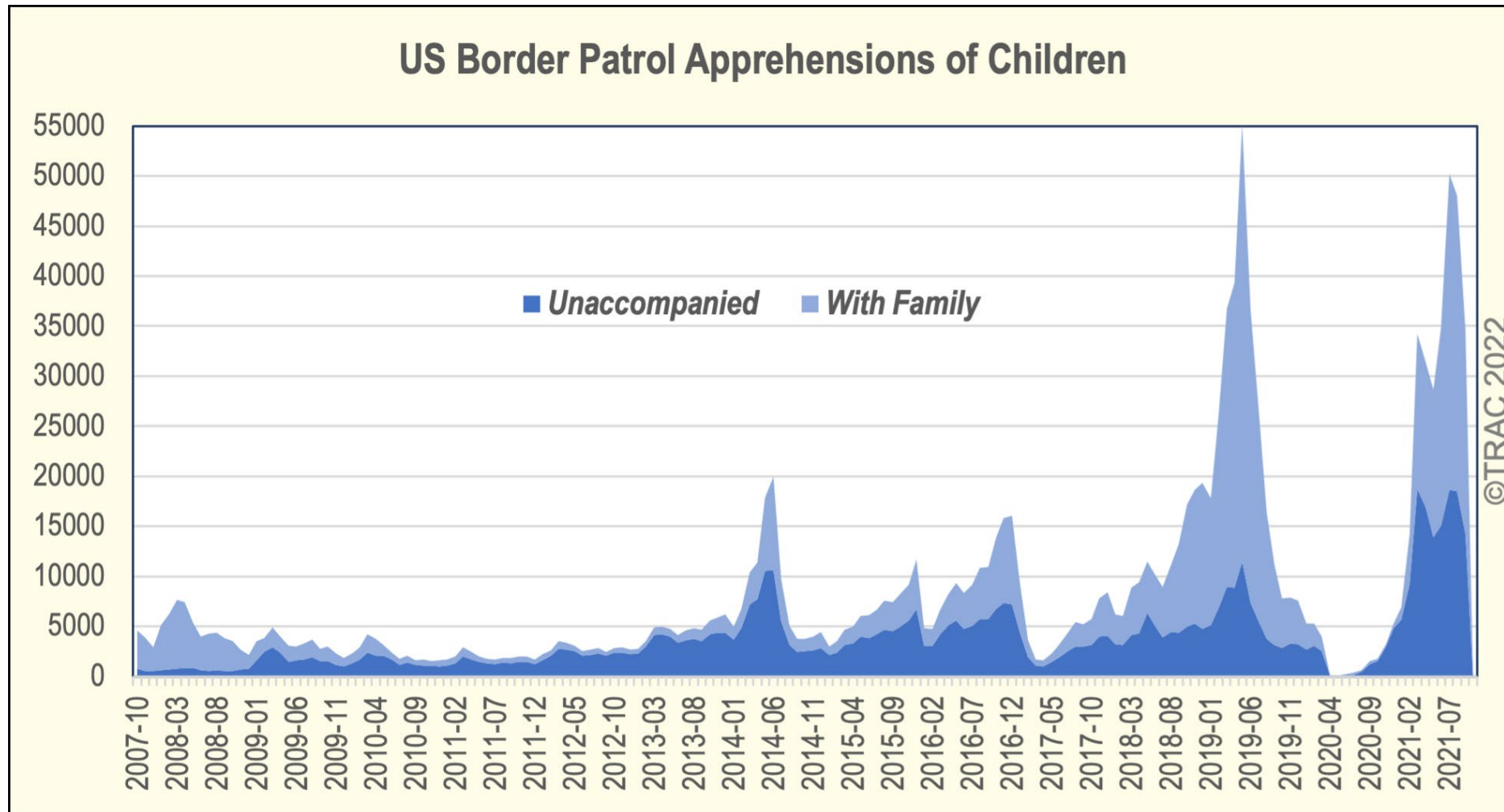
On August 2–4, 2015, representatives from IBBY, REFORMA, USBBY, IBBY Mexico/A Leer, TLA, and ALA met in the Rio Grande Valley to see first-hand the work underway to improve the quality of life of arrested and detained Central American refugee children along the US-Mexican border and to consider how best they could be supported through books and reading.



