Report

Gender equality, disability and social inclusion analysis in Latin America: Guatemala 2025

Carmen Leon-Himmelstine, Diana Jiménez Thomas Rodriguez, Anushka Sisodia and Rachel Marcus

September 2025



Gender equality, disability and social inclusion analysis in Latin America: Guatemala 2025

Carmen Leon-Himmelstine,
Diana Jiménez Thomas Rodriguez,
Anushka Sisodia and Rachel Marcus



ODI Global

This report has been funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). However, the views expressed are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect the UK Government's official policies.

ODI Global
4 Millbank
London SW1P 3JA
United Kingdom

© ODI Global 2025

Online ISSN: 2052-7209

This work is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Readers are encouraged to reproduce material for their own publications, as long as they are not being sold commercially. ODI Global requests due acknowledgement and a copy of the publication. For online use, we ask readers to link to the original resource on the ODI Global website.

Views and opinions expressed in this publication are the responsibility of the author(s) and should in no way be attributed to the institutions to which they are affiliated or to ODI Global.

How to cite: León-Himmelstine, C., Jiménez Thomas Rodriguez, D., Sisodia, A. and Marcus, R. (2025) *Gender equality, disability and social inclusion analysis in Latin America: Guatemala 2025*. ODI Global Report. London: ODI Global.

Front cover image: Folk dancers in indigenous costume perform in San Juan del Obispo, Guatemala © Lucy.Brown | Shutterstock ID: 1157017480

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to all the key informants that agreed to offer their time and insights during the key informant interviews (conducted in 2025), without whom this research would not have been possible. The authors also gratefully acknowledge the feedback, support and assistance provided by colleagues at FCDO throughout the different stages of this research project: Isabel MacDonald, Georgia Watson and Faye Minshall.

About the authors

Carmen León-Himmelstine is a Research Fellow in ODI's Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) programme. She is the project lead, led on the child exploitation chapter and provided quality assurance.

Diana Jiménez Thomas Rodriguez is a Senior Research Officer in ODI's GESI programme. She led on the gender-based violence against girls and young women chapter.

Anushka Sisodia is a Research Officer in ODI's Politics and Governance (POGO) programme. She led on the GEDSI statistical analysis.

Rachel Marcus is a Senior Research Fellow in ODI's GESI programme. She supported the drafting of the child exploitation chapter and provided quality assurance.

About this report

The UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) has commissioned ODI Global to conduct a gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) analysis in Latin America, with a view to inform FCDO's efforts to support women, girls and other minority groups across the region. Focuses on four countries: Uruguay, Chile, Guatemala and Panama, the analysis provides the latest high-quality evidence on the state of a number of GEDSI dimensions at national levels. The research also spotlights a range of salient issues including: gender-based violence, women's participation in politics, women's economic autonomy, feminist foreign policy, LGBTQ+ rights, children in alternative care, online violence and bioeconomy. For each country, the analysis provides:

- an overview of up-to-date data on gender equality, disability and social inclusion
- an analytical 'deep dive' into two/three topics of national relevance
- recommendations for relevant stakeholders to support national-level action and/or collaborate with potential international partners.

Contents

Acknowledgements / V

Display items / VIII

Acronyms / X

Key terms / XII

1 Introduction / 1

1.1 About this report / 1
1.2 Legacy of violence / 1
1.3 Towards a more gender equal and inclusive society / 2

2 GEDSI statistical profile / 4

2.1 Marginalised groups / 7
2.2 Poverty and inequality / 10
2.3 Migration / 14
2.4 Access to digital services / 15
2.5 Education, literacy and skills / 15
2.6 Health / 17
2.7 Economic empowerment / 19
2.8 Unpaid care and domestic work / 22
2.9 Women's political representation / 22
2.10 Gender-based violence / 24
2.11 Exploitation, including human trafficking / 27

3 Gender-based violence against girls and young women / 28

3.1 Prevalence and types of gender-based violence against girls and young women / 28
3.2 Causes of gender-based violence: social norms, child marriage, generalised violence and impunity / 37
3.3 Consequences girls and young women face as a result of GBV: physical and mental health risks, education losses, and migration / 42
3.4 Policy and programme responses to prevent and respond to GBV against girls and young women / 47

4 Exploitation of children / 54

4.1 Main types of exploitation of children in Guatemala / 54
4.2 Policy and programme responses to address child exploitation / 63
4.3 The role of digital technologies and media in exploitation of children / 71

5 Future research agenda and policy recommendations / 78

5.1 Violence against girls and young women / 78

5.2 Exploitation of children / 80

References / 84

Annexes / 102

Annex 1. List of key informant interviews / 102

Annex 2. Laws and policies on child exploitation in Guatemala / 103

Annex 3. Key initiatives addressing the exploitation of children in Guatemala / 105

Display items

Figures

Figure 1 Incidence of poverty by sex, 2023 (%) / 11
Figure 2 Distribution of population by poverty status and ethnic group, 2023 (%) / 11
Figure 3 Distribution of Indigenous population by type of poverty and sex, 2023 (%) / 12
Figure 4 Incidence of poverty by level of education, 2023 (%) / 12
Figure 5 Distribution of the population by level of education and ethnic group, 2023 (%) / 17
Figure 6 Average monthly income in the formal sector by area and sex, 2023 (in quetzales) / 20
Figure 7 Average monthly income in the informal sector by area and sex, 2023 (in quetzales) / 20
Figure 8 Girls and women over 15 who have suffered GBV at some point in their lives, by department, 2023 (%) / 25
Figure 9 Girls and women over 15 who have suffered GBV at some point in their lives, by age group, 2023 (%) / 26
Figure 10 Girls and women over 15 who have suffered GBV at some point in their lives, by type and space of occurrence, 2023 (%) / 26
Figure 11 Girls and young women who have suffered GBV at some point in their lives, by type, 2023 (%) / 29
Figure 12 Girls and young women who have suffered GBV at some point in their lives, by space of occurrence, 2023 (%) / 29
Figure 13 Girls and young women who have suffered GBV at some point in their lives, by type and space of occurrence, 2023 (%) / 30
Figure 14 Girls aged 15 to 19 who gave birth, 2023 / 32
Figure 15 Girls aged 15 to 19 who gave birth, 2024 / 33
Figure 16 Girls aged 10 to 14 who gave birth, 2023 / 35
Figure 17 Girls aged 10 to 14 who gave birth, 2024 / 36
Figure 18 Number of cases of rescued children and adolescents from exploitation, by department, 2024 / 57

Tables

Table 1 Guatemala GEDSI indicators compared to the LAC region / 4
Table 2 Incidence of extreme and non-extreme poverty by age, 2023 (%) / 13
Table 3 Access to basic services according to poverty, 2023 (%) / 14
Table 4 Unemployment rate by region and sex, 2023 (%) / 21
Table 5 Key indicators on unpaid care and domestic work / 22
Table 6 Gender norms held by girls and young women in Guatemala / 38
Table 7 Initiatives for GBV-related gender norm change / 47
Table 8 Comprehensive sexuality education initiatives / 49
Table 9 Guatemala's legal framework on GBV against girls and young women / 51
Table 10 requency of different types of exploitation experienced by victim-survivors of trafficking supported in shelters, 2023-2025 / 55
Table 11 Ethnicity of victim-survivors of exploitation by type of support provided, 2023 (%) / 56
Table 12 Summary data on children working / 59
Table 13 Initiatives to raise awareness about risks of child and adolescent exploitation related to technology / 75
Table 1A List of key informant interviews / 102
Table 2A Laws and policies on child exploitation / 103
Table 3A Programmes addressing commercial sexual exploitation of children and child labour in Guatemala / 106

Boxes

Box 1 Digital GBV against girls and young women / 37
Box 2 Prevalence of child marriage / 39
Box 3 Interaction with poverty / 46
Box 4 Children's workloads in coffee production / 60
Box 5 UNIVET: travelling thousands of kilometres to raise awareness on sexual exploitation / 63
Box 6 La Alianza: an example of victim support accompanied by legal advocacy / 64
Box 7 CA-4: a regional initiative to prevent child trafficking / 65
Box 8 The 'Human Trafficking in the Peruvian Amazon' project: an example of successful capacity building / 67
Box 9 The positive effects of adopting intercultural perspectives / 68
Box 10 CONVIVIMOS: an initiative working on community violence prevention / 69
Box 11 Advantages and limitations of digital campaigns to address child exploitation / 70

Acronyms

AI	Artificial intelligence
ASFC	Abogados sin fronteras Canada
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CIPRODENI	Coordinadora Institucional de Promoción por los Derechos de la Niñez (Institutional Coordinator for the Promotion of Children's Rights)
CONACMI	Asociación Nacional Contra el Maltrato Infantil (National Association Against Child Abuse)
CONADI	Consejo Nacional para la Atención de las Personas con Discapacidad (National Council for the Care of People with Disabilities)
CORETT	Coalición Regional contra la Trata de Personas y el Tráfico Ilícito de Migrantes (Regional Coalition Against Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants)
CSE	comprehensive sexuality education
CSO	civil society organisation
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ENCABIH	Informe Encuesta Nacional de Calidad y Bienestar de los Hogares (National Survey on the Quality and Well-being of Households)
ENCOVI	Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida (National Survey of Living Conditions)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences)
GBV	gender-based violence
GEDSI	gender equality, disability and social inclusion
GDI	Gender Development Index
GII	Gender Inequality Index
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICT	information and communications technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
INACIF	Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Forenses (National Institute of Forensic Sciences)
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estadística (National Institute of Statistics)
IPV	intimate partner violence
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
KII	key informant interview
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean

LGBTQI+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and other non-normative sexual orientations and identities
MIDES	Ministerio de Desarrollo Social (Ministry of Social Development)
MINEDUC	Ministerio de Educación (Ministry of Education)
MP	Ministerio Público de Guatemala (Attorney General's Office)
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MSPAS	Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social (Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance)
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSAR	Observatorio de Salud Reproductiva (Reproductive Health Observatory)
PADF	Pan American Development Foundation
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PGN	Procuraduría General de la Nación (Public Prosecutor's Office)
PNC	Policía Nacional Civil (National Civil Police)
Q.	quetzales
RENAP	Registro Nacional de Personas (Guatemala's National Registry)
SEPREM	Secretaría Presidencial de la Mujer (Presidential Secretariat for Women)
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
SVET	Secretaría Contra La Violencia Sexual, Explotación y Trata De Personas (Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Human Trafficking)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIVET	Unidades Móviles para la Prevención de la Violencia Sexual, Explotación y Trata de Personas (Mobile Units for the Prevention of Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Human Trafficking)
UNODC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

Key terms

Child grooming: A practice by means of which an adult 'befriends' a child (often online, but offline grooming also exists and should not be neglected) with the intention of sexually abusing her/him (UNODC, 2020a).

Children: In this report, the term 'children' is used to refer to people aged 0–17 years; the term 'adolescents' is used to refer specifically to the 10–19 age group.

Child sex trafficking: Acting in a manner that recruits, leads, causes, maintains and/or otherwise facilitates the commercial sexual exploitation of children (UNODC, 2019).

Gender-based violence: Violence directed at an individual or a group of individuals based on and motivated by their (perceived) gender. Gender-based violence can be physical, sexual, psychological and economic.

Gender norms: Social norms or informal rules that shape people's socially acceptable behaviour, roles, entitlements and expression on the basis of their gender. 'Patriarchal gender norms' refer to those that sustain gender inequality and that recognise only male and female.

Intersectional/ intersectionality: Based on the work of black feminist scholars and activists, the concept of intersectionality argues that individual identities such as gender, race, sexuality and others, overlap and intersect and reflect macro-level forms of oppression and privilege, such as sexism, racism and heteronormativity.

Online child sexual exploitation: The use of information and communication technology as a means to sexually exploit children, where child sexual abuse and/or other sexualised acts using children involve an exchange of some kind (UNODC, 2019).

Sexting: Self-generated sexually explicit material.

Sextortion: A form of cyber-harassment whereby the victim is threatened with the release of sexually explicit content if the demands of the perpetrator are not met (UNODC, 2019).

Sexual violence: A type of gender-based violence. It entails forcing or manipulating someone into unwanted sexual activity or an act that aims to harm a person's sexuality. Sexual violence includes, for example, rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment and sextortion.

Trafficking: As per Article 3 of the Palermo Protocol (United Nations, 2000), human trafficking refers to: (a) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;... (b) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered 'trafficking in persons' even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article; (c) 'Child' shall mean any person under 18 years of age'.

1 Introduction

Guatemala was once considered '*the most dangerous place for women in all of Latin America*' (Suarez and Jordan, 2007: 1). A history of conflict, systemic inequality and patriarchal gender norms contribute to gender inequalities, including the normalisation of gender-based violence (GBV) and exploitation of children.

Similarly, other vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, migrants, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQI+) people and Indigenous peoples, have been claiming their rights and demanding protection, despite ongoing challenges and systemic discrimination. For instance, Indigenous peoples have been demanding respect for their land and territorial rights (Kelly, 2025). LGBTQI+ people face ongoing violence and discrimination that threatens their physical safety, leading some to migrate (HRW, 2025). However, some progress on addressing gender and social inequalities has been achieved, as this report will show.

1.1 About this report

This report provides updated data and analysis on key Guatemalan gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) indicators including poverty, education, health, digital inclusion, GBV, among others. Where data is available, it shows data differences across key social groups (women, Indigenous groups, migrants, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people) and data that is disaggregated by regions/departments.

It also synthesises evidence on two topics of relevance to Guatemala's efforts to achieve GEDSI outcomes: GBV against girls and young women, and exploitation of children. Data sources include secondary quantitative and qualitative literature, including global and government statistics, journal articles and grey literature. Analysis on the three topics is complemented by 18 key informant interviews (KIIs; see Annex 1) with stakeholders from a variety of institutions, such as government agencies, international organisations that are active on GEDSI topics (including UN agencies) and civil society organisations. This report does not aim to provide an in-depth analysis of the Guatemalan GEDSI statistical landscape or the two topics of interest, but offers key insights to support relevant stakeholders to achieve GEDSI outcomes.

1.2 Legacy of violence

GEDSI-related inequalities in Guatemala have been, and continue to be, shaped by violence. Guatemala's civil war (1960–1996) led to widespread human rights violations. The Guatemalan State attacked civilians as part of counterinsurgency strategies: the Commission of Historical Clarification identified a total of 42,275 victims, including men, women and children (Commission for Historical Clarification, 1999: 17). Of these, 23,671 were arbitrarily executed and 6,159 forcibly disappeared.[1] Most victims belonged to the Mayan population: an estimated 83% of

1 Other sources estimate that at least 100,000 were people killed, 40,000 disappeared and tens of thousands displaced – 80% of them being Indigenous people. It is also estimated that the conflict left 80,000 widows and 250,000 children orphaned (IACHR and OAS, 2024).

fully identified victims were Mayan[2], while 17% were Ladinos/Mestizos,[3] and around a quarter of the direct victims of human rights violations were women (ibid., 1999: 17, 23 and 27). The conflict also entailed high levels of sexual violence, as government forces raped and enslaved Indigenous women across the country (ibid.).

According to the Organised Crime Index (2023), Guatemala's criminality score – a measure of overall organised crime levels in the country – is 6.60 (9th in the Americas and 26th in the world). According to Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2025), while declining since 2010, in 2023 the homicide rate in the country was 16.1 per 100,000 people – with most homicides committed with firearms (OC Index, 2023). From the 2000s, a new wave of violence began in the country, with a significant increase in the number of murders and homicides driven by organised crime (CICIG, 2019).

Internal conflict and organised crime violence have contributed to low levels of government spending on social development. Spending on defence was the priority during the armed conflict and addressing the security agenda has been central over the last decade (KII, UN Agency 1). Organised crime also entails high levels of government corruption (OC Index, 2023; IACHR and OAS, 2024), possibly decreasing further available resources for social development. This has shaped inequality within the country and created an unsafe environment for ordinary citizens, with specific challenges for girls and women.

1.3 Towards a more gender equal and inclusive society

Despite these challenges, Guatemala has made important progress in combatting and preventing GBV and child exploitation, the key focal topics of this study. One example is the 9-2009 Law against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons, which reformed the Criminal Code and created the Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Human Trafficking (Secretaría Contra La Violencia Sexual, Explotación y Trata De Personas; SVET). Similarly, Guatemala adopted the Law of Immediate Search of Missing Women in 2016 (Law No. 9-2016, also known as the Isabel-Claudina Alert) aiming to enhance the prevention, immediate location and protection of missing women. In 2017, the minimum legal age for marriage was increased to 18 for both men and women from 16 and 14 respectively (World Bank, 2023).

Women's movements have been pivotal to achieving gender equality reforms and to challenging discriminatory structures and gender norms. For instance, Indigenous women-led groups have been at the forefront of recent pro-democracy movements and mobilisations against corruption (Global Fund for Women, 2024). Similarly, women's movements in Guatemala were essential for the inclusion of women's interests

2 Although other ethnic groups are not mentioned as direct victims, the report recommends that the Guatemalan Government should provide for and finance the translation of the report's conclusions and recommendations into Garifuna and Xinca.

