UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

EL SALVADOR
MARCH 2025

Monthly Update #3

Yesenia, a resident of La Campanera, receives her diploma after completing digital skills training through the Creating Opportunities programme.
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Our 2025 response in figures

21,472 people
received support through UNHCR's helpline, Support Spaces and mobile teams

724 individuals
helped with psychosocial support and mental health services

1,910 people
reached through activities to prevent violence against women

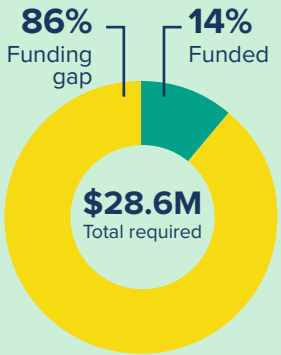
208 people
trained in skills for employment or self-employment, supported with vocational training or linked to decent job opportunities

248 people
registered with biometrics

*These figures are regularly updated and reflect cumulative data for 2025.

Funding

14% of UNHCR's financial requirements for El Salvador received by 31 March 2025.



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Highlights

- UNHCR joined the Directorate for the Reconstruction of Social Cohesion and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the groundbreaking ceremony of the Urban Centre for Welfare and Opportunities (CUBO) in Chancuyo, Ahuachapán. These centres promote educational and cultural activities that foster peaceful coexistence in communities historically affected by violence and forced displacement. The project aims to benefit approximately 12,500 people in the community and surrounding neighbourhoods. UNHCR contributed with equipment and materials, purchased in previous years, to support learning, cultural and recreational activities.
- As part of the International Women's Day commemorations, 16 women survivors of violence reflected on challenges and the importance of resilience in an event organized by UNHCR and partner Salvadoran Women for Peace (ORMUSA).
- UNHCR and World Vision briefed residents of the Zacamil and La Campanera communities in San Salvador about the "JuegaXLaPaz", a project by UNHCR with support from the Barça Foundation. Community leaders learned about the SportNet methodology, which combines sports, play as tools for social integration. This project aims to reach some 600 children and adolescents in six communities historically affected by gang violence and forced displacement in San Salvador and Santa Ana.

As conmemoration of International Womens Day, seventy five women nationwide participated from an activity promoting well being and selfcare tecquniques. © FUNDASAL

Protect

Community leaders from four departments joined a UNHCR-supported workshop led by FUNDASAL to strengthen their knowledge on Human Rights, Leadership, and Community Organization. © FUNDASAL

- Fifty community leaders from San Miguel, San Vicente, Santa Ana, and Sonsonate participated in a workshop on international protection and forced displacement as part of the UNHCR-supported Advanced School on Human Rights, Leadership, and Community Organization by partner FUNDASAL. The programme strengthens outreach volunteers' skills for peaceful conflict resolutions and to identify individuals with specific needs.
- Thirty-three case management nationwide staff of the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women (ISDEMU) enhanced their knowledge of international protection, case management, and referral pathways for individuals with specific needs through a workshop facilitated by UNHCR.
- As part of efforts to strengthen national protection systems, UNHCR led a specialized training on forced displacement and international protection for legal staff from the Internal Displacement and Childhood units of the General Attorney's Office (PGR). With enhanced capabilities, specialized staff provides legal assistance and information on rights to individuals seeking protection in El Salvador.

Respond

In coordination with CONAPINA, UNHCR has equipped the psychosocial support centre in Tutunichapa I to support children, families, and caregivers in communities affected by violence and displacement. © UNHCR El Salvador

- In San Salvador Centro, UNHCR coordinated actions with representatives of the Tutunichapa I community and delegates from CONAPINA to support the operation of the local psychosocial care center for children. These spaces, supported by UNHCR, provide individual and group psychosocial support to children, adolescents, families, and caregivers in communities historically affected by gang violence and forced displacement.
- UNHCR delivered 2,850 printed "Guides for the Care of Displaced Students and Teachers" to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MINEDUCYT), produced in 2024. As part of a MIRPS commitment, this tool will promote efficient responses nationwide for teachers and students affected by forced displacement.
- Seventy-five women leaders came together to share their life experiences discuss challenges , and learn self-care techniques in an activity organized by FUNDASAL's women's committee, with support from UNHCR. The Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women, ISDEMU, joined the event and provided information on available services for survivors of violence against women and girls.