In 2023, more children than ever are trying to enter the US with or without their parents.



Kids apprehended at the border Trac



Origins of Kids coming to the border TRAC

| Fiscal Year | Total(with adults) | All Children(0-17) | | | | | | Unaccompanied Children (0-17) | | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------|---------|-------------|---------|-------------------------------|-----------|----------|---------|-------------|--------|
| | | All | Guatemala | Honduras | Mexico | El Salvador | Other | All | Guatemala | Honduras | Mexico | El Salvador | Other |
| All | 6,511,892 | 1,350,640 | 392,037 | 351,982 | 286,333 | 198,172 | 122,116 | 621,867 | 199,442 | 171,422 | 130,440 | 101,827 | 18,736 |
| 2008 | 723,862 | 59,579 | 1,755 | 1,854 | 53,392 | 1,701 | 877 | 8,081 | 1,391 | 3,407 | 1,578 | 1,391 | 314 |
| 2009 | 555,944 | 40,347 | 1,465 | 1,218 | 35,494 | 1,648 | 522 | 19,646 | 1,114 | 16,114 | 961 | 1,214 | 243 |
| 2010 | 463,382 | 31,222 | 1,679 | 1,175 | 25,317 | 2,211 | 840 | 18,622 | 1,501 | 13,727 | 1,023 | 1,907 | 464 |
| 2011 | 340,252 | 23,089 | 1,719 | 1,084 | 17,994 | 1,545 | 747 | 16,067 | 1,567 | 11,773 | 977 | 1,394 | 356 |
| 2012 | 364,768 | 31,029 | 4,054 | 3,329 | 19,039 | 3,726 | 881 | 24,481 | 3,835 | 13,974 | 2,997 | 3,314 | 361 |
| 2013 | 420,789 | 47,397 | 8,694 | 9,009 | 21,247 | 7,134 | 1,313 | 38,833 | 8,068 | 17,240 | 6,747 | 5,990 | 788 |
| 2014 | 486,651 | 107,613 | 24,114 | 37,559 | 18,764 | 24,960 | 2,216 | 68,631 | 17,068 | 15,651 | 18,253 | 16,405 | 1,254 |
| 2015 | 337,117 | 62,167 | 20,787 | 11,208 | 13,360 | 15,505 | 1,307 | 40,035 | 13,599 | 11,026 | 5,414 | 9,396 | 600 |
| 2016 | 415,816 | 102,264 | 31,389 | 21,365 | 13,853 | 32,672 | 2,985 | 59,757 | 18,926 | 11,940 | 10,474 | 17,514 | 903 |
| 2017 | 310,531 | 82,769 | 28,153 | 19,859 | 10,181 | 22,479 | 2,097 | 41,546 | 14,855 | 8,894 | 7,799 | 9,147 | 851 |
| 2018 | 404,142 | 107,498 | 49,100 | 31,833 | 11,450 | 12,489 | 2,626 | 50,145 | 22,359 | 10,167 | 10,919 | 4,954 | 1,746 |
| 2019 | 859,501 | 321,708 | 127,190 | 118,187 | 14,054 | 42,019 | 20,258 | 76,136 | 30,361 | 10,513 | 20,405 | 12,027 | 2,830 |
| 2020 | 207,665 | 40,740 | 11,954 | 7,732 | 9,479 | 3,731 | 7,844 | 19,657 | 6,990 | 6,310 | 3,391 | 1,883 | 1,083 |
| 2021 | 621,472 | 293,218 | 79,984 | 86,570 | 22,709 | 26,352 | 77,603 | 140,230 | 57,808 | 20,686 | 39,502 | 15,291 | 6,943 |

What is Happening to Unaccompanied Minors now?

