

# Changing the Way We Care in Guatemala



Photo by Robyn Fieser/CRS

## What is happening in Guatemala?

**In Guatemala** and around the world, more than 80-90% of children and adolescents living in orphanages (referred to as “protection homes” in Guatemala) have at least one living parent. Many of these children and adolescents have been separated from their families due to poverty combined with lack of access to basic services and violence: issues which are also some of the main drivers for migration. Poverty and lack of employment opportunities have produced an increase in migration to the United States, especially of youth and unaccompanied minors. In addition, in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic began, vulnerable communities and families in Guatemala were badly impacted. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities in rural areas and in cities.

## FACTS ABOUT GUATEMALAN CHILDREN IN CARE

- Nearly half of all children in orphanages have been placed there due to poverty and lack of social services, such as health or education.<sup>1</sup>
- There are currently 3,800 children and adolescents living in orphanages in Guatemala,

and 90% of these children have at least one living parent.<sup>2</sup>

- Public investment in children and adolescents in Guatemala is the lowest in the Northern Triangle region, with an average of 3.6% of Guatemala’s GDP.<sup>3</sup>
- More than 2 million Guatemalan children were already excluded from the school system before the pandemic began<sup>4</sup>.

## Changing the Way We Care Guatemala is working towards change

**The Changing the Way We Care<sup>SM</sup> (CTWWC)** initiative was formed in 2018 to transform care systems and demonstrate sustainable change at scale in 5 to 7 countries, including Guatemala, Kenya, Moldova, India, and Haiti.

In Guatemala, CTWWC collaborates closely with government institutions overseeing childcare and protection and with civil society organizations to promote care reform at national and local levels through our demonstration site in Zacapa.

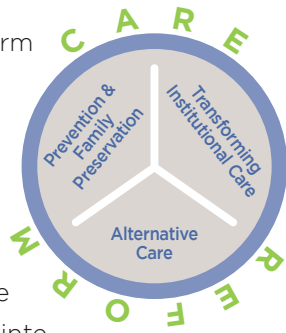
1 Census of Children and Adolescents Housed in Institutional Care Facilities, Guatemalan Judicial Agency, February- March 2019

2 Census of Children and Adolescents Housed in Institutional Care Facilities, Guatemalan Judicial Agency, February- March 2019

3 “Responding to the Needs of Girls, Boys, and Adolescents: A Public Investment Proposal to Advance the Agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals,” Central American Institute for Fiscal Studies (ICEFI), Guatemala, March 2021

4 Floridalma Meza, Ex Technical Vice-Minister of Education for Guatemala, August 2020

CTWWC understands care reform as a three-pronged approach that includes prevention of separation through family strengthening, expansion of alternative family-based care options, decreased reliance on residential care through reintegration efforts, and strengthening of community services for at-risk children and their families.



## Changing the Way We Care in Guatemala:

### LEVERAGES PREVIOUS SUCCESS AND CONTRIBUTES NEW APPROACHES AND TOOLS

CTWWC is a global initiative designed to generate learning and good practice. Recognizing the many years of care reform efforts of various actors in Guatemala, CTWWC aims to leverage that experience and contribute new tools and approaches that complement and build off existing ones. A robust case management package of tools and standard operating procedures, public expenditure analyses, a service mapping tool, and strategic approaches to engage those who have lived experience with care have all been used in Guatemala to promote a comprehensive approach to care reform.

### FOSTERS STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

CTWWC works closely with key actors engaged in different elements of care reform through participation in and contribution to multisectoral and interinstitutional working groups, direct technical assistance, and direct implementation, including in the demonstration site of Zacapa. CTWWC believes that for care reform to be successful, it must include the intentional involvement of government, non-governmental organizations, faith-based actors, community leaders, families, and children.

### ADVOCATES TO REDIRECT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RESOURCES

To prioritize family care and services to prevent family separation, CTWWC leverages existing public resources and is actively seeking partnerships and opportunities to engage the private sector and NGOs whilst advocating for improved and increased public budgets targeting children.

### GENERATES EVIDENCE TO INFORM ACTIONS

CTWWC believes that data is critical to inform care reform efforts. Working with key government agencies, CTWWC has collected and analyzed data to inform programming and promote positive changes for children and families.

## OUR RESULTS 2018 - 2020



**51**  
Reunifications



**28** Evaluation  
processes completed  
in orphanages



**780** Parents or caregivers  
supported with family  
strengthening



**250** Social service  
workers trained  
in family care



**200** Government staff  
members trained in systems  
reform and family-based care



**3 000** Community  
members participated in  
awareness raising