



HIGHLIGHTS

1,830

New asylum applications registered in Costa Rica in 2015. **60%** increase in comparison with 2014.

890

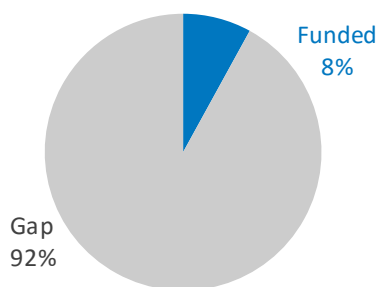
New asylum applications of nationals from the Northern Triangle of Central America in 2015. **127%** increase in comparison with 2014.

450

Refugees identified and selected as participants of the "Graduation Model" project between 2014 and 2015.

Funding requirements

USD 4.4 million requested



Context information

- Costa Rica is facing an unabated increase in asylum trends. New asylum applications from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have significantly increased in recent months with more than 400 new applications received in the month of January 2016 alone, suggesting the total number of asylum claims may double this year.
- UNHCR's 2016-2018 multi-year protection and solutions strategy in Costa Rica aims to ensure timely and fair RSD decisions and promote local integration for all refugees and persons of concern from the earliest stages of displacement, through their inclusion in the various national protection and integration mechanisms available in the country.

UNHCR Presence

Staff:
7 national and 3 international staff

Offices:
Branch Office in San José

UNHCR Costa Rica: Operational Map
June 2016



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Elaboration: 29 June 2016 Sources: UNHCR / GADM Author: UNHCR - RCPAN

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- UNHCR Costa Rica works with a wide range of governmental, non-governmental, private sector and international actors, including the UN system. The Office has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of the Presidency, Migration Directorate, Ministry of Education, National Institute of Learning (INA), the Office of the Ombudsperson, the Judiciary and its National Coalition for Access to Justice for Migrants and Refugees, and the Chamber of Commerce of Costa Rica.
- UNHCR is moving from traditional interventions to a program based on shared responsibility with national and local authorities, private sector, the UN System, particularly United Nations Country Team (UNCT), UNICEF, ILO, IOM and UNDP, the academia and UNHCR's partners: ACAI, Fundación Mujer, Fundación Parque La Libertad and the Jesuit Migration Service.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Protection

- Identify persons in need of international protection to enable them to effectively access to asylum as well as to address their specific protection needs, if any, and ensuring their legal local integration at early stages.
- Provide capacity development and support to the governmental Refugee Unit and the Administrative Migration Tribunal.
- Monitor compliance of the Quality of Asylum Initiative to continue strengthening RSD procedures maintaining fair decisions and recognition rates.
- Support the efforts of establishing a RSD Coordination Team which meets on a regular basis, improving communication flow and coordination.
- Work hand-in-hand with local civil society and local authorities, such as CENDEROS, CARITAS, Casabierta and municipalities, in border monitoring activities to strengthen local protection networks.
- Complete a mapping initiative to further involve prospective protection partners from the public and private sectors as well as academia to provide legal assistance to persons of concern, collect data and produce qualitative analysis.
- Follow the signature of a MoU with the University of La Salle, UNHCR promotes the provision of post-graduate studies on refugee law and the creation of legal clinics on refugee related matters.
- Create a prevention and response SGBV Multi-Functional Team and ensure it is fully operational.
- Reduce risk of statelessness by identifying and assisting Ngöbe-Buglé children and youth in San Vito de Coto Brus area who were born in Costa Rica to Panamanian parents in late registration procedures. The Office is also addressing potential under-registration at birth/lack of nationality documentation in Northern border migrant community.

Durable Solutions

- The Multi-Year Protection and Solutions Strategy promoted by UNHCR in Costa Rica allows refugees and asylum seekers to access socioeconomic integration and self-sufficiency opportunities through livelihoods and trainings in different areas.
 - The Strategy includes two programmes: "Vivir la Integración", a Corporate Social Responsibility Programme, and The Graduation Model, a livelihoods programme focused on UNHCR's persons of concern that live in poverty and socioeconomic vulnerability.
 - UNHCR is also advocating for a provisional work permit for asylum seekers to facilitate livelihood opportunities.
- The Government of Costa Rica is working very closely with UNHCR on efforts to improve communication with persons of concern, who can now access key relevant information from the General Directorate of Migration or UNHCR.
- The UNHCR Office has developed a number of complementary initiatives to improve the two-way communication with refugees, such as a social media campaign called "Being a refugee is like being a Costa Rican"; Help.unhcr.org; Mobile outreach teams; "Ascend", which enables UNHCR and partners to be in contact with refugees through SMS messages; digital information stands placed in strategic points in the greater metropolitan area as well as in border points and towns with Nicaragua; ACNUR CR, a mobile app available for Android devices; as well as information videos.

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