



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



# The Dry Corridor

## In El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras

The Central American Dry Corridor is a stretch of territory classified as tropical dry forest or dry tropics, which extends between Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. More than 10 million people live in the Dry Corridor. Many are dedicated to agriculture and small-scale production of basic grains. The area is highly vulnerable to extreme climate events, with long periods of drought and shorter periods of heavy rains that strongly impact the livelihoods and food and nutritional security of local populations.

According to the Global Climate Risk Index from Germanwatch, during the 1998–2017 period, four countries of the Dry Corridor were among the twenty countries most affected by extreme weather events: Honduras (2nd), Nicaragua (6th), Guatemala (14th) and El Salvador (16th).

”

**There are more than 10 million people living in the Dry Corridor, many of whom are engaged in agricultural activities.**

### Total Dry Corridor land area



**7.5%**

suffers severe drought

**50.5%**

is classified as high drought

**42%**

suffers low levels of drought

### Municipalities located in severely affected areas



**25**

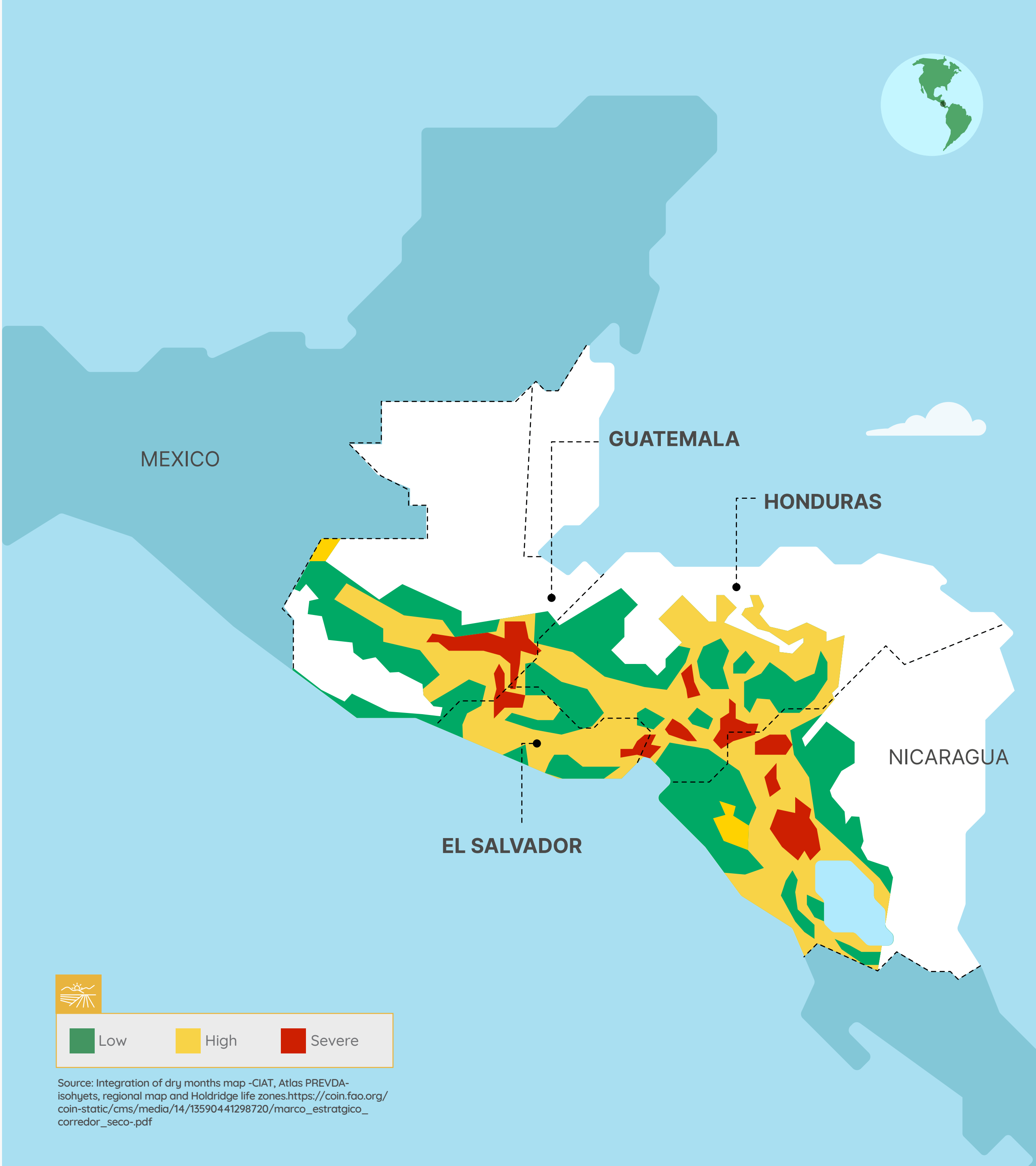
municipalities in El Salvador

**54**

municipalities in Guatemala

**33**

municipalities in Honduras



# More than 10 million

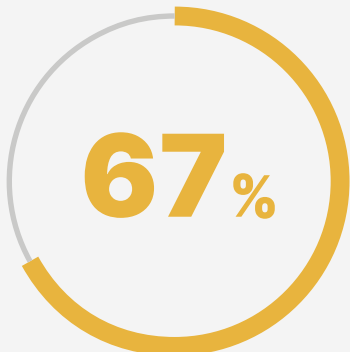
people live in the Dry Corridor. Many of them engage in subsistence agriculture and the production of basic grains



Of all rural households, the percentage of those producing basic grains ranges from:

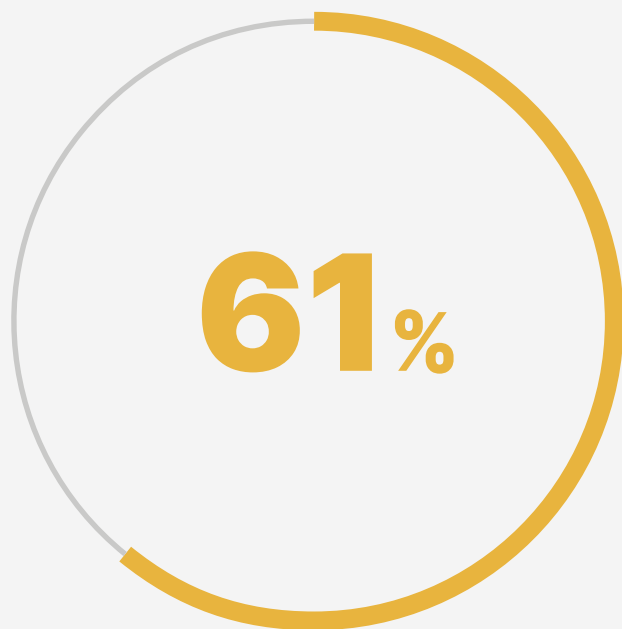


in El Salvador and Honduras, to



in Guatemala.

