El Salvador
September 2023
Monthly Update #9

At the MIRPS learning event, the countries exchanged experiences and learned about El Salvador's good practices in psychosocial support services.
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Key figures

Community-based protection

366 individuals assisted through UNHCR's helpline in September, and 2,666 in 2023.

327 people assisted at the Support Spaces in September and 2,200 in 2023.

5,410 people reached via Support Spaces mobile units in September, and 61,693 in 2023.

Cash assistance

139 households (**289** individuals) at heightened risk received cash assistance in September and 1,548 households (4,198 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

347 people registered with biometrics in September and 1,902 in 2023.

Funding

51% of UNHCR's financial requirements for El Salvador received by 18 September 2023.

Highlights

- **El Salvador hosted a two-day learning event on mental health services for displaced people, organized by the MIRPS, the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework.** Members of the MIRPS, which is a regional application of the Global Compact on Refugees, and the MIRPS Support Platform countries, shared experiences, and best practices. Attendants also visited the Support Space 'A tu Lado' in San Salvador, the community centre-CUBO in Santa Lucía and ISDEMU's Ciudad Mujer programme in San Martín. The United States, as Chair of the MIRPS Support Platform, launched the guidelines to support in the region future projects on mental health services or employment initiatives.

- **UNHCR, the Secretary of the National Asylum Commission (CODER), and the Civil Registry (RNPN) marked the end of a training cycle on international protection to border officers at an event in the Monseñor Romero International Airport.** UNHCR supported nine training days in seven border points between June and September, reaching 250 public officers of the General Directorate for Migration and Foreigners (DGME), the General Customs Directorate of El Salvador (DGA), the Autonomous Port Executive Commission (CEPA), the Solidarity Fund for Health (FOSALUD) and the National Civil Police (PNC).

- **UNHCR delivered computers and audio equipment, musical instruments, books, office furniture and sporting goods to the Directorate for the Reconstruction of Social Cohesion for ten community centres CUBOS and one Community Integration Centre CIC in Ilobasco.** This support is part of a joint strategy to mitigate risks of violence for youth and to provide opportunities for population living in communities historically affected by gang violence and forced displacement.

250 public officials strengthened their capacities to ensure that people seeking asylum in El Salvador access information, guidance and support.
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Protect

- **UNHCR supported the signing of a cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Customs Directorate of El Salvador.** This agreement represents an opportunity to increase knowledge on asylum by customs officials, who are usually the first contact for asylum-seekers upon arrival in the country. This agreement contributes to the fulfilment of El Salvador's commitments under the MIRPS National Action Plan.

- **UNHCR met with authorities of several municipalities of Santa Ana and Chalatenango departments, as part of the border monitoring strategy to identify mixed movement trends and to ensure access to asylum.** Local authorities agreed to identify and refer individuals in need of international protection to UNHCR and partners.

The signing of the agreement is an opportunity for the General Customs Directorate of El Salvador staff to receive comprehensive training on the right to asylum in El Salvador.
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Respond

- **The Protection Sector, led by UNHCR, along the National Directorate for Shelter trained 350 institutions delegates on protection and human rights factors in the management of temporary shelters.** Training targeted national and local authorities across the country in eight sessions.

Empower

- **UNHCR participated with a Mobile Unit A tu Lado in a fair organized in San Miguelito, Tutunichapa, (San Salvador) under the Territorial Activation Plan (Plan de Activación Territorial).** The Activation, which is led by the National Council for Childhood and Adolescence (CONAPINA), gathers national institutions at historically excluded neighbourhoods to bring services closer to population. During the fair, the Mobile Unit informed 140 people on the prevention of displacement and the available support services.

- **UNHCR and the Comprehensive Centre for Emotional Intelligence (CIIE) conducted a mental health session for 20 young people from Rio Zarco and Lamatepec communities, in Santa Ana.** This activity is part of the “Psico-Apoyarte” project, which offers mental health support in stigmatized communities.

- **UNHCR in coordination with the National Comprehensive Council for Elderly People (CONAIPAM) carried out four workshops with 74 outreach volunteers working in 51 communities throughout the country.** The training focused on the Special Law for the Protection of the Rights of Elderly People and helped participants to identify and find ways to eradicate violence and discrimination against older people at work, community, family, and institutional environments. UNHCR plans monthly workshops.