3 Peoples of mixed Indigenous and Spanish/European descent.

in the Peace Accords[4] and the passage of gender equality reforms, such as Guatemala's Law Against Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women (2008 VAW Law) (Beck, 2022) and the Isabel-Claudina Alert (Congreso de la Republica de Guatemala, 2019).

The Government has also developed a series of technical and guidance processes to mainstream gender issues across government policies and systems. These include its first policy on gender equality in the areas of food security, nutrition and rural development (FAO, 2023). The Presidential Secretariat for Women (Secretaria Presidencial de la Mujer; SEPREM) also coordinated efforts that led to the development of the National System for Equity between Men and Women, a public mechanism that provides conceptual, technical and guidance materials to promote gender equality and the rights of all women and girls (ibid).

Similarly, as this report will show, Guatemala has made progress on important GEDSI indicators such as improvements in health, contraception, education, representation of women in politics and women's economic empowerment.

4 The Guatemalan Peace Accords, signed in 1996 as the *'Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace'*, officially ended a 36-year civil war between the Guatemalan Government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca). The formation of the Commission for Historical Clarification led to the 1999 publication of the Memory of Silence report. The Commission's report clarified the approximate number of casualties and revealed that most of the victims of the war were Indigenous Maya. Initially established in 1994 as a human rights verification mission, the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA), was extended in December 1996 to assist in implementing the *Agreement*. The Mission trained former combatants on demobilization to assist with resettlement and integration after years of war. Those efforts, among others, were building blocks for long-lasting reforms in the country and led to the United Nations declaring Guatemala eligible for access to the UN Peacebuilding Fund in 2011 (United Nations, n.d. -a)

2 GEDSI statistical profile

This chapter presents data on key GEDSI indicators in Guatemala, including a comparison with other countries in the LAC region where available. Table 1 provides a summary of results: yellow cells highlight the most favourable outcome in relation to each indicator.

Table 1 Guatemala GEDSI indicators compared to the LAC region

	Guatemala	Region	Source
GEDSI indexes			
Gender Development Index	0.931	0.991	UNDP, 2022a
Gender Inequality Index	0.474	0.386	UNDP, 2022b
Women Peace and Security Index	0.569	0.626	Georgetown Institute for WPS, 2023
Social Institutions and Gender Index	25.7	21	OECD, 2023a
Poverty			
Poverty headcount ratio at societal poverty line (% of population) (2023)	29%	25.9%	World Bank, 2025a
Education			
Population aged 20 to 24 years with complete secondary education (%) (2023)	Urban: Female 46.3% Male 52.4% Rural: Female 18.1% Male 20.2%	Urban: Female 76.2% Male 70.5% Rural: Female 57.5% Male 51.2%	ECLAC, 2025a
Population with at least some secondary education (% ages 25 and older) (2022)	Female 31.1% Male 37.8%	Female 64.4% Male 64.2%	UNDP, 2022b
Share of youth not in education, employment or training (% of youth population) (2023)	Female 38.4% Male 7.5%	Female 25% Male 13%	World Bank, 2025b
Health			
Maternal mortality ratio (estimate per 100,000 live births of women aged 15–49) (2023)	94	77	World Bank, 2025c
Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15–19) (2023)	68.3	51.2	World Bank, 2025d
Percentage of adolescent girls and young women aged 15–19 who are mothers (Guatemala 2013; LA 2020)	13.1%	10%	ECLAC, 2025b
Percentage of sexually active population using modern methods of contraception (women of reproductive aged 15–49)	36%	55%	Health Information Platform for the Americas, 2025
Unmet need for family planning: any method (women aged15–49 married or in a union) (2025)	12.2%	N/A	UN, 2025

Table 1 Guatemala GEDSI indicators compared to the LAC region

	Guatemala	Region	Source
Economic empowerment			
Labour force participation (aged 15 and older) (2023)	Female 52.3% Male 87.3%	Female 52.3% Male 75.3%	World Bank, 2025e
Percentage of the population agreeing or strongly agreeing that 'when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women' (2022)	22%	15%	OECD, 2023b
Percentage of the population agreeing or strongly agreeing that 'men make better business executives than women do' (2022)	18%	18%	OECD, 2023b
Gender gap in management positions (% of managers, men and women)	Female 37% Male 63%	Female 38% Male 62%	OECD, 2023b
Gender gap in top management positions (% of firms with a woman as top manager versus % of firms with a man as a top manager) (2022)	Female 19% Male 82%	Female 18% Male 82%	OECD, 2023b
Youth unemployment (% of labour force aged 15–24) (2023)	Female 4.7% Male 4.1%	Female 15.4% Male 11.6%	World Bank, 2025f
Unpaid care and domestic work			
% of the population agreeing or strongly agreeing that 'when a mother works for pay, the children suffer' (2022)	59%	39%	OECD, 2023b
Men's and women's average time spent (in hours) on unpaid domestic and care work in a 24-hour period	Female 4.7 Male 0.6	Female 4 Male 2	OECD, 2023b
Women's political representation			
% of Members of Parliament, men and women (2022)	Female 19% Male 81%	Female 34% Male 66%	OECD, 2023b
% of seats held by women in national parliaments (2023)	20%	36%	World Bank, 2025g
% of women cabinet ministers (2025)	38.5%	30.4%	UN Women, 2025a
Gender-based violence			
% of women who have ever experienced intimate partner violence (% of ever-partnered women aged 15-49) (2018)	21%	25%	World Bank, 2025h
% of men and women who report not feeling safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live (2021)	Female 53% Male 32%	Female 49% Male 35%	OECD, 2023b
% of boys and girls aged 15 to19 who have been or are still married, divorced, widowed or in an informal union (2022)	Female 18% Male 6%	Female 10% Male 3%	OECD, 2023b
Femicides or feminicides (absolute numbers and rates per 100,000 women) (2023)	45 Rate (per 100,000 women) 0.5	3,897 Rate (per 100,000 women) N/A	ECLAC, 2025c

As Table 1 shows, Guatemala ranks worse than the average for the region on most indicators. The next section discusses these patterns and the reasons for them in more detail.

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) measures gender inequalities in three areas (reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity), with a higher value representing a less gender equitable society. Guatemala has a GII value of 0.474, which is higher than the regional average (0.386) – that is, Guatemala is ranked as less gender equal than the average for the rest of the region.

The Women Peace and Security (WPS) Index ranks countries based on 13 indicators under 3 dimensions: women's inclusion, justice, and security. Countries score between 0 and 1, with 0 denoting the worst performance and 1 (or 100) denoting the best. Guatemala's score is 0.569, lower than the average score for the LAC region of 0.626 (Georgetown Institute for WPS, 2023).

On the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI),[5] Guatemala has a value of 25.7 (based on most recent data from 2023), which is classified as a comparatively low level of gender discrimination. For the four dimensions of discrimination, the country is rated 'very low' for the category 'restricted civil liberties' (15); and 'low' for 'discrimination in the family' (29), 'restricted physical integrity' (30), and 'restricted access to productive and financial resources' (28) (OECD, 2023a). As can be seen in Table 1, although Guatemala has an overall 'low' score in relation to gender discrimination, discrimination is higher than in the rest of the LAC region (20.9). This is because Guatemala's scores for 'discrimination in the family', 'restricted physical integrity', and 'restricted access to productive and financial resources' dimensions are slightly higher compared to other countries in the region (ibid.). As will be discussed later, this is due to gender gaps to the detriment of women, such as gaps in top management positions, political representation, patterns of labour market participation and economic equality, as well as the high levels of gender-based violence. It is worth noting that the SIGI indicators alone do not necessarily capture the extent of gender discrimination in Guatemala.

A similar trend is observed in the Gender Development Index (GDI).[6] The GDI is designed so that the closer a country's GDI value is to 1, the more gender equal it is. Among developing regions, the gender gap in human development is narrowest in the LAC region (UNDP, 2022a). Guatemala's GDI value is 0.931, slightly lower than the LAC regional average of 0.991, according to 2022 data. This places Guatemala in category 3 (with 5 being the worst and 1 being the best in terms of gender equality).

---

5 The SIGI uses 25 variables to measure discrimination in social institutions. These variables are grouped into four dimensions: discrimination in the family, restricted physical integrity, restricted access to productive and financial resources, and restricted civil liberties. The SIGI scale ranges from 0 to 100, with 0 being the best outcome and 100 being the worst. Countries are classified into five groups according to their SIGI score: (1) very low level of discrimination (SIGI < 20); (2) low level of discrimination (20 < SIGI < 30); (3) medium level of discrimination (30 < SIGI < 40); (4) high level of discrimination (40 < SIGI < 50); and (5) very high level of discrimination (SIGI > 50) (OECD, 2023a).

6 The Gender Development Index (GDI) measures gender inequalities in achievement in three basic dimensions of human development: health (measured by female and male life expectancy at birth); education (measured by female and male expected years of schooling for children and mean years for adults aged 25 years and older); and command over economic resources (measured by female and male estimated GNI per capita). The income component of the GDI is a proxy to command over economic resources. See: http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-development-index-gdi

The following sections present key GEDSI indicators by topic.

2.1 Marginalised groups

Guatemala is the most populous country in Central America, with an estimated population of 18.4 million in 2024 (World Bank, 2025i). It has a highly youthful population – in 2020, 67% of the population was under 30 years of age (MARN et al., 2024).

Indigenous groups

Guatemala is a multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual society. The ethnic composition of the country includes Indigenous groups: Maya, Xinka and Garifuna (mixed African-Indigenous peoples); Ladino or Mestizo (peoples of mixed Indigenous and Spanish/European descent); and an Afro-descendent population (that is not Garifuna). According to Guatemala's National Institute of Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadística; INE), in 2023, Indigenous people represented 38.8% of the total population, most of whom identify as Maya (37.5%). The majority (60.3%) of the population is Ladino/Mestizo. Smaller groups include: Xinka (1.3%), Afro-descendent (0.9%) and Garifuna (0.1%) (INE, 2023a).

Of the Indigenous population in 2023, 53.0% were women, a large proportion (42.9%) was aged between 0- to 17 and the majority (61.8%) lived in rural areas (INE, 2023a). Indigenous peoples are distributed throughout the country, although the largest Indigenous population is found in the central part of the country, notably the departments of Alta Verapaz and Baja Verapaz, followed by Huehuetenango and Quiché (ibid.). A study in 2023 found that 72.4% of the Indigenous population speaks an Indigenous language[7] as their mother tongue, and 27.2% reported speaking Spanish as their mother tongue.

Looking at the Mayan community, there are 22 Mayan linguistic communities of which the K'iche and Q'eqchi communities are the largest, representing 26.2% and 24.9% of the Mayan population, respectively (INE, 2023a). As will be detailed in subsequent sections, Indigenous people face significant inequalities in education, healthcare, living conditions and income (IWGIA, 2023; Vílchez, 2023; UN Women, n.d.) because of the exclusion and racism that have led to structural, legal and institutionalised forms of violence and discrimination. These are often starker in the case of Indigenous women, particularly among those who live in rural areas (UN Women, n.d.).

People with disabilities

Data from Guatemala's National Council for the Care of People with Disabilities (Consejo Nacional para la Atención de las Personas con Discapacidad; CONADI)[8] indicates that 10.4% of the population over the age of four years has at least one disability, of which 53.4% are women and 46.6% are men (CONADI, 2024). The greatest difference between women and men with disabilities is evident in the department of Guatemala, where 55.7% of people with disabilities are women, compared to 44.3% who are men. By ethnic group, 61.7% of those with a disability identify as Ladinos and 35.6% as Maya (ibid).

---

7 The population that speaks Indigenous languages was defined as people who reported one of the 22 languages of Mayan origin, the Xinka language or Garifuna as their mother tongue.

8 CONADI is the government agency responsible for coordinating, advising and promoting policies related to disability rights in Guatemala.

The most common disability is difficulty seeing, accounting for 7.0% of the total population, followed by difficulty walking or climbing stairs, at 3.4%. Of the total population, 2.7% experience difficulty hearing, 2.2% have difficulty remembering or concentrating, 1.4% have difficulty communicating, and 1.0% have difficulty with personal care (ibid.).

There are often gaps in disabled people's access to health, education, work and other services, though data on gaps is not always available (UN, 2021). For instance, 17.4% of children with disabilities do not study, compared to 10.9% of children without disabilities, and 47.0% of households with people with disabilities have unmet basic needs, compared to 37.8% of households without people with disabilities (CONADI, 2024). Indigenous women and girls with disabilities, in particular, face heightened levels of discrimination and exclusion as they encounter multiple barriers and intersecting inequalities based on their disability, gender and Indigenous origin (Global Disability Fund, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the invisibility of people with disabilities, the widening exclusion gaps, and the lack of an inclusive approach in health emergency responses, with many essential health services not being accessible to people with disabilities (PAHO, n.d.).

Despite some legal recognition, social protection for people with disabilities tends to be limited due to budgetary constraints and a lack of political will (UN, 2021; Hernández, 2023). Disability rights have often been overshadowed by other forms of discrimination or addressed in isolation rather than being integrated into broader discussions around gender equality, education, health, housing and social protection. As a result, persons with disabilities are often overlooked in national social programmes (Disability Rights International, n.d.). People with severe disabilities who benefitted from social protection benefits represented just 2.1% of the total population in 2022 (2.7% of the male population and 0.9% of the female population) (UN Women, 2025b; UN, n.d. -b).

Public opinion about people with disabilities can vary and is not necessarily negative, but factors such as lack of knowledge about disability and lack of sensitisation within communities often reinforces exclusion (Grech, 2016; Liliane Fonds, 2024). This is reflected in practices such as the institutionalisation of children with disabilities in centres (also called orphanages), where children are vulnerable to violence and abuse (Disability Rights International, 2021; Hernández, 2023).

LGBTQI+ individuals

LGBTQI+ individuals in Guatemala face significant legal and social marginalisation. Same-sex sexual acts are legal in Guatemala, as the country's first Penal Code (1834) after independence did not criminalise consensual same-sex sexual acts between adults (ILGA, 2025a). However, there is no legislation to protect against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression (Marsicovetere, 2022).

In terms of recognition of gender identity, any person can submit a request for name change to Guatemala's National Registry (Registro Nacional de las Personas; RENAP) and Guatemala's trans population has taken advantage of this right (Gómez-Lugo and Jones Pérez, 2023). However, this request is published in the government gazette and can be opposed by other persons (in which case, a court will determine if the given name of the petitioner will be changed or not) (ILGA, 2025b). Individuals are also unable to modify the sex markers in their identification documents, although their photographs can be changed (Gómez-Lugo and Jones Pérez, 2023). Local organisations, such

as OTRANS-RN, which supports trans women in Guatemala, have succeeded in providing support for 400 people to rectify the names and photos on their documents, but not their sex marker (ibid.).

LGBTQI+ people in Guatemala often experience violence and discrimination at home, in schools, workplaces and from law enforcement (UNDP, 2023a). This threatens their physical safety, limits their life choices and, in some cases, leads them to flee their country. In 2024, at least 36 LGBTQI+ people were murdered in Guatemala for reasons allegedly related to their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression – the second highest number of violent deaths recorded by Lambda – an organisation that documents violence against the LGBTQI+ community in Guatemala (Asociación Lambda, 2024). Geographically, the departments with the highest number of violent deaths of LGBTQI+ people were Guatemala (9), San Marcos (5) and Santa Rosa (5) (ibid.).

Family rejection and discrimination contribute to economic marginalisation, particularly for trans women, many of whom report limited job options beyond sex work (ibid.). Poverty can also heighten their exposure to violence from organised crime, the public and security forces (ibid.).

Research on attitudes towards LGBTQI+ issues in Guatemala have identified a strong opposition to LGBTQI+ rights, reflecting underlying homophobic sentiments: according to the World Values Survey (2017–22), just 14.89% of Guatemalans thought homosexuality was justifiable (Equaldex, n.d.). A 2023 UN Development Programme (UNDP) survey of LGBTQI+ individuals across Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica and Panama found that 45% of respondents had experienced discrimination in the past year, while 29% reported violations of their rights in the past year (UNDP, 2023a). Lack of family support, difficulty freely expressing one's sexual orientation, and violence due to prejudice and discrimination, including at work and school, were issues that were often cited for the LGBTQI+ community (ibid.).

Access to justice can already be difficult due to fragile institutions, corruption and gang influence, but LGBTQI+ individuals face additional stigma, discrimination and violence from law enforcement (ibid.). There have been consistent reports of police surveillance, abuse and targeted killings of trans women (HRW, 2021; Outright International, 2025).

