

# Going Virtual



## HONDURAS & EL SALVADOR YOUTH PATHWAYS CENTRAL AMERICA (YPCA)

**VALUE**  
\$17.3M

**PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE**  
JUL 2015 – SEP 2021

**OBJECTIVE**

Strives to improve livelihoods for at-risk youth to prevent their engagement in exploitative labor and the worst forms of child labor.



## GHANA

## COMBATING FORCED LABOR AND LABOR TRAFFICKING OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN (FLIP)

**VALUE**  
\$3.5M

**PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE**  
DEC 2011 – DEC 2022

**OBJECTIVE**

Aims to improve the capacity of companies, employers, governments, civil society, and workers to use ILO indicators of forced labor to understand and address forced labor and labor trafficking.



## MEXICO

## CAMPOS DE ESPERANZA ("FIELDS OF HOPE")

**VALUE**  
\$11M

**PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE**  
NOV 2016 – SEP 2023

**OBJECTIVE**

Engages the government, private sector, and civil society to reduce child labor in migrant agricultural communities, particularly in the coffee and sugarcane sectors in Veracruz and Oaxaca.

## COVID's Impact on Child Labor

An undisputed correlation exists between school closures and the increased incidence of child labor.

For each of these projects, the combination of school closings with an inability to adapt to a virtual classroom meant that children were more vulnerable to exploitative circumstances. In the case of Honduras, multiple tropical storms and disturbances in the Caribbean that caused school building to be repurposed as shelter—and the chances of children returning to a safe classroom plummet even further.

School closures due to COVID were complemented by travel restrictions that negatively impacted social structures and livelihoods, hitting poor and marginalized households and youth the hardest. The economic crisis has placed more pressure on families to subsist, leading to an increase in the demand for labor. Early in the pandemic, both UNICEF and ILO warned of an increased risk of child labor due to this combination of circumstances.<sup>1</sup> This elevated the importance of projects that strive to combat child labor.



Facilitator with their students using virtual platform.

*Credit: Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo de Honduras (FUNADEH)*

1 [Child labour gains since 2000 'could be wiped out by COVID', UN warns](#) | UN News

## Taking Training Virtual

As travel restrictions were put in place and fears grew over the spread of the pandemic, project activities, including training, explored options to go virtual.

Project	Training Focus	Adaptations
YPCA	<b>Entrepreneurial and employability skills to increase economic inclusion opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reassessed vocational course offerings to account for shifting demand and added courses for safe motorcycle delivery, food preparation that incorporates COVID-19 safety protocols, and digital marketing</li> <li>• Adapted the YouthBuild life skills curriculum to include 10 hours of psychosocial support for youth and their families</li> <li>• Shifted employment training for job seekers to focus on online job</li> </ul>
	<b>Training of Trainers (TOT) for Labor Inspectors and Officers to prevent, identify, and address forced labor and labor trafficking, including skills to conduct in-person workplace inspections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replaced the 5-day face-to-face training with a 6-week virtual program covering the same modules but asked participants to undertake week-long practical exercises in the workplace and report back in virtual sessions.</li> <li>• After participating in a TOT online course, staff from the Ministry of Labor conducted face-to-face, step-down trainings.</li> </ul>
FLIP	<b>Raising awareness of child labor, forced child labor, hazardous work, and ILO indicators, grounded in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched a free online learning resource featuring two courses: Forced Labor Frameworks and The ILO Forced Labor Indicators. Government ministries, business owners, workers, and organizations providing social services use these resources to build the capacity of their staff in forced labor and related issues.</li> </ul>
	<b>Raising awareness of child labor and workers' rights (including occupational safety and health)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led multiple trainings and national fora on child labor and workers' rights in coffee, sugar cane, fruit and vegetable sectors that reached 3,000 people in one year (original target was 200 in-person trainees)</li> <li>• Continued to hold face-to-face trainings with agricultural workers and added safe use of hand sanitizer and masks, social distancing, etc.</li> </ul>
CdE	<b>Educational services to increase the quality of formal and non-formal educational services in migrant agricultural communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapted messaging to social media (Facebook) and added health messaging (e.g. social distancing, what is COVID-19)</li> <li>• Sent coloring books and life skills activities to teachers and families thru WhatsApp and supported printing costs</li> <li>• In response to demand from teachers, the project developed a virtual training on how to teach remotely for teachers, 3 lectures for just over 1,200 teachers from Oaxaca and other states</li> <li>• Adapted curricula to include life skills</li> </ul>

## Best Practices in Virtual Training

**ADAPT TRAINING CONTENT:** Reassess training content to ensure offerings comply with beneficiary demand

**APPEAL TO DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES:** (1) material presented online can be complemented by (2) homework to be completed at the student's own pace and (3) face-to-face follow up.

