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# THE GRAPHIX PROJECT

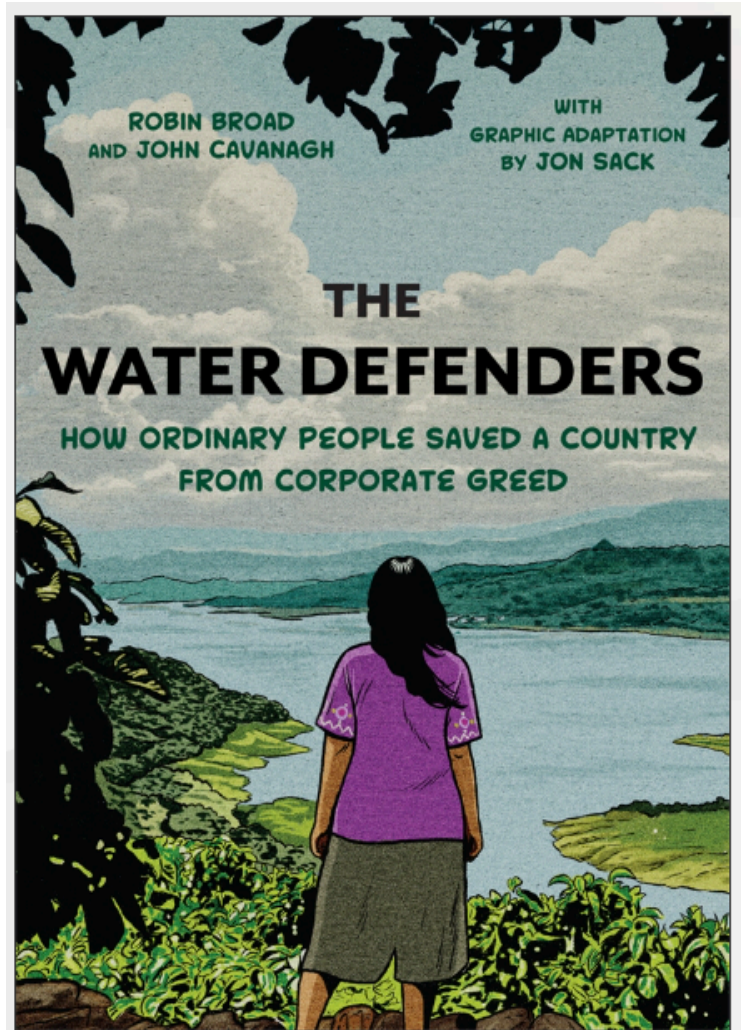
APRIL, 2026

Dear All,

After five years in the making, the Graphix Project will officially launch in May 2026 with the release of our first graphic book, an adaptation of the award-winning best selling book "[The Water Defenders: How Ordinary People Saved a Country from Corporate Greed](#)". This acclaimed book tells a David and Goliath story of ordinary people in El Salvador who rallied together with international allies to prevent a global mining corporation from poisoning the country's main water source. At a time when countless communities are resisting powerful corporations — from Flint, Michigan, to the Standing Rock Reservation, to Didipio in the Philippines — The Water Defenders tells the inspirational story of a community that took on an international mining corporation at seemingly insurmountable odds and won.

Writers Robin Broad and John Cavanagh drew on a decade of research, interviews, and experience to recount the harrowing saga. [Jon Sack](#)'s captivating new graphic adaptation brings the story to new audiences and with new urgency, as environmental progress and human rights have come under renewed assault around the world. This book is a blueprint for grassroots civil society and local-to-global activism, a story that will inspire anyone who feels helpless against corporate malfeasance.

Updated to cover the arrests of five water defenders under the ascendancy of dictator Nayib Bukele — because this fight isn't over.

