

INEE Round Table “The Role of Education and Youth in Preventing Urban Violence and Countering Violent Extremism”

~ Case Studies from Research and Practice ~

Summary

<i>Logo</i>	Organisation	USAID
	Location	Guatemala
	Title	Vulnerable youth
	Key Themes	Migration, youth vulnerabilities and barriers
Overview: Recent and considerable changes in age and socio-demographics now characterize Guatemala as a ‘youth bulge’ nation - where almost 70% of the population is under the age of 30, and almost 60% of these youth are poor. Several vulnerabilities are hindering youth’s future. Violence and economic problems are the main problems faced by both urban and rural youth. Hence, lacking a sense of inclusion, Guatemalans are migrating to other countries, leading to the disintegration of families and social structures within Guatemala. In response, USAID is articulating a variety of interventions to provide relevant opportunities for youth.		

Description of Context: (problematize, include figures/data where possible)

Guatemala is a post-conflict and young democracy. In an unprecedented development of events and after five months (April –September 2015) of protests and peaceful demonstrations, the President and Vice-president and several high-level Government Officials were indicted. Almost all are in prison now, awaiting a hearing to determine the date of the trial and their fate. Guatemalan society, in this instance was far from passive and disengaged. Professional associations’ and youth participation and engagement is the cornerstone of this transition.

With a population of 15 million people, Guatemala is the largest country in Central America. It a small, heterogeneous country (25 languages are spoken within its borders) and has some of the lowest human development indicators¹; namely, the highest level of chronic malnutrition (49.8%) in the hemisphere for children less than five years of age. There are 1.7 million out-of-school youth –OSY—nation-wide aged 15-24, the vast majority without primary education certification and a limited skillset to enter the labor force. Youth in Guatemala are particularly vulnerable not only to poverty, but also to violence, as Guatemala has one of the highest rates of homicides in the world (31.2 per 100,000 persons, down from 41 per 100,000 in 2010²). Victims and perpetrators of armed violence and homicides are mainly male youth, between 18 and 39 years old.

¹“International Human Development Indicators: Guatemala,” United Nations Development Program, 2014.

² Policía Nacional Civil, Julio 2015. According to INACIF, homicide rate is 36.6 per 100,000 persons

In summer 2014, US Congressional concerns regarding Unaccompanied Child –UAC- migrating to the United States made front-page headlines. More than 60,000 Central American UAC have been detained at the US South border and are currently in custody of US immigration officials to begin the deportation process. The highest incidence of out-migration is from Guatemala City (19.4%), followed by departments in the Western Highlands. The average Guatemalan unaccompanied child migrant is from a rural, indigenous area, and between the ages of 14-17 (of which 83% are boys). Guatemala's migration is fueled by the economic situation mainly. However, a second factor is the violence registered in urban areas in particular.

Explanation of the Intervention: *(rationale, conceptual basis, process)*

a) Methodology and Approach

The case study describes the country and youth context, and highlights the role of a variety of interventions to provide opportunities for vulnerable youth in an effort to mitigate several migration underlying factors.

b) Implementation Process

Starting in 2015, interventions to provide opportunities for vulnerable youth are targeting rural and poor municipalities in the Western Highlands; and urban and peri-urban areas with high crime-related violence rates. Cross-sectoral work is currently being implemented to promote integration and synergies among development stakeholders in the education, health, violence prevention, civil participation, and employment sectors. This intervention is laying the foundations of the "Alliance for Prosperity Plan", which was signed by the Government of the United States of America and all three Central American Northern Triangle countries.

Results & Findings: *(outcomes, direct/indirect results, intended vs unintended, challenges)*

The intervention is completing its launching phase and has less than one year of full implementation. There are several incidental findings that have required substantial modifications to the implementation phase:

1. Despite new and vibrant civil society movements, most out-of-school youth in both rural and urban contexts continue to be excluded from the generation of opportunities.
2. Youth do not participate, are not empowered, and are rather apathetic to the community's development when there aren't relevant opportunities created to mitigate their opportunity costs and specific demands.
3. The upscale of youth interventions is limited in the short term due to weak institutional frameworks and eroded country systems.
4. Numerous factors and vulnerabilities are affecting youth; these barriers are preventing the access to the education system and labor markets.
5. A significant portion of youth do not envision a better future for themselves and their families and thus decide to migrate to another country.
6. The interaction of types of violence needs further analysis to provide inputs to the education system, in light of a regional stability threat.

Conclusions: *(suitability of the approach, adaptability to other contexts, lessons learned, outcomes, direct/indirect results, intended vs unintended)*

1. USAID's interventions to provide opportunities for youth –through community-based crime prevention projects or in rural settings to increase income generation activities– are

inherently cross-sectoral. That is, they integrate education and workforce development, economic growth and employment, public health, and governance interventions. This interrelation creates relevant programs that can mitigate some of the social challenges identified above.

2. The participation of youth in the development of these opportunities is the cornerstone of a sustainable process to increase youth's wellbeing. The demands of vulnerable youth that arise in a specific context need to be taken into consideration (as opposed to the employers' demands as a stand-alone factor).
3. Contexts with vulnerable youth need to be explored with a fragility and stability lens. The Central American Northern Triangle stability could be jeopardized if State institutions do not respond with relevant alternatives for youth.
4. Structural changes need to follow the short-term provision of opportunities for youth. Interventions need to take advantage of Guatemalan youth's unprecedented engagement and leadership role to fight against impunity, corruption, and the overall lack of opportunities. There is a clear gap to be filled between short-term solutions and the strengthening of country's systems and institutions.
5. In the education sector, several questions remain unanswered, pending systematization of the political crisis. The systemic adjustments of the secondary education sector as the transition level, the facilitation of civic engagement opportunities, the revision of the curriculum, and the responses provided pedagogically to trauma, migration, and fragile environments are areas that need further analysis and concrete responses.

Links: *(documents, references, websites etc.)*

Case study attached

Key questions and considerations for further engagement: *(points for further discussion among members in the Roundtable discussions)*

- i. To be discussed after presentation
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.