The remaining portion of the rural population is engaged in salaried jobs and other agricultural and non-agricultural activities.



of the producers of basic grains in Guatemala are indigenous peoples from the high plateau.

The income of small-scale producers of basic grains in the Dry Corridor is low, ranging from

**72 USD**  
per month in Honduras, to  
**104 USD**  
per month in El Salvador.

Around 80% of small-scale producers live below the poverty line.

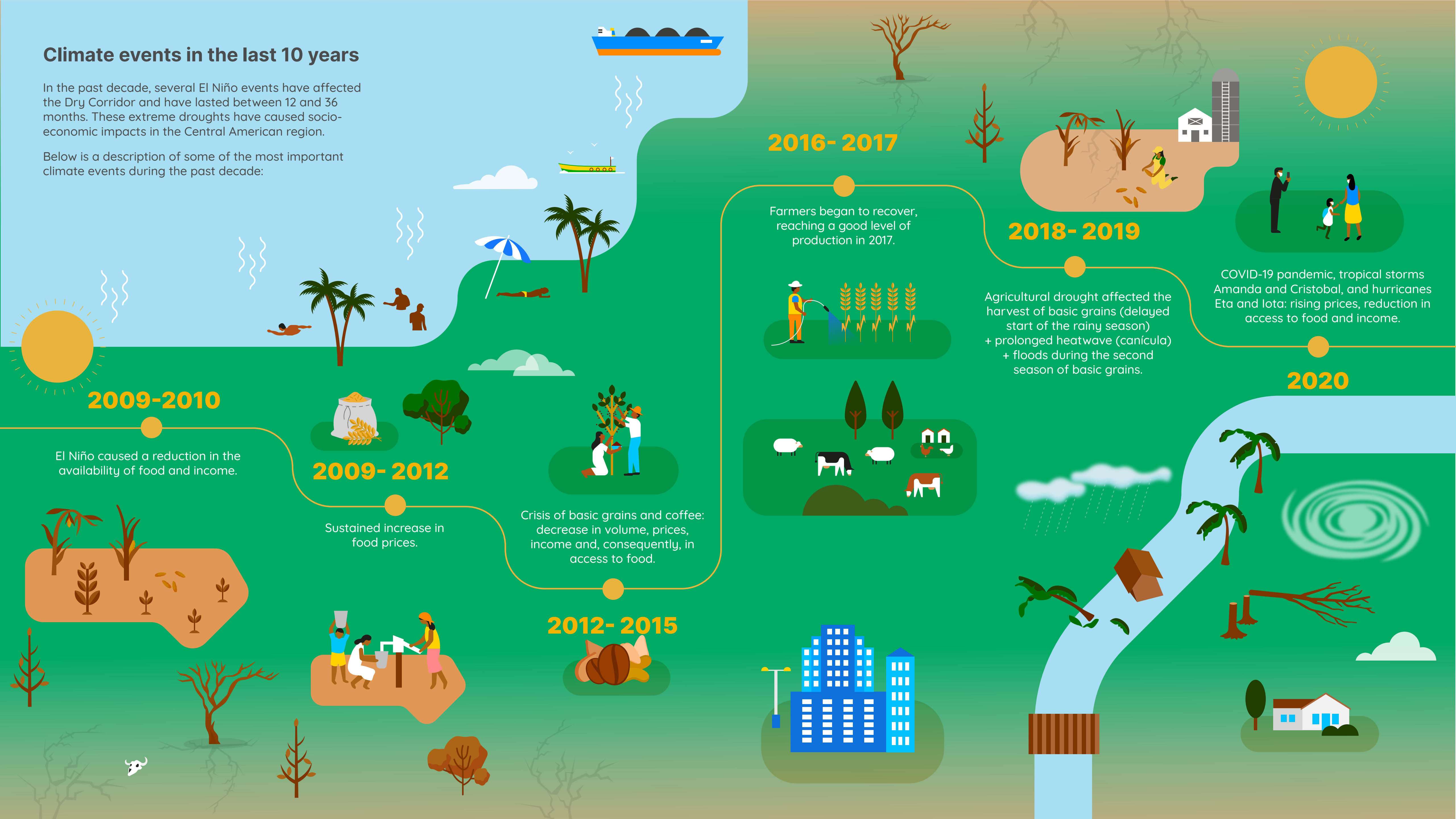


live in extreme poverty.

# Climate events in the last 10 years

In the past decade, several El Niño events have affected the Dry Corridor and have lasted between 12 and 36 months. These extreme droughts have caused socio-economic impacts in the Central American region.

Below is a description of some of the most important climate events during the past decade:

