Learnings From World Vision's Work to Address the Root Causes of Forced Migration in Central America

Analysis of World Vision's programming in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras

April 2021

INTRODUCTION

"Our vision for every child, life in all its fullness"

Addressing the root causes of forced migration is at the core of World Vision's work in Central America.

World Vision understands that forced migration is the result of an array of factors and interacting risks that place individuals in a sudden or chronic status of high vulnerability, in which their life and well-being are at stake. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified such vulnerabilities. Children and youth—especially girls and young women—are extremely vulnerable and are at risk of violence and mistreatment.

In countries like Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, key drivers of migration span a variety of different conditions—from factors like violence, a lack of opportunities, and weak governance, to risks like natural disasters (droughts, floods, etc.). Our deepening understanding about the key factors and risks around forced migration positions World Vision to respond effectively and adapt quickly when contexts change rapidly.

With the objective of capturing the learnings and promising practices of addressing the root causes of forced migration, World Vision engaged internal experts to analyze our diverse programming in these countries. The analysis included programming from a variety of funding sources, including programs funded by the government of United States and private donors from Canada, Spain, and the United States. The programs covered rural, semi-urban, and urban areas where most community members face limited economic opportunities, low education rates, violence, and limited access to suitable entry-level and quality jobs. Programs considered in this analysis spanned between three and 15 years of life of activity.

Such learnings were critical to inform **World Vision's Hope at Home: Building Resilience in Central America framework**, which aims to address the root causes of forced migration in the fragile contexts of Central America. The framework seeks to build resilience at different levels, and through actions in partnership with local communities, local and national governments, faith-based organizations, and civil society. **The framework identifies pathways to building resilience at individual, family, community, and societal levels, as well as advocating for more (and more-efficient) social investment and an innovative early warning system for migration.**

Organized per pillar, in this document you will read about those learnings, whose underlying foundation is building resilient capacities at different levels of society in contribution to country development agendas, and consequently sustainable development goals.

We want to thank all of the participants who helped us gather these learnings, especially our frontline staff and volunteers who are our anonymous heroes that make all of this work possible.

World Vision's framework to address the root causes of forced migration in Central America

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Pillars of the Hope at Home: Building Resilience in Central America framework

Resilient individuals

- Early childhood development
- Holistic nurture of children and youth
- Food security
- Women and girls empowerment
- Youth empowerment
- Market approach to livelihoods
- TIC and digital inclusion
- Civic engagement and participation
- Roots and community identity
- Empowered worldview

Resilient families

- Domestic violence prevention
- Values-based positive parenting
- Food security and nutrition
- Gender equality and inclusion
- Roots and community identity
- Empowered worldview

Resilient communities

- Violence prevention and culture of peace
- Resilient livelihoods
- Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)
- Disaster risk reduction and preparedness
- Social accountability and strengthening governance at local and national levels
- Roots and community identity
- Empowered worldview

Resilient societies

- Strengthening of social capital
- Gender equality and inclusion
- Communication for transformation and hope
- System strengthening at local and country levels
- Engagement of government entities for impactful public investment

Macro context risk monitoring and Early Warning System for Migration (EWS-M)
Scenario-based planning: adaptive management strengthening for individual and collective resilience
Partnerships and collaborations with key sectors, including faith-based organizations

WORLD VISION'S APPROACH

Risks and Vulnerabilities in Central America

💲 Economic	🌐 Environmental	🔒 Security	🏛️ Political	👪 Societal
• Low access to services and safety nets to withstand shocks due to remoteness • Lack of Opportunities for Youth-at-Risk • Low Human Development & deprivation • Food Insecurity	• Disaster Risk, especially in the Dry Corridor • Food Insecurity • Prevalence of Infectious diseases	• Violence against women • Homicides • Violent crime	• Lack of mechanism for exerting citizenship to inform public policy	• Social Exclusion among most vulnerable groups (youth, women, indigenous populations) • Uprooted People due to lack of opportunities and low access to services and safety nets

Theory of Change

According to the **Hope at Home: Building Resilience in Central America** framework, if we strengthen resilience at the individual, family, community, and societal levels in dimensions where people are highly vulnerable, then people will be more capable to recover from shocks, while positively absorbing, adapting, and transforming their structures and means for living in the face of long-term stresses, change, and uncertainty. Thus, they will be less prone to migrate.