In recent years, legislative efforts have further threatened LGBTQI+ rights and opposition for LGBTQI+ rights has been seen in all branches of government, as well as from well-organised religious groups (Gómez-Lugo and Jones Pérez, 2023). In 2021, for example, several deputies introduced a 'Bill to guarantee the integral protection of children and teenagers against gender identity disorders', which could potentially ban any legal gender recognition to children and adolescents, as it sets the 'right' of every child and teenager to have their 'sexual gender identity at birth' protected (ILGA, 2025b). In 2022, Congress passed the 'Life and Family Protection Law' (Law Initiative 5272), which sought to ban same-sex marriage, ban schools from teaching about sexual diversity and gender equality, and define sexual diversity as deviant behaviour. The law was vetoed by the President following protests led by women's rights and LGBTQI+ rights groups, including students, Indigenous groups and trans activists, as well international actors such as Amnesty International and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (Marsicovetere, 2022). Even among politicians who do not actively oppose LGBTQI+ rights, there remains a lack of political will to support thoseLGBTQI rights, leaving significant challenges for legal or policy reform to prevent discrimination.

2.2 Poverty and inequality

According to the 2023 National Living Conditions Survey (Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida; ENCOVI), 56.0% of Guatemala's population was living in poverty in 2023, corresponding to 9.7 million people (INE, 2023b). Of this figure, 16.2% lived in extreme poverty and 39.8% – or 6.9 million – in non-extreme poverty.[9] Of the total population, 44.0% is considered non-poor, with consumption above the general poverty line (ibid).

Although Guatemala is considered an upper middle-income country, there is an extremely unequal distribution of wealth: the top 20% of the population accounted for 59.88% of national consumption in 2023 (INE, 2023c).[10] In contrast, the poorest 20% of the population accounted for just 3.02% of total national consumption.

The Gini coefficient, a measure of the degree of income inequality in a country (where a higher number indicates greater income inequality), was 0.48 in 2000, decreasing by 0.11 between the years 2000 and 2014, and rising again to 0.42 in 2023 (ibid.). The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) considers five different dimensions of poverty or well-being according to the Guatemalan context and complements other tools, such as the consumption poverty line.[11] It found that 57.7% of the population was multidimensionally poor based on data from the 2023 National Survey of Living Conditions (Encuesta Nacional de Condiciones de Vida; ENCOVI) (Government of Guatemala, 2025). The incidence of multidimensional poverty in rural areas is almost double that in urban areas (76.3% versus 40.8%). The greatest differences between urban and rural areas are observed in indicators such as years of schooling, informal employment, housing materials, and garbage collection, where the deprivation is significantly higher in rural areas. At the regional level, the Norte, Petén, and Noroccidente regions have the highest levels of multidimensional poverty. The Norte region stands out for both its high incidence and intensity of poverty: not only does it have the highest percentage of multidimensionally poor people, but, on average, they face 52.1% of possible deprivations (ibid).

Differences by sex

Poverty rates among men and women are similar, though slightly higher among men: 56.5% of men and 55.5% of women experienced some form of poverty in 2023 (INE, 2023c). Figure 1 presents gender-disaggregated data on incidence of poverty.

---

9 The extreme poverty line is the annual cost of consuming a minimum amount of food per person (in quetzales, Q). The national extreme poverty line in 2023 was Q.6,095.7, with 16.2% of the population living below this line (INE, 2023b). In contrast, the general poverty line represents the annual cost of consuming the minimum amount of food in addition to the cost of consuming goods and services other than food. The estimated minimum consumption of food and other non-food goods and services for 2023 was Q.14,382.7 per year, equivalent to about £1,499. The conversion rate, as of 01 October 2023, was determined using Wise's Currency Converter (Wise, 2025).

10 This has come down about 9 percentage points since 2006.

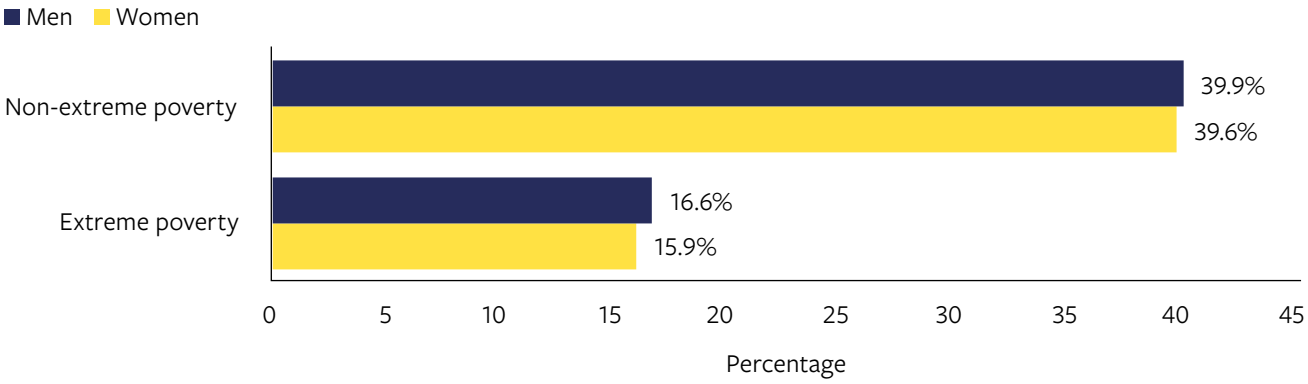
11 The MPI for Guatemala considers five dimensions of poverty, which are weighted equally and comprised a total of 17 indicators: i) Health and Food and Nutritional Security (comprising 4 indicators, each with a 5% weight); ii) Education (comprising 4 indicators, each with 5% weight); iii) Decent Employment (comprising 2 indicators with a 10% weight each); iv) Access to Services; and v) Housing (comprising 3 indicators, each with a 6.66% weight). The 2023 Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida (ENCOVI) was used to calculate the MPI (Government of Guatemala, 2025).

Socio-demographic differences

As shown in Figure 2, Guatemala's Indigenous population is more affected by poverty than its Ladino/Mestizo and Afro-descendant populations. In 2023, 45.5% of the Indigenous population lived in non-extreme poverty and 29.8% in extreme poverty. As for the Ladino/Mestizo and Afro-descendant population, 36.2% were in non-extreme poverty and 7.6% in extreme poverty (INE, 2023a).

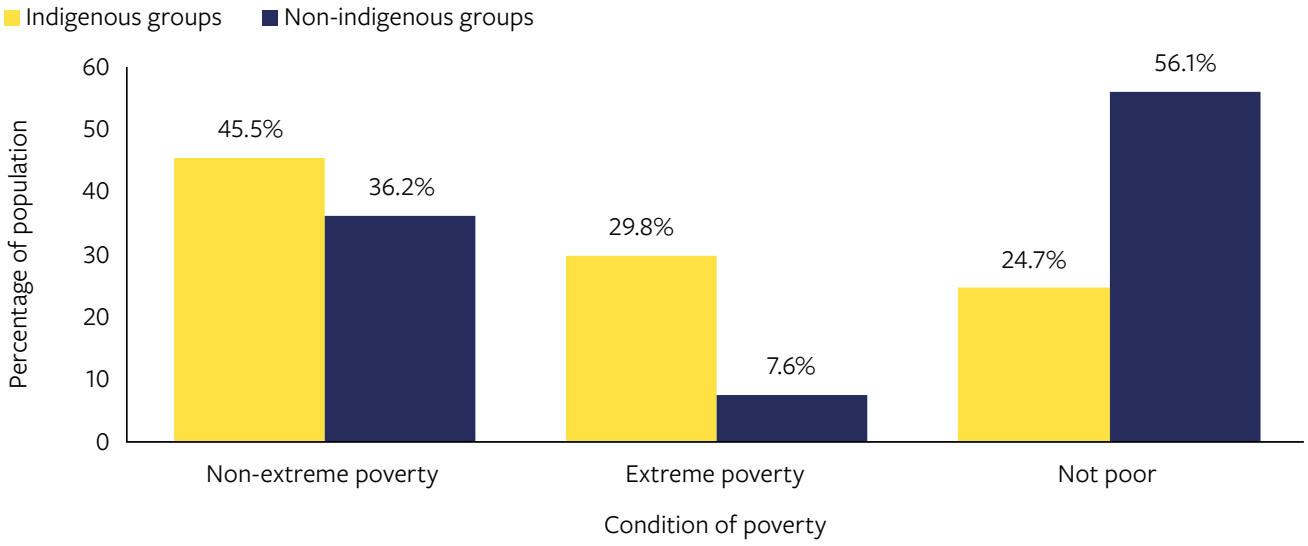
Additionally, as demonstrated in Figure 3, poverty affects Indigenous men and women very similarly, with 29.4% of women living in extreme poverty in 2023 compared to 30.3% of Indigenous men (ibid.).

Figure 1 Incidence of poverty by sex, 2023 (%)



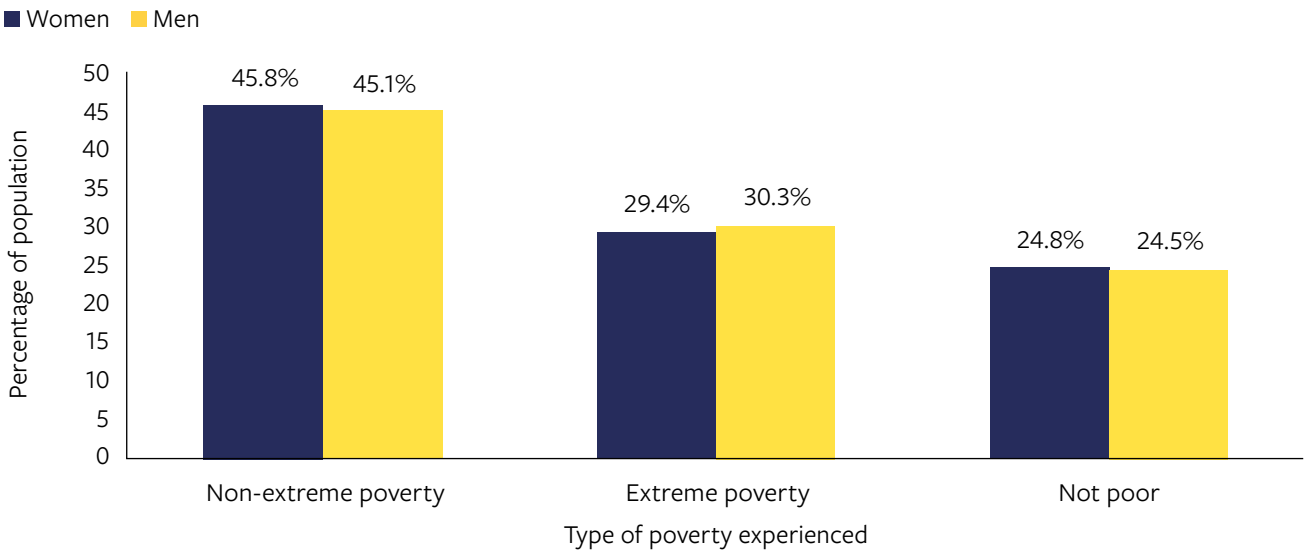
Source: authors, using data from National Institute of Statistics (INE), Guatemala (2023c)

Figure 2 Distribution of population by poverty status and ethnic group, 2023 (%)



Source: authors, using data from National Institute of Statistics (INE), Guatemala (2023a)

Figure 3 Distribution of Indigenous population by type of poverty and sex, 2023 (%)

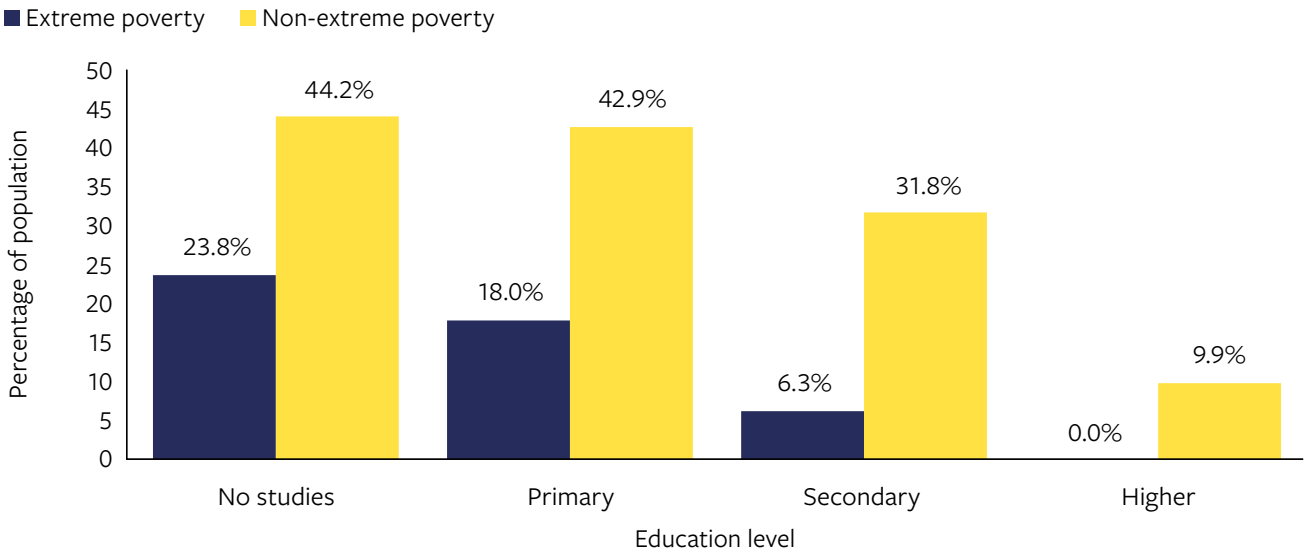


Note: The reported results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Source: authors, using data from National Institute of Statistics (INE), Guatemala (2023a)

Regarding people with disabilities, data from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) shows that in Guatemala, 10.38% of people with disabilities live in poverty or extreme poverty (PAHO, n.d.). Poverty is also related to level of education. Figure 4 shows that people without education are the most affected by poverty, with 68% of those who have not received any education experiencing some form of poverty. In contrast, only 9.9% of the total number of people with higher education are living in poverty (INE, 2023c).

Figure 4 Incidence of poverty by level of education, 2023 (%)



Source: authors, using data from National Institute of Statistics (INE), Guatemala (2023c)

The data shows a downward trend in the incidence of poverty as age increases, indicating greater poverty among young people. The 0–19 age group has the highest proportion of people living below the national poverty line, at 64.0%, with the lowest proportion of people in poverty found in the 60-year-old and older group, at 40.6% (ibid.). This means that poverty is more widespread among younger age groups. Similarly, the highest proportion of extreme poverty is found in the group under 20 years of age, (20.4%), while for those aged 60 and over, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty is 8.5% (see Table 2).

Table 2 Incidence of extreme and non-extreme poverty by age, 2023 (%)

Age	Proportion of population living below national poverty line (2023)	Proportion of population living below extreme poverty line (2023)
0–19	64.0%	20.4%
20–39	54.8%	15.1%
40–59	46.7%	12.2%
60 +	40.6%	8.5%

Source: authors, using data from National Institute of Statistics (INE), Guatemala (2023c)

Additionally, poverty rates are notably higher in rural areas than urban areas. The extreme poverty rate in rural areas was 24.4% compared to 8.8% in urban areas in 2023 (INE, 2023c). The total poverty rate in rural areas in 2023 was 66.4%, compared to 46.7% in urban areas. This rural–urban poverty differential has shrunk since 2000, when total poverty rates in rural areas were 74.5%, compared to 27.1% in urban areas (ibid.).

Living conditions and access to essential services

In Indigenous households (that is, Mayan, Xinka and Garifuna), 36.6% live in overcrowded conditions,[12] compared to 20.6% in Ladino/Mestizo and Afro-descendant households. This percentage rises to 66.1% of Indigenous households living in extreme poverty (INE, 2023a).

At the national level, 32.6% of the population lived in households with access to basic sanitation services in 2023 (INE, 2023c). This proportion varies significantly between areas: in urban areas, 55.9% of the population had access to these services, while in rural areas, only 7.0% had access.

As shown in Table 3, households' access to services such as water, electricity and sewerage varies according to their poverty status. The low coverage of the drainage network stands out, with just 14.1% and 39.0% of extremely poor and non-extremely poor households having access to this service, compared to 63.3% of non-poor households (INE, 2023c).

