El Salvador
November 2023
Monthly Update #11

Youth from communities prioritized by UNHCR during a presentation of a play to raise awareness on gender-based violence.
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Key figures

Community-based protection

337 individuals assisted through UNHCR's helpline in November, and 3,886 in 2023.

370 people assisted at the Support Spaces in November and 3,395 in 2023.

6,362 people reached through the Support Spaces' mobile units in November, and 73,772 in 2023.

Cash assistance

658 households (**1,895** individuals) at heightened risk received cash assistance in November and 1,910 households (5,411 individuals) in 2023. This support helps cover basic needs such as food, rent, documentation, and transportation, as well as to facilitate livelihoods activities for economic integration and education.

Registration

277 people registered with biometrics in November and 2,493 in 2023.

Funding

55% of UNHCR's financial requirements for El Salvador received by 30 November 2023.

Highlights

- **Sixty community leaders graduated from the advanced School of Human Rights, Leadership, and Community Organization, a collaborative effort supported by UNHCR, FUNDASAL, World Vision, and COMCAVIS TRANS.**

Community leaders celebrating during their graduation from the advanced School of Human Rights, Leadership, and Community Organization.
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- **Between April and November 2023, 363 internally displaced people, at-risk youth, and asylum-seekers were certified in life and employment skills by specialists from the Ministry of Labour.** As part of My First Job programme, 136 of these individuals signed five-month apprenticeship contracts with private companies and were enrolled with the Salvadoran Social Security Institute (ISSS).

- **UNHCR and Clowns Without Borders USA held over 20 performances in San Vicente, Ilopango, Ciudad Delgado, Cuscatancingo, Valle Verde, Panchimalco, San Salvador, Mejicanos, La Paz, San Vicente, San Miguel and La Unión, in which more than 800 children and their families participated.** The performances promoted mental health in communities historically stigmatized by violence.

- **In the framework of the 16 Days of Activism, 30 youth from prioritized communities presented a play to raise awareness on gender-based violence.** This presentation is the result of a training programme on performance techniques to portray situations of gender-based violence that youth identify in their communities and surroundings.

Protect

- **UNHCR organized two workshops in San Salvador and Santa Ana for officials from the Specialized Unit on Human Trafficking and Smuggling within the General Prosecutor's Office (FGR).** The workshops covered topics such as mixed movements, international and domestic refugee law, as well as gender-based violence and human trafficking.

- **UNHCR implemented a survey tool with key actors at the border of El Amatillo, Pasaquina municipality, Santa Rosa de Lima and Intipucá in the eastern border with Honduras, and in the western border with Guatemala at San Cristóbal and Las Chinamas.** The tool is part of the border monitoring plan to identify territorial dynamics, mixed movements, and people in need of international protection.
- **UNHCR organized a workshop on international protection for 31 officials representing key institutions working at the Centre for the Attention to Migrants (GAMI).** Participants included officers from GAMI, the National Civil Police, the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women (ISDEMU), the Directorate for Attention of Victims (DAV), the National Council for Childhood and Adolescence (CONAPINA), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The workshop aimed to improve knowledge of the asylum application process in El Salvador, and the identification of people at risk.

Respond

- **UNHCR and World Vision conducted a workshop in five communities in San Salvador, Santa Ana, and San Miguel to develop community response plans for climate-related disasters.** In collaboration with the General Directorate for Civil Protection, UNHCR trains prioritized communities to empower them for risk identification and response planning in case of disasters.

Empower

- **UNHCR and the Comprehensive Emotional Intelligence Centre (CIIE) organized a community mental health activity in Brisas del Jiboa, San Vicente, with a focus on children, youth, and elderly people.** The initiative seeks to promote social cohesion and provide support for individuals affected by historical violence in the community. This event was organized in response to the needs identified in the 2023 participatory assessments.