**SELECT AN APPROPRIATE TRAINING FORMAT:** Consider self-paced learning, prerecorded webinar, live session with small groups, messaging printed materials, or some combination thereof.

**MAKE SESSIONS INTERACTIVE:** Utilize Mentimeter polls, participant presentations, and breakout groups

**INVEST IN TRAINING THE TRAINERS:** Session leaders should be well versed in the online platform's functions as well as skills to teach online and engage an audience

**IDENTIFY EXPERTS:** Consider bringing in regional or event international expertise to lead a session or participate in training

**SCHEDULE SESSIONS STRATEGICALLY:** 2-3 hour sessions spread out over multiple days are more likely to be effective. For longer training, allow days between sessions for participants to use theory learned virtually in a practical environment to effectively absorb the information.

**UNDERSTAND AND PROACTIVELY ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO ACCESS:** (1) The project may need to pay for the cost

YPCA's Virtual Entrepreneurship Congress and Entrepreneurial Bootcamp allowed participants to hear from speakers in Israel, Guatemala, Uruguay, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, El Salvador, and Ecuador.

of mobile data, travel to a community hub, incentive stipends, local printing, and in some cases, laptops or tablets; (2) recognize that some participants will have limited or no comfort using technology due to a lack of experience and may require additional instruction; (3) targeted outreach may be required to ensure that vulnerable populations attend.

**BUDGET APPROPRIATELY:** While typical conference costs are not required, projects may need to cover other participant costs.

**LIMIT THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN A SESSION TO PROMOTE INTERACTION.**

**INCENTIVIZE ATTENDANCE:** Provide stipends and certificates to those who successfully complete the training.

## Long-term Viability of the Hybrid Model

Following the onset of COVID-19 related travel and social distancing restrictions, staff from these projects expressed a newfound appreciation for the hybrid model. As restrictions are gradually lifted, the question remains, is this model effective under "normal" circumstances?

A multi-modal hybrid model is a practical, cost-effective way to reach a broad audience. However, it does have limitations:



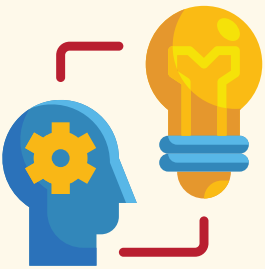
Not all **TOPICS** are conducive to virtual learning. Vocational training, entrepreneurial skills training, and webinars for raising awareness worked fairly well but labor inspector training (i.e. how to perform on-site inspections) are still best in person.



Not all **AUDIENCES** are best suited for virtual learning. When working with at-risk youth, human contact is needed to achieve significant and lasting changes in thinking, behavior, and habits. Migrant workers among others preferred printed materials to virtual training. Rural communities often lack reliable cellular and/or internet connection to engage virtually.

# Lessons Learned

Advantages	Disadvantages
Cost effective	Requires more training of trainers
Access to international and regional experts	Generally not preferred by participants
Ability to reach a large audience	Some topics not conducive to virtual platform
Promotes learning retention when structured appropriately	Can result in exclusion of marginalized groups
	Reduced human contact
	Relies on functional cellular and/or internet access



**THEORY + PRACTICE = SUSTAINABILITY** Going virtual presents an opportunity to engage participants in a manner that promotes learning retention. Capitalize on the chance to focus on theory and then have participants apply their knowledge in the real world.

**INCLUSION COUNTS** In shifting to a virtual world, the number of training participants or beneficiaries reached does not tell the whole story. Be intentional about going the extra mile to ensure marginalized populations are included. Projects should have had an established GESI strategy with disaggregated targets, goals, outcomes, and requirements to report regularly against these.



**CONSIDER PARTICIPANT PREFERENCE** Even with a positive perception of virtual trainings, many beneficiaries expressed a preference for in-person trainings.

**INVEST IN ADAPTATION** Shifting to virtual takes time and resources. Projects should especially invest in trainers to ensure they are not only well versed in the subject matter, but also the features of the learning platform and how to engage participants in a virtual setting.