12 The overcrowding index is a measure of the proportion of people living in a household and the number of bedrooms available in that household. In Guatemala, a household is considered to be overcrowded when the index value is greater than 3.0 (INE, 2023b)

Table 3 Access to basic services according to poverty, 2023 (%)

Basic service	Extremely poor households	Non-extremely poor households	Non-poor households
Water distribution network	54.7 %	73.3%	84.7%
Drainage network	14.1%	39.0%	63.3%
Electricity distribution network	61.3%	84.5%	94.4%

Source: authors, using data from National Institute of Statistics (INE), Guatemala (2023c)

2.3 Migration

Poverty and economic stress are the reasons cited most widely for migration throughout the region (Mixed Migration Centre, 2023). However, migration dynamics affect women differently compared to men as a result of gendered divisions of labour. These gender differences in experiences of migration and displacement reflect prevailing gender norms and patterns of economic opportunity. Data on adolescent migration shows a higher proportion of boys (59%) than girls are encountered migrating irregularly from Guatemala to Mexico (Government of Mexico, 2023). While girls also migrate for work, caregiver norms mean they are more likely to be expected to stay at home and care for other family members, the home or the farm (Marcus, 2024). Moreover, threats of sexual violence and forced recruitment into organised crime are also key factors that contribute to internal and external migration (ibid.).

Male migration can also increase the burden on women, especially if a male partner does not send remittances or if there are insufficient resources to maintain the household (MARN et al., 2024). When men leave their families because of migration, there are psychological effects for both women and children, as well as impacts on the family's economic stability and living conditions, including financial hardship where families have to pay off their migration debt (Canizales, 2023).

Migration can also increase the vulnerability and dependence of women who remain in Guatemala (MARN et al., 2024). Guatemala's patriarchal culture allows men to maintain their role as providers and decision-makers even from a distance, and gender roles may continue to be maintained through the husband's family. In some cases, men send remittances to their parents, who do not allow women to access them or make decisions about their use (ibid.).

Transit migration and returns

Due to its location, Guatemala experiences a significant flow of migrants in transit – particularly migrants from Central American to North America (IOM, 2024; Integral Human Development, 2022). As a result, there is a large flow of irregular migrants who enter Guatemala: in 2024, a total of 25,854 foreigners were identified and expelled for entering in Guatemala illegally, the majority being from Venezuela (Government of Guatemala, 2025).

Regarding returns, under the current United States administration, the commitments to migration enforcement and mass deportations of undocumented migrants have intensified. These commitments have significant implications for Guatemala, particularly given the high rates of irregular migration from Guatemala to the US. In 2024, 61,722 Guatemalans were deported from the US, of whom the majority (74.4%) were men

(IOM, 2025a). These numbers are expected to rise, as Guatemalan President Bernardo Arevalo made an agreement with the US to increase the deportation flights it receives from the US by 40%, not only for Guatemalan nationals but also for deportees from other nationalities (ibid.). Recent testimonies from Guatemalans who have been deported have revealed the shock and trauma of their sudden deportation, particularly considering that many had lived in the US for years and had to leave abruptly, often without family members (Abbott, 2025).

2.4 Access to digital services

Telephone networks appear to be weak across the country, with only 8.3% of homes having access to a telephone network (INE, 2023d) and just 0.9% of extremely poor households with such access (INE, 2023c). Access to residential internet also appears to be quite limited and the gap between poor and non-poor households is also notable: the 2023 ENCOVI found that only 2.0% of households in extreme poverty have residential internet, compared to 11.1% of non-extremely poor households and 30.4% of non-poor households (INE, 2023c). Data on digital inclusion from the World Bank shows that the gender disparity in internet access is notable for Guatemala: the percentage of the population with internet access from any device and location was 48.6% for women and 53.4% for men in 2021. These figures are lower than the LAC regional averages of 77.5% and 77.7% for women and men, respectively, in 2022 (World Bank, 2025j).

Nonetheless, since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a reported increase in internet access and the acquisition of digital devices (Cetino, n.d.), although the report does not specify if internet access increased due to access via homes or mobile devices. In 2023, 65% of the population (ages not specified) used cell phones, including 67.8% of men and 62.6% of women (INE, 2023c). Even households in extreme poverty have significant access to mobile phones, with a prevalence of mobile phones in extremely poor households of 67.2%, not far from the 77.5% for non-poor households. The data above suggests that although households might not have access to residential internet, they might have it through their mobile phones (buying data/credit from private mobile companies), a trend that increased with COVID-19.

2.5 Education, literacy and skills

Access to education

Guatemala's formal education system is structured as follows: pre-primary (aged 4 to 6 years), primary (7 to 12 years), basic secondary (13 to 15 years), diversified secondary (16+ years) and higher education, which includes tertiary, university and postgraduate education (SITEAL and UNESCO, 2019). Schooling is obligatory until basic secondary level (ibid.). The education levels achieved by the Guatemalan population (aged 15 years or older) are as follows (INE, 2023a):

- no studies – 20.1%
- primary – 39.7%
- secondary – 34.5%
- higher – 5.7%.

The country has made significant progress in the Gender Parity Index on enrolment rates[13] at all levels of education: primary, 0.98; secondary, 1.02 (as of 2021); and tertiary. 1.21 (as of 2023) (World

13 The Gender Parity Index for the gross enrolment ratio is the ratio of girls to boys enrolled at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels in public and private schools.

Bank, 2025q). The data shows that more women and girls participate in education in Guatemala; however, the country falls behind regional averages in education metrics overall. For instance, the lower secondary school completion rate was 51% for girls and 48% for boys as of 2023, compared to 76% and 72% for girls and boys, respectively, across the LAC region (World Bank, 2025k).

According to UNDP's GDI, the expected years of schooling for women in Guatemala are slightly lower – 10.6 years compared to 10.9 years for men – while the regional average is higher (15.3 years for men and 14.2 years for women and men) (UNDP, 2022a). The participation rate in formal and non-formal education in 2023 for young people and adults between 15 and 24 was 33.6% overall and was fairly balanced between men and women (35.8% for men and 31.6% for women) (INE, 2023c).

Women's representation in STEM and other fields

Data on the share of higher education graduates by field shows that women are better represented in certain fields than others. Data for 2015 showed that the share of female graduates was fairly high in degrees in education (71.4%), health and welfare (70.5%), and social sciences, journalism and information (64.3%); while it was much lower in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) (34.7%) and agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary subjects (30.9%) (World Bank, 2025l).

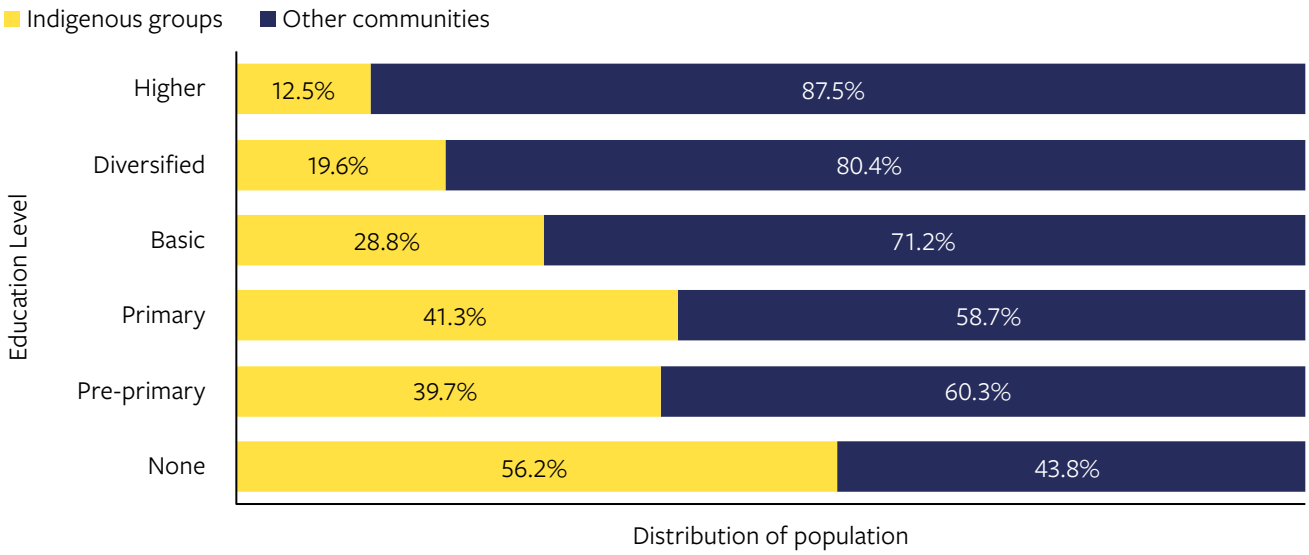
Indeed, gender disparities in STEM fields remain high, although information related to women's participation in STEM careers is quite limited. A study conducted by the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, with data collected between 2017 and 2020, indicated that 24% of those pursuing STEM careers were women and just 0.61% of graduates were Indigenous women. This reflects both the low participation of Indigenous women studying STEM careers as well as their limited access to university studies (MARN et al., 2024).

Indigenous peoples

Despite the progress made on gender parity in education, the quality and coverage of education is still a challenge in the country, especially for Indigenous women in secondary education (UN Women, n.d.). Of the 4.2 million people who were enrolled in formal education in 2023, the majority (65%) were of Ladino origin, compared to 35% of Mayan origin, 0.03% from the Garifuna community and 0.02% from the Xinka community (INE, 2023e).

The literacy rate of the Indigenous population (aged 7 years and older) is fairly high and not far from the national level – 72.9% and 83%, respectively (INE, 2023e; World Bank, 2025m). However, Figure 5 shows that the higher the level of education, the lower the number of Mayan, Xinka and Garifuna populations participating at that education level, with Ladino/Mestizo populations representing the vast majority of those in higher and diversified education (INE, 2023a).

Figure 5 Distribution of the population by level of education and ethnic group, 2023 (%)



Source: authors, using data from National Institute of Statistics (INE), Guatemala (2023a)

A positive measure of change has been the Ministry of Education's (Ministerio de Educación; MINEDUC) support for Indigenous children's participation in primary education. During the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women's (CEDAW's) 10th periodic report of Guatemala in 2023, the Guatemala delegation reported that education was provided in 16 languages by the Ministry of Education, compared to just 4 during the previous administration (OHCHR, 2023). A grant programme for English language education was also directed to Indigenous and rural communities (ibid.).

Literacy and information and communications technology (ICT) skills

Guatemala's adult literacy rate[14] is 83%, based on data from 2022 (World Bank, 2025m). Adult literacy is lower among women (78.6%) than among men (88.4%) and is also lower than the regional average (94.5% and 95.1% for women and men, respectively) (ibid). According to the 2018 census, higher literacy rates are concentrated in the south of the country, with the highest literacy rate in the departments Guatemala (93.5%) and Sacatepéquez (90%) and the lowest literacy rates concentrated in the central part of the country: Alta Verapaz (66.2%) and Quiché (64.5%) (Government of Guatemala, 2018).

The proportion of youth and adults (15 years or older) with information and communications technology (ICT) skills in 2023 overall was 80.2%, with a greater prevalence of these skills among men than women (84.8% and 76.4%, respectively) (INE, 2023c).

2.6 Health

Guatemala's life expectancy for women was 75 years and for men 70 years, as of 2023. These figures are slightly lower than the LAC regional average for 2023, which is 79 for women and 73

14 The adult literacy rate is the percentage of people aged 15 and above who can both read and write with understanding a short, simple statement about their everyday life.

for men (World Bank, 2025n). Data from the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) indicates that chronic malnutrition affects 58% of Indigenous people and 38% of non-Indigenous people in Guatemala (IWGIA, 2023).

Indicators for women and girls' health in Guatemala have improved in line with regional and global trends, but many indicators show that health outcomes for women in Guatemala are worse than the regional average (see Table 1). There are also significant disparities in health for rural and marginalised populations due to barriers in accessing healthcare, but national statistical averages can hide these disparities, while data that separates outcomes for Indigenous versus non-Indigenous populations is not always available.

Sexual and reproductive health

The adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15–19), despite decreasing in line with global trends, remains higher than the regional and world average. The rate in 2023 was 68.3, compared to the regional average of 51.2 and world average of 39.1 (World Bank, 2025d). More than 4,000 girls between the ages of 10 and 14 give birth every year in Guatemala (UN Women, 2023). In 2016, 37,624 adolescents aged 10 to 19 had a pregnancy, 4% of whom were girls aged 10 to 14 (OHCHR, 2023). This resulted in 13.1% of adolescents aged 15–19 being mothers in 2018, compared to the Latin America regional average of 10.0% (ECLAC, 2025b). Chapter 3 discusses the factors driving these high birth rates in more detail.

Contraceptive prevalence (the percentage of married women aged 15–49 using any modern method of contraception) in 2015 was 61% (World Bank, 2025o). However, research has shown that contraceptive use is low among Indigenous women in rural areas, where there is less awareness and availability of contraceptive methods (Khalil and Richardson, 2019). Young women in Guatemala are likely to have a great need for sexual and reproductive health education, particularly in areas where education rates are lower (Guttmacher Institute, 2014).

Cultural factors create further barriers to reproductive healthcare, as women and girls may fear social or religious chastisement for using family planning; or they may feel unable to make and assert their own decisions about using contraception (Richardson et al., 2016). While the government has made some efforts to decrease teen pregnancy, including via the Plan for the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy for 2018 to 2022 (OHCHR, 2023), women's reproductive rights remain limited and have faced repeated attacks. This will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

Maternal and infant health

The maternal mortality ratio in Guatemala (deaths per 100,000 live births) improved from 166 in 2000 to 94 in 2023 – a 43% reduction – but is still slightly higher than the regional average of 77 (World Bank, 2025c). Indigenous women and women with no or a low level of schooling continue to be the most likely to die from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, with Indigenous women estimated to have a maternal mortality ratio more than twice that of non-Indigenous women (OHCHR, 2023; Olivas et al., 2023). High levels of maternal mortality can be attributed to extremely low levels of formal prenatal and delivery care, especially in rural areas, (World Bank, 2017).

Between 2002 and 2021, infant mortality in Guatemala decreased from 38.8 to 17.27 deaths per 1,000 live births, a fall of 55.5% (PAHO, 2024). Data on the proportion of births attended by

specialised health personnel shows that, at the national level, 63.8% of births are attended by trained professionals, with greater coverage in urban areas (77.8%) than in rural areas (51.9%) (INE, 2023c). Guatemala's National Survey of Mother and Child Health 2014-15 (Encuesta Nacional de Salud Materno Infantil 2014–15) also found that only 50.3% of Indigenous women and adolescent girls had skilled birth attendance, compared to 82.1% of non-Indigenous women (UN Women, 2018). Women in rural communities often rely instead on traditional Indigenous midwives (*comadronas*), to assist with pregnancy, labour and the postpartum period (Thakkar, 2024).

2.7 Economic empowerment

Labour force participation

The total labour force participation rate in Guatemala is higher than regional averages. This is one of the few metrics, together with the youth unemployment rate, where Guatemala outperforms the regional average for LAC. Guatemala's labour force participation rate (the percentage of the total population aged 15+) in 2023 was 68.2% compared to a regional level of 63.3% (World Bank, 2025e). However, at 52.3% in 2023, women's labour force participation was significantly lower than that of men (87.3%) (ibid.).[15]

Labour force participation lags behind among low-income women in particular. The labour force participation rate of women in urban areas aged 15 years and over in 2023 was 54.1% among the non-poor compared to 35.5% among the poor. Women in rural areas are at even more of a disadvantage, with a 41.7% labour force participation rate among the non-poor compared to 24.10% among the poor (ECLAC, 2025c).

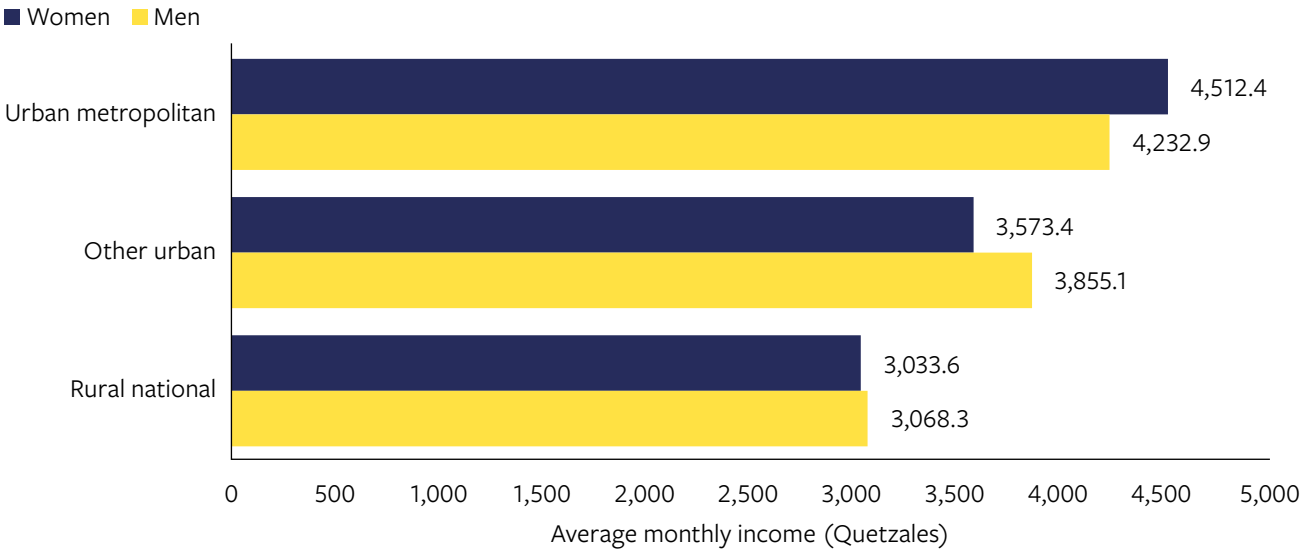
Women's lower labour force participation compared to that of men could be explained by gender norms and a traditional division of labour in the household, which is more likely to position women in the domestic sphere than men. For instance, the proportion of the Guatemalan population agreeing or strongly agreeing that 'when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women' was 22%, higher than the average for the Americas (15%), based on 2022 data from the World Values Survey (OECD, 2023b).

