**Report to Congress on
Effectiveness of Northern Triangle Programming
Consistent with section 7019(e) of the Department of State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2024 (Div. F, P.L.
118-47) and House Report 118-146**

FY 2023 was the second full year of implementation of the U.S. Strategy to Address the Root Causes of Migration in Central America (Root Causes Strategy, or RCS). State and USAID collected and analyzed context data (referred to as "country commitment metrics") and FY 2023 interagency performance data to inform policymakers as they monitor and assess progress toward achieving the objectives of the RCS. New features of this report include analysis of trends in performance since 2021; summaries of the results associated with diplomatic engagement in Central America, particularly northern Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras); findings of relevant evaluations, assessments, or studies; and success stories linked to key RCS achievements.

Notable Fiscal Year 2023 Achievements

On 15 of the 21 key performance metrics, results were very robust (for seven metrics, departments and agencies exceeded annual targets and reported increased results two consecutive years) or robust (for eight metrics, departments and agencies exceeded annual targets, but results decreased from previous years). For the remaining six metrics, results were somewhat robust (four metrics) or declining (two metrics). Highlights, by pillar, include:

Pillar I: Addressing economic insecurity and inequality

U.S. government programming supported more than 12,000 private firms to expand investment and increase employment in northern Central America, nearly doubling reach since 2021. This support helped create or sustain more than 70,000 jobs in areas of high out-migration and among focus groups (e.g., women and youth), and generate more than $500 million in agricultural and non-agricultural sales.

Programming helped create greater food and income security, and resilience to environmental and economic shocks through helping more than 130,000 farmers in northern Central America utilize innovative technologies to increase their production and income. Nearly 328,000 students were reached through provision of food commodities and/or school rehabilitation, and more than 125,000 children under age five were given critical nutrition assistance to treat malnutrition and improve child survival.

In FY 2023, U.S. government programming reached more than 220,000 primary and secondary students in high out-migration municipalities in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras with programs aiming to improve math and reading skills, keep youth in school, and boost completion rates. For example, in 2023, a USAID activity in Guatemala that recruited youth to serve as reading tutors for younger learners recorded a 17-point increase over baseline in the percentage of learners reaching grade-level reading proficiency.

Pillar II: Combating corruption, strengthening democratic governance, and advancing rule of law

U.S. government programming trained more than 10,500 government officials and people affiliated with non-governmental organizations to manage accountability systems and processes, take action against corrupt behavior, and raise awareness of ethical standards, thereby helping build citizens' trust in institutions that can hold government officials accountable.

Moreover, programs trained more than 4,000 justice sector personnel in northern Central America and helped improve systems in 36 courts in Guatemala and Honduras, giving citizens greater confidence that perpetrators will be held accountable for alleged crimes. In Honduras, support to 20 courts – including digitization of court case management systems – contributed to a more than 80 percent reduction in case processing times.

In FY 2023, U.S. government programming worked with national governments to promote the sustainable reintegration of nearly 150,000 returned migrants in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras into their communities. The U.S. also provided post-arrival assistance (such as hygiene kits, food, clothing, and transportation) to nearly 78,000 returned migrants, and reintegration services (such as training, job placement, and psychosocial support) for nearly 27,000 individuals.

Pillar III: Promoting respect for human rights, labor rights, and a free press

U.S. government programming supported nearly 3,000 human rights defenders to report human rights violations and advocate for their protection. Since 2021, State provided more than 500 civil society members in Central America with emergency financial assistance after being threatened or attacked for their work, with 97 percent reporting the assistance mitigated future threats and allowed them to return to work. Programs also helped more than 2,000 government officials, labor law enforcement officials, employers, and workers across northern Central America to increase their knowledge of labor rights (child labor, forced labor, collective bargaining, freedom of association, and occupational safety and health).

Pillar IV: Countering and preventing violence, extortion, and other crimes perpetrated by gangs, trafficking networks, and other organized criminal organizations

In FY 2023, through U.S. assistance, more than 7,674 civilian police were trained across Central America, and police units arrested nearly 4,000 suspected criminals. Through support for community-based crime and violence prevention, more than 120,000 at-risk youth in northern Central America accessed training and services, including leadership coaching, psychosocial support, conflict management, and employment and livelihoods training. These programs promote resilience and help youth cope with challenges, thereby decreasing their susceptibility to crime and violence and helping them envision a future in their own countries.

Pillar V: Combating sexual, gender-based, and domestic violence

In FY 2023, the U.S. government launched new programs to prevent or combat gender-based violence (GBV) in northern Central America, reaching more than 27,000 people (most of them in Honduras) with a variety of services, which are critical given high rates of GBV in the region.
  With U.S. government support, the Guatemalan Police Department of Victim's Attention significantly expanded its reach by inaugurating 19 new Offices of Attention for Victims in the Western Highlands, a region that is home to several vulnerable Indigenous communities. This expansion enabled the provision of culturally sensitive services to more than 1,000 domestic and GBV survivors.

Fiscal Year 2023 Context Analysis

Country commitment and context data help characterize the environment in which the U.S. government and its partners work. Analysis of country commitment (or context) metrics further highlights characteristics of the complex operating environment in northern Central America:

- Reasons to migrate have evolved since 2021. The number of people from northern Central American countries seeking to migrate declined considerably from highs in 2021 to 2023, and the overall trend is down despite a rise in encounters in the first half of FY 2024.

- Slow economic growth, inflation and high cost of food, weak or nonexistent social safety nets, and vulnerability to climate change and weather-related shocks have left many Central Americans – particularly women, youth, and historically marginalized groups – in precarious economic situations.
- Corruption and mismanagement of public resources continue to hinder government revenue generation and investment opportunities, weakening governments' ability to deliver quality essential services to all citizens.
- Rights activists and journalists continue to face concerningly high pressures and risks to their livelihoods and lives.
- Significant governance challenges and due process concerns remain.
- While national homicide rates decreased in all three countries, other non-violent and violent crimes – particularly GBV – go unreported and unaddressed due, in part, to corruption, impunity, and lack of public trust in the justice systems.

For detailed analysis by pillar and metric please see Appendix 1, U.S. Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America: Fiscal Year 2023 Results Report

Next Steps

State and USAID are committed to deepening analysis of existing performance metric data to understand the degree to which we are reaching focus populations (e.g., women, youth, Indigenous Peoples) and/or sub-national geographic regions. State and USAID will continue to collect, analyze, and disseminate analyses of migration-related data from multiple sources, collect and utilize geo-location data, and introduce new performance and country commitment (or context) metrics.

Attachment

      Appendix 1 – U.S. Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America: Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Results Report

U.S. Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America:
Fiscal Year 2023 Results Report

May 2024

Photo credit: United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

BAC	Banco de América Central
CAF	Central America Forward
CATIE	Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CMMS	Collaborative Migration Management Strategy
DFS	Digital Financial Services
DOC	U.S. Department of Commerce
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
DOL	U.S. Department of Labor
DRL	Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GAO	U.S. Government and Accountability Office
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IAF	Inter-American Foundation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. Department of State
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LAPOP	Latin America Public Opinion Project
NSC	National Security Council
OVP	Office of the Vice President

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCA	Partnership for Central America
Root Causes Strategy or RCS	U.S. Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America
State	U.S. Department of State
Treasury	U.S. Department of Treasury
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USTDA	U.S. Trade and Development Agency
USTR	U.S. Trade Representative
V-DEM	Varieties of Democracy

Executive Summary

This report, the third in a series of annual reports, covers the combined achievements associated with implementation of the U.S. Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America (Root Causes Strategy or RCS) across five U.S. government departments and agencies in fiscal year 2023 (October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023).[1] The Root Causes Strategy is one part of the U.S. government's comprehensive approach to migration management in the Western Hemisphere. The comprehensive approach includes the Collaborative Migration Management Strategy (CMMS) and the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, which aims to advance hemispheric collaboration to integrate migrants into host countries and communities, expand labor pathways, and humanely manage migration.

Similar to past years, this year's RCS results report summarizes analysis of:
- Performance metric data, comparing annual results to targets and the prior year's results in Central America, particularly Northern Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras); and
- Country commitment (or context) metric data, comparing the most recent data to regional averages and historic trends.[2]

With the addition of a third year of performance metric data, this year's report also includes analysis of trends in performance since July 2021, when the White House launched the Root Causes Strategy. Other new features of this report include:
- Summaries of the results associated with diplomatic engagement in Central America, particularly Northern Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras);
- Findings of relevant evaluations, assessments, or studies; and
- Success stories linked to key RCS achievements.

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[1] U.S. government departments and agencies that provided data for the fiscal year 2023 report include DOL, State, IAF, USAID, and USDA. State bureaus providing results data include INL and DRL. DOC and DoD indicated that they did not have relevant performance metric data to report in fiscal year 2023; DoD provided examples of diplomatic engagement. This annual results report complements quarterly narrative and financial reports submitted by U.S. government departments and agencies to the NSC and the OVP, on implementation of the RCS and the CMMS.

[2] State and USAID provided the first-ever RCS results report to the U.S. Congress in July 2022. The report, covering fiscal year 2021 (October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021), depicted initial progress and established an important benchmark or comparison for assessing future years' RCS results data. It is publicly available at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00ZGN3.pdf

State and USAID submitted the second RCS results report, covering fiscal year 2022 (October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022) to the NSC and OVP in May 2023, to the U.S. Congress in June 2023. The report updated key performance and country commitment (context) data to assist policymakers in monitoring and assessing progress toward achieving RCS strategic objectives. It is publicly available at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA0213D1.pdf

RCS Achievements in Fiscal Year 2023

Taking into account the country commitment challenges described below and detailed in the accompanying report, Root Causes Strategy results measured by 15 of 21 key performance metrics for fiscal year 2023 were *very robust or robust*. U.S. government departments and agencies tailored programs and diplomatic engagement to available resources and to openings and challenges in a complex, dynamic Northern Central America operating environment. As summarized in the table below, performance on 21 key RCS performance metrics is as follows:

- **Very robust results** (shown in dark blue below)**.** For seven of the key performance metrics, U.S. departments and agencies exceeded annual targets and reported increased results two years in a row.
- **Robust results** (shown in medium blue below). For eight key performance metrics, departments and agencies exceeded annual targets, but results decreased from previous years.
- **Somewhat robust results** (shown in light blue below). Further, for four performance metrics, U.S. departments and agencies did not meet annual targets (or targets were not available), but results increased over previous years.
- **Declining results** (shown in gray below). On two performance metrics—both of them under RCS pillar IV—targets were not available, and results decreased over previous years.

Results robustness	Number of key performance metrics	Performance metrics, by RCS pillar
Very robust	7	Pillar I: Firms, farmers with improved technology Pillar II: Anti-corruption training Pillar III: Human rights defenders, labor rights actors, journalists Pillar IV: Youth crime and violence prevention
Robust	8	Pillar I: Jobs, education reach, , workforce development training, food security finance, food security reach, children's nutrition Pillar II: Justice sector personnel Pillar V: Gender-based violence services
Somewhat robust	4	Pillar I: Sales, water and sanitation, students with nutrition assistance Pillar IV: Police training
Declining results	2	Pillar IV: Arrests, illicit item seizures

Note: *Very robust* is defined as exceeding annual targets and increasing results two years in a row (from 2021 to 2022, and from 2022 to 2023). *Robust* is defined as exceeding annual targets, but decreasing results compared to previous years. *Somewhat robust* is defined as not meeting annual targets, or targets were not available, and results increasing over previous years. *Declining results* are defined as targets not being available, and results decreasing over previous years.

Analysis of qualitative performance information indicates that several factors affected these results, including:

- Sunsetting of legacy programs followed by gradual startup of new programs suited to RCS objectives and country contexts;
- Design and launch of new programs to fill identified gaps, such as programs to combat gender-based violence (GBV) and to help communities mitigate and adapt to the effects of global climate change; and
- Alterations in available and projected funding levels.

U.S. government departments and agencies also refitted ongoing programs and tailored diplomatic engagement to respond to openings and challenges in the region. Analysis of country commitment (or context) metrics further highlights characteristics of the complex operating environment in Northern Central America:

- Intentions to migrate have stabilized since 2021, the number of people from Northern Central America countries seeking to migrate declined considerably from 2021 to 2023, and the overall trend is down despite a recent rise in encounters in the first half of fiscal year 2024.
  - USAID analysis of CBP encounter data for the ten-year period show that a larger share of migrants encountered at the U.S. Southwest border from Northern Central America were women or girls in fiscal year 2023 (43 percent) compared to 2013 (25 percent). In addition, a larger share of encountered migrants from these countries were minors in fiscal year 2023 (41 percent) compared to fiscal year 2013 (18 percent). Detailed demographic analysis of CBP encounter data is included in an annex to the accompanying report.
  - Because the encounter data CBP shares with USAID no longer includes sub-national origin information for the vast majority of migrants, USAID is exploring alternative sources of data to update the Agency's place-based strategies in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.
- Northern Central American economies largely have recovered from COVID-19 pandemic-related shocks. However, slow growth rates, inflation (particularly elevated food prices), weak social safety nets, and vulnerability to climate- and weather-related shocks have left many Central Americans—particularly women, youth, and marginalized groups—in precarious economic situations. These conditions also hamper efforts to reduce food insecurity, improve health conditions, and strengthen human capital.
- Corruption and mismanagement of public resources in all three countries continue to hinder government revenue generation and investment opportunities, weakening governments' ability to deliver quality essential services to all citizens. The peaceful democratic transition in Guatemala presents an opening to tackle governance challenges there.
- Rights activists and journalists continue to face enormous pressures and risks to their livelihoods and lives.

- While national homicide rates have decreased in all three countries, other violent and non-violent crimes—particularly gender-based crimes—go unreported and unaddressed, due in part to corruption, impunity, and lack of public trust in police and justice systems.

Against this background, U.S. departments and agencies reported several notable achievements, which are summarized by RCS pillar below.

Pillar I (Addressing economic insecurity and inequality):
- USAID supported more than 12,000 private firms to expand investment and increase employment in Northern Central America, nearly doubling USAID's reach since 2021. USAID's support helped:
    - Create or sustain more than 70,000 jobs in areas of high out-migration and among focus groups (e.g., women and youth).
    - Generate more than $500 million in agricultural and non-agricultural sales.
- USDA programs supported more than 1,300 coffee sector jobs in Guatemala and Honduras.
- Through more than 135 grants in Central America, IAF supported more than 2,100 medium and small businesses, trained more than 33,000 people in workforce skills and enterprise development, improved agricultural practices on more than 5,000 hectares, and mobilized more than $51 million in non-donor resources for local development priorities.
- USAID helped more than 3,600 teachers successfully transition from pandemic-era remote learning in 2021 to in-person schooling in 2023 and reached more than 220,000 primary and secondary students in high out-migration municipalities in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras with programs aiming to improve math and reading skills, keep youth in school, and boost completion rates. For example, in 2023 a USAID activity in Guatemala that recruited youth to serve as reading tutors for younger learners recorded a 17-point increase over baseline in the percentage of learners reaching grade-level reading proficiency.
- Since 2021, about 30,000 youth from high out-migration municipalities have completed USAID-supported vocational training programs that reflect local labor market needs of Northern Central America, ensuring access to decent work post-graduation. Over the same period, more than 12,000 young people were employed in new jobs after completing their vocational training.
- USAID and USDA programs helped more than 130,000 farmers in Northern Central America utilize innovative technologies to increase their production and income and raise more than $100 million in private sector finance. This helps create greater income security and resilience to shocks, including environmental shocks.
- USDA reached nearly 328,000 students through provision of food commodities and/or school rehabilitation, and USAID provided critical nutrition assistance to more than 125,000 children under age five, to treat malnutrition and improve child survival.
- Since 2021, USAID has launched new programs in Guatemala and Honduras that have begun to help people and communities build resilience and reduce their vulnerability to the effects of climate change, which can exacerbate the root causes of irregular migration. In fiscal year 2023, USAID programs in Honduras trained nearly 14,000 people to adopt climate-resilient practices and raised more than $600,000 in non-U.S. government finance for climate adaptation. In

Guatemala, two USAID programs launched in 2023 will complement existing agriculture activities, which provide innovative, climate-smart technologies to farmers. In El Salvador, USAID built government capacity to mobilize resources and invest in climate-resilient infrastructure and disaster risk reduction.

- Since its launch, the Vice President's CAF initiative, in partnership with the Partnership for Central America (PCA), has mobilized $5.2 billion in private sector commitments to support inclusive economic growth in Northern Central America. To date, companies have deployed over one billion in investments in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, generating nearly 20,000 jobs, connecting two million people to the Internet, establishing 160,000 new bank accounts, and reaching 60,000 learners with vocational training.

- Between November 2021 and October 2023, State supported the establishment of a Women's Business Resource Center in the Western Highlands of Guatemala reaching more than 550 women entrepreneurs with entrepreneurship-support services, including information on their legal rights. The Center also provided more than 3,500 hours of individual business advisory services, daycare services for more than 100 children of women entrepreneurs and supported the launch of 30 new businesses.

Pillar II (Combating corruption, strengthening democratic governance, and advancing the rule of law):
- In fiscal year 2023, the U.S. government has promoted accountability through visa restrictions for over 600 individuals involved in acts of corruption or undermining democracy in Central America, rendering them generally ineligible for visas to the United States. In addition, the Department of the Treasury sanctioned three individuals in Nicaragua for their role in, among other things, serious human rights abuse.

- State and USAID trained more than 10,500 government officials and people affiliated with non-governmental organizations to manage accountability systems and processes, take action against corrupt behavior, and raise awareness of ethical standards, thereby helping build citizens' trust in institutions that can hold government officials accountable. For example:
    - In El Salvador, USAID capacity building support helped local advocacy organizations comply with a new and complex set of regulations. This support helped CSOs overcome these purposefully burdensome regulatory hurdles so they could continue their work in governance and social accountability.
    - In Guatemala, USAID's support for the National Civilian Police helped channel corruption cases to investigative units, thereby resolving more than half the backlog of complex cases. USAID's support for a new police anti-corruption division helped bring to trial 35 new cases involving bribery, abuse of authority, and dereliction of duty, resulting in the conviction and removal of 40 police officers.
    - In Honduras, USAID's long-time support for the National Anti-Corruption Council has contributed to the investigation of more than 150 corruption cases, identifying more than $430 million in potentially embezzled funds, and involving more than 1,700 current and former public servants. In fiscal year 2023 alone, the Council investigated six new cases identifying more than $19.8 million in potentially embezzled funds and involving more than 32 former public officials.

- State has supported more than 140 journalists and more than 25 news outlets from Central America to improve investigative reporting on corruption and other issues of public interest.
- USAID and State trained more than 4,000 justice sector personnel in Northern Central America and USAID helped improve systems in 36 courts in Guatemala and Honduras, giving citizens greater confidence that perpetrators will be held accountable for their alleged crimes.
  - In Guatemala, USAID collaborated with the Government of Guatemala to dismantle 12 local gang cliques in Guatemala City. By enabling the development of 25 comprehensive crime pattern reports, USAID aided the Guatemalan government's investigations leading to the execution of 14 search warrants and 21 arrest warrants, resulting in cases brought against the alleged offenders and the seizure of firearms, ammunition, and cell phones.
  - In Honduras, USAID support to 20 courts—including digitization of court case management systems—contributed to substantial reductions (more than 80 percent) in case processing times.
  - Between fiscal years 2021 to 2023, State trained nearly 27,000 justice sector personnel on strengthening partner governments' judicial systems to more effectively manage accountability systems and processes, take action against corrupt acts, and raise awareness of ethical standards and legal obligations.
- USAID support to local government institutions and providers helped expand coverage and improve quality of needed services, boosting communities' confidence in local institutions. For example:
  - In El Salvador, USAID support to 31 municipalities helped increase local resources for public services such as waste collection and public lighting, benefiting 200,000 citizens.
  - In Guatemala, USAID support to 23 municipal governments contributed to investment of more than $630,000 in water chlorination in 227 community water systems, benefiting 45,000 households and more than 230,000 people.
  - In Honduras, USAID support and training helped 56 health facilities digitize a community-level nutrition diagnostic tool and a registry of nutrition activities. The availability of higher quality data helped local health authorities and service providers expand nutrition service coverage for young children and reactivate nutrition services that had ceased during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- USAID, in coordination with State, partnered with Northern Central American government institutions and the United States private sector to connect Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Hondurans to temporary job opportunities in the United States. The number of temporary worker visas available to Northern Central Americans nearly tripled from fiscal year 2021 (9,800) to 2023 (28,000), providing a legal alternative to irregular migration.
- USAID supported national governments to receive and support nearly 150,000 returned migrants in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras and promoted sustainable reintegration of these migrants into their communities. USAID provided post-arrival humanitarian assistance (such as hygiene kits, food, clothing, and transportation) to nearly 78,000 returned migrants, and reintegration services (such as training, job placement, and psychosocial support) for nearly 27,000 individuals.

Pillar III (Promoting respect for human rights, labor rights, and a free press):

- State and USAID supported nearly 3,000 human rights defenders to report human rights violations and advocate for their protection.
  - For example, in Honduras, USAID supported the launch of a mobile phone application enabling 81 CSOs representing women from low-income neighborhoods, women's groups, urban youth, people living with HIV/AIDS, and Afro-Honduran, Indigenous and LGBTQI+ communities to submit alerts directly to the government's Human Rights Observatory. When organizations such as these are able to report violations and advocate for protection, the public is empowered to push for improved government accountability and transparency.
  - Since 2021, State has provided more than 500 members of civil society in Central America with emergency financial assistance after being threatened or attacked for their work, with 97 percent reporting the assistance allowed them to return to the work, mitigating future threats.
- DOL helped more than 2,000 government officials, labor law enforcement officials, employers and workers across Northern Central America to increase their knowledge of labor rights (child labor, forced labor, collective bargaining, freedom of association, and occupational safety and health).
- State and USAID supported and trained 451 journalists across Central America to investigate and report on human rights violations.

Pillar IV (Countering and preventing violence, extortion, and other crimes perpetrated by criminal gangs, trafficking networks, and other organized criminal organizations):

- Since 2021, State provided training has professionalized up to 22,000 civilian police across Central America. In fiscal year 2023, State and USAID trained 7,674 civilian police across Central America, and State-supported police units arrested nearly 4,000 suspected criminals.
- U.S.-supported narcotics and asset seizures in Central America remain at historic highs. In fiscal year 2023, more than $1.1 billion in seizures of drugs across Northern Central America, Belize and Costa Rica with about $462 million alone seized in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador with the help of State assistance.
- Since July 2021, State has provided $7.5 million to improve security and disrupt the diversion and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. This resulted in the destruction of over 17 metric tons of unserviceable ammunition and over 4,000 small arms and light weapons.
- Through USAID and IAF support for community-based crime and violence prevention, more than 120,000 at-risk youth in Northern Central America accessed training and services, including leadership coaching, psychosocial support, conflict management, and employment and livelihoods training. These programs promote resilience and help youth cope with challenges, thereby decreasing their susceptibility to crime and violence and helping them envision a future in their own countries.