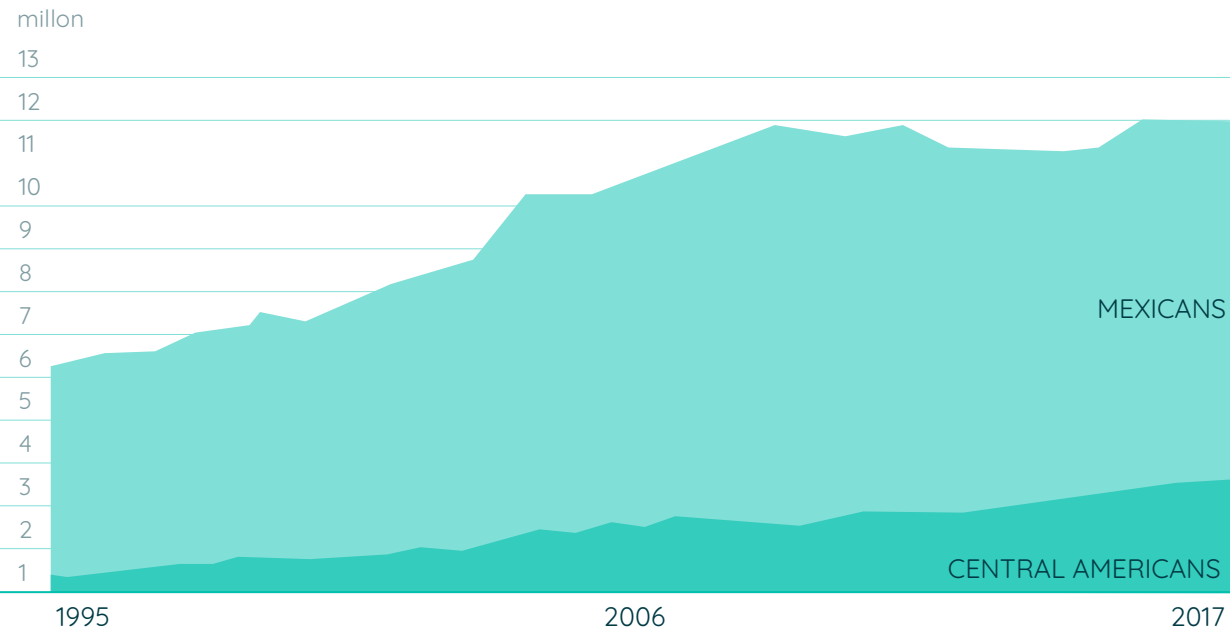




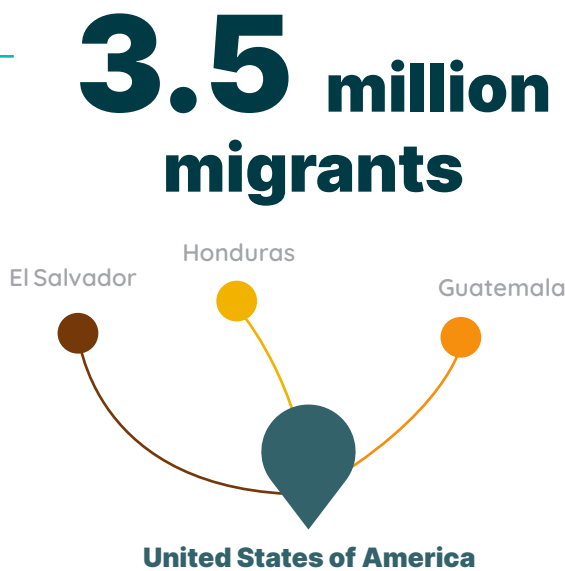
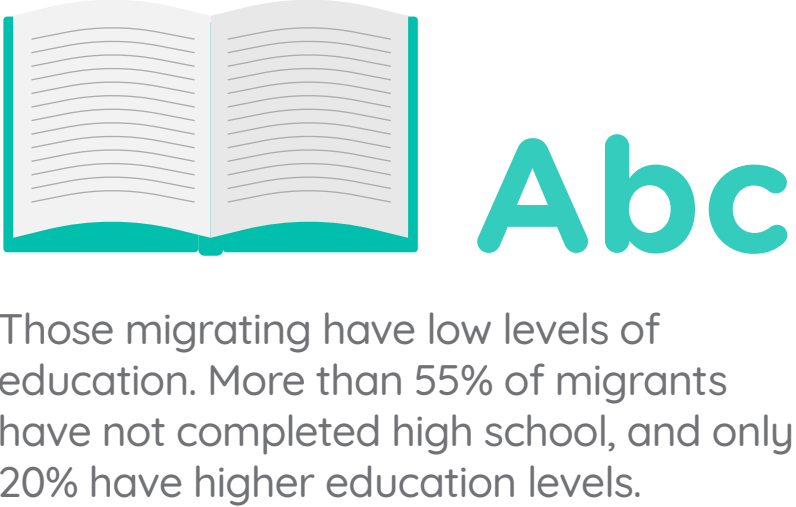
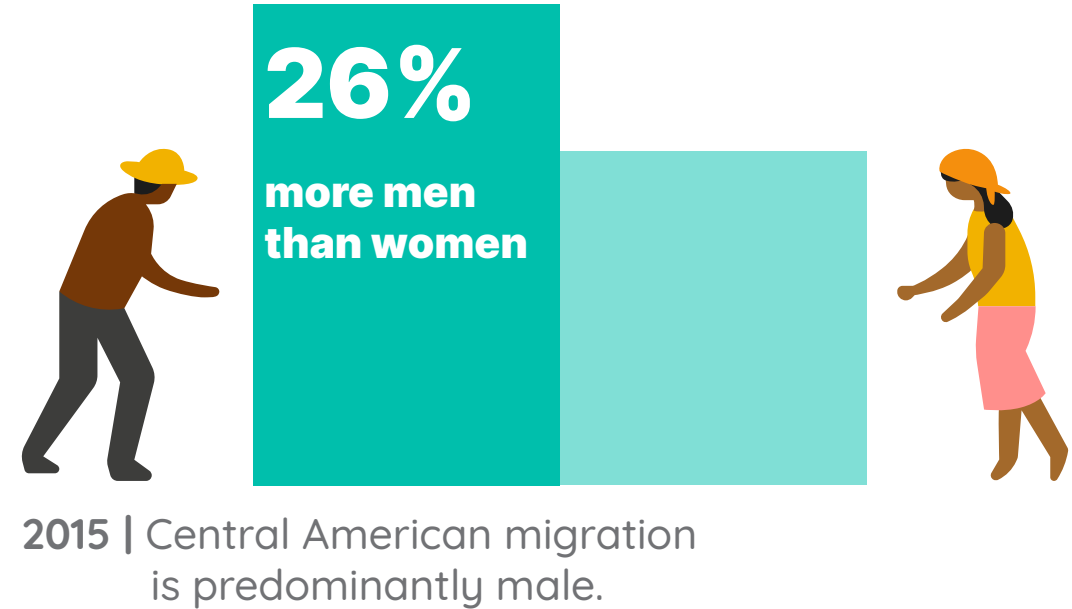
# Rural migration