Gender pay gap

Figure 6 presents gender-disaggregated data on monthly income in the formal sector by area, revealing that men generally earn more than women, except in urban metropolitan areas (INE, 2023d). However, it is important to note that informal employment dominates the Guatemalan labour market (see data on informal employment later in this section). This means that formal sector data does not fully reflect the income realities of most workers. Indeed, women in informal employment have a significantly lower incomes than men in urban and rural areas (see Figure 7).

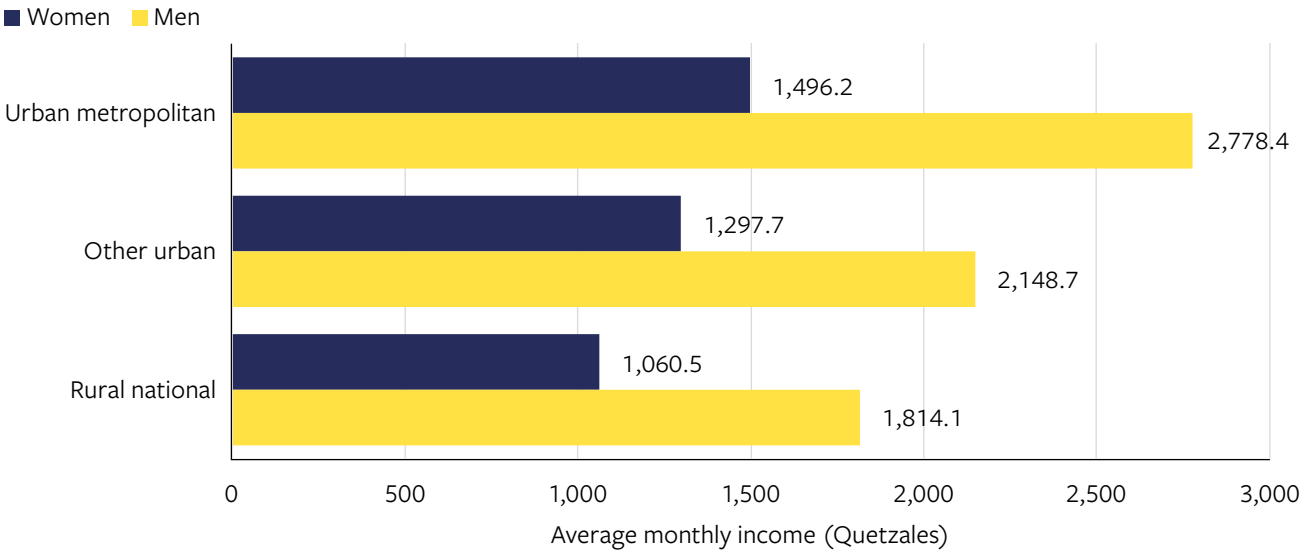
15 There is a slight discrepancy in the labour force participation rate between the national and ILO estimates. This report uses the national estimate.

Figure 6 Average monthly income in the formal sector by area and sex, 2023 (in quetzales)



Source: authors, using data from National Institute of Statistics (INE), Guatemala (2023d)

Figure 7 Average monthly income in the informal sector by area and sex, 2023 (in quetzales)



Source: authors, using data from National Institute of Statistics (INE), Guatemala (2023d)

Vulnerable employment

Workers in vulnerable employment are the least likely to have formal work arrangements, social protection and safety nets to guard against economic shocks and are, therefore, more likely to fall into poverty. The share of people in vulnerable employment as a proportion of total employment was 52% for women and 29% for men in Guatemala in 2023 (World Bank, 2025p). While the rate for men was slightly lower than the regional average (32%), the rate for women was noticeably higher (ibid.).

Informal employment

Informal employment is highly prevalent in Guatemala. Indeed, most of the employed population aged 15 years and older works in the informal sector: based on International Labour Organization (ILO) data, total informal employment in Guatemala was 83.2% in 2023; 81.2% for men and 86% for women (ILO, 2025). This is significantly higher than the 2023 LAC regional average, which stands at 51.8% overall: 52.6% for men and 50.8% for women (ibid.). Informal employment in Guatemala is highest in the agricultural sector (94.1%), slightly lower for industry (85.4%) and lowest for the services sector (75.3%) (ibid.).

Unemployment

Data from Guatemala's National Institute for Statistics (INE) shows that the national unemployment rate was 1.7% in 2023.[16] However, as shown in Table 4, women face higher unemployment across both urban and rural areas (INE, 2023d). By ethnic group, the unemployment rate was 2.3% among Ladinos, 0.5% among Mayans and 2.6% among other groups (that is, Garifuna, Xinka, Afro-descendent and foreigners). Unemployment rates among indigenous groups might be lower because they are concentrated in particular sectors of the economy (e.g. agriculture), where they tend to earn lower salaries; increasing their probability of being poor (Canelas and Gisselquist, 2018). Unemployment is also reported to be higher for young people aged 15–24 (3.7%) than for those aged over 24 (1.1%) (ibid.).

Table 4 Unemployment rate by region and sex, 2023 (%)

	Women	Men
Metropolitan urban	6.6%	2.2%
Rest of urban	2.3%	0.9%
Rural	0.9%	0.5%

Source: authors, using data from National Institute of Statistics (INE), Guatemala (2023d)

In line with the regional trend, women in Guatemala were represented disproportionately among youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) in 2023: 38.4% of women aged 15 to 24 were in this situation compared to only 7.5% of men in the same age group (World Bank, 2025b). The underemployment rate (that is, economically active people who work less than the working day and have a desire to work more) was 11.9% in 2023; 10.7% for men and 14.0% for women (INE, 2023d).

Women in leadership positions

Data from various sources demonstrates the significant gender gap in management positions. Data from Guatemala's National Institute of Statistics (INE) shows that women (aged 15 and over) represented 34.3% of those employed in managerial positions in 2023. Not suprisingly, there is a significant discrepancy between urban and rural areas, with 40.6% of women in urban areas employed in management positions, compared to just 3.8% in rural areas (INE, 2023c).

16 There were slight discrepancies in the unemployment rate between national and international data sources. According to the World Bank, Guatemala's unemployment rate (as a percentage of the total labour force) was 2.3% in 2023, notably lower than the rate for the LAC region (6.2%) (World Bank, 2025p). The unemployment rate for women was 2.9% and for men 1.9%, compared to 7.4% and 5.2% for men and women across the LAC region. The unemployment rate among persons with disabilities was also higher, at 3.3% for men and 6% for women in 2023 (ILO, 2024).

Similarly, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports that women represent 37% of the share of middle and senior managers, compared to a share of 63% for men (OECD, 2023b). Additionally, the proportion of men in top management positions (by percentage of firms) is considerably higher (82%) compared to women (19%). This is consistent with regional patterns: in the Americas, women represent, on average, 38% of middle and senior managers and 18% of those in top management positions (ibid.).

Some inequitable gender norms persist regarding the ability of women to lead. For instance, results from 2022 World Values Survey show that the proportion of the population agreeing or strongly agreeing that 'men make better business executives than women do' is 18% in Guatemala – the same as for the LAC region generally (OECD, 2023b).

2.8 Unpaid care and domestic work

Responsibilities for household tasks and caregiving tend to fall upon women and are often a major barrier to their labour force participation. Indeed, there are large inequalities in working hours between men and women, with women spending significantly more time on unpaid work than paid work. On average in 2022, women and men (aged 15 and over) reported spending 14.4 and 38.4 hours on paid work a week, respectively, whereas for unpaid work, women and men reported spending 41.9 and 8.3 hours, respectively (ECLAC, 2025c). As shown in Table 5, even among women who are employed, there is significantly greater responsibility for household chores compared to men.

Attitudinal data reveals that norms endorsing conventional gender divisions of labour are still strong. For instance, the proportion of the population agreeing or strongly agreeing that 'when a mother works for pay, the children suffer' is higher in Guatemala (59%) than it is across the Americas region (39%) (LAC, USA and Canada), according to 2022 data from the World Values Survey (OECD, 2023b).

2.9 Women's political representation

After 36 years of internal armed conflict, Guatemala entered a new phase in 1996 with the signing of the Peace Accords and an agenda for building a more inclusive country. This was the first Peace Accord in Latin America to recognise violence against women, create specific mechanisms for Indigenous women and institutionalise peace (UN Women, n.d.). Women's organisations played a leading role in the negotiations to ensure that gender-specific provisions were included in the final agreement (see Chapter 1, Introduction).

Table 5 Key indicators on unpaid care and domestic work

Indicator	Women	Men	Source
Proportion of time spent daily on unpaid housework and care by people aged over 15 (%) (2023)	27.1%	8.0%	INE, 2023c
Average time spent per day on housework by employed population (hours) (2023)	5.8	2.4	INE, 2023e
Time spent weekly on unpaid work among those with own income (hours) (2022)	44.81	15.64	ECLAC, 2025c

An indication of progressive change has been the rising participation of women in Guatemalan public life and politics, including Indigenous women, who are running in elections at both the local and national levels (UN Women, n.d.). For the first time in Guatemalan political history, a woman was elected to the vice-presidency during the 2011 elections (UN Women, n.d.). To date, no woman has been elected as President, but women have been elected to preside over the judicial and legislative branches of government (ibid.).

In terms of political participation, 54.1% of registered voters were women in the 2023 elections (EU Election Observation Mission, 2023). This may be a result of government efforts to increase political engagement and representation of women and Indigenous people – for instance, Guatemala's delegation to CEDAW noted that the Government established offices that promoted the rights of women in 340 municipalities (OHCHR, 2023). Additionally, in 2020, the Office for the Defence of Indigenous Women (Defensoría de la Mujer Indígena, DEMI) and its partner institution implemented a project promoting Indigenous women's rights in politics, society, healthcare and other spheres (ibid.).

Nevertheless, women – especially Indigenous women – are still poorly represented at all levels of government, reflecting high levels of social exclusion and structural barriers that continue to impede women and marginalised groups' participation in politics (IWGIA, 2023). Following the 2023 elections, only 12 of the 340 municipalities have a woman as a mayor, and only one identifies as Indigenous (Bautista, 2023). Some of these women are also perceived as being elected due to their connections with former politicians rather than for their commitment to gender issues:

'Sister of, wife of, because the mechanism that works is a family network. So, whoever is willing and wants to take on the role to continue maintaining territorial control has an opportunity. We have seen with great sadness that many women enter into that game,' says Karin Slowing Umaña, an independent analyst and former head of the Presidential Planning and Programming Secretariat, Segeplan (Bautista, 2023).

This trend was also observed in a UN Women report, which stated that many women are called to the ranks of political parties as candidates because they are the relatives of another political figure. They do not necessarily have experience in politics but are simply co-opted with the goal of attracting the votes of supporters of their predecessors, or they themselves are interested in this political calling (UN Women, 2018).

Limited evidence was found of reforms to the electoral system and to political parties that promote the participation of Mayan, Garifuna, Xinca, Mestizo and Ladino women (MARN et al., 2024). Indeed, Guatemala is the only country in Latin America without a quota system for women's political participation (King's College London, 2024).

Further statistics on representation of women from different sources include the following:

- Guatemala has one of the lowest rates of female participation in the Presidential Cabinet (12.0% during the most recent term of office) and local government (11.4% as of 2020) in the LAC region (ECLAC, 2025d).
- The proportion of seats held in the national Parliament by women was just 19.4% as of 2024 – notably lower than the LAC regional average (35.8%) (ECLAC, 2025d). This is, nonetheless, an important increase since 2003, when the proportion was just 8% (World Bank, 2025g).

- Indigenous individuals account for no more than 15% of parliamentarians and high-ranking public officials (IWGIA, 2023).
- The presence of women judges in the Supreme Court is relatively high: in 2021, 58.3% of judges in the highest court were women, compared to the LAC regional average of 30.4% (ECLAC, 2025d).

UNDP's Gender Social Norms Index indicates that the proportion of people with biases against women in the political dimension is high in Guatemala at 59.55%, which is similar to global levels (61%) (UNDP, 2023b). The definition of political bias comprises two indicators: 'Women having the same rights as men is essential for democracy' and 'Men make better political leaders than women do', taken from the World Values Survey. This could partly explain women's unequal outcomes in political participation.

2.10 Gender-based violence

This section presents an overview of data on gender-based violence (GBV), to provide the context for a focus on the experiences of girls and young women in Chapter 3. Guatemala has high rates of GBV in both public and private spaces. According to the 2023 National Survey on the Quality and Well-being of Households (Informe Encuesta Nacional de Calidad y Bienestar de los Hogares; ENCABIH), 48.8% of women over the age of 15 reported having experienced GBV of any type – sexual, physical, psychological or economic – at some point in their lives – and 30.3% reported having experienced it in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Figure 8 shows, by department, the percentage of women and girls (aged over 15) who have experienced GBV at some point during their life. The departments with the highest prevalences are Guatemala, Sacatepéquez, Escuintla and Retahuleu (INE, 2024a; 2024b).

According to the survey, GBV prevalence is higher among women who:

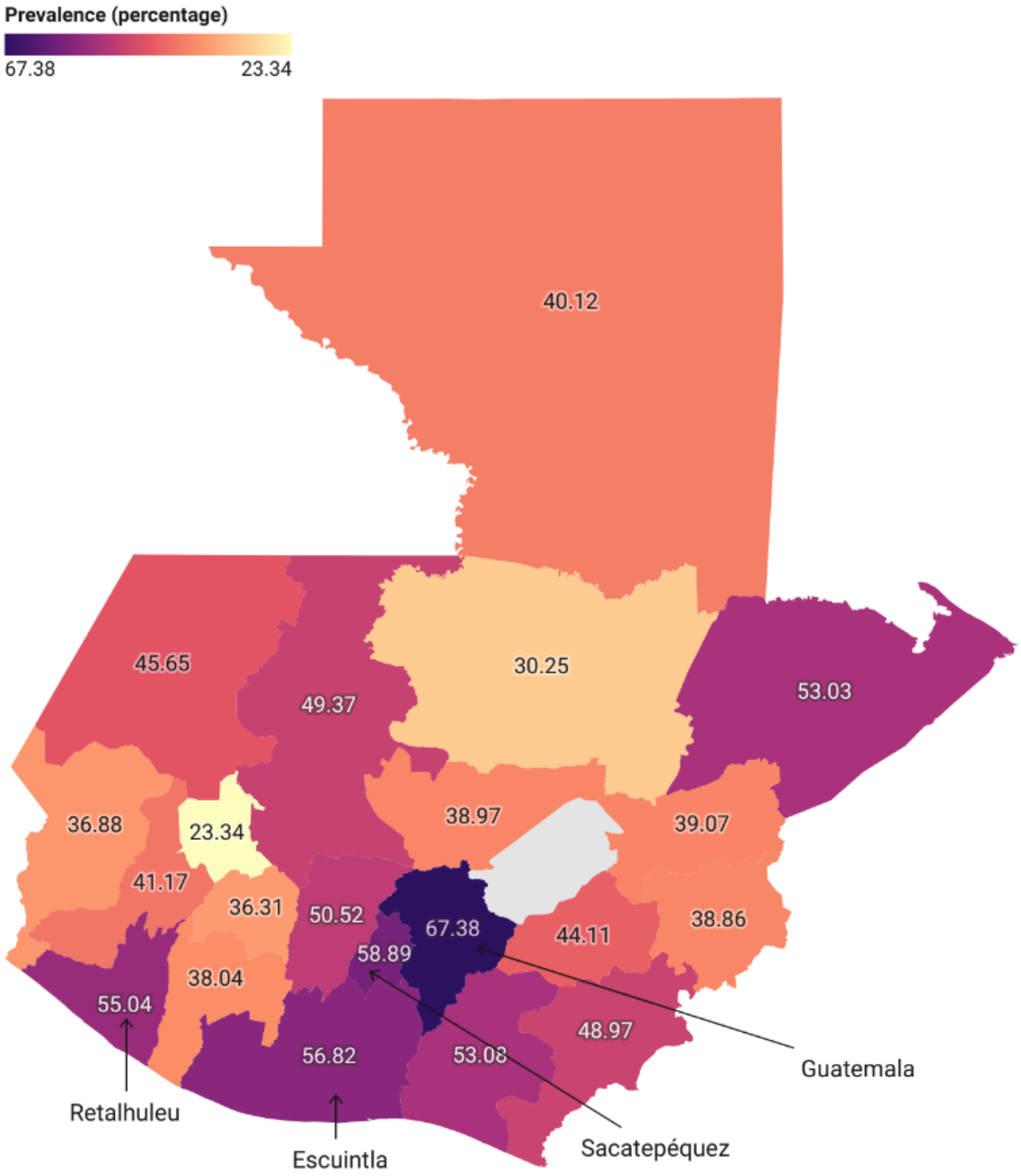
- live in urban areas (55.2%, compared to 40.5% of women in rural areas)
- are literate (53.4%, compared to 34% of illiterate women)
- are more educated (66.3% of women with post-secondary education, 59% of women with secondary, 45.9% of women with primary, and 50.9% of women with no education)
- are divorced, separated or widowed (61%, compared to 49% of single women and 44% of women in marriages or informal unions)
- are not Indigenous (53.9%, compared to 40.3% of Indigenous women) (INE, 2024a).

