

United Nations Development Programme



OUR VOICES FROM BELOW:  
DIAGNOSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE

***SEMBRANDO VIDA (SOWING LIFE) AND  
JÓVENES CONSTRUYENDO EL FUTURO  
(YOUNG PEOPLE BUILDING THE FUTURE)***

PROJECTS IN THEIR BENEFICIARIES IN EL SALVADOR  
AND HONDURAS







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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Mexican State has historically exercised a foreign policy guided by a solidarity vocation and governed by principles embodied in its Constitution; One of those principles is international development cooperation. Since the beginning of the twentieth century and until today, actions in the field of international cooperation for the development of Mexico have been aimed at strengthening the economic, technical, cultural, and scientific capacities of other countries. These actions have had various manifestations: from the provision of humanitarian aid to the financing of infrastructure and the opening of credit lines, through the training of human resources and technical and scientific cooperation (Figuroa, 2014).

Since 2018 – the year when the Government of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador began– Mexico’s international cooperation policy has also acquired an innovative approach: for the first time since its creation in 2011, the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID *Agencia Mexicana de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo*) is implementing social projects in other countries, aimed at achieving the well-being of people, and with the distinctive characteristic that economic support is directly delivered to their beneficiaries.

In this sense, the most relevant action of Mexican international cooperation today is the implementation of two projects: *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) and *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future), in Honduras and El Salvador. This is the adaptation to the specific contexts of both countries of two of the most important programs –in terms of number of beneficiaries and resources exercised– of the social policy that the Government of Mexico began to implement at national level since 2019. As of August 2022, both international cooperation projects have a total of 40,000 beneficiaries in those Central American countries: 10,000 for *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) in each country and 10,000 for *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) in each country.

This implementation is part of the objectives of the Comprehensive Development Plan (*PDI - Plan de Desarrollo Integral*) for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and south-southeast Mexico presented by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL - *Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe*) in 2021. The Plan includes a set of public policy recommendations (114) that, from multiple approaches, seek to solve the structural causes of irregular migration, while influencing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Pact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration; all this, while strengthening the relationship between the countries of northern Central America and the south-southeast states of Mexico, through regional integration.



This is the context in which the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) and *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future)) programs are being implemented in El Salvador and Honduras. From this, some questions arise: What achievements have been made after little more than a year of implementation? How have the objectives of the programs materialized in the lives of the beneficiaries? What do the beneficiaries think about their participation in the programs? What lessons does this innovative experience leave us for international cooperation for development?

The purpose of this document is to provide a diagnosis of the results perceived by the beneficiaries of the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) and *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future)) programs in El Salvador and Honduras: it tries to build a collective understanding of the effects that the programs have had, taking as main input their beneficiaries opinion; In other words, a diagnosis built from below.

## 2 DIAGNOSTIC METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 DIAGNOSTIC STAGES

As of the Engagement Facility, an agreement between the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID *Agencia Mexicana de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo*) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in México, the preparation of a diagnosis regarding the effects perceived by the beneficiaries of the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) and *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) projects in Honduras and El Salvador derived from their participation in them. The production of the diagnosis consists of the following stages:

- Preparation of two surveys, one per project, which will be applied to four samples of beneficiaries (one sample per project, per country).
- Definition of the inclusion and exclusion criteria that delimit the population of interest of the diagnosis.
- Definition of the size of the four samples to ensure representativeness of the population of interest.
- Application of surveys to four representative samples.
- Systematization and quantitative descriptive analysis of the information collected from the surveys applied to the beneficiaries of both projects.
- Elaboration of semi-structured interviews based on the results of the descriptive analysis of the surveys.
- Application of semi-structured interviews to a select group of beneficiaries of both projects.
- Systematization and qualitative descriptive analysis of the information collected from semi-structured interviews.

This chapter summarizes the methods and criteria used for the selection of the four samples of beneficiaries.

### 2.2 METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

The methodological proposal contemplated the use of mixed information collection methods: both quantitative and qualitative. The justification is based on the fact that the use of both types of methods allowed to broaden the variety of research questions and to have a broader perspective of the results achieved by the implementation of *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) and *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) in Central America. In addition, the use of both information collection techniques allows the changes in the situation caused by the programs to be described in a more detailed and contextualized way.

This study considered two main components. First, there was a documentary review of the projects' information, as well as cabinet research on the specific topics. The objective of this component was to understand the projects, identify the most relevant aspects of their design and ensure the adequate design of the contents of the information collection instruments.

Secondly, field information was collected from the project beneficiaries in Honduras and El Salvador. Information was collected through surveys and interviews or focus groups with project participants.

Quantitative data collection was carried out by surveying a representative sample of beneficiaries of both programs in each country. The application of a survey allowed to obtain data of objective variables and subjective data (such as satisfaction opinions and personal evaluations of the respondents), to analyze the results achieved by the programs.

On the other hand, qualitative data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The use of these techniques was intended to provide information that would allow us to deepen the findings of the surveys and answer why some results were observed. The focus groups were held through joint conversations with 14 beneficiaries of the *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) project. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 beneficiaries of *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life).

### 2.3 DESIGN AND SIZE OF THE SAMPLE

Currently, the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) and *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) projects have 40,000 beneficiaries in total in El Salvador and Honduras (10,000 beneficiaries per project per country). In El Salvador, *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) has coverage in 10 of the 14 Departments, and *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) has coverage throughout the national territory. In Honduras, *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) has coverage in 10 of the country's 18 departments, and *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) in 16.

Of the total number of beneficiaries, an inclusion criterion was established to define the population of interest for the diagnosis:

- Number of months as beneficiaries of the projects: to collect experiences that reflect the use of all project components, beneficiaries with a minimum of a 7-month participation will be considered

A sample size was estimated to obtain representativeness of the entire beneficiary population per program, considering a 90% confidence interval and a margin of

error of 5% (equation 1). The parameters were determined along with the AMEX-CID team to have a representative sample of each program, but not too large, what would make the information recollection feasible.

For *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life), a face-to-face information survey was conducted. Due to time constraints, departments were selected by country with a high number of beneficiaries. For *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future), information gathering was virtual and the call was left open to beneficiaries from all departments.

$$\text{where } n = \frac{NZ_{\alpha}^2 pq}{B^2(N-1) + Z_{\alpha}^2 pq} \quad (1)$$

N: Total beneficiary population per country

$Z_{\alpha}$ : Table value of a normal standard distribution (trust level  $[1 - \alpha]$ )

$p$ : Expected proportion

$q = (1 - p)$

$B$ : Estimation error (accuracy) (5%, 0.05 is advised)

In this case, we considered the proportion that generates the largest sample number i.e. ( $p = q = 0.5$ ),  $B = 0.05$ ,  $Z_{\alpha} = 1.65$  and the total population of beneficiaries per program in each country (in all cases  $N = 10,000$ ).

Based on this information, the representative sample size in each country for each project, according to the aforementioned parameters, is 266 beneficiaries. During the survey, information was collected from a larger number of beneficiaries, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Number of surveys conducted during the collection of information**

	Honduras	El Salvador	Total
<b><i>Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro</i> (Young People Building the Future)</b>	296	302	598
Men	85	134	219
Women	208	168	376
Would rather not say	3	0	3
<b><i>Sembrando Vida</i><sup>1</sup></b>	371	310	681
Men	265	210	475
Women	106	100	206
Would rather not say	0	0	0

*Internally prepared based on collected information*

<sup>1</sup> After a verification process, some surveys were eliminated since some of the participants did not meet the inclusion criteria of the analysis. A total of 582 surveys were considered, 278 for Honduras and 304 for El Salvador.



As a complement to the quantitative fieldwork and with the aim of learning in depth the beneficiaries' opinions, information collection was conducted with qualitative techniques. This allowed us to deepen and understand the results obtained in the surveys. In the case of *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) two focus groups were held with beneficiaries in each country, where information was collected from 14 beneficiaries. For *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life), 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted with beneficiaries.

The focus groups and semi-structured interviews sample was selective, with each observation intentionally chosen for its ability to provide key information in different contexts. Priority was given to ensuring that the sample was of maximum variation, that is, selecting beneficiaries who provided information in varied circumstances<sup>2</sup>. The main interest was that the qualitative fieldwork was developed in varied contexts that allowed a better understanding of the projects and their results. With this, erroneous findings were avoided, and it was possible to find generalities in different situations. The selection of this sample was made by the AMEXCID team and the consulting team had no interference in it.

## 2.4 INFORMATION RECOLECTION

Information collection was conducted from July 25 to 29, 2022. For the implementation of the surveys, technological platforms were used to facilitate the data processing and analysis. In addition, the use of these technologies homogenized the survey application process and decreased the error probability during collection. The KoBo Toolbox<sup>®</sup> platform was used, in the case of *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life), and Google<sup>®</sup> forms for *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future).

In the case of *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life), the survey was carried out face-to-face with beneficiaries in Honduras and El Salvador, while for *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) a self-applied online form was designed that was shared in online sessions with young beneficiaries to respond. This difference in surveys was due to the difference in Internet access and electronic devices between the beneficiaries of both projects; It should be noted that *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) is a project with a total presence in rural areas, while *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) has a wide presence in urban areas.

Prior to the data collection, on July 22, 2022, a training was carried out with the AMEXCID team that would be collaborating in the surveys so that they knew the

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<sup>2</sup> In the case of *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future), priority was given to having young people of different ages, participating in different types of work centers, having different graduation periods and being in different employment circumstances.

instruments and information platforms. This training had a double purpose: on one hand, share what the evaluation's objective was, show the variables to be collected during the fieldwork and delimit aspects that should be considered during the fieldwork to the team. On the other hand, it aimed for the team to know the different information collection instruments of and become familiar with the programming of instruments.

During the training, a role play was played among those who would apply the questionnaire. That game consisted of first one pollster applying the instruments to another and, subsequently, the same exercise was done in the opposite way. With this, it was guaranteed that all people knew the instrument in detail and the possibility of solving doubts or problems that may arise during the collection was increased.

For the collection of quantitative information, questionnaires were developed for each project that allowed for limited response options. The coding of the collected data facilitated their analysis and contributed to the explanation of the findings. For qualitative collection, semi-structured interview guides and focus groups were designed to conduct conversations with beneficiaries.

Within the fieldwork strategy, a pilot test of the information collection instruments was considered to validate their congruence and adaptability in the context of the beneficiaries. The pilot test was remotely conducted on July 22, 2022, with beneficiaries from some departments where the projects are covered and with people who were not selected in the sample. Derived from the results of the pilot exercise, the pertinent modifications were made to the collection instruments prior to the collection of information. As part of this test, it was also validated that they had the questionnaires well programmed.

Likewise, the collection of qualitative information from the projects was conducted once the surveys had been applied and processed. For *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future), this collection took place on August 4 and 5, while for *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life), it took place from July 25 to 29. This allowed focus groups and semi-structured interviews to provide information to understand the findings and deepen the survey findings.

## 2.5 CLEANING AND DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected in the surveys were fed into databases differentiated by country and by project. These databases underwent a process of data cleaning and validation, where it was verified that the information did not present inconsistencies and the observations that met the inclusion criteria for analysis were determined.

During the information collection, daily reviews of the database were carried out to ensure and expedite the cleanliness of the data. This process was carried out daily

during the survey in order to identify errors in a timely manner. The daily analysis of data allowed to monitor the progress in the collection of information and the fulfillment of goals, as well as to solve problems in the application of the instrument in real time. Data analysis at the end of the survey allowed the database validation. For *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future), no observations showed inconsistencies. For *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life), some surveys were eliminated since some of the participants did not meet the analysis' inclusion criteria. A total of 582 surveys were considered, 278 for Honduras and 304 for El Salvador.

Once the data was validated, quantitative analysis of information was performed, and the results were estimated. In this process, a descriptive characterization of the studied population was conducted first (descriptive statistics), and important elements were identified in the context of the beneficiaries. Subsequently, the results of the interest variables were estimated, and comparisons were made between countries. In some cases, the indicators' results were disaggregated by sex or other relevant characteristic.

The information collected with the qualitative instruments was transcribed for analysis. Subsequently, a thematic analysis of the information from the interviews and focus groups of each program was conducted. Thematic analysis is a method that seeks to discover the most prominent topics in a text at different levels<sup>3</sup>. The process involved identifying topics through careful reading and re-reading of transcripts to recognize patterns within the data<sup>4</sup>.

## 2.6 METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

- **Identification of results of the projects, but not of impacts**

In the absence of a control group or counterfactual, it is not possible to know what would have happened to the beneficiaries if they had not participated in the Project. In this sense, this document presents the results obtained in the beneficiary population since they received the project, from their perspective; however, they should not be considered as the impacts generated by the interventions. In the absence of a counterfactual scenario, only the contribution of the projects to the identified results is observed, but the precise attribution of the projects is not identified. It is possible that the changes observed in the beneficiaries may be due to the implementation of the projects and other external factors of the context.

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3 Attridge-Stirling, Jennifer. 2001. "Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research", *Qualitative Research* 1(3). pp. 385-405.

4 Fereday, Jennifer; Muir-Cocrane, Eimear. 2006. "Demonstrating Rigor Using Thematic Analysis: A Hybrid Approach of Inductive and Deductive Coding and Theme Development". *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, pp. 80- 92.

- **Social desirability bias**  
Studies that collect data on people's income through self-reported information depend on people being able to report this data accurately. However, it has been identified that in this type of studies differences can be systematically found between what is supported and the actual financial data<sup>5</sup>. An example of this situation is when there is an eligibility threshold for social programs, where people have an incentive to underreport income to be eligible for programs.
- **Memory bias**  
Memory bias is a systematic error caused by differences in accuracy in remembering past events or experiences. This bias is important because the longer the beneficiaries had been out of the projects, the bias could increase.

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5 Kelly, N. L. (2015). *Examining social desirability bias in measures of financial behavior*. Illinois State University.



### 3 **SEMBRANDO VIDA (SOWING LIFE) AND JÓVENES CONSTRUYENDO EL FUTURO (YOUNG PEOPLE BUILDING THE FUTURE) IN EL SALVADOR AND HONDURAS WITHIN THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK (PDI).**

#### 3.1 THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PDI)

##### **a) Objective and context.**

Implementation of *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) (SV) and *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) (JCF) in El Salvador y Honduras is aligned with the Comprehensive Development Plan (*Plan de Desarrollo Integral PDI*) for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and the south-southwest of Mexico prepared by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe – CEPAL/ECLAC) which is also an aligned instrument with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

The origin of the PDI dates back to 2018, specifically on December 1, President of Mexico Andrés Manuel López Obrador's (AMLO) inauguration. On the inauguration, the Presidents of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico signed a declaration with the aim of laying the understanding foundations for a new relationship among the four countries through a Comprehensive Development Plan (PDI). The signatory countries requested technical support from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) for the design and implementation of the initiative.

The overall objective of the Plan is to address the structural causes of irregular migration from the countries of northern Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras), and south-southeast Mexico to the northern countries of the continent. Understanding migration as a complex phenomenon, the Plan identifies some socioeconomic factors that act as causes of the high rates of irregular migration in the region: poverty, inequality, unemployment, and the impact of natural disasters (ECLAC, 2021). Ultimately, the Plan seeks to increase the well-being of populations, to make human mobility a freely chosen option.

To achieve its objective, the plan issues a set of 114 public policy proposals articulated around 4 pillars and 15 programs; In addition, it contemplates the mobilization of resources for an amount of 45 billion dollars over 5 years.

**Table 2. Pillars, objectives and programs of the Comprehensive Development Plan**

Pillar	Objetivo	Programs
<b>1</b> <b>Economic development</b>  <b>5 programs</b> <b>49 proposals</b>	Promote initiatives to improve economic performance, attract investment, increase trade, and increase the generation of income and dignifying and decent jobs, preferably in territories with a greater migratory propensity.	<b>a) Enabling infrastructure (22 proposals)</b> <b>b) Trade promotion and regional integration (3 proposals)</b> <b>c) Productive development (12 proposals)</b> <b>d) Territorial development (11 proposals)</b> <b>e) Macroeconomics for development (1 proposal)</b>
<b>2</b> <b>Social welfare</b>  <b>5 programs</b> <b>27 proposals</b>	Promote universal access to social rights and well-being for equality.	<b>a) Social and labor inclusion (10 proposals)</b> <b>b) Life skills (4 proposals)</b> <b>c) Comprehensive child development (3 proposals)</b> <b>d) Lifelong health (2 proposals)</b> <b>e) Violence prevention and peace culture (8 proposals)</b>
<b>3</b> <b>Environmental sustainability, climate change and adaptation, and disaster risk reduction</b>  <b>3 programs</b> <b>16 proposals</b>	Boost sustainability and resilience to climate change and comprehensive risk management to mitigate its impact as a reason for immigration.	<b>a) Knowledge generation, data and tools for climate change adaptation and risks of disaster (2 proposals)</b> <b>b) Building resilience to prevent displacement from disasters (6 proposals)</b> <b>c) Climate change and nature-based solutions (8 proposals)</b>
<b>4</b> <b>Integrated management of the immigration cycle</b>  <b>2 programs</b> <b>22 proposals</b>	Guarantee fundamental rights, as well as care and protection, security and dignity of people throughout the migration cycle (origin, transit, destination and return), promoting safe, orderly and regular migration.	<b>a) National integral responses (8 proposals)</b> <b>b) Regional actions (14 proposals)</b>

*Internally developed with information from the Comprehensive Development Plan*

The *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) and *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) projects implemented by AMEXCID in the North of Central America are two of the 114 public policy proposals included in the PDI, as detailed below.

### 3.2 SEMBRANDO VIDA

#### a) *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) as a PDI proposal

The implementation of *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) is framed in pillar 3. *Environmental sustainability, climate change and adaptation, and disaster risk reduction* and in program c. *Climate change and nature-based solutions* (Proposal 3.16). As to this project, the PDI provides the following context: at this time, almost half of the population of the northern Central America countries lives in poverty, and between 12% and 19% of the population is in an extreme poverty situation (ECLAC, 2021).

In Latin America, most poverty is constantly concentrated in rural areas. In this sense, the migratory phenomenon of northern Central America includes among its structural causes economic factors experienced by the rural areas' population, such as lack of employment, precariousness due to low incomes, and growing inequality between rural and urban territories (ECLAC, 2021). Other structural causes are related to climate change: the trend of increasing surface temperature in Central America, and the intensification of hydro-meteorological events that affect ecosystems and agriculture (ECLAC, 2021).

In this sense, the Plan establishes the need to diversify and scale productive activities and increase the income of agricultural producers, as well as develop the innovation potential of sectors linked to the countryside (ECLAC, 2021).