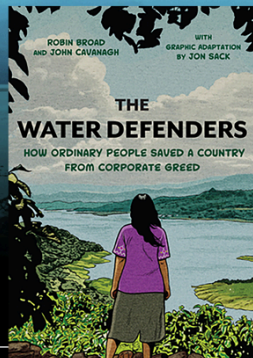


# BE THE FIRST TO GET THE BOOK!

**NEW** graphic version of the award-winning book!

## The Water Defenders

*How Ordinary People Saved a Country from Corporate Greed*



Embrace hope and preorder Robin Broad, John Cavanagh, and Jon Sack's **new graphic adaptation** of their award-winning *The Water Defenders*.

This **extraordinary, illustrated true story** brings alive the local and global networks that inspired a country to prohibit toxic mining to **save its rivers**. It offers many lessons for the critical campaigns against the unaccountable corporations and governments of today.

Paperback \$21.95 • Ebook \$21.95

Use code **WATER** at [www.ohiostatepress.org](http://www.ohiostatepress.org) for **30% off the paperback and free U.S. shipping**

👊 **Pre-Order via [Ohio State University Press](#):** use discount code WATER at checkout for 30% off and free shipping in the US at this link. The book costs only \$15.37 with the discount code. You can also preorder through your favorite indie bookstore, Order from [Barnes & Noble](#) or even through (gulp) Amazon. While we do not endorse them, Amazon recently changed its algorithm to prioritize external referrals, so by clicking [this link](#) and choose either wish list or preorder you will help us!

**Yearning to join these brave warriors & do more? We have ideas!**

👊 **1. Request a copy at your local library:** librarians are instrumental in getting books out to readers. And we didn't just write this book for sales; we wrote it in the hope that people would read it.

👊 **2. Share this book with a friend:** Whether it is our book or someone else's, tell people that you know authors with a book coming out! Word of mouth is one of the best tools we have.

**SAMPLE (ABOVE) OF OUR SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN**

👊 **3. Add it to Goodreads:** Whether their "want to read" shelf or set up a Goodreads "want to read" shelf.

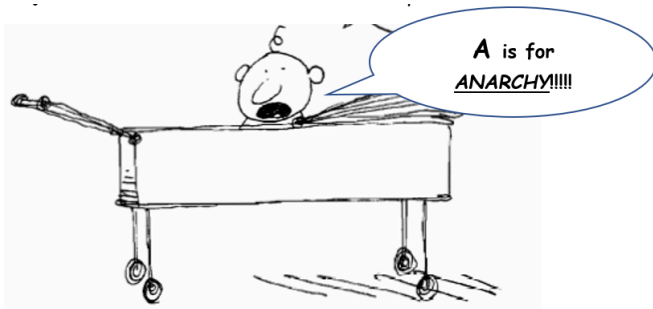
👊 **4. Write a short review!** Your individual reviews matter a great deal! A brief review on Goodreads and/or on retailer pages at Amazon and Barnes & Noble not only promotes our book but signals the book is attracting interest, which in turn promotes it in search results.

Thanks for the support for us and, by extension, the courageous people who take on vested interests around the globe. Your help will make this one triumph go far.



# Baruch COLLEGE

The City University of New York



IT IS BACK TO SCHOOL (CUNY) FOR A GP BUSINESS PLAN!

The Graphix Project has a vision to connect artists globally and leverage graphic novels and histories as a medium for human rights and social activism. Over the last five years we have established meaningful academic and artistic relationships but now need to focus on moving from vision to execution. For the last year we have been looking for a business school to help us develop a clear, testable starting point that can ultimately generate learning and connections, as well as inform future expansion.

As such we have partnered with CUNY's (City University of New York) Zicklin School of Business of [Baruch College](#). Zicklin is the largest business school in the United States, with more than 10,000 students enrolled in its programs. The purpose of this consulting engagement is to design and validate an ecosystem that demonstrates how graphic novels can be used to engage artists, students, and partners in social activism — and to translate those learnings into a replication playbook that can be used globally.

**Our Core Question:** What does a viable pilot ecosystem look like for using graphic novels as a vehicle for social activism within a university-based community, and what assumptions must hold true for this model to be replicated elsewhere?