Such efforts need to be holistic, tailored to local context, and built upon existing local and national resources and capacities that advance the priorities of the country, promoting growth, social inclusion, and governance at different levels of society.

> ### OUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS
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> *World Vision defines success as the extent to which children and families have hope for a better future and thrive in their own communities. This is reflected when children enjoy good health, are educated for life, experience the love of God and their neighbors, and are cared for, protected, and participating in their communities.*

RELEVANCE OF FRAMEWORK

Our framework is informed by promising practices and approaches, and lessons learned from World Vision's work in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.[17]

We recognize that contexts are constantly changing, especially in countries with subnational fragile contexts that require unique solutions to their own challenges. Yet there are still lessons to be learned from successful interventions. The following is a list of key learnings from World Vision programs that address the root causes of forced migration of at-risk populations, of which qualitative and quantitative data from the M&E processes points to promising results. These practices aim to address key risks by building and strengthening resilience at the individual, family, community, and societal levels.

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

ADDRESSING RISKS RELATED TO:

- Level of violence and organized crime
- Social cohesion
- Citizen participation and civic engagement
- Governance

› **The active participation of children and youth strengthens programming and contributes to systemic change.**

Consulting children and youth during the context analysis and design of programs leads to effective and relevant programming on fostering youth resilience and community-based violence prevention efforts.

This people-focused approach for design and implementation provides the opportunity to exert leadership, enabling them to become agents of systemic change in their communities.

This promising practice addresses the risk of youth being influenced by organized crime and gang activity by building individual resilience through agency.

Example:

Because of our programs in Guatemala that promote youth agency, local authorities now have evidence of the important role youth play.

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[17]With the objective of identifying how the context changes, World Vision engaged internal experts to analyze our diversity of programming in the countries to capture the learnings and promising practices in the proposed solutions in addressing the root causes of forced migration. The analysis included programming across different funding sources, in which we can mention programs funded by the government of United States and private donors from the United States, Canada, and Spain. The programs reviewed covered rural, semi-urban, and urban areas where most community members face limited economic opportunities, low education rates, violence, and limited access to suitable entry-level and quality jobs. The programs considered in this analysis spanned between three and 15 years of life of activity.

Individual level

"The COCODES [Community Development Councils] consider the youth and invite their participation. ... The participation from youth in these groups has produced good results and contributes to the community's development," said a local government authority in Guatemala.

A local child protection authority in Guatemala also noted the leadership and influence of youth in community development:

"When the youth have taken on leadership roles, they bring new ideas and different, more current forms of governing. The voice of youth is very important when making decisions as the youth made good contributions. ... Now [there] has been a lot more youth participation and they have been recognized as community leaders, providing good ideas that do help with the community's development."

At the Fostering Hope project in San Pedro Sula, youth participants were formally incorporated into the municipality's operational planning process. This allows them to influence the Municipal Child Protection Board's work plan and establish protective and advocacy actions. Recognizing the valuable contributions of youth in the planning processes, the San Pedro Sula Municipal Child Protection Board participated in several regional and national exchanges in which they promoted and advocated for the inclusion of children in such structures and processes.

ADDRESSING RISKS RELATED TO:

- Level of violence and organized crime
- *Ninis*
- Socioeconomic vulnerability
- Inequality

> **The prospect of alternative futures and the development of soft skills are driving youth toward transformation and increasing their employability.**

Youth must develop new competencies and mindsets if they're to access and succeed in work opportunities. In addition to technical skills, competencies that employers consider critical to success include soft skills related to critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, and socioemotional intelligence, while key mindsets include persistence, tolerance, initiative, and generosity.

Example:

World Vision's Youth Ready methodology has supported thousands of youth across the Northern Triangle in strengthening their skills, forming a career plan, and making that plan a reality. A strong focus on soft skills has transformed participants' self-confidence, agency, and hope. It's also made them more competitive and successful.

Vocational training institutions consistently note the clarity of vision, drive, collaboration, emotional intelligence, communication skills, and character of Youth Ready graduates. Scores of private sector partners have created new internship programs specifically for Youth Ready graduates, and an online job match service called the "Talent Bank" was developed to help meet the increased demand from the private sector to hire Youth Ready graduates.