- **UNHCR and World Vision held a closing ceremony for the first phase of the Community Sports Programme (DECO) in La Presita and Milagros de la Paz in San Miguel.** This phase engaged 150 children and adolescents to prevent forced recruitment and provide psychosocial support. Follow-up soccer tournaments and activities will continue in these communities.

The “Psico-Apoyarte” project offers and mental health workshops offer young people a space to learn and receive emotional support.
© **UNHCR/Centre for Emotional Intelligence (CIIE)**

Solve

- **Over one hundred young people in Santa Ana, Soyapango and Zacamil completed their entrepreneurship course through UNHCR-Fe y Alegría Creating Opportunities programme.** The diploma certifies participants completed ILO’s IMESUN training methodology on entrepreneurship. These young people received this course while participating in technical vocational education programmes to improve their competencies for employment and self-employment.

- **Twenty-two youth IDP, at risk of displacement, and residents from San Miguel, Usulután, Morazán, and La Unión participated in My First Job programme's youth employment route.** Participants obtained a certificate in work skills provided by the Ministry of Labour. Since 2021, 1,135 individuals have received guidance and soft skills training for employment, of which 616 young people received apprenticeship contracts.

Stories from the field

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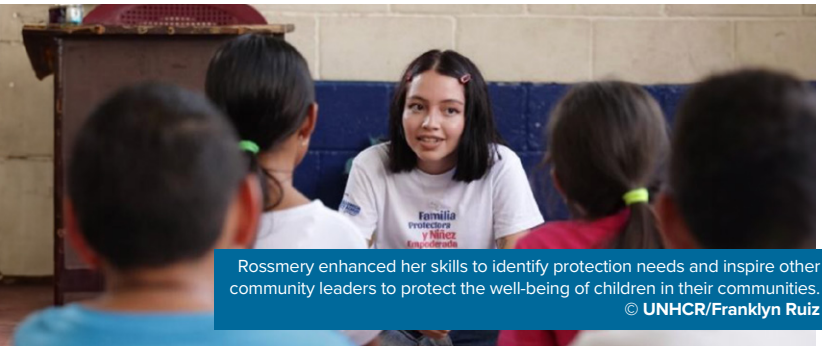
Community committees apply best practices in protecting children from forced displacement



Rossmery enhanced her skills to identify protection needs and inspire other community leaders to protect the well-being of children in their communities.
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Rossmery has always had a passion for learning and participating in activities, especially when it comes to human rights.

"I was 16 years old when I learned that in our municipality there was a group of people that met to discuss children's risks. I always wanted to be part of that", she says. However, she had to wait until she turned 18 to apply and join the Local Committee for Children' and Adolescent' Rights (or CLD) in her municipality, Chalchuapa, located in the western region of El Salvador.

The local committees bring together representatives from educational and healthcare institutions, local government, and community volunteers. These committees advocate for the rights of children and adolescents in each municipality. Additionally, they develop municipal plans and activities aimed at protecting children.

In El Salvador, the impact of decades of violence led to a complex situation of internal and cross-border forced displacement. In response to this situation, UNHCR collaborates with institutions, communities, organizations, and society at large to facilitate access to protection and solutions for those forced to flee, including a special emphasis on the needs of children.

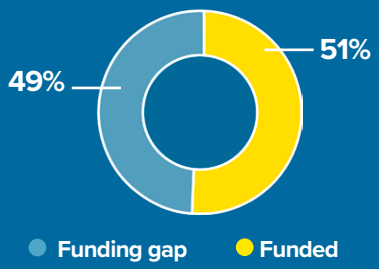
Thanks to the European Union's "Global Promotion of Best Practices for Children in Migration" programme, jointly implemented by the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, and UNHCR, in El Salvador, México, Zambia and South Africa, the responses to the needs of children and adolescents affected by displacement have been reinforced.

Like Rossmery's experience, 110 members from local committees in seven municipalities participated in a capacity-building programme between 2021 and 2023. This programme enhanced their knowledge in children's and adolescents' rights, forced displacement, and community leadership. Through a training programme developed by UNHCR and SOS Children's Villages, members of these committees in the departments of San Salvador, Santa Ana, San Vicente, and San Miguel improved their abilities to identify needs, refer cases to to specialized authorities, and inspire other community leaders to join efforts aimed at protecting the well-being of children in El Salvador.

Rossmery holds a dream that motivates her every day: to see all local committees across the country grow stronger and work effectively in preventing the forced displacement of children. "My dream is that no child is ever forced to flee their home," she asserts with determination. "And if any risks arise, that we act quickly, now that we have expanded our knowledge," she adds.

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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