



# LARC Resources about Labor Organizers and Farm Worker Movements

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## FILMS

### ***Banana Company***

Images of workers in banana fields are juxtaposed with interviews, archival footage and the poetry of Father Ernesto Cardenal in an exploration of Nicaragua's banana plantations. Icarus film. 1982. Film, English, 15 minutes.

### ***Bialet Masse: Un siglo despues***

An article written in 1904 by Juan Bialet Masse (doctor, lawyer, agricultural engineer, entrepreneur, investigator, and Spanish adventurer) revealed the abuse and injustice that workers and indigenous peoples of Argentina suffered. 100 years later and guided by the voice of Bialet, the producers went to the same country to compare the past and present in a town visited by Bialet Masse. Film, Spanish, 91 minutes.

### ***Children Without Childhood Mexico: Back Door to the Promised Land***

This program, produced by film for the Humanities and Sciences, examines the current economic and political struggle of poor families in Mexico post-NAFTA and the lives of their children. For some childhood means heavy labor as a migrant worker in northern Mexico while for others gang life on the streets of Tijuana. A compelling film about poverty, civil war, and the demand for cheap labor. 2000. Film, English, 45 minutes.

### ***Cooperativa sin fronteras: El primer paso***

Describes the work of the Inter-American Foundation to support grass-roots development in Latin America. This film focuses on the Mexican Cooperativa Sin Fronteras, a cooperative made up of migrant workers and workers in Mexico, and its successful efforts to fund community development in four Mexican villages. Includes instructor's guide in English with discussion questions. High school/college. Inter-American Foundation. 1987. Film, Spanish, 21 minutes.

### ***El Crucero***

An in-depth picture of a Nicaraguan coffee plantation in September 1984. Interviews with female farm workers, a farm union organizer, and others who work on the farm. Discusses the various issues: the role of women, food shortages, war, workers' demands, poor health conditions. Film, English, 60 minutes.



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### ***El norte***

The story of two young Guatemalans who flee political unrest in their homeland, dreaming of a utopian life in the US. Danger follows them constantly as they join many who illegally enter and finally they face the frustration of the life of migrant workers. Directed by Gregory Nava. Starring Zayde Silva Gutierrez, David Villalpando. 1984. Guide included which provides detailed lesson plans for each 10 to 15 minute segment of the film—Arobics, Inc. High Demand. Film, Spanish with English subtitles, 141 minutes, 49 pages.

### ***Granito de arena***

For over 20 years, economic globalization has been dismantling public education in Mexico. But always in the constant shadow of popular resistance. This is the story of that resistance - the story of a grassroots, non-violent movement of public schoolteachers who took Mexico by surprise and who have endured brutal repression in their 25-year struggle to defend public education. Film, English and Spanish with subtitles, 62 minutes.

### ***Guatemala: The Human Price of Coffee***

Coffee is second only to oil as the world's most valuable traded commodity, but small-scale producers rarely profit from it. This program reveals the hardship and uncertainty faced by coffee farmers in Guatemala, and how many are taking steps to obtain better prices and build better lives. Analyzing the country's traumatic history and the lingering effects of its civil war, the video sheds light on the reluctance of some citizens to organize for fear of persecution and murder. Part five in the Fighting the Tide series clearly demonstrates that behind every pound of coffee lies a story of human struggle. Film, English, 26 minutes.

### ***Halvan kahvin uhrin (Victims of Cheap Coffee)***

Collapsing prices on the world coffee market have plunged millions of growers in many countries into poverty. In Nicaragua, Rosa Maria Mendez buried her 6-year-old son, who had died of starvation. "We have nothing left but to wait for death", she says, as she looks after her five surviving children. Coffee plantation owners are bankrupt, the workers are starving. The programme reports on the victims of cheap coffee and tells about the consequences that collapse of coffee prices has caused in producer countries. The programme was filmed in Nicaragua and Vietnam. 2003. Film, Finnish with English subtitles, 50 minutes.

### ***Maquilapolis (City of Factories)***

Carmen Durán works the graveyard shift at one of Tijuana's *maquiladoras*; she is one of millions of women around the world who labor for poverty level wages in the factories of the transnational corporations. She lives in a dirt-floor shack, a single parent with three children. When the plant where Carmen worked for six years moved to Indonesia, they try to avoid paying the legally mandated severance pay. Carmen becomes a *promotora* or grassroots activist, challenging the usual illegal tactics of the powerful transnationals. Through sheer persistence Carmen and her fellow workers win the severance pay to which they were entitled by law. The filmmakers gave several women workers in Tijuana video cameras to make a record of their lives, giving the documentary the intimate feel of video diaries. Lourdes Lujan takes us on a tour of her *colonia*, Chilpancingo, which has the bad fortune to be located under a bluff from which dozens of factories expel hazardous wastes. Residents suffer from rashes, respiratory problems and an alarmingly high rate of birth defects. But Lourdes and her *compañeras* successfully pressure the Mexican and American governments to clean up a toxic waste site left behind by a departing battery recycling plant. In 2001 Tijuana suffered a recession of transnationals looking to cut labor costs even further, left for Asian countries. In the global marketplace workers are mere commodities. Directed by Vicky Funari and Sergio de la Torre. 2006. Film, Spanish with English subtitles, 68 minutes.