Pillar V (Combating sexual, gender-based, and domestic violence):

- USAID launched new programs to prevent or combat GBV in Northern Central America, reaching more than 27,000 people (most of them in Honduras) in fiscal year 2023 with a variety of services, which are critical given high rates of GBV in the region. In addition to services to individuals, USAID supported a multi-media anti-violence campaign in Guatemala that reached more than 10 million people through posters, videos, and comic books. Preliminary assessment findings indicated a positive shift in attitudes, with a 78 percent decrease in the number of male respondents who say that women sometimes deserve to be hit by their boyfriends.
- With State's support, the Guatemalan Police Department of Victim's Attention significantly expanded its reach by inaugurating 19 new Offices of Attention for Victims in the Western Highlands, a region home to several vulnerable Indigenous communities. This expansion enabled the provision of culturally sensitive services to more than 1,000 domestic and GBV survivors.
- In Honduras, State foreign assistance supported more than 100 survivors of extreme GBV, including lifesaving services such as medical, psychosocial and legal support.

The accompanying report provides detailed analysis of performance and country commitment (or context) metric data, describes medium-term results (i.e., outcomes) linked to RCS performance metrics derived from evaluations and assessments of programs supporting RCS objectives, results of diplomatic engagements that complemented or otherwise supported achievement of RCS strategic objectives, and examples of individual success stories.

Next Steps

This report, covering fiscal year 2023 and trends observed over the first three years of the Biden-Harris Administration's Root Causes Strategy implementation, is intended to inform policy, strategy, and programmatic decision making. It can be a resource for U.S. departments and agencies to take stock of Root Causes Strategy implementation and progress to date, with an eye to potentially updating the Root Causes Strategy and/or adapt programmatic and diplomatic engagement carried out in support of RCS objectives.

State and USAID are also committed to deepening analysis of existing performance metric data in order to understand the degree to which we are reaching focus populations (e.g., women, youth, Indigenous Peoples) and/or sub-national geographic regions. We also will continue to collaborate with other departments and agencies to collect and analyze the results and country commitment (or context) data presented in this report on an annual basis. State and USAID will also continue to collect, analyze, and disseminate analyses of migration-related data from multiple sources, collect and utilize geo-location data, and introduce new performance and country commitment (or context) metrics, as appropriate.

Results Report

Introduction

This third annual interagency results report provides a summary of the combined accomplishments of U.S. government programs and diplomatic engagement in fiscal year 2023 (October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023), the third full fiscal year of implementation of the Root Causes Strategy.[3]

The Root Causes Strategy is one part of the U.S. government's comprehensive approach to migration management in the Western Hemisphere. The comprehensive approach includes CMMS and the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, which aims to advance hemispheric collaboration to integrate migrants into host countries and communities, expand labor pathways, and humanely manage migration.

Last year's report, covering fiscal year 2022, described results (compared to the first year of strategy implementation) and achievement of the majority of targets. (Links to previous years' reports are provided at the end of this report.)

This report primarily serves to update U.S. government policymakers on analysis of key performance metrics[4] and country commitment (or context) metrics[5] that will assist them in monitoring and assessing progress toward achieving RCS strategic objectives.

With the addition of a third year of performance metric data, this year's report also includes analysis of trends in performance since 2021. Other new features of this report include:

- Summaries of the results associated with diplomatic engagement in Northern Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras);

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[3] The White House approved the Root Causes Strategy in July 2021. U.S. government departments and agencies that provided data for the fiscal year 2023 report include DOL, State, IAF, USAID, and USDA. State bureaus providing results data include INL and DRL. DOC and DoD indicated that they did not have relevant performance metric data to report in fiscal year 2023; DoD provided examples of diplomatic engagement.

[4] Performance metrics help managers and policymakers monitor and assess results of programs implemented by the U.S. government and its partners. As in past years, this report compares the most recent fiscal year results to prior years' results (increased, maintained, decreased) and, where available, pre-established annual targets (exceeded, met, not met).

[5] Country commitment (or context) metrics, which are often gathered by independent third-parties, help policymakers monitor regional and national operating environments, including country commitment to reform. As in past years, this report compares the most recent country-specific scores on these indicators to regional averages and prior years' scores (i.e., benchmarks).

- Findings of relevant evaluations, assessments, or studies; and
- Success stories linked to key RCS achievements.

Operational metrics

Operational metrics help U.S. government policymakers monitor *how* the RCS is being implemented. This report highlights two important examples of these metrics: (1) use of migration data and evidence to plan, geographically focus, implement, assess, and adjust programs in support of RCS objectives; and (2) for USAID, shifting program funding and decision making to local stakeholders.

Use of Migration Data and Evidence

There is no single source of complete migration data. To remedy this gap, State and USAID have assembled a suite of migration data from multiple sources to inform and assess Root Causes Strategy context and implementation.

Sustained decline in migration intentions. Surveys conducted in 2023 by LAPOP showed no change in intentions to migrate in all three Northern Central America countries (31 percent for El Salvador, 23 percent for Guatemala, and 37 percent for Honduras, respectively), compared to levels in 2022. For Guatemala and Honduras, the 2023 intentions rates maintain 2022 levels, which represented a double-digit decrease in intentions compared to the previous year.[6]

Intentions to Emigrate

Percent answering "yes" with intentions to migrate

Source: Americas Barometer, Vanderbilt University
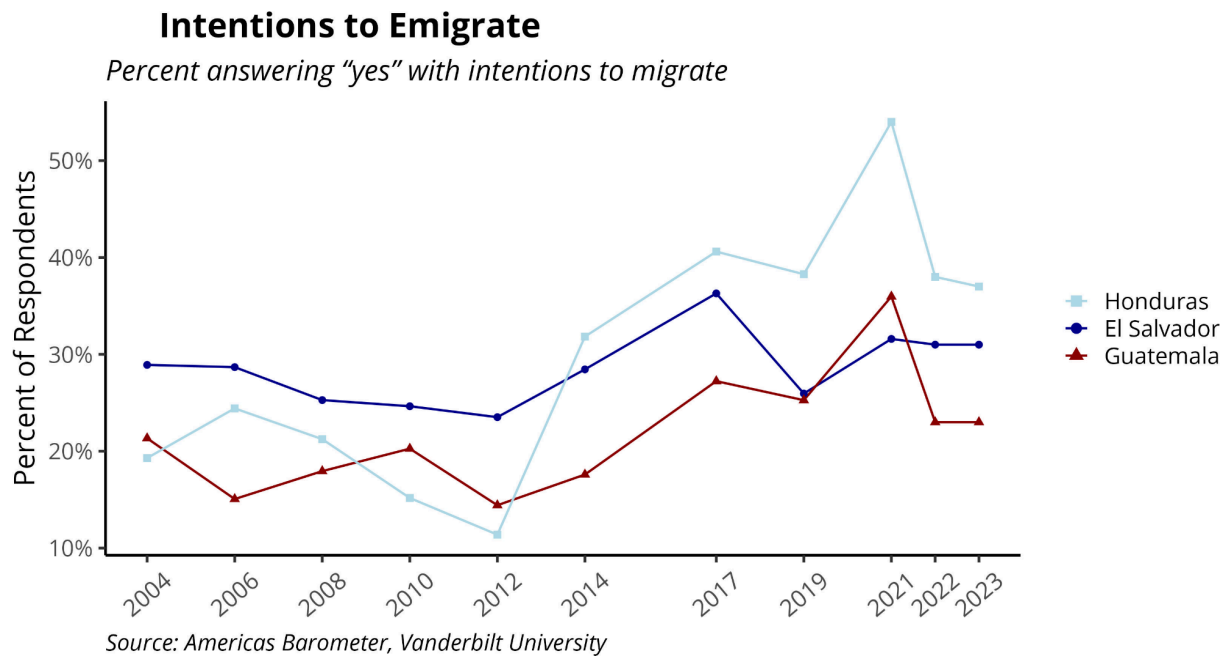
While trends in migration intentions historically have tracked with actual migration patterns, not all who express intentions to leave will actually embark on the journey. While majorities of those intending to migrate say it is somewhat or very likely, few of them had taken two or more concrete steps (e.g., speaking with friends or family, saving money, or making arrangements) to prepare. Among the Northern Central Americans who said they planned to emigrate, the percentages who rated themselves as very

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[6] For comparison, the LAC region-wide average intentions to migrate in 2023 was 32 percent.

likely to do so were: 43 percent in Guatemala (almost no change from 44 percent in 2022), 50 percent in Honduras (increase from 44 percent in 2022), and 36 percent in El Salvador (increase from 25 percent in 2022).

Emerging evidence shows that USAID programs can influence participants' attitudes about migration, plans for their futures, and actual migration behavior. For example:

- According to an independent evaluation conducted in 2023, the number of youth participants in USAID's vocational training program in El Salvador who planned to stay in El Salvador increased by 13 percentage points over the course of the program. Importantly, these same youths indicated that their plans depended on being able to support themselves and their families, indicating that USAID and our partners need to stay the course to sustain these results.
- A groundbreaking 2023 study comparing communities in Guatemala found that **when more temporary worker visas are available, more individuals take advantage of those legal pathways *rather than irregularly migrating*.**[7] In addition, the study found that **families of regular migrants have a better general economic situation**—lower levels of poverty and food insecurity, access to diverse food, among other development outcomes—and that more frequent and larger remittances sent by regular migrants are channeled into investments that improve quality of life and generate income and development in the migrants' communities of origin over the long term.

Downward trend in aggregate CBP encounters with Northern Central American citizens. Publicly reported aggregate border enforcement data, while prominently reported from month to month, lack granularity and fluctuate greatly based on multiple factors, many of which are beyond the scope of the Root Causes Strategy. Nevertheless, tracking overall migration trends can help U.S. government policymakers take stock of changes in migration from Northern Central America, and there are encouraging signs that, by addressing root causes, U.S. government programs and diplomatic engagement may be helping more Central Americans access opportunities in their home countries. Numbers of CBP encounters of Northern Central Americans fell by nearly one-third between fiscal years 2021 (701,049) and 2023 (495,286). While CBP has reported an uptick in encounters in the first half of fiscal year 2024, the overall trend is down from 2021—and this increase has been small relative to the number of encounters for migrants from countries outside of Northern Central America.

Increasing shares of women, girls, and children. USAID analysis of CBP encounter data for a ten-year period shows that a larger share of migrants encountered at the U.S. Southwest border from Northern

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[7] Specifically, the percentage of households with irregular migrants in communities with greater access to temporary worker visas was 19 percentage points lower than communities with fewer temporary worker visas: 11 percent of households in communities with more temporary worker visas compared to about 30 percent in communities with fewer temporary worker visas. For more information, see *Impact of Regular Temporary Migration to Canada and the United States on the Living Conditions and Migration Intentions of Families and Communities in Guatemala, and Analysis of Barriers and Opportunities to Scale Up the Regular Migration Strategy* (May 2023), available at https://reliefweb.int/attachments/4952a588-ee56-4604-a143-94360e592b93/Impact-of-regular-temporary-migration-to-Canada-and-the-U.S.-FINAL-INFORM-2023.pdf

Central America were women or girls in fiscal year 2023 (43 percent) compared to 2013 (25 percent). In addition, a larger share of encountered migrants from these countries were minors in fiscal year 2023 (41 percent) compared to fiscal year 2013 (18 percent). Detailed demographic analysis of CBP encounter data is included in an annex to this report.
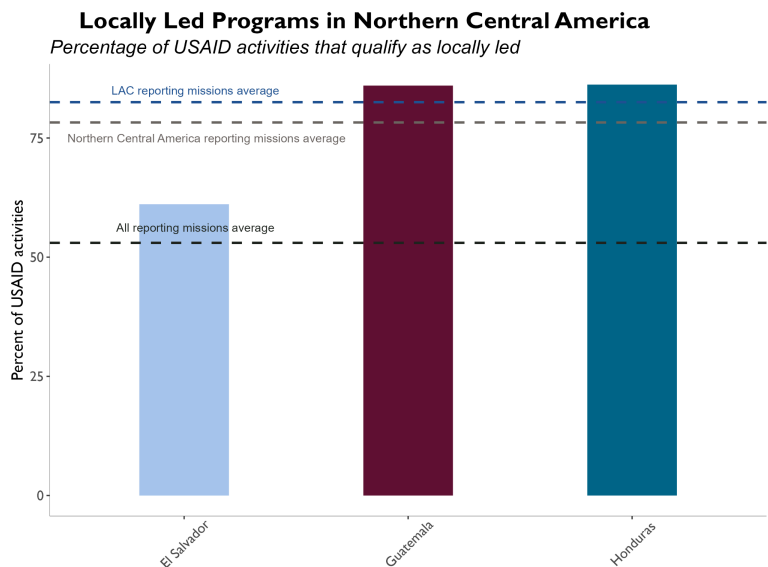
Geographic (place-based) focus of RCS programs. In 2022, State and USAID, using sub-national original data shared by CBP with USAID through a 2020 data-sharing agreement, reported on the departments in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras that migrants reported to CBP as their last place of residence.[8] USAID and other U.S. agencies have used analyses of these data to inform strategic and programmatic planning, including by focusing programs and funding on the areas with relatively higher levels of out-migration. As of March 2024, because the encounter data CBP shares with USAID does not include sub-national origin information for the vast majority of CBP encounters, USAID is exploring alternative sources of data to update the Agency's place-based strategies in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

In addition, State and USAID remain committed to collaborating with departments and agencies implementing RCS programs to develop the capacity to collect, report, and analyze program geo-location data; and to collect and report on sex- (or gender identity-) and age-disaggregated performance metric data, where available and appropriate.

USAID's Localization Efforts

As a key Root Causes Strategy implementing agency, USAID is making good on its commitment to shifting funding and decision-making power to the people, organizations, and institutions driving change in Northern Central America countries, based on the Agency's scores on two key operational metrics.

First, USAID is increasing the amount of direct funding to local partners. Between fiscal years 2020 and 2023, USAID funding to local partners in Northern Central America grew from 3 percent to 21 percent. At the mission

Locally Led Programs in Northern Central America
Percentage of USAID activities that qualify as locally led

Source: Results from the Locally Led Programs pilot data collection, USAID Bureau for Planning, Learning and Resource Management (PLR)

level, in fiscal year 2023, El Salvador obligated 30 percent of its funding directly to local partners, followed by Guatemala (19 percent) and Honduras (15 percent). Direct local funding in Northern Central America is also higher than the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region as a whole (13 percent) as well as the Agency overall (10 percent). This amounts to more than $140 million provided to nearly 30 local

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[8] See Appendix 5 in the fiscal year 2021 RCS results report, available at
https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00ZGN3.pdf

organizations and enterprises driving change in their own region, countries and communities in fiscal years 2021 through 2023.

Second, USAID is elevating local voices and leadership in its work. USAID has committed to increasing its engagement with local actors, whether as direct funding recipients, sub recipients of USAID funding, or as community members affected by USAID programming. In fiscal year 2023, the majority of USAID's activities in Northern Central America (61 percent in El Salvador, 86 percent in Guatemala, and 86 percent in Honduras) utilized at least two good practices that elevate local leadership in priority setting, activity design, implementation, and defining and measuring results.[9] All three missions exceeded the Agency-wide average of 53 percent. USAID missions in Northern Central America frequently co-create awards with local or regional partners. A recent GAO report noted that USAID's co-creation approach in the region has been "more collaborative than prior localization efforts and better addresses local needs." The missions also often invested in local organizations indirectly, through sub-awards and subcontracts. Capacity strengthening for local organizations is another priority in Northern Central America, with the goal of supporting local actors to sustain development achievements following the close of USAID awards.

Expanding on these early successes in Northern Central America will require continued intentional focus. As noted in a recent GAO review of USAID's Centroamérica Local initiative,[10] USAID will need to continue capacity strengthening actions which may require investing resources into diversifying the pool of potential local partners and building their capacity to grow into organizations able to take on reporting and financial safeguarding or other administrative skills required in U.S. government funded awards. In addition, there is room for USAID to expand use of practices that elevate local leadership in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. USAID will continue to monitor and report on progress towards its localization goals and highlight outcomes associated with these efforts.

Report Outline

The report is organized by RCS pillar and strategic objective. Each pillar section of the report lists the strategic objectives, outlines key performance and country commitment (or context) metrics, highlights relevant and notable U.S. government program research, outcomes and diplomatic engagements; and provides an overview of regional and country context.

For each strategic objective, key performance metrics are summarized in a "Snapshot" which summarizes results, notes contributing agencies, describes the metric's link to the strategic objective, compares the fiscal year 2023 results to a target (where available), compares the result previous years' results (where available), and provides a brief performance narrative (see table 1).

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[9] These figures are based on pilot data collection of USAID's new Locally Led Programs indicator and reflect a methodology that evaluated whether activities employed at least two out of 14 good practices for elevating local leadership. Based on learning from the pilot exercise, the methodology used to capture local leadership will likely evolve in subsequent years.

[10]*Centroamérica Local* is a five year initiative aimed at supporting local organizations, communities and leaders in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. From fiscal years 2021 to 2025, USAID intends to invest up to $300 million, subject to the availability of funds, toward engaging, strengthening, and funding local organizations. These programs are being carried out under the RCS.

Performance Metric Snapshot Table Guide

The RCS key performance metric snapshots provide an overview of each performance metric, including a description of the metric, a narrative explaining the report result for the metric, a summary of fiscal year 2023 results, and the contributing U.S. government departments or agencies, using the format below:

>*Title of snapshot*
>
>*Description of the link between the performance metric(s) and RCS pillar or strategic objective, and intended use of the metric(s).*
>
>*Performance narrative including relevant background, context, and other information describing or characterizing performance as measured by the metric.*

Summary of results	*Result compared to annual target*
Contributing departments/agencies	*Fiscal year 2023 result compared to previous fiscal year results*

In addition, the performance metric snapshot tables use icons to summarize comparisons of fiscal year 2023 results to annual targets (where available) and previous fiscal year results (where applicable). The icons are described in the table below.

Performance Metric Icon Guide

Target Icons	Definition
[icon] 12	Results met the annual target
[icon] 13	Results exceeded the annual target
[icon] 14	Results did not meet the annual target

Results Icons[11]	Definition
[icon]	Results increased year over year
[icon]	Results decreased year over year
[icon]	Results maintained year over year
[icon]	Results increased in the second year and decreased in the third year
[icon]	Results decreased in the second year and increased in the third year
[icon]	No data reported in the first year; results increased in the third year
[icon]	No data reported in the first year; results decreased in the third year
[icon] 15	Not available

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[11] Note: the bars in the icons below are not drawn to scale.

[12] *appointment* by Adrien Coquet from Noun Project

[13] *right* by Gonzalo Bravo from Noun Project

[14] *Left* by Gonzalo Bravo from Noun Project

[15] *Blocked folder* by cathy moser from Noun Project

Pillar I: Addressing economic insecurity and inequality

Pillar I comprises four strategic objectives:

- Foster a business enabling environment for inclusive economic growth,
- Increase and diversify trade,
- Enhance workforce development, health, education, and protection, and
- Build resilience to address climate change and food insecurity.

While U.S. government departments and agencies achieved or exceeded annual targets (where available) on the majority of pillar I performance metrics, they saw decreases in results over fiscal year 2022 levels. However, the majority of results increased over fiscal year 2021 levels. This trend was strongest across the education, health, and workforce development metrics (the third strategic objective). The economic growth and food security metrics had the strongest target achievement and result increases over previous fiscal years.

Results robustness	Definition	Number of key performance metrics	Performance metrics, by pillar I strategic objective
Very robust	⯈ and 📊	2	• Firms, • Farmers with improved technology
Robust	⯈ and 📊 or ⯈ and 📊 or ⯈ and 📊 or 📁 and 📊 or ⯈ and 📊	6	• Jobs • Education reach • Workforce development training • Food security finance • Food security reach • Children's nutrition
Somewhat robust	◀ and 📊 or ◀ and 📊 or 📁 and 📊	3	• Sales • Water and sanitation • Students with nutrition assistance
Declining results	📁 and 📊	n/a	n/a

USAID and USDA support to micro, small, and medium enterprises in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras helped create and sustain jobs in key geographic areas, among specific groups (e.g., women, youth, and marginalized communities), and in key sectors such as agriculture. USAID and IAF supported improved viability and growth of firms and enabled agribusiness producers, smallholder farmer associations, and companies to maintain sales. In addition, IAF and USAID continued to provide youth access to gainful employment through workforce development initiatives.

USAID and USDA provided support to students, teachers, and administrators as the education sector continues to readjust to post-pandemic realities. USDA increased its school feeding program, surpassing fiscal year 2021 and 2022 results.

USDA and USAID delivered food security programs and leveraged private sector investment to increase income and improve livelihoods among marginalized populations such as women and Indigenous Peoples. USAID continues to reach children under five with nutritional interventions, and in fiscal year 2023 began reporting the public and private investment mobilized for climate change.

Since its launch, Central America Forward – in partnership with the Partnership for Central America (PCA) – has mobilized **a total of $5.2 billion** in private sector commitments to support inclusive economic growth in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. To date, these companies have deployed nearly $1.3 billion on the ground, including **$141 million in El Salvador, $509 million in Guatemala, and $545 million in Honduras, in investments**. *In Her Hands*, a women's economic empowerment initiative launched by Vice President Harris and PCA in June 2022 has also mobilized more than **$113 million in gender-related investments to the region.** These investments are materializing into tangible opportunities for families and communities across integrated supply chains in Central America and the United States – benefiting students, employees, entrepreneurs, and families – and shaping a model for mobilizing private sector commitments through collective action to drive economic development. Specific investments include:

- **Job Creation**: Partner companies have created almost 20,000 jobs to date, and committed to create an additional 50,000 jobs;

- **Digital Access**: Partner companies have committed to connect more than four million people to the internet, and have already reached two million people with access;

- **Financial Inclusion**: Partner companies aim to bring almost eight million people into the formal financial economy; to date, two million people have been brought into the formal financial economy, including over 160,000 with new accounts;

- **Investment and Procurement**: Across manufacturing, digital access, financial inclusion, and agriculture, partner companies have already deployed $639 million in investment, and have increased procurement from companies in the region by $468 million;

- **Skilling and Workforce Development**: Partner companies have committed to train over six million people by 2027. Over two million learners have been reached through skilling programs led by partners, and almost 60,000 learners have been reached with programs that lead to certification or employment.

Unemployment rates across Northern Central America continued to decline from the spike in 2020, but significant challenges remain for youth (lack of available jobs, underemployment) and women. Hunger

grows in the region amid multiple recent crises (e.g. COVID-19, the climate crisis, the Ukraine conflict) which have exacerbated food insecurity and malnutrition. Child health in Northern Central America continues on a positive trend, but from a very low baseline, and lower-secondary completion rates modestly increased. Environmental policies and standards are weak in the region contributing to climate-related risks.