## Project Scope

- Define a target ecosystem (e.g., a university community with relevant academic, artistic, and social activism stakeholders)
- Conduct primary research (interviews, focus groups) to test key assumptions related to:
  - Participant motivation and engagement
  - Partnership requirements
  - Delivery formats (digital, print, events)
- Develop a pilot-level business and operating model
- Produce a replication playbook for future pilots for countries around the world

## Key Deliverables

1. Pilot Ecosystem Definition
2. Research Insights Summary
3. Pilot Business Model

# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



UNIVERSITY OF  
**TORONTO**

The GP is actively following up with an exciting University of Toronto (U of T) partnership with their Centre for Media, Culture, and Education, which is part of the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Canada's top-ranked faculty of education. This year the project launched a SECOND! January to June capstone project with U of T's Faculty of Information in order to design a wireframe for the project's proposed multilingual, secure global platform.

The project challenged students to design a wireframe for a multilingual and secure global web platform that will fill a critical gap in the human rights ecosystem, enabling activists and artists world-wide to discover and support compelling causes and each other much more easily.

This platform will address a critical gap in the human rights ecosystem, helping artists and activists around the world discover each other, amplify powerful causes, and collaborate in creative resistance.

As part of the design process, the UX team is conducting both primary and secondary research, focusing on activists in a range of countries in order to:

1. **Showcase Creative Activism:** Highlight diverse forms of creative activism, emphasizing the unique cultural and social contexts in which they occur.

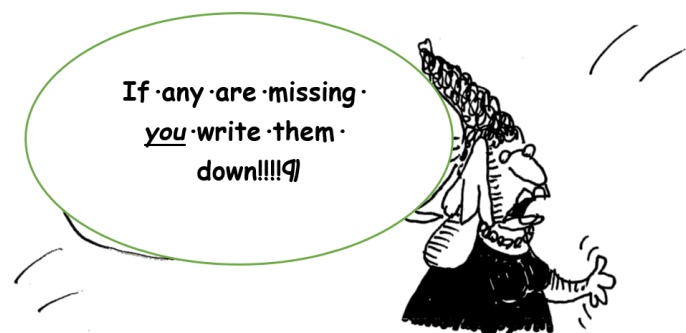
2. **Foster Global Solidarity:** Create a platform for activists to share their stories, strategies, and successes, promoting international solidarity and collaboration.
3. **Educate and Inspire:** Provide educational resources and visual storytelling to inspire new generations of activists and inform the public about the power of creative activism.

## Target Audience:

- Activists and community organizers
- Educators and students
- Nonprofit organizations and NGOs

In the process, students working on this initiative gained a deeper working understanding of how online platforms, comics, social media, and graphics can best be used to advance human rights.

The UX project team will conduct primary and secondary research to understand our users' perspective, initially in Canada, Ecuador and the Philippines, and share insights on the challenges they face.



# GRAPHIC BIOGRAPHIES & AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CANADA

The Graphix Project is now officially working with Amnesty International Canada and art students at both the Ontario College of Art and Design [OCAD](#) in Toronto (Canada's top art school) and the wonderful [Ringling Art school](#) in Florida. Based on the [Smithsonian Drawn to Art initiative](#) done with Ringling in 2023, this project will see students develop graphic biographies of environmental defenders from around the world for advocacy and educational purposes.