#### b) Objectives and components

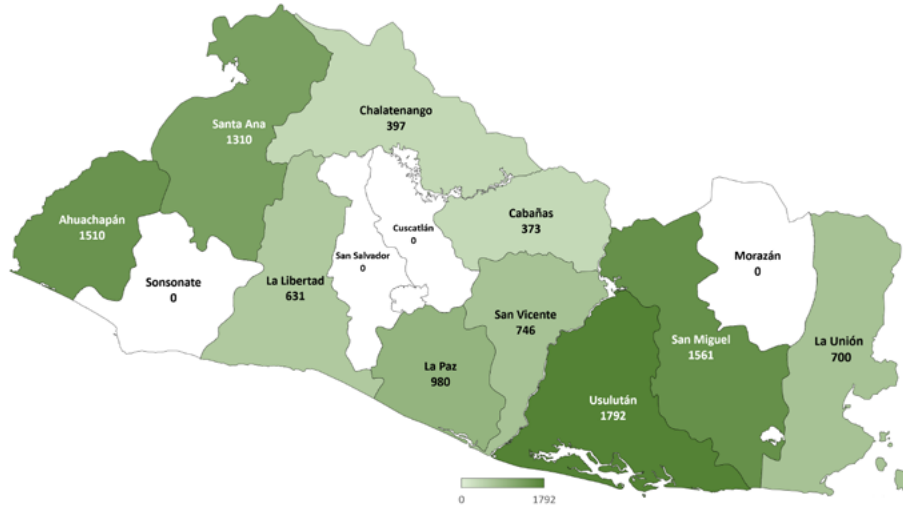
*Sembrando Vida's* (Sowing Life) general purpose is to improve the quality of life of the rural population in high marginalization areas by incentivizing production and self-consumption of food, commercialization of surpluses, and job generation. To achieve it, it has components:

- Provide monthly individual financial support for 8 months
- Provide individual in-kind support for agroforestry production (plants, inputs, tools).
- Provide technical support to beneficiaries for the implementation of agroforestry systems

#### c) Distribución territorial de los beneficiarios.

*Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) currently has a presence in 48 municipalities of El Salvador, located in 10 of the 14 Departments of the country. Of its 10,000 beneficiaries, 71% are men and 29% are women.

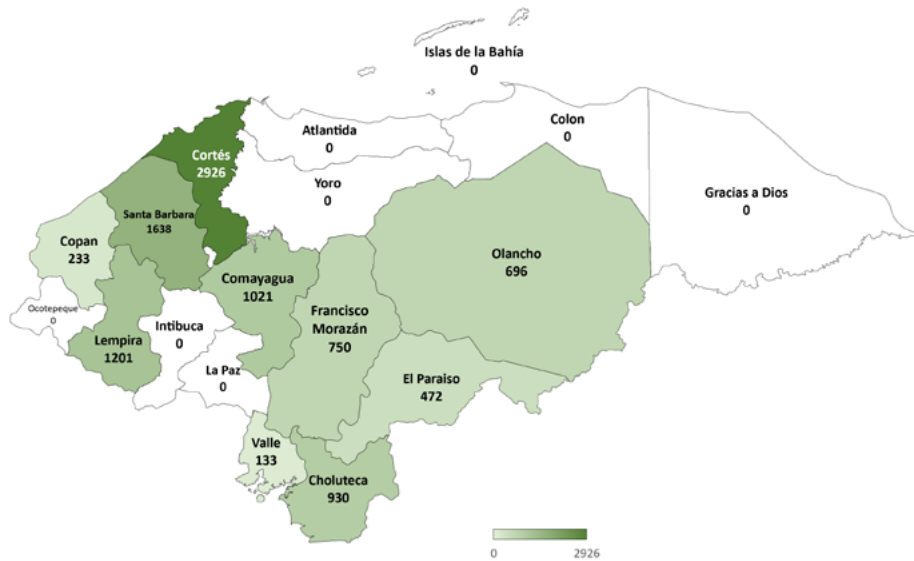
**Figure 1. Number of *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) beneficiaries by Department in El Salvador**



*Internal preparation based on the project's registries*

In the case of Honduras, *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) has a presence in 79 municipalities, distributed in 10 of the country's 18 departments. Of its 10,000 beneficiaries, 81% are men and 19% are women.

**Figura 2. Number of *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) beneficiaries by Department in Honduras**



*Internal preparation based on the project's registries*



### 3.3 **JÓVENES CONSTRUYENDO EL FUTURO (YOUNG PEOPLE BUILDING THE FUTURE)**

#### **a) Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro (Young People Building the Future) as PDI proposal**

The implementation of *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) is framed within pillar 2. *Social welfare* and in the program a. *Social and labor inclusion* (Proposal 2.9). In this regard, the PDI (ECLAC, 2021) contextualizes that in the immigration phenomenon structural causes interact such as productivity and income gaps, demography and inequality.

For the specific case of the Central American region, the demographic aspect is relevant: in a decade, from 1990 to the year 2000, the population grew from 19.5 million to 24 million people. The lack of quality jobs and the increase in the demographic rate in low-growth contexts has meant that only a third of young people in the labor market have a formal job (ECLAC, 2021).

In addition, although about 40% of immigrants from Honduras and El Salvador were employed at the time when they decided to emigrate, one of their motivations to leave their countries of origin was the motivation to get a job that would allow them to generate higher incomes (ECLAC, 2021). Therefore, the Plan recommends the adoption of development policies that seek to influence the migratory phenomenon, considering both the labor productivity gap and unemployment as fundamental determinants (ECLAC, 2021).

#### **b) Objective and components.**

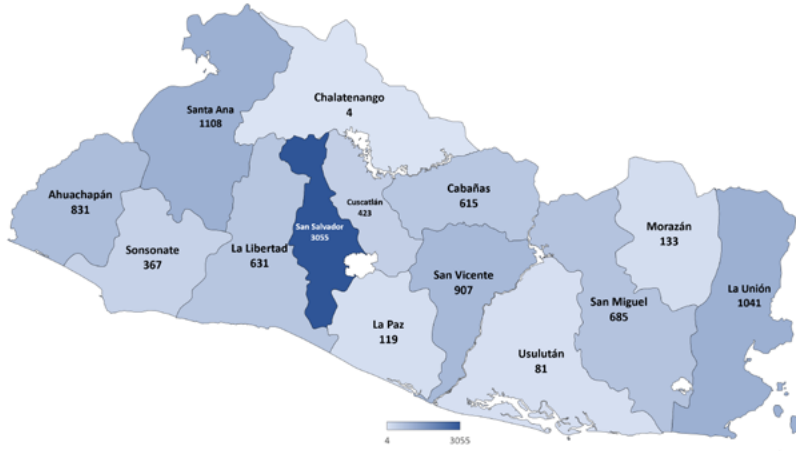
The objective of *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) is to provide job training opportunities to young people between 18 and 29 years old who do not have a work activity and do not study, with the intention of increasing their employability and inclusion in the labor market, the generation of leadership and soft skills and the acquisition of tools for a better quality of life. To achieve this, it consists of 3 components:

- Provide each beneficiary with monthly financial support for 8 months.
- Provide training to beneficiaries in public, private or social workplaces.
- Provide a certificate of training with official value that describes the training received and the skills developed by the beneficiaries.

#### **c) Territorial distribution of beneficiaries.**

*Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) is currently present in 169 municipalities in El Salvador, located in the 14 departments in the country. Of its 10,000 beneficiaries, 56% are women and 44% are men.

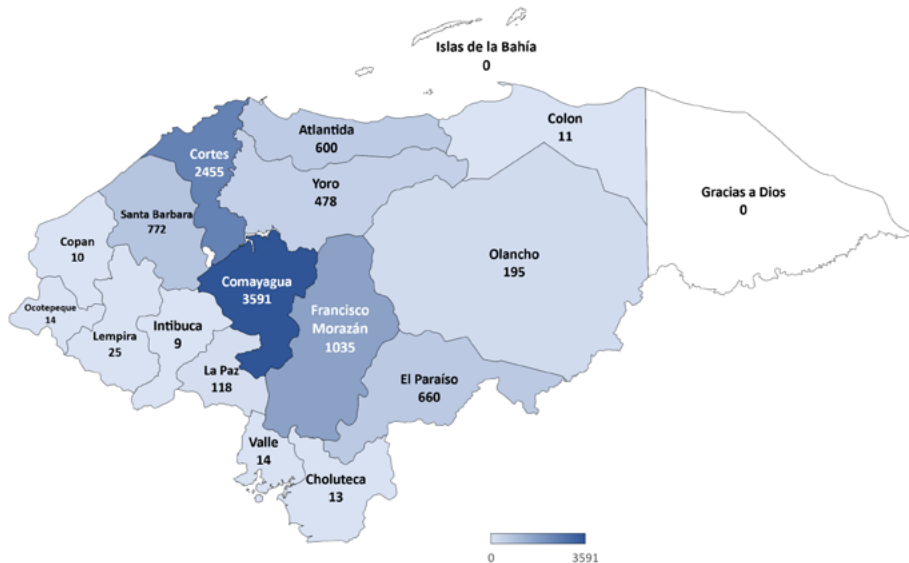
**Figure 3. Number of Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro (Young People Building the Future) beneficiaries by Department in El Salvador**



*Elaboración propia con base en los registros del proyecto.*

In Honduras, *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) is present in 169 municipalities, located in 16 of the country’s 18 departments. Of its 10,000 beneficiaries, 63% are men and 37% are women.

**Figura 4. Number of Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro (Young People Building the Future) beneficiaries per Department in Honduras**



*Internal preparation based on the project’s registries.*

### 3.4 COMMON CRITERIA FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY AMEXCID

It should be noted that the implementation of both projects in El Salvador and Honduras by AMEXCID has been governed by common criteria that have been decisive in meeting the established goals:

1. **Tailoring initiatives to the needs of each country.** This has implied its adequacy to comply with local administrative laws and regulations; It has also involved the identification of the geographical areas of priority attention.
2. **Transfer of economic resources directly to the beneficiaries.** The *Banco de Bienestar* (Bank of Wellbeing) – a Mexican governmental social banking institution – has been designated as the financial institution responsible for managing the resources and transferring them to the beneficiaries. Therefore, economic resources remain in Mexico, and are subject to national legislation on transparency and accountability.
3. **Registrations of electronic and field applicants.** The registration of applicants for beneficiaries is conducted on electronic platforms designed to systematize the information collected by both projects and is complemented by the work carried out by AMEXCID staff at the field level. This fieldwork is carried out both in the countries receiving the cooperation and in Mexican territory (with this, it is intended to identify potential beneficiaries in migrant centers and migrant caravans).
4. **Beneficiaries' perceptions measurement.** AMEXCID has developed exercises to learn the beneficiaries' perceptions about the effects that the projects have generated in various aspects of their lives (including the economic, labor and migratory fields).

## 4 **SEMBRANDO VIDA (SOWING LIFE) IN HONDURAS AND EL SALVADOR: BENEFICIARIES' ANALYSIS**

It is estimated that there are more than 15 million families in rural areas of Latin America and the Caribbean who plant on a small scale<sup>6</sup>. Of these, more than 10 million plant for subsistence and the rest participate in sales activities with varying degrees of market integration. Although this rural population is diverse, small farmers share certain challenges such as high social marginalization, poverty and extreme poverty derived from a lack of access to labor and productive opportunities, credits, inputs, and new production technologies, among others. (Berdegué & Fuentealba, 2014; Wiggins, 2016).

The *Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life) (SV)* program integrates various components that, when implemented in parallel, aim to improve the living conditions of these families. These components have been implemented, individually or together, in different contexts. In addition, many of these other interventions have proven effective in achieving results such as improvements in productivity and income, greater access to food, among others. (IEG, 2011).

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first presents an overview of SV beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras. Next, the second and third sections summarize the economic and non-economic results perceived by the beneficiaries of the project in these countries. The fourth section presents the general assessment that the beneficiaries give to the project. Finally, the fifth section summarizes a series of recommendations that derive from the analysis of the information collected.

### 4.1 **PROFILE OF BENEFICIARIES**

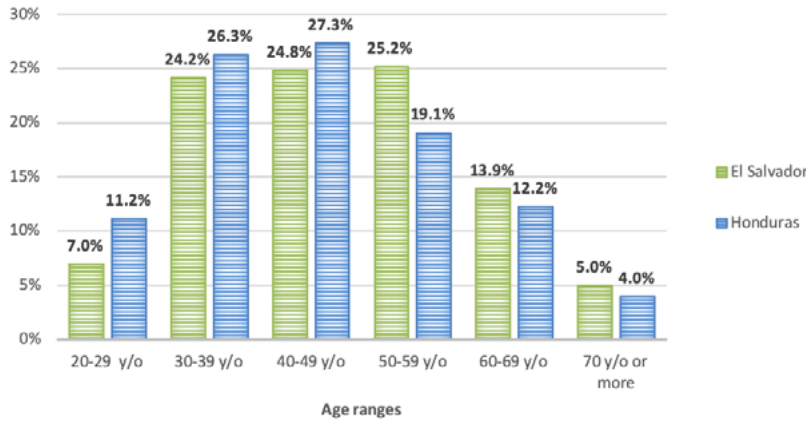
Generally speaking, SV beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras are smallholder farmers who have access to a small plot of land for crop planting. Specifically, we can characterize them from different socioeconomic variables such as their age, education, size of the household, measure of land they work type of land ownership, among others.

The data collected shows that the average beneficiary in Honduras is 45 years old, while in El Salvador is 47 years old (see Figure 1). In addition, women beneficiaries are younger than men, with an average age of 46 years old vs. 48 years old in El Salvador, and 40 years old vs. 47 years old in Honduras.

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6 Although there are variations in how small-scale agriculture is defined between countries, this concept encompasses agricultural activities (usually family-based) that produce crops on plots of two hectares or less.

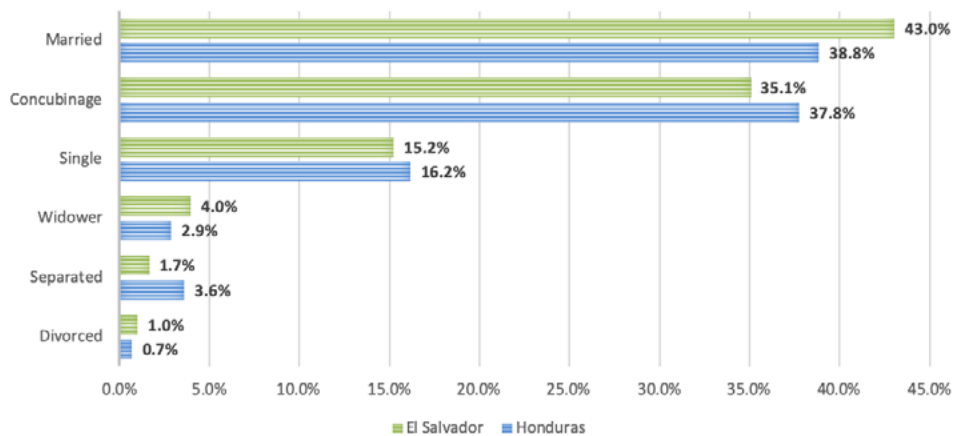
**Figure 1. Age ranges of SV beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras**



*Internally prepared based on the information collected in the surveys*

In both countries, most beneficiaries are married or in a concubinage (see Figure 2) and the distribution remains similar for all six categories. However, the figures are heterogeneous when estimated by sex. In El Salvador, 47 per cent of beneficiaries are married, while this figure for women beneficiaries is 36 per cent. This difference is wider in Honduras, with 45% of married men compared to 26% of women. On the other hand, a quarter of the women beneficiaries in El Salvador are single against 10% of single men. The respective figures for Honduras are 21% of beneficiaries and 14% of beneficiaries in single marital status.

**Figure 2. Marital status of SV beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras**

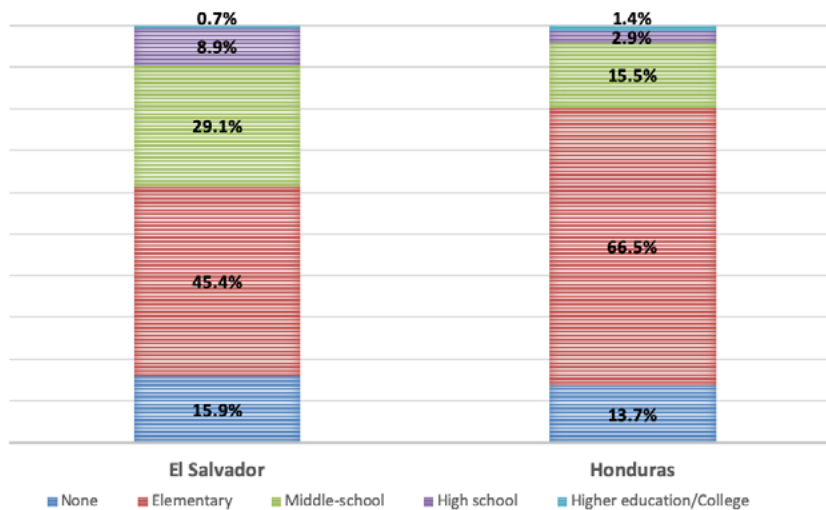


*Internally prepared based on the information collected in the surveys*

The proportion of beneficiaries by educational level varies significantly between El Salvador and Honduras. Approximately half of the beneficiaries in El Salvador have a primary education level or less, while the figure in Honduras is more than 80%. On the other hand, in El Salvador, 39% of the beneficiaries have secondary or higher educational levels and in Honduras the percentage is only 18%.

Differences are also apparent when estimating the figures by sex (see Figure 3). 10% of beneficiaries in El Salvador have a high school education, compared to 3% in Honduras. However, 6% of beneficiaries in Honduras did not complete any level of education, while the figure in El Salvador rises to 19%.

**Figure 3. Educational level of SV beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras**

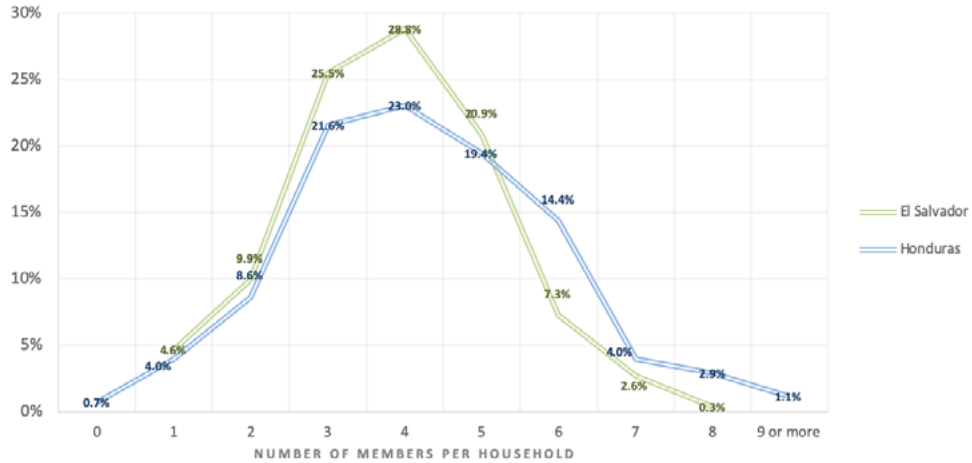


*Internally prepared based on the information collected in the surveys*

The average household of the beneficiaries in El Salvador is 3.85 members, while in Honduras it is 4.3. However, there are households with 6 or more inhabitants, predominantly in Honduras (see Figure 4). Of these households, few have members who speak an indigenous language, representing 0.3% and 5.3% of families in El Salvador and Honduras respectively.