Magnitude, profiles and main causes, including food insecurity, poverty and environmental vulnerability

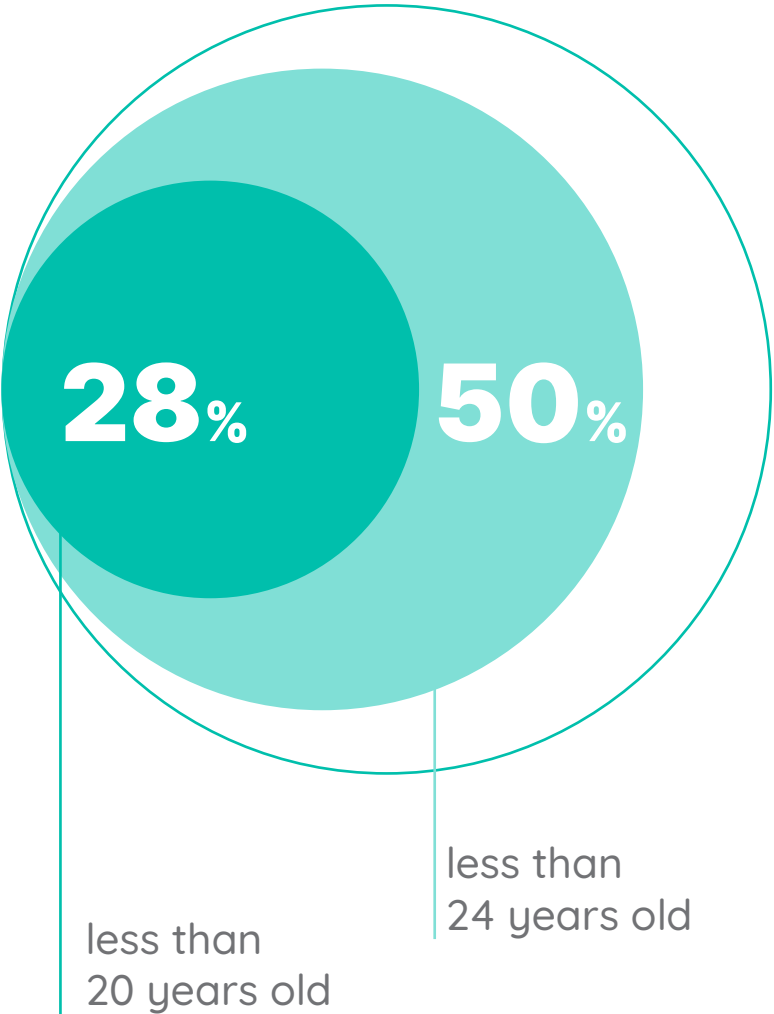
Migrants in the United States of America



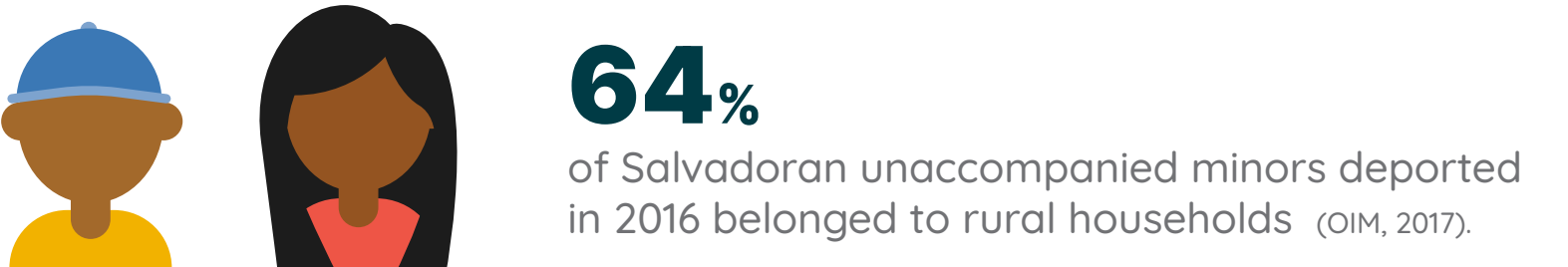
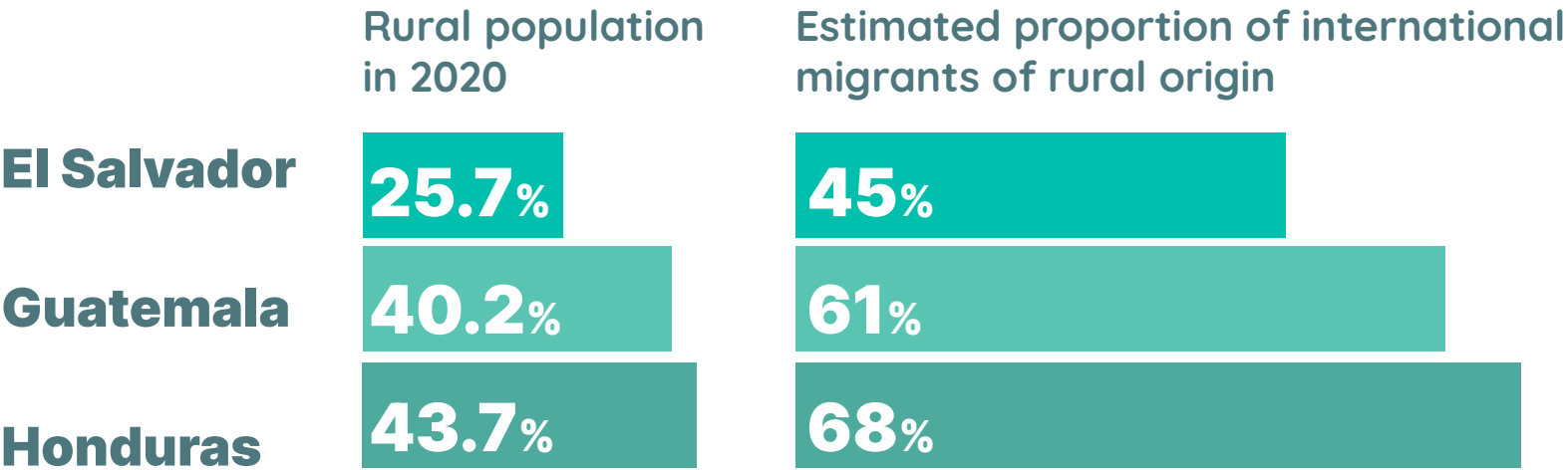
Source: Canales y Rojas 2018: Overview of international migration in Mexico and Central America



Those migrating are young: the average age of migrants from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras is 24 years old.



