FACTSHEET

COSTA RICA: Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion

As of October 2024

Context

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UNHCR in Costa Rica works to ensure the **social and economic inclusion** of refugees and asylum-seekers by promoting their access to formal and decent **employment opportunities**, as well as **income generation** initiatives. Efforts are focused in the Metro Area (GAM) and the Northern Region.

The ***Vivir la Inclusión*** **(Living Inclusion)** framework brings together public and private sector initiatives to enhance employability, support entrepreneurship, and boost financial inclusion for forcibly displaced populations, under a **whole-society approach**.

Living Inclusion (VLI) Spirit

From July 2024, the sixth edition of the **Living Inclusion** (VLI) **Award** developed its application process, whose submission stage was finalized in November; thus, the evaluation phase is well underway. This year, a total of **41 nominations** were submitted, including **12 organizations** applying for consideration for the first time, highlighting the success of the Award's rebranding and communication strategy:

The VLI Seal continues to promote an all-society, shared responsibility approach, where the private sector and civil society organizations play a key role in the economic inclusion of those forced to flee.

Breakdown of Submissions:

- **20 private sector organizations**, 10 of which are first-time applicants.
- **7 non-profit organizations** and civil society actors.
- **8 academic nominations**.
- **5 public sector institutions**.

Award's categories:

Staff selection and recruitment / Staff development and training / Value-chain / Inclusion and Diversity / Research

For this edition, a distinct approach was implemented. The Livelihoods team called upon an **internal, multi-functional evaluation committee** to gather insights regarding the nominations and the overall strategy of the VLI Award. This committee included colleagues from various units, such as Protection, Information Management (IM), Programme, Registration, External Relations, Development, as well as representatives from field units in Upala and Los Chiles.

The diverse participation in this internal committee provided **broad visibility for the projects identified by the Award** within the organization, and offered valuable inputs for discussions with the external evaluation committee, setting the strategy for 2025 and exploring ways to **improve collaboration between units** going forward.

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2024 Achievements

People Reached: Over **3,470 individuals benefitted** from training, advisory services and grants for employability and entrepreneurship.

Training:

- **715 completed certified courses,** including digital literacy and business management.
- **711** trained in **financial health.**
- **137** trained through **job interview workshops**

Grants for Livelihoods:

- **126 grants awarded (71** for training, **28** for individual initiatives, e.g. seed capital, and **2** collective grants for community-based agricultural projects).

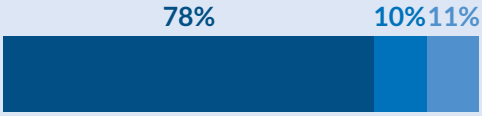
Profile of Beneficiaries:

Gender

61% women
39% men

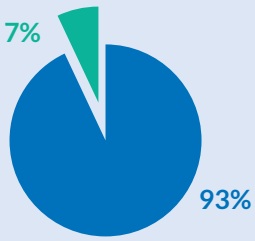
Nationality

78% Nicaraguans
10% Venezuelans
11% Others



Residence

93% Metro Area
7% Northern Region



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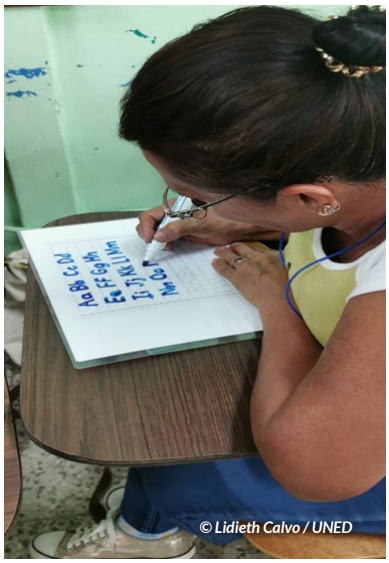
Strategic Partnerships: Public sector

INS Group:

- **Healthcare:** Second Health Day for Refugee Women, providing specialized medical services and workshops on nutrition and mental health to 10 participants.
- **Financial Inclusion:** First Financial Inclusion Day, training 20 entrepreneurs in savings, insurance, and formalizing small businesses.

Public Universities:

- **National Distance Learning University (UNED):** Basic literacy program for 25 participants in Desamparados canton.
- **National Technical University (UTN):** Language (English) and thematic (animal production) courses for groups in Los Chiles canton and Finca Las Melinas, Upala canton.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Fieldwork

UNHCR, in partnership with organizations like ***Fundación Omar Dengo*** and **National Institute for Learning (INA)**, has supported rural communities by:

- Strengthening digital and business management skills.
- Developing investment plans for crops such as corn, cassava, and beans through two collective grants.

These initiatives promote the **sustainability of refugee-led businesses** and their integration into local economies.

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As of 15 November 2024

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