ADDRESSING RISKS RELATED TO:

- Level of violence and organized crime
- Gender inequality
- Social cohesion
- Violence against women

❯ Girls/women and boys/men must be equally engaged in violence reduction and resilience building.

To strengthen protective environments as well as educational and economic opportunities for children and youth, it's critical to equally engage both girls/women and boys/men in programming. To do so effectively, it's necessary to conduct a deeper, more systemic exploration of the barriers to participation of these groups in programming. This review should identify sociocultural attitudes and norms that limit participation in some activities. The root causes of these attitudes and norms must be further explored and actively challenged at the individual, household, community, and systemic levels to support gender parity.

Gender inequality is a risk for women in the Central America. By intentionally including women and girls in programming and challenging negative behavior and sociocultural norms and attitudes, we're enabling an environment where women and girls can thrive.

Example:

Programs in the three countries equally targeted girls, boys, women, and men, and focused on girls and women who are at risk of gender-based violence and face disadvantages in the labor market. But although the programs were designed to engage girls/women and boys/men equally, this goal was not consistently achieved in implementation. Youth resilience programming tended to reach young men at a higher rate than young women. Community violence reduction programming—especially work focusing on families and their ability to adequately care for and protect children and youth—had significantly greater participation of women than men. For programming to promote children and youth having access to safe schools, places to play, and areas to gather in their communities, the participation rates of boys versus girls varied depending on the activity as well as other contextual factors such as violence and livelihoods. Focus groups indicated that these differences are attributed to sociocultural norms and attitudes.

FAMILY LEVEL

ADDRESSING RISKS RELATED TO:

- Level of violence and organized crime
- Socioeconomic vulnerability
- *Ninis*
- Dysfunctional families

❯ Positive parenting skills are an enabling factor for youth success.

Limited parenting skills and household resources inhibit parents' ability to care for, protect, and support children and youth. Support from parents and caregivers is critical to resilience and success.

Engaging parents and ensuring their buy-in while providing psychosocial support to families and response to violence and trauma is critical, as youth consistently referenced the role their caregivers and parents played in supporting them to complete their education and achieve their goals. With limited economic opportunities for both youth and adults in the targeted areas, there was significant pressure in many households to seek out alternative employment and income generation activities outside of their communities, whether in more urban areas in their region or further afield in places like the United States or Mexico. During focus group discussions, youth consistently referenced how the migration of other family members impacted their household's overall vulnerability.

Example:

Project facilitators in Guatemala and Honduras noted that adolescent boys and young men often stopped attending school and Peace Clubs as well as other program activities due to household economic vulnerability. Parents or caregivers halted the school attendance or program participation of their young boys and men so they could work and contribute to household earnings.

Thus, projects have implemented different strategies to encourage parents and support youth to continue their education. The U.S.-funded Puentes project in Guatemala had an Inclusion Fund in the project design. This allowed for additional support for vulnerable youth to facilitate their participation in project activities. It covered costs such as transportation, childcare, and aid for people who are disabled. Funds like this could support youth from vulnerable households through their education and as they enter the workforce, when they're more likely to drop out due to external pressures.

"There are parents that do not support their young children. They cannot attend school all the time because they have to go to work. Those [youth] that arrived at our school in September just disappeared once it was time to cut coffee. It's a barrier that they do not have the direct support from their parents," said a male community stakeholder in Guatemala.

RELEVANCE OF FRAMEWORK

ADDRESSING RISKS RELATED TO:

- Level of violence and organized crime
- Socioeconomic vulnerability
- Family dysfunction
- Food security

> **Creating environments that enable children and youth to thrive within their families and communities is essential to progress.**

Reducing the effects of significant adversity on children's healthy development is essential to the progress and prosperity of any society.[18] The single most common factor for children who develop resilience is at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult.

Raising Children with Tenderness is World Vision's approach for child development in the Latin American and Caribbean region. It's based on a scientifically proven theoretical concept that tenderness supports children and eradicates violence. Raising Children with Tenderness focuses on cultivating loving family relationships and expands to mobilizing the community to provide a safe and nurturing environment. Its three pillars are:

- Building healthy family relationships

- Mentoring parents and caregivers

- Strengthening cultural and structural contexts

Example:

In El Salvador and Honduras, under the shared value of improving the lives and resilience of children and their families, World Vision is engaging and equipping parents, caregivers, and faith leaders from different denominations with training, mentoring, and tools that help them provide loving and safe environments for children.