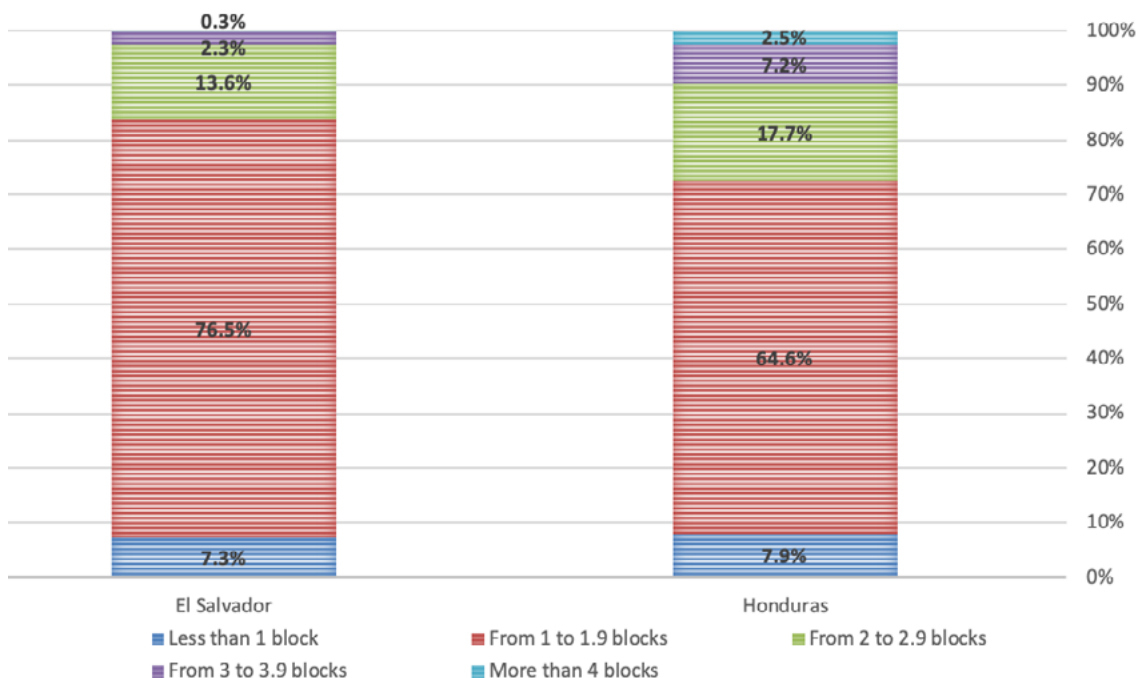


**Figure 4. Household size of SV beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras**



*Internally prepared based on the information collected in the surveys*

Most beneficiaries in both countries work between 1 and 1.9 blocks of land, with figures of 76.5% for El Salvador and 64.6% in Honduras. However, there is a higher proportion of participants growing 2 or more blocks of land in Honduras than El Salvador, representing 27.4% and 16.2% of the total beneficiaries respectively (see Figure 5). When estimating these numbers by sex, we found that there is a higher proportion of women who work less than two blocks of land than men (88% vs. 82% in El Salvador and 81% vs. 69% in Honduras).

**Figure 5. Measure of land worked by SV beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras**

*Internally prepared based on the information collected in the surveys*

An interesting aspect is the large difference in land tenure between countries. In Honduras, approximately 70% of beneficiaries own the land they work, or it belongs to a relative, while this figure for El Salvador is 41% and most beneficiaries rent the land they work (see Table 3). In addition, a higher proportion of men in both countries own land than women (32% vs. 21% in El Salvador and 64% vs. 59% in Honduras).

**Table 3. Type of land owned by SV beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras**

Type of land possession	El Salvador	Honduras
Is the owner of the land he/she works	28.8%	62.5%
The land he/she works is owned by a relative	12.3%	6.9%
The land he/she works is leased	58.9%	30.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Internally prepared based on the information collected in the surveys*

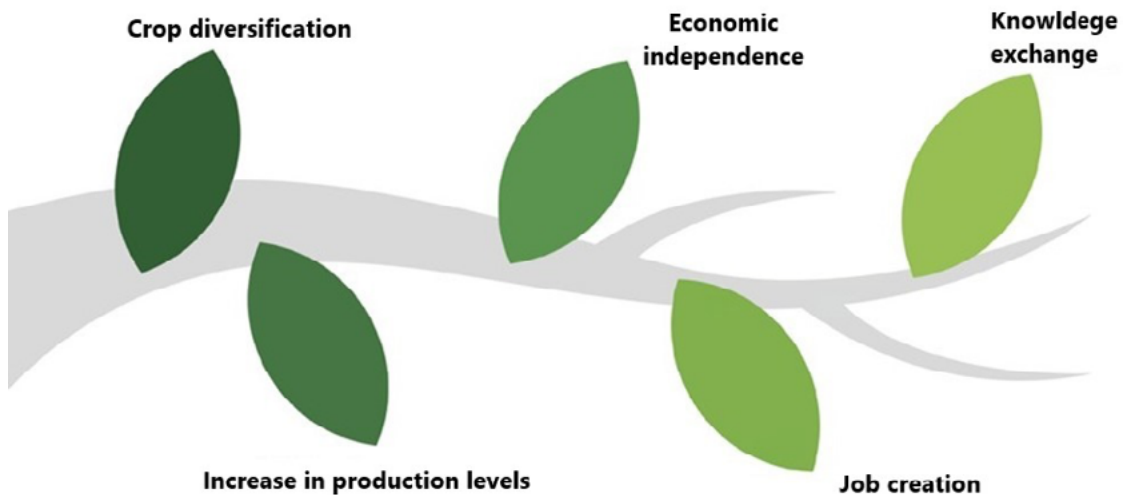
## 4.2 PERCEIVED ECONOMIC RESULTS

The economic results perceived by the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) beneficiaries refer to the economic wellness changes (productive operations/income generation) at the individual, family and community, which are derived from the participation of the Project beneficiaries. The analysis of these results was broken down into two themes: resilience and externalities.

Within the context of small farmers and the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) context, the **resilience** concept is defined as the ability to adapt and transform considering its environment and the conditions where it develops agricultural activities. It also refers to the ability to anticipate potential negative shocks (e.g., droughts or severe storms, and volatility in crop prices) and to recover from crises (e.g., crop loss to new pests and diseases). The topic of **externalities** Consider the “spillover effect” that a beneficiary’s participation in the project has on their family and community.<sup>7</sup>

The resilience strengthening of the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) program in El Salvador and Honduras is reflected in various aspects, summarized in Figure 5.

**Figure 5. Main economic results received by the beneficiaries of *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) in El Salvador y Honduras**



*Elaboración propia a partir del análisis de las encuestas*

<sup>7</sup> This section discusses the economic externalities generated by participating in *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life). The positive social welfare effects perceived by beneficiaries’ families and communities are summarized in the next section.

### 4.2.1 Resilience

#### Crop diversification

One of the structural challenges faced by small farmers is the set of barriers that limit their ability to diversify crops, achieve efficient productivity levels (kilos of crops per apple planted), and generate a stable income. The main barriers are:

- Lack of knowledge about different crops and new planting techniques
- lack of access to physical capital (land, inputs, machinery) needed to diversify their crops
- lack of access to financial capital needed to invest in agriculture

There is a large body of empirical research on the great benefits of **crop diversification** or **multicropping**. Among the main ones are environmental contributions from crop rotation, increased land use (due to differences in harvest seasons between crops), higher production levels and job creation. (Francis & Porter, 2017).

According to the information collected in the surveys, the four components of the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) project have helped mitigate these barriers (see Figures 5 and 6). Prior to participating in the project, most beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras were mainly engaged in traditional crops.

**Currently, the participants have successfully and efficiently ventured into new crops such as vegetables and fruit and/or timber trees.** The increase in the planting of new crops is extraordinary, considering that the beneficiaries of El Salvador and Honduras have been participating in the project for an average of 12 and 10 months, respectively (see Graphs 6 and 7).

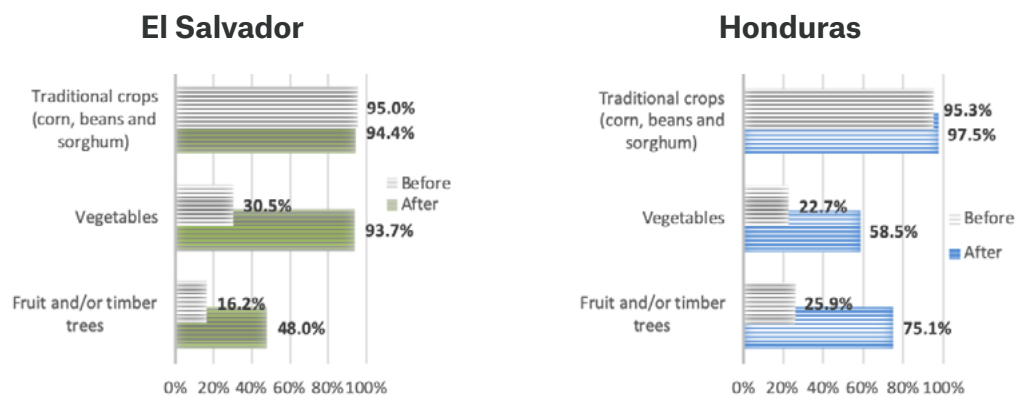
On average, vegetable planting by El Salvador's beneficiaries increased by **208%**, and the planting of fruit and/or timber trees by **196%** since participating in the project. In the case of Honduras, the planting of fruit and/or timber trees increased by **190%** and the planting of vegetables by **158%** since the participation of the beneficiaries in the project.

*"The experiment we did in the first trainings, seeing that what we are doing worked, that has motivated us to plant more, especially vegetables and milpa. We are seeing that more can be planted without the risk of chemistry, and this makes it possible."* (SV beneficiary in El Salvador).

*“Now I plant new things. Once I tried, I planted 200 tomato bushes, and it was lost. My soul ached because of the amount of work. When it was already in the best of the harvest, everything went down because of pests. Not now, today I plant tomatoes and chili in quantities.” (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

*“Today I sow everything. I continue with corn and corn, but also always cucumber, tomato, chili, lettuce. And thanks to the little plants they gave us, I also have lemon trees.”. (SV beneficiary in Honduras).*

**Figures 6 and 7. Types of crops planted by SV beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras before and after the project**



*Internally prepared based on the information collected in the surveys*

When considering by sex, it is observed that both the beneficiaries ventured into the planting of vegetables and fruit and/or timber trees. However, countries show different patterns of diversification. In the case of vegetables, diversification was more intense in El Salvador; planting increased by 94% for men and women in El Salvador, while in Honduras these figures correspond to increases of 59% for men and 56% for women. Regarding fruit and/or timber trees, the number of beneficiaries in Honduras who diversified their planting activities with fruit and/or timber trees is higher than in El Salvador. The planting of these crops increased by 50% for men and 45% for women in El Salvador, while the figures for Honduras are 76% and 72% for men and women, respectively.

In the semi-structured interviews, several beneficiaries mentioned that they had never tried to plant vegetables, or fruit trees, and/or timber trees (or had tried with a non-traditional type of crop) because of the barriers that limit the crop diversification mentioned above, and another important reason: the aversion to the risk of losing the investment in the planting of new crops.

Thanks to the continuous training that extension workers provide to both beneficiaries and other members of the community, and the technical support faced with the need for additional help, the beneficiaries felt empowered, accompanied, and confident in taking the risk of planting new crops. When asked about the specific crops, the beneficiaries interviewed commented that they went from not planting vegetables and fruit and/or timber trees to planting a variety such as onions, chilies, lettuce, carrots, among others, and lemon, orange, mango trees, among others.

Extensionists offer a catalog of trainings, in which they address different topics. Figures 8 and 9 summarize the themes that the beneficiaries consider having been most useful for their agricultural activities. For example, more than two-thirds of beneficiaries in both countries report that the implementation of cornfield systems interspersed with fruit trees is one of the issues that has served them the most.

Going deeper into the topic in the semi-structured interviews, beneficiaries emphasized the importance of being able to produce their own organic manure, fertilizers, and insecticides due to three main reasons. First, the producers of both countries comment that the prices of these products are very volatile and can double in a year. In addition, the products they produce are organic, and their use has brought them benefits in terms of the quality of their crops in the health of the soil. Finally, by using natural products, beneficiaries and those involved in planting activities are less likely to become intoxicated and risk their health.

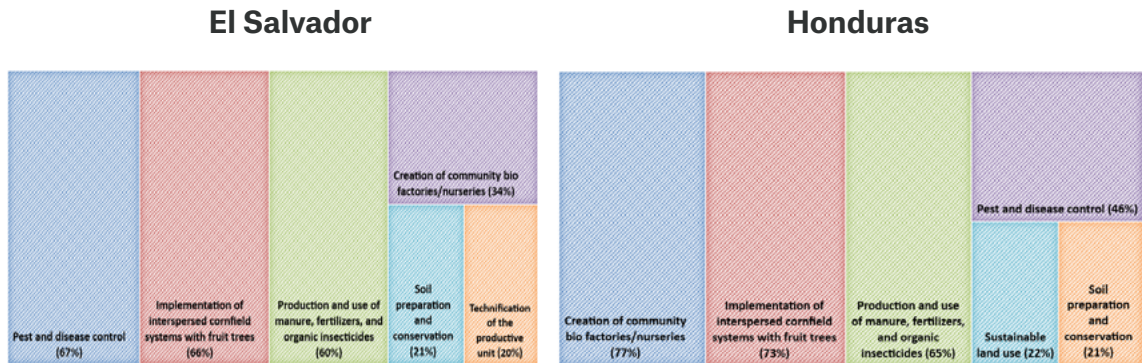
*“Switching from chemicals to bio inputs has allowed my children to want to participate more in planting activities. Seeing that they are natural products, motivates them to get involved. Once, my oldest son got intoxicated. Now they see that we make products based on molasses and more hygienically, that change has made them more involved.” (SV beneficiary in El Salvador).*

In El Salvador, beneficiaries similarly prioritize the importance of different trainings; However, there are two issues in which there is a slight difference: pest and disease control, and production and use of inputs (fertilizers, insecticides). More women consider the learning acquired in terms of pest and disease control to be a priority compared to men (69% of beneficiaries vs. 63% of beneficiaries). On the other hand, 61% of the beneficiaries consider training related to the production of inputs to be highly relevant, while this figure is 54% for women.

In Honduras, a similar pattern is identified: there is a general consensus on the training that has benefited the beneficiaries' agricultural practices to a greater extent. As in El Salvador, the beneficiaries show that they seem to value two training topics differently: Implementation of cornfield systems interspersed with fruit trees, and pest and disease control. Women value the first topic more than men (76% vs. 70%), and men give greater utility to the second topic compared to women (48% vs. 39%).



**Figures 8 and 9. Most relevant trainings for SV program beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras**



Elaboración propia con base en la información recopilada en las encuestas

*“The engineers visit us a lot to see how the plots are progressing. We are applying all the practices we have been taught and we are seeing the changes by using better fertilizers. We recently did a demonstration test to produce the inputs, so more people learn.” (SV beneficiary in Honduras).*

*“We have learned new planting techniques and soil improvement such as drawing level curves. That helps us to make hillside ditches and plant in that way to prevent erosion.” (SV beneficiary in El Salvador).*

*“What we have learned has been very helpful. Thanks to that, my plan is to continue implementing what we have been taught, little by little. They gave us seeds and timber trees to experiment with new crops, and my plan is to continue planting different types of crops.” (SV beneficiary in Honduras).*

*“The extensionist has taught us a lot in the trainings. They have been good to us because they share everything, they know with us. Not only in matters of planting, but also to learn to value what we produce, to lose the fear of going out and selling what is ours.” (SV beneficiary in Honduras).*

*“Today we use organic fertilizers thanks to what we have been taught, fertilizers and foliar that we produce. The use of these products as organic insecticides has allowed us to control pests. Today I can apply what I have learned alone, without the supervision of extension workers” (SV beneficiary in El Salvador).*

### Increase in agricultural production

**96% and 93%** of the El Salvador and Honduras respectively, **reported that their production levels increased from their participation in the project, both for self-consumption and for commercializing surpluses.** The increase in agricultural production is usually due to higher levels of land productivity (more kilos of crops per block) or an increase in the extent of land planted. The *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) beneficiaries in both countries report both cases.

Several producers mentioned in the semi-structured interviews that this was possible because they now plant more plots of land to be able to plant more types of crops. This has been possible thanks to the economic support they received, which has allowed them to rent more plots, hire more labor and acquire the necessary inputs. In addition, small agricultural producers comment that, thanks to the project, they currently plant a larger area of the plots or even rent more land to cultivate. On the other hand, the beneficiaries comment that, thanks to the use of organic inputs, the land is healthier and more productive, allowing them to obtain higher levels of cultivation per block.

*"Before, we planted half a block. Now we have been increasing and we are planting two blocks. We have been renting more plots of land." (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

*"Thanks to new planting techniques like the intercropped milpa, I can plant more crops on the same extent of land." (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

A related aspect that was repeatedly mentioned in the semi-structured interviews was the time required to see increases in production (see Table 4). Interviewees report that learning from training, coupled with access to various resources (organic inputs for planting, new seeds, among others) have transformed the way in which agricultural activities are carried out, and there has been an **adoption of good sowing** practices by the beneficiaries. However, this process is not immediate and presents challenges along the way.

On one hand, some producers mentioned how they lost the first crop of a crop they were raising due to pests or diseases. By repeating these good practices, and thanks to the extensionists' technical support, the beneficiaries managed to recover from these setbacks, and today they are dedicated to multicropping. On the other hand, the interviewees mentioned that the preparation of the land varies depending on the crops. This requires the implementation of certain actions to ensure the long-term success of planting.

**Table 4. Months to increase the production of SV beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras**

Months	El Salvador	Honduras
Less than 1 month	1.4%	0%
1 month	9.6%	3.2%
2 months	15.8%	10.8%
3 months	44.7%	31.0%
More than 3 months	28.5%	48.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Internal preparation based on the information collected in the surveys*

In aggregate, the bulk of beneficiaries report seeing **increases in production after the three months in which they began to adopt good practices** (74% of beneficiaries in El Salvador and 79% in Honduras). The differences are moderate when disaggregated by sex in El Salvador, showing a faster way in obtaining this result by the beneficiaries with respect to the beneficiaries; The percentage of men who report an increase in production in the first two months of adopting good practices is 25% compared to 30% of beneficiaries in the same situation.

*"It took me a year to produce more. We are seeing that using natural products has helped us produce more, because the earth is healthier. Also, we encourage ourselves to plant more because it is less risky for health. Before I only sowed and a little; Now my children help me, and we plant more." (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

*"Preparing the land, removing everything that was wrong, took me about three months. There are termites and many animals that must be removed. Then, treat the land with cattle manure and organic manures, clean it. It's a process that takes time." (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

*"We have to understand that, by using so many chemicals, the earth is dead. And it shows. To bring it to life we have to take care of it and give it its time. Little by little we see the earth come alive, but it takes time." (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

### Economic independence

Another factor that has strengthened the resilience of beneficiaries is economic independence. This increase is due to the delivery of economic support, which had an immediate effect, and the development of productive skills that allowed them to produce more.

*"Before the project, I generated less than \$250 a month with what I sold. Today, after Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life), I'm reaching \$300. This increase is moderate because we are planting more little by little. With the transition to organic, the soil is gradually improving, and we cannot treat it all at once. So we go in parts, and that's why income is slowly increasing. But it is cheaper to produce because we produce the fertilizers, and they also give us the salts to make the organic fertilizer." (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

*"The financial support was very supportive. It served us to feed the family and to invest in crops, especially to hire waiters for planting." (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

Thanks to the different elements previously developed, especially the increase in their production levels, the beneficiaries report that they currently have more crops for self-consumption and selling. Since their participation in the program, **beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras consume on average 37% and 40% of their crops respectively, and market the remaining 63% and 60%**. The main marketing channels for both countries are their home, community, and municipal markets. However, more than 35% of beneficiaries in Honduras report selling through intermediaries, while this figure is 9.3% in El Salvador (see Table 5).