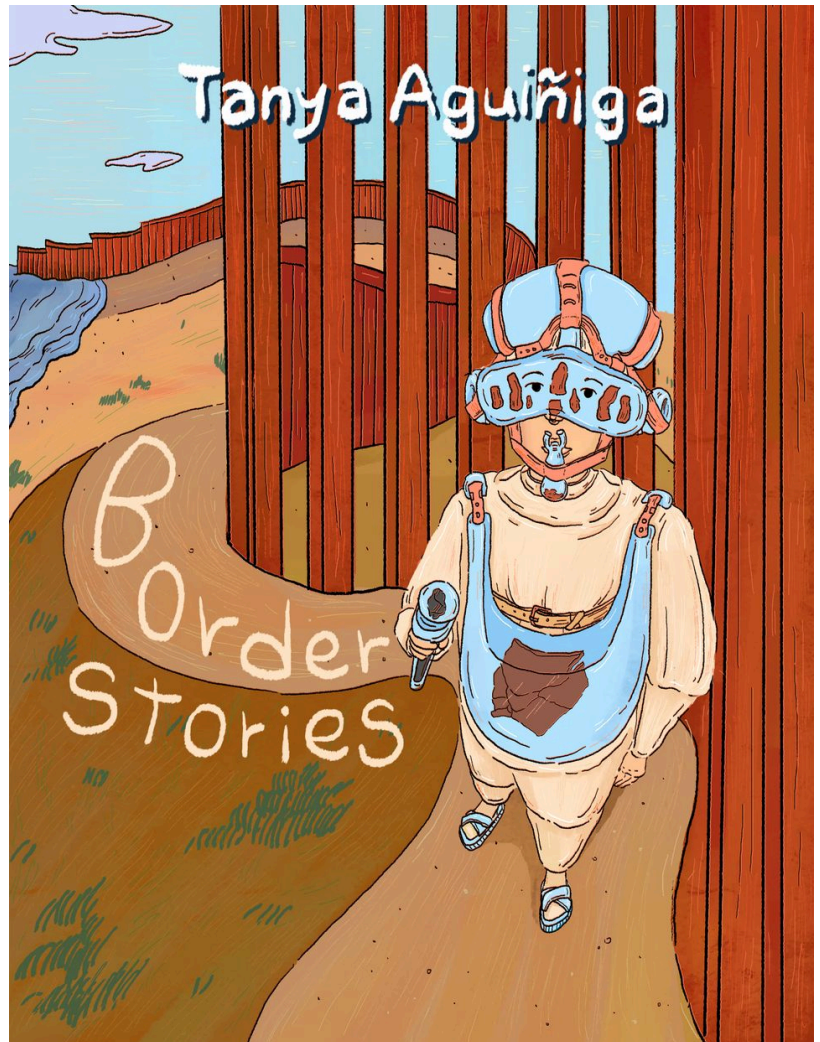
## Why the focus on Graphic Biographies?

Over the last five years, the GP led the largest global comics and activists research in history. We found young people are most keen to read stories of successful activists and their journeys; they have a burning desire to learn from one another; and ultimately, that there is a huge, untapped demand for comics that support activist training, education, and advocacy.

Graphic biographies are thus a powerful tool for sharing the experience of human rights and social activists with each other and the world. Blending visual storytelling with journalistic rigor, these comics make complex, often traumatic, stories accessible, empathetic, and engaging. As importantly, they protect artist and activist security by, where necessary, ensuring privacy. Comics can also act as a form of "graphic witnessing" to document history and serve as a record of human rights violations. Finally they can make complex or controversial topics accessible to a wider audience, along the way breaking down barriers of literacy and language. They are also easy to share and cheap to translate allowing them to be accessed in almost any country under almost any circumstance. By using this medium, stories of activism can be in effect transformed into educational and tools that foster vigilance and awareness in both digital and physical spaces.

## Why Environmental Defenders?

In an era of climate change and a break down of justice, it is often land and environmental defenders who are most at risk. Almost 150 land and environmental defenders were killed or disappeared globally in 2024, the last time statistics were compiled, according to UK based NGO Global Witness. The NGO estimates the total number of defenders killed or disappeared from 2012 to 2024 comes to at least 2,253. The vast majority (82%) of those killed come from Latin America, with 48 in Colombia, which had the most killings globally for the third year in a row. This is followed by Guatemala, where 20 defenders were killed in 2024 – up from four in 2023. At least 18 defenders were killed in Mexico and at least 12 in Brazil.



# CHANGING THE WORLD ONE CARTOON (IST) AT A TIME

## DEFENDING CARTOONISTS ON THE FRONTLINES OF FREE EXPRESSION



Extract: work in progress by Pedro X. Molina

## UPDATE ON OUR CARTOONISTS RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

[Cartoonists Rights](#) is the first global human rights organization to focus on the need for protection of cartoonists to carry out their work without fear of recrimination. Since 1999 their work has helped cartoonists all over the world with legal and financial assistance so that they can do what they do best; advocate against the injustices of this world.