The project mid-term evaluation found that by the end of FY19, 77.19% of youth were carrying out mentoring actions for the benefit of children and their peers, and 75.48% of children and youth expressed positive values toward their families, peers at school, and others in their community.

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[18]Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University - https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/resilience/

COMMUNITY LEVEL

ADDRESSING RISKS RELATED TO:

- Socioeconomic vulnerability
- Natural hazard exposure
- Food security

> **Economic and agricultural effects of environmental changes also drive migration.**

According to the 2018 World Risk Index,[19] El Salvador and Guatemala are among the 15 countries at greatest risk from natural disasters, due to their frequent exposure and weak response capacity. This reportedly has forced households to engage in extreme coping strategies, such as taking on debt, selling off land, and migrating. Furthermore, in the Northern Triangle Dry Corridor, which is highly prone to drought, communities are largely dependent on smallholder agriculture for their livelihoods. According to a report released by the World Food Programme in 2017, emigrants from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras returned by the Mexican authorities to their respective countries of origin were primarily men (79%), and 50% of them were working in the agricultural sector before migrating.[20]

Example:

In Honduras, World Vision's THRIVE (Transforming Household Resilience in Vulnerable Environments) program empowers families in fragile contexts to build improved and resilient livelihoods by equipping them with practical farming and business skills in addition to helping them recognize their own agency and potential.

The three pillars of equipping smallholder farmers to develop improved and resilient livelihoods are:

- End-to-end business of farming
- Natural resource management
- Emergency and situational awareness

The THRIVE model is based on our Empowered Worldview approach, which uses faith-based principles to build healthy mindsets, economic security, trusting relationships, and Christian principles to foster social capital, building community resilience and helping to ensure lasting change.

THRIVE builds resilience holistically, at both the household and community levels, by sequencing and layering an integrated package of evidence-based World Vision project models. Integrated approaches to strengthen community resilience are generally considered more effective than stand-alone projects. World Vision is pioneering large-scale, integrated livelihoods approaches including climate-smart agriculture, market systems development, and microfinance—including financial services and crop insurance from our microfinance subsidiary, VisionFund—to address the drivers of poverty and food insecurity.

As a first step in THRIVE interventions, World Vision couples Empowered Worldview training with our Savings for Transformation approach (S4T). S4T builds resilience by enabling community members to develop skills and access to funds to cope with household emergencies, learn long-term coping strategies, focus on the health, nutrition, and education of their children, and invest in their own livelihoods. These groups become important social safety nets to their members, creating a greater sense of empowerment and trust within communities. The S4T model works to include the community's most vulnerable and marginalized individuals and households, providing accessibility and inclusion to women, youth, people with disabilities, and others often left behind.

[19]World Risk Report - https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WorldRiskReport-2018.pdf

[20]2017 - Food security and emigration - El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras - https://www.wfp.org/publications/2017-food-security-and-emigration

RELEVANCE OF FRAMEWORK

Community level

The primary objective of World Vision's Strategy for Resilient Development Practice is to contribute to the sustained well-being of children by addressing the drivers of risk and vulnerability in a changing climate. Doing so requires us to focus on the following areas:

- **Reducing underlying community vulnerabilities to shocks and stresses:** Strengthen financial, physical, social, and spiritual resilience through program interventions, so that lives and livelihoods are minimally disrupted by shocks and stresses when they occur.

- **Building a culture of resilience:** Use knowledge and education about risks to build a culture of resilience and adaptive capacity at the individual, household, and community levels.

- **Understanding the potential impact:** Use analysis of the nature and potential impact of the hazards and vulnerabilities communities face to enhance early warning and early action.

- **Strengthening capacity for risk reduction and adaptation:** Identify and build individual and institutional capacities by working with local government and other service providers who can support effective risk reduction and adaptation planning or implementation.

- **Being prepared:** Prepare to respond to a crisis effectively. At times of disaster, impacts and losses can be substantially reduced if authorities, individuals, and communities in hazard-prone areas are well prepared, ready to act, and equipped with the knowledge, capacities, and resources for effective disaster management.