However, the higher prevalence among women with higher education levels and with literacy could be explained by higher awareness and reporting of GBV among both groups. As Section 3.2 discusses, there is an important lack of knowledge and recognition of human rights, and more specifically of what constitutes GBV. This could be leading to under-reporting among groups who are less likely to have this knowledge.

The ENCABIH does not capture data on GBV and disability. However, other sources report that a total of 7.25% of victim-survivors of domestic violence – that is, GBV perpetrated by intimate partners or by other family members – aged 7 years or older had some type of disability (MARN et al., 2024).

Figure 9 shows the percentage of women and girls who have suffered GBV by age. It demonstrates that GBV is high among all age groups, but highest for women aged 40-44, followed by women aged 25-29 (INE, 2024b).

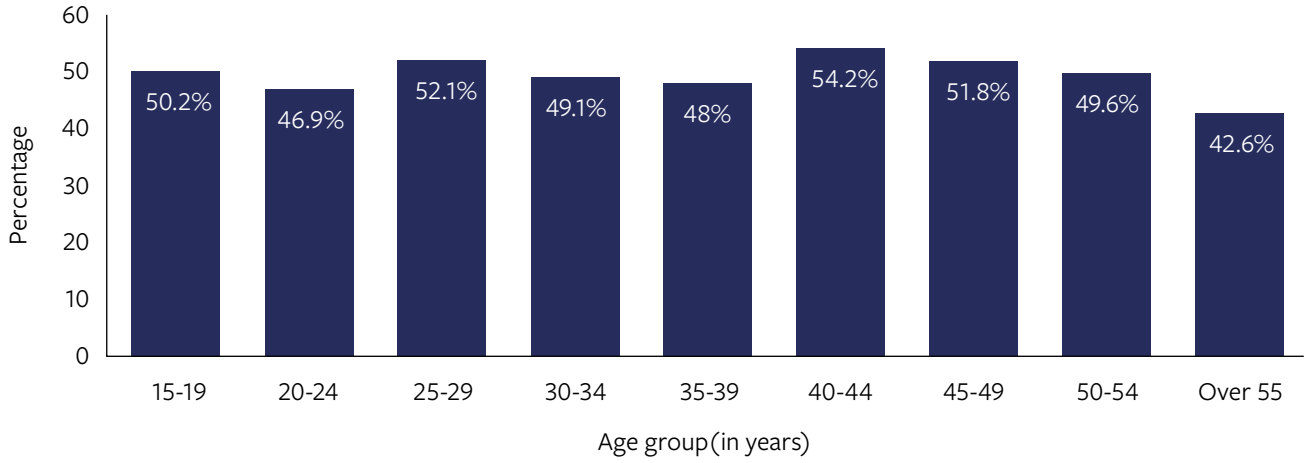
Figure 8 Girls and women over 15 who have suffered GBV at some point in their lives, by department, 2023 (%)



Note: no available data for El Progreso

Source: authors, using data from ENCABIH (2023)

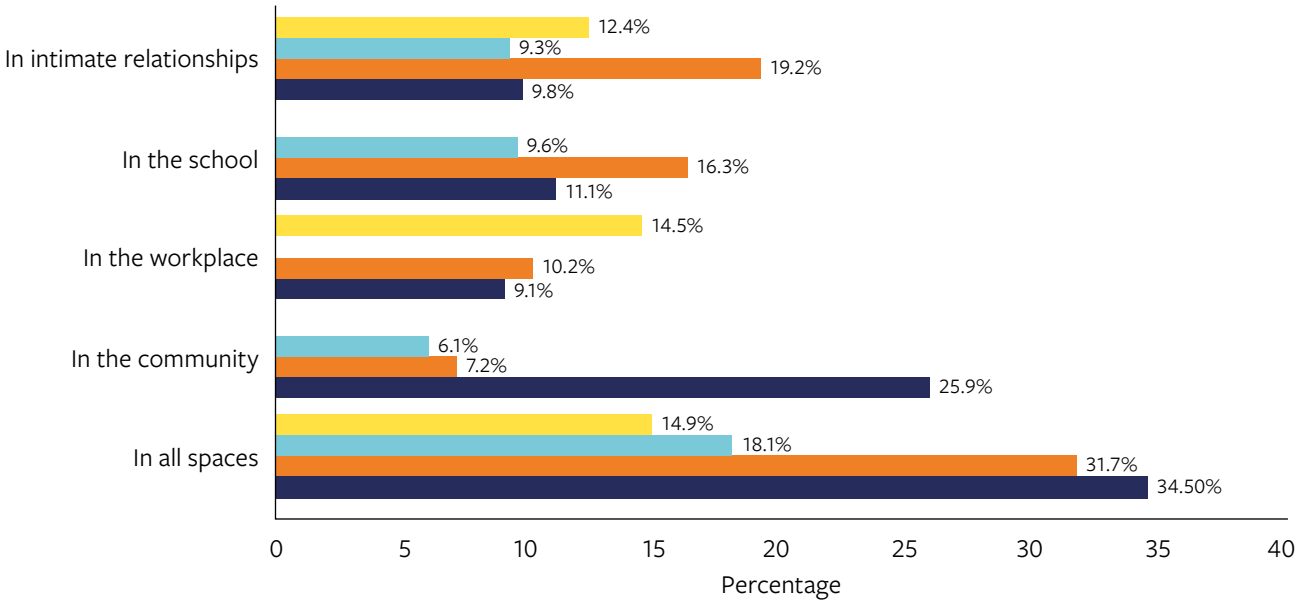
Figure 9 Girls and women over 15 who have suffered GBV at some point in their lives, by age group, 2023 (%)



Source: authors, using data from ENCABIH (2023)

Figure 10 shows the percentage of women and girls who have suffered GBV by type and space. Sexual violence is the most prevalent type of GBV, followed by psychological, physical and economic. When taking into account the space where GBV was perpetrated, however, sexual violence is only the most prevalent form of GBV in community spaces. Psychological violence is the most prevalent form of GBV at schools and in intimate relationships, and economic violence the most prevalent in the workplace (INE, 2024a).

Figure 10 Girls and women over 15 who have suffered GBV at some point in their lives, by type and space of occurrence, 2023 (%)



Note: no data for economic violence in the community and school, and no data for physical violence in the workplace

Source: authors, using data from ENCABIH (2023)

Guatemala ranks among the countries with the highest rates of femicide – that is, homicides of women that are motivated by gender-related factors. In 2021 and 2022, there were 527 and 534 cases reported as femicide, respectively (World Bank, 2023).[17] According to the Attorney's General Office (Ministerio Público, MP), in 2021, femicides represented 38.9% of the total number of violent homicides in the country (ibid.). However, it is possible this figure under-represents the problem, as there are barriers to having a case legally recognised as a femicide. Guatemala also has a high number of disappeared women, with four per day going missing. In 2024, there were 1,792 cases related to the Isabel-Claudina Alert (Ministerio Público, 2024).

Last, all types of GBV can also be committed, promoted or aggravated through digital technologies. Digital, or technology-facilitated, GBV includes disseminating or producing intimate sexual content without consent; online sexual harassment; and extorting someone in exchange for promises not to make one's intimate content public, among other acts (Oropa et al., 2024; UNFPA, 2023). However, while there are increasing reports in the media, there is little official data on digital GBV in Guatemala.

According to 2021 data, there were 733 cases reported to the Cybercrimes Section of the National Civil Police (Policía Nacional Civil; PNC). Of these, at least 192 were gender related, as 99 were related to the Isabel-Claudina Alert (an alert for when women go missing, for the prevention of femicide), 69 involved sexual violence, and 24 were related to femicides (Morales, 2021). Data on digital GBV against girls and young women is discussed further in Section 3.1 and its relationship to exploitation and human trafficking is discussed in Chapter 4.

2.11 Exploitation, including human trafficking

While data on exploitation of children (including human trafficking) is presented in Chapter 4, adults are also victim-survivors of exploitation. According to the Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Human Trafficking (SVET) a total of 108 adults were victim-survivors of human trafficking in 2023 (SVET, 2024a: 89). Nonetheless, children and adolescents continue to be most affected by this crime (ibid.) (see also Section 4.1.1).

Internal trafficking for forced labour is a risk in the agriculture and domestic service sectors in Guatemala, especially in the regions close to the Mexican border and in the highland (Altiplano) region (ILO, 2014). The Indigenous population is particularly vulnerable to labour exploitation and forced labour (ibid.). Reports based on interviews with migrants and asylum-seekers transiting Guatemala have also alleged that police across the country routinely extort migrants for money or coerce migrants and asylum-seekers into sexual exploitation (US Department of State, 2024). Members of the security forces have facilitated trafficking and perpetuated impunity by accepting bribes, working with criminal organisations and/or inhibiting law enforcement. These abuses exacerbate migrants' and asylum-seekers' existing vulnerabilities to trafficking and deter vulnerable individuals from reporting crimes (ibid.).

17 Rates of femicide vary significantly between sources. For instance, according to ECLAC (2024), there were a total of 45 femicides in 2023, or a rate of 0.5 per 100,000 women.

3 Gender-based violence against girls and young women

This chapter focuses on gender-based violence (GBV) against girls and young women (below 25 years of age) in Guatemala. It first discusses the prevalence of different forms of GBV against girls and young women in the country and then discusses the findings on the main factors driving this form of violence, the consequences that girls and young women experience, and existing initiatives to prevent and respond to GBV. The chapter is guided by the three following research questions:

1. What are the main factors that contribute to the perpetration of GBV?
2. What are the consequences of GBV?
3. What existing donor and government activity is effective in preventing and responding to GBV during childhood and adolescence in Guatemala?

3.1 Prevalence and types of gender-based violence against girls and young women

As discussed in Section 2.10, Guatemala has high rates of GBV against women and girls. Age-disaggregated GBV data is limited, particularly for girls under 15, where information is confined to sexual violence. Child abuse data offers an estimate of physical GBV in this age group, but the prevalence of economic and psychological GBV remains unknown. GBV data for girls and young women aged 15–24 is more comprehensive, detailing the primary forms of GBV they experience and their locations. However, data for both age groups lacks further disaggregation by other demographic factors – such as ethnicity, location, education level, disability or migratory status – limiting intersectional analyses.[18]

This section discusses GBV data by age group, beginning with girls and young women aged 15–24, followed by available data for girls under 15. Data indicates that sexual violence, in particular, is high across public and private spaces for both age groups.

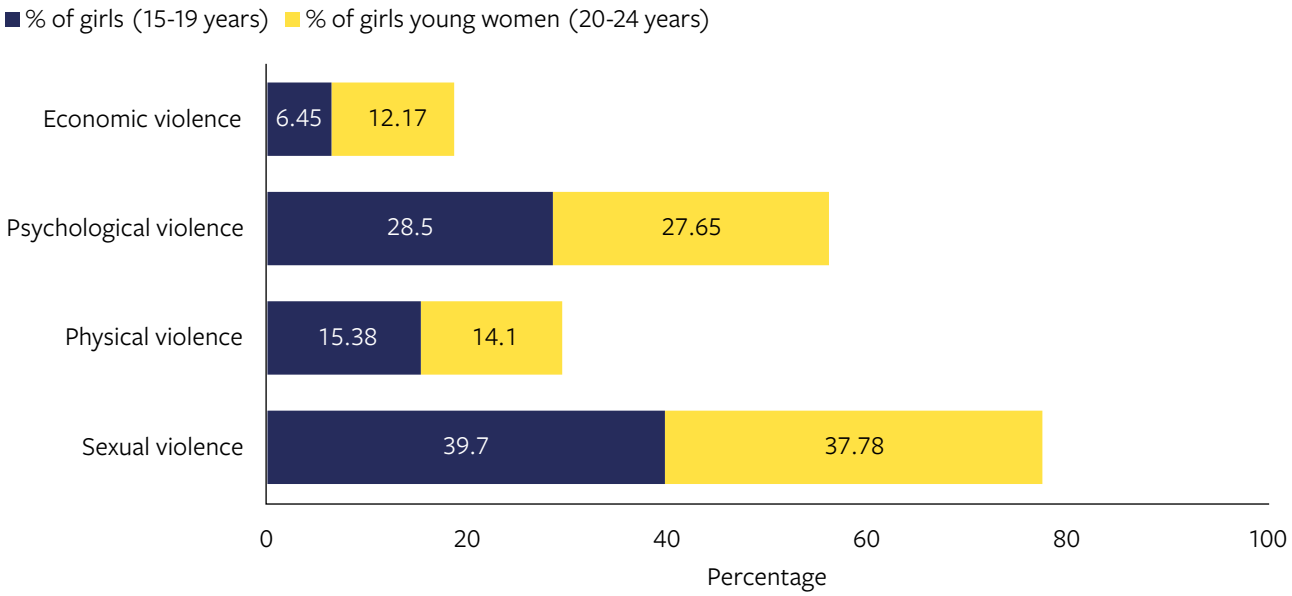
Girls over 15 years of age and young women

As discussed in Section 2.10, the 2023 ENCABIH captured GBV data for women and girls over 15 (see INE, 2024a; 2024b).

According to the survey, 50.2% of girls aged 15 to 19 and 46.9% of young women aged 20 to 24 reported having experienced some form of GBV – physical, sexual, psychological or economic – at some point in their lives (INE, 2024a). As Figure 11 indicates, both girls aged 15 to 19 and young women aged 20 to 24 have suffered sexual violence the most, followed by psychological violence.

18 Data on sexual violence is also inconsistent as there is no centralised registry between the various institutions that are tasked to address it (HRW, 2025).

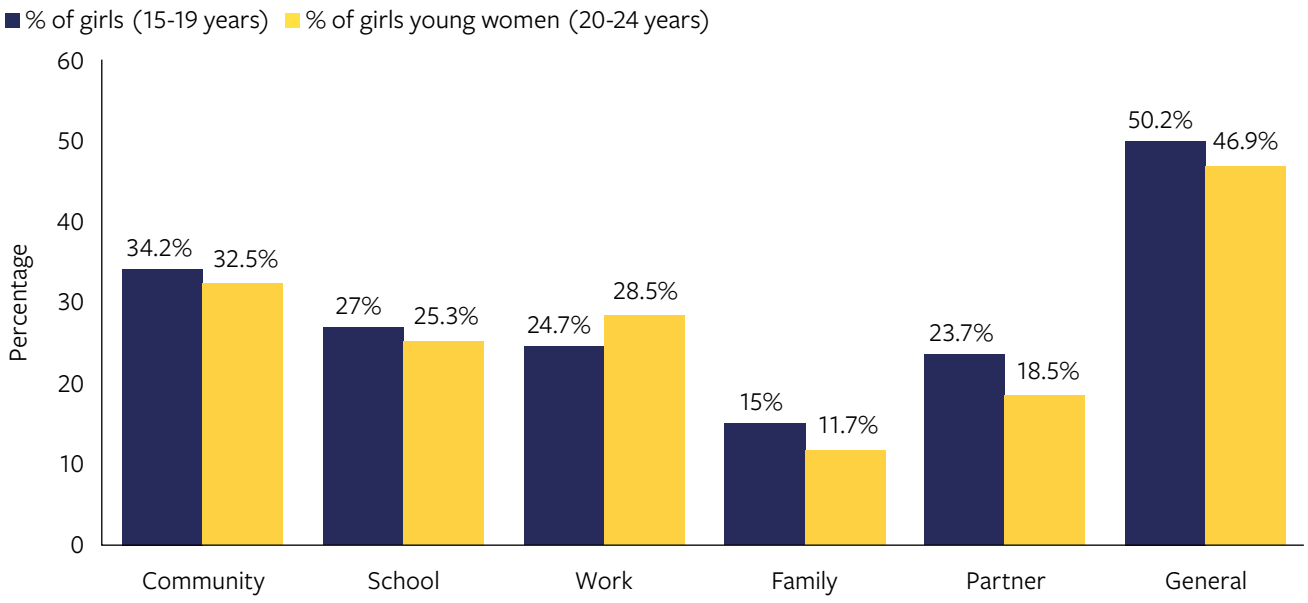
Figure 11 Girls and young women who have suffered GBV at some point in their lives, by type, 2023 (%)



Source: authors, using data from ENCABIH (2023)

As shown in Figure 12, for both girls aged 15 to 19 and young women aged 20 to 24, the community has been the space where they have experienced GBV the most. For girls aged 15 to 19, this is followed by the school and for young women aged 20 to 24 by the workplace (INE 2024a; see Figure 12). Intimate partner violence (IPV) ranks fourth for both girls and young women.