Foster a Business Enabling Environment for Inclusive Economic Growth

Three key performance metrics capture results for this strategic objective: jobs, sales, and firms. Results for firms and sales have been increasing year-over-year since the first results report published in fiscal year 2021. Fiscal year 2023 jobs results did not increase over the previous two fiscal years due to the planned closeout of programs that predated the Root Causes Strategy and typically operate for about five years. All targets were exceeded except for the sales targets which fell short by an almost negligible amount.

Key country commitment (or context) metrics include GDP per capita growth, which began returning to pre-COVID-19 trends in 2022 (the year for which data is most recent), and unemployment rates (including youth, female youth, and male youth unemployment) which continue to track at or below regional averages. Gender-specific job gaps remain persistent and high.

Performance metrics

Jobs

These indicators track U.S. government contributions to agricultural and non-agricultural private sector job creation and stability in Northern Central America. U.S. government support addresses a key root cause of migration from Central America by providing income, helping reduce poverty, and strengthening ties to individuals' communities. Creating and sustaining good jobs provides a key path for economic opportunity, especially for youth who are likely to migrate or become involved in illegal activities.

USAID (one activity in El Salvador, one in Guatemala, seven in Honduras, and one Central America regional activity) and **USDA** (one project in Guatemala and one in Honduras) support to private sector employers contributed to generating or sustaining 72,189 jobs in many sectors including forestry, plantation and livestock management, construction, tourism and hospitality, small manufacturing, and food production. The majority of jobs (71,647) were created in Northern Central America.

USAID exceeded annual targets for this indicator in Guatemala and Honduras and in one regional program. In Guatemala this was due to an increase in temporary construction employment in project-supported infrastructure and housing projects, and one road and bridge project beginning earlier than anticipated. In Honduras activities exceeded targets by stimulating local labor and product demand, lowering business constraints, and expanding coffee export opportunities and innovative labor approaches. Though results had increased in fiscal year 2022, they decreased in fiscal year 2023 due to the planned closeout of programs that predated the Root Causes Strategy and typically operate for about five years.

More than 70,000 jobs created or sustained in fiscal year 2023	Results **exceeded** annual targets (where available)
Contributing agencies USAID (70,875) USDA (1,314)	Results **increased** in the second year and **decreased** in the third year

Private firms

These indicators track U.S. government contributions to the viability and/or expansion of new and existing private sector firms, including small and medium enterprises. This in turn supports inclusive, broad-based economic growth, empowerment, and stability—the lack of which is a root cause of irregular migration from Central America.

USAID (two activities in El Salvador and three activities in Guatemala) and **IAF** (grants across Central America) provided technical assistance to 14,371 firms, with most (14,115) firms supported in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Technical assistance included initiatives focused on increasing international market access, strengthening value and supply chains, developing innovative and high-quality products and services, and transforming businesses through digitalization. The programs paid special attention to women's entrepreneurship and micro, small and medium enterprises, particularly strengthening Indigenous women involvement.

Results increased year over year, and the number of private sector firms supported by USAID in fiscal year 2023 was double the number supported in fiscal year 2021. In 2023 USAID exceeded its targets due to initiatives encouraging certifications that enabled companies to export more easily and, in turn, boost regional trade facilitation. Additionally, more companies than expected took part in digitization and innovation initiatives stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and demand for firms to pivot to e-commerce solutions.

More than 14,000 private sector firms supported in fiscal year 2023	Results **exceeded** annual targets (where available)
Contributing agencies USAID (12,265) IAF (2,106[16])	Results **increased** year over year

Sales

These indicators track USAID's outcomes of agricultural, nonagricultural, and environment assistance programs. Increased productivity and production of small-holders or firms helps reduce poverty, a key root cause of migration, through improved livelihoods and broad-based economic growth.

USAID (one activity in El Salvador, three in Guatemala, and four in Honduras) provided specialized assistance to agribusiness producers and companies including microenterprises, small-to-medium sized enterprises, and cooperatives to increase their sales. Region-wide sales totaled $521,511,423 which is significantly higher (by about $200 million) than fiscal year 2022 levels and an increase over 2021 levels. Support included innovation for products and processes, accessing new markets, strengthening value chains, and improving the quality of products and services. Additionally, initiatives promoting the growth of agricultural value chains generated benefits in the value chains of local producers and suppliers.

In aggregate, USAID fell short of its fiscal year 2023 target by a negligible amount (less than one percent). Some activities met or exceeded their targets after increasing the number of supported firms, higher yields, improved product quality, and increased exports. Activities not meeting annual targets cited external factors such as falling global coffee prices and greater-than-anticipated sales in local and regional markets, which command lower prices than the export market. Since fiscal year 2021, sales by supported firms have totalled nearly $1.26 billion.

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[16] The IAF collects cumulative data on indicators since many grantees work with the same groups over the years. These data, therefore, represent cumulative (not actual) values for active grants during each given fiscal year.

More than $500 million in sales generated by supported firms in fiscal year 2023	Results **did not meet** the annual target[17]
Contributing agencies: USAID ($521,511,423)	Results **decreased** in the second year and **increased** in the third year

Success stories

In collaboration with BAC Credomatic El Salvador, USAID co-designed a Point-of-Sale-based financial credit lending product to address many common barriers that women-owned small and medium sized businesses face in accessing conventional loans from banks. In July 2022, BAC launched its new financing product with the goal of disbursing at least three million dollars in financing to at least 125 women business owners by September 30, 2024. As of August 2023, BAC had far surpassed its financing goal, mobilizing $8,643,352 in financing for 235 women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises in 10 different departments of El Salvador in 11 months of implementation.

Relevant evaluations, assessments, and studies

The Opportunities to Foster DFS Market Development in Guatemala report examined the DFS needs of low-income and marginalized populations, particularly women and Indigenous Peoples. Among these populations, there is awareness of and openness to engaging with financial service providers and significant enough cash inflows to conduct frequent financial transactions. Opportunities exist to link low-income and marginalized populations to the financial services sector in the context of remittance transfers, government payments, and salary payments.

In fiscal year 2023, USAID commissioned a series of studies on remittances. One study examined how remittances can be used to foster productive investments in the context of Indigenous communities in Guatemala. The study looks at the Mayan philosophy of Utz K'aslemal, or good living, which encompasses principles of harmony, balance, and reciprocity with nature and society and how it interacts with migration and remittance-receiving households. The study advocates for the responsible consumption and sustainable investment of remittances to generate income in Mayan communities. Priorities identified include assistance in opening savings accounts, promoting digital literacy, and exploring communal investments in remittance-receiving communities.

In Honduras, USAID funded the 2023 National Survey of Migration and Remittances,[18] in collaboration with the Honduran National Institute of Statistics and IOM. Findings include that more than 17 percent of Honduran households have family members living abroad, with more than 82 percent of migrants

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[17] The result was less than one percent short of meeting the annual target.
[18] IOM. (2023). National Survey on Migration and Remittances, Honduras 2023.

living in the United States. The main reasons for migrating are economic, with Hondurans leaving due to unemployment, to seek better job opportunities, and due to low income. It is estimated that close to 14 percent of the Honduran population aged 15 or older plans to migrate in the next year. One out of every four households in Honduras receive remittances, with households receiving $2,303 on average, per year.

Country commitment (context) metrics

After the sharp rebound in 2021, GDP per capita growth in all three Northern Central American countries is returning to pre-pandemic levels. However, all three countries experienced lower per capita growth in 2022 (the year for which the most recent data is available) than regional averages (see figure).. Though economic recovery continued into early 2023, inflation-related policies and weakening external environments dampened economic growth across the LAC region.[19]

GDP per Capita Growth
Annual Percentage

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators
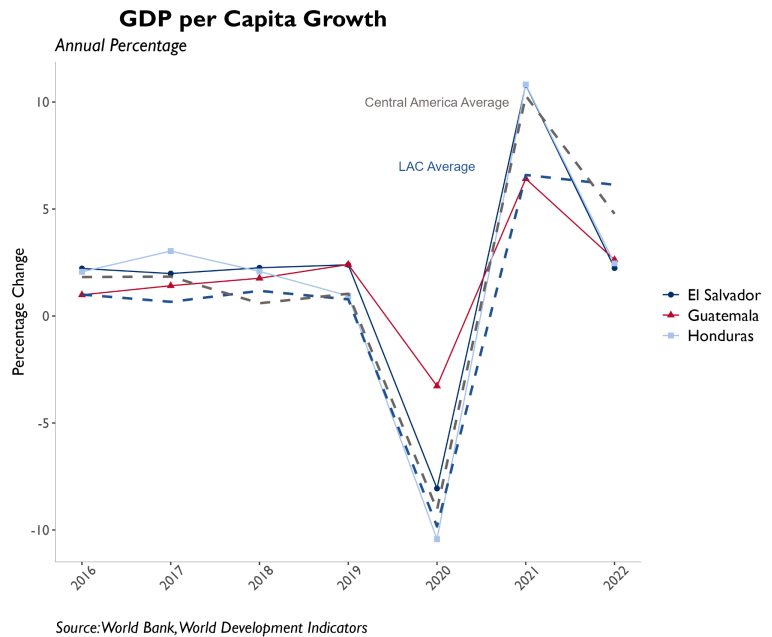
Unemployment rates continue to decline from the spike in 2020 and are tracking at or below regional averages. Honduras has significantly higher unemployment rates (including youth, and female unemployment) than the other two countries, but is on par with the Central America average[20]. According to ILO, urban employment returned to 2019 rates across the LAC region; however, rural employment rates lagged behind.[21]

Similar to the overall employment rate, the youth unemployment rate across Northern Central America remains lower than regional averages and continues to decline.[22] ILO analysis shows young people in the region experience more intermittent employment and occupational instability leading to necessary skills and qualifications and pushing young people towards informal work.[23] Youth face other challenges as

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[19] IMF. (2023). Regional economic Outlook, Western Hemisphere.

[20] International Labour Organization. "ILO Modelled Estimates and Projections database (ILOEST)" ILOSTAT. Accessed December 2023 through The World Bank Group.
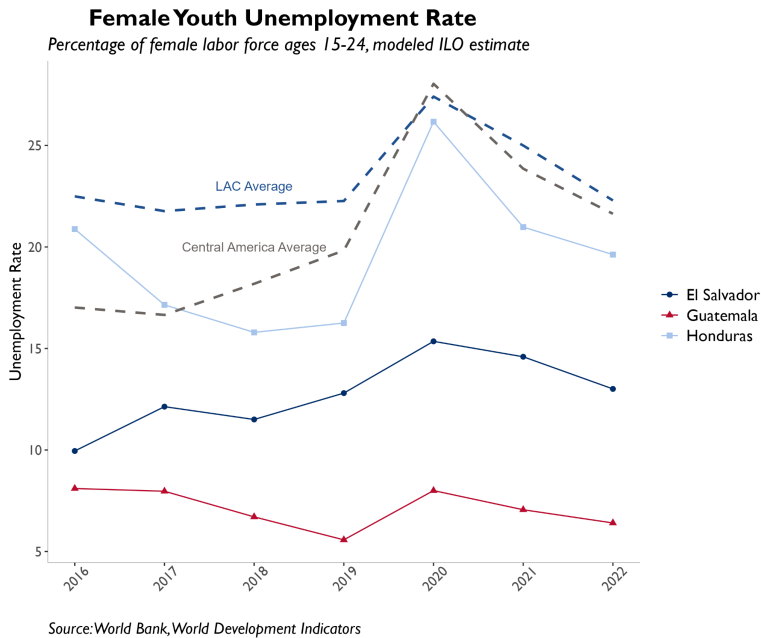
[21] ILO. (2023). 2023 Labour Review, Latin America and the Caribbean.

[22] International Labour Organization. "ILO Modelled Estimates and Projections database (ILOEST)" ILOSTAT. Accessed December 2023 through The World Bank Group.

[23] ILO. (2023). 2023 Labour Review, Latin America and the Caribbean.

well including a lack of available jobs and underemployment. According to the Guatemalan National Economic Research Center, each year 170,000 young people enter the Guatemalan labor market, while only 10,000 to 30,000 new jobs are created annually in the formal economy.[24] In Honduras, more than 70 percent of employed youth report being underemployed.[25]

Although the participation gap between men and women has returned to pre-pandemic levels, gender-specific job gaps are persistent and high.[26] The female youth unemployment rates across Northern Central America continue to be almost double the rates of male youth unemployment.

Female Youth Unemployment Rate
Percentage of female labor force ages 15-24, modeled ILO estimate

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators

In the second half of 2023, the LAC female labor participation rate was 51 percent whereas for men, it was 74 percent.[27] The ILO finds that sectors dominated by male workers (e.g. construction and transportation) have recovered from the COVID-19 era more quickly than those with primarily female workers.[28]

El Salvador's economy has largely recovered from the pandemic, however its annual economic growth rate remained low around 3.5 percent in 2023.[29] According to the IMF, the main drivers of growth in El Salvador are private consumption, public investment and tourism, but potential risks remain if domestic policy decisions weaken investor confidence.[30] The Guatemalan economy has been slowing down since the 2021 peak and the IMF suggests that the deceleration of growth is partly due to the U.S economic

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[24] Centro de Investigaciones Económicas Nacionales (The National Economic Research Center). (2019). Crecimiento, Empleo e Infraestructura (Growth, Employment and Infrastructure).

[25] USAID. (2021). Honduras Inclusive Growth Diagnostic (pgs. 10-11). (Age range included: all population)

[26] ILO. (2023). 2023 Labour Review, Latin America and the Caribbean.

[27] ILO. (2023). 2023 Labour Review, Latin America and the Caribbean.

[28] ILO. (2023). World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2023.

[29] Banco Central de Reserva. (2023). Situación Económica de El Salvador 2023 y Perspectivas 2024.

[30] IMF. (2023). El Salvador: Staff Concluding Statement of the 2023 Article IV Mission.

slowdown.[31] A lack of economic opportunities is shown as the principal reason why Guatemalans migrate irregularly, as identified in the USAID-funded "Determinants of Migration" econometric study completed in 2019 and confirmed by an update to the Migration study from February 2022.[32]

Fiscal year 2023 was a tumultuous year for the Honduran economy. Inflation hit a 14-year high,[33] pummeling the purchasing power of businesses and consumers, and a slowdown in growth and investment kept unemployment above pre-pandemic levels. Inflation mostly decreased throughout 2023 with growth eventually picking up throughout the year.[34]

The World Bank's Environment for Business Creation scores[35] remained consistent in comparison to recent past years: El Salvador's being higher, Honduras' roughly on par or above, and Guatemala's below regional averages. Honduras lags behind the other two Northern Central American countries in the World Bank's measure of enabling regulations for business (the degree to which regulations enable businesses to start, compete, and expand), but remains above the LAC regional average.[36] The World Bank cites burdensome tax policies, inefficient public administration and inadequate security as some of the greatest obstacles facing private sector development in Honduras. In addition, an insufficient skilled workforce is a secondary issue that weakens the business environment.[37] In Guatemala, limited access to finance, infrastructure gaps and weak governance coupled with corruption contribute to below-average business environment.[38] Although El Salvador's Environment for Business Creation score is above-average compared to the LAC regional score, the World Bank suggests that obstacles such as limited private sector access to credit as well as lack of skills among workers impact the country's business environment.[39]

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[31] IMF. (2023). Guatemala: 2023 Article IV Consultation-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Executive Director for Guatemala.

[32] USAID. (2022). Determinants of Migration and Public Policy Implications (Phase 2 Analysis).

[33] Banco Central de Honduras (Central Bank of Honduras). (2023).

[34] USAID-funded Creating Economic Opportunities Project. (2022). Determinants of Migration and Public Policy Implications (Phase 2 Analysis).

[35] Environment for Business Creation scores are based on four indicators: (1) whether private companies are protected and permitted (2) labor skill as a business constraint (3) availability of skilled workers and (4) the state of cluster environment.

[36] World Bank Enterprise Survey data, accessed in December 2023 from the Legatum Prosperity Index database.

[37] World Bank Group. (2022). Country Private Sector Diagnostic, Creating Markets in Honduras.

[38] International Finance Corporation. (2023). Country Private Sector Diagnostics, Creating Markets in Guatemala.

[39] The World Bank Group. (2023). Country Partnership Framework for The Republic of El Salvador for the Period FY23–FY27.

Increase and Diversify Trade

Two key performance metrics capture results for this strategic objective: training in trade and investment, and the number of trade facilitation agreements supported. Trainings did not reach targets due to scheduling delays, but the number of agreements did meet targets. Results did not exceed fiscal year 2022 results (fiscal year 2021 results were not reported for these metrics) due to the planned closeout of programs that predated the Root Causes Strategy and typically operate for about five years.

All three Northern Central American countries continued to see increases in export sophistication, a key country commitment (or context) metric.

Performance metrics

These performance metrics track U.S. government contributions to reducing costs to traders and transporters, a key barrier to inclusive economic growth through cross-border trade.

USAID (one regional activity) exceeded targets on the number of World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement provisions supported across Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, though results did not increase over fiscal year 2022 results due to the planned closeout of programs that predated the Root Causes Strategy and typically operate for about five years. Additionally, 2,210 person-hours of training were completed in border control agencies. The number of person-hours reduced over the previous fiscal year result totals and training targets were not achieved due to scheduling delays outside of USAID's control. For both of these metrics, fiscal year 2021 data was not reported.

Training included using information technology systems to streamline and optimize border procedures, implementing new sanitary registration processes to streamline registration of pharmaceutical and related products, and training on soft skills and trade facilitation best practices.
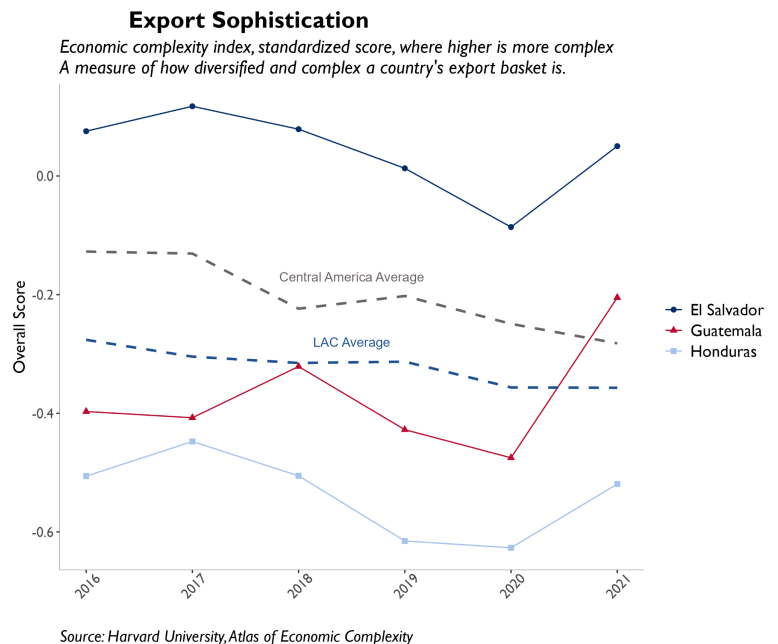
Diplomatic Engagement

Agencies reported more than 60 high-level engagements that focused on addressing economic insecurity and inequality in Central America including by DOC, DOL, IAF, State, Treasury, USAID, and USTDA. Most of these efforts focused on fostering a business enabling environment for inclusive growth.

- Engagements with business leaders helped substitute local produce, including garlic, instead of foreign grown at the main grocery store in Honduras.

- In June, State's Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment provided keynote remarks at an event organized by the PCA, State's implementing partner for the CAF initiative. The event launched the PCA Rule of Law Pledge – signed by ten CAF companies – as a commitment to conduct business operations according to the standards set forth by the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct. State's participation highlighted the importance of these issues and that good governance and economic development are closely linked.

- State supported the PCA and Transparency International launch of the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Initiative for Central America (ACT Project). The ACT Project, fully funded by the private sector, will encourage companies to volunteer to be held accountable for operating responsibly. As with the PCA Rule of Law Pledge, the ACT Project will use the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct as the reference framework to strengthen corporate integrity and investment conditions in the region. This is one of the first steps to operationalize the Good Governance, Good Jobs Joint Declaration and enforce its goals and has led to engagement with the private sector on anti-corruption and transparency issues.

- State, USTR, and DOC participated in sector-specific dialogues to create opportunities for trade and Investment in Central America. Conversations between brands/retailers and manufacturers led to a better understanding of the needs of diverse stakeholders and allowed for the identification of gaps and areas of development such as the need for longer term contracts, technical opportunities and training, and best practices.

- State funded a DOC project to enhance trade facilitation and strengthen regional supply chains between Northern Central America, Mexico, and the United States

Country commitment (context) metrics

All three Northern Central American countries saw increases in export sophistication[40] in 2021 (the year for which data is most recent) according to Harvard University's Atlas of Economic Complexity. Honduras continues to score particularly low and below all regional averages. Guatemala has had the most dramatic increase from 2020 to 2021, surpassing both regional averages in 2021. El Salvador continues to exceed regional averages. In 2023, export values declined due to low sales of livestock and agricultural products[41] and demand weakened especially among commodity exporters amidst inflation.[42]

Export Sophistication
*Economic complexity index, standardized score, where higher is more complex
A measure of how diversified and complex a country's export basket is.*

Source: Harvard University, Atlas of Economic Complexity

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[40] Note on data discrepancies between this visualization and the one used in the fiscal year 2022 report: Harvard's Growth Lab updates data up to a year and a half after a report is published due to delays in countries providing updates and corrections. Additionally, a revision in one country's figures might change the score for others too.

[41] United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2023). International Trade Outlook for Latin America and the Caribbean 2023. Structural change and trends in global and regional trade: challenges and opportunities.

[42] ILO (2023). World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2023.

Relevant evaluations,assessments, and studies

The USDA Food for Progress Northern Triangle project conducted horticultural value chain assessments in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, to pinpoint economically viable value chains, and to develop strategic plans for horticultural sector development. Assessments also identified methods to harness horticultural value chains' potential for climate-smart, inclusive economic growth, as well as opportunities for trade to the United States and regionally. After the completion of the assessment, the project will work with the public and private sector to increase trade in these value chains, will create income generation and employment opportunities and will work with governments to enact trade facilitation, sanitation performance standards, and food safety reforms to facilitate growth.

Enhance Workforce Development, Health, Education, and Protection

Key performance metrics capturing results for this strategic objective include number of students supported through education programs, number of students receiving nutrition assistance, number of people trained in workforce development, and number of schools with improved water and sanitation. The school-based nutrition results have increased year over year and met targets. All other metric results decreased over fiscal year 2022 (and some over 2021 levels as well), despite achieving or surpassing targets, due to the planned closeout of programs that predated the Root Causes Strategy and typically operate for about five years.