**Table 5. Marketing channels used by SV beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras**

Marketing channels	El Salvador	Honduras
From home	59.1%	36.0%
Grocery store	5.0%	15.8%
Community market	55.8%	30.6%
Municipal market	49.2%	17.3%
Main market of the Department	14.6%	10.4%
Supermarkets	1.0%	1.8%
From a vehicle	0.3%	1.1%
On request by phone or via Internet	3.0%	1.8%
Through an intermediary	9.3%	35.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Internally prepared based on the information collected in the surveys*

*“Before Sowing Life, my family and I consumed 10% of everything we planted, and the rest was sold. Before, consumption was minimal. Currently, we can consume 30% of what we sow.” (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

*“We have always left 30% of what we grow for family consumption, but today it is more varied because we plant more crops. The rest we sell to “coyotes” (middlemen). They always try to get things out cheaply.” (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

*“Before we didn’t get much out of what we sowed. A good part of what we sowed was lost to pests. Now we bring out what we grow and it’s healthy, and it’s allowed us to sell a lot more.” (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

*“Now we can sell more because we produce more. Last year only in corn about 70 quintals were sold, and we left 40 for family consumption for a good time. Sometimes the same family comes to buy what we grow from us because it is very expensive in the markets and my corn has better quality.” (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

In addition, **96% and 99% of beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras respectively report feeling more economically independent** thanks to being able to invest in other small family businesses, and less dependence on credit. On average, since participating in the project, the demand for credits by beneficiaries has decreased by 72% and 62% in El Salvador and Honduras, respectively.

*“Before the project, I bought calves and sold them after a year to buy the sowing inputs. After the project, I was able to keep two productive cows that produced two calves for me, so now I have four cows. The cows generate milk for our own consumption and for sale.” (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

*“In the community there is an association with a revolving fund. There I asked for loans because I did not have enough resources for sowing, but since the project I no longer have to borrow.” (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

*“Today I feel more independent, stronger. Before, we needed money while we take out the harvest and pay for it later. After Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life), I haven’t had to borrow. We’ve felt less of a burden.” (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

*“I believe that, over time, I will be able to generate income equal to or greater than the financial support we received for eight months. This is because we are sowing more, and we know more.” (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

It is important to stress that **beneficiaries have not been able to significantly diversify the marketing channels of their products**. Although beneficiaries report interest in marketing their surplus production (30% of the total beneficiaries in El Salvador and 36% in Honduras), they face certain barriers that make it difficult for them to sell larger production volumes (see Table 6).

Numerous studies have found that smallholders around the world face limited access to lucrative markets. Among the main causes of this problem are:

- Low capacities to develop activities within the value chain such as crop classification, washing, waxing, packaging, and transport of crops<sup>8</sup>
- Need for immediate payment
- Lack of links with large buyers such as supermarket chains or agri-food companies

In delving into the subject in semi-structured interviews, beneficiaries mentioned that it would be of great help to access other commercial channels in addition to the premises to sell larger volumes, have greater power to negotiate prices and thus gain greater economic independence.

**Table 6. Activities that SV beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras want to continue implementing**

Activities	El Salvador	Honduras
Continue sowing traditional crops	80.8%	91.7%
Continue planting vegetables	79.1%	71.9%
Continue planting fruit and timber trees	48.7%	77.3%
Market the surplus of the products	30.5%	35.6%
Join a producers' cooperative	8.3%	17.3%
Start your own business	4.3%	16.9%
Invest in improving your production unit	20.5%	11.5%
Engage in another non-agricultural activity	3.6%	0.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Internal preparation based on the information collected in the survey*

<sup>8</sup> In the agricultural context, a value chain refers to a set of actors, markets and processes that make it possible to add value to the basic agricultural product, to take it from its cultivation in the field to the hands of final consumers. (Walker et al., 2021)



#### 4.2.2 Spillover effect on family members and community

##### Job creation

One of the most relevant positive externalities of the project is the **creation of employment in the communities**. The beneficiaries surveyed report that they currently generate employment, hiring 1,320 day laborers in El Salvador and 897 in Honduras for agricultural activities. In addition, several beneficiaries who participated in the semi-structured interviews mentioned that, although they hired day laborers before participating in the program, today they hire more people on a sustained basis during the cultivation and harvesting stages.

*"I work my land and now I hire relatives. I usually hire cousins or uncles to help me with planting, more so now that I plant more blocks." (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

*"Before I couldn't hire laborers to help me with planting. Today I hire one or two people per planting period." (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

*"Today I hire 10 to 12 people, who are community friends. Now I plant 3 apples, and I couldn't do it on my own." (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

**Table 7. Persons hired by SV beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras**

Relationship with people hired	El Salvador	Honduras
Family	43.7%	32.1%
Friends	63.9%	60.3%
Community members	33.1%	22.7%
People outside the community	0.3%	1.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Internal preparation based on the information collected in the survey*

##### Knowledge sharing

Finally, **knowledge generation has not been limited to program beneficiaries**. On the one hand, the trainings given by the extensionists are open, and both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the project participate. In that sense, **92% of beneficiaries in El Salvador and 88% in Honduras report sharing their new knowledge with members of their communities**. In addition, a relevant fact obtained in the semi-structured interviews is that the commercialization conditions among neighbors are more favorable. On the one hand, there is a greater diversity of crops for sale among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. On the other hand, given the increase in production and marketing volume, the beneficiaries comment that it is feasible for them to sell to their neighbors at prices lower than those of the market.

It is important to note that the success in the chained development of these capabilities was possible thanks to the implementation of the four components in a comprehensive and parallel manner. For example, crop diversification increased productivity and created jobs, and this was possible because beneficiaries had financial support, training, and the delivery of inputs in parallel.

*“The neighbors who are not beneficiaries are seeing results, so they approach. For this, I now have a demonstration plot and that’s how we all learn. What is learned is disseminated. There has been a very strong impact on those who have participated and also on those who have not because they see results.” (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

*“I’ve taught him what I’ve learned to relatives. I have taught my father-in-law, who is a farmer, how to use insecticides and organic manures. I have given him a taste of what I plant, and he has seen that my crops are of better quality. I tell him that I am doing tests in a plot with different fertilizers and foliar, and with different techniques. And we’ve both seen the results” (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

### 4.3 NON-ECONOMIC RESULTS PERCEIVED

The non-economic results perceived by the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) beneficiaries refer to the positive changes in social welfare (quality of life) at the individual, family and community levels, which derive from the participation of the beneficiaries in the project.

**Figure 6. Main non-economic results perceived by the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) beneficiaries in El Salvador y Honduras**



*Internal preparation from the analysis of the surveys*

## Family Welfare

A success element of *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) It is the **improvement in the general well-being of the families of the beneficiaries**. Although not all are directly involved in the project activities, participants report that the quality of life of their families increased mainly due to improvements in their diet (they consume more and a greater variety of foods), development of cultivation skills, access to more goods and services thanks to the increase in family income, improvements in housing and acquisition of appliances, to a lesser extent they mention that, since participating in *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life), their relatives (spouses, children, siblings) become more involved in commercialization activities and sowing.

**Table 8. Proportion of *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) beneficiaries by types of social welfare improvements in El Salvador and Honduras**

Improvements in the family-life quality	El Salvador	Honduras
Income	73.8%	82.3%
Housing	20.9%	53.5%
Feeding	59.3%	69.4%
Development of cultivation know-how	41.1%	62.0%
Education of beneficiary or his/her economic dependents	5.6%	29.9%
Has family members/friends abroad (family reunification)	5.6%	17.7%
Overall improvement in the community (because there are other beneficiaries in the project)	11.6%	12.5%
Family involvement in sowing activities	16.2%	12.9%
Family involvement in crop commercialization activities	9.6%	5.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

*“There is more income for my family, we can buy medicines, we have more for food.” (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

*“The financial support helped us improve our diet. He also helped us pay for the girl’s studies, and the rest of us have been making arrangements in the field and in the house. (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

*“The economic support that has helped us a lot. In the house there are many expenses. Our children are of school age, and it has helped us to continue. It has also helped us a lot with food.” (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

*"Today I plant green beans, tomatillo, chilies, many vegetables; We eat healthier. And it even feels better because we sow with organic fertilizers." (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

*"Now we have more food for the house. Sometimes my granddaughter asks me to go for cucumbers and lettuce in the evening for dinner and we have everything. And she tells me that what we sow is richer than what she tastes elsewhere. That's because we use natural inputs, ash, cattle manure." (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

### Migration preferences

One aspect that beneficiaries perceive is related to **changes in their migration preferences and those of their families**. According to the data collected in the surveys, 21% and 22% of the beneficiaries of El Salvador and Honduras respectively migrated to another country prior to their participation in the program. Most migrated to the United States or Mexico; Even 5% of the Honduran beneficiaries who migrated report having done so to both destinations.

**Table 8. Countries to which SV beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras have migrated**

Countries	El Salvador	Honduras
Estados Unidos	90.3%	80.0%
México	6.5%	11.7%
Estados Unidos y México	0.0%	5.0%
Other	3.2%	3.3%

*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

Approximately 80% of beneficiaries from both countries did not migrate prior to their participation in the project; however, of this set, 24% in El Salvador and 33% in Honduras report having considered it. After the program, these figures decreased to 2% and 4% respectively. **This change in intentions to migrate reflects a percentage reduction of 91% in El Salvador and 87% in Honduras.**

When asked more about this in semi-structured interviews, beneficiaries who had migrated before the program or who intended to do so commented that their migration preferences were mainly explained by the lack of job and productive opportunities in their communities that would allow them to generate a decent income, and by crime and insecurity. They realize that, thanks to increases in production levels and crop diversification, they can now consume more and market more, ensuring more food for their families and higher income from sales.

However, it is important to note that the migratory preferences of children and grandchildren of small producers may be different. Several beneficiaries commented in the

semi-structured interviews that the best opportunities for new generations are outside the countryside, and migration to other countries becomes an attractive option. Graphs 10 and 11 present the degree of collaboration of family members in planting activities, before and after the participation of the beneficiaries in the project.

*“My older children are studying. While they have become involved in sowing activities, they do not consider engaging in this. It all depends on their chances of living from this activity.” (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

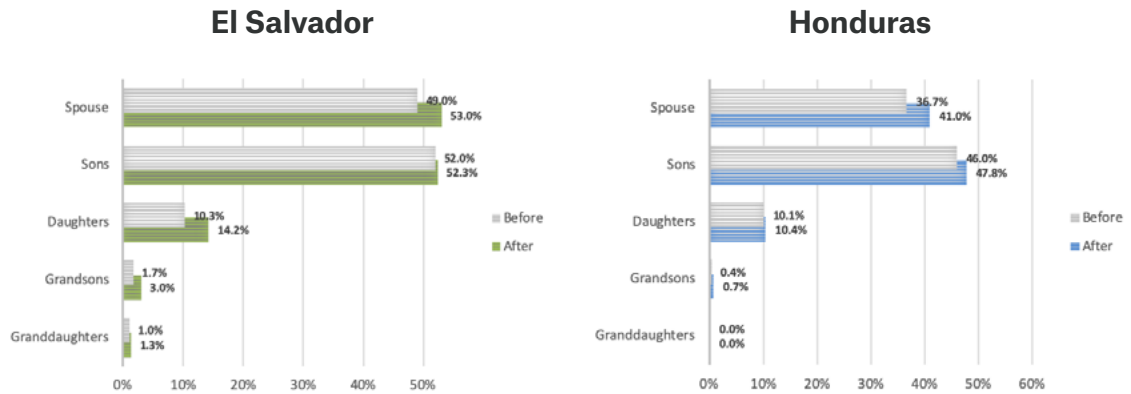
*“We, before Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life), It was difficult for us because we did not see a future for our children in this activity. The best thing was that they looked for options in other lands. Today we are looking for them to be interested in studying, but also to sow.” (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

*“It could work that Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life) Invites our children directly to the trainings so that they are more motivated about sowing.” (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

As we can see, the involvement of spouses, children and grandchildren of small agricultural producers has not increased significantly since their participation in the project. The largest increases were in the participation of husbands in both countries and daughters in Honduras, but these remain modest changes. It should be noted that, although the beneficiaries report that the involvement of their relatives is similar to before their participation in the project, today they feel more motivated.

*“My children helped me since before Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life) to fertilize the land; We also tap the milpa together. But now they are more motivated because they are aware of the project, and they are learning, what I learn I transmit to them.” (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

**Figures 10 and 11. Beneficiaries' family members participation in sowing activities before and after the project**



Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys

### Community Integration

Another positive result of the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) project in El Salvador and Honduras is **community integration**. **The exchange of knowledge and good practices among neighbors is considered one of the main improvements in the community by 54% and 67% of beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras respectively.** In addition, there is evidence in different contexts about how these interactions promote trust and respect within the community.

Several beneficiaries who participated in the semi-structured interviews comment that, since *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) has been implemented in their communities, they have had the opportunity to meet and live with more neighbors, forging greater unity in the community. Another important aspect is that the strengthening of community ties has fostered the exchange of crops between families and thus access to a greater variety of foods throughout the year.

*"When we make bio inputs, we spend all day on this. We organize ourselves to prepare our food for the day, we make minimal contributions to cook right there and we eat together."* (SV beneficiary in Honduras)

*"We meet in the bio factory, we elaborate the natural inputs and when the fermentation process is over, it is distributed among all those who participate."* (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)

*"Before Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life), Everyone worked on their own. The coexistence between the people of the community has been strengthened thanks to the program. Many of us knew each other face-to-face. Today, bonds of friendship have been created in the working groups. We also share experiences of what has worked or*



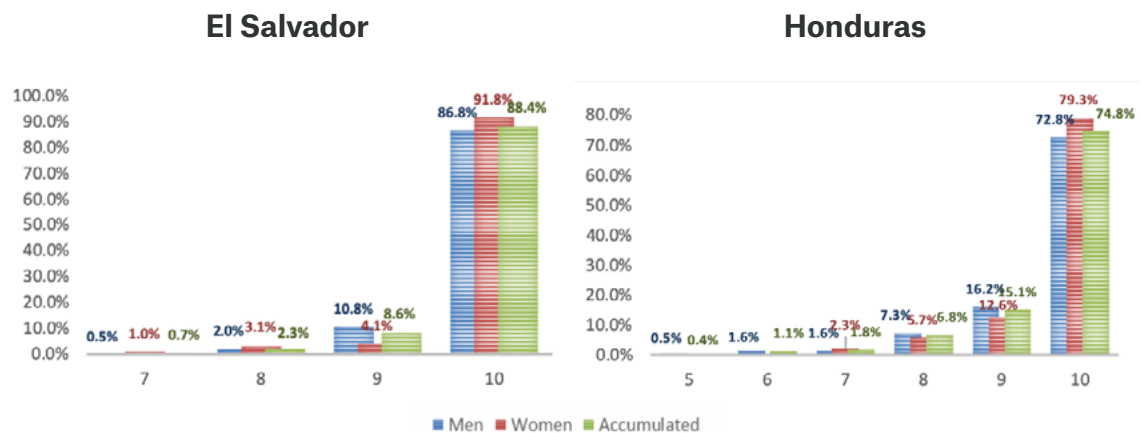
*not when we cultivate. We learn together, and we generate new ideas within the team to apply new practices that generate better results.” (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

*“The project has come to unify us more and to improve the organization of the association that we already had before” (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

#### 4.4 GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT BY THE BENEFICIARIES

**In general, the *Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life)* beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras give a high rating to the project;** however, the figures are more positive in El Salvador than in Honduras. In the first case, more than 88% of small producers give the program a rating of 10, while this figure is lower than 75% in Honduras. When considering the evaluations by sex, women in both countries give a higher rating to the project compared to men.

**Figures 12 and 13. Qualification that the beneficiaries gave to the *Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life)* project in El Salvador and Honduras**



*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

When delving into the semi-structured interviews, the beneficiaries comment that their evaluation of the project is high because it is very complete. The activity of planting is a complex process that requires varied capacities and resources, which are usually expensive to obtain. *Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life)* It integrates components that meet the diverse needs faced by small farmers in order to get ahead.

*“When the *Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life)* project arrived, we saw that it was real. They had already come before to tell us that they would help us, but it did not happen. *Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life)* has fulfilled us.” (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

*"The cost of inputs has risen by more than 100% if we find them because they are also scarce. Sembrando Vida (Sowing Life) came at the right time to our community." (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

*"The project has motivated us to continue with the planting activity. We've learned a lot, they've given us results, and now we have a more positive mindset." (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

*"With everything the project has implemented, we want it to be extended to other communities so that more farmers can benefit from this aid. They have helped us with no interest other than our well-being. (SV beneficiary in El Salvador)*

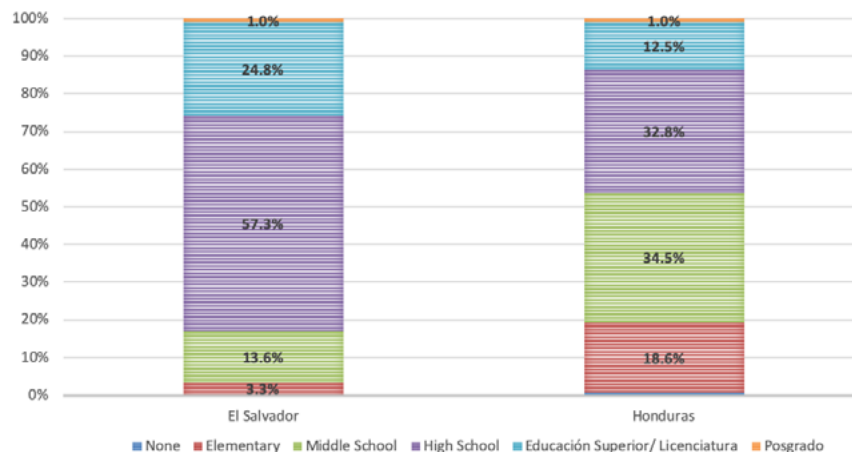
*"Before, to plant a week of corn, we had to get our money. When we sold, we didn't make a profit. With the contribution of the economic bonus, we have become technified and now we can produce organic fertilizers, we have learned new cultivation techniques." (SV beneficiary in Honduras)*

## 5 JÓVENES CONSTRUYENDO EL FUTURO (YOUNG PEOPLE BUILDING THE FUTURE) IN HONDURAS AND EL SALVADOR: BENEFICIARIES' ANALYSIS

### 5.1 PROFILE OF THE BENEFICIARIES

In average, the young beneficiaries of *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) are 23 years-old in both countries. In the age analysis, the youth reported being between 17 and 36 years old. This fact implies that there are some people who have benefited from the project and who are not between 18 and 29 years old, as was proposed in the design. In the case of Honduras, the percentage of people who were not in that range is 2%, however, in El Salvador, the percentage decreases to 0.7%, representing minimal proportions. It is important to clarify that, in the survey carried out, the young people self-reported their age and there was no means of verifying it.

**Figure 14. Last degree of studies completed by JCF beneficiaries by country**



*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

As shown in Figure 14, most of the young people benefiting from the project have upper secondary or secondary education as their last level of studies completed. Despite this, young beneficiaries in El Salvador have a higher level of education than those in Honduras. In El Salvador, more than half of young people have completed upper secondary education, while in Honduras the percentage of respondents with completed upper secondary education was 32.8%. It is also important to note that the percentage of people with a higher education or a bachelor's degree completed in

El Salvador (24.8%) is almost double that in Honduras (12.5%). In addition, in Honduras, 0.7% of respondents did not complete any educational level, and in El Salvador, all have some degree of education.

Of every 10 young people benefited by *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) in Honduras, 7 are single and 2 are in concubinage. In contrast, in El Salvador most beneficiaries are single (see Table 9). However, the results change when the situation is analyzed by sex. 94.8% of men in El Salvador and 83.5% in Honduras are single. In contrast, out of every 10 women participating in the program, 8 are single in El Salvador and 6 in Honduras. This situation shows that the marital status of the beneficiaries is primarily different from singleness; So, the decisions of work, economic and use of supports depends on their home and not only on them.