ADDRESSING RISKS RELATED TO:

- Socioeconomic vulnerability
- Social cohesion
- Food security

> **The early warning system for vulnerability supports families at risk.**

By gathering socioeconomic data, World Vision identifies the most vulnerable families and communities with higher likelihood of forced migration.

This identification serves as an early warning system so World Vision can provide timely action to support vulnerable families. This is accomplished by connecting them with other families facing the same challenges, with communities that can add capacity in the face of shocks and stresses, and with local authorities, organizations, and networks who can share information and response action in the face of crisis.

Example:

In 2019, World Vision carried out an Early Warning System for Vulnerability pilot project in Honduras, which resulted in reducing by 78% the number of people in Nueva Frontera, Honduras, who had migrated away from their own communities. This was achieved because the pilot integrated a coping and referral mechanism as part of World Vision's overall programming. Faith-based partnerships across the Latin American and Caribbean region played an influential role.

SOCIETY LEVEL[21]

ADDRESSING RISKS RELATED TO:

- Level of violence and organized crime
- Socioeconomic vulnerability
- Dysfunctional families
- Social cohesion

❯ Partnerships with church and faith-based organizations are key.

One of the main push factors for migration from Central America is violence. Religious groups and faith-based organizations are key local actors informing the worldview of individuals and are best positioned for preventing and addressing violence against the most vulnerable, including children. World Vision intentionally brings together leaders from different religious denominations to unify them around the shared value of improving the lives of children and their families, aiming to shape a new generation of Central Americans that is free of violence.

Through effective models and methodologies aiming to transform relationships based on love, respect, and a culture of peace, World Vision equips faith leaders, parents, caregivers, and schools to create programs promoting resilience, care, and protection—all essential for peaceful communities with positive alternatives to gangs and other violent groups for children and youth.

Example:

In all three countries, participants recognized the church as a safe place that sought to strengthen families and protect children and youth. World Vision has established partnerships with churches and faith-based organizations to support efforts to prevent violence against children by strengthening communities' and families' capacities to care for and protect children and youth.

In Guatemala, we have worked through faith leaders to gain access and build trust with communities that are highly vulnerable to violence. In some of the most violent communities in El Salvador and Honduras, World Vision equips children and youth to be agents of change by fostering safe communities and homes, and by influencing and mentoring their peers. In Honduras, churches provide space for youth employment centers, which have helped to place hundreds of youth in internships, jobs, and education programs (in partnership with Youth Ready).

In August 2019, more than 200 churches and faith-based organizations signed a joint declaration to work in favor of children, to give alternatives to joining or remaining in gangs. In El Salvador, for every dollar that World Vision has invested in child protection, youth development, and community mobilization, churches have invested $6.

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[21]*Society* in this document refers to the closest administrative division, in which citizen participation can play a role in influence and shaping policy making and its implementation for the good of the people living in it. As per country administrative division, it can be at municipal, subregion, province, department levels, etc.

RELEVANCE OF FRAMEWORK

ADDRESSING RISKS RELATED TO:
- Citizen participation and civic engagement
- Governance
- Social public investment

> **Providing interconnected solutions to interconnected risks and vulnerabilities results in more impact.**

Migration is a complex social phenomenon. Holistic solutions that address the most urgent vulnerabilities have more impact than sector-based activities.

An integrated approach should consider programs that address vulnerabilities faced by communities and establish the interlinks for success.

Based on World Vision's analyses as well as the qualitative data collected for this review, these causes are primarily related to violence, lack of opportunities, and the impact of environmental hazards on communities at high risk.

Example:

Community Roots, a U.S. government–funded program in Guatemala, applied evidence-based programs and child protection systems strengthening approaches. This integrated approach and combined experience was relevant and rigorous in addressing the root causes of youth migration in Guatemala.

The project established or strengthened Community Violence Prevention Commissions (CVPC). World Vision facilitated and convened the different actors to build these commissions in cooperation with municipal officials and community leaders, including youth. CVPC assessed the risks facing children and youth, and based on their findings, developed plans and made proposals to the municipality to support the prevention of and response to violence. As CVPC implemented these plans and monitored the community, they identified children and youth that were at high risk of insecurity and isolation, then referred them to preventive services that included educational opportunities, life skills development, and job readiness training as well as recreational activities implemented by World Vision and local partners.