Key country commitment (or context) metrics include education quality, lower secondary completion rates, child health and social protection coverage rates. All Northern Central American countries continue a trend of steadily increasing child health, and El Salvador and Guatemala experienced modest increases in lower-secondary completion rates (updated data for Honduras were not available). Updated data for social protection rates and education quality are not available as of the writing of this report.

Performance metrics

Students Reached

These indicators track the overall reach of the U.S. government support for inclusive, quality education, a critical step toward improving learning outcomes for children and youth.

USAID (four activities in Guatemala, three in Honduras, and one in El Salvador) provided education assistance to 221,435 learners in primary and secondary schools. Despite not increasing over previous fiscal year results totals, fiscal year 2023 results did exceed targets.

Assistance included provision of teaching and learning materials/supplies (e.g. computer equipment); training for teachers; and science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics training as well as soft skills training for students. Support for transportation, lunches, vocational orientation, psychosocial support, field trips, and higher education scholarships were also provided.

More than 220,000 students reached through primary and secondary education programs in fiscal year 2023	> Results **exceeded** annual targets (where available)
Contributing agencies: USAID (221,435)	Results **decreased** year over year

USDA's McGovern-Dole Program (three projects in Guatemala, one in Honduras, and one in another Central American country) and **USAID** (two activities in Guatemala, three in Honduras, and five in El Salvador) supported 5,716 public and private schools across Northern Central America. Support included training for parents and caregivers on positive discipline and strengthening the capacity of community leaders in school management, furniture and equipment (laptops, projectors, desks), provision of high quality digital and physical resources to teachers for teaching language and math, and training for teachers and administrators on inclusive classroom strategies and the use of a new educational model. Targets were not achieved in El Salvador and Honduras due to shifting needs and preferences of host country ministries, unexpected resistance by an educational union in one municipality, and other unexpected delays and circumstances.

In addition, **USAID** supported 68 learning environments in Honduras and El Salvador to improve their safety, including the illumination and paving of streets, as well as the construction or improvement of essential public infrastructure like parks, schools, outreach centers, and health facilities. Across Central America 9,240 educators completed professional development activities with support from USDA's McGovern Dole Program (two projects in Guatemala, one in Honduras, and one in another Central American country) and USAID programs (one activity in Guatemala, two in Honduras and two in El Salvador). The majority of educators (8,889) completed activities in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. Support included helping educators successfully transition from pandemic-era remote learning to in-person schooling.

School-Based Nutrition Metric

This indicator tracks the overall reach of U.S. government support for inclusive, quality education, a critical step toward improving learning outcomes for children and youth.

USDA reached 327,915 students through assistance to schools (through four McGovern-Dole Program projects in Guatemala, one in Honduras, and one in another Central American country) which includes the provision of commodities for school feeding and/or the rehabilitation of school infrastructure. Fiscal year 2023 results increased over the two previous fiscal years' result totals.

Nearly 328,000 students received nutrition or other assistance in fiscal year 2023	 Target data not available
Contributing agencies: USDA (327,915)	 Results **increased** year over year

Additionally, **USDA**'s McGovern-Dole Program (one project in Honduras, four in Guatemala, and one in another Central American country) and **USAID** (two activities in Honduras) supported 2,412 parent teacher associations or community governance structures in primary and secondary schools across Central America.

Workforce Development

These indicators track the reach and short- and medium-term outcomes associated with U.S. government-supported workforce development programs, which by their nature focus on youth, a key population for addressing the root causes of migration from Central America.

During fiscal year 2023, **USAID** (one activity in Guatemala, one in Honduras and three in El Salvador) and **IAF** (projects across Central America) trained 40,586 individuals in workforce development, with the majority of individuals (36,435) trained in Northern Central America. Since 2021, about 30,000 youth have completed USAID-supported vocational training programs; over the same period, more than 12,000 young people were employed in new jobs after completing their vocational training. Vocational training courses included those in tailoring, haircutting, baking, cooking, English language skills, solar panel installation, customer service, carpentry, motorcycle repair, phone repair, graphic design, and animal husbandry, among others. Assistance also included the provision of stipends and equipment to enable enrollees to complete their educational programs, as well as psychosocial care and training in soft skills to ensure their job placement. Though results had increased in the second year of the RCS, they decreased over fiscal year 2022 levels. Where set, the U.S. government exceeded targets.

More than 40,000 individuals trained in workforce development in fiscal year 2023	> Results **exceeded** annual targets (where available)
Contributing agencies: IAF[43] (33,936) USAID (14,778)	Results **increased** in the second year and **decreased** in the third year

In fiscal year 2023, 14,875 youth - 54 percent of youth who participated - were newly employed or had better employment after completing their vocational training (in the current or prior years). Others who completed training continued their education or changed jobs, among other outcomes.

Spotlight on USAID's Central America Service Corps Programming
Fabio's Story: Fabio, a 22-year old from Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, initially only had modest career aspirations, and according to him, "barely paid attention to my community." Under the Youth Community Service Pilot program, volunteers such as Fabio were trained in soft skills, social-emotional learning, and the Teaching at the Right Level methodology to prepare them to tutor elementary school students in reading and math. They also received a stipend while they participated in the pilot program. According to Fabio, his volunteer work with children "has been transformative, molding my attitude, fostering democratic leadership, and instilling a positive outlook…The most moving part of my volunteer service is seeing how enthusiastic the children are to study with me, and it motivates me to see them so attentive and eager to learn." Lessons learned from this pilot program and others will inform the implementation of the Central America Service Corps across Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Cesar's Story: In Honduras, high school students face a lack of employment opportunities, structure, and direction after graduation. Eighteen-year-old Cesar was a scout and dreamed of studying psychology, but had no plan, mentor, or source of income to support him. USAID's program is helping Cesar and thousands of graduating high school students transition more smoothly to higher education, the workforce, or both, by helping them articulate a career plan, equipping them with employability, leadership, and soft skills; providing a modest stipend; and mentoring them through the job search process. The program also helps participants conduct service projects to instill a sense of belonging and volunteerism. Cesar's volunteer work was at a center for visually impaired children. He has been mobilizing fellow scouts to play games with the children, collect donations of books and toys, and form a reading circle for the kids. He said he can now envision a pathway to employment while he studies at the university to become a clinical psychologist.

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[43] The IAF collects cumulative data on indicators since many grantees work with the same groups over the years. These data, therefore, represent cumulative (not actual) values for active grants during each given fiscal year.

Water and Sanitation Metric

These indicators track U.S. government contributions to sustainably increasing access to safe drinking water, a public service essential for long-term development. Lack of access to safe, reliable, and affordable drinking water negatively affects health outcomes and diverts time and financial resources away from other development needs, thus putting other development outcomes at risk. Increased financing for water and sanitation increases the availability and sustainable management of safe water and sanitation for underserved and vulnerable populations.

The **USDA's** McGovern-Dole program strengthened 1,227 schools in Guatemala (three projects) and in another Central American country (one project) by supporting the use of improved water sources or sanitary facilities, helping to ensure safe food preparation, improve hygiene practices, and reduce illness. Fiscal year 2023 results increased over fiscal year 2021 levels, but remained stable over the previous fiscal year with only a slight decrease over fiscal year 2022 results.

More than 1,000 schools with improved water or sanitation facilities in fiscal year 2023	Target data not available
Contributing agencies: USDA (1,227)	Results **increased** in the second year and **decreased** in the third year

Additionally, **USAID** (one activity in Guatemala) supported initiatives that significantly enhanced water availability in communities facing water challenges. Programs helped distribute789 water filters across five municipalities coupled with training on maintenance and use for optimal results. Additionally, 80 rainwater catchment systems were installed in two communities, involving local community development councils to select the beneficiaries. Beneficiary criteria prioritized single mothers, senior citizens, families in poverty, and those with disabilities. The communities contributed with labor and local materials, ensuring sustainable use of rainwater catchment systems storing up to 7,500 liters.

Success Stories

Irma Torres pulled out of school in the 6th grade to support her family in the Tierra Colorada community in Momostenango, Guatemala. After 6 years, Irma was able to resume her studies. She began the 'Emprender con Éxito' Diploma, a USAID-supported training program that strengthens participants' skills to perform office tasks using the computer and a selection of software. These courses helped Irma on her path to becoming a teacher for the National Literacy Committee of the Guatemala Ministry of Education. Now, Irma uses her information and communication technologies skills to strengthen her work teaching a literacy class for Indigenous women in her community. Irma says, "I am very happy when they can help their children with their homework because…then the children can go to school without fear."

Country commitment (context) metrics
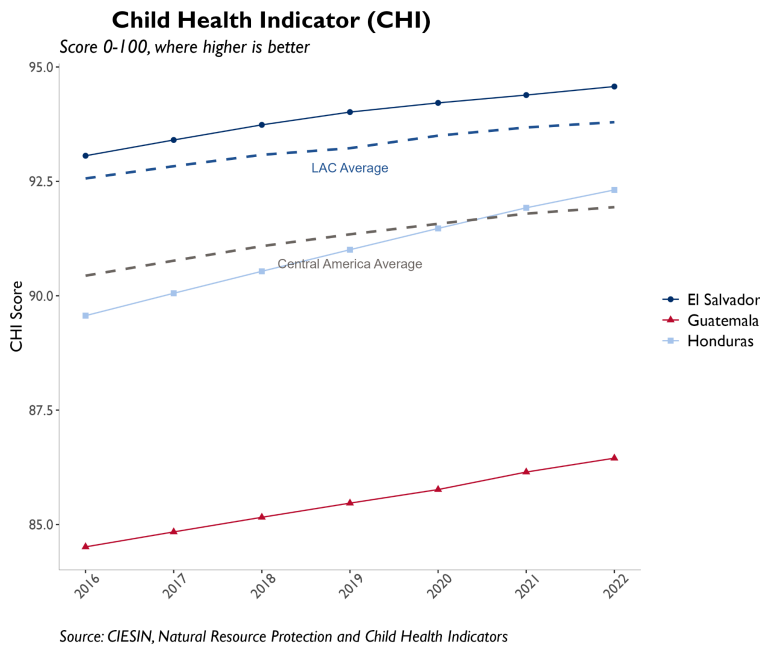
Child Health Indicator (CHI)

Score 0-100, where higher is better

Source: CIESIN, Natural Resource Protection and Child Health Indicators

All Northern Central American countries continue a trend of steadily increasing child health according to the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) at Columbia University.[44] Guatemala continues to have far lower child health indicator scores than Honduras and El Salvador, and only El Salvador continuously scores higher than the regional averages[45]. While the LAC regional average of stunted growth for children under the age of 5 is 11.4 percent, 43 percent of children in Guatemala are stunted alongside a national poverty rate of 55 percent, with both rates higher among Indigenous Peoples.[46] Even though 20 percent of children in Honduras are stunted, Guatemala stands out due to its rate being four times the LAC average.[47] Weak or nonexistent social services like health, education and water in underserved communities compel Guatemalans to migrate to the United States. Meanwhile, Guatemala's national average of child malnutrition is 46.5 percent.[48]

El Salvador and Guatemala experienced modest increases in lower-secondary completion rates[49] from 2019 to 2020 (year for which data is the most recently available. Data is not yet available for Honduras). The increasing completion rates of lower and upper secondary education in the LAC region may reflect policies opening up opportunities to pursue alternative pathways for educational attainment outside of

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[44] The child health data for previous years has been updated in 2023, so data in this visualization and last years' may differ for 2021 and before.

[45] Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), Columbia University. (2022). Natural Resource Protection and Child Health Indicators, 2022 Release.

[46] The World Bank. (2023). The World Bank in Guatemala: Overview.

[47] OECD and the World Bank. (2023). Health at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2023.

[48] Sistema de Información Nacional de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional de Guatemala (National Food and Nutrition Security Information System of Guatemala). (2022). Desnutrición Crónica (Chronic Malnutrition).

[49] Lower secondary completion rates reflect an upper estimate of the actual lower secondary completion rate; the numerator may include late entrants and overage children who have repeated one or more grades of lower secondary education as well as children who entered school early.

traditional programs.[50] In Honduras, social development has stalled, with only 60 percent of Honduran school-aged children in school.[51]

Third-party sources collect and update data periodically, often annually or biannually. Therefore, as of the writing of this report, updated data for social protection rates and education quality are not available. The fiscal year 2022 RCS results report contains analysis of the most recent data for these metrics; see the fiscal year 2022 RCS results report to Congress for a detailed review.

Build Resilience to Address Climate Change and Food Insecurity

Key performance metrics capturing results for this strategic objective include the number of individuals in the agriculture and food system who have applied improvement management practices or technologies, number of children reached with nutrition interventions, and number of individuals participating in food security programs. Individuals with improved agricultural practices or technologies and individuals reached with food security programming continued to increase year over year and achieve targets. Investment in food security and child nutrition targets were surpassed, but did not exceed fiscal year 2022 results due to the planned closeout of programs that predated the Root Causes Strategy and typically operate for about five years.

Key country commitment metrics include environmental policy scores and the prevalence of severe food insecurity. The prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity continued to rise from 2020 to 2021 (the year for which data is most recent) with the prevalence across Northern Central America consistently higher than regional averages.All three countries continue to have low environmental policy scores at or below the 50th percentile.

Performance metrics

Agriculture Technology Assistance Metric

Agricultural technological assistance, financing and investment indicators track U.S. government contributions to reducing poverty and hunger through support for inclusive agriculture-led economic growth.

USDA (two Food for Progress projects in Guatemala, two in Honduras, one in El Salvador, and two projects and one in another Central American country) and **USAID** (three activities in Guatemala and three in Honduras) supported 132,836 individuals (farmers) to apply new agricultural technologies across Central America. These programs reached the majority of individuals (126,056) in Northern Central America. USAID's fiscal year 2023 results (more than 63,000 farmers) exceeded fiscal year 2023 targets, and were more than 40 percent greater than 2021 levels. Small producers received technical assistance

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[50] UNESCO, UNICEF and ECLAC. (2022). Education in Latin America and the Caribbean at a Crossroads - The SDG4-Education 2030 Regional Monitoring Report.

[51] Honduras National Institute for Statistics. (2023). Encuesta Permanente de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples (Permanent Household Survey of Multiple Purposes) - Education.

and training in applying agricultural practices and technology to their plots with the intention of increasing the income of producers and improving livelihoods.

More than 130,000 farmers applied improved management practices or technologies in fiscal year 2023	 Results **exceeded** annual targets (where available)
Contributing agencies USDA (69,110) USAID (63,726)	 Results **increased** year over year

Additionally, **USDA's** Food For Progress projects and **USAID** provided or facilitated access to nearly $100 million in agriculture-related financing for small-holder farmers and microbusinesses across Central America. USAID's fiscal year 2023 access to finance result ($57 million) was nearly triple the result for fiscal year 2021. Program beneficiaries used financing for a variety of purposes including promoting the growth of value chains and generating benefits for local producers and suppliers, modernizing farming processes, and expanding lending to women-owned SMEs.

During fiscal year 2023, **USDA, USAID** and **IAF** supported the application of improved management practices and technologies to 86,180 hectares across Central America. Technologies included crop genetics, cultural practices, irrigation, soil and related fertility management, integrated pest and disease management, and the utilization of water reservoirs and greenhouses.

USAID (one activity in Guatemala and three in Honduras) supported 1,443 people to improve their economic situations through developing small business development in areas such as recycling, composting, and producing organic fertilizers, honey, and biodegradable packaging materials.

Food Security Metric

The food security programming reach indicators track the number of individuals reached by U.S. government food security and nutrition programs. According to the LAPOP 2022 national survey, mothers who experience food insecurity and have a negative outlook for the future are more likely to migrate irregularly.

USDA (three Food for Progress projects and one McGovern-Dole project in Guatemala, two Food for Progress projects in Honduras, one Food for Progress project in El Salvador, and two Food for Progress projects in another Central American country) and **USAID** (four activities in Guatemala and five in Honduras) reached 725,294 individuals with food security programming. The majority of individuals (614,605) were reached in Northern Central America. Results increased year over year, and targets were exceeded, where available.

USAID programs engage agricultural producers and are focused on food-insecure, impoverished, and/or marginalized populations, including women and Indigenous communities. USDA supported individuals through school feeding programs, and agricultural productivity and trade expansion programs.

Nearly 730,000 individuals reached with food security programming in fiscal year 2023	Results **exceeded** annual targets (where available)
Contributing agencies USDA (582,939) USAID (142,355)	Results **increased** year over year

Food Security Investment Leveraged Metric

This private sector investment indicator tracks new investments leveraged by the U.S. government for supporting food security and nutrition. Initiatives strengthen the value chains, promote the adoption and application of good agricultural practices and increase farmer resilience.

USAID (two activities in Guatemala and two in Honduras) and **USDA** (one Food for Progress and four McGovern-Dole projects in Guatemala, two Food for Progress projects each in Honduras and in another Central American country, and one in El Salvador) leveraged an estimated $49.4 million in private sector investments to support food security and nutrition. USAID leveraged the vast majority of that estimated investment ($48.9 million) in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. Though results decreased over fiscal year 2022 levels (fiscal year 2021 data was not reported), the U.S. government exceeded targets.

In the Latin and Central American USDA Food for Progress project, public-private sector investments and alliances were aimed at improving commercial outcomes via renovation and rehabilitation of coffee plantations, fertilization, training on productivity and quality of coffee, integrated pest and disease management, soil and shade management, diversification of agroforestry systems and practices to promote sustainability. In cacao, public private partnerships have helped to establish cacao tasting panels, implement International Standards for Cacao Quality and Flavor protocols, and strengthen national laboratories to improve sensory analysis.

Nearly $50 million leveraged for food security in fiscal year 2023	 Results **exceeded** annual targets (where available)
Contributing agencies: USAID ($47,126,947) USDA ($2,233,142)	 No data reported in the first year; results **decreased** in the third year

Child Nutrition Metric

The child food security indicator tracks the reach of nutrition interventions among children under five, and these interventions remain essential to prevent and treat malnutrition and to improve child survival.

USAID (two activities in Guatemala and one in Honduras) and USDA's McGovern-Dole Initiative (two projects in Guatemala and one in Honduras) provided 144,150 nutritional interventions to children under five. Initiatives promoted nutrition-specific interventions, and essential infant and young child feeding behaviors. In fiscal year 2023, child nutrition results decreased over fiscal year 2022, but increased over year one (2021) levels. This year they did not exceed fiscal year 2022 levels, though targets were exceeded.

More than 140,000 children reached with nutrition interventions in fiscal year 2023	 Results **exceeded** annual targets (where available)
Contributing agencies: USAID (125,418) USDA (18,732)	 Results **increased** in the second year and **decreased** in the third year

Climate Change Metric

The climate change indicators track the amount of investment mobilized for climate change adaptation and clean energy supported with U.S. government assistance. The impacts of climate change can exacerbate the root causes of migration especially for vulnerable people and communities.

In 2021 USAID launched new programs in Guatemala and Honduras that help people and communities build resilience and reduce their vulnerability to the effects of climate change. For example, an activity in Honduras protects coastal wetlands by reducing climate change impacts on coastal flooding and erosion that negatively impacts livelihoods such as fisheries and tourism.

In fiscal year 2023, **USAID** (six activities in Honduras) trained nearly 14,000 people to adopt climate-resilient practices and raised $629,182 (two activities in Honduras) in non-U.S. government finance for climate adaptation. In Guatemala, two programs launched in 2023 will complement USAID's agriculture activities, which provide innovative, climate-smart technologies to farmers. USAID attained targets for the number of people trained in climate adaptation, but not the amount of financing raised due to activity start-up delays. This is the first year that data have been reported for this metric so there is no comparison to previous fiscal years.

Success Stories

[Kevin and Flor](#) are farmers in El Salvador. Through USAID's agriculture initiative with Accesso (a smallholder producer), they were able to purchase their own plot of land, increase their harvests and sell their products at stable prices, building a better future for their families right here in their country. More than 30,000 farmers are a part of this initiative that we promote alongside the private sector to expand the commercialization of seeds, strengthen food systems, improve livelihoods and increase income.

Elías Abimael Sosa Dionicio is a 20-year-old young man from the municipality of Santa María Visitación, Sololá in Guatemala. He was granted inputs valued at $7,486.96 from the Food for Progress ProCampo project for his small fattening poultry farm. He and his team (he now employs 13 women and one man) managed to sell the birds and obtain an income equivalent to 74 percent of the value of the subsidy in three months. He credits the project with helping him learn sound business practices and ways to obtain a good income in agriculture. He also highlighted that two of the young ladies in his group recently started their university studies because they believe they must continue learning and start diversifying—not only broiler hens but other activities that will benefit them as a group or individually.

In 2022, the Food for Progress project, ProCampo, awarded cash grants to the Nuevo Vision Cooperative located in the municipality of San Juan Cotzal in the department of Quiché, Guatemala. The goal of the grant was to provide inputs and infrastructure to improve tomato production, a lucrative crop in the region. With the resources provided by the grant, the cooperative installed seven chapel-type greenhouses, which are used by 18 families. Among the cooperative members, 29-year-old Samuel López Sambrano stands out. Samuel has recently been registered by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food as a supplier for the school feeding program in primary schools in his municipality. Samuel says, "we learned to adopt new technology to benefit our production. We also developed experience in commercial matters since this subsidy allowed us to enter a working relationship with schools under the School Feeding Law and we now sell our produce to three educational centers in our municipality, this guarantees economic income to each of the families in the cooperative that are benefiting from the subsidy."

*Relevant evaluations, assessments, and studies*

Key evaluation finding: In 2023 a USAID activity in Guatemala that recruited youth to serve as reading tutors for younger learners recorded a 17-point increase over baseline in the percentage of learners reaching grade-level reading proficiency.

A forthcoming impact evaluation of Feed the Future programs in Guatemala found a statistically significant drop of 11-16 percentage points in moderate and/or severe food insecurity among beneficiaries from 2019 to 2022, which was attributed to the programs.

In 2023, USDA released its "Assessment of Agricultural Resilience under Climate Change and its Relation to Food Insecurity and Migration in the Northern Triangle of Central America,"[52] which was conducted in partnership with CATIE, the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center. The assessment addressed three questions for Northern Central America: 1) How resilient are agricultural systems to the effects of climate change? 2) What is the relationship between food insecurity and migration? And 3) What interventions can increase agricultural resilience to the effects of climate change? Findings were that: 1) staple grain farmers were the least resilient, vegetable farmers had a low resilience, but coffee farmers and raisers of livestock were most resilient to the effects of climate change. However, climate change does not act as an isolated migration driver. 2) Food insecurity acts as a push factor for migration through different socio-economic influences. 3) Any strategy to face migration must consider the combination of different factors and how they interact in a specific geographic, social, and livelihood context. USDA and CATIE proposed 12 on-the-ground and programmatic technical interventions that can improve agricultural resilience under the effects of climate change and increase food security and the ability of farmers to be successful in their communities and avoid migrating.