- Unaccompanied minors as young as 7 years old are being placed in holding facilities until they are transferred to the custody of the Department of Health and Human Services, which works to find them a safe sponsor—usually a family member in the United States—until their immigration case is decided by the courts.
- The law clearly states that children cannot be held in a Border Patrol holding cell for more than 72 hours. But because the system is so overwhelmed right now, children are often being held longer. And as holding centers overflow, children are being placed in facilities meant for adults, or even moved to temporary influx shelters in places like convention centers.

Mexico finds a crowded truck transporting nearly 70 migrants from Guatemala, mostly unaccompanied children, at a checkpoint in Mexico's northern Chihuahua state, which borders the US --January 27, 2023 teleSur

Out of 67 migrants crammed into the truck's trailer, 57 were Guatemalan adolescents, including 43 boys and 14 girls. The remaining were eight men and a woman and her daughter. All of the adolescents were considered unaccompanied minors, implying they had no parents or relatives with them.

On January 17, Mexico and US signed an agreement to expedite the reunification of migrant children who are in Mexican territory and have a parent north of the border. Feb. 05, 2023.

TeleSur—Photo Christian Lazzari Getty Images



FEMA assistance in building shelter beds for Unaccompanied Minors

FEMA

| WHERE | BEDS | CHILDREN | |
|------------------------|--------|----------|--|
| El Paso, Texas | 10,000 | 7572 | |
| San Diego, California | 1450 | 3130 | |
| Pecos, Texas | 1997 | 2986 | |
| Dallas, Texas | 1990 | 2851 | |
| San Antonio, Texas | 2010 | 2181 | |
| Midland, Texas | 700 | 1921 | |
| Donna, Texas | 1500 | 1800 | |
| Pomona, California | 1100 | 1233 | |
| Long Beach, California | 820 | 931 | |
| Carrizo Springs, Texas | 440 | 812 | |
| Houston, Texas | 500 | 481 | |
| Lackland, Texas | 372 | 455 | |
| Albion, Michigan | 224 | 397 | |
| Erie, Pensylvania | 150 | 146 | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| TOTAL | 23,253 | 26,896 | |

A little known fact—Children are still being separated from their caregivers and placed alone in shelters

Grandmothers, grandchildren separated at border, despite U.S. move to reunite migrant families



Rick Jervis

USA TODAY Jan 30, 2023

No tracking of nonparental separations



- Nonparents – grandparents, aunts, older siblings – are routinely separated from children at the border, despite federal efforts to keep families together, according to immigrant advocates.
- The families are separated under a U.S. law designed to shield asylum-seeking minors from child traffickers and other threats. But the policy often ends up breaking up families and traumatizing children, said Jennifer Podkul, of Kids in Need of Defense, an advocacy group.

Hilda Hernandez, 42, an asylum-seeker from Honduras, was separated from her granddaughter, Shayra, at the U.S.-Mexico border near Eagle Pass, Texas. Hernandez was released but Shayra remains in a federal shelter in Texas. *Casey Revkin, Each Step Home*



Nearly 130,000 unaccompanied migrant children entered the U.S. shelter system in 2022, a record

Camilo Montoya-Galvez October 14, 2022 CBC News



Alone and Exploited, Migrant Children Work Brutal Jobs Across the U.S.

Arriving in record numbers, they're ending up in dangerous jobs that violate child labor laws — including in factories that make some of the country's best-known products.

By Hannah Dreier New York Times February 25, 2023

- These workers are part of a new economy of exploitation: Migrant children, who have been [coming into the United States](#) without their parents in record numbers, are ending up in some of the most punishing jobs in the country, a New York Times investigation found. This shadow work force extends across industries in every state, flouting child labor laws that have been in place for nearly a century. Twelve-year-old roofers in Florida and Tennessee. Underage slaughterhouse workers in Delaware, Mississippi and North Carolina. Children sawing planks of wood on overnight shifts in South Dakota.
- Largely from Central America, the children are driven by economic desperation that was worsened by the pandemic. This labor force has been slowly growing for almost a decade, but it has exploded since 2021, while the systems meant to protect children have broken down.