CVPC were indispensable to the effectiveness and integration of the project's community-based approach in addressing the needs of vulnerable youth.

ADDRESSING RISKS RELATED TO:
- Level of violence and organized crime
- Socioeconomic vulnerability
- Social cohesion

> **Local government is a catalyst for private sector partnerships.**

Local government representatives have been instrumental in mobilizing private sector support for out-of-school youth, in some cases from the assessment phase through implementation. This has included financially supporting activities, soliciting private business participation in job fairs, and advocating for on-the-job training and employment opportunities for youth participants. Government partnerships like these have been critical in both creating opportunities within the formal sector and supporting youth with entrepreneurial undertakings.

Programs should continue to partner with governments and more effectively link participants to government programs and services. This will allow programs to expand their reach, contribute to sustainability, and build youth resilience.

Example:

The success of World Vision's programs facilitating private sector support for vulnerable youth owes much to the catalytic role played by local governments, with the national government's support.

Projects have used the community-based violence prevention committees, in which local authorities and other local entities participate, to convene efforts in support of at-risk youth.

ADDRESSING RISKS RELATED TO:

- Level of violence and organized crime
- Socioeconomic vulnerability
- Social cohesion

› **Community-level private sector engagement is critical in creating sustainable job opportunities for youth.**

Engaging the private sector at the local level enables World Vision to adapt its programming to local markets and advocate for local youth. This helps ensure that private sector partnerships create shared value—where the competitiveness of the company is enhanced while simultaneously advancing the economic and social conditions in the communities where it operates.

Example:

In Honduras, hundreds of local partnerships with the private sector have transformed the job environment for youth. World Vision has helped businesses create new internship programs that provide hundreds of youth with work experience, mentoring, a solid reference, and, for many, job offers. Local staff build relationships of trust with these businesses, which results in higher levels of commitment to youth outcomes as well as new innovations. This has led to more inclusive employment opportunities for underemployed groups like girls and youth with disabilities, more local business leaders serving as youth mentors, and new youth-friendly financial products and services from local banking cooperatives. It's now common for 100 to 200 representatives from the private sector to attend the graduation ceremonies of youth completing the Youth Ready curriculum. In September 2019, some of our local private sector partners were invited to share their experience at the Global Youth Economic Opportunities Summit hosted by Making Cents. They observed that these partnerships were sustainable because they see benefits not only to their own competitiveness but also on the social and economic impact in their community.

RELEVANCE OF FRAMEWORK

ADDRESSING RISKS RELATED TO:

- Level of violence and organized crime
- Socioeconomic vulnerability
- Inequality

❯ It's necessary to collect practical labor market information to determine high potential growth sectors relevant to youth in targeted communities.

Market-driven approaches will bring about more sustainable change.

An increase in educational enrollment generates greater aspirations and demand for wage employment, but markets in the targeted areas appeared to be structured around production by household farms and firms, which offer limited opportunities for skilled work.

Comprehensive market assessments and collaboration with the private sector and training programs are imperative if youth are to find success in the job market.

In-depth market assessments are critical in shaping the direction of training, employment, and private sector linkage activities. This not only helps to ensure that there will be demand for the skills of participants who complete training activities, but also informs youth participants during their life planning activities. This will allow them to create plans and access resources to develop skills and competencies relevant to the market, which ultimately increases their chances of finding meaningful employment. A critical component to success of the market assessment processes is their ability to assess the market opportunities in target communities that youth can practically access. Given that travel distances and security are real factors influencing school and work dropout rates, it's critical that projects and programs identify opportunities that participants can easily access close to their communities. To achieve this, market assessments should be community-based and include a broad range of actors.

Example:

In Guatemala, the export produce sector expressed a need for suppliers to improve product quality. It was determined that there was a good potential to grow produce for export—which generally generates more income than other agricultural work—in the municipalities targeted by Puentes. To meet this need, Puentes began developing a diploma in Innovative Export Crop Production. The technical group designing this diploma included representatives from an exporting company (San Juan Agroexport), the National Agriculture School (Escuela Nacional de Agricultura), sector specialists, universities, and Puentes Project partners.