Country commitment (context) metrics

In all three Northern Central American countries, the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity continued to rise from 2020 to 2021 (the year for which data is most recent), with Guatemala's percentage of the population experiencing the highest food insecurity. The prevalence across the three countries is consistently higher than the Central American and LAC regional averages.[53] According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture organization from 2021-2022, the prevalence of hunger in Mesoamerica remained the same while moderate or severe food insecurity rose modestly. Multiple recent crises (e.g. COVID-19, the

Food Insecurity in Northern Central America

Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity (percentage of population)
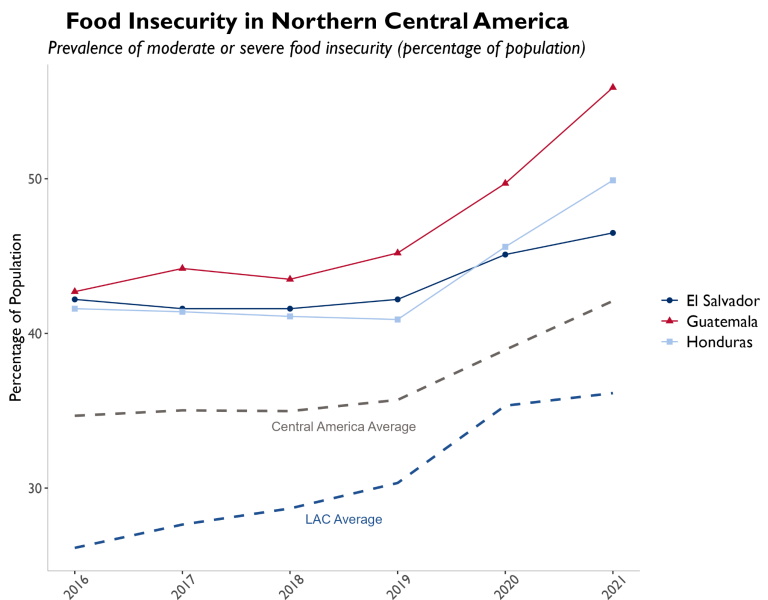
Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), FAOSTAT

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[52] USDA & CATIE. (2023). Assessment of Agricultural Resilience under Climate Change and its Relation to Food Insecurity and Migration in the Northern Triangle of Central America, available at https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/ASSESSMENT%20OF%20AGRICULTURAL%20RESILIENCE%20UNDER%20CLIMATE%20CHANGE%20AND%20ITS%20RELATION%20TO%20FOOD%20INSECURITY%20AND%20MIGRATION%20IN%20THE%20NORTHERN%20TRIANGLE%20OF%20CENTRAL%20AMERICA.pdf .

[53]FAO. (2022). Indicator 2.1.2 Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale.

climate crisis and Ukraine conflict) have played a role in shaping the levels of hunger and malnutrition people face in the LAC region through contributing to rising food prices, and compromising the resilience of agrifood systems. Longstanding inequalities in the LAC region lead to vulnerable populations taking on more of the burden (i.e. women face food insecurity more than men).[54]

All three countries have low environmental policy scores. El Salvador's score is just above the LAC and Central America averages. Guatemala and Honduras score below the regional averages.[55] All three countries struggle with having robust and autonomous institutions that can drive strong environmental policies and, in particular, conservation policies created in conjunction with Indigenous members to protect land.[56]

According to OECD, pollution remains the leading environmental health risk in the LAC region and when developed, air quality standards are usually not enforced. In regards to commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Honduras has set sector-specific targets for 2030, but Guatemala and El Salvador have "no clear targets" for emissions reductions stated in their Nationally Determined Contributions, despite participating in the Paris Agreement.[57]

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[54] FAO. (2023). Latin America and the Caribbean - Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023.

[55] Bertelsmann Stiftung (2020). Transformation Index (BTI). The BTI Environmental Policy indicator scores countries' environmental policies on a one to ten scale, with higher scores representing more advanced environmental policy regimes. This indicator measures the soundness of environmental stewardship and natural resource management, factoring a wide array of macroeconomic policies with environmental consequences, such as energy and tax policies, national climate plans, and incentives at the firm and household levels. The indicator also considers whether legislation and regulations are effectively executed, as well as the influence of societal stakeholders beyond the government, including the private sector and civil society.

[56] Morales-Marroquín, Zucchi, and Pinheiro. (2023). 8th multi-stakeholder UN Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for SDG. Biodiversity and environmental policy challenges in Central America towards natural resource governance.

[57] OECD. (2023). Environment at a Glance in Latin America and the Caribbean, Spotlight on Climate Change.

Pillar II: Combating corruption, strengthening democratic governance, and advancing the rule of law

Pillar II comprises three strategic objectives:

- Strengthen democratic institutions to improve governance and rule of law,
- Combat corruption, and
- Improve government service delivery.

The U.S. government exceeded fiscal year 2023 targets (where set) for key metrics and result increases over previous fiscal years were mixed. The number of judicial personnel trained has been decreasing year over year due to the planned closeout of programs that predated the Root Causes Strategy and typically operate for about five years, as well as pauses in programming due to pervasive corruption and a lack of trusted government partners. Anti-corruption training results continue to increase each year since fiscal year 2021 and far exceed targets. Variance in these data and targets are due to fewer opportunities for State to implement programming with the judicial sector.

Results robustness	Definition	Number of key performance metrics	Performance metrics, by pillar II strategic objective
Very robust	▶ and ᵢᵢᵢ	1	● [Anti-corruption training](#)
Robust	▶ and ᵢᵢᵢ or ▶ and ᵢᵢ or ▶ and ᵢ or ⌂ and ᵢᵢᵢ	1	● [Justice sector personnel](#)
Somewhat robust	◀ and ᵢᵢᵢ or ◀ and ᵢᵢ or ⌂ and ᵢᵢᵢ	n/a	n/a
Declining results	⌂ and ᵢᵢ	n/a	n/a

USAID and State continue to train public defenders, judges, prosecutors, and other justice sector personnel across Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador to improve service delivery and increase

competency in theory, techniques and management. In addition, USAID strengthened the capacity of partner governments across Northern Central America and the region to administer public resources. State also joined USAID to support CSOs to better advocate for services and conduct oversight of public administration activities.

USAID has supported the provision of humanitarian assistance and reintegration services such as educational and vocational training to provide for a dignified and humane return and reintegration. In addition, USAID helped triple the number of H-2 visas issued to workers from Northern Central America from fiscal year 2021 to fiscal year 2023.

According to the World Justice Project, all three Northern Central American countries continue to score lower than the LAC average on government effectiveness, though El Salvador and Guatemala's tax revenue as a percentage of GDP continued to rise (no data is available for Honduras). Governance challenges including corruption and democratic backsliding continue in El Salvador and Guatemala, and positive perceptions of the judicial systems in these two countries declined. While Guatemala and El Salvador are two of eight countries in the LAC region becoming more autocratic, Honduras is classified as a democracy according to the V-Dem Institute.

Strengthen Democratic Institutions to Improve Governance and Rule of Law

Key performance metrics for this strategic objective include number of trained justice sector personnel and number of supported courts. The number of judicial personnel trained has been reducing year over year, but targets (where set by USAID) were exceeded. Support to courts did not achieve targets nor increase results over the two previous fiscal years due to the post-pandemic return to in-person hearings earlier than anticipated which impacted the number of courts supported.

The key country commitment metrics for this strategic objective are V-DEM diagonal accountability index, World Justice Project's overall rule of law index, and data on trust in judicial systems gathered by State. Honduras' rule of law scores have steadily improved since 2021, whereas Guatemala and El Salvador's rule of law scores have maintained or declined, respectively. Positive perceptions of the judicial system continue to rise since 2021 in Honduras, whereas from 2022 to 2023, the positive perceptions of the judicial systems in El Salvador and Guatemala have declined. Updated data for V-Dem's Diagonal Accountability is not available as of the writing of this report.

Performance metrics

Justice Sector Personnel Training Metric

These indicators track U.S. government contributions to strengthening partner governments' judicial systems, essential for transparency and accountability in democratic societies, as well as performance of those systems, measured by prosecutions and convictions.

USAID (one activity in Guatemala, three in Honduras and two in El Salvador) and **State** trained 3,910 justice sector personnel including public defenders, judges, prosecutors, and ombudspersons across

Northern Central America. Training focused on strategic criminal prosecution, litigation techniques, case theory, evidence management, due process, and updated environmental legislation, among other related topics. Others focused on imparting relevant knowledge to improve GBV service delivery, reduce victimization, and implement a victim-centered approach in the justice system.

Though results have decreased year over year, fiscal year 2023 targets were exceeded, and USAID's fiscal year 2023 result (more than 3,000 personnel) was nearly double its reach in fiscal year 2021. Additional unanticipated requests for assistance from counterpart institutions, the implementation of strategies focused on building greater trust with justice sector counterparts, and securing political will for the implementation of broader technical assistance have contributed to exceeding targets. The ability to engage focus participants and conduct trainings varies by fiscal year given the variable level of political will and access to Northern Central American host-government counterparts. In Honduras, COVID restrictions also extended beyond other countries in the region, significantly affecting State's programming.

Nearly 4,000 justice sector personnel trained in fiscal year 2023	Results **exceeded** annual targets (where available)
Contributing agencies: USAID (3,075) State (1,265)	Results **decreased** year over year

Additionally, **USAID** supported 36 courts in Guatemala (one activity) and Honduras (two activities) that improved courts' case management systems by implementing better management tools and models, training staff and donating equipment. USAID did not achieve targets this fiscal year and results have been decreasing year over year due to the earlier return to in-person hearings than had been anticipated.

Diplomatic Engagement

Throughout the year, agencies reported several high-level engagements that targeted corruption, strengthened democracy, and advanced the rule of law, most of which were led by State.

- High-ranking United States government officials participated in public roundtable discussions to highlight the importance of the rule of law, speaking out against undemocratic actions, and highlighting the importance of good governance for the Biden Administration.

- State carried out robust engagement with the Government of Guatemala, members of the private sector, civil society, and international community to urge respect for the will of the Guatemalan people and importance of upholding democratic principles between the time of Arevalo's election in August 2023 and his inauguration in January 2024.

Success Stories

Honduras: USAID grantee Asociación para una Sociedad Más Justa (ASJ) put in place a new Hearing Management Model in 20 courts of the Judicial Branch of the Government of Honduras. Once adopted, ASJ found significant time reductions in the average number of days elapsed between hearings in the courts. For example, the time elapsed between the defendant's first appearance in court and the initial hearing went from 17 days to five days, representing a 71 percent reduction. The average number of days elapsed between the initial hearing and the preliminary hearing went from 369 days to 73 days (or 52 weeks to 11 weeks), representing an 80 percent reduction.

In Guatemala, USAID collaborated with the Government of Guatemala to dismantle 12 local gang cliques in Guatemala City. By enabling the development of 25 comprehensive crime pattern reports, USAID aided the Guatemalan government's investigations leading to the execution of 14 search warrants and 21 arrest warrants, resulting in cases brought against the alleged offenders and the seizure of firearms, ammunition, and cell phones.

In El Salvador, State-funded DOJ programs helped El Salvador's Financial Intelligence Unit and other government regulatory bodies charged with anti-money laundering prevention and supervision modernize their approach to the collection and analysis of financial intelligence. The Government of El Salvador also developed new regulations and internal protocols to improve anti-money laundering compliance programs, financial reporting, and supervision consistent with international standards and Financial Action Task Force regulations. The Attorney General's office also issued a mandatory instruction requiring the institution to initiate parallel financial investigations in any case involving any potential assets.

In El Salvador, DOJ-trained prosecutors and investigators took down a child pornography network. On April 2, the Attorney General and the Minister of Justice arrested 232 child sexual predators. The Deputy Attorney General, the Director of Women, Children, Adolescent, LGBTQI+ and other Vulnerable Communities, and the National Children and Adolescent Coordinator led the operation with the cooperation of all 19 State-supported Specialized Units for Women, Children, and Adolescents Attention and the National Civilian Police.
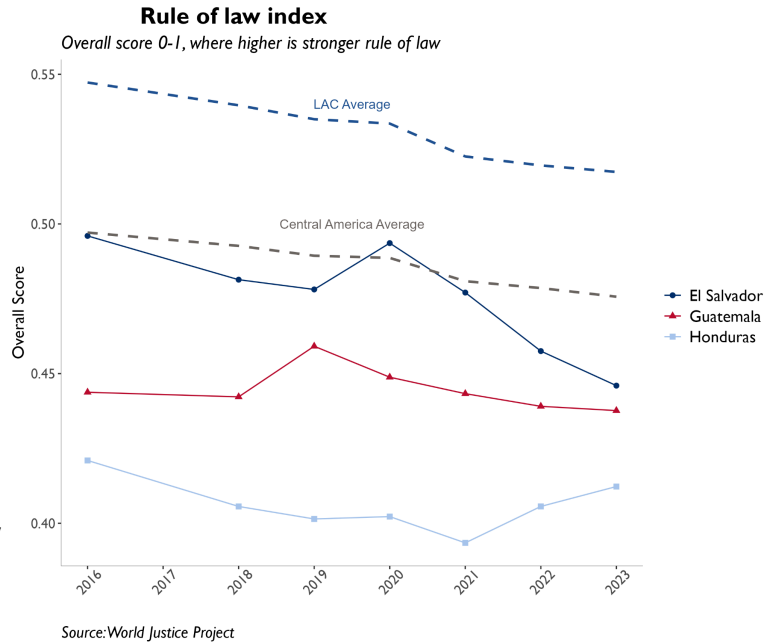
Country commitment (context) metrics

Since 2016, Guatemala and Honduras have had Rule of Law Index scores[58] lower than both the Central America and the LAC regional averages. The scores for Guatemala have stabilized from 2022 to 2023 and Honduras' have steadily improved since 2021, whereas El Salvador's have steadily decreased starting in 2021. While Honduras was once considered an electoral autocracy in 2012, as of 2022, it is classified as an electoral democracy according to the V-Dem Institute[59]. According to the Rule of Law index,

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[58] The ROL Index scores and ranks countries on eight primary factors: Constraints on Government Powers, Absence of Corruption, Open Government, Fundamental Rights, Order and Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice. It is built upon an original conceptual framework developed by World Justice Project researchers, in consultation with academics, practitioners, and community leaders around the world.

[59] V-Dem Institute. (2023). Democracy Report 2023, Defiance in the Face of Autocratization.

Guatemala, before the current presidential administration, and El Salvador were categorized as two of eight countries in the LAC region moving towards autocratization. However, the new Arevalo administration offers hope for a new direction for the country with an anti-corruption platform. El Salvador does not meet Rule of Law's minimum standards to be labeled a democracy because of its lack of transparency and eroding checks and balances. El Salvador and Honduras are characterized by Freedom House as partly free, particularly affected by impunity and the undermining of institutional independence.[60] Democracy continues to be challenged in Guatemala with attacks on the judicial system and the undermining of investigations into corruption.[61] However, the new Arevalo administration has expressed a commitment to democracy and rule of law.

Rule of law index
Overall score 0-1, where higher is stronger rule of law

Source: World Justice Project

According to a reputable public opinion data source, positive perceptions of the judicial system continue to rise since 2021 in Honduras, whereas from 2022 to 2023, the positive perceptions of the judicial systems in El Salvador and Guatemala have declined. Overall, positive perceptions of the judicial system are much higher in El Salvador than the other two countries. Across the LAC region, trust in the legislative and judicial systems remains consistently low and less than one in every three adults have trust in their national legislature.[62]

Third-party sources collect and update data periodically, often annually or biannually. Therefore, as of the writing of this report, updated data for V-Dem's Diagonal Accountability and Liberal Democracy Indices is not yet available. The fiscal year 2022 Root Causes Strategy results report contains analysis of the most recent data for these metrics; see the fiscal year 2022 RCS results report to Congress for a detailed review.

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[60] Freedom House. (2024). Freedom in the World 2024: The Mounting Damage of Flawed Elections and Armed Conflict.

[61] V-Dem Institute. (2023). Democracy Report 2023, Defiance in the Face of Autocratization.

[62] LAPOP Lab. (2023). LAPOP's AmericasBarometer takes the Pulse of Democracy.

Combat Corruption

The number of individuals, both government and civil society representatives, trained in anti-corruption is the main performance metric for this strategic objective. In fiscal year 2023, the U.S. government exceeded targets and results continue to increase each year since fiscal year 2021.

The country commitment (or context) metric for this strategic objective is the perception of public corruption which has not widely changed in the Northern Central America countries from 2021 to 2022 (the year for which data is most recently available). All three Northern Central American countries score lower than the global and LAC averages (which are almost equivalent).[63]

Performance metrics

Anti-corruption training metric

These indicators track U.S. government contributions to strengthening the capacity of partner government officials to manage accountability systems and processes, take action against corrupt acts, and be aware of the ethical norms related to their official roles.

USAID (two activities in Guatemala and two in Honduras) and **State** (Honduras and projects across Central America) trained 10,597 government officials and people affiliated with non-governmental organizations in transparency and anti-corruption. The objectives of these trainings included improving the skills and knowledge of public servants to administer public resources, and enabling community organizations (e.g. women's networks, youth networks, Local Emergency Committees) to better advocate for services and conduct oversight of public administration activities.

Where available, U.S. government programs exceeded targets, and results increased over previous fiscal year levels. Programs exceeded targets due to meeting additional and unanticipated requests for trainings from counterpart institutions.

More than 10,500 individuals trained in anti-corruption in fiscal year 2023	Results **exceeded** annual targets (where available)
Contributing agencies: USAID (4,714) State (5,883)	Results **increased** year over year

Diplomatic Engagement

The State Department's Coordinator on Global Anti-Corruption traveled to Guatemala in October 2022. The Coordinator highlighted the U.S. commitment to strengthen rule of law and promote accountability for corrupt actors in meetings with civil society, judges, private sector leaders, and government officials. In a meeting with Guatemalan Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Labor, and Health, the Coordinator

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[63] Transparency International. (2022). Corruption Perceptions Index.

encouraged them to institutionalize a culture of anti-corruption and take practical steps to increase transparency.

In fiscal year 2023, the U.S. government promoted accountability through visa restrictions for over 600 individuals involved in acts of corruption or undermining democracy in Central America, rendering them generally ineligible for visas to the United States. In addition, the Department of the Treasury sanctioned three individuals in Nicaragua for their role in, among other things, serious human rights abuse.

Success Stories

In Guatemala, since 2014 USAID has supported the Guatemalan National Civil Police (PNC) in strengthening its Statistics Section. [Agent Paz](), who serves as Director of the Statistics Section, says, "I like working with data because they speak for themselves, they don't lie. They are a tool we can have at hand for operational and administrative decision-making." In 2023, USAID supported a new Division of Police Corruption Investigations (DICOP), which has successfully brought 35 cases to trial involving bribery, abuse of authority, and dereliction of duty. These cases resulted in the conviction and dismissal of more than 40 police officers, helping the PNC to fight corruption and improve its accountability to the Guatemalan people.

In Honduras, USAID's long-time support for the National Anti-Corruption Council has contributed to the investigation of more than 150 corruption cases, identifying more than $430 million in potentially embezzled funds, and involving more than 1,700 current and former public servants. In fiscal year 2023 alone, the Council investigated 6 new cases identifying over $19.8 million in potentially embezzled funds and involving more than 32 former public officials.

In El Salvador, USAID capacity building support helped local advocacy organizations comply with a new and complex set of regulations. This support helped CSOs overcome these purposefully burdensome regulatory hurdles so that they could continue their work in governance and social accountability.
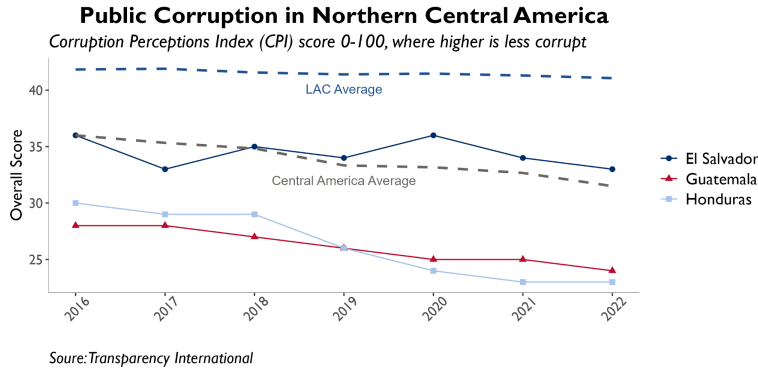
In El Salvador, State-supported civil society organizations in partnership with local investigative journalists identified more than 80 potential instances of corruption, filed more than 40 corruption complaints with host government and international institutions, and submitted more than 150 access-to-information requests to local institutions for accountability in fiscal year 2023.

Relevant evaluations, assessments, and studies

In fiscal year 2023, USAID commissioned studies examining the connection between corruption and migration in Honduras. A statistical analysis coupled with qualitative information suggested a correlation between irregular migration and the perception of corruption between the participants. More than 90 percent of interviewees reported that their perceptions impact their decision to migrate.

Perceptions of public corruption in Northern Central America have not widely changed from 2021 to 2022 (the year for which data is most recently available) according to Transparency International.[64] In Honduras, anti-corruption champions and civil society chapters of Transparency International have increasingly received attacks or threats from the current Castro administration when highlighting the state of corruption in the country. The implementation of a UN-backed anti-corruption commission has been delayed in Honduras.[65] According to Transparency International, Guatemala and Honduras are perceived as more corrupt than El Salvador, and more corrupt than regional averages. The

Public Corruption in Northern Central America
Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score 0-100, where higher is less corrupt

Soure: Transparency International

perception in El Salvador is on-par with the Central America average over the last few years, but higher than the LAC average. The average global score is 43 (on a scale from 0-100, where higher is less corrupt), and all three Northern Central American countries score lower than the global average which is almost the same as the LAC average.[66]

Improve Government Service Delivery

This section tracks U.S. government support to partner governments to enhance the number of temporary work visas issued to individuals from Northern Central America and also support for countries to provide for the dignified and humane return and reintegration of returned migrants.

Key country commitment (or context) metrics include national-level government effectiveness on which all three Northern Central American countries scored lower than the LAC average, and tax revenue as a percentage of GDP which continued to rise for El Salvador and Guatemala (no data is available for Honduras).

Metrics

- **Number of temporary work visas issued with USAID support.** USAID's work with the governments of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras has helped nearly triple the number of

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[64]Transparency International explains in their CPI 2022: Highlights and Insights that, "The Index ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople. It relies on 13 independent data sources and uses a scale of zero to 100, where zero is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. More than two-thirds of countries (68 per cent) score below 50 and the average global score remains unchanged at 43. Since 2012, 25 countries significantly improved their scores, but in the same period 31 countries significantly declined."