“Twenty percent of kids have to be released every week or you get dinged,” said Ms. Keswani, who stopped working with H.H.S. last month.

Concerns piled up in summer 2021 at the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the H.H.S. division responsible for unaccompanied migrant children. In a memo that July, 11 managers said they were worried that labor trafficking was increasing and complained to their bosses that the office had become “one that rewards individuals for making quick releases, and not one that rewards individuals for preventing unsafe releases.”

Staff members said in interviews that Mr. Becerra, head of HHS, continued to push for faster results, often asking why they could not discharge children with machine-like efficiency.

“If Henry Ford had seen this in his plants, he would have never become famous and rich. This is not the way you do an assembly line,” Mr. Becerra said at a staff meeting last summer, according to a recording obtained by The Times.

Supposed to go to school all day, work all night.

Wander starts looking for day-labor jobs before sunrise. He is 13.



Unaccompanied minors lined up to go to work



Carolina Yoc, back right, worked on math problems after a night shift at a Grand Rapids food plant. The 13-year-old girl sitting next to her said she also worked nights at a factory. Photos by Kirsten Luce for The New York Times



Separated from parents at the border

Camilo Montoya-Galvez October 14, 2022 CBC News

Some migrant children in U.S. custody arrived at the southern border with non-parental relatives, such as adult siblings, aunts or uncles, rendering them unaccompanied children under U.S. law. Others traveled to the U.S. with parents, but were separated from them for different reasons, including concerns they would be sent back to Mexico if they crossed together.

Francisco, 15, Carlos, 13, and Diego, 4, spent several months in HHS custody this year after crossing the U.S.-Mexico border late last year. It wasn't until last month that the three brothers from Honduras were released to their mother in New York City, government documents reviewed by CBS News show.



'Thought we'd made it': new Biden rule leaves asylum seekers in limbo

[Nina Lakhani](#) in Mexico City Guardian 31 Jan 2023

- Those migrating from Nicaragua, Cuba, Haiti and Venezuela dumped back in Mexico after being expelled at US border
- A couple of days later, the vast majority of the group – which included women and children – were taken back over the border to a Mexican immigration facility in Piedra Negras.



A week later, González was among dozens of desperate people – including infants and children – from Cuba, Venezuela, Haiti, Ecuador, Angola and Afghanistan camped outside the headquarters of Mexico's refugee agency (Comar) in the country's capital, unsure what to do or where to go.



A Guide to Title 42 Expulsions at the Border




Since late January 2021, the Mexican state of Tamaulipas (which borders South Texas) has barred Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) from expelling families with children under the age of seven. In response, CBP has carried out “lateral” transfers by plane or bus to other locations along the border, such as El Paso, where Mexican authorities will allow the agency to expel families with young children. However, because the capacity to carry out “lateral flights” is limited, CBP has been forced to release the majority of families who cross the border in South Texas, despite President Biden’s prior insistence that he would expel all families if he could.

Before the practice of expelling unaccompanied children was blocked in court and then later formally ended by the Biden administration, CBP used Title 42 to turn away and expel nearly 16,000 unaccompanied children. These expulsions took place despite provisions of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act which require the government to protect children who arrive at the border without a parent or legal guardian.

REFORMA Children in Crisis response

Photos by Heidi Erik Tarbeck



Photos: Outila Guera de Cortes

CHILDREN IN CRISIS

Books for Unaccompanied Refugee Children
A Project by **REFORMA**
The National Association for Public Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking

The arrival of thousands of children from Central America seeking refugee status here in the United States has created a humanitarian crisis that compels REFORMA, and others to act.