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### ***New Harvest Old Shame***

A PBS (Frontline special) documentary on the continuing plight of migrant farm workers and the forces that keep their lives so desperate. 1990. Film, 59 minutes.

### ***On the Map***

On the Map focuses on the movement of Guyanese people into Barbados, within the context of the Caribbean Single Market & Economy. Are failing economies forcing the poor to migrate at all costs? Un/documented migrants speak about their migrant experiences, exposing cracks in the dream and myth of the "one Caribbean" region. Images, sound, and data collide to create moments between raw testimonials of migrants, formal interviews, and passionate reflections. Directed and produced by Annalee Davis. 2007. 30 minutes. Spanish subtitled screening option. Film, English with optional Spanish subtitles, 30 minutes.

### ***Poto Mitan: Haitian Women, Pillars of the Global Economy***

Told through the compelling lives of five courageous Haitian women workers, Poto Mitan gives the global economy a human face. Each woman's personal story explains neoliberal globalization, how it is gendered, and how it impacts Haiti. And while Poto Mitan offers in-depth understanding of Haiti, its focus on women's subjugation, worker exploitation, poverty, and resistance makes it clear that these are global struggles. 2009. Film, English, 50 minutes.

### ***The Guestworker***

The Guestworker tells the story of Don Candelario Gonzalez Moreno, a 66-year old Mexican farmer who has been coming to the U.S. since the 1960s as a farm laborer. He is some twenty to forty years older than all the thousands of Mexican men who work in today's United States H2A Guest Worker program started in 1986. Despite his age, he continues to work long hours in tobacco, cucumber, and pepper fields, sweating and worrying-all for his family, particularly his ailing wife. He says he still wants to work "harder than all the others" as he did when he was a younger man, but now knows he just can't. Yet he is asked back, year after year, because of his commitment to hard work, his "good attitude" , and his long-term service to Wester Farms in North Carolina. We follow him through one grueling season, learning about one man's life in-depth, and through this intimate and personal story we learn about this little-known Guest Worker program. Directed by Cynthia Hill and Paul Thompson. 2006. Film, Spanish with English subtitles, 53 minutes.

### ***Troubled Harvest***

This documentary examines the lives of women migrant workers from Mexico and Central America as they work in grape, strawberry, and cherry harvests in California and the Pacific Northwest. Women Make Movies. 1990. Film, English, 30 minutes.

### ***Voices of Disposable People***

More than 300 million men, women, and children are being forced to work in conditions of virtual enslavement. They have lost all control over their lives, and their survival rests in the hands of exploitative individuals and corporations. When they are no longer productive, they are simply discarded, broken, empty, and humiliated. This program goes around the world to document the stories of disposable people: sugarcane cutters in the Dominican Republic, bonded laborers in India, and migrant workers in Miami, U.S.A., 2004. Film, English, 53 minutes.

### ***Zapatistas: The Next Phase***

The legendary leader of the Zapatista uprising, Subcomandante Marcos, speaks to thousands of Mexican workers and peasants in the remote Lacandon rain forest at the National Democratic Convention



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convened by the Zapatista leadership in August 1994. Includes footage of the Zapatista army and interviews. International Action Center. 1994. Film, Spanish/English, 23 minutes.

## PRINT RESOURCES

### ***Black Plague***

This documentary shows the destruction of the Amazon in Ecuador by Chevron/Texaco during their 20 years of oil exploitation. It also shows the campesino and indigenous movement in Ecuador against this giant oil company based in the San Francisco Bay Area. It was made for the International Campaign against Chevron/Texaco organized by Amazon Watch. 2002. Film, English and Spanish with English subtitles, 10 minutes.

### ***Bananeras***

The banana is a ubiquitous fruit, but many of us do not know how and by whose efforts it reaches our table. From the banana plantations of Honduras we find a new struggle that places women's human rights at the center of global class politics. There, women banana workers - mujeres bananeras - are waging a powerful revolution by making gender equity central in Latin American labor organizing. All told, their successes broadly re-imagine the possibilities of international labor solidarity. Over the past 20 years, banana women have organized themselves and gained increasing control over their unions, their workplaces, and their lives. In a vibrant example of transnational feminism at work, banana women from Honduras crossed borders to ally with workers in six other banana exporting countries, arguing all the while that empowering women at every level of their organizations makes for stronger unions and a more powerful front in the face of transnational corporations. Lively and accessible, *Bananeras* is a people's history of a vital movement in the worldwide struggle for human rights and global justice. Book, English, 137 pages.