[65] Americas Quarterly. (2024). Honduras' Anti-Corruption Push Has Stalled.

[66] Transparency International. (2022). Corruption Perceptions Index.

H-2 visas issued to workers from those countries from 9,800 in fiscal year 2021 to more than 28,000 in fiscal year 2023.

- **Returned migrants processed by regional governments.** USAID's assistance helped the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to receive and process 148,686 returned migrants.

- **Post-arrival humanitarian assistance for returned migrants.** USAID provided assistance including hygiene kits, food, clothing, and transportation to 77,998 returning migrants: 33,698 in Guatemala, 13,300 in El Salvador, and 31,000 in Honduras.

- **Reintegration services for returned migrants.** USAID supported 26,997 individuals in Central America with reintegration services including vocational training, education, job placement, and psychosocial support.

In addition, USAID support to local government institutions and providers helped expand coverage and improve quality of services, boosting communities' confidence in local institutions. For example:

- In El Salvador, USAID support to 31 municipalities helped increase local resources for public services such as waste collection and public lighting, benefiting 200,000 citizens.

- In Guatemala, USAID support to 23 municipal governments contributed to investment of more than $630,000 in water chlorination in 227 community water systems, benefiting 45,000 households and more than 230,000 people.

- In Honduras, USAID support and training helped 56 health facilities digitize a community-level nutrition diagnostic tool and a registry of nutrition activities. The availability of higher quality data helped local health authorities and service providers expand nutrition service coverage for young children and reactivate nutrition services that had ceased during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Diplomatic Engagement

Not applicable for the reporting period.

Relevant evaluations, assessments, and studies

A forthcoming independent evaluation of the USAID program supporting temporary worker visas in El Salvador found that nearly a quarter of survey respondents were unemployed before joining the program—thus directly addressing a frequently cited root cause of irregular migration—and that about two-thirds experienced marked increases in their income (from less than $500 per month to $1,000-2,000 per month). In turn, 45 percent of survey respondents said that the increased income opened up investment and entrepreneurship opportunities in their home communities.

Success Stories

El Salvador: To meet U.S. demand and speed up enrollment of Salvadoran workers, USAID, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Labor Mobility Unit, built an extensive workers database. With support from newly trained municipal staff around the country, USAID and 144 municipal governments helped community members subscribe in the workers database, which enabled more than

6,500 H-2A and H-2B applicants to be vetted and made readily available so U.S. companies could hire them quickly. Maria Nuñez with Automated Harvesting is one of the U.S. employers benefiting as a result. Her company employs Salvadoran H-2A workers on their lettuce farms in California, and anticipates hiring more in the future given the positive experience they've had with these workers.

Country commitment (context) metrics

All Northern Central America country government effectiveness[67] estimates are below the LAC average, however since 2020, El Salvador's estimate of government effectiveness has scored above the Central America average. Honduras and Guatemala estimates are below regional averages and declining since 2020.[68]

Government Effectiveness in Northern Central America
Estimate -2.5 to 2.5, where higher is better
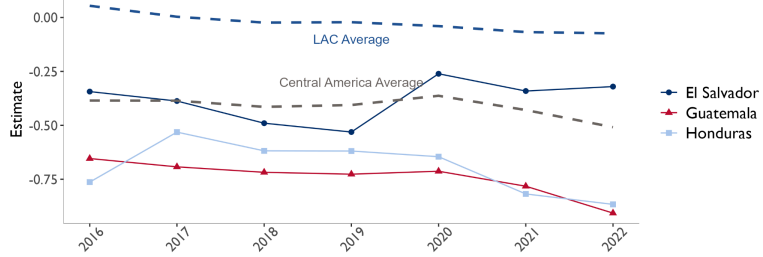
Source: World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators

Tax revenue as a percentage of GDP continues to rise from 2020 to 2021 (the year for which data is most recently available) in El Salvador and Guatemala (little to no data is available for Honduras). The OECD cites value-added taxes and income tax as the main drivers of higher revenues. Recovery of economic activity from COVID-19 pandemic shock, higher commodity prices and end of temporary tax relief enabled a rebound in tax revenue across the LAC region.[69]

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[67] The World Bank explains in their Metadata Glossary that, "Government effectiveness captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies."

[68] Daniel Kaufmann and Aart Kraay (2023). Worldwide Governance Indicators.

[69] World Bank. (2022). Tax revenue (percent of GDP).

Pillar III: Promoting respect for human rights, labor rights, and a free press

Pillar Ill comprises three strategic objectives:

- Enhance respect for human rights,
- Enhance respect for labor rights, and
- Promote a free press.

DOL, State, and USAID work with partners in the region, including civil society, to promote respect for human rights for all citizens. In fiscal year 2023, all metrics included under this pillar—human rights defenders trained or supported, increased capacity to address labor rights issues, and number of journalists trained and supported—met or exceeded targets (where set) and increased results over the two previous fiscal years.

Results robustness	Definition	Number of key performance metrics	Performance metrics, by pillar III strategic objective
Very robust	▶ and ▁▅█ or ▶ and ▁▅▁	3	• Human rights defenders • Labor rights actors • Journalists
Robust	▶ and ▁▅█ or ▶ and ▃▅▁ or ▶ and ▅▁ or ⌧ and ▁▅█		n/a
Somewhat robust	◀ and ▁▅█ or ◀ and ▁▅▁ or ⌧ and ▁▅█	n/a	n/a
Declining results	⌧ and ▃▅▁	n/a	n/a

Human rights concerns continue to be rampant in the region, especially in light of recent democratic backsliding. Perpetrators of violence and abuses are often not held accountable, intimidation of the press is widespread, and vulnerable populations (women and girls, Indigenous, Afro-descendent, and LGBTQI+) suffer discrimination and violence with little redress. National compliance with labor rights and

labor institutions are weak in the region. Significant gender gaps exist in the labor market. Press freedom is below the 50th percentile across the region with all three countries scoring below regional averages.

Enhance Respect for Human Rights

The main performance metric for this strategic objective is the number of human rights defenders trained or supported. Fiscal year 2023 results exceeded targets, and results continue to increase year over year.

The primary country commitment (or context) metric is the World Justice Project's Fundamental Rights index scores which had not yet been updated for 2023 as of the time of writing this report.

Performance metrics

Human Rights Defenders Metric

These indicators track U.S. government assistance to prevent, reduce, and mitigate risk factors and reduce human rights violations. Increasing the number of human rights defenders trained and supported through U.S. government assistance will result in increased capacity to report human rights violations and advocate for the protection of human rights. This leads to improved government accountability and transparency, as the public becomes more aware of government violations. This awareness will ideally lead to a decrease in human rights violations.

State (Central America) and USAID (two activities in Honduras and one in El Salvador) supported 2,978 human rights defenders. Through support to 31 human rights organizations, human rights defenders were trained in strategic advocacy at the national, regional, and international level on topics including, environmental rights, and the rights of women, Indigenous Peoples, and LGBTQI+ peoples, among other related topics. Trainings in El Salvador utilized the Victimology Approach and its application to comprehensive assistance to survivors, advocacy and effective communication in social networks and digital security.

Results have increased year over year and programs exceeded targets in El Salvador as sub-grantees conducted training activities for human rights defenders that broadened the previously planned outreach. The activity increased the delivery of training courses to human rights defenders in topics such as protection and personal security, and case documentation of human rights violations.

Nearly 3,000 human rights defenders trained and supported in fiscal year 2023	> Results **exceeded** annual targets (where available)
Contributing agencies: State (2,433) USAID (545)	Year over year increases

Additionally, during calendar[70] and fiscal year 2023, State and USAID (one activity in Central America) have protected more than 437 human rights defenders, journalists, and activists with emergency financial assistance as the deterioration of democratic systems in the region continues. In fiscal year 2023, the region witnessed the continued closure of spaces for citizen participation and the co-optation of government

> **Voices (VOCES) Initiative**
> First launched by USAID Administrator Power in June 2022, the interagency Voices initiative to protect, defend and promote civic space in Central America made important advances in 2023. This included new regional programming to protect and strengthen independent media to expose corruption and increase public demand for government transparency and accountability and an infusion of resources to support the critical work of human rights defenders and other civil society advocates. Through public diplomacy, the interagency signaled its commitment by meeting regularly with civil society advocates during high level visits and at headquarters; actively participating in key forums such as RightsCon, the Central America Donors Forum, the Organization of American States General Assembly, and the InterAmerican Commission on Human Rights; and fostering new opportunities for collaboration among business actors, multilateral organizations, philanthropic entities and other donor countries. The initiative served as a vital coordination space, enabling agencies to more effectively deploy all of the U.S. government tools to further the goals of Voices.

institutions by authoritarian actors, leading in a series of human rights violations. USAID missions have responded to these closing spaces. For example, USAID/El Salvador's Democracy and Governance Office has shifted its focus towards protection for activists, improved monitoring, and research into communications strategies and malign influence. It has also begun implementing a community-based approach to democracy and governance programming and is expanding work with municipal governments.

USAID (two activities in Guatemala, six in Honduras, three in El Salvador, two regional activities, and one in other Central American country) and State supported 336 CSOs across Central America to engage in advocacy in their communities. Programming likewise engages government institutions and serves as a convener with local civil society. This support strengthens CSOs to mobilize society, ideas, and resources to bring about democratic change and/or its consolidation, a critical means for citizens to express their needs and concerns to their governments.

Diplomatic Engagement
Not applicable for the reporting period.

Success Stories
Guatemala: Solsiree, a Guatemalan municipal leader, has spent years working with other local leaders and community members on issues of tolerance, discrimination, and health education. Through participation in community gatherings organized under a USAID activity, she is now better equipped to change discriminatory attitudes in her community so individuals can connect with local services such as HIV-counseling and testing.

In Honduras, USAID supported the launch of a mobile phone application enabling 81 CSOs representing women from low-income neighborhoods, women's groups, urban youth, people living with HIV/AIDS, and Afro-Honduran, Indigenous and LGBTQI+ communities to submit alerts directly to the government's Human Rights Observatory.

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[70] In this instance, only calendar year data is available for State.

Third-party sources collect and update data periodically, often annually or biannually. Therefore, as of the writing of this report, updated data for World Justice Project's Fundamental Rights Index had not been updated for 2024. The fiscal year 2022 RCS results report contains analysis of the most recent data for these metrics; see the fiscal year 2022 RCS results report to Congress for a detailed review.

Enhance Respect for Labor Rights

The main performance metric for this strategic objective is the number of labor rights actors, including government officials, employers, and workers and their organizations, with increased knowledge and skills to better address labor rights violations. For this metric, fiscal year 2023 results exceeded targets, and represented an increase over fiscal year 2022 result levels.

The country commitment (or context) metric measures the level of national compliance with labor rights. The most recent data available is for 2021. From 2018 to 2021, Honduras' level of national compliance with labor rights declined whereas Guatemala's increased over the same time period. El Salvador's levels had been declining since 2017, but increased from 2020 to 2021.

Performance metrics

Individual Labor Actors Metric

This indicator tracks the number of labor rights actors, including government officials, employers, and workers, with increased knowledge and skills to better address labor rights violations.

DOL increased the knowledge and skills of 2,190 labor rights actors, including government officials, employers and workers in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica. The majority (2,055) was in Northern Central America. This included increased knowledge of labor rights (child labor, forced labor, collective bargaining, freedom of association, and occupational safety and health) and improved skills for labor law enforcement officials. Results exceeded targets and increased year over year.

More than 2,000 labor rights actors with increased knowledge and skills in fiscal year 2023	 Results **exceeded** annual targets (where available)
Contributing agencies: DOL (2,190)	 Results increased year over year

In fiscal year 2023, **DOL** and **State** promoted international labor standards by training 101 agriculture sector (sugar, banana, and palm oil) and services sector (especially domestic workers) worker organizations on labor rights and building capacity on management and accountability.

DOL's support to workplaces and worker organizations across Northern Central America have resulted in six MOUs with occupational safety and health (OSH) programs, and more than 900 workers, supervisors, managers and employees participating in OSH field interventions and complying with OSH requirements in El Salvador.

DOL worked with 75 unions and other institutions across Northern Central America to improve labor rights through publications, dialogue, and round-table processes; or improve delivery of services, programs or duties.In Honduras, 5 of these were coffee cooperatives and exporters adopting social compliance system tools. Three hundred forty six workers increased their affiliation to unions in target factories or plantations in Northern Central America.

In Honduras (one project), **DOL** trained a total of 581 individuals in labor compliance from the Ministry of Labor and private sector stakeholders on each of the modules of the electronic case management system. Across Northern Central America and Costa Rica, more than 80 trained workers became leaders continuing to replicate training sessions for other workers, and/or use tools learned in project trainings to involve more workers in the organizing process. This also includes a number of labor officials who subscribed to the new electronic case management system.

Country commitment (context) metrics

Labor Rights in Northern Central America
Level of national compliance with labour rights, modeled ILO estimate
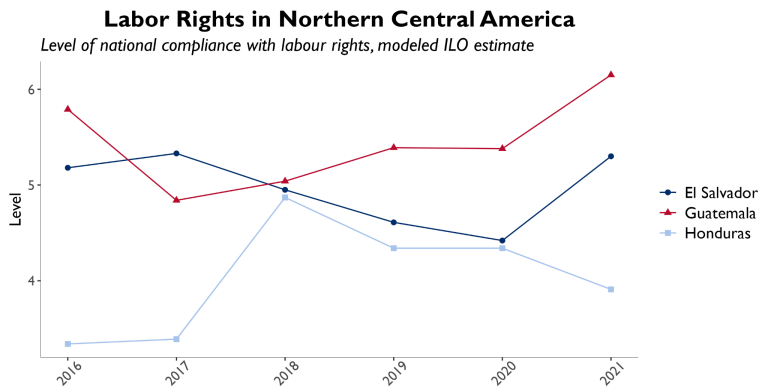
Source: United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goals Indicators Database

In fiscal year 2023, State and DOL added a new labor rights context metric from the Global Sustainable Development Goals Indicator Database, "Level of National Compliance with Labor Rights.[71]" The most recent data is available for 2021. From 2018 to 2021, Honduras' level of national compliance with labor rights declined whereas Guatemala's increased over the same time period. El Salvador's levels had been declining from 2017 to 2020, but increased in 2021. The ILO states that the LAC region currently needs policies that recognize and address barriers that women face in access and progress in the labor market, given the significant gender gap in both high and low-skilled jobs. Additionally, the region needs to strengthen labor institutions, such as the minimum wage and collective bargaining mechanisms.[72]

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[71] ILO. (2021). SDG Indicator 8.8.2: ILO's Level of national compliance with labor rights.

[72] ILO (2023). 2023 Labour Review, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Promote a Free Press

The main performance metric for this strategic objective is the number of journalists trained or supported. For this metric, fiscal year 2023 results exceeded targets, and increased over fiscal year 2022 result levels.

The country commitment (or context) metric is Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index. Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala continued to have declines in press freedom from 2022 to 2023.

<u>Performance metrics</u>

Journalists Metric

This indicator tracks U.S. government contributions to improving journalists' abilities to investigate and report on human rights violations, a key aspect of government accountability and transparency.

State and **USAID** (two activities in El Salvador) supported and trained 451 journalists across Central America to investigate and report on corruption, crime, human rights violations, and other issues of public interest. Trainings included topics such as investigative journalism, financial forensics, digital and physical security best practices, how electoral systems and public institutions function, protection measures for electoral coverage, the use of Bitcoin as political financing, and electoral technologies. This exceeded previous fiscal year results and surpassed targets. USAID/El Salvador exceeded targets due to high demand triggered by the democratic backsliding in the country.

More than 450 journalists trained and supported in fiscal year 2023	Results **exceeded** annual targets (where available)
Contributing agencies: State (369) USAID (82)	Results decreased in the second year and increased in the third year

State also assisted four media-sector CSOs to counter disinformation, and to monitor and report on attacks against press freedom and freedom of expression.

Diplomatic Engagement

In fiscal year 2023, U.S. government departments and agencies reported more than 25 high-level engagements that fell under pillar III with most of them emphasizing respect for human rights. The agencies responsible for these engagements were DOL, IAF, State, USAID, and USTR. State and USAID leadership regularly hold briefings with civil society in the United States and region to provide updates on our engagements and receive feedback.

- In January, Under Secretary of State Zeya led a delegation to the U.S.-Honduras Strategic and Human Rights Dialogue. The U.S. delegation raised concerns about threats to civil society, impunity in criminal justice, and the treatment of marginalized groups. Representatives of the U.S. delegation called for a swift and thorough investigation of the recent murders of civil society activists in Guapinol, demonstrating the importance of these issues to the U.S. government. The U.S. delegation recognized labor relations in the Honduran apparel sector as a potential model for the region and pressed the Honduran government to fully implement the Monitoring and Action Plan.

- In June, as a part of the CAF initiative, DOL, State, USAID,and USTR co-led an interagency labor and gender delegation to El Salvador and Honduras. The delegation engaged with women workers, CSOs, the private sector, and government to work on strategies for improving gender equity, economic security, and working conditions. This high-level commitment through the delegation has led to enhanced interagency coordination and elevation of these issues, including a follow-on summit on "good jobs"that DOL is planning for 2024.

Relevant evaluations, assessments, and studies
Not applicable for the reporting period.

Press Freedom in Northern Central America
World press freedom index score 0-100, where higher is better
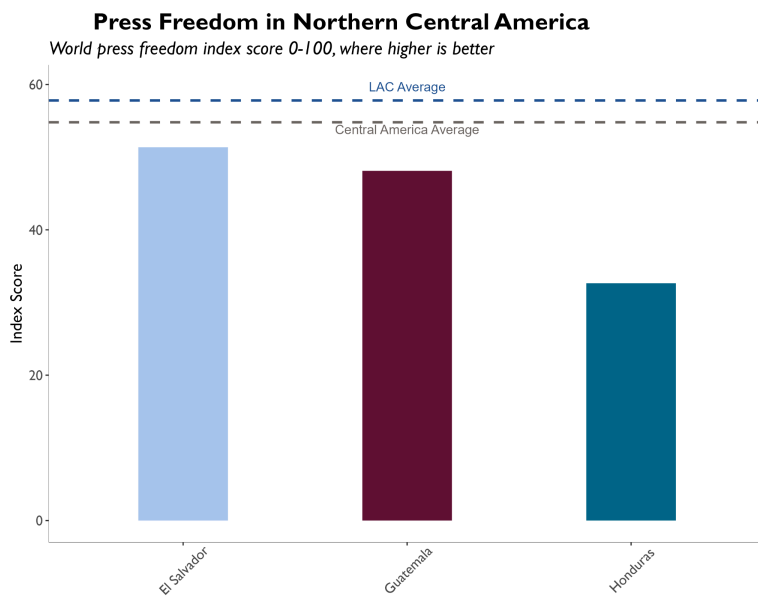
Source: Reporters Without Borders, World Press Freedom Index

Country commitment (context) metrics

Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala continued to show declines in press freedom indicators from 2022 to 2023. According to Reporters without Borders, all three countries continue to score in the "difficult" or "very serious" classifications, representing the lowest two classifications out of five on the index.[73]

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[73] Reporters Without Borders. (2023). Press Freedom Index.

Pillar IV: Countering and preventing violence, extortion, and other crimes perpetrated by criminal gangs, trafficking networks, and other organized criminal organizations

Pillar IV comprises three strategic objectives:

- Professionalize the security forces,
- Counter organized crime, and
- Build safe communities through violence prevention and intervention.

In fiscal year 2023, all but one metric saw results decrease in comparison to previous fiscal year result levels. Despite this, the number of youth trained in violence prevention exceeded targets and results have increased year over year.

Results robustness	Definition	Number of key performance metrics	Performance metrics, by pillar IV strategic objective
Very robust	⏵ and ▮▮▮	1	• Youth crime and violence prevention
Robust	⏵ and ▮▮▮ or ⏵ and ▮▮▮ or ⏵ and ▮ or ⌧ and ▮▮▮ or ⏵ and ▮▮▮	n/a	n/a
Somewhat robust	⏴ and ▮▮▮ or ⏴ and ▮▮▮ or ⌧ and ▮▮▮	1	• Police training
Declining results	⌧ and ▮▮▮	2	• Arrests • Illicit item seizures

Across Central America, State and USAID trained civil police on a wide range of subjects including violence prevention, police preventive models with a human security angle, and data management and

analysis for citizen security. State trained and supported police and specialized task forces to seize illegal assets and drugs across Northern Central America to effectively combat crime and reduce associated violence. IAF and USAID delivered crime prevention programming across Northern Central America aimed at building youth resilience to avoid crime and violence.

High rates of crime persist across Northern Central America. Due to El Salvador's state of exception, a nationwide anti-gang dragnet that has incarcerated more than 70,000 people, violent crime and murder rates have plummeted, but due process guarantees have been suspended in an unprecedented manner. Conversely, in Guatemala, little was being done to address criminality. According to the 2022 Migration Propensity Index, victims of crime in Guatemala are 61 percent more likely to migrate than non-victims. In Honduras, the state of exception suspended constitutional rights across the country, seemingly inspired by the Salvadoran model, but without the same enforcement efforts, effectiveness, or claims of human rights abuses as El Salvador's. Honduras' state of exception may have forced gangs to take a lower profile, but crime is still prevalent.

In recent years, all three Northern Central American countries have had reductions in their homicide rates, although the baseline rates were high to begin with. El Salvador's rate has plummeted due to the state of exception and more than 90 percent of Salvadorans polled responded that they generally feel safe in their community at night. Perceptions of safety in Guatemala and Honduras have also increased, but less drastically. According to national police media statements, in 2023 Honduras saw the lowest homicide rate in the country since 2000. El Salvador continues an upward trend since 2018 with more than 60 percent of respondents responding that they have "a lot" or "some" trust in their national civil police. Less than 40 percent of respondents in Guatemala and Honduras responded with the same level of trust.

Professionalize Security Forces

Key performance metrics for this strategic objective are the number of police and security officials trained by State and number of arrests. Fiscal year 2023 results for both metrics did not increase over fiscal year 2022 levels. This may be in part the result of decreasing training and partnerships during that time period where State lacked reliable and trustworthy partners in Northern Central American government agencies.

The main country commitment (or context) metric is public trust in the police. El Salvador continues an upward trend since 2018 with more than 60 percent of respondents responding that they have "a lot" or "some" trust in their national civil police. Less than 40 percent of respondents in Guatemala and Honduras responded with the same level of trust.

Performance metrics

Security Personnel Training Metric

These indicators track U.S. government contributions to building the capacity of partner governments' military and law enforcement capabilities.