## The rural origin of migration



# Causes of rural migration

Factors such as family reunification and violence have a significant influence on rural migration. However, migration has a multicausal nature. The characteristics of the rural territories of origin, in terms of food and nutritional security, poverty, income generation and vulnerability to climatic and other natural shocks, also have a significant impact on migration rates.

## Food and Nutritional Security



El Salvador



Guatemala



Honduras



Mesoamerica

Undernourishment

8.9%  
0.6 million

16.1%  
2.8 millions

13.8%  
1.3 millions

8.7%  
15.2 millions

Food Insecurity  
(according to FIES) \*

Severe:  
14.6% (0.9 million)  
Moderate or Severe:  
42.2% (2.7 millions)

Severe:  
18% (3.1 millions)  
Moderate or Severe:  
45.2% (7.8 millions)

Severe:  
23.9% (2.3 millions)  
Moderate or Severe:  
55% (5.3 millions)

Severe:  
13.1% (23.1 millions)  
Moderate or Severe:  
37.4% (65.7 millions)

Chronic hunger < 5 years

13.6%  
(2014)

46.7%  
(2015)

22.6%  
(2012)

12.6%  
(2019)

Overweight < 5 years

6.4%  
(2014)

4.9%  
(2015)

5.2%  
(2012)

6.9%  
(2019)

Overweight > 18 años

59.9%  
(2016)

55.9%  
(2016)

55.8%  
(2016)

63%  
(2016)

Obesity > 18 years

24.6%  
(2016)

21.2%  
(2016)

21.4%  
(2016)

27.3%  
(2016)

Cost of the double  
burden of malnutrition

10.3% of GDP  
(2017)

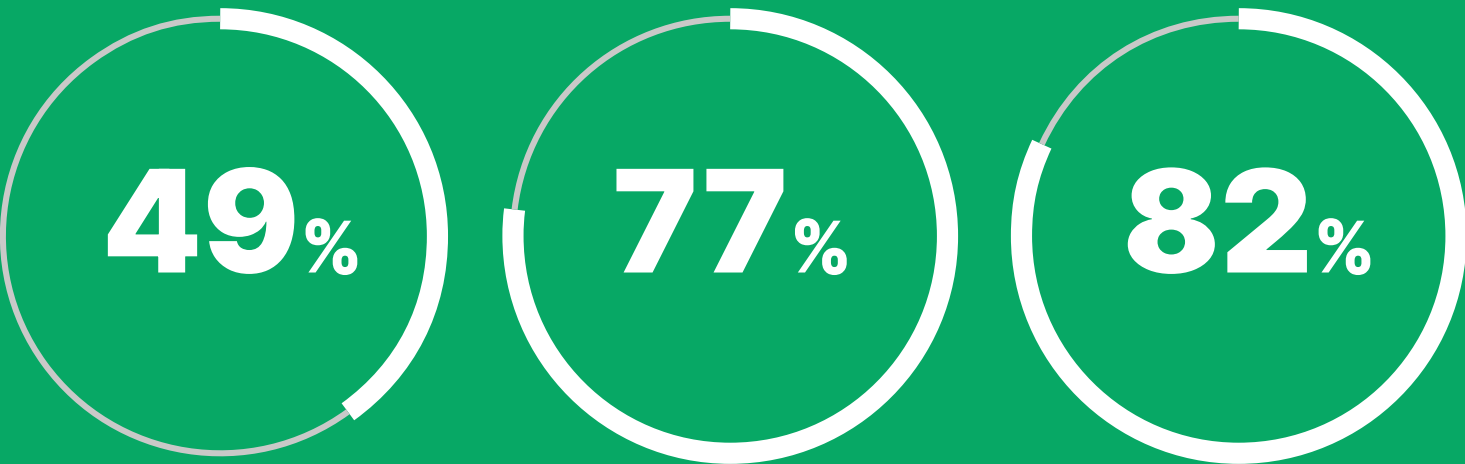
10.2% of GDP  
(2017)

16.3% of GDP  
(2018)

Double  
burden of  
malnutrition\*\*

Source: Own elaboration, based on: FAO, IFAD, PAHO, WFP and UNICEF. 2020  
\* FIES, or The Food Insecurity Experience Scale, is a methodology that measures the experience of food and nutrition insecurity, related to adequate access to food.  
\*\* The double burden of malnutrition is characterized by the coexistence of situations of malnutrition, overweight and obesity.

Rural poverty



El Salvador      Guatemala      Honduras

**57%** of the rural population employed in Mesoamerica work in agriculture.

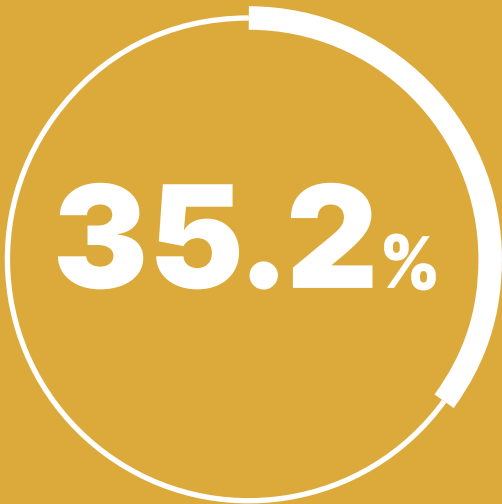
**55 %** are self-employed and unpaid family workers.

Salaried workers make up **45 %** of rural workers.

Self-employment and informality characterize agricultural work. It is estimated that between 95% and 98% of agricultural work is informal in these three countries.

