POVERTY AND ITS EFFECTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Sustainable Development Goal #1

BACKGROUND
Since the onset of violent civil wars throughout the 1980s, (but certainly reaching back through the oppressive history of European colonialism), Central America has emerged as one of the poorest regions of Latin America. While some Latin American countries have made gains in reducing child hunger, improving wages for workers, and strengthening environmental outcomes, Central America and specifically the impoverished “Northern Triangle” countries of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador struggle to provide basic services like healthcare, education, and civil security. This has resulted in massive emigration from the region, including a sharp rise in emigration by children and unaccompanied minors.

Causes for the current state of poverty in Central America stem from deep historical trauma and are fueled by a variety of complex social and geographic factors. The emergence of extreme gang infighting, regional political conflicts, and human rights violations for children and other marginalized populations have further exacerbated day-to-day challenges associated with poverty. Where extended drought existing in the Northern Triangle’s “dry corridor” might benefit from environmental policies and agricultural innovations that show progress in nearby countries, the dangerous social reality of life in this region makes those solutions more difficult to implement.

While poverty in the region seems to hold a tight grip on Central Americans, global attention and innovative collaboration may hold promise for supporting Central Americans working to wrestle free from food insecurity, generational poverty, and the violence that often accompanies them. Scores of Central Americans currently migrating north on treacherous journeys toward uncertain futures would prefer to remain in their homeland if the roots of chronic poverty and violence could be addressed with some success.

RESOURCES

Personal Stories
- Meet Soledad, a Youth Migrant Determined to Take Back Her Story - Voice of Witness
- Nakisha’s Story - UNICEF
- Lessons in Power and Inequality from Nicaragua - Manolo Baca - TEDx
- The Quiet Crisis of Central America's Unaccompanied Migrant Children
Articles
- Broken Dreams: Central American Children's Dangerous Journey to the US
- Children and Families Fleeing Violence in Central America
- Food Security and Emigration: Why People Flee and the Impact on Family Members Left Behind in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras
- Can Science Solve Poverty? (Asian Scientist)
- Computers, satellites replace human survey teams to track poverty - Newsela
- How to guarantee water access to reduce inequality in Central America - World Bank Blogs
- 'Narco-deforestation' may boost disaster risks in Central America - Reuters
- Coffee, Bees and Climate Change Are Linked In Ways You May Not Have Expected - NPR
- To Escape Gangs and Poverty, Central American Children Making Risky Journey to the US (UNICEF)
- If Our Countries were Safe, We Wouldn't Leave (Guardian)
- Poverty, Violence Drive Central American Exodus to US (Reuters)
- Dozens of Central American Children Rescued from Sweating Truck in Mexico (Reuters)
- Mexico Rescues 147 Central American Migrants Headed for US (Reuters)
- Indigenous Peoples -- see "Projects" (International Fund for Agricultural Development)
- Poverty in Latin America: Where do We Come From, Where are We Going? (Brookings)
- Poverty Rates are Creeping Back Up in Latin America; Investing in Entrepreneurs can Help This (World Economic Forum)
- What Prosperity for Central America Under US Hegemony?
- Can a Coast-to-Coast Canal Solve Nicaragua's Poverty Problem?
- Central America Build Interconnected Clean Energy Corridor
- Central America Hashes Out Agenda for Sustainable Use of Water
- Social and Economic Inclusion of Women is Key for the Development of Central America
- The Perils of Emigration from the Northern Triangle

Data and Maps
- The Multidimensional Global Poverty Index
- Progress of Sustainable Development Goal 1 in 2017
- UN Data - Poverty Data Series
- Poverty in Central America: Advancements and Needs - The Borgen Project
- Children Bear the Brunt of Poverty - UNICEF
- Soil to Sky of Agroecology vs Industrial Agriculture - The Christensen Fund
- Water and Sanitation: The Pathway to a Sustainable Future - UN Water
- Infographic: What's a Toilet Worth in Nicaragua? - WSP & The World Bank
- Rise in US Immigrants from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras Outpaces Growth from Elsewhere (PEW Research)
- Data for Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador (World Bank)
- Fact Sheet: Why Central American Families are Fleeing their Homes
- MAP: Humanitarian Consequences of Pervasive Violence in the Northern Triangle of Central America

Photos and Videos
- Climate Change Could Drive More Than 100 Million Into Poverty by 2030, Report Says - TIME
- Indigenous Communities of Costa Rica - Talamanca
- UN Development Program: Human Development Report for Latin America and the Caribbean 2016

Solutions
- A Sweet Affair: In Guatemala, Honey Production is a Development Tool for Local Communities
- In El Salvador, this Program Lays out a Path to Escape Gang Violence (Undertold Stories Project)
- Guatemalan Deportees Get Fresh Start as Volcano Guides (Solutions Journalism)
- How the Most Dangerous Place on Earth got Safer (Solutions Journalism)