State (programs across Central America including Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Belize, Costa Rica and Panama) and USAID (activities across Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Belize, and the Dominican Republic) trained 7,674 civilian police across Central America. The majority (4,823) were trained in Northern Central America. Trainings covered a wide range of subjects including violence prevention, police preventive models with a human security angle, and data management and analysis for citizen security. Results decreased over previous fiscal year totals due to more targeted, high-impact trainings on specialized topics and issues versus focusing only on the number of participants trained.

In fiscal year 2023, State trained 2,309 members of the Salvadoran National Civilian Police in human rights, ethics, and use of force. Additionally, State trained 127 Municipal Security agents (including 23 female agents) to build their capacity to respond to local citizen security issues.

With State support, the Honduran Police Education System received renewed international accreditation by the International Police Education Network (RINEP). Valid through 2027, this renewal demonstrates the Honduran Police Education System's commitment to developing effective educational processes covering areas such as police administration, resource management, and efforts to prevent and combat crime.

More than 7,500 civilian police and security officials trained in fiscal year 2023	Target data not available
Contributing agencies: State (7,247) USAID (427)	Results increased in the second year and decreased in the third year

Arrests Metric

This indicator tracks U.S. government contributions to building the capacity of partner governments' military and law enforcement capabilities. In fiscal year 2023, State reported that vetted units supported 3,956 arrests across Central America, with most of those (3,369) in Honduras.

Nearly 4,000 arrests of suspected criminals in fiscal year 2023	Target data not available
Contributing agencies: State (3,956)	Results decreased year over year

Diplomatic Engagement

- U.S. ambassadors publicly reiterated the U.S. position on migration, leveraging engagement to dispel disinformation that the border is "open" to undocumented travelers and warned against the use of smugglers. They visited local communities, including those with U.S. government-funded projects that highlighted the impact of U.S. assistance in strengthening citizen security, improving border security, and fighting the trafficking of drugs, people, and contraband.

- In January 2023, State Department Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights visited Honduras to lead the U.S. delegation for the High-Level Strategic and Human Rights Dialogues in Honduras, during which government officials discussed combating corruption, promoting good governance and rule of law, and reducing insecurity and gender-based violence.

- During a May 2023 visit to Guatemala, State Department Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights discussed counternarcotics cooperation with now former Minister of Government, including to increase port security and incinerate confiscated precursor chemicals.

- In July 2023, SOUTHCOM Commander General visited Honduras and engaged the Honduran President and other senior Honduran defense officials to discuss continued bilateral cooperation, including security cooperation.

- In September 2023, Department of Homeland Security Secretary and Honduran President visited the U.S. border with Mexico in McAllen, Texas and discussed continued cooperation to reduce irregular migration through border enforcement and lawful pathways as an alternative to human smuggling.

- On October 18, 2023 the United States and Panama held a Strategic-Level Security Dialogue (SLSD) which underscored the deep and close nature of the bilateral security relationship. The SLSD included discussions on maritime security; illegal, underreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; strategic planning capacity for Panama's Ministry of Public Security; Panamanian commitments to joint security projects; and the formation of a migration working group.

- In September 2023, a high-level delegation from DoD, OVP, State, and USAID visited Belize and thanked Belizean policymakers, including Prime Minister Briceño, for their steadfast partnership and explored opportunities in defense cooperation, security, and humane migration. The visit highlighted Belize's excellent partnership and strengthened coordination on strategic domain awareness, border security, and migration.

Perceptions of the Civil Police in Northern Central America

Percent of respondents who said "a lot" and "some" to Do you have a lot, some, a little, or no trust in our national civil police?

Source: Office of Opinion research, Department of State

Country commitment (context) metrics

According to a reputable public opinion data source, trust in police in El Salvador continues an upward trend since 2018 with more than 60 percent of respondents responding that they have "a lot" or "some" trust in their national civil police. In Honduras and Guatemala, trust in police is much lower. Less than 40 percent of respondents in these two countries said they had 'a lot' or 'some' trust in police. The high percentage of Salvadorans responding with high trust tracks with the rate of confidence in El Salvador's executive (Bukele) due to using the police and military to crack down on crime and violence.[74]

Counter Organized Crime

The main performance metric for this strategic objective is the value (in U.S. dollars) of seizures of illicit items. This metric's fiscal year 2023 results did not increase over fiscal year 2022 levels.

The country commitment (or context) metric tracks the level of criminality in each country. Each Northern Central American country remains at or above regional criminality levels.

Performance metrics

Illicit items seizures Metric

These indicators track U.S. government contributions to strengthening partner countries militaries and law enforcement to combat transnational criminal organizations.

State trains and supports police and specialized task forces to seize illegal assets and drugs across Northern Central America to effectively combat transnational threats and crime, enhance law enforcement resiliency against transnational crime, and reduce associated violence. State reported that across Northern Central America, Belize and Costa Rica, officials seized more than $1.1 billion of drugs of which, $462 million was seized in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Specifically in El Salvador, the government seized $80,743,809 worth of illicit drugs in calendar year 2023. Results decreased over previous fiscal year totals. This may be because seizure amounts vary based on the size and scope of a specific operation or intervention.

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[74] LAPOP Lab. (2023). LAPOP's AmericasBarometer takes the Pulse of Democracy.

More than $1.1 billion in seizures of illicit items in fiscal year 2023	Target data not available
Contributing agencies: State ($1,136,256,339)	Results decreased year over year

Diplomatic Engagement

State finalized a three patrol vessel donation to Guatemala's Naval Special Forces in February 2023 with senior State and Guatemalan Defense officials. These vessels will improve Guatemala's naval mobility and from the Tilapa Forward Operating Base it will provide the Navy an important presence near heavy narcotics trafficking activity around the Guatemala-Mexico maritime border.

DoD, through SOUTHCOM and the Office of Secretary of Defense's leadership, reported more than 40 diplomatic engagements for the year. These engagements with Central American counterparts reaffirmed the importance of our security relationship, strengthened collaboration on key priorities, and built partner capacity, and frequently emphasized the importance of human rights.

To professionalize security forces, in fiscal year 2023, DoD leveraged Institutional Capacity Building through the Institute for Security Governance (ISG) Ministry of Defense level advising with Guatemala and Panama. DoD's Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS) is also engaged in El Salvador and Guatemala. Through Army Security Force Assistance teams, DoD advised the Panamanian National Border Service (SENAFRONT) and the Honduran Military Academy, NCO Academy, Intelligence and Signal Schools.

DoD leadership engagements advanced shared priorities, including through new cybersecurity initiatives that enhanced our partner nation's ability to detect and respond to malign actor presence in governmental networks, as well as teaching them how to better plan for, mitigate, prevent, and respond to cyber threats. Tabletops and planning exercises helped address shared threats, including counter-narcotics and disaster relief.

In October 2022, the U.S. Ambassador to Honduras participated in a two-day State Department-funded regional meeting on Human Smuggling funded by State, and organized by DOJ's the Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance and Training (OPDAT). The meeting brought together regional law enforcement and justice officials from Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, and the United States and reaffirmed their commitment to combating human smuggling and partnering to strengthen citizen security in Honduras.

Relevant evaluations, assessments, and studies

USAID commissioned several assessments to better understand crime and violence in Northern Central America and strengthen related programming. This work included an examination of extortion dynamics and its social and economic impact, as well as suggestions for related programming. The assessment highlighted the impact of extortion on every productive sector in Northern Central American countries, notably micro, small, and medium enterprises and transport. At the individual level, it disproportionately impacts traditionally vulnerable populations. Resulting recommendations emphasized the importance of integrating anti-extortion measures into security policies, programs, and laws; the need to understand how criminal activities are linked; and the need to strengthen collaboration among security and judicial entities for an effective response.

USAID also completed a conflict and violence assessment in Honduras that analyzed related dynamics, drivers, and actors and developed programming recommendations for conflict prevention, management, and/or mitigation. Contributing dynamics include ideological polarization, the rising cost of basic goods, and widening inequality and the exclusion of minority groups. Resulting recommendations included support to strengthen transparency and accountability and improve access to justice, raise awareness of human rights, and improve adherence to international norms related to Indigenous people.

Country commitment (context) metrics

High rates of crime persist across Northern Central America, with all three countries' Criminality Index Scores[75] are at or above regional averages. Both the Central American and LAC regional averages score at or about a six on a scale from one to ten, where higher is more criminality. In Honduras, President Castro vowed to tackle organized crime, but according to the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, the corrupt state apparatus in addition to the country's recent economic hardships, have posed as significant

Criminality Index Score, 2023
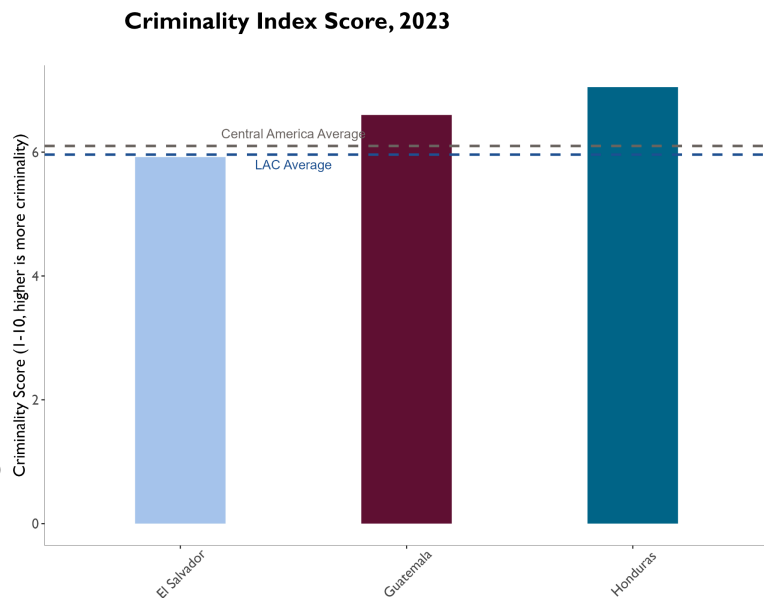
Source: Global Organized Crime Index

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[75] The Global Organized Crime Index (accessed December 2023) scores countries from one to ten, where a higher score indicates more severe criminality. The criminality scores consist of the average of ten criminal markets and four criminal actor types. While encompassing a range of activities, criminal markets consist of the political, social, and economic systems surrounding all stages of the illicit trade and/or exploitation of commodities or people. Criminal actor scores come from assessments of the structure, control and influence of groups engaged in organized criminal activities.

obstacles[76]. In fiscal year 2023, Honduras' security sector underwent significant developments., most notably the implementation of a partial state of emergency affecting a majority of the population. The actual impact of Honduras' state of emergency on security remains a subject of debate, but the general consensus is that while it has not had a profound effect on overall security, it did compel gangs to adjust their operations and adopt a more low-profile approach. Nationally, homicide rates from January-September decreased compared to the same period in calendar year 2022. However, this reduction masks higher rates in gang-controlled areas, where 40 percent of homicides occurred within just ten municipalities.[77]

Despite organized crime and public safety being discussed in Guatemalan political campaigns, anti-organized crime initiatives have been largely ineffective.[78] El Salvador's March 2022 "exception regime" declared to reduce gang violence, and in the process, suspended due process guarantees.[79] According to State, the state of exception has resulted in security forces having arrested more than 70,000 alleged gang members, while violent crime and murder rates have plummeted.[80]

Build Safe Communities through Violence Prevention and Intervention

Key performance metrics for this strategic objective include number of youth accessing violence prevention services, number of youth graduated from the Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) program, and number of police officers trained to teach GREAT. The number of youth trained in violence prevention exceeded targets and results have increased each fiscal year. Through State programming, 72,919 youth graduated from the GREAT program in fiscal year 2023.

In El Salvador, the GREAT program has increased from zero graduates in calendar year 2020 to 2,508 in calendar year 2021, 15,779 in calendar year 2022, and 41,581 in calendar year 2023. El Salvador's Police Athletic League has grown from 5,499 participants in calendar year 2020 to 15,231 in calendar year 2021, 18,237 in calendar year 2022, and 25,115 in calendar year 2023.

In calendar year 2023, GREAT Honduras graduated more than 125,785 youth. An additional 54,954 youth benefitted from GREAT camps. In total, Honduras has graduated more than 880,000 children since the program's inception.

The main country commitment (or context) metrics are homicide rate and public perceptions of safety. All three Northern Central American countries have had reductions in their homicide rates, and perceptions of safety at night have increased, especially for El Salvador.

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[76] Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). Global Organized Crime Index: Honduras.

[77] United Nations Development Programme Infosegura. (2023). Citizen Security Analysis in Honduras. January-September 2023.

[78] Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). Global Organized Crime Index: Guatemala.

[79] Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (2023). Global Organized Crime Index: El Salvador.

[80] State. (2023). U.S. Relations With El Salvador.

Performance metrics

Violence Prevention Metric

These indicators track the reach of U.S. government crime prevention and intervention programs (including those funded through the Central America Regional Security Initiative) focused on at-risk youth. Youth resilience is strengthened through initiatives that provide workforce development support and job placement. These initiatives also improve youth's abilities to avoid involvement in illicit activities, thereby decreasing susceptibility to crime and violence.

USAID (three activities in Guatemala, three in Honduras, one in El Salvador, and one in another Central American country) and IAF (projects spanning Central America) trained 120,652 youth in social and leadership skills. The large majority of youth trained (111,605) were in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Programs include trainings and programs to improve youths' capacities in areas such as leadership, emotional regulation / anger management, communication skills, mental health and psychological first aid, social skills, conflict resolution, teamwork, time management, job skills, and livelihood programs. These activities can help improve access to labor opportunities, increase school retention rates, and reduce vulnerability to violence. Youth who are equipped with better decision-making, social-emotional intelligence and communication skills will be better able to navigate an environment of conflict and crisis, plan for a future in their own country, and avoid gangs and violence.

Where available, programs exceeded targets and results increased over each fiscal year. This was due to multiple reasons including expansion of the programmatic reach of one activity to incorporate a training-of-trainers approach where trained youth shared their skills with counterparts, and investment on the part of another activity in retaining youth in the program.

More than 120,000 youth trained in social and leadership skills in fiscal year 2023	Results **exceeded** annual targets (where available)
Contributing agencies: USAID (97,424) IAF (23,228)	Results increased year over year

Additionally, USAID reached 148,753 at-risk youth through crime and violence and prevention programs in Honduras, a significant increase over fiscal year 2022 results. Programs exceeded targets due to a new partnership which supported outreach center efforts and activities targeted at the most vulnerable, strengthening household resilience to the negative psychosocial and economic effects of violence (including GBV) and natural disasters through community-based protection activities and basic needs support.

Across Central America, USAID (two activities in Guatemala, two in El Salvador, and one in another Central American country) provided support to 61,832 vulnerable people, with the majority (56,756) in Northern Central America. Targets were exceeded due to expanding activities targeting a greater number of vulnerable populations through activities such as sports, arts and citizen empowerment; and expanding reach by using video gaming to target youth populations along with youth ambassadors to promote and roll out the video game.

Success Stories

Honduras: In the municipality of Choloma, communities with high rates of violence are finding new ways to foster positive change so youth see that there is a promising future. USAID works with teachers, school counselors and parents to identify youth at risk. Kevin Saldívar, a high school teacher in Éxitos de Anach, has been instrumental in identifying and referring young people who are in urgent need of support to the project's family counseling program. This counseling is strengthening families and giving parents the tools to create improved family cohesion, keeping youth focused on their studies, family, and forming positive relationships. By addressing issues at all levels (individual, family, and community) we are improving youths' ability to confront challenges, take advantage of opportunities, and solve problems without resorting to violence.

Country commitment (context) metrics

Homicide rates in Honduras seem to have dropped from 2022 to 2023. At of the time of this report, a preliminary rate of 2.4 homicides per 100,000 people in 2023 is available for El Salvador;[81] Guatemala's 2023 homicide rate is not yet available. Across the LAC region, organized crime (e.g. drug trafficking organizations, street gangs, and militias) is responsible for at least half of all homicides. In recent years, all three Northern Central American countries have had reductions in their homicide rates, although baseline rates were high to begin with.[82]

Homicide Rate in Northern Central America
Intentional homicides per 100,000 people
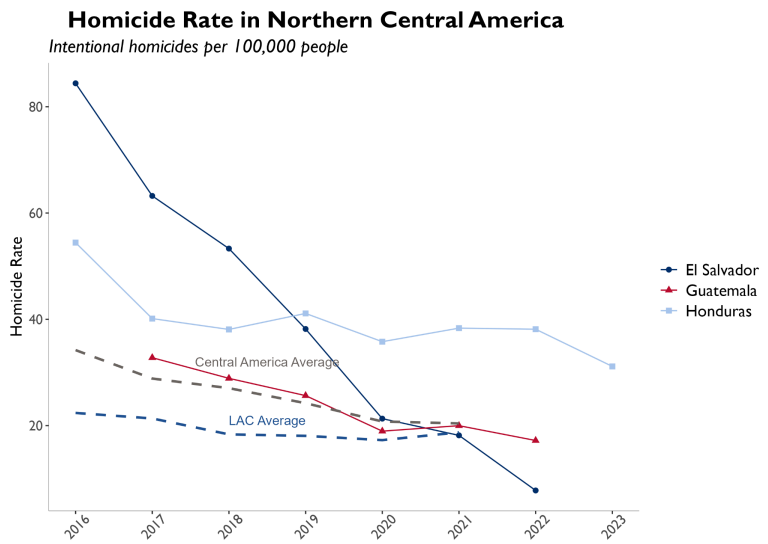
Source: UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Global Study on Homicide.
Note: 2022 and 2023 data for El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala come from the Ministry of Justice and Public Security of El Salvador, Technical Secretary of the National Security Council of Guatemala and Guatemala's National Civil Police, and Secretary of State, Government of the Republic of Honduras, respectively.

In El Salvador, the decline is attributed to the state of exception, which has resulted in security forces arresting more than 70,000 alleged gang members leading to plummeting violent crime and murder

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[81] InSight Crime. (2023). InSight Crime's 2023 Homicide Round-Up.

[82] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2023). Global Study on Homicide in 2023.

rates at great cost to civil liberties and due process protections.[83] In 2022, crackdowns led to the dismantlement of more than 38 gangs in Honduras according to national police media statements and in 2023 produced the lowest homicide rate in the country since 2000.[84]

Perception of the Safety at Night in Northern Central America

Percent of respondents who said "Safe" to Do you generally feel safe or unsafe when you walk in your community during the night?
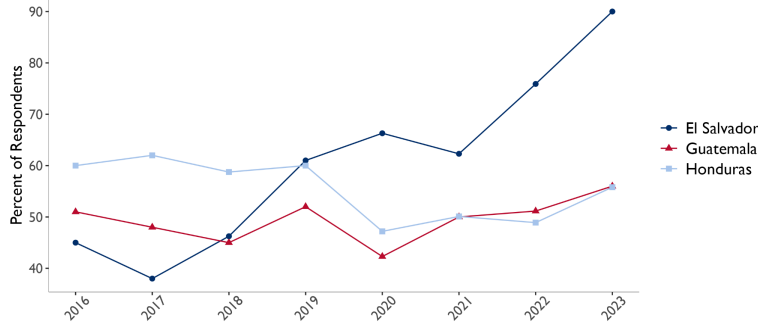
Source: Office of Opinion research, Department of State

According to a reputable public opinion data source, perceptions of safety at night in El Salvador continue a drastic incline to more than 90 percent of respondents reporting they generally feel safe in their community at night. Perceptions in Guatemala and Honduras have also increased, but less drastically. The percent of respondents who said they feel safe remains much lower than the percent of respondents in El Salvador.

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[83] U.S. Department of State. (2023). U.S. Relations With El Salvador.

[84] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2023). Global Study on Homicide in 2023.

Pillar V: Combating sexual, gender-based, and domestic violence

Pillar V comprises one strategic objective: combating sexual, gender-based and domestic violence. In fiscal year 2023, targets were exceeded. Fiscal year 2023 results slightly decreased over fiscal year 2022 result levels.

Results robustness	Definition	Number of key performance metrics	Performance metrics, pillar V
Very robust	▶ and ▁▃▅	n/a	n/a
Robust	▶ and ▁▃▅ or ▶ and ▁▃▂ or ▶ and ▁▃ or ⌧ and ▁▃▅ or ▶ and ▁▃▂	1	• Gender-based violence services
Somewhat robust	◀ and ▁▃▅ or ◀ and ▁▃▂ or ⌧ and ▁▃▅	n/a	n/a
Declining results	⌧ and ▁▃▂	n/a	n/a

In fiscal year 2023, USAID launched new activities focused on GBV in El Salvador and Guatemala. Initiatives include those aimed at providing support and counseling related to GBV, including delivering preventive counseling sessions to children who are survivors of violence and/or experienced irregular migration, implementing targeted prevention services in high violence areas, and improving comprehensive care services for survivors of domestic and intrafamilial violence through strengthening national agencies and local organizations.

Northern Central America suffers from some of the highest rates of GBV, including some of the highest rates in Latin America of femicide, domestic violence, trafficking of children, and gang-related sexual violence. The femicide rates in Guatemala and El Salvador dropped slightly from 2021 to 2022, whereas

the rate in Honduras increased. There is a chronological correlation between when the state of emergency in Honduras went into effect and the increase in violence against women, though no causal relationship can be confirmed.

Combating sexual, gender-based, and domestic violence

The key performance metric for this strategic objective is the number of people reached by GBV services (e.g., health, legal, psycho-social counseling, shelters, hotlines). In fiscal year 2023 targets were exceeded and results decreased over fiscal year 2022 totals. Results increased over fiscal year 2021 levels.

The key country commitment (or context) metric is the country's femicide rate, which in 2022 dropped slightly in Guatemala and El Salvador, but increased in Honduras.

Performance metrics

Gender-Based Violence Services Metric

These indicators track U.S. government contributions to mitigating GBV and its harmful effects.

USAID (two activities in Guatemala, five activities in Honduras and three activities in El Salvador) reached 27,174 people with GBV services. Programs delivered GBV Services through a variety of activities, including economic development, governance and human rights programming. Programs reached the large majority of individuals in Honduras (25,726) through initiatives including informative GBV prevention workshops and positive masculinities workshops, psychoeducation training, self-help circles focused on support and resilience-building for women, provision of legal services for survivors, and case management and essential GBV response services for individuals affected by GBV. Programs also held workshops were also provided to men who commit violent acts to address self-esteem issues and shift their perspectives about GBV through awareness-raising and prevention activities. Results exceeded fiscal year 2021 totals, and slightly decreased over fiscal year 2022 totals. Fiscal year 2023 targets were exceeded.

More than 27,000 survivors of gender-based violence received services in fiscal year 2023	Results **exceeded** annual targets (where available)
Contributing agencies: USAID (27,174)	Results increased in the second year and decreased in the third year

In fiscal year 2023, State (one project in Honduras) supported four GBV prevention training workshops for more than 100 youth and teachers from four high schools and universities in Comayagua through developing the curricula, providing the training materials, and training the instructor.