Our U.S.-funded project Community Roots entered into an agreement with Grupo Hame and Fundación Azteca Guatemala through the "*Guatemala es tu tierra, quédate*" ("Guatemala is your land, stay") program to provide young people from Coatepeque, Quetzaltenango, and Malacatan, San Marcos, with opportunities for development in the form of technical training in the fields of electricity, welding, plumbing, cooking, and hospitality. This will increase their opportunities to earn a living and motivate them to stay in the country to build youth resilience against interconnected risks and vulnerabilities.

Under the U.S.-funded Puentes programs, commerce and private sector members were invited to actively participate in the community-based labor market assessment process. They also collaborated with other community actors such as the local government to provide input into the market assessment processes.

ADDRESSING RISKS RELATED TO:

- Social cohesion
- Level of violence and organized crime
- Socioeconomic vulnerability

> **Linking local, national, and subregional advocacy efforts can increase contributions to systemic change.**

To bring about sustainable change, development efforts should include the system strengthening approach at local and national levels so that capacities for resilience are strengthened at different levels of the society.

Programs should include scale-up actions once a practice shows positive results. In this way, good programming will achieve wider impact by strengthening local and national systems.

Example:

The Community Roots project in Guatemala mobilized local and municipal government stakeholders and resources to develop and implement violence and migration prevention initiatives. This program successfully leveraged public policy and corresponding resources and structures to strengthen violence prevention efforts and provide educational and vocational training opportunities for youth. Similarly, the Fostering Hope project in Honduras and sponsorship programming in Guatemala and El Salvador have contributed to the improved implementation of public policies related to child protection services and support mechanisms at the municipal level. Those efforts include the establishment and strengthening of child protection offices and committees along with networks that conduct preventive actions and respond to cases of violence against children.

According to the review of the programs and the progress achieved thus far, there is opportunity to further contribute to systemic change by intentionally linking advocacy efforts at the local, national, and subregional levels both within and across programs.

ADDRESSING RISKS RELATED TO:

- Level of violence and organized crime
- Ninis
- Socioeconomic vulnerability
- Inequality

> **Facilitated on-the-job experience is critical to increase the employability of youth at risk of migration.**

In highly competitive job markets, education and the completion of training are only one piece of the complex puzzle youth must navigate to find meaningful employment. Employers often prefer more experienced candidates who require less training and investment, and some are biased against applicants from at-risk communities. As a result, many youth struggle for a chance to get their foot in the door, despite having completed their education or vocational training.

Example:

To best meet the needs of participants in programs, continue to prioritize influencing employers and creating opportunities for targeted youth to gain on-the-job experience. In addition, ensure that vulnerable youth have the resources and support necessary to complete their internships or probationary periods.

RELEVANCE OF FRAMEWORK

In summary, we have learned that in order to address the root causes of migration, it is crucial to:

> take action to address the immediate and emerging needs of the most vulnerable population, while also addressing the more structural and cultural root causes of forced migration—done by building resilient capacities at individual, family, community, and societal levels

> address the multidimensional and interacting risks in the root causes of migration in order to create sustainable environments for people to thrive in their home countries, promoting social inclusion and equity

> engage churches, faith-based organizations, and leaders whose unique contributions position them to help shape human worldviews and mindsets, behaviors, and actions, as well as gain access to the most violent and hardest-to-reach communities

> build resilience in youth-at-risk by building and strengthening the life skills and character that will help them thrive (in addition to creating opportunities in the job market)

> empower women and indigenous populations through tailored and targeted approaches—so that they can unleash their full potential

> work with families and communities, as well as local and national governments, to bring about systemic change

> work with country media outlets to foster a culture of peace and hope by creating transformational messages of a better future in one's home country

A full report of lessons learned is available at worldvision.org

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While there is still much to learn about the context dynamics in Central America, it is World Vision's expectation that the **Hope at Home: Building Resilience in Central America** framework will help different actors of the Central American society work together in building resilience so people can thrive in their home countries.

World Vision invites organizations and entities to join this effort. We're bringing local governments, communities, faith-based organizations, schools, families, and children together with the same goal in mind: increased resilience for the people of Central America, so they can cope with and recover from shocks and experience life in all its fullness.

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