Non-agricultural informal employment levels in rural areas vary, as follows:

Country	Men	Women
El Salvador	<b>56% men</b>	<b>69% women</b>
Guatemala	<b>72% men</b>	<b>69% women</b>
Honduras	<b>63% men</b>	<b>76% women</b>



In El Salvador, multidimensional poverty affects 35.2% of households and is slightly more than double in rural areas (58.5%) compared with urban areas (22.5%).

In Guatemala, poverty is close to **59.2% :**

**77% in rural areas and 42% in urban areas.**

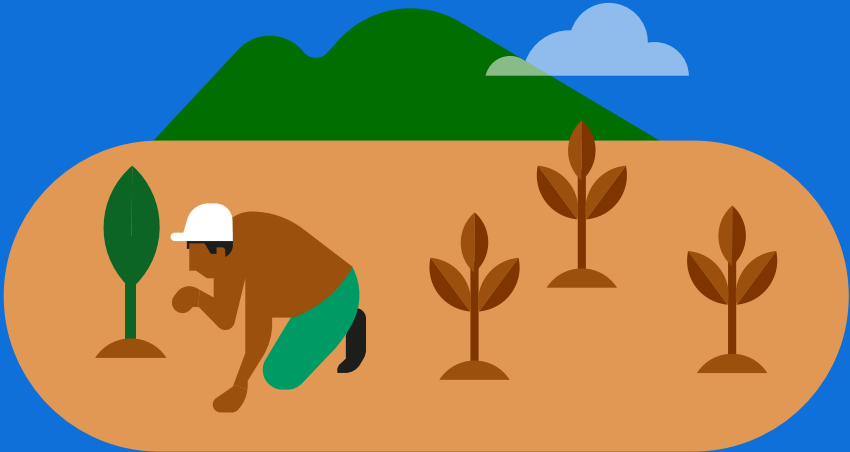
Regarding education, the average schooling rate is about 6.7 years, corresponding to 7.8 years for urban residents and 4.9 years for those living in rural areas.

In Honduras, income per capita in rural areas is 70% lower than the national average. The illiteracy rate in 2014 was 12.6%, reaching 8.8% in urban areas and 20% in rural areas.



Abc

El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have the most unfavourable numbers in the region regarding the digital divide, which is exacerbated between urban and rural areas.



In El Salvador, the digital divide between rural and urban areas is almost 20%, and it has continued to worsen in recent years.



Effects of the El Niño phenomenon in the countries of northern Central America-2015



El Salvador



Honduras



Guatemala

People in need of humanitarian assistance



700 000

1.3 million

1.5 million

People experiencing food insecurity



190 000

461 000

915 000

Crop losses

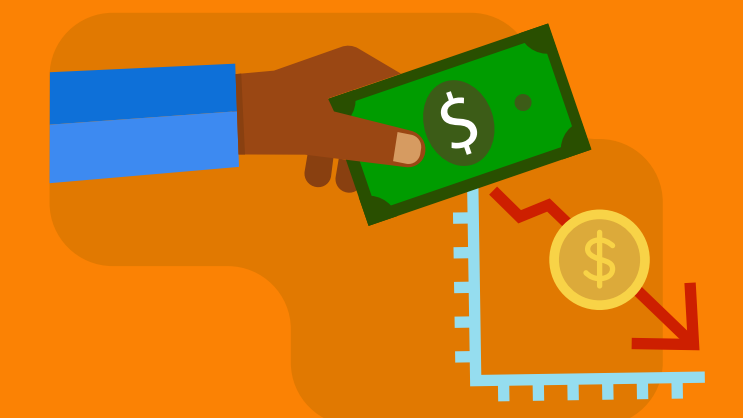


60% maize

60% maize and 80% beans

200 000 tonnes of maize and beans

Financial deficit



USD 6.6 million

USD 3.4 million

USD 7 million

Environmental vulnerability, shocks and food crisis

Climate events, particularly hurricanes Eta and Lota, conflicts and economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to the food crisis situation in the Dry Corridor. Migration has often been used as an adaptation strategy to these types of crises.

According to the latest Global Report on Food Crises, more than

7.2 million

million people are in a situation of food crisis or food emergency.

More than 12 million

are in a situation of stress .



More than 2/3 of the households

in the Dry Corridor reported a reduction in income during October and December 2020.



Almost 320 000 people

in El Salvador and Honduras were internally displaced in early 2020.

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) "Central American Dry Corridor: Situation Report". June 2016 [Online] <http://fao.org/3/a-br092s.pdf>.



# Food insecurity levels



Source: Global Report on Food Crises (2021), conforms to United Nations World map (2021)

## Remittances and returned migrants

Remittances are a substantial source of income for Central American economies and households. It is estimated that they represent:

El Salvador **17% of GDP**

Guatemala **10% of GDP**

Honduras **20% of GDP**



In 2020, Guatemala received the most revenues from remittances:

USD 11.34 billion, followed by El Salvador with USD 5.65 billion; and Honduras with USD 5.52 billion.



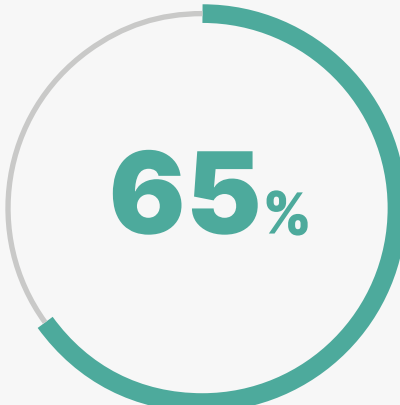
It is estimated that 40% of international remittances are sent to rural areas (International Fund for Agricultural Development, IFAD 2017).



**164 000 migrants** returned between 2017 and 2018.The



The number of migrants returning to Honduras increased by 56% between January and June 2017 and during the same period in 2018, while Guatemala saw an increase of 65% during the same period. Returns to El Salvador decreased by 20% between January and June 2017 and during the same period in 2018.



# FAO's Contributions

## Actions with countries and partners

Along with its local and international partners and other agencies of the United Nations System, FAO implements 26 projects in these three countries, with a strong presence in the Dry Corridor.

These projects are divided into three main areas: food and nutritional security; resilience and sustainability; poverty reduction and income generation.