In El Salvador, GBV efforts include working groups across justice sector institutions, support for GBV awareness campaigns, support for victims' assistance centers, and an emphasis on gender equity within security and justice institutions. State provides support to the National Civilian Police's Specialized Women's Attention Units. In calendar year 2023, State renovated three unit centers in areas with the highest GBV incidence rates, funded an awareness campaign, and helped standardize services. The National Civilian Police reported GBV survivors received over 14,500 services from Specialized Women's Attention Units (including temporary shelter, restraining orders, and filing police reports), compared to 11,500 services in calendar year 2022.

With State's support, the Guatemalan Police Department of Victim's Attention significantly expanded its reach by inaugurating 19 new Offices of Victims Attention in the Western Highlands, a region home to several vulnerable Indigenous communities. This expansion enabled the provision of culturally sensitive services to more than 1,000 domestic and GBV survivors.

Diplomatic Engagement

In January, State Department Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights led a delegation for the U.S.-Honduras Strategic and Human Rights Dialogue. The United States and Honduras recognized the need to overcome high levels of GBV across Honduran society. The two countries announced the intent to sign a bilateral GBV partnership to enhance coordination and elevate focus on this critical issue.

To mark 16 Days of Activism, State and USAID leadership spoke with key civil society representatives from the region to inform them of our GBV engagements, create opportunities for coordination, and strengthen our efforts.

Success Stories

The U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador toured a newly renovated Women's Attention Unit within the Soyapango police facility in September 2023. The State-supported renovation of the Women's Attention Unit, or "Unimujer," was one of three in areas with the highest rates of GBV and sexual assault cases. Renovating and equipping these Units helped the Salvadoran police provide emergency services for GBV survivors including criminal report filing, access to judicial services, and temporary shelter.

In March 2023, the U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala and Guatemalan President visited a Victims' Assistance Office (OAV) remodeled with State support and funding. Through State support to renovate or open new OAVs and specialized police training with a new Victims' Assistance Protocol, State helped Guatemala expand its presence, especially in the Western Highlights where GBV crimes are acute, and its capacity for victims' assistance.

In a country plagued by staggering rates of GBV, a [shelter in San Pedro Sula](), Honduras, provides a safe haven and a lifeline of support for survivors like Fanny and her children. Arriving with only the clothes on their backs, the shelter provided them with essential items and a space to feel safe again. Spearheaded by the Mayor's Office with support from USAID, this shelter provides legal counsel, psychological care, education, and childcare services free of charge to survivors like Fanny, so they can start their lives again.

USAID support has meant municipal government partners are better able to care for survivors of GBV and ensures that they can effectively link local response services to national networks of care, building a safer, more hopeful future for women and children across the nation.

A major USAID-funded media campaign and production of a youth-oriented comic book and animated series features a strong female hero who stands up against violence. USAID has reached 10 million viewers and distributed 15,000 physical comic books per episode. Early findings show a positive shift in attitudes, with a 78 percent decrease in the number of male respondents who say that women sometimes deserve to be hit by their boyfriends.

Relevant evaluations, assessments, and studies

GBV and Impunity (GBV-I) studies. To ensure USAID's efforts to address GBV are context specific and culturally nuanced, the GBV and Impunity (GBV-I) studies provide case studies and analysis from Northern Central America animated by the question, "What would constitute meaningful GBV accountability according to diverse survivors in LAC?" The studies' key findings are:
1. For survivors, "impunity" means being ignored and revictimized, including by government institutions that fail to uphold their basic human rights.
2. Survivors describe negative experiences and little trust in interactions with law enforcement and justice institutions. Discrimination and inequality reduce survivors' access to and benefits from an already limited set of justice, protection, and recovery support services.
3. Socioeconomic, legal, and political inequities, as well as living in gang-controlled communities further deepen survivors' experiences of impunity.

In accordance with the GBV-I recommendations, USAID is working with partners to implement survivor-centered protection and recovery services, including expanding and improving safe shelters and affordable housing for diverse survivors and their dependents, and increasing funding and technical expertise for GBV service providers. USAID is also supporting prevention initiatives that promote gender equality and non-violent conflict resolution, restorative justice, and programs that promote positive, non-violent masculinities, family counseling, and support groups to help prevent re-offense, recidivism, and recurring cycles of violence.

Monitoring and Evaluating Gender-Based Violence Interventions Toolkit
USAID's Collective Action to Reduce Gender-Based Violence (CARE-GBV) launched an Addendum to the Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Gender-Based Violence Interventions along the Relief to Development Continuum in February 2024. This addendum highlights significant advances in research and learning regarding monitoring and evaluation of GBV programming since the development of the original USAID toolkit. Stakeholders can use this addendum for user-friendly, effective, and accessible guidance which includes new evidence, techniques, and challenges.

Country commitment (context) metrics
Northern Central America suffers from some of the highest rates of GBV, including some of the highest rates in Latin America of femicide, domestic violence, trafficking of children, and gang-related sexual

violence. GBV is chronically underreported, but even when survivors make official reports, judicial responses are often lethargic, discriminatory, inaccessible, and ineffective.

Femicide Rate in Northern Central America

Female Victims of intentional Homicide, rate per 100,000 women (2022)
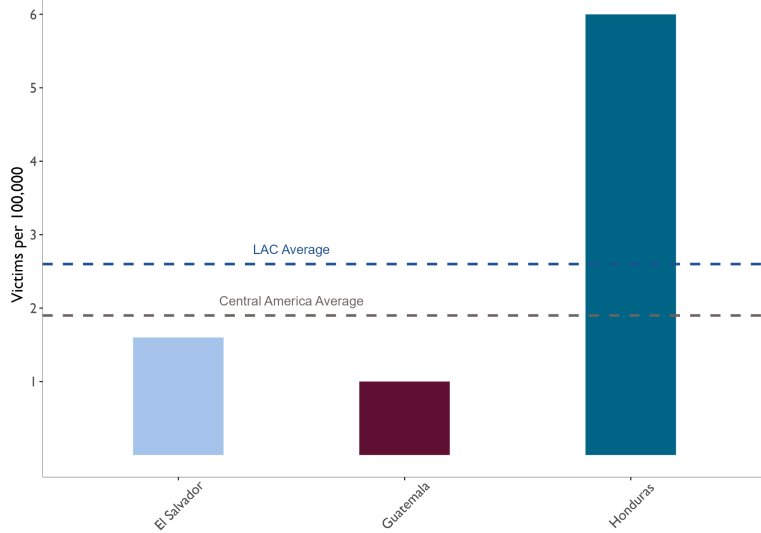
Source: United Nations, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, CEPALSTAT Database

Femicide rates in Guatemala and El Salvador dropped slightly from 2021 to 2022 (the year for which data is most recently available), and remained below both the LAC and Central American regional averages. Honduras has the highest femicide rate out of the Northern Central American countries with rates above regional averages. The state of emergency in effect in Honduras since December 2022 is one factor with a chronological correlation to this 2023 increase in violence against women. A causal relationship cannot be confirmed, but of note is that the state of emergency has driven gang members and other violent actors off the streets. While it has helped suppress violence out in the open, the measure could be contributing to violence behind closed doors. The percentage of female homicides that occurred in private spaces doubled in the first quarter of 2023 to 28 percent from 14 percent in the first quarter of calendar year 2022. That analysis found that only 9 percent of homicides where the victim was male occurred in private spaces during the first quarter of calendar year 2023.[85]

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[85] United Nations Development Programme Infosegura. (2023). Análisis sobre violencia y seguridad ciudadana en Honduras.

Related reports

In November 2021, State and USAID provided the first-ever RCS results report to the NSC and OVP, covering fiscal year 2021 (October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021). The fiscal year 2021 RCS results report depicted initial progress and established an important benchmark or comparison for assessing future years' RCS results data. State and USAID subsequently updated the report and submitted it to the U.S. Congress in July 2022; the final version of the first annual RCS results report can be found at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00ZGN3.pdf.

In May 2023, State and USAID submitted to the U.S. Congress a report on the interagency monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework for the Root Causes Strategy. The report on RCS monitoring and evaluation benchmarks can be found at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA0213CZ.pdf.

Finally, State and USAID provided the second RCS results report, covering fiscal year 2022 (October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022) to the NSC and OVP in May 2023. The fiscal year 2022 RCS results report updated key performance and country commitment (or context) data to assist policymakers in monitoring and assessing progress toward achieving RCS strategic objectives. State and USAID submitted an adapted version of the report to the U.S. Congress in June 2023; the second annual RCS results report can be found at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA0213D1.pdf.

Errata

In the Fiscal Year 2022 "Report to Congress on progress made in the strategy to advance economic prosperity, combat corruption, strengthen democratic governance, and improve civilian security in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras" published July 3, 2023 (https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA0213D1.pdf), there were errors in missing footnotes, the number of jobs reported and the number of schools with improved water or sanitation facilities reported.

When results from the Inter-American Foundation were cited, a footnote should have been included stating, "The IAF collects cumulative data on indicators since many grantees work with the same groups over the years. These data, therefore, represent cumulative (not actual) values for active grants during each given fiscal year."

In the Jobs snapshot on page 10, it states that USAID contributed 91,613 jobs towards a total of 115,071 jobs. The correct number of jobs contributed by USAID is 91,433 for a total of 114,891 jobs contributed by USAID and USDA combined. The text should read, "Nearly 115,00 jobs associated with RCS programs in fiscal year 2022" rather than, "More than 115,00 jobs…". Additionally, it should read "generating or sustaining 114,891 jobs" rather than, "115,071 jobs". Lastly, in the executive summary on page 3, the first bullet under "In support of pillar 1 (Addressing economic insecurity and inequality):...create and sustain more than 115,000 jobs…" should be corrected to, "nearly 115,000 jobs…"

In the Water and Sanitation Snapshot on page 15, it states that the U.S. Department of Agriculture strengthened 2,757 schools. The correct number of schools strengthened was 1,912 and, therefore, it should read, "The U.S. Department of Agriculture's McGovern-Dole projects strengthened 1,912 schools…" rather than, "...2,757 schools…". Lastly, it should read, "Nearly 2,000 schools with improved water or sanitation facilities in fiscal year 2022" rather than, "More than 2,500 schools…".

Appendix 1: Analysis of CBP Encounter Demographic Data, Fiscal Years 2013-2023

USAID analyzes data provided by CBP via a 2020 data-sharing agreement between the two agencies. USAID uses CBP data, along with data from other sources, to track underlying migration dynamics in Northern Central America. The CBP data set, which dates to fiscal year 2013, includes demographic information (age, gender, arrival status, etc.) for Guatemalan, Honduran, and Salvadoran citizens encountered by CBP at the U.S.-Mexico border. This analysis examines trends over time in the composition of migrants arriving at the Southwest Border, as well as differences by country.

Gender

- **A larger share of migrants encountered at the U.S. Southwest border from Northern Central America were women or girls in fiscal year 2023 compared to fiscal year 2013**. In fiscal year 2013, 25 percent of migrants were women or girls, while in 2023, the share was 43 percent.
    - Among the three countries, over the period El Salvador had the largest share of women and girl migrants, at 44 percent, followed by Honduras at 41 percent, and then Guatemala at 34 percent. In 2023, the shares converged to 46 percent, 43 percent, and 43 percent respectively.
    - In terms of year-over-year trends, the number of women and girls migrating increased from 39 percent in fiscal year 2022 to 44 percent in fiscal year 2023.
- **Women and girls make up a greater share of family units than men and boys**
    - In fiscal year 2023, for example 76 percent of Northern Central American adults traveling in family units were women, while 48 percent of Northern Central American family unit children were girls. Overall, in fiscal year 2023, 61 percent of family unit encounters from Northern Central American countries were women or girls.

Age

A larger share of migrants encountered at the U.S. Southwest border from Northern Central American countries are minors in fiscal year 2023 compared to fiscal year 2013. In fiscal year 2013, 18 percent of Northern Central American encounters were minors, while in fiscal year 2023, the share more than doubled to 41 percent. However, the share of unaccompanied minors only increased from 15 percent to 18 percent.

The share of minors encountered was fairly comparable when averaged across the decade. Guatemala had the largest share of minor migrants, with 41 percent, followed by Honduras at 40 percent, and then El Salvador at 39 percent for the ten-year period. In fiscal year 2023, the shares diverged, with Guatemala leading the group with 44 percent minors, followed by Honduras with 39 percent, and then El Salvador with 34 percent. Among unaccompanied minors, the share was 22 percent, 15 percent, and 16 percent respectively in fiscal year 2023.

**Larger Share of Women and Minors
Among Northern Central America Migrants Encountered by CBP**
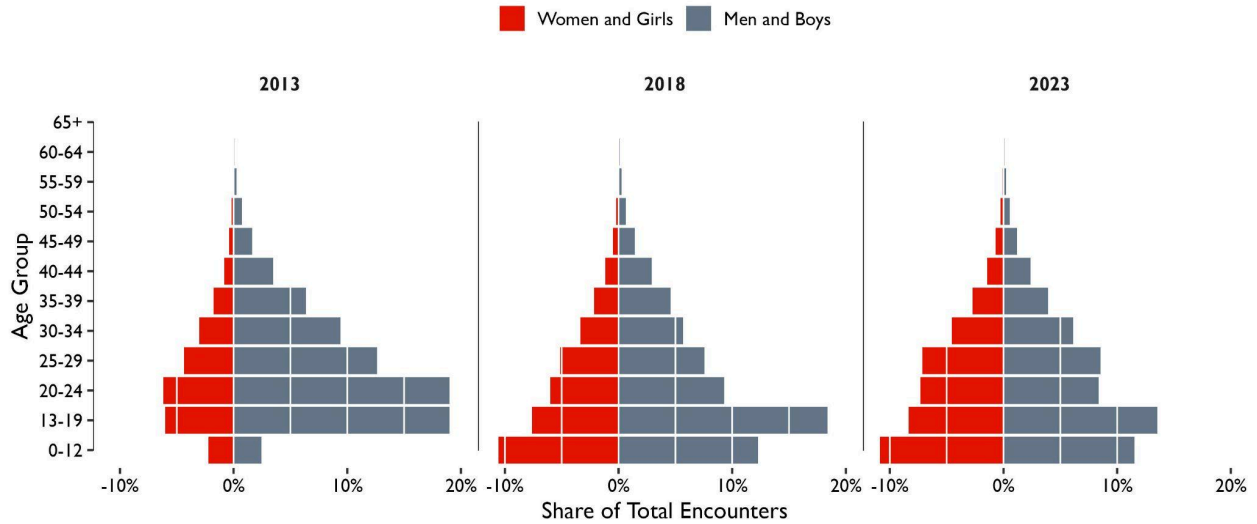
Data from DHS/CBP. All information is self-reported

In terms of year-over-year trends, the share of minors encountered remained relatively stable between fiscal year 2022 and fiscal year 2023, rising slightly from 40 percent to 41 percent. Meanwhile, the share of unaccompanied minors decreased from 25 percent to 18 percent between fiscal years 2022 and 2023. Looking only at school-age minors, a similar pattern emerges: Over the past decade the share of migrants who are school-aged has increased from 17 percent to 29 percent.

The rise in minors migrating coincides with a similarly substantial increase in family unit migrants, from 29 percent in fiscal year 2922 to 41 percent in fiscal year 2023). By comparison, the three percentage point increase in unaccompanied minors (from 15 percent to 18 percent) is much less dramatic.

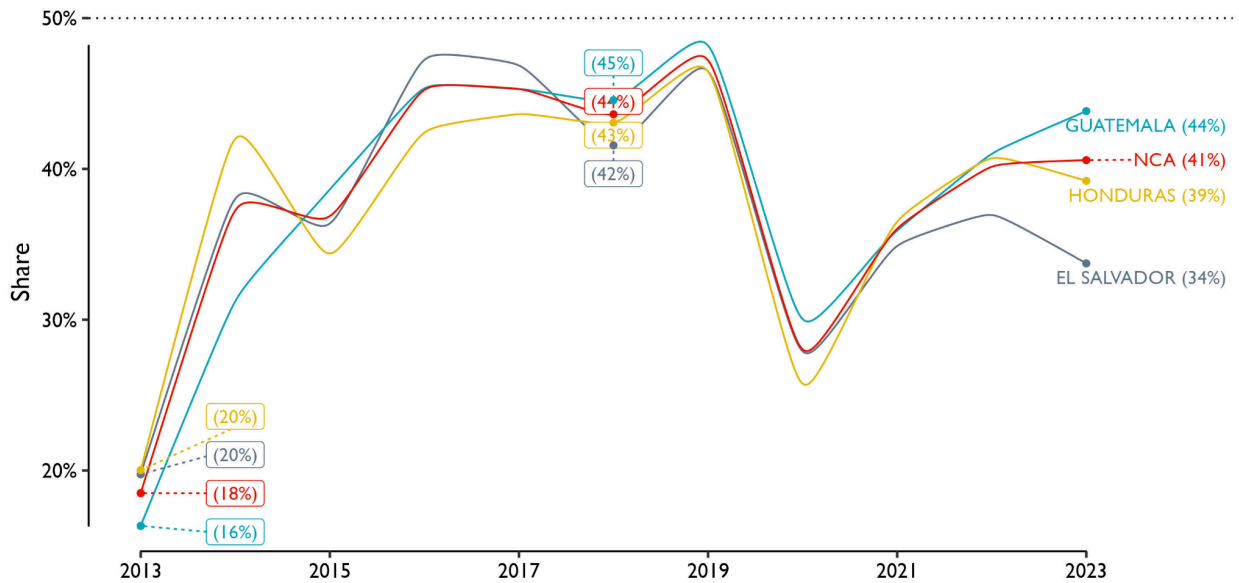## Increase in Share of Women Encountered Since FY13
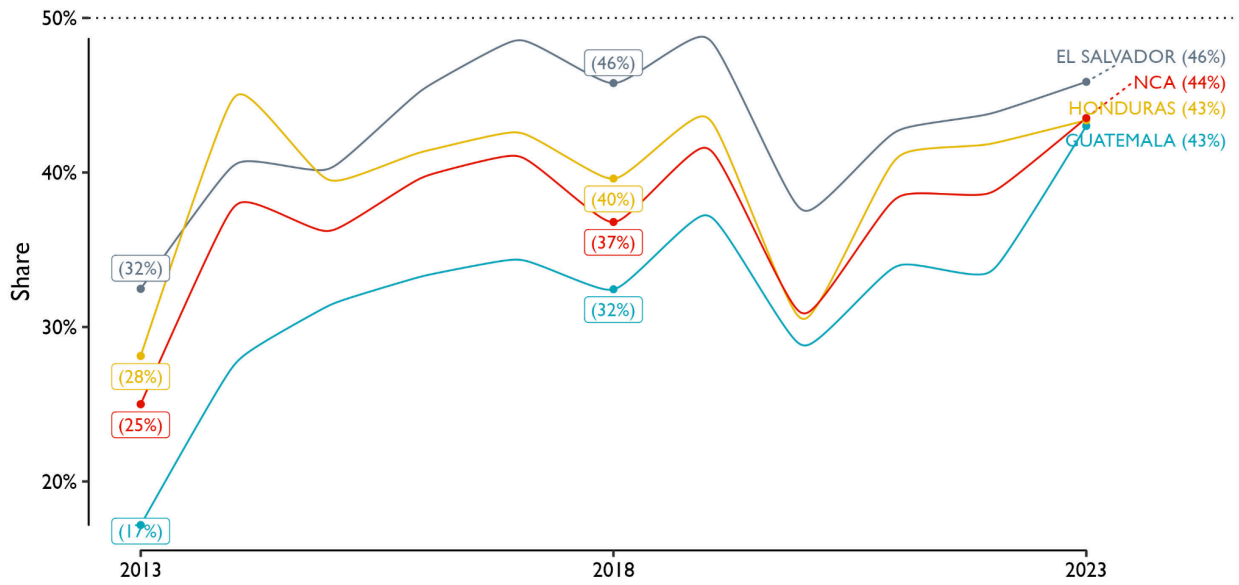
By Fiscal Year

Data from DHS/CBP | Chart created by USAID/LAC
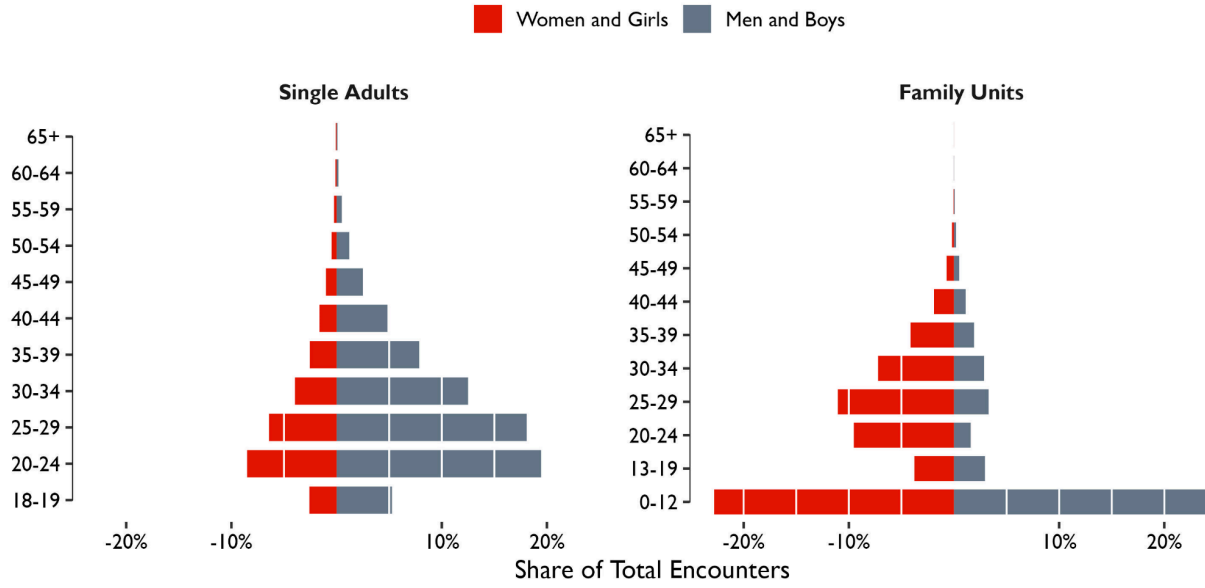
Increase in Share of Minors Encountered Since FY13

By Fiscal Year

Data from DHS/CBP | Chart created by USAID/LAC

Arrival Unit

Greater Share of Women Migrants Among Family Unit Encounters Compared to Single Adults

■ Women and Girls   ■ Men and Boys

Single Adults   **Family Units**

Share of Total Encounters

Data from DHS/CBP | Chart created by USAID/LAC