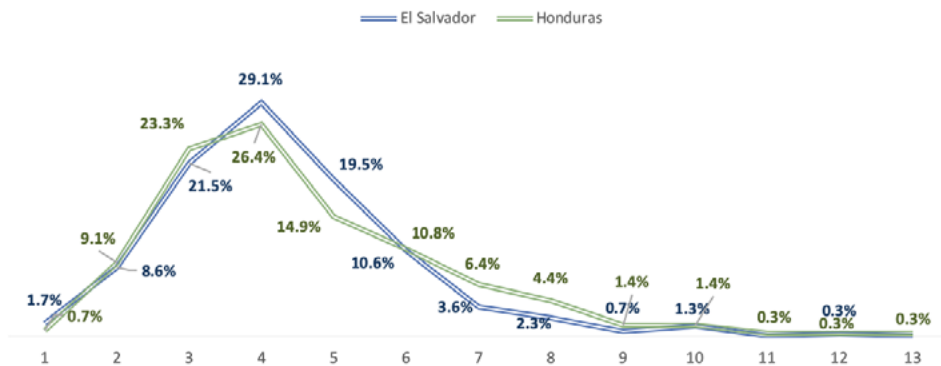
**Table 9. Marital status of young beneficiaries of JCF by country**

Country	Single	Married	Separated	Divorced	Concubinage	Widower
<b>El Salvador</b>	84.4%	9.3%	0.7%	0.0%	5.6%	0.0%
<b>Honduras</b>	69.3%	8.1%	0.3%	0.0%	22.3%	0.0%

*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

On average, young people benefiting from *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) in Honduras live in households with 6 people; and those of El Salvador, where 5 live, but there are households in which up to 12 or 13 people live (see Figure 15). In practically all these households in both countries, no member speaks any indigenous language. Only 3 out of every 100 households in Honduras and 2 out of every 100 in El Salvador have a member who speaks an indigenous language.

**Figure 15. Household size of JCF beneficiaries by country**



*Note: some observations (0.7% for El Salvador and 0.3% for Honduras) were excluded by young people who reported living in households where 0 people lived.*

*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

It is important to mention that more than half of the young people who have benefited from the project in both countries have someone who depends economically on them in their homes, 57.6% in El Salvador and 68.6% in Honduras. This fact implies that the economic support and labor approach offered by the project does not only benefit the 10,000 people benefited in each country and that the results have indirect implications in a greater number of people. It should be noted that these results do not change when analyzing the situation based on the sex of the participants in El Salvador. However, the percentage rises to 75.5% if only women in Honduras are considered. Therefore, in this country, there is a higher proportion of women with economic dependents.

There are two important elements about the profile of the beneficiaries that should be considered in the analysis of the results. These elements do not prevent the veracity and certainty of the information presented. However, when conducting analyses based on sex or the departments where respondents live, two main aspects should be considered.

On the one hand, the proportion of women beneficiaries in both countries was not maintained. Most of the people surveyed were women, with 55.6% and 70.3% for El Salvador and Honduras, respectively. In El Salvador, 56% of the beneficiaries are women, a percentage like that of the sample. On the other hand, only 37% of the beneficiaries are women in Honduras and there was a significantly greater female presence in the sample.

On the other hand, the proportion of beneficiaries per department in each country was not maintained. The departments with the highest percentages of beneficiaries in Honduras were Comayagua (34.8%), Cortés (31.8%) and Santa Bárbara (24%), accumulating a percentage of 90.4%. However, these are only three of the eight departments considered in the country. Likewise, in El Salvador, the departments that had a higher percentage of respondents were Santa Ana (35.4%), San Salvador (27.5%) and La Unión (28.1%), having a cumulative percentage of 91% and being only three of the six departments considered in the country.

### **Participation in the Workplace**

According to the focus groups held for the beneficiaries of the program, the way they learned about the project was through friends, family, municipalities, and social networks. At that time, no clear dissemination process was identified by AMEXCID, national governments or the project's communication area to provide information on the mechanisms for registering and selecting beneficiaries. This situation can lead to information asymmetries or dissemination of false information about the project, its selection criteria, and its processes.

Also, most of the participants decided to participate in the project to get work experience, opportunities, a change of perspective or because the courses offered caught their attention.

*"I became aware of the project through some friends, but I also looked through social networks, practically through Facebook. There I was able to learn a little more deeply about the project. So, when I looked at the social media part and looked for a tutor, I talked a little bit about the terms and about the theme of the program and the benefit, which can be either virtual or face-to-face." (Young JCF participant in Honduras)*

*"In my case, I found out from a publication that the municipality made. This publication offered the opportunity for paid internships for young people. I started asking acquaintances I had seen working on the project. They explained to me how the theme and the hours of work were, and the truth is that at that time it was a plus in my life. It was like the project that I think all the young people were needing." (Young participant of JCF Honduras)*

Most of the young people benefiting from the projects completed their training at a Public Sector Work Centre. 4 out of 5 young people in El Salvador and 3 out of 5 in Honduras were trained in a work center in this sector (see table 10). The tertiary sector is the one with the least recruitment of young people in both countries.

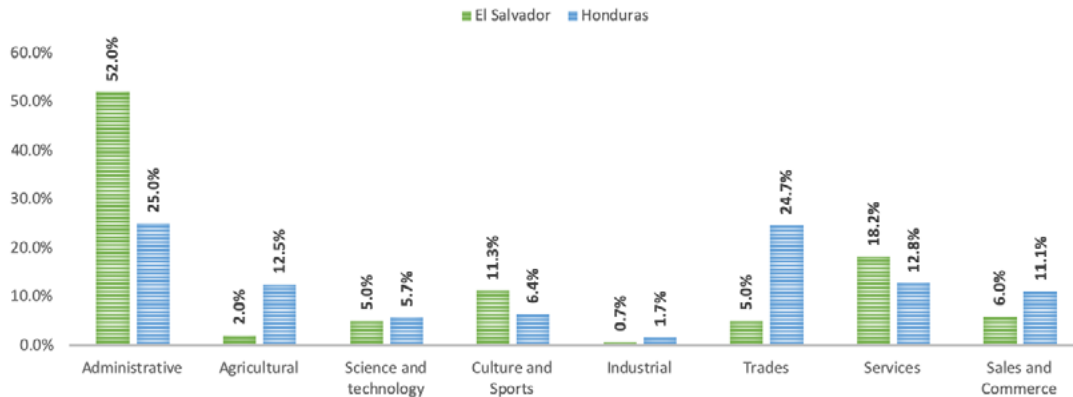
**Table 10. Type of sector in which the beneficiaries conducted their training**

Type of center	El Salvador	Honduras
Public sector	83.1%	66.6%
Private sector	11.9%	18.6%
Social organizations	5.0%	14.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

As shown in Figure 10, the most common training area among workplace participants was the administrative area, accounting for 52% for El Salvador and 25% for Honduras.

**Figure 16. Training areas of participants in the Work Centers by country**



*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

The focus groups revealed that the specific activities carried out by the beneficiaries within the Work Centers depended on each center, representing a plan that was not shared by all. However, most participants found activities, courses and trainings related to their areas of study or that interested them. It should also be noted that some of the courses offered were conducted online, giving some flexibility to the beneficiaries of the program. Additionally, most of the participants in the focus groups perceived that they were useful for the Work Centers.

*“Given the situation with the tutor I was assigned to, it was very good to learn several things that I really never planned to learn at any time in my life. He told me that there are times when you find yourself with the courage to invent something new. ‘Look, this drone doesn’t work, so try to fix it and, if not, then there it is, it’s not in the trash.’ It gave me the confidence to come and say ‘give it a try, you’re not going to lose anything. It’s already damaged, but you can fix it and improve on a certain aspect of company and mindset, that anything is possible.” (Young participant of JCF Honduras)*

*“The tutor always took me by the hand. He never left us out, because any interview that was or an edition that one did not understand, did not scold him, but rather told him ‘No, look, it is this and this and you will improve little by little. You’re not going to learn everything quickly, but well, calmly and patiently.” (Young participant of JCF Honduras)*

*“The selection was according to the skills and competencies we already possessed from what we are or have studied. To enhance those skills that we already had, we were given a series of trainings in these and other areas. For example, we learned a little in the workshop area, in the finance area and in the design area. I believe that the workplace is very open, let’s say flexible, according to each one, because in time it adapts to their studies and work.” (Young participant in JCF of El Salvador).*

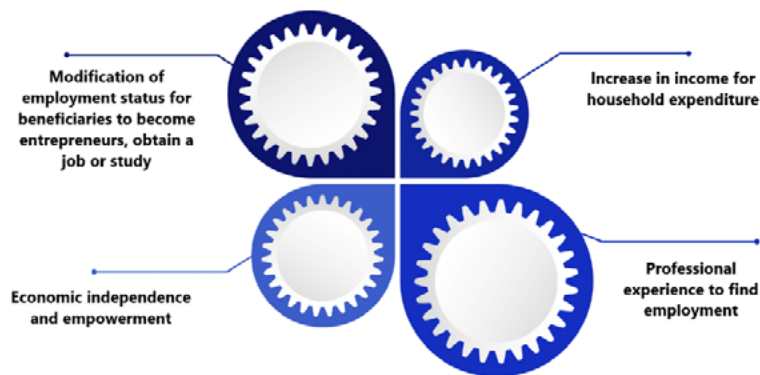


## 5.2 PERCEIVED ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

In this analysis, the economic benefits will be related to two variables: i) the beneficiaries of the project employment situation, and ii) the perception they have about the income results generated by *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future). The reason is that, indirectly, a change in the employment situation of the population that did not study, or work will have an impact on their economic situation in the short or medium term – whether working, studying or entrepreneurship. In addition, it is important to analyze how the beneficiaries perceive that their income was modified after the implementation of the project.

As shown in Figure 7, the economic results of the *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) implementation that were perceived by the beneficiaries can be summarized in four main findings.

**Figure 7. Main economic results perceived by the beneficiaries**

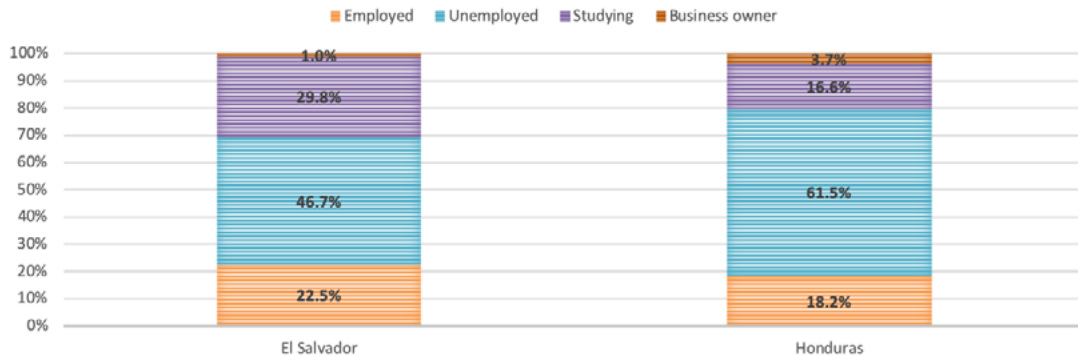


*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

### **Modification of the young people's employment situation**

Figure 17 shows that 53.3% of beneficiaries in El Salvador and 38.5% of beneficiaries in Honduras currently work, study, or have their own business after their participation in the project. When analyzed in detail, it is possible to identify that 29.8% of the beneficiaries in El Salvador and 16.6% in Honduras are students and less than 4% of the beneficiaries own their own business. This situation infers that, for more than a fifth of the beneficiaries in both countries, *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) allowed them to return to formal education or decide to become entrepreneurs and that modifies the employment situation of the beneficiaries beyond just formally employing them.

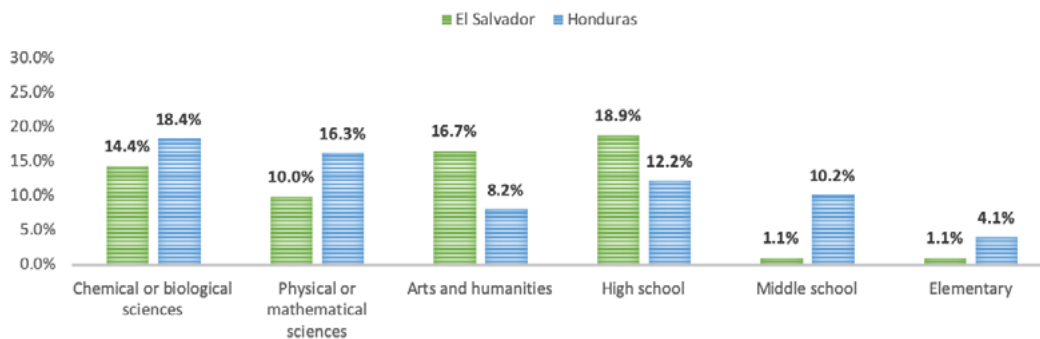
**Figure 17. Labor situation of the JCF beneficiaries per country**



*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

Those young people who benefited who chose to return to formal education after their participation in the workplace focused, mainly, on studying something related to social sciences or administration, with chemical or biological sciences or upper secondary education (see graph 18).

**Figure 18. Study area for young beneficiaries who are studying by country**



*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

Additionally, some of the beneficiaries were able to start and open their own business. The percentage of entrepreneurs in Honduras is slightly higher than in El Salvador (3.7% and 1.0%, respectively). This can be related to the fact that in Honduras one of the three main areas of training was trades. For entrepreneurs in El Salvador, a third took less than 1 month to start their business; another third, between 1 and 3 months; and the last third, more than 6 months. In contrast, for respondents from Honduras, 27.3% took less than 1 month to start their business; 54.5%, between 1 and 3 months; and 18.2%, between 3 and 6 months.

*“You also taught how to be an entrepreneur, which is widely advantageous because you are able to start your own business.” (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

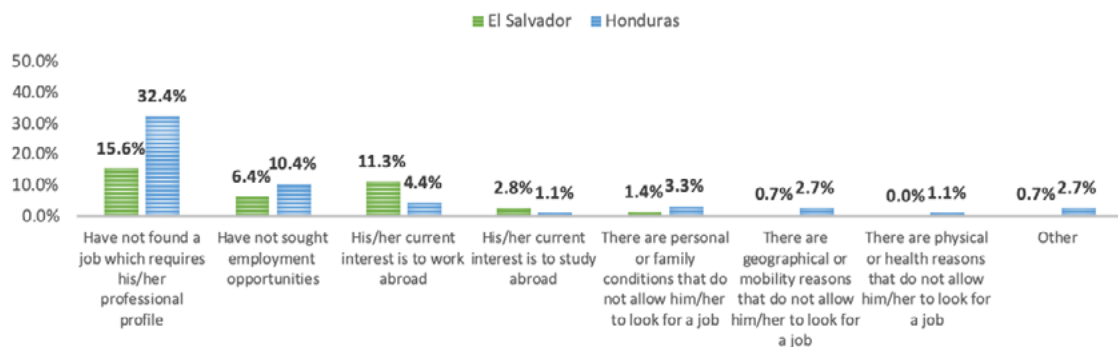
*"[...] We are going to find a little bit of everything in this life and we have to see what we adapt to best, whether with ourselves starting a business or seeing if you can work with someone else in a company or somewhere else, who feels comfortable with yourself or sees that you do things well." (Young participant in JCF from Honduras).*

Although the design of the project is aimed at enabling young people to have their first approach to the labor market, only a fifth of respondents in both countries are employed once they have finished their training (see graph 19). By contrast, after eight months of training, more than half of beneficiaries are unemployed and do not attend school or have their own business. It is important to mention that this situation must be analyzed with caution, since it is not necessarily a failure of the project, since there is no counterfactual in which it is determined what the percentage of unemployed young people would have been.

When analyzing this situation based on the sex of the participants, the percentages of the employment situation of the beneficiaries remain the same in El Salvador. However, in Honduras there are important changes, where the proportion of unemployed decreases for young men. In this country, the percentage of unemployed men drops to 51.8%, and the percentage of male students increases to 27%. Consequently, there is a higher proportion of unemployed women.

Analyzing the reasons why the population benefiting from the project is unemployed, three main ones were identified: i) that they have not been selected in the recruitment processes, ii) that there are no positions vacant related to their profile, and iii) that they have not sought employment. In this sense, it is also important to highlight that conditions associated with the context of young people or motivations to study or work abroad are very little preponderant.

**Figure 19. Reasons why project participants are unemployed by country**



*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

### Professional experience to find a job

For more than 80% of the beneficiaries, *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) represented a first approach to the labor market (85.1% in El Salvador and 80.1% in Honduras). This result does not change significantly if analyzed by sex. However, the only age group with significant differences is the one which contains participants over 27 years of age. For this group of beneficiaries, the percentage decreases. For El Salvador, the percentage changes to 63.4%, and in Honduras, the result changes to 70.6%.

Of the young employees, **36.8% in El Salvador found work in less than 1 month after their participation in the project, while 20.4% in Honduras found work in the same amount of time.** It should be noted that about half of the employed respondents were still part of the project and attended the work centers when the survey was conducted, so they had not sought employment.

**Table 11. Time it took for young employees to find work**

Time period	El Salvador	Honduras
Less than 1 month	36.8%	20.4%
Between 1 and 3 months	7.4%	16.7%
Between 3 and 6 months	1.5%	0.0%
More than 6 months	5.9%	0.0%
It is still part of the project	48.5%	63.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

Beneficiaries who are employees recognized positive results generated by JCF:

*"Today I am fulfilling one of my dreams. I'm working in the place I've always wanted." (Young participant in JCF of El Salvador)*

*"I feel like the program gave me that job responsibility that we could say is an adult life responsibility and being able to coordinate everything I've done. [...]. The truth is that it gave me the opportunity to belong to it." (Young participant in JCF of El Salvador)*

*"It has changed my ability to develop work activities while the incentive is an ideal supplement for certain expenses at home. Experiences are known, skills are acquired in sales, administration, organization, employment, teaching, investment, etc. For the family it is clearly helpful how expenses are divided at home and lessens the burden or pressure they have to support all members at home." (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

Just under half of the young people employed in both countries were hired by the Work Center that provided them with training (41.2% for El Salvador and 48.1%

for Honduras). This result frames that, although the project grants training for 8 months to young people, living their first work experience, it is still pending to include in the design mechanisms for workplaces to hire them.

Hiring by Work Centers varies based on the sex of beneficiaries in both countries. In El Salvador, 1 out of every 4 female participants was hired by the Work Center, while this situation occurred for 6 out of 10 male participants. A similar situation occurs in Honduras, where 66.7% of men were hired by the Work Center, compared to 41% of women hired.

Although this situation can be perceived as negative for the results of the program, there is no counterfactual point to determine what would have happened to the population that is currently employed if the project had not been implemented. In addition, it must be recognized that the Work Centers hire almost half of the young employees, which infers that the connection between young people with the job offer made by *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) is useful. This situation is relevant, since labor inclusion refers to access and participation in the labor market in decent working conditions (Abramo, 2019), which consists of access to employment that generates income, access to social security, allows freedom of expression and is carried out without discrimination of gender or any other type (ILO, 2004).

Although most of the young beneficiaries undergo their training in public sector work centers, less than 30% of them are recruited in this sector. In contrast, all participants from El Salvador who were in a center belonging to a social organization were hired by it, while, in Honduras, 62.5% of participants in this type of center were hired. Likewise, in the private sector work centers, greater hirings were observed in El Salvador (82.4%) for those who did their training there, compared to Honduras (38.5%). This situation shows two situations: on the one hand, the Work Centers where young people are hired belong mainly to a different sector from the public in the two countries. On the other hand, the level of hiring is higher in El Salvador than in Honduras in all sectors, which may be due to local labor market conditions.

The reasons why employees were not hired by the workplaces where they did the training are mainly since they were not offered the possibility of working in the center and the lack of resources in both countries (see Table 12).