Our goal is to 1) get books into the hands of these children, 2) create access to story time materials, and 3) to make recent arrivals aware of library resources available to them.


HELP US BRING JOY TO EVERY CHILD ONE BOOK AT A TIME!

Make your donation today by sending a check or securely using PayPal through our website:
(REFORMA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your donation is tax deductible as allowed by law.)

Mail a check to:
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Attn: CHILDREN IN CRISIS PROJECT
P.O. Box 832
Anaheim CA 92815-0832

<http://refugeechildren.wix.com/refugee-children>
&
<http://www.reforma.org>





**Al niño viajero,
a la niña viajera,
al joven viajero,
al padre o la madre viajera**



**To the traveling child,
to the traveling young person,
to the traveling parent**

La Biblioteca Pública es un lugar donde tú puedes encontrar muchas cosas que te serán muy útiles y agradables en tu nueva vida. ¡Y es gratis!

The Public Library is a place where you can find many things that will be very useful and fun in your new life. And it is free!

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- CDs y DVDs
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- Información acerca de los servicios que hay en tu nueva comunidad
- Clubes de lectura
- Ayuda para los deberes
- Bibliotecarias y bibliotecarios que te puedan ayudar a ubicarte.

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you light and comfort.***

Lucia Gonzalez

***This book is dedicated to all the refugee
children.***

A present from IBBY and REFORMA.



***Un libro es un compañero
que te da luz y cobijo***

Lucía M. González

Este libro está dedicado
a todos los niños refugiados

Un regalo de parte de



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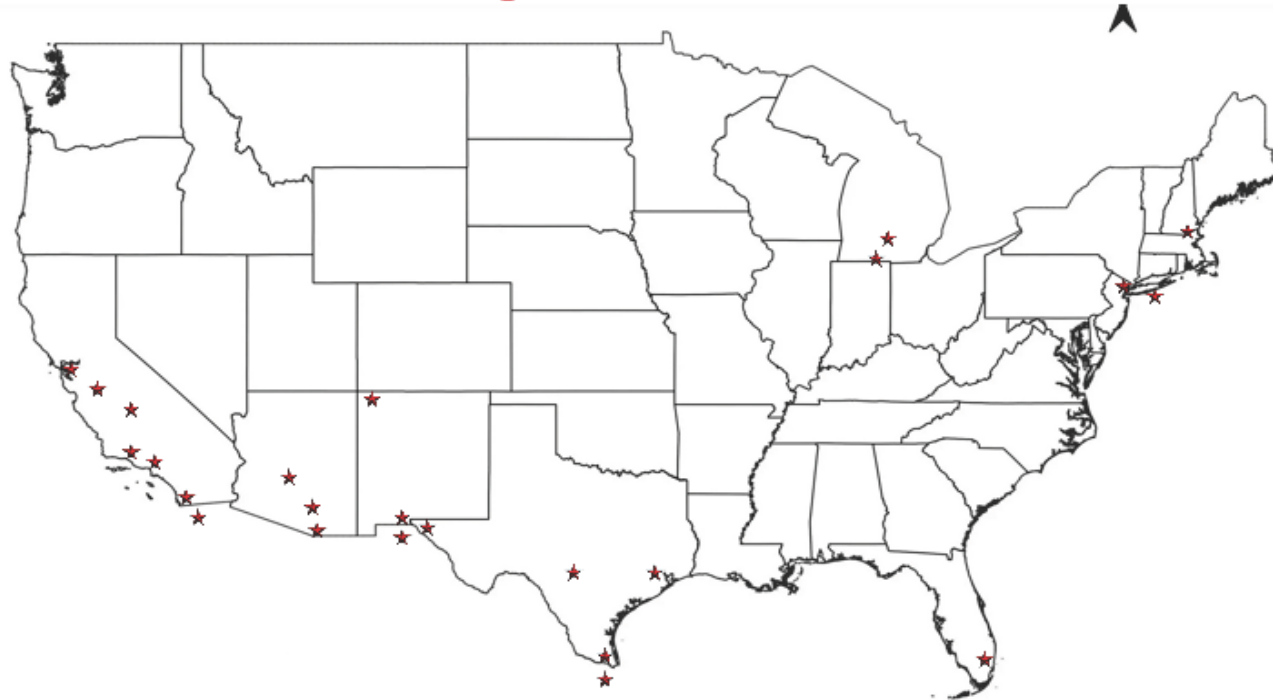
www.reforma.org www.ibby.org