Together with the Graphix Project, the two organizations in 2024 launched a groundbreaking initiative to raise awareness (and funds!) and support powerful calls to action on behalf of cartoonists in hiding or in exile. To date 10 stories have been commissioned and/or developed. Once completed this project will be launched with these multilingual biographies published in newspapers and web platforms, wherever possible beginning in countries of origin. A planned book is also in the works with [Fantagraphics](#), one of the world's top publisher of graphic novels.

To date \$20,000 has been committed to this initiative by both the Graphix Project and Herblock Foundation. Another \$20,000 is needed to complete this project. The latest commissions include:

- [MARIA ESTHER LEMUS CORDERO](#) – Cuban exile in Spain: one of several Havana-based cartoonists interrogated and ultimately forced to make televised confessions in 2022, concerning their work for a banned news outlet.
- [ALI DORANI](#)\* – Iranian exile in Norway: Ali (pen name Eaten Fish) was a detainee in an Australian "processing center" for "boat people" from 2013 to 2017. His story concerns his experiences there, including allegations of abuse.
- [WOOH HMO](#) – Burmese exile in France: Wooh's story focuses on an incident that occurred in Yangon in 2021, when a group of young protestors jumped from a building when raided by armed police.
- [PEDRO X. MOLINA](#)\* – Nicaraguan exile in the USA: Pedro's story concerns journalist Ángel Gahona who was fatally injured while live-streaming from the site of a heavily-policed protest in 2018. Multiple witnesses stated that the killer was a police officer.
- [RACHITA TANEJA](#) – Indian national, internally displaced: Rachita's story activist and Jesuit Father Stan Swamy, who died in Mumbai aged 84 in 2021, and after eight-months detention without bail accused of "terrorism".

Like with all but the luckiest refugees, forced relocation of a cartoonist at risk is often a traumatic experience entailing grief, culture shock and, unfortunately, disenfranchisement. In multiple locations (whether a cartoonist in exile or not) the refugee and asylum-seeking population are scapegoated and subjected to organized (and in the most extreme cases, state-sponsored) marginalization. At the project's heart, then is a spirited rebuttal to those who seek to restrict the freedom of expression of cartoonists and to create understanding and solidarity with all refugees and internally displaced people everywhere.



Extract: work in progress by Wooh Hmo

## IN BRIEF: Projects In GP Pipeline



### BOOKS

- GP has reached an agreement with Ohio University Press concerning a graphic adaptation of their [Ohio Short Histories of Africa](#). This is a series of biographies and introductions to African history written for the undergraduate classroom, with a secondary readership of teachers, journalists, and general readers. As a first steps the GP is exploring a graphic adaptation of their biography of Julius Nyerere with a small team in Tanzania.

### OP ARTS

- GP has submitted a proposal for a graphic explainer of Nicaraguan human rights violations to the New Yorker magazine - through the eyes of a Nicaraguan cartoonist in exile in the US who is seeing in his country of refuge, what happened in his country of exile in terms of XXX y
- GP has submitted a proposal for a graphic explainer on the Mediterranean Refugee Crisis to the Guardian.

Or

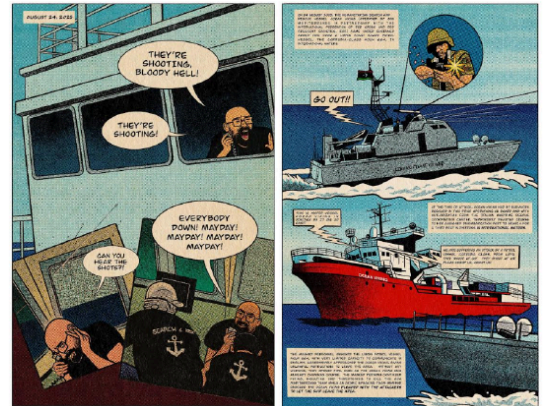
## Current projects In the GP Pipeline

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# THE END

