



PROTECTING CHILDREN from EXPLOITATION AND VIOLENCE in the NORTHERN TRIANGLE

Fostering Hope at Home in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala

QUICK FACTS

- » World Vision research on children's perceptions of violence in El Salvador found that only 32 percent of respondents felt safe at home.
- » Three of the ten countries with the highest homicide rates in the world are Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

Introduction

Violence is a daily threat for many children in Central America. In the home, children experience and witness domestic violence, and high rates of alcoholism in society fuel violence faced in the community. In a World Vision study, Honduran children recounted the risks they face: being robbed at gunpoint, witnessing shootings, and even seeing bodies buried in their soccer fields. In addition to violent environments, limited opportunities for education and employment as well as family separation are regional trends that pull children to migrate to the U.S.

Why it matters

Often, children do not feel safe at home, at school, or in their community. Children exposed to violence within the home may flee to public spaces, which may also not be safe. Without a safe space—whether at home or in the community—children and youth may be forced to either seek protection in the streets, where they are at risk of recruitment into or violence from criminal groups and gangs, or to leave violent situations within their community and migrate.

ASK

The U.S. government must continue to put the needs of vulnerable children first with a long-term solution. To address violence against children and unsafe migration sustainably, the U.S. government must continue to address the root causes through foreign assistance. Additionally, the U.S. government must maintain the protections for unaccompanied children arriving in the U.S. These protections ensure children who have experienced violence receive appropriate care.



Facts

- » 31 percent of females in El Salvador (15 to 49 years old) reported being physically abused by age 18.
- » 23 percent of unaccompanied minors from Guatemala have suffered physical violence from caregivers.
- » In a 2014 study by UNHCR, 48 percent of children from Central America arriving in the U.S. shared that they had experienced or been threatened with serious harm through organized crime, by those associated with the government, or by other members of the community. The children may have suffered such harm due to a lack of sufficient protection by their countries' governments.
- » Violence against children affects a child's social, emotional, mental, and physical development and has far-reaching consequences into their future and their community.
- » Children who experience violence need time and adequate support to discover their resilience.
- » The World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have developed solutions that World Vision endorses for addressing violence against children. Investment is needed to address the root causes of the problem at all levels—in the home, school, and community.

ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES

In Guatemala, World Vision and RTI International is implementing the \$46 million USAID-funded *Community Roots Project* focused in areas of high crime and violence. The connection between violence and migration, and underlying causes, is being addressed through holistic violence prevention. This contributes to the goals of the Guatemalan and U.S. governments to promote development and decrease violence in targeted areas.

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