In Las Margaritas, San Salvador, residents mapped protection risks and available local services. © UNHCR El Salvador

Empower

- UNHCR, in coordination with World Vision and FUNDASAL, conducted community mapping in prioritized communities in San Salvador, Sonsonate and San Miguel departments. These exercises are aimed at identifying protection risks, community structures, access to services, and key local actors, thus enhancing coordination among field actors and strengthening local response efforts.

People of all ages in Los Lirios, Cuscatancingo, took part in community mapping exercises to strengthen local response efforts.
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Solve

- Under the My First Job programme, eight youth internally displaced or at risk of displacement participated in a one-day workshop supported by UNHCR and facilitated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MTPS). The session focused on employment skills and soft skills development. Participants will soon be linked to decent job opportunities in the private sector.
- Through the Súper Pilas programme, 34 women from Panchimalco (San Salvador) and Nahuizalco (Sonsonate) began training to develop life and business plans to boost their small ventures. Led by UNHCR in collaboration with World Vision, this initiative expands their livelihood opportunities and contributes to the local economy in their municipalities.
- Under the Creating Opportunities programme, 17 individuals from the La Campanera community began an 80-hour training course to develop digital, creative, and leadership skills as Community Managers. In collaboration with Fe y Alegría, the UNHCR-supported initiative strengthens participants' soft skills and seeks to broaden their livelihood opportunities.

Through the My First Job programme, youth in Santa Ana participated in a workshop focused on employment and soft skills development.
© UNHCR El Salvador

In Panchimalco, participants of the Súper Pilas programme began training to develop life and business plans, learning about budgeting, cost analysis, and planning to strengthen their small ventures.
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STORIES FROM THE FIELD

“It’s never too late to learn and grow”

For Yesenia, the digital skills training opened new possibilities, equipping her with tools to support local businesses and take an active role in her community.
© UNHCR / Jacqueline Henriquez

Since 2022, UNHCR has been working in La Campanera to strengthen community leadership, prevent violence and forced displacement, promote livelihoods, improve communication with communities, and foster peaceful coexistence—among other key actions to support those who need it most.

In La Campanera, a community historically affected by decades of violence and displacement, access to opportunity can be life-changing. For Yesenia Ayala, a single mother and long-time resident, one such opportunity opened the door to a new beginning.

What began as a simple interest in learning basic computer skills became a stepping stone to broader personal, professional, and community growth.

“I came in thinking I would learn how to use a computer, but I discovered something much bigger: I learned how to use social media to start a business, to communicate, to grow,” she says.

Through the Creating Opportunities programme, supported by UNHCR and Fe y Alegría, Yesenia joined 17 other participants in an 80-hour training focused on digital skills, leadership, and communication for social transformation. But for Yesenia, the most powerful impact came not just from the content of the course, but from the chance to participate.

“This opportunity helped me overcome my fears and believe that I can aim higher,” she shares. “Now I have a new vision for my future and for my community. I no longer see social media as just entertainment, but as a tool for creating opportunities.”

Yesenia is now using her skills to support small businesses in her neighbourhood, helping them improve their social media presence and promote local events. She’s also become a vocal advocate for expanding access to similar opportunities for others.

“Many times, we think that being older means we can’t do it. All it takes is an opportunityto take the first step and dare to try,” she says.

UNHCR works alongside communities to favour conditions where individuals can pursue stability, growth, and self-reliance. In places like La Campanera, these efforts aim to strengthen local leadership, promote livelihoods, and foster peaceful coexistence and prevent forced displacement.

For Yesenia, a learning opportunity opened new doors. “Fear used to keep me paralyzed. Today, I feel capable of learning, of starting something new, and of imagining a future for myself and my community.”

In 2025, due to funding constraints, UNHCR in El Salvador faces significant challenges in continuing its education and employment support programmes, leaving many vulnerable individuals without access to decent livelihood opportunities. In this context, UNHCR remains committed to working with partners, national and local actors, to help forcibly displaced people and those at risk, rebuild their lives with dignity.

In 2025, UNHCR is appealing 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 2025 of:

Australian Aid | Belgium partner in development | In partnership with Canada | German humanitarian assistance | Irish Aid | KOICA Korea International Cooperation Agency | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC | UKaid | Peacebuilding Fund | UN-Habitat For a better urban future

Private donors: España con ACNUR

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