One of the best things that we can do for a child in crisis is to read to them, to let them choose their books, talk to them, be a constant, faithful, reliable adult.



Where the donated books are going

**REFORMA's Children in Crisis Project
Reaching Out to Meet the Need**





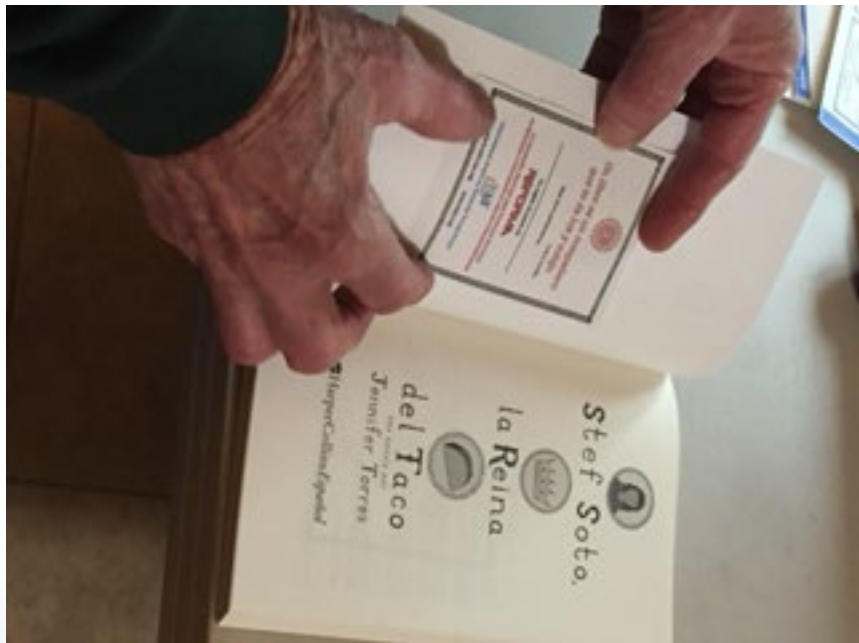
| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|----|
| Bethany Christian Services | Michelle Spencer | La Mirada | CA |
| KIND El Paso | Luis Enrique Jacquez | El Paso | TX |
| Casa Alitas | Ally Ramona | Tucson | AZ |
| Team Brownsville | Andrea Rudnick | Brownsville | TX |
| Endeavors/Pecos Children Center | Education Dept | Pecos | TX |
| Team San Antonio | Dr. Melba Salazar Lucio | San Antonio | TX |
| Bethany Christian Services | Faith Whiting | Houston | TX |
| Syosset Public Library | Jessikah Chautin | Syossets | NY |
| New York Public Library | Elisa Anais Garcia | New York | NY |
| Southwest Key | Liliana Tequida | Phoenix | AZ |
| Southwest Key | Ady Huertas | El Cajon | CA |
| Nevins Memorial Library | Elizabeth Borges Ocasio | Methuen | MA |
| Libros Para El Viaje | Denise Chávez | Las Cruces | NM |
| KIND Houston | Maira Herrera | Houston | TX |
| Bethany Christian Services | Roxana Martinez Mendez | Modesto | CA |
| Bethany Christian Services | Linda Renland | Fresno | CA |
| REFORMA New Mexico | Flo Trujillo | Farmington | NM |
| Samaritas | Kayla Park | Lansing | MI |

| | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------|----|
| REFORMA El Paso | Oscar Baeza | El Paso | TX |
| Deacon Bob | Deacon Bob Guerra | El Paso | TX |
| Southwest Key Brownsville | Jennifer Perez | Brownsville | TX |
| Southwest Key Brownsville | Juan Gandara | Brownsville | TX |
| El Pasoans Fighting Hunger | Food bank to Ft Bliss Shelter | El Paso | TX |
| Library of Dreams | Jorge Argueta | Daly City | CA |
| Cherokee Federal | Jessica Cheeseman | Pomona | CA |
| Casa Alitas | Sarah Reed | Tucson | AZ |
| Kino Border Initiative (KBI) | Ivette Fuentes | Nogales, | AZ |
| Florence Immigration & Refugee Rights Project | Annalise Parady | Phoenix | AZ |
| Starr Commonwealth | Julie Voigt | Albion | MI |
| Long Beach Public Library | Cynthia Bautista | Long Beach | CA |
| Ft Bliss via NLM Volunteers | Elena Leon | El Paso | TX |
| United States Committee on Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) | Elcy Valdez | Lake Worth | FL |





How donated and purchased books get to the children: they are shipped by donors to San Diego where name plates and IBBY library cards are inserted and finally shipped from Patrick Sullivan's garage.



The books go all across the border where volunteers read to, talk to and engage with the children.





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A book is a companion that will bring you light and comfort





Photo by Hendrik Terbeck



Photos: Orihela Garza de Cortes

CHILDREN IN CRISIS

Books for Central American Refugee Children

A Project by **REFORMA**
The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking

HELP US BRING JOY TO EVERY CHILD ONE BOOK AT A TIME!

These books were generously donated to REFORMA's Children in Crisis Project and SD Rapid Response Network by Mexico's Secretary of Public Education



HAVE NO BOUNDARIES

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Do Not Move
Will be Picked up
Sunday @ 6:00pm

Reforma
Books

Contribute to the REFORMA CHILDREN IN CRISIS PROJECT

- To donate books or money please go to:
- <https://refugeechildren.wixsite.com/refugee-children/donate>



CHILDREN IN CRISIS

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Or, donate through the
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United States Board on Books for Young People
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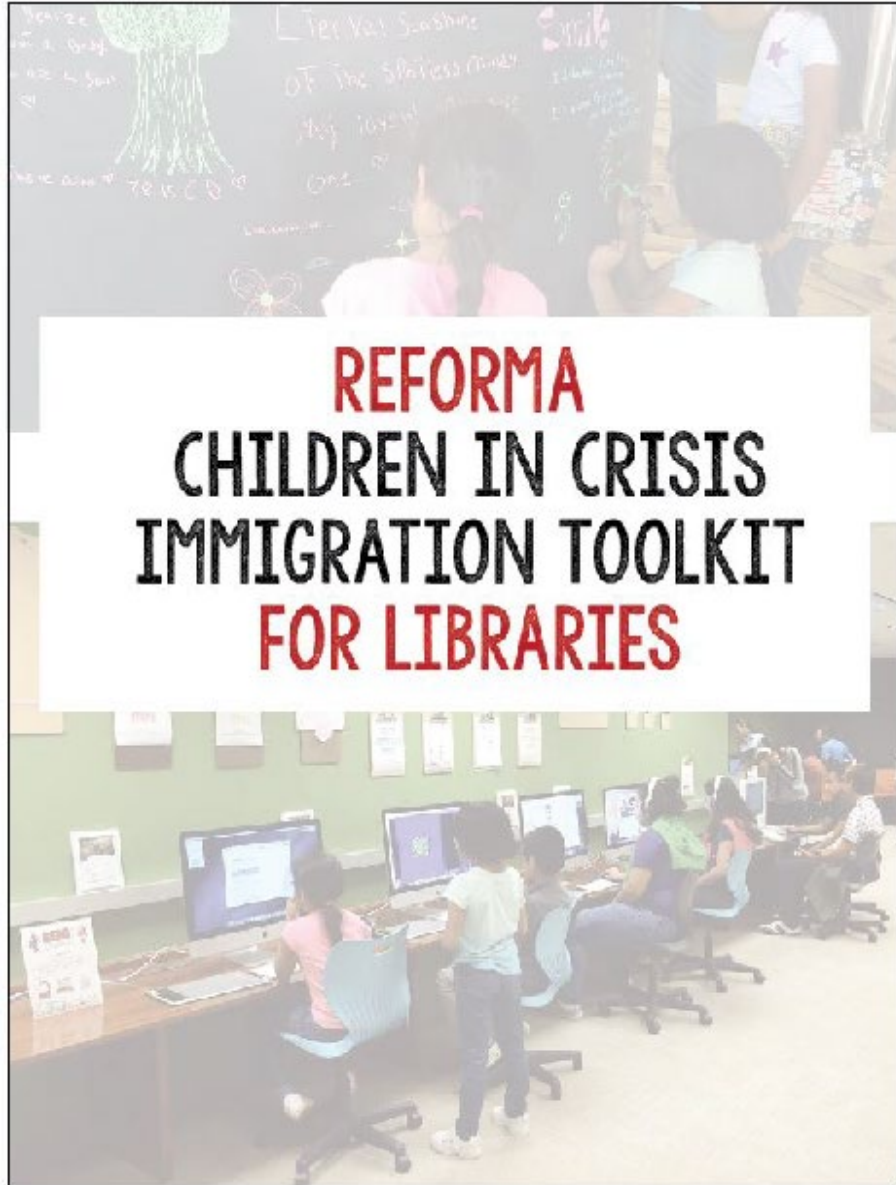
**IBBY/REFORMA Children in Crisis Project for Refugee Children on the U.S.
Southern Border
Reading Saves Lives Project**