113 588 007 USD

Active projects (ongoing)



47 290 000 USD

Projects in the pipeline



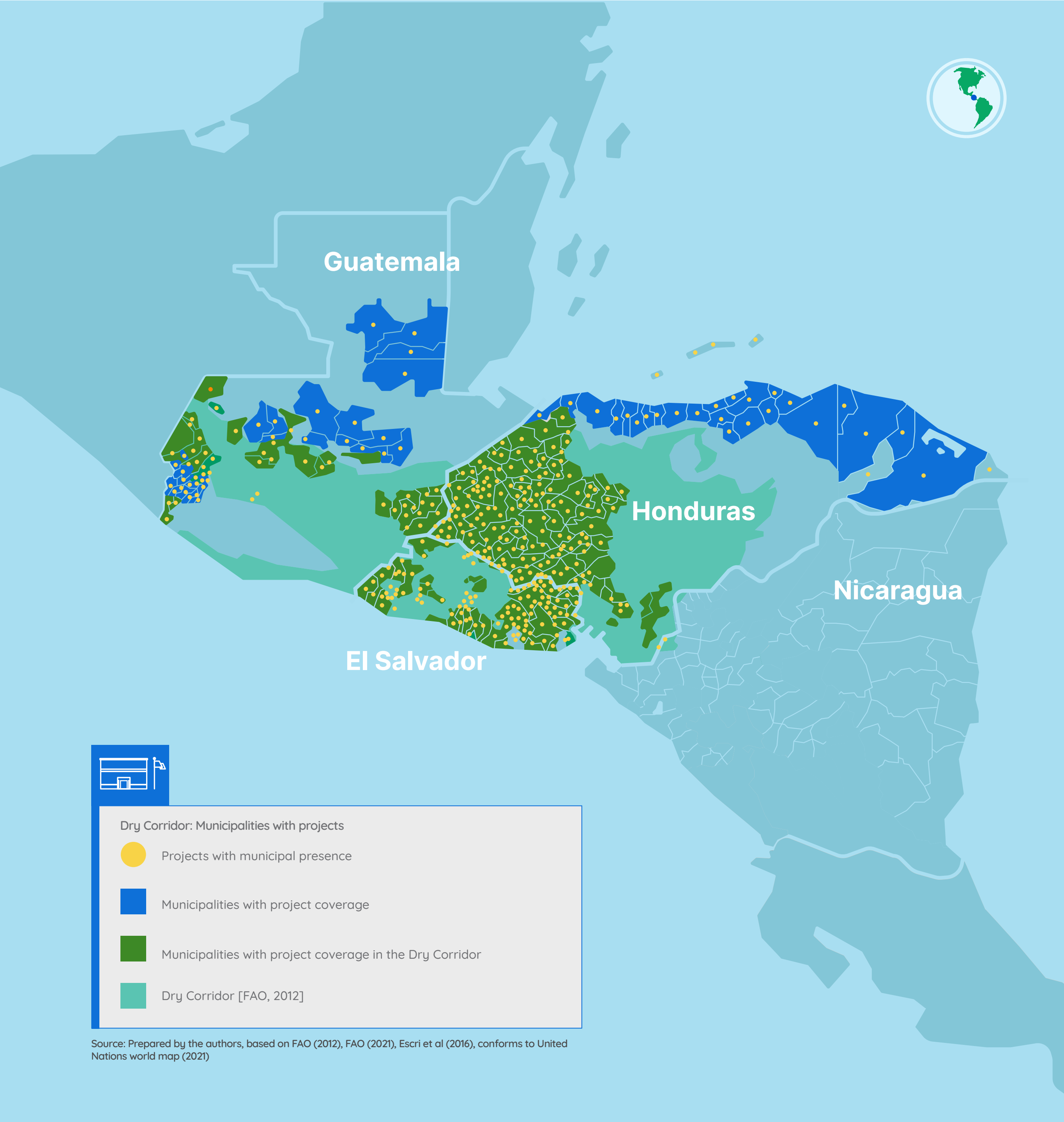
41 823 119 USD

Projects in final consultation

In the implementation of its projects in these three countries, FAO currently works with more than 190 local partners and 15 international partners to finance them.

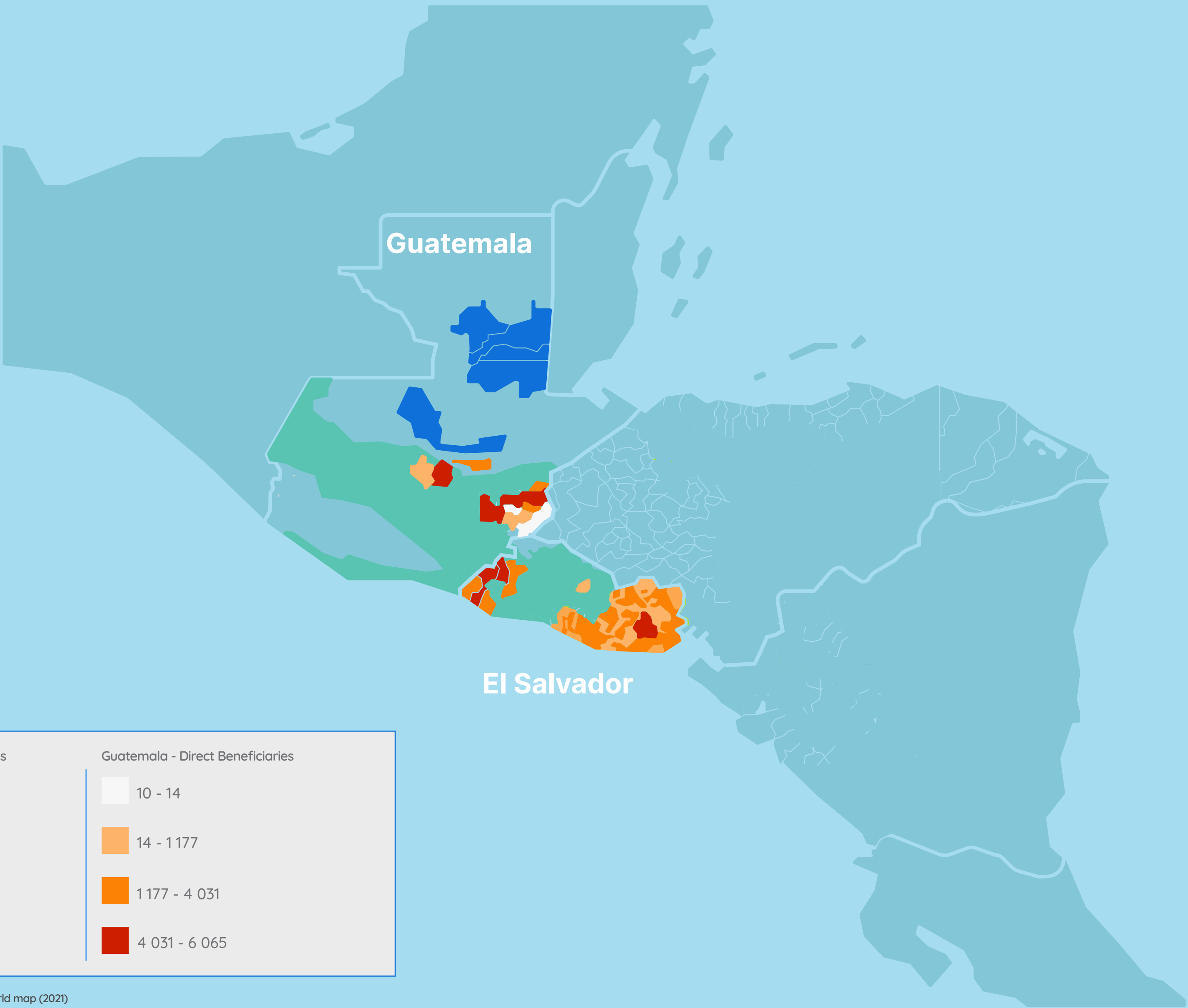
Local Partners of FAO in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras	
Civil Society	14
Private Sector (cooperatives and producer organizations)	52
National Governments (ministries and institutions)	26
Sub national or local governments	80
Universities and Research Centers	13