*“Personally, they couldn’t hire me because in the area I’m in, there’s enough staff. The vacancy has not been given so that I can settle in.” (Young participant in JCF of El Salvador)*

*“We have never touched on that subject, nor with the instructors, nor have we discussed it with the companions. The only thing we have been told is that the knowledge we acquire, sooner or later or in any field will serve us.” (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

**Table 12. Recruitment possibilities by workplaces at the end of the training, by country**

	El Salvador	Honduras
<b>It did offer hiring, but there was no possibility of hiring due to lack of resources.</b>	45.0%	32.1%
<b>It did offer hiring, but there was no possibility of hiring due to lack of infrastructure.</b>	5.0%	0.0%
<b>It did offer hiring, but it did not meet the expectations of the Youth for the schedule, salary or type of work offered.</b>	0.0%	7.1%
<b>It did not offer the possibility of being hired.</b>	47.5%	60.7%
<b>Other</b>	2.5%	0.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

Regarding the perspectives of the participants, and according to the focus groups held, the majority of participants in Honduras considered that it was not likely that the Work Centers would hire them. On the other hand, El Salvador's beneficiaries mentioned that the probability was high. It is possible that, therefore, differences between countries are observed.

5 out of 10 young people in El Salvador and 6 out of 10 young people in Honduras found a job on their own from the application to vacancies, because they were not hired by the Work Center. Almost all of these (85.7%) in El Salvador believe that the experience they gained thanks to the program helped them find work or start their own business. This percentage is substantially lower in Honduras (47.5%). One possible explanation for the change in outcome between countries is that focus groups with young people identified that young people attended work centers in Honduras for fewer months than in El Salvador. It is therefore important to standardize the duration of the project in both countries.

*"The way it was a little difficult or a little bit bad, so to speak, and that was that I only lasted three months. Not because I decided to leave, but they said, 'and that's as far as the program goes'. And actually, I was a little sad because I say I need a lot to learn several things and be able to perform better. And at one point I didn't come because of the incentive or things like that, but I say I want to learn something new. And yes, I needed a couple of things, I already learned them, but I would have liked to finish the eight months there with my tutor" (Young participant in JCF of Honduras).*

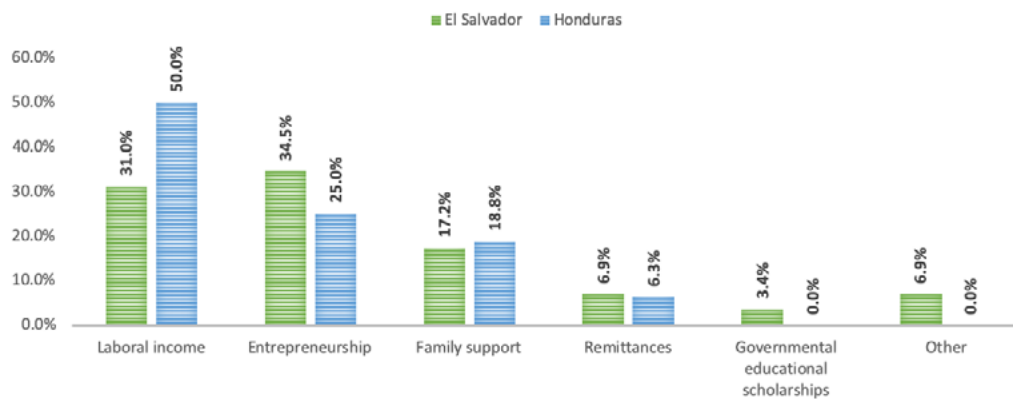
*"This opportunity allowed me to enter the labor field and the development of inter and intrapersonal skills to reinforce my knowledge based on the academic process in my university career for future employment" (Young participant in JCF of El Salvador).*

### Increase in income

**More than 90% of respondents did not have any type of economic income before becoming a beneficiary of *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future)** (90.4% in El Salvador and 94.6% in Honduras). For men this proportion is slightly lower (89.4%). For the small percentage of youth who had an income before *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future), the amount was mostly less than \$180USD (65.5% for El Salvador and 75% for Honduras). Mainly, in both countries, the proportion of young women who had an income with this amount before participating in the project is higher. In this sense, the project is favoring the economic inclusion of women in Central America.

In the case of El Salvador, most respondents mentioned that these incomes came from their work or from some enterprise, while, in Honduras, most mentioned that they came from their work, as can be seen in Figure 20. This situation does not present significant changes based on the sex of the participants.

**Figure 20. Source of monthly income of participants who had an income before the project by country**



*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

Additionally, **only 6.0% of beneficiaries in El Salvador and 3.4% in Honduras received financial support from the government of their country.** These supports were, for the most part, of an amount less than 180 USD; delivered only once in El Salvador and monthly in Honduras. **In this sense, the implementation of *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) in these countries represents an opportunity to increase young people's income and allow them to have their first economic resource.** In addition, it allows to meet the needs of a population that is not being benefited by local social programs.



Once they are beneficiaries of *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future), **income distributions changed in both countries.** Of every 10 young beneficiaries in El Salvador, 1 reported having a monthly income of less than 180 USD, 6 equal to 180 USD, 1 greater than 180 USD and 2 reported having no income. In the case of Honduras, out of every 10 young beneficiaries, 2 have a monthly income of less than 180 USD, 2 equal to 180 USD, 1 greater than 180 USD and 5 do not receive income.

In this regard, two elements need to be highlighted. On the one hand, there is a noticeable difference in the income of young people before and after participating in *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future), so the project represents the first income for most beneficiaries. On the other hand, the difference in the percentage of young people without income from one country to another may be since, according to what was collected in the focus groups, payments in Honduras have not been executed for all or have a shorter duration than in El Salvador.

*"I got the email that they could no longer give me the incentive and that the project was finished, because there were no funds." (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

*"When I entered the program, I received the incentives for about three or four months, but I was still in the place where I was learning and I am still here. I think two weeks ago I was told that the program was over for me and that it was ending." (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

Regarding the financial support received by the participants during the project, **most beneficiaries of both countries mentioned that they used it mainly to contribute to household expenses.** The second most common use was to cover food expenses (see graph 21). The least mentioned reason in both countries was to support the maintenance of an economic dependent. This fact may indicate that, although most young beneficiaries have a financial dependency, the expenses associated with this are not covered by the resources of *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future), but with another income. These results do not change significantly when filtered by the sex of the participants.

The main uses of financial support by sex remain the same as for participants in general, i.e. contributing to household expenses, covering food costs and paying for personal expenses. The same is true when the beneficiaries are divided into age groups, 17 to 22 years, 23 to 27 years old, and 28 years and older. No matter what classification is made, the most common use is the contribution to household expenses, while the less common reasons are to invest in a business and support the maintenance of an economic dependent.

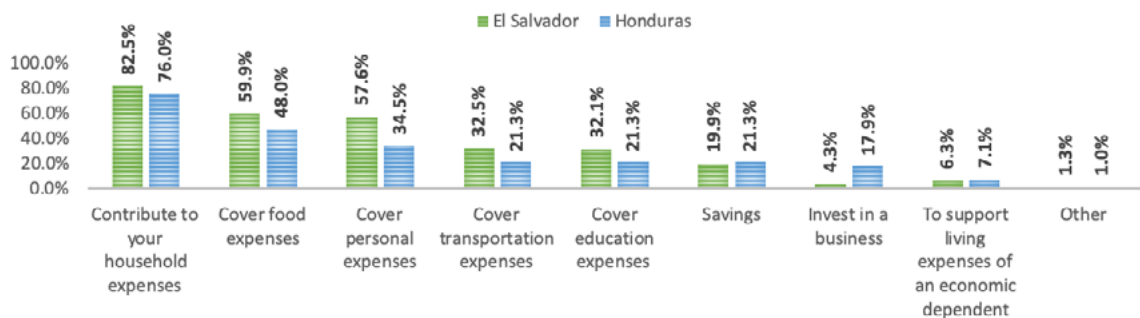
*"I'm already supporting my mom a little more. That is, this month I buy food or even that for any extra expenses you may have." (Young participant in JCF of El Salvador)*

It should be noted that 3 out of 10 beneficiaries in El Salvador used the support to cover their educational expenses. In addition, 4.3% of respondents in El Salvador used support to invest in a business, while this percentage was 17.9% in Honduras, which can be seen the intention to undertake is a priority in Honduras.

*"Since I received a call to be taken into account on the platform I went with great joy, since that was in plans to start undertaking. I felt happy because what I lacked was the raw material. I was just patient and with the first incentive they gave me I started my entrepreneurship." (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

*"The way I used it was to prepare for college and I said, 'This incentive is going to help me buy a computer and I want to keep studying.' So, I started buying certain things, like implements for the university, [...] to continue and be able to continue studying and it really helped me a lot." (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

**Figure 21. Use of financial support granted by the project by country**



*Internal preparation based in the information gathered in the surveys*

*Note: It was possible to select up to three options (the three main uses). The percentages shown should be understood as the percentage of beneficiaries who mentioned each of the options and not as a sum of percentages between the options.*

Despite the positive results generated by economic incentives, it was identified that they are late in the delivery of resources or that they are granted one or two payments in a single exhibition. This situation makes it difficult for beneficiaries to plan the use of resources and financially manage the use of support accurately.

*"In my case it was delayed two months, but the day the first incentive of the month of February arrived to me, if I am not mistaken, within minutes I received the second incentive of April 20." (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

*"That this was quite common for payment to be delayed. In fact, and that makes many interns fall short as the classmates say. So, that used to happen here." (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

*“That happened to me too [that two payments came together] and it was, let’s say, an advantage as much as a disadvantage because, just as it all fell together, there is no record that it will fall again.” (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

### **Economic independence**

In addition to the direct income outcomes that young people identified, indirect outcomes linked to economic empowerment were observed. **82.5% of young people in El Salvador and 63.9% in Honduras said they felt more independent of their parents or other family members. In addition, 12.3% of young people in El Salvador and 22.6% in Honduras mentioned that they feel freer from their partner.** This fact shows that 9 out of 10 young beneficiaries in both countries feel more economically and socially independent, given the economic support and skills they developed through the project.

*“[I’ve been] able to develop new experiences, learn teamwork and, most importantly, feel independent with well-worked money. I’m no longer afraid to step out of my comfort zone.” (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

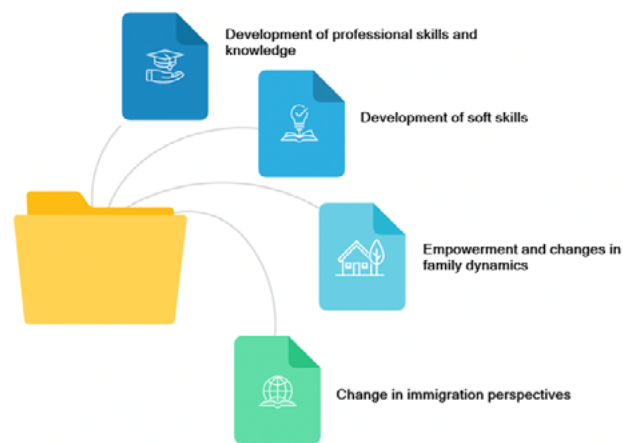
*“I have had greater opportunities to solve personal economic problems, a certain degree of independence and greater performance in social life. It has helped me lose my fear for the workplace and have hope that in our country we can achieve great things if we set our minds to it.” (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

*“[I had a] personal and professional growth, financial independence and the opportunity to collaborate on something I love and other opportunities that I know is because I can grow in this area.” (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

### 5.3 NON-ECONOMIC PERCEIVED RESULTS

The non-economic results perceived by the beneficiaries refer to all the changes generated in them, in their families or in their perceptions after the arrival of the project. In this case, non-economic outcomes are analyzed in five dimensions: (i) development of professional skills and knowledge; (ii) soft skills development; (iii) changes in family dynamics and (iv) changes in migration perspectives.

**Figure 8. Main non-economic results perceived by beneficiaries**



*Internal preparation based on the information gathered in the surveys*

#### **Development of professional skills and knowledge**

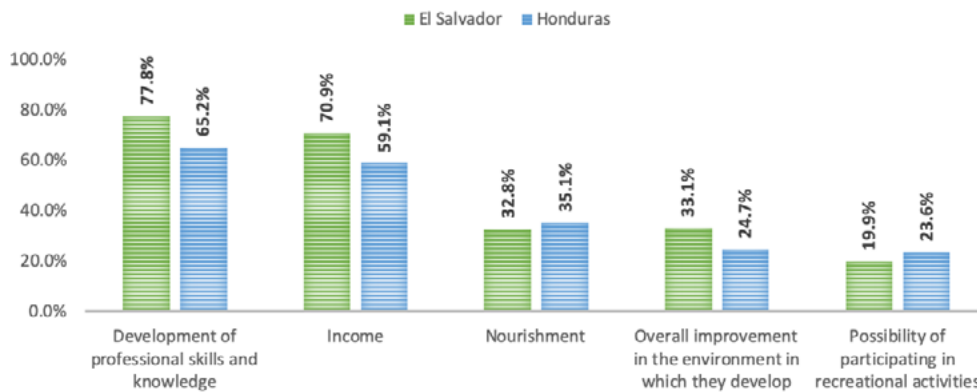
**The main change that young people mainly perceived after their participation in the project was the development of professional skills and knowledge.** (see figure 22). In addition to this, a change in economic income was linked as a benefit of the project.

*“The project has brought a great change to my personal and professional life, since thanks to it I can now easily relate in the workplace. Also, my knowledge and skills have increased, without forgetting that I have also learned to manage money very well. In my family it has also brought a great change, since now I can be an economic support for my parents and siblings and, thus, get ahead.” (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

*“It has been quite enriching in terms of knowledge of administrative tools, assertive communication and when it comes to dealing with a new environment. It has taught me to prepare well for the support I would like to provide with the career I am studying to contribute to the growth and formation of young people.” (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

This is also confirmed by the focus groups held in both countries, since the participants mentioned that the main changes and perceived benefits were the approach to the world of work, a change in mentality, as well as personal changes. Additionally, the program managed to change the perspectives of the beneficiaries on the labor market and, consequently, they now value their jobs, knowledge and learning more.

**Figure 22. Improvement aspects perceived by young people for having participated in JCF in each country**



Note: It was possible to select up to two options (the two main aspects of improvement). The percentages shown should be understood as the percentage of beneficiaries who mentioned each of the options and not as a sum of percentages between the options.

Internal preparation based on the information gathered in the surveys

*"[...] Suddenly I feel that acquiring these responsibilities paid a little to becoming a little more mature, to decision-making, in what I can think, in what I can say, as well as thinking about the repercussions that there may be. [...] I also believe that it helped me to form myself as a person, to have more opportunities, values, to know how to speak, how to interact, how to address in public, [...] to be able to relate to people here in the country. [...] So I think that beyond paying in the professional part and development, it also helped me in the personal part to personal growth."* (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)

Likewise, **more than 90% of beneficiaries in both countries say that the program allowed them to apply knowledge related to their professional training.** These percentages do not change significantly if controlled for the sex or age of the participants.

### Soft skills development

**Almost all young people in both countries believe that they developed some skill thanks to the project (98.3% in El Salvador and 97.6% in Honduras).** As observed in graph 18, the perception of the skills that were most developed in them were teamwork and communication. Although there are no significant differences when filtered by the type of Work Center where the beneficiaries participated, it should be noted that all participants from Honduras who participated in private sector centers and all participants from El Salvador who participated in centers belonging to social organizations reported having developed some skill.

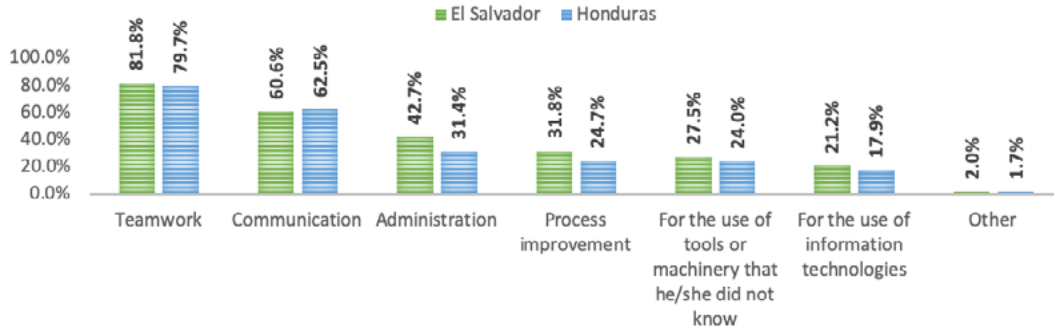
The focus groups revealed that the activities carried out within the Work Centers depended on each center, representing a plan that was not shared by all. However, most participants found activities, courses and trainings related to their areas of study or which interested them. It should also be noted that some of the courses offered were conducted online, giving some flexibility to the program beneficiaries. Additionally, most of the participants in the focus groups mentioned that they perceive that they were useful for the Work Centers.

*"[A] we were given the general trainings. They help you try and [teach you about] leadership. Then, you adapt to new areas of work, and the people in charge of us have taught and guided us how to do the work." (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

*"In my case it was a little different because I'm a mother. At the time I went to register, I was with my baby. [My tutor] told me "Considering the possibility (sic) that you are a mother, I have a different training: virtual." So she told me about virtual, non-face-to-face training. That's when I hugged her and the opportunity she gave me." (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

*"Yo siento que fui bastante bueno. Soy todavía de bastante utilidad para el centro de trabajo y se valoró mucho y se valora mucho lo que hago día a día." (Joven participante en JCF de El Salvador)*

**Figure 23. Skills that young people perceive to have developed as a result of JCF in each country**



Note: It was possible to select up to two options (the two skills that were most developed). The percentages shown should be understood as the percentage of beneficiaries who mentioned each of the options and not as a sum of percentages between the options.

Internal preparation based on the information gathered in the surveys

Focus group participants stated that they also developed other skills. Among them, in El Salvador they mentioned that the most developed during their participation included organization, discipline, responsibility, leadership, commitment, teamwork and trust. In Honduras, these skills were determination, optimism, and skills specific to the training area. The way in which they realized that they developed these skills was through the mention of the coordinators, introspection exercises, living with other peers or with the community and given an improvement in studies.

*"[I developed] the ability to work as a team, to be able to organize ourselves with the colleagues to carry out the different activities and also, in my personal case, to be able to develop in public to give the trainings. I was a person who had a hard time talking and more in front of a large group of people, but as I gave each training, every day I felt more confident. Now for an exhibition, I already feel more confident."* (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)

*"We also had a coordinator and she [told us] at one point 'you can have more communication.' [...] By improving also at a time when we have already acquired it, he told us."* (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)

### Empowerment and changes in family dynamics

More than half of the beneficiaries in the two countries believe that the division of domestic and care work in the home changed compared to what it was before participating in *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) (69.5% in El Salvador and 74.7% in Honduras). Table 13 shows that, mainly, those who identified a change in the division of labor were because some other person in their family assumed the main burden of the tasks.



*"It changed the way we divide things around the home. I am not only referring to the economy, but also to the tasks. Through the trainings I can tell my husband and, thus, we both learn about these given topics. I can also teach my son the value of growing in soft and hard skills, as it is a primary theme in our entire lives." (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

**Table 13. Changes in domestic and care work generated by JCF perceived by young people in each country**

Perceived changes	El Salvador	Honduras
My partner/spouse was more involved in domestic housework and care activities to help me	16.2%	26.7%
Some other family member assumed the main burden of these tasks	73.3%	68.8%
Other	10.5%	4.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Internal preparation based on the information gathered in the surveys*

Analyzing the reasons why there had been no change in the division of this type of tasks, just over half in both countries continued to do most of the work in the home, while approximately 30% in the two countries have never been entrusted with such work. This is, in part, confirmed by the focus group held in Honduras, since the participants commented that their dynamics at home did not change, since their relatives and they have always worked.