The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), USBBY, IBBY Mexico, and REFORMA, the American Library Association and the Texas Library Association call on the US Government and the bodies responsible for the care of unaccompanied refugee children and families while they are detained in facilities and as they are released to allow them access to appropriate books, to have contact with Spanish-speaking librarians who are trained in using books as therapeutic agents, and to ensure that their well-being is monitored as they are processed through the system. Books and reading saves lives and give traumatized children a chance to become whole, contributing citizens as they grow up.

Children who are readers have better life long outcomes. Strong public libraries, access to appropriate materials, and a strong culture of reading promotion in communities help children everywhere live better lives. Poor children and those from ethnic minorities often lack access to this support, even in countries as wealthy and stable as the United States. And refugee children and those whose societies are destroyed by conflict and post-conflict situations have almost no chance to thrive and grow. This is not only deeply unjust, it is unacceptable. We can change this situation. We are calling everyone to join us to give these children who are suffering the chance they deserve to live good, positive lives.

Librarians Are Key Supporters of these children

Libraries play an essential role in helping these children, at the border and once they arrive at their final destination.



Al niño viajero,
a la niña viajera,
al joven viajero,
al padre o la madre viajera



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- NO SEPARATION FROM PARENTS OR CAREGIVERS
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SOURCES—the facts in this power point come from the following sources

- TRAC at Syracuse University: <https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/reports/687/>
- FEMA and HHS: <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2022-04/OIG-22-35-Mar22.pdf>
- Customs and Border Patrol: <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters>
- American Immigration Lawyers Association: <https://www.aila.org/research-library/?c=Unaccompanied%20Children>
- American Immigration Institute: <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/guide-title-42-expulsions-border>
- USA Today: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2023/01/23/us-immigration-migrant-children-grandparents-separated/11088510002/>
- The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/jan/31/us-mexico-border-aylum-seekers-biden-rule-change?CMP>
- teleSur: <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Rise-in-Unaccompanied-Migrant-Children-at-U.S.-Mexico-Border-20230205-0012.html>
- New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/25/us/unaccompanied-migrant-child-workers-exploitation.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>