FORGOTTEN POPULATIONS OF COLOMBIA: INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT OF INDIGENOUS AND AFRO-DESCENDANTS

Social Work Challenges and Implications by:
Sebastian Melo [MSW to be conferred May 2013]
Mariam Toor [MSW to be conferred May 2013]

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Mariam Rohini Toorunjian, is an emerging social worker with 10 years of program management experience overseeing emergency crisis and transitional housing programs for youth and adults. She received clinical training through Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services and is currently a child welfare intern for Alameda County Department of Social Services. Mariam Rohini’s spiritual foundation is supported by the teachings of Amma “the hugging Saint”, Indigenous Worldviews, and mindfulness practice. She also works with a Kalyan Amitta Group at the East Bay Meditation Center, Creating Community Consciously exploring issues of race and class through a restorative justice lens and is an alumnus of the yearlong Commit to Dharma program at EBMC. Mariam Rohini is honored to work with community tackling issues such as child abuse and neglect, complex-trauma, resource scarcity, addiction, street economics, exploitation, grief and loss. With the emergence of the Dana Café, an upcoming monthly program, Mariam envisions the growing cultivation of generosity-based economics as a strategy to increase personal and community wellbeing.

Sebastian Melo was born in Medellin, Colombia. He is a 2nd year Master’s in Social Work student at SFSU and is currently an intern at Laguna Honda Hospital, his last year placement was at UCSF Community Focus. His past experience includes working with refugees at the Florida Center for Survivors of Torture as well as conducting HIV testing for the University of South Florida. He has been a needle exchange volunteer in San Francisco, since 2011. Sebastian has an interest in human rights with refugees, IDPs, returnees and vulnerable populations, international migration, intersectionality in social work, internal conflict and peace building strategies. He is currently a candidate for the INGO Peace Brigades International as a Human Rights observer/accompanier in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua, Mexico. Sebastian enjoys long naps, couch surfing the world and watching PBS; his future dream is to use therapeutic humor, mindfulness and laughter therapy to heal survivors of torture and war trauma.