In addition, focus group participants from both countries mentioned that the main changes in their households and families were not in the division of labor, but in their perspectives or attitudes. It was shown that participants now have greater opportunities to contribute and provide for their families and consider that both they and their families are more optimistic.

*"With the program, what I [learned] is just that by coming together we can accomplish a variety of things. Supporting us in the meantime both in the field of work, as well as within the family itself. Many things can be achieved together." (Young participant in Honduras)*

Compared with the beginning of their participation in *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future), **98% of participants from both countries feel more empowered and able to make important decisions alone.**

### Migration perspectives

Analyzing the migration perspectives of the youngsters is important since *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) is framed as one of the alternatives of the welfare pillar of the PDI. This Plan establishes that "for migration

in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico to be a voluntary decision and not forced by a set of deficiencies and lack of alternatives, it is essential to substantially improve the living conditions of populations, especially in territories with a strong migratory propensity” (ECLAC, 2021).

Before participating in *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) only 4% of young people in El Salvador and 8.8% in Honduras had migrated to another country. More than half of them migrated to the United States. Young people from El Salvador only migrated to this country or to another Central American country. In contrast, some from Honduras migrated to Mexico or a European country.

The main reason why half of these young people migrated was the need for higher incomes in El Salvador and the lack of work in Honduras. Only 2 in 10 young people in El Salvador and 1 in 10 in Honduras who have migrated were awarded as delinquency. None of the young migrants reported having migrated due to natural disasters, to have access to health services or to reunite with a family member or friend. This situation shows that employment and income are causes of migration in these contexts and not family reunification or crime, as one might think.

*“I thought about going to study in another country, going to work in another country, to improve myself personally more than anything else and to unite all parties. I still think about it.” (Young participant from El Salvador)*

*“I’ve always [considered migrating] for an economic reason, because a lot of times people, customers, devalue the work you do or just because you do a job a little faster. They do not want to pay the sum of money that one is charging them, that perhaps one is not charging the hours of work, but what it has cost him to learn and what he knows how to do. A lot of times there are customers who don’t value that and don’t take that into account.” (Young participant from Honduras)*

*“I saw how other people began to migrate and I said I got the idea, I said ‘what if I do it?’, ‘what is going to be in my way?’ [...] It’s a bit, so to speak, tempting [...] because the country we sometimes live in is not fit to live.” (Young participant from Honduras)*

Almost half of the youngsters who had not migrated had considered doing it before participating in *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) (46.9% in El Salvador and 54.8% in Honduras). This proportion decreases considerably once young people were already part of or had been part of the program: in El Salvador the proportion of young people fell to 37.7% and in the case of Honduras, to 28.0% (see table 14). **This change in intentions to migrate reflects a percentage reduction of 19.6% in El Salvador and 48.9% in Honduras.**

**Table 14. Youth migration perspectives before and after participating in JCF by country**

	El Salvador		Honduras	
	Before participating in JCF	After participating in JCF	Before participating in JCF	After participating in JCF
<b>Had thought about migrating to another country</b>	46.9%	37.7%	54.8%	28.0%
<b>Had not thought about migrating to another country</b>	53.1%	62.3%	45.2%	72.0%

*Internal preparation based on the information gathered in the surveys*

In this sense, the results of the program can show that it discourages the migration prospects of young people; However, it cannot be said that the reduction is solely a consequence of the implementation of *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future). It is clear that the program has positive results in reducing migration intentions, but it may also be due to other contextual factors, such as a greater fear of migrating, having better conditions in the country of origin or changes in the preferences of young women, among others.

The focus groups showed that the implementation of the project in their countries made them change their minds, so that now, although they continue to consider migrating legally, they want to grow academically and professionally. In addition, the project helps young people realize that there are possibilities and opportunities within their countries.

*"I had no intention of migrating, but because of the situation of the country and the families of Salvador, at times that can be momentary, and thanks to the project you receive income that helps to cover expenses and that before the project was not implemented." (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

*"In my case it is an idea that suddenly crossed my mind, the situation and everything and because in my family there are many people who have left, but nevertheless the circumstances at least have changed a lot with this opportunity and within my family. So, for the time being, it has been ruled out." (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

*"Yes, I also feel that I came at one point to consider it more when I had to start university and see the expenses that were coming, because my mom could not really do it anymore and maybe because of that, because of the economic support, it did motivate me to leave. But well, after the project kind of gave me that little hope and that motivation to say I want to stay and continue preparing myself as a touch and be a support to my country for the agricultural area." (Young participant in JCF of El Salvador)*

For most people who are still considering migrating in both countries, their first choice is the United States. As can be seen in Table 15, the second most considered country for respondents from El Salvador was Canada (17.5%), while, for respondents from Honduras, it was a European country (13.3%).

Based on the participants' gender, the results remain virtually the same. The only exception occurs with male participants from El Salvador, since the second most considered country to migrate is a European country (21.7%) instead of Canada (11.7%). Virtually all of them (97.5%) are willing to do so in an orderly, regular, and safe manner. The percentages do not change significantly when controlling for the sex of the participants, but it is important to mention that all male participants from both countries are willing to migrate in an orderly, regular, and safe manner.

*"I was planning to leave for Canada, and it is a very pleasant place, so to speak. And yes, I think I could work, but I would like to leave in a legal and formal way, not migrate like that, without documents or anything like that, because it becomes very difficult for one to be in another country, since they do not know it and do not have the knowledge of its rules or its work environment." (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

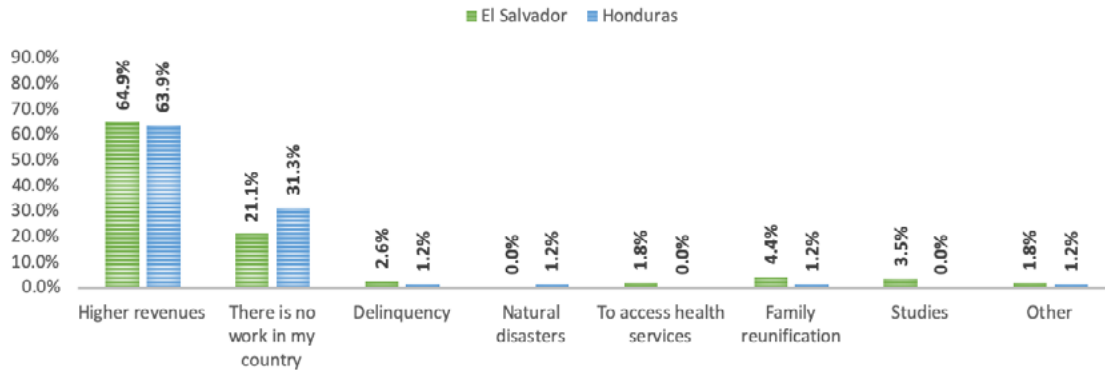
**Table 15. Main countries to which young people have considered migrating by country**

Country	Mexico	United States	Canada	Another country in Central America	Another Latin American country	A European country	Other
<b>El Salvador</b>	7.9%	53.5%	17.5%	2.6%	0.0%	16.7%	1.8%
<b>Honduras</b>	3.6%	72.3%	8.4%	1.2%	0.0%	13.3%	1.2%

*Internal preparation based on the information gathered in the surveys*

The main reasons for migration are shown in Figure 24. It highlights that the main reasons why participants from both countries want to migrate are the need for higher incomes and the lack of work in their respective countries. As is visible, the reasons are the same for those who have already migrated as for those who consider migrating even with their participation in *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Youth Building the Future).

**Figure 24. Main reasons why young people have considered migrating by country**



Internal preparation based on the information gathered in the surveys

On the other hand, the focus groups identified that there is an additional effect of the program on the migratory perspectives of young people that contrasts with those previously observed: it encourages young people to migrate to other countries in search of better contexts and opportunities, in an orderly and legal manner. Although it was not the generality that was identified in the group discussions, it is important to consider that it may be an additional result to the implementation of the project.

*"[Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro (Young People Building the Future)] helped me decide that I can go to another country to get a job, since it is currently very difficult to find a job in El Salvador. In addition, there are jobs that need a lot of physical strength, so I have seen myself in the decision of wanting to look for a job abroad. I can speak English and I think maybe I could apply." (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

*"[I've considered migrating to] Europe, mainly to Sweden, because they have a pretty good standard of living. Of course, it is expensive, but there are people who are worthwhile and Canada too, because it is a country that is also, but so quiet." (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

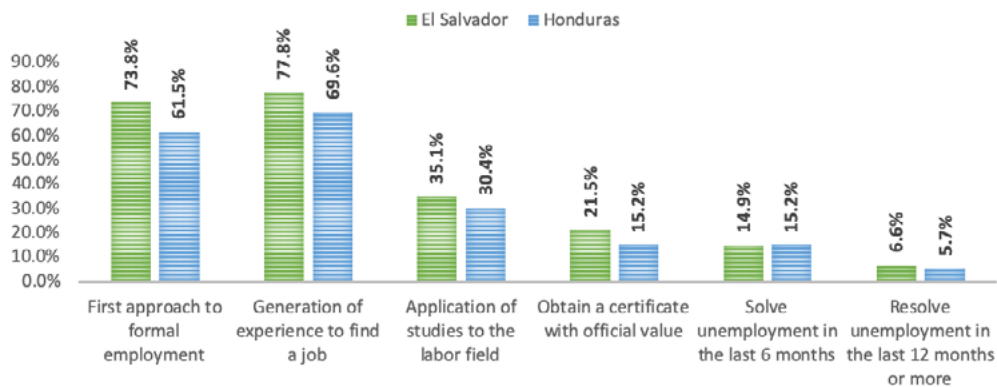
#### 5.4 GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT BY THE BENEFICIARIES

**Virtually all beneficiaries in both countries consider having acquired some Benefit thanks to the Project (98.7% in El Salvador and 95.9% in Honduras).** As shown in Figure 25, young people identify that the main benefits generated by JCFD were that they had a first approach to formal employment and generated experience to find a job. In this sense, it is confirmed that the benefits of the project can be directly linked to exposure to the first work experience for young people.

*"It taught us to see our lives differently, to reflect on whether we have opportunities in our country. All we needed was someone to come and say, 'We're here to support you, to show you to society and make them look at how valuable you are, that you can learn and you can perform well in a job.'" (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

However, only 14.9% of young people in El Salvador and 15.2% in Honduras identify that JCF allowed them to resolve their unemployment situation in the 6 months prior to the time of the survey. Additionally, for just over 5%, the project resolved their unemployment in the last year. In this sense, the findings relate to the levels of unemployed youth exposed previously. Although the project provides the first job opportunity to this population, there is still a pending link with formal job offers that transcend eight months of training. This situation is not necessarily a negative aspect of the implementation of the project, since the result may be due to situations in the local context such as high unemployment rates, among others.

**Figure 25. Benefits that young people perceive as a result of JCF in each country**



*Internal preparation based on the information gathered in the surveys*

Participants were asked to rate the project from 1 to 10, considering all elements of the project: design, implementation, supports received, skills developed, etc. On average, the project was evaluated with a rating of 9 and more than half of young people in both countries assigned a 10. About 3% of respondents from both countries gave the project a rating of 6 or lower.

*"[Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro (Young People Building the Future)] it is like an aid to find yourself both personally and professionally, and for each one it is a more realistic vision of what the workload is, the situation of the country, of what it is really like to take your finances, but a little more responsible and with growth. [...] So for me it's like a bridge to new opportunities."* (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)

When inquiring about the elements considered by the young people participating in the project to work best, the elements that were most mentioned were the economic support from the project, as well as the help to those without work experience.

*"They pay for work experience, and it provides a great opportunity for young people who are far from getting decent employment. The program is quite broad and very beautiful, as we can get involved in different activities within the program." (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

*"[It helps] young people to present them to society so that they can highlight all their skills, also to give them that opportunity to work in a company to gain experience. Other than that, the economic incentive works because it motivates us." (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

*"The fact that it is an intern-type element to start in the world of work makes institutions continue to see the opportunity to insert young people into the work experience." (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

Regarding the elements that the beneficiaries want to change in the project, he stressed that the most common is that the promised time of training was met, since 8 months of training had been planned, but in several cases, this was not fulfilled. This situation was evident in Honduras, since the implementation of the project has been irregular among young people.

*"I only lasted three months. Not because I decided to leave, but they told me that this is as far as the program goes. Actually, I was a little sad, because it takes me a lot to learn several things and be able to perform better. I didn't come for the incentive, but I want to learn something new. [...]. I would have liked to finish the eight months there with my tutor." (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

*"Everyone in the project was told that 'your three months have already expired, please stop doing your evaluations,' because there are no longer funds supposedly. We stopped doing the evaluations as much as my co-workers and my tutor, or other people from other jobs also stopped doing everything, the evaluations and already told them 'this is where it ends'." (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

In addition, it was identified that it is necessary to regularize the delivery of support because it was delayed for several of the participants. Focus group participants mentioned that payments are often delayed. Likewise, the main problems faced by the beneficiaries when receiving or collecting the support of the program were the transfer to the bank or that the payments were not ready when they went to the banks. On the other hand, participants believe that financial support should be increased.

*"I think [the support] could be a little more, since here in the country only on transportation a lot is spent. The fares are constantly increasing, and the food still becomes much more expensive. I guess that most of the interns, as in my case, sometimes had to buy food or there is also this desire to contribute to our homes, since I am receiving an income. [...]. It's great that they can pay us an internship because they don't really*



*do it in many places, but I consider that a raise could be considered. We seek not only to cover our personal expenses, whether it is studies or anything we need, but also the idea is to support families.” (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

*“I would consider that late payment can be improved, or a cash pickup date established, because many interns consider this financial support for the same performance of their internship in terms of food, transportation or personal expenses.” (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

Another element frequently mentioned was the administration of the project, so that, in some cases, it can be counterproductive for the beneficiaries.

*“They should assign someone from their embassy to check the processes. They use young people for extra tasks as an obligation and are matters of political purpose. There are cases of young people who are employed and continue to be given the scholarship. They include a lot of acquaintances of mayoral employees.” (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

*“The way they distribute young people to the workplace [could be improved], because this internship should help them gain work experience based on the career they’re studying or skills they have. It was the case that we were sent to areas that have nothing to do with it. You can improve the schedules in which they call us to assign us a job, since many times they call them and in some way it is harder.” (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

*“It has allowed me to become more aware of the current situation of the country, recognizing that there are projects like AMEXCID that, although it is true that it has not solved my socioeconomic problems in totality, but to a certain extent it has been a project that has helped me a lot personally and indirectly to my family. By obtaining job training and a monthly per diem, it has given me more independence and development of professional, technical, work skills and other aspects, such as the good management of interpersonal relationships. Also, it has given me the opportunity to meet people with knowledge of all kinds and at the same time interact with them, as well as to know the world of work and apply my academic knowledge.” (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

In the focus groups it was also identified that the participants consider that the project should have a longer duration and that there is a follow-up after its completion and that the young graduates could give trainings or participate with the new beneficiaries.

*“Perhaps the duration can be a little longer. I think it can also be a very good opportunity for everyone, because, at least in my case, I got to feel quite comfortable. I really liked participating in that format.” (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

*"I think that in the long run they may be able to reconsider the interns who have already completed the first phase so that they can be trainers of new interns. [This] would motivate several fellows, for the same reason that not all have had to be available or have had the benefit of being hired at the study center." (Young participant in JCF from El Salvador)*

*"Regarding the evaluations, there are times when the tutor does not do them, perhaps because he/she does not know how to do them or because of negligence against his/her interns." (Young participant in JCF from Honduras)*

## 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 SEMBRANDO VIDA (SOWING LIFE)

#### Strengths of the project

It is estimated that there are 570 million plots of land for agriculture in the world. Of these, 475 million are in the hands of smallholder farmers who operate approximately 12% of the planting land. Historically, this population has faced disproportionately various problems that limit their quality of life, including poverty and extreme poverty, hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition. In the absence of mechanisms that limit or diminish their persistence, these problems are inherited between generations.

In parallel, population growth (accelerated after the COVID-19 pandemic) requires agricultural production to increase by more than 50% to meet future food demand. Challenges such as climate change, new pests and diseases, water scarcity and the aging of the rural population make it difficult for this increase in production to become a reality (International Finance Corporation, 2019).

Faced with this scenario, small farmers have become key actors for governments and multilateral development agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Bank. On one hand, they concentrate a large proportion of the population that suffers from the problems mentioned above, prioritizing their attention to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals to End Poverty and Zero Hunger Challenge. On the other hand, their participation in agricultural markets is vital to ensure a sustainable supply of food products.

One of the main strengths of the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) project in El Salvador and Honduras is that it **simultaneously implements interventions that have already been tested in different contexts and have proven to be effective in boosting rural incomes and increasing farms' productivity in the hands of small agricultural producers**. A significant number of programs and projects financed by multilateral organizations have been evaluated and have impact measurements in increasing rural incomes and increasing the productivity of plots in the hands of small agricultural producers (FAO, 2016; FAO, 1015).

**Agricultural training** has shown to build capacities that improve harvest and post-harvest practices, increasing plot productivity. Among the topics covered in the trainings provided by the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) project in El Salvador and Honduras, beneficiaries learn how to prepare inputs such as fertilizers, fertilizers and organic insecticides. In other contexts, this learning has not only benefited

in reducing production costs but has also allowed to improve the quality of the land, that is, to increase the level of nutrients, by using better quality inputs compared to those they bought before.

It is important to emphasize that these trainings are delivered on a group basis and are not limited to the beneficiaries. From the semi-structured interviews, it was possible to identify that the beneficiaries of the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) Project in El Salvador and Honduras have socialized their participation with their neighbors and other community members, sparking a general interest in the trainings. By not closing them to the beneficiaries, the trainings become an intervention with characteristics of public good, disseminating good agricultural practices in the communities.

The **monetary support** component is one of the least common, but highly effective. The low incomes of small producers limit access both to goods and services to meet their basic needs and those of their families, as well as to inputs and production technologies that allow them to be more productive. By having economic resources, various evaluations have found that the beneficiaries of these invest in their plots and in inputs / machinery, in addition to being able to afford family expenses that improve their quality of life.

The **delivery of inputs** such as seeds and materials for the manufacture of fertilizers and fertilizers has also shown to have a positive impact in other contexts. Sometimes, some of these inputs are scarce in rural areas, in addition to being *commodities* with high price volatility. By having these inputs, beneficiaries see their production costs decreased, increasing their disposable income for family consumption or other expenses necessary for agricultural activities.

The results perceived by the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras associated with these components are aligned with those of different evaluations in multiple contexts, so it is recommended that they continue to be implemented, both in future phases of the projects in these two countries and in the first phase to be implemented in new territories.

Another strength of the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) Project is that it implements one more component that has not been mentioned above: **technical support**. The project created a network of country-by-country agriculture professionals called extensionists, responsible for implementing the training and input delivery components. However, their work is not limited to these activities. The extensionists provide advice and personalized technical support according to beneficiaries' specific needs. This accompaniment consists of telephone attention (by messages or call) and the visit to the plots of the beneficiaries to give specific recommendations on how to treat a pest or disease, advice on the application of planting techniques learned in the trainings.

While technical support and agricultural training share the element of capacity building, their implementation is different and responds to different needs of beneficiaries. Agricultural trainings are the first step and bring participants closer to the different topics covered in these sessions. Subsequently, we proceed to the application of this knowledge in their plots. However, the conditions are not exactly maintained, so participants may need additional accompaniment to be able to correctly implement what they have learned.

Finally, a great success of the project is that the **network of extension workers of both sexes by country is formed by local professionals**. Extensionists know the areas where they work, from the characteristics of the land and crops to the specific challenges of planting in these contexts. This, along with the willingness of extension workers and the motivation they transmit, has allowed them to gain the trust and commitment of small agricultural producers.