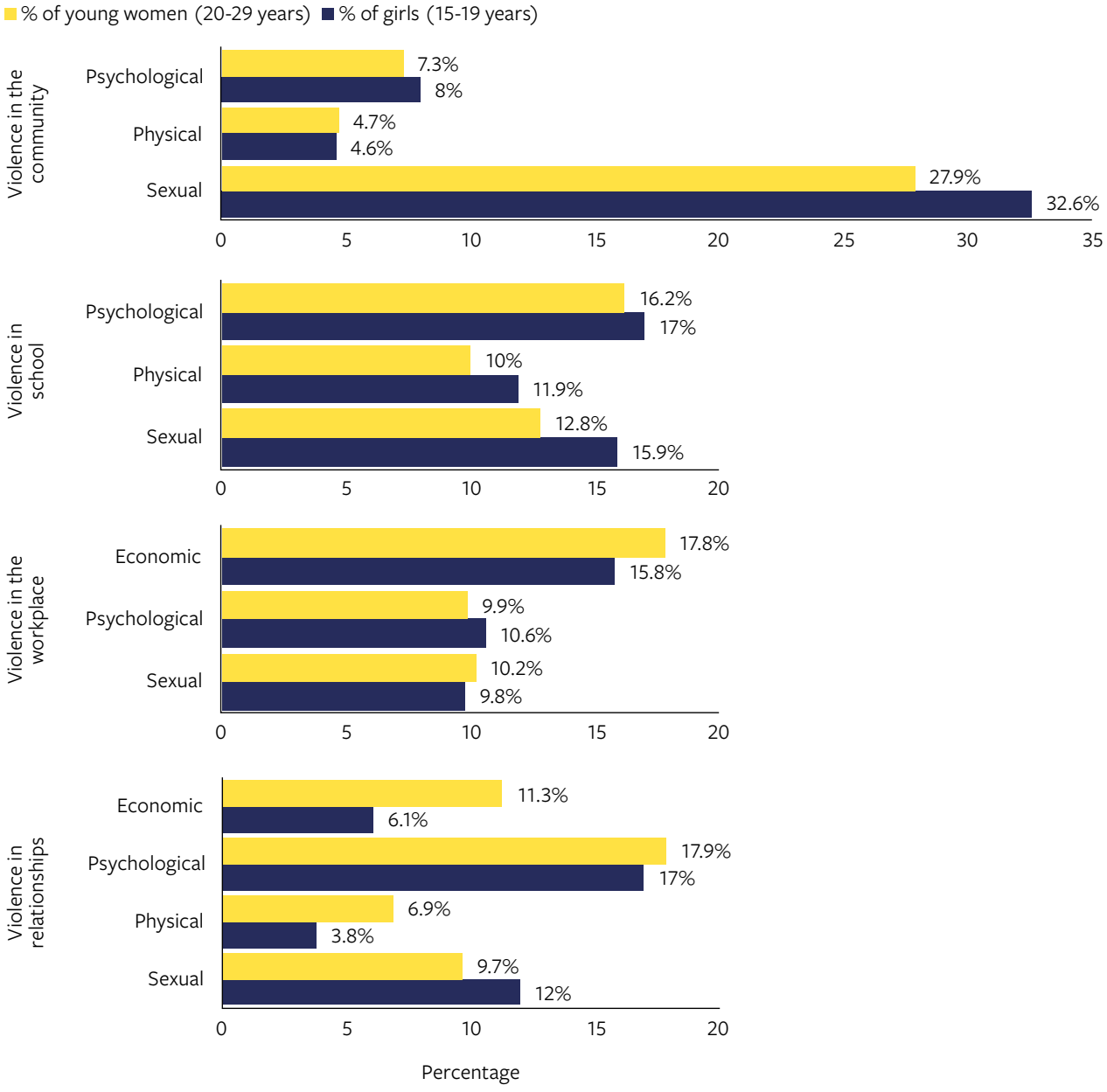
Figure 12 Girls and young women who have suffered GBV at some point in their lives, by space of occurrence, 2023 (%)



Source: authors, using data from ENCABIH (2023)

When cross-analysing available data on type and location, for both girls aged 15–19 and young women aged 20 to 29,[19] sexual violence is the most common in community spaces, psychological violence is the most common in schools and intimate relationships and economic violence is the most common in the workplace (see Figure 13).[20]

Figure 13 Girls and young women who have suffered GBV at some point in their lives, by type and space of occurrence, 2023 (%)



Source: authors, using data from ENCABIH (2023)

19 Previously, data for the older group was presented for girls aged 20–24. However, these statistics were only available with different age ranges.

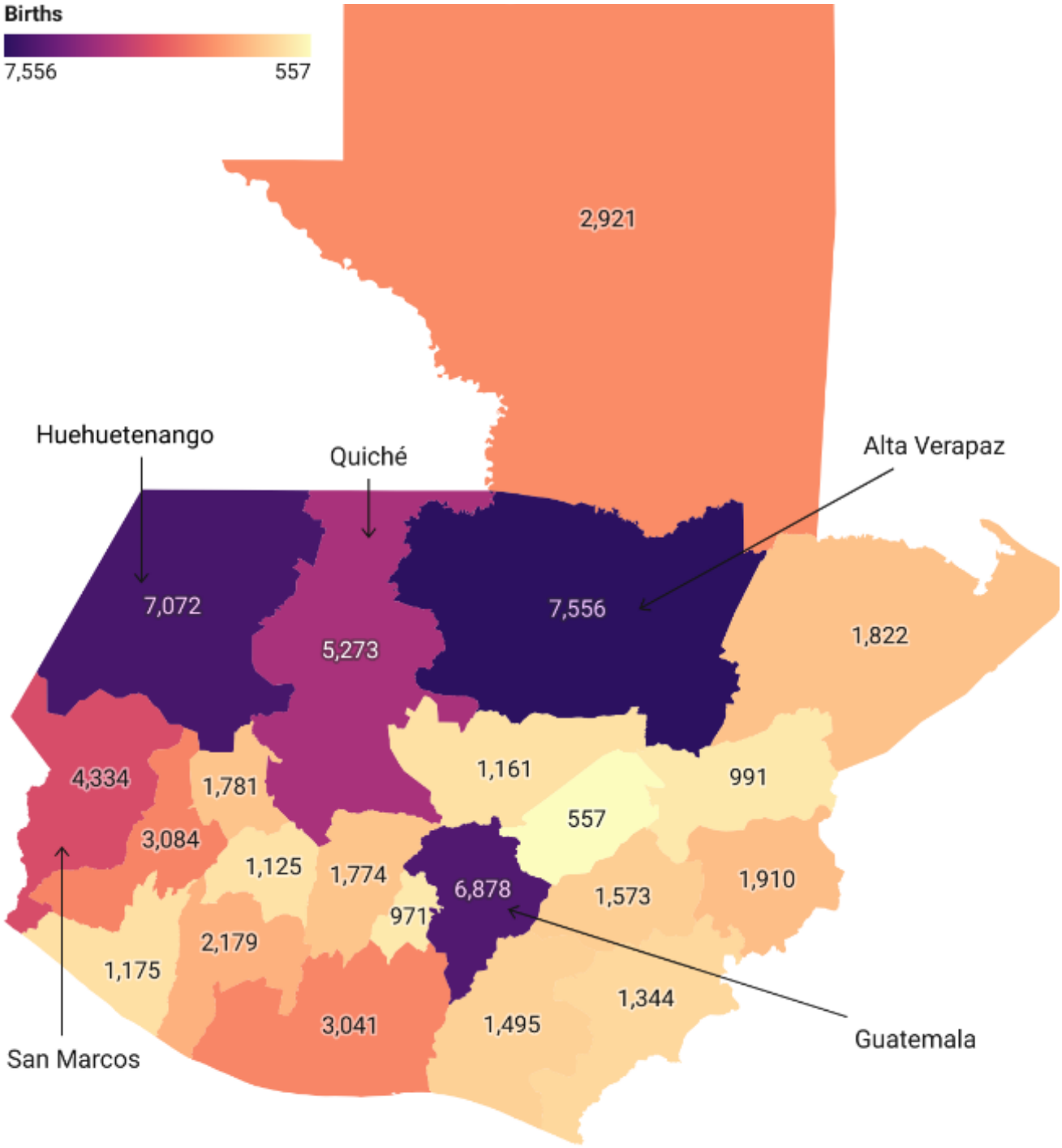
20 There was no data on the types of GBV girls and young women experience in the family.

Data on adolescent pregnancies and physical child abuse further illuminates the prevalence of sexual and physical GBV among girls aged 15 to 19. According to the Reproductive Health Observatory (Observatorio de Salud Reproductiva; OSAR), between 2018 and 2024, there were 446,520 registered births to mothers aged 15 to 19 in Guatemala's National Registry (Registro Nacional de Personas; RENAP). According to 2023 and 2024 data, the departments with the greatest numbers of adolescent pregnancies (15 to 19) were Alta Verapaz, Guatemala City, Huehuetenango, Quiche, and San Marcos – three of which are also those with the largest Indigenous populations (see Section 2.1 and Figures 14 and 15). Sexual violence against girls aged 15 to 19 is likely to be, however, much higher as not all pregnancies lead to births. According to OSAR data, while in 2018–2022 there were 331,888 births registered to mothers aged 15 to 19, there were 516,305 girls aged 15 to 19 who were pregnant.[21] The difference between these figures could be due to miscarriages, unsafe abortion or maternal mortality.

Data on physical child abuse may include cases of physical GBV. Given the normalisation of physical violence as a disciplinary method (Tissera, 2024), its use against adolescents is likely to be linked to the enforcement of gender norms and thus acquires a gendered dimension. In 2023 (January–August), there were 840 medical evaluations of cases of physical violence against children and 805 in 2022 (January–October) – with 60% of the cases in each year related to girls (CIPRODENI, 2022; 2023). If the age distribution of 2020 cases is typical, this would imply that around 50% of cases involved adolescents aged 15 to 19 (ibid.).

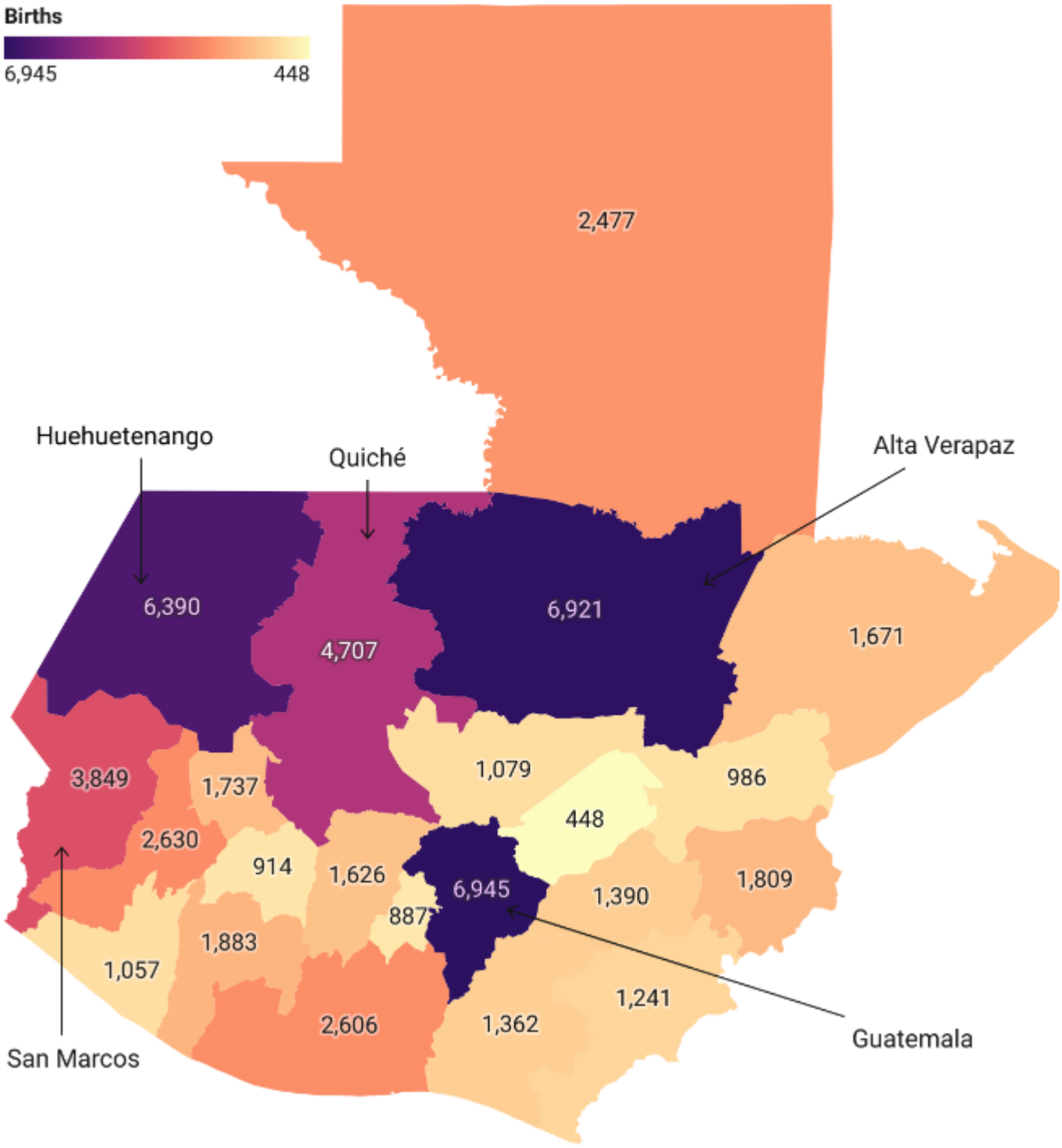
21 Figure calculated using OSAR data (see OSAR 2018; 2019; 2020; 2021; 2022).

Figure 14 Girls aged 15 to 19 who gave birth, 2023



Source: authors, using data from OSAR (2023, 2024)

Figure 15 Girls aged 15 to 19 who gave birth, 2024



Source: authors, using data from OSAR (2023, 2024)

Last, while various reports emphasise increasing rates of femicide in Guatemala, there is no age-disaggregated data. The closest age-disaggregated data that gives insights into the killing of young women and girls covers homicide rates. In 2022, 595 women and girls were violently murdered, according to the Attorney General's Office (MP), of whom 26% were aged 18 to 30 and 7% were aged 14 to 17 (López, 2023).[22] In 2023, there were 67 girls murdered in Guatemala (CIPRODENI, 2023).

Girls under 15 years of age

GBV data for girls under 15 is limited to sexual violence. Between January 2018 and June 2024, there were 24,441 medical evaluations for sexual violence or pregnancies involving girls under 15 (HRW, 2025).[23] In the same period (2018–2024), Guatemala's National Registry (RENAP) reported 14,696 birth records of mothers under 15 years of age (HRW, 2025).[24] As consent to sexual activity can only occur from age 14 onwards under Guatemala's law, this figure indicates statutory rape for those under 14. Figures 16 and 17 show that these cases are, for the most part, also concentrated in the regions where births to mothers aged 15 to 19 are the highest.

As discussed in relation to older girls, rates of sexual violence for this period (2018–2024) could be higher as not all pregnancies lead to births. According to OSAR data, while in 2018–2022 there were 9,926 births registered to mothers under 15, there were 18,610 girls under 15 who were pregnant – almost double the number of births.[25]

While there is no data on physical GBV against girls under 15, available data on physical abuse against children can be indicative. As discussed in relation to older girls, in both 2023 and 2022 there were around 800 medical evaluations related to physical child abuse and around 60% of the cases pertained to girls. While these figures include children up to the age of 19, in 2020 violence against children under 15 represented over half of recorded cases (198 out of 387) (CIPRODENI, 2020). It is likely that physical abuse against younger children is particularly underestimated in these figures as they are less able to access the health and legal system. Box 1 shows some data on digital GBV against girls and young women.

Of the 595 women and girls murdered in 2022, according to the Attorney General's Office (Ministerio Público de Guatemala; MP Office), 2% were girls of 13-17 years of age and 2% were under 6 years (López, 2023).