### ***Breaking Through***

The sequel to *The Circuit*, Francisco Jimenez continues the story of his struggles as a child who lived in migrant workers camps in California. Here he narrates his struggles to stay in school and help support his family while working in the United States. Americas Award Winner. Book, English, 195 pages.

### ***Cesar Chavez: A Photographic Essay***

Chavez has become a hero, an icon, so it's difficult for people, especially young people, to understand him simply as a man. Esteemed Latin American scholar and writer Ilan Stavans, supported by 40-plus photographs from archival collections at the Cesar Chavez Foundation, restores this man's humanity so that readers can understand his struggles as a labor organizer and civil rights activist for farm workers. The book discusses his growing up and his family; his comadre Dolores Huerta, who stood with him from the beginning; his relationship with Dr. King and other activists in the broader struggles for civil rights for all peoples of color; and his insistence on being an activist for the rights of farm workers when so much media attention was given to the civil rights activists in the cities. Book, English, 91 pages.

### ***Child Labor is NOT Cheap***

This unit's three lessons focus on the 250 million children who spend most of their day on the job, including hundreds of thousands in our hemisphere who sew clothing and other goods for the U.S. market in maquiladoras. The first lesson can be used with SI LA 15 film C 01 "Zoned for Slavery," the second examines the conflict between corporate social responsibility and "the bottom line" through a role play exercise surrounding a U.S. athletic-wear firm with a plant in the Dominican Republic. The third explores



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student actions that are forging new policies and practices in the U.S. and elsewhere. Resource Center of the Americas. [www.americas.org](http://www.americas.org). 1997. Book, English, 40 pages.

### ***El otro lado***

A film made with the rare cooperation of large groups of Mexican campesinos as they walk into the U.S. to live as undocumented workers in citrus groves near Phoenix, AZ. Bleak Beauty film. 1978. Film, Spanish with English subtitles, 60 minutes.

### ***Strike! The Farm Workers' Fight for their Rights***

On September 8, 1965, in Delano, California, hundreds of Filipino field hands laid down their tools and refused to harvest vines laden with fruit. Led by Larry Itliong and the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, the field hands insisted on adequate wages for their demanding work. Their actions that Wednesday unleashed one of the most important agricultural strikes in US history. Soon Cesar Chavez and his struggling union joined the fight. Over the next five years, tens of thousands of farm workers demanded justice in the fields. Their strikes and boycotts led to unprecedented victories. But this was only the beginning - the farm workers' fight was far from over. In *Strike!* Larry Dane Brimner relies on oral histories, FBI files, personal diaries, letters, and newspapers to tell the dramatic story of the Delano grape strike and the rise (and fall) of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers of America. Book, English, 172 pages.

### ***La Patagonia rebelled***

Based on the novel *Los Vengadores de la Patagonia Tragica* by Osvaldo Bayer. A classic political film about repression in Patagonia in 1920 where troops are sent to pacify workers striking for better conditions and a better life. Directed by Hector Olivera. Starring Luis Brandoni, Osvaldo Terranova. 1964. Film, Spanish, 105 minutes.

### ***Los Trabajadores/The Workers***

Directed by Heather Courtney. "We build the buildings, we do the hardest jobs, and still they don't want us". These are the words of Juan Ignacio Gutierrez, a Nicaraguan profiled in the film *Los Trabajadores/The Workers*, winner of the International Documentary Association David Wolper Award. *Los Trabajadores* tells the story of immigrant day laborers, placing their struggles and contributions in the context of the economic development of Austin, Texas. Through the stories of Juan from Nicaragua and Ramon from Mexico, and through the controversy surrounding the relocation of a day labor site from downtown to a residential neighborhood, the film examines the misconceptions and contradictions inherent in America's dependence on and discrimination against immigrant labor. As Juan says, "they say Austin is growing, but thanks to whom?" 2003. Film, English and Spanish with English subtitles, 48 minutes.

### ***We Aren't Asking for the Moon***

The women garment workers of Mexico City are the focus of this 1987 documentary which shows their struggle to form a union and cooperative, and the impact of the 1985 earthquake. Icarus film. 1986. Film, English, 58 minutes.



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## CURRICULUM UNITS

### ***¡Huelga! A Social Studies Unit on the Farm Worker Movement***

The unit is centered on history and civics themes relevant to migrant farm labor movements. Students are exposed to history of the farm worker movement led by Larry Itliong, Cesar Chavez, and Dolores Huerta, and issues surrounding migrant workers today. Students are encouraged to apply civics concepts to explain the role of labor unions and evaluate the reliability of sources and evidence when conducting research. The curriculum also encourages sustained civic engagement through the organization of authentic community projects. This curricular unit contains six 75-minute lessons in Social Studies for grades 6-8. This unit was developed by Erin Lierl, who currently teaches part-time in a New Orleans charter high school while pursuing her M.A. at Tulane University's Stone Center for Latin American Studies.