### Opportunity areas of the project

Based on surveys and semi-structured interviews applied to beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras, areas of opportunity were identified in the implementation of the project that can improve and enhance its results.

An important aspect mentioned by several producers is that **there are no bio factories in all communities**. Producers report that these spaces generate multiple benefits. On the one hand, participants meet in bio factories to prepare organic inputs such as fertilizers and fertilizers. On the other hand, this coexistence strengthens the bonds between the beneficiaries, facilitates the exchange of learning and experiences derived from planting activities, and promotes organization among small farmers for agricultural production. It is advisable to develop this type of infrastructure in more communities, and thus expand coverage to more small producers.

Another issue that is in line with the previous one has to do with the **development of more specific capacities considering the differences between crops**. One of the most relevant economic results is crop diversification, which has led small producers to become familiar with new types of plants, different cultivation techniques and land management. Several producers mentioned that they have learned to prepare general organic inputs; However, they consider that it would be very useful to develop more specific fertilizer formulas and fertilizers for crops, since this can increase the productivity of the plots. It is recommended to identify the most common crops by country, or if possible, by department and expand the offer of training related to the development of inputs for production.

### Aspects to develop within the project

According to the Comprehensive Development Plan (PDI), the general objective of the project is to improve the quality of life of the rural population by encouraging the production and self-consumption of food, the commercialization of surpluses

and employment generation. Beneficiaries perceive a productivity increase in their plots that has resulted in an increase in production for self-consumption of food and marketing. In addition, beneficiaries comment that the program has led to job creation in their communities. However, there are **important challenges to ensure the sustainability of crop commercialization.**

The increase in agricultural production is mainly due to crop diversification and the higher productivity of the beneficiaries' plots. Although the production destined for self-consumption is greater and more varied, it cannot grow indefinitely thanks to the point of food satiety. However, as production increases, smallholders face the **challenge of selling higher production volumes.**

From the collected information, it is identified that the beneficiaries market their agricultural surpluses in their community directly to final consumers (for example, neighbors) or to local markets and intermediaries. Selling all surpluses to local buyers can generate supply surpluses that drive down the price of crops, reducing the profitability of agricultural activity. Also, these buyers are within the initial links of the agricultural value chain, which are usually the least profitable.

One of the interventions that has proven to be one of the most successful in achieving the general objective of *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) is to **facilitate beneficiaries' access to new markets to sell their products.** When they have access to a greater number and diversity of buyers, small producers benefit from being able to sell higher levels of production, gain bargaining power by having more sales options, and be able to sell at better prices.

Another component that could be of great benefit to small agricultural producers is to **support them to join cooperatives.** Although beneficiaries report increases in their production levels, they still remain small producers. Large buyers such as supermarket chains and agri-food companies buy in volumes unattainable for one producer alone. However, other social programs implemented by governments and development agencies support beneficiaries to legally associate in cooperatives, which allows them to sell higher levels of production together, reduce costs by taking advantage of economies of scale, access to credit and physical capital that allows them to develop other activities within the field of agricultural value such as laundering, waxing, packaging, and transport. Likewise, another benefit of cooperatives is that small producers organize themselves to define what should be planted and at what levels of production.

It is highly advisable that the project considers the **gradual inclusion of activities that pay for the two previous components** (facilitating producers' access to new markets and supporting them to join cooperatives) for two main reasons. First, the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) beneficiaries in El Salvador and Honduras have gone through a learning process where they have gradually changed the way they work the land. Currently, producers plant a larger area of land using better agricultural

practices, thus leading to a higher level of production, as well as a greater variety of agricultural products, and this has required an arduous effort on their part. If this effort does not generate yields, it is possible that these large results that small producers report relative to the increase in the levels of agricultural production and job creation will not be sustainable in the long term. In addition, these components are essential for beneficiaries to generate an income equal to or greater than monetary support (\$250) by themselves.

The second reason has to do with the participation of the new rural generations in agricultural activities. According to surveys, beneficiaries aged 40 and over correspond to 62.5% in Honduras and 69% in El Salvador. It is crucial to consider that, although it is reported that children mainly support sowing activities, they do not consider it viable to dedicate themselves to agriculture due to low profitability, forcing them to look for other productive activities that generate a decent income for themselves and their families. With the ageing of small farmers, it is essential to create the right environment for young people in rural areas to sustainably continue agricultural activities, to receive fair payment for their crops and thus to break the patterns of poverty between generations.

Finally, **it is recommended to develop a diagnosis and a change theory for the project.** In 2020, the Mexican Government published a diagnosis identifying the problems which the *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) program seeks to assist, its causes and the population experiencing it. This document aligns the actions of this program with the National Development Plan 2019 – 2024, and presents the results of national and international experiences with interventions similar to those implemented by *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life). It is recommended to prepare a document that contemplates these elements for the project in Central America, and that determines the scope of *Sembrando Vida* (Sowing Life) in these countries. In addition, it is advisable to develop a theory of change that identifies the contribution that each component implemented by the project has in achieving specific results. Another element of the theory of change is that it identifies assumptions and risks to be considered that may alter the implementation of the program.

## 6.2 **JÓVENES CONSTRUYENDO EL FUTURO (YOUNG PEOPLE BUILDING THE FUTURE)**

### **Strengths of the project**

The *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) project began its operation in 2021 in Central America as part of the initiatives conducted within the PDI framework. The efforts it has made in its first year of operation to reach the target coverage of 10,000 young beneficiaries per country are noteworthy. In addition, it is noteworthy that the project has been able to develop an implementation in El Salvador and Honduras without having an existing structure or operational strategy that would allow the activities and delivery of components to



be carried out. In this regard, project personnel in both countries should be recognized for initiating project implementation at the same time as reaching the coverage goal.

In addition, the project began its operation in a complex context, characterized by economic instability and possible effects on the labor market caused by the COVID-19 crisis. This context was able to increase the potential population of the program, since it is likely that the number of young people who do not study or work has increased. In this sense, it must be recognized that the results observed in the employment situation and the participation of the young beneficiaries counteract a negative scenario in the local economy. However, the lack of a comparison group in the analysis prevents the observed results from being attributed solely to the presence of JCF in these territories.

The project has adequately identified a problem presented by young people in this country to enter the labor market (lack of experience, skills, and abilities for work). It must be recognized that the design of the intervention responds to a need of the target population and that it is plausible that it contributes to the labor inclusion of this population.

The results showed progress in the labor inclusion of this population. For almost all beneficiaries of *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) it represented a **first approach to the labor market and they consider that the experience acquired thanks to the program helped them find a job or launch their own business**. In addition, almost all young people in both countries considered that they developed some professional skill thanks to the project - teamwork, communication, etc. - and also identified the **development of soft personal skills** - organization, discipline, responsibility, etc.-.

In the collection of information, the beneficiaries acknowledged that they **found activities, courses and trainings related to their areas of study in the work center**. This fact must be recognized as a positive aspect, since it implies that the relationship between young people with the labor offer is satisfactory and meets their needs. Another strength of the project is that it motivates all types of training, including apprenticeships, which diversifies the work opportunities of young people.

The results showed that there are **positive effects on the labor inclusion of young people in addition to employment**, since for more than a fifth of the beneficiaries in both countries of *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) it allowed them to return to formal education or decide to undertake. In this sense, the implementation of *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) should be seen as a mechanism that not only causes the labor inclusion of young people through a job.

A strength of the implementation of the project is that positive results were identified for women beneficiaries in relation to access to employment opportunities and income compared to men, which indicates that **the actions implemented reduce gender gaps in this population**. Therefore, it is important to analyze the differentiating effects that the program achieves on its beneficiaries based on sex and to consider including differentiating supports for women (longer duration of training or a greater economic boost).

The implementation of *de Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) in Central America, is an opportunity to increase the income of young beneficiaries, who are not benefiting from local social programs. The results showed a marked difference in the income of young people before and after participating in the project, as **it represents the first economic resource for almost all beneficiaries**.

Likewise, it has been identified that the **economic support of the program is used to contribute to the income of households or cover food expenses**. This element is very important because the resources allow to cover basic needs of the fellows and their families.

It is important to recognize that additional results caused by the project were identified in its beneficiaries. Among them, **increased youth empowerment and decision-making capacity and changed the division of domestic and care work in the home** compared to how it was before participating in *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future).

Finally, it was shown that *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) has positive results to reduce the immigration intentions that the participants have. In this sense, the interest they have in migrating to other countries decreased and caused those who want to migrate to do so in a legal and orderly manner. To maintain these results, it would be pertinent for the project to incorporate within the information that gives the participants the value of productively maintaining themselves in their country.

### Opportunity areas of the project

Although there are favorable results for the implementation of the program in Central America, there are some opportunity areas that can improve its design and implementation, as well as potentiate its results.

The **main challenge** of the implementation in both countries is to **achieve that after the training, the young people find a formal job**. Almost half of those who were part of the project are unemployed once the eight months of training are completed. This situation should not be understood as a negative aspect of implementation, as it may be that the percentage of unemployed would have been higher if *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) had not been implemented. However, it frames that as part of the implementation of the project, **strategies should be designed to definitively link the productive sector (public, private or social) with young people trained. Another alternative could be to design a component that helps in the job search once the trainings are concluded**, include a job bank on the program page or homogenize training to develop tools that potentiate obtaining a job (how to prepare a CV, how to act in a job interview, etc.).

It was additionally identified that hiring levels are substantially lower for women than for men in both countries. In this way, the main causes of these differences must be identified and differentiated actions must be taken so that the women beneficiaries increase their possibility of being hired.

Regarding the processes of dissemination of calls and selection of beneficiaries, **three main areas of opportunity are identified**. Firstly, although it should be considered a wise thing to attend to young people aged 18 to 29 who have presented difficulties in entering the labor market. However, some participants have ages outside this range, so it should be verified that those who participate are within the target age of the program.

Secondly, **no prioritization elements were identified for population groups that are in more vulnerable situations**, such as indigenous population, population in communities with high levels of violence or with high marginalization or population with lower incomes. It would be appropriate to consider that in the selection processes the incorporation of these young people should be prioritized, since their situations are more disadvantaged than for the rest.

In addition to prioritizing vulnerable groups, strategies must be designed that do not exclude the participation of young people based on their context. For example, it would be pertinent to design other mechanisms for disseminating calls and joining the project in communities with restricted access to the internet or where

Population does not have a computer, to potentiate its incorporation into the program. This, because the registration process and the way in which young people are more informed about the project is through electronic means.

Thirdly, it was identified that young people access information about the project through different means and that *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) has implemented an effective dissemination strategy. However, **the dissemination strategy may not be very appropriate for young people who do not use social networks and who are not familiar with the use of computers.** Likewise, an “official” channel of communication must be designed with the potential beneficiaries and with the beneficiary population, since the young people mentioned that they learned about the call, the days of payment and the different elements of the project, mainly through friends or acquaintances. It is recommended to strengthen communication strategies so that young people know the processes and reasons that justify the existence of this project in their countries.

The delivery of the support includes two elements for the project: 1) the capacities in the Work Centers for a period of eight months and 2) the monthly financial support of 180 USD for the same duration. The trainings are a strategic element of the project, as they are aimed at raising the employability of apprentices and allowing young people to acquire and increase their experience, skills, and knowledge.

Despite this, the training received by the young beneficiaries was heterogeneous. In the design of JCF it is not considered that the trainings are given by the program, but by the Work Centers and that the definition of the means and contents falls on them. It is recommended that methodological instruments be designed to guide the definition of the type of training that beneficiaries are expected to receive or a definition of minimum elements that are expected to be learned by young people. This is relevant because the assumption is that young people will not return to their original condition once they finish the training. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that they develop the knowledge and skills that the program considers as necessary minimums.

The young people mentioned that there have been delays in the **reception of support**, and that they do not know the precise dates on which the support will be received. In this sense, it would be pertinent for the project to carry out a payment schedule that allows young people to know when they will receive support to be able to make financial decisions and schedule the use of support.

It is important that the program consider including as part of its operational mechanism **differentiated measures for certain population groups**, such as women or

vulnerable social groups, for whom the duration of the program or the amount of support is greater. This situation is relevant when differentiated results based on sex are observed.

Another of the most relevant areas of opportunity is that it was identified that the **duration of training and support varies by country**. While in El Salvador it was mentioned that the trainings and supports lasted for eight months, in Honduras some young people identified a shorter duration (3 months). As a result, young people in Honduras believe that the project should have a longer duration. It is relevant that the duration is homogeneous because the theory of the project is that young people are exposed to training for a certain duration. Decreasing the duration of support and training negatively decreases the results that can be achieved.

### Aspects to develop in the project

For the preparation of this report, there was no diagnostic document or document related to the design that would allow identifying the causes related to the problem addressed by the project, the characteristics of the beneficiary population. The diagnostic document is relevant to lay the foundations of the design of the project and allow clarity on the problem, the target and the population being served; above all, for implementation in different territories. In addition, it justifies why intervention is the best alternative to solve the problem, as well as to design a coverage strategy that allows progress. In this sense, it is important that the project develops a diagnostic document in which it also captures the problem trees and objectives.

Additionally, no documents related to the design were identified that specify the **quantification of the population aged 18 to 29 who do not study or work in each country or department**. It is important for the project to count and update this information because there may be local labor market conditions that increase the size of the population presenting the problem. Likewise, it is recommended that implementers have these quantifications to know the regions or departments in each country where the problem is of greater magnitude and, therefore, coverage should be expanded or prioritized.

It is important that, as part of the preparation of the diagnostic document of the project in Central America, the scope of the project objective is defined and how the results can be identified. This, for example, because labor inclusion can materialize through access to training for young people, reduce unemployment in this population or ensure that young people have an economic remuneration for their work. Above all, because for international organizations such as ECLAC, labor inclusion does not only refer to carrying out a remunerative activity. It is linked to productive and quality work, well paid and with social protection (ECLAC, 2019). In this sense, taking the conception of ECLAC a young person who receives remuneration for his work in the informal sector is excluded from work.

It is considered relevant that, as part of the design, *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) establishes **alliances with local agencies or organizations that allow young people to be linked with credits, seed capital or school scholarships**. In this way, it will be possible for beneficiaries to have opportunities to undertake or continue with formal education. Above all, because as the program is currently designed, it could discourage access to education, since it encourages young people to participate in *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* (Young People Building the Future) instead of studying.

Similarly, it is recommended that the design of the program include a **methodological review strategy** to identify the extent to which the Work Centers are developing the skills of young people based on their characteristics and resources. As part of this strategy, mechanisms for the dissemination of good practices should be included in the design and implementation of training plans between Work Centers in the same sector.

Related to the monitoring and evaluation system, **it is suggested to determine the result indicators that the project will use** in order to have relevant information for decision making. In addition, a scheme of evaluations related to the design and processes carried out in both countries must be scheduled. These evaluation exercises will allow us to better understand the results presented in this document and identify actions that must be implemented to potentiate the results or bottlenecks that threaten implementation.

It is suggested to **design information mechanisms to monitor the results of the intervention on a recurring basis**. Thus, a question can be implemented at the beginning and another at the end of the training that allows comparing the situation of each of the beneficiaries before and after receiving the support. In these instruments, socioeconomic information must be collected from the participants, aspects related to their employment situation and variables that allow us to know the economic, learning and resource use results.

In the same sense, it would be relevant to **plan studies or evaluations** that allow corroborating the theory that young people develop skills that increase their chances of participating in the labor market after 8 months of training and to investigate specifically what type of skills are developed. Also, **the perspective of the Work Centers should be included** to identify if the design and implementation of the program aligns with their needs.

Finally, it is considered relevant that within the monitoring and evaluation strategy of the project, an **analysis of the indirect effects that the implementation may have** on other variables of interest is considered. For example, it would be useful to analyze the effects on mitigating informality of this population or the change in the incentives of the Work Centers to hire beneficiaries instead of hiring full-time staff.

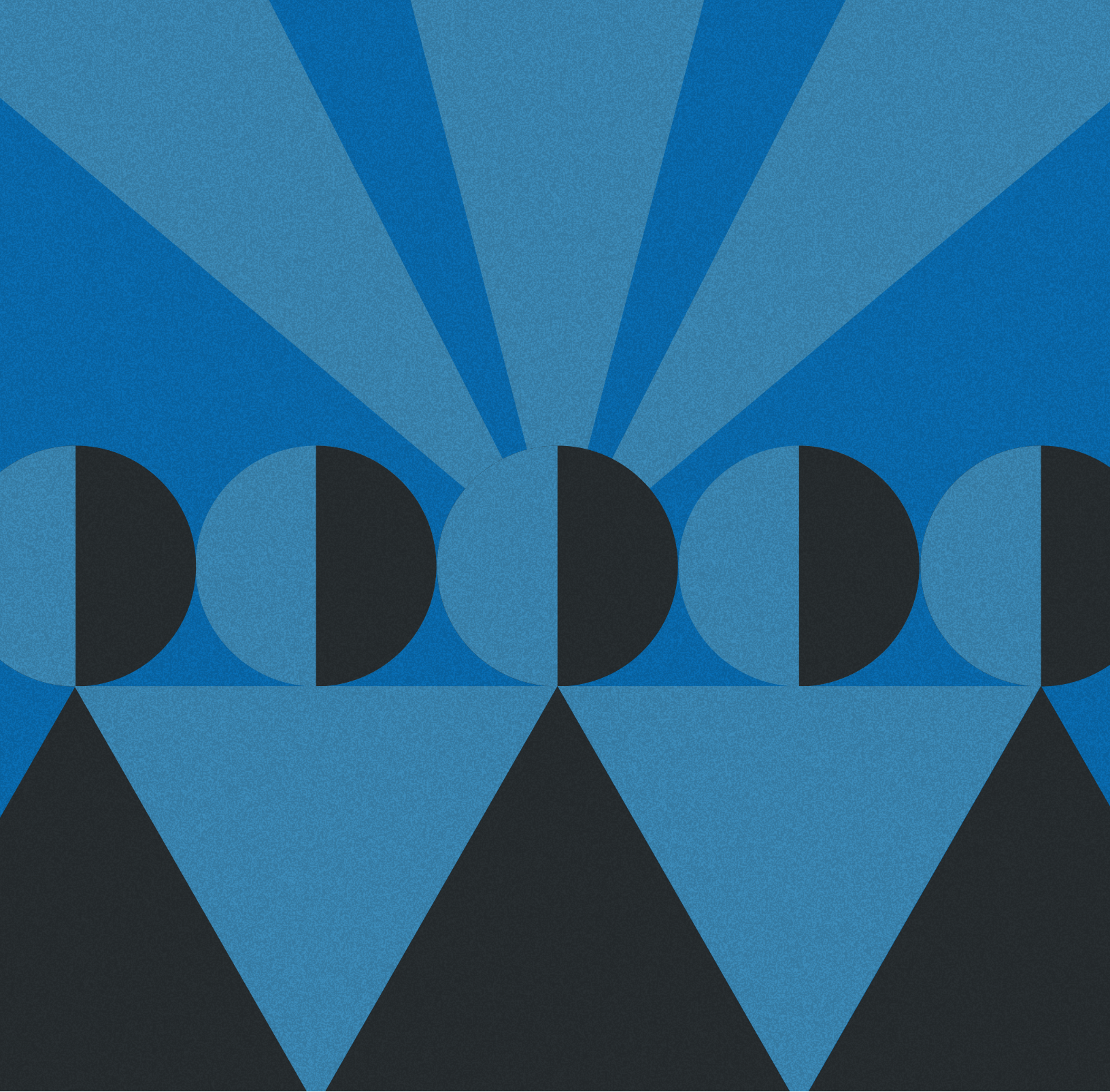
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