---

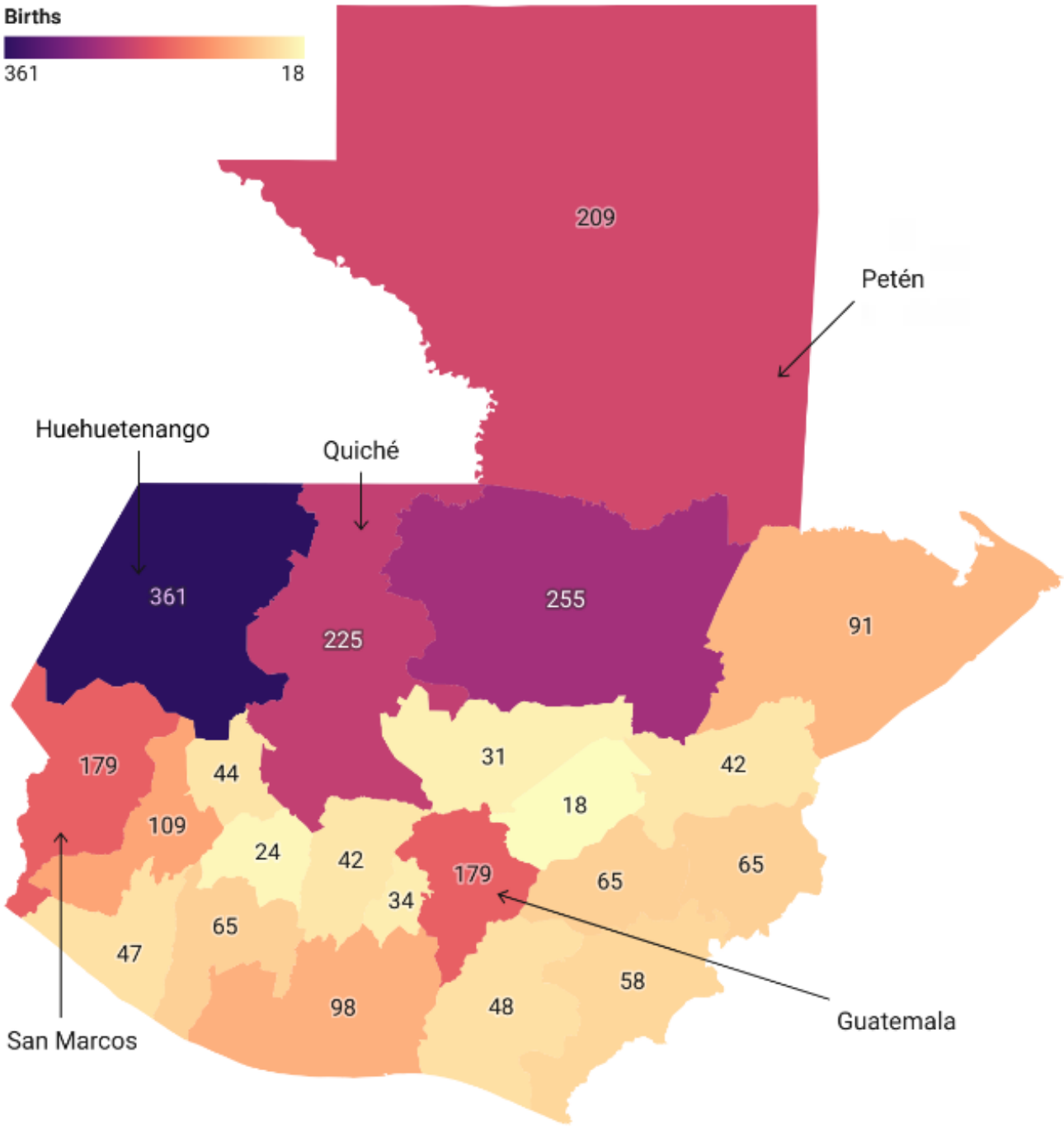
22 Figures should be read as the minimum number of cases in each category, as 26% of records were missing age details.

23 As reported by the National Institute of Forensic Services (INACIF) to Human Rights Watch (2025). These numbers differ or seem incompatible with those reported by the MP Office for the same period, the Prosecutor's Office and the PNC (see HRW, 2025).

24 This figure differs slightly to that resulting from OSAR data, which amounts to 14,168 cases. However, for 2019, available data covers January to November only, possibly explaining the discrepancy. In the same period, the MSPAS instead reports 14,406 pregnancies in girls under 15 years old (HRW, 2025).

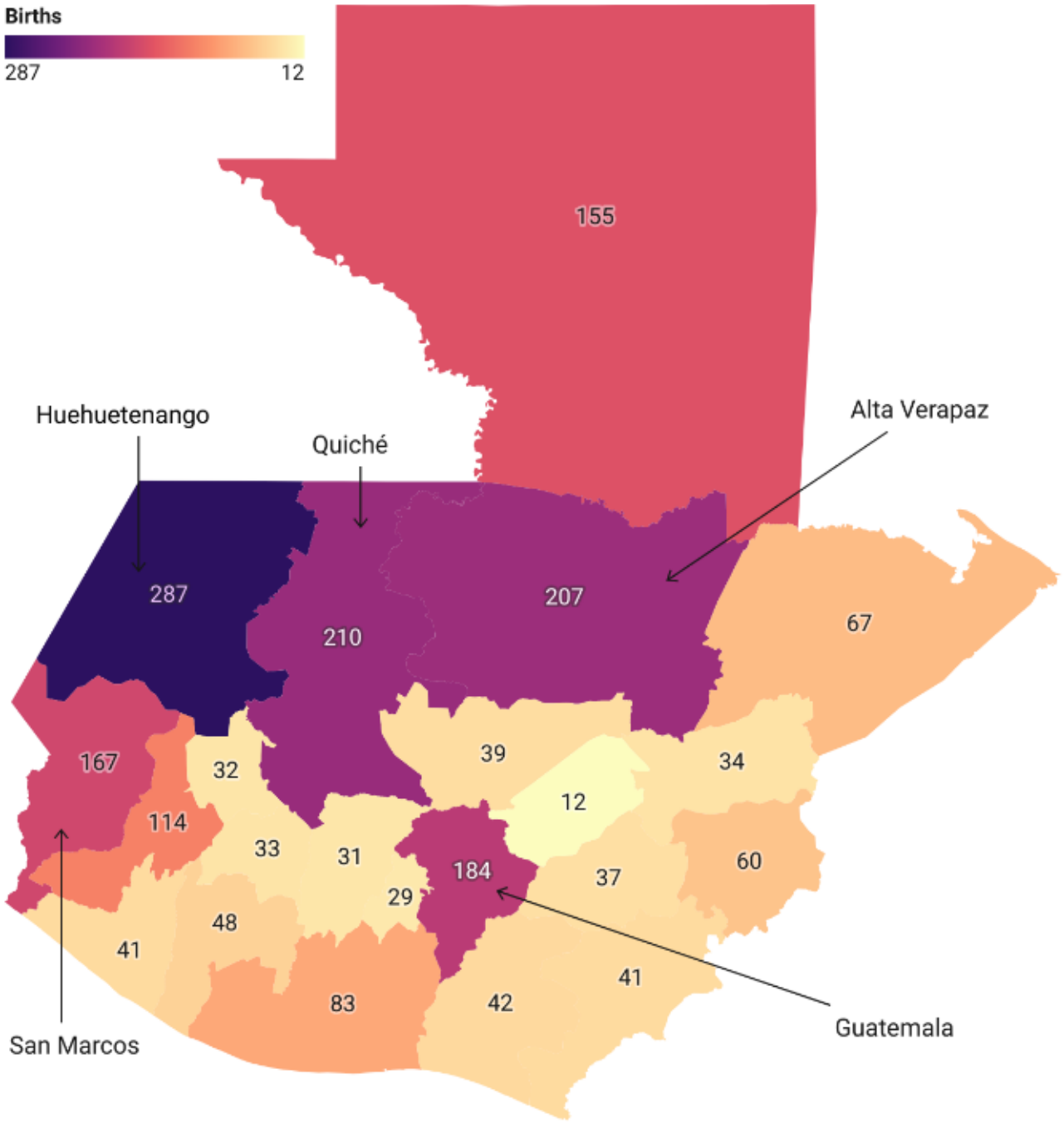
25 Figure calculated using OSAR data (see OSAR 2018; 2019; 2020; 2021; 2022).

Figure 16 Girls aged 10 to 14 who gave birth, 2023



Source: authors, using data from OSAR (2023, 2024)

Figure 17 Girls aged 10 to 14 who gave birth, 2024



Source: authors, using data from OSAR (2023, 2024)

Box 1 Digital GBV against girls and young women

Girls and young women are particularly vulnerable to digital GBV. While they could be increasingly spending time online, they might not have enough information to protect themselves. There is no age-disaggregated data except for a study conducted by the Guatemala Observatory of Cybercrimes in 2018. The study, conducted with 1,651 primary and secondary students in Guatemala City, found that 30.4% of students had been victim-survivors of sextortion, 24.89% of identity theft and 34.40% of cyberstalking. Data, however, is not gender-disaggregated (Castro, 2022). As discussed in Section 2.10, in 2021 there were 733 cases reported to the Cybercrimes Section of the National Civil Police; of these, at least 130 involved children as they were related to the Alba-Kenneth Alert (an alert for missing and kidnapped children) and 192 had a gendered dimension (Morales, 2021).

There is no data regarding the kinds of violence experienced by social media platform, but one study[26] looking at Instagram observed that the most recurrent types of digital GBV suffered by women (118 participants aged 20 to 29) were digital harassment (33%), cyberflashing (29%), deepfakes (20%) and lastly, online threats (18%) (González Vázquez, 2023).

3.2 Causes of gender-based violence: social norms, child marriage, generalised violence and impunity

Gender and age-related social norms and power dynamics drive GBV against girls and young women in Guatemala, as in many other contexts. More specific to Guatemala is the persistence of child marriage, elevated rates of violence (currently and historically), and systemic impunity. As these do not affect all girls and young women in Guatemala equally, girls and women who are Indigenous, poorer, have a disability or are migrants can be more vulnerable to GBV (IACHR and OAS, 2024: HRW, 2025).

Social norms

GBV is both a consequence and a tool to enforce patriarchal gender norms (Jiménez Thomas Rodriguez, 2022). As across Latin America, patriarchal gender norms in Guatemala ascribe authority to men and associate masculinity to being superior and dominant over women, while they ascribe submissiveness and chastity to women (Barrios-Klee, 2015; UNFPA and FLACSO, 2017; Luna and Ramazzini, 2020; Gibbons et al., 2025). They also link notions of toughness to masculinity, which is defined not only in terms of physical strength, but also as suppressing emotions seen as feminine, like sadness.

These norms lead to unequal power dynamics between men and women. They ascribe control to men and tend to place women in a condition of economic and social vulnerability – for example, as

26 This is based on an undergraduate dissertation. There seems to be a gap in terms of larger-scale academic studies.

a result of having less control over how household income is spent, or not having independent economic resources (see Sections 2.2, 2.7 and 2.8, for example). They also lead to boys and men being less able to deal with their emotions in a healthy manner and thus more prone to resorting to violence. Therefore, when they are placed in a position of authority vis-à-vis girls and young women, they are more likely to assert that authority violently. Unequal power relations further support the use of violence to enforce patriarchal gender norms on women, such as submissiveness, responsibility for the home or chastity.

As Table 6 shows, a study carried out by the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales; FLACSO) with 596 adolescent girls across the country found that beliefs supporting men's authority over women were still highly prevalent in the country. While it found that there was a strong rejection of GBV among girls on the grounds of not fulfilling domestic chores, disobeying their husbands or refusing to engage in sexual relations (though there was still an important percentage of girls who believed it to be justified), there was still a high acceptance of GBV when infidelity was involved.

Recognition that girls and women are not obligated to have sexual intercourse with their husbands was lower for Indigenous girls, but they were also less likely to believe that a wife should obey her husband or that a husband is justified in hurting his wife if she disobeys him (Barrios-Klee, 2015; Luna and Ramazzini, 2020). There is, however, no similar study on boys' beliefs, and girls' beliefs should not be mistaken as speaking for both groups.

Table 6 Gender norms held by girls and young women in Guatemala

Belief	Ladino/Mestizo girls in agreement	Indigenous girls in agreement	Total of girls in agreement
A wife should obey her husband even if she disagrees with him	50.80%	40.50%	45.60%
A husband needs to show his wife he is the one in charge	48.90%	43.40%	46.60%
A husband can hurt his wife if: she doesn't fulfil her domestic chores to her husband's satisfaction	12%	19.10%	15.40%
A husband can hurt his wife if: she disobeys him	23.20%	14.30%	18.80%
A husband can hurt his wife if: she refuses to have sexual intercourse with him	3.20%	7.80%	5.30%
A husband can hurt his wife if: he suspects she is unfaithful	25.50%	19.90%	22.40%
A husband can hurt his wife if: he has proof she is unfaithful	42.20%	38.70%	40.10%
If a husband is hurting his wife, this needs to be solved within the family	58.90%	51.50%	55.40%
A wife can refuse to have sexual intercourse with her husband if she doesn't want to	89%	76.30%	82.10%
A wife can refuse to have sexual intercourse with her husband if he is violent towards her	90%	79.30%	84.50%

Source: Table adapted from Barrios-Klee (2015: 47)

The combination of these gender norms with age-related norms can place girls and young women in more vulnerable situations than adult women – especially in relation to adult men. Combined, they heighten adult authority over them in the context of the family, school, workplace and community. Within the family, the interplay of social norms with adolescents' economic and legal dependence on adults can significantly restrict their ability to escape abusive situations.

Child marriage

Child marriage is still prevalent in Guatemala (see Box 2) and is strongly tied to all forms of GBV within intimate relationships. Girls are expected and often pressured to start a family once married and are forced to be sexually intimate with their partners, whom in Guatemala tend to be adult men. Girls Not Brides (2022) reports that of the 11,109 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 who officially married in 2017, 82% were married to men over 20 years old (Luna and Ramazzini, 2020; Girls Not Brides, 2022). Child marriage is also a response to unintended pregnancies in adolescents, even when this was the result of rape, exposing girls to further sexual violence in the context of intimate relationships (Girls Not Brides, 2022). Moreover, child marriage increases the risk of experiencing any form of GBV from intimate partners throughout girls' lives (Kidman, 2017).

Child marriage is propelled by discriminatory gender norms and poverty. Patriarchal gender norms that link girls' and women's roles to the household and to motherhood play a crucial role in motivating and maintaining the practice. Luna and Ramazzini (2020) document that it is common for parents to believe that girls must marry by 15 or 16 or they risk 'being left behind', which is highly frowned upon. Child marriage as a result of an unintended pregnancy is also encouraged by norms on female chastity, as 'pregnancy outside of marriage reflects badly on the family' (ibid.: 3), regardless of whether this was the result of sexual violence or not.

Box 2 Prevalence of child marriage

According to the 2014–2015 National Survey on Maternal and Child Health, around 30% of women had married or entered a union before turning 18 in Guatemala, while only 10% of men did so. Around 6% of women did so before the age of 15 (MSPAS et al., 2017). Peruch Álvarez and Paredes Cruz (2017) reported that in 2014 and 2015, marriages involving girls and young women under 20 years old represented around 26% of all marriages registered in Guatemala. While there has been no data since 2018, the strong link between adolescent pregnancies and child marriage in Guatemala (Barrios Klee, 2015; Luna and Ramazzini, 2020), means the number of girls under 18 or 19 years of age giving birth captures this issue to some extent.

According to the 2014–2015 National Survey on Maternal and Child Health, child marriages are more likely to occur in low-income rural areas. However, they are not restricted to these contexts (Girls Not Brides, 2022). The survey also indicated a link between education level and age of marriage: women aged 25–49 with no education entered a union at an average age of 17.9 years, while their counterparts with high school education did so at an average age of 21.3 years (ibid.).

Gender norms that assign authority and the role of economic provider to men and that value youth in women also sustain child marriage. This means it is more likely for older men to be able to provide for girls and that, in return, they may have partners who are perceived as highly desirable and over whom they can also have a higher degree of control (UNFPA and FLACSO, 2017). This in turn explains why there is often a significant age gap between girls and their partners and why the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and FLACSO (2017) found in their study that men with higher levels of education were more likely to look for adolescent brides.

Luna and Ramazzini (2020) also argue that child marriage is perpetuated by perceived male ownership over girls and women. This encourages parents to consent to child marriages in exchange for economic or financial assets. However, interviewees for the current project underscored that parents generally agree to this practice out of need. They argued that parents often see child marriage as a way of securing better economic conditions for their child and, in many cases, of simultaneously improving the family's economic situation (KIIs, Civil Society 1, 3). Adolescents may also seek informal unions with more affluent partners as a way of escaping poverty and violence at home (Greene, 2019).

While Girls Not Brides (2022) argues that child marriage is most common among Mayan Indigenous communities, available