International Partners of FAO in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras	
Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI)	Germany
Green Climate Fund (GCF)	Brazil
Global Environment Facility (GEF)	Canada
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	Spain
Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)	United States of America
	Mexico
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
European Union	Sweden



# FAO in the Dry Corridor

FAO's projects - Green Climate Fund



Scope of FAO GCF Projects in the Dry Corridor	El Salvador - Direct Beneficiaries	Guatemala - Direct Beneficiaries
<div></div> Municipalities under project coverage	<div></div> 0 - 144	<div></div> 10 - 14
<div></div> Municipalities under project coverage in the Dry Corridor	<div></div> 144 - 418	<div></div> 14 - 1 177
<div></div> Dry Corridor [FAO , 2012]	<div></div> 418 - 608	<div></div> 1 177 - 4 031
	<div></div> 608 - 1 824	<div></div> 4 031 - 6 065

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on FAO (2021), Escrí et al (2016), conforms to United Nations World map (2021)

# A glance at some of the main projects



## Support for the Comprehensive Development Plan for Central America within the framework of the European Union's global response to COVID-19

- **Action Area:**  
Poverty reduction and income generation / Resilience and sustainability
- **Countries:**  
El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras
- **Objective:**  
Improve people's resilience in situations of vulnerability and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to extreme weather-related events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters that cause the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of people each year.
- **Beneficiaries:**  
5400 families (direct beneficiaries)
- **Donor partners and project amount:**  
European Union  
USD 8 426 880



## Mesoamerica Hunger Free AMEXCID-FAO

- **Action Area:**  
Food and Nutritional Security
- **Countries:**  
Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama
- **Objective(s):**  
Improve food security and nutrition, reduce poverty, and improve social protection in rural areas through support to governments in designing and implementing public policies and regulatory frameworks for food and nutritional security and family farming; technical advice, facilitation and coordination; validation and formulation of methodological tools and implementation of pilot actions.
- **Beneficiaries:**  
16 500 people (direct beneficiaries); 32 million people – estimated rural population of Mesoamerica (indirect beneficiaries). The project contributes to 30 public policy processes and 36 legal frameworks.
- **Donor partners and project amount:**  
Mexico (AMEXCID)  
USD 15 000 000



## RECLIMA – Resilience of Livelihoods to Threats and Crisis

- **Action Area:**  
Resilience and Sustainability
- **Country:**  
El Salvador
- **Objective(s):**  
Increase climate resilience in the agroecosystems of the Dry Corridor of El Salvador through interventions in 114 municipalities to increase the resilience of agricultural production systems in more than 56 600 hectares and restore 17 333 hectares of degraded ecosystems.
- **Beneficiaries:**  
225 000 people – 50 000 producer families (direct beneficiaries)
- **Donor partners and project amount:**  
Green Climate Fund (GCF)  
USD 35 849 612  
Environmental Investment Fund of El Salvador (FIAES)  
USD 91 838 126  
Total: USD 127 687 738



## RELIVE - Resilient Livelihoods of Vulnerable Smallholder Farmers in the Mayan Landscapes and the Dry Corridor of Guatemala

- **Action Area:**  
Poverty reduction and income generation / Resilience and sustainability
- **Country:**  
Guatemala
- **Objective(s):**  
Increased climate resilience in the agroecosystems of the Dry Corridor of El Salvador.
- **Beneficiaries:**  
583 000 people and direct technical assistance to 116 000 producers – most of them indigenous peoples from the Achi, Q'eqchi', Mopan and Chortí ethnic groups, including 46 000 women – in 29 municipalities of Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz, Chiquimula, Petén and Zacapa (direct beneficiaries)
- **Donor partners and project amount:**  
Climate Fund (GCF) USD 29 800 000  
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA)  
National Forest Institute (INAB)  
Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)  
USD 36 900 000  
Total: USD 66 700 000



## Empowerment of Women for Climate Action in the Forestry Sector

- **Action Area:**  
Poverty reduction and income generation
- **Country:**  
Honduras
- **Objective:**  
Strengthen leadership and economic capacities for income generation from forestry activities and access to markets for forest products and by-products.
- **Beneficiaries:**  
2 000 young indigenous women from 12 municipalities (direct beneficiaries)
- **Donor partners and project amount:**  
Canada  
USD 5 204 095



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