

El Salvador

March 2024

Operational Update #3



Nidia, 46, used to be shy and hesitant to speak up. Now, as a community leader, she advocates for the most vulnerable.
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Key figures

Community-based protection

369 individuals assisted through UNHCR's helpline in March, and 1,142 in 2024.

446 people assisted at the Support Spaces in March, and 1,084 in 2024.

6,858 people reached via Support Spaces mobile units in March, and 20,277 in 2024.

*These figures are updated regularly and may change.

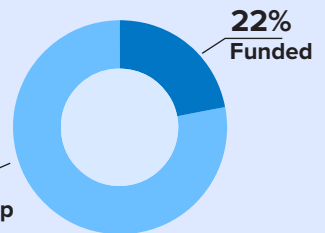
Cash assistance

277 households (977 individuals) at heightened risk received cash assistance in March, and 478 households (1,607 individuals) in 2024. This support helps cover basic needs and facilitates livelihoods and education.

Registration

240 people registered with biometrics in March, and in 882 in 2024.

Funding



22% of UNHCR's financial requirements for El Salvador received by 31 March 2024.

Highlights

- Twelve staff from the Ombudsperson's Office (PDDH) and UNHCR participated in a workshop on climate change and forced displacement. With the aim to strengthen the response and protection for people affected by climate-induced displacement, PDDH shared ongoing experiences and UNHCR socialized its Plan for Climate Action 2024-2030.
- To commemorate the International Women's Day, UNHCR and World Vision organized awareness-raising sessions on the challenges and opportunities towards gender equality with 150 people in communities in Apopa, Nahuizalco, Mejicanos, Santa Ana, San Miguel, San Salvador, and Soyapango. Also, 23 women at the community centre CUBO in Santa Lucía, Mejicanos, shared opinions and analysed women's contributions to strengthening support networks.



Women from different communities in Mejicanos participating in activities organized by UNHCR to commemorate International Women's Day.
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Protect

- Eighteen officials from the Attorney General's Office (PGR) and the Directorate for Attention of Victims (DAV) participated in a workshop organized by UNHCR on legal framework for the protection of internally displaced people and refugees.



PGR and DAV officials during a protection workshop organized by UNHCR. © UNHCR / David Ardón

- UNHCR and the Directorate for the Attention of Victims (DAV) defined a work plan for 2024. Activities include enhancing protection for internally displaced people and at risk of displacement through training and coordination for updating the 2018 Protocol of Attention to Victims, a key instrument for assisting people in vulnerable situations.

Respond

- UNHCR and Plan International outlined a strategy for the protection of children when displaced, at risk of displacement or with protection needs. The strategy defines a referral pathway for cases at risk and collaboration with national institutions to strengthen technical capacities.

Empower

- UNHCR and the Supreme Court's Judicial Facilitators briefed the staff from the local court and newly elected Judicial Facilitators in Jujutla, Ahuachapán; San Isidro, Morazán; San Antonio del Mosco, San Miguel, and Santo Domingo de Guzmán in Sonsonate. The sessions focused on rights and access to services, the work of the Support Spaces "By Your Side," and how to identify and refer cases in need of protection.

- Along partners COMCAVIS Trans, FUNDASAL, and World Vision, UNHCR launched local mappings with 43 prioritized communities and seven community groups. This exercise boosts community capacities to identify protection risks, available services, needs, existing community structures and actors.



People from La Pelota community in San Miguel during an exercise to identify needs, services, and community structures. © UNHCR

Solve

- Fifteen participants from San Salvador enhanced their entrepreneurship skills under the Creating Opportunities programme. This 40-hour vocational training designed by UNHCR and Fe y Alegría with technical support of the International Labour Organization (ILO), will boost youth livelihood opportunities.



Participants of the Creating Opportunities programme during the closing ceremony of an entrepreneurship training. © UNHCR



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“I used to be shy and hesitant to speak up. Now, I advocate for my rights and assist others in doing the same”.

Nidia’s journey: An empowering voice transforming her community.

© UNHCR / Markel Redondo

"All the difficult situations in our community made it hard for us to communicate," Nidia explains. "I felt I could do something about it," she adds firmly.

Living in a community previously controlled by gangs posed significant challenges for Nidia and her neighbours. Curfews and restrictions to freedom of movement, known as "invisible borders", imposed by gangs limited community members from interacting with each other. In this context, Nidia was a shy woman who avoided talking to her neighbours as a protection mechanism.

Her journey began three years ago when she learned about UNHCR's outreach volunteers programme through an informative session by UNHCR partner World Vision.

This programme comprises 76 community leaders, primarily women, who participate in leadership and community organization training and inform others about rights and services.

As Paulo Lugoboni, Associate Community-based Protection Officer, says: "UNHCR work builds upon women's own

resilience and strength". "Nidia's story is an example of the transformative impact of empowering women," he concludes.

Observing the absence of women in community activities, she resolved to address this disparity. "I realized women play a crucial role and I gained the confidence to advocate for the most vulnerable in my community," asserts Nidia.

Leveraging her newfound skills, she went door-to-door, encouraging people of all ages, especially women, to engage in community processes. Thanks to her efforts, more individuals now participate in meetings and decision-making processes.

Her actions motivated her neighbours to shape their future actively. "When people come together, they can find solutions to any challenge," Nidia reflects.

"I urge women to support each other. Look at me; I used to be shy and hesitant to speak up. Now, I advocate for my rights and assist others in doing the same," she concludes.

In 2024, UNHCR appeals for USD 28.6 million to provide protection, responses, empowerment and solutions to refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced persons in El Salvador. The best way to support UNHCR's appeal is through unearmarked contributions. Such flexible funding at the global level is key in allowing a timely response to evolving needs wherever required.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is grateful for the support in 2024 of:



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