Youth interacting during a mental health activity in Brisas del Jiboa, San Vicente. © **CIIE**

- **UNHCR held a workshop with partners on Accountability to Affected Population (AAP).** Thirty-five people participated in the activity to consolidate a joint AAP system and agreed on a new community-based complain mechanism, currently piloted at two community centres CUBOs. The community based complaint mechanism enhances its safety, transparency, and effectiveness through cultural adaptations and inclusion of different population groups.
- **In the framework of World Children's Day, UNHCR, in collaboration with SOS Children's Villages, presented the play *La Travesía de Gualcho* "Gualcho's Journey". This performance was inspired by the book *Te cuento, mi cuento***, and is part of a joint initiative with UNICEF, supported by the European Union. The play seeks to raise awareness on forced displacement, integration, and resilience.

Presentation of the play "La Travesía de Gualcho" in San Salvador. © **UNHCR/Jacqueline Henríquez**

Solve

- **The last groups of the 2023 Súper Pilas programme involving 170 participants, concluded their training and received their diplomas.** The three-month course included psychosocial orientation and training on the ILO's IMESUN methodology. From February to November 2023, 476 participants in seven municipalities, including people internally displaced or at risk of displacement, asylum-seekers, and refugees successfully concluded the programme.

UNHCR staff registering participants in the My First Job Programme and identifying protection needs. ©**Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion**

- **UNHCR and World Vision participated in the Women Entrepreneurs Fair in the municipality of San Miguel, as part of the "MercaMujer" initiative.** Ten women entrepreneurs, who received seed capital from the Súper Pilas Programme, showcased their products at the event.

"Your life is magical."

The message of hope Clowns Without Borders USA brought to communities in El Salvador

"We can see the community's need for joyful moments, to share with children, to share laughter, something that couldn't be done before," explained Manuel, a community leader in San Vicente. "We used to only see sad faces due to various circumstances. Now we are trying to coexist with neighbours, our families, and even neighbouring communities, something that couldn't be done before. We used to live in isolation," he added.

Children in a shelter enjoying joyful momments during the presentation of Clowns Without Border USA in San Salvador. © **UNHCR/Franklyn Ruiz**

UNHCR and Clowns Without Borders USA brought laughter, wonder and joy during two weeks to communities historically affected by violence.

Over 800 people in communities across the departments of Santa Ana, Sonsonate, San Salvador, La Libertad, La Paz, San Vicente, San Miguel, and La Unión enjoyed 21 performances during this tour, which took place between 9 October and 12 November.

In El Salvador, UNHCR collaborates closely with communities, the Government, and civil society to empower individuals and their communities, promote peaceful coexistence, and create opportunities for all.

Through smiles, the collaboration between Clowns Without Borders USA and UNHCR supported the mental health of those affected by forced displacement, including internally displaced, refugee children, and asylum-seekers in the country. The activity also contributed to resilience and strengthened social ties in historically stigmatized communities.

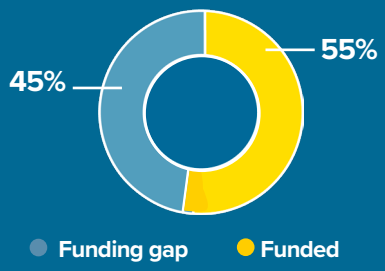
"At UNHCR, we believe that community integration is a powerful tool for protection. We joined Clowns Without Borders USA on this tour, bringing joy to girls and boys, adolescents, young people, adults, and older people in communities prioritized by UNHCR," expressed Monica Tse Cándido, Deputy Representative for Protection at UNHCR in El Salvador.

UNHCR promotes psychosocial support and mental health activities through community work, collaborating closely with government entities, partner organizations, and the communities themselves.

The message of "Your life is magical," resonated with the communities, that enjoyed and embraced the uplifting message that Clowns Without Borders USA shared in their performances.

Funding

- **In 2023, UNHCR is appealing for USD 26 million to provide protection, response, 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 global level is key in allowing a timely response to the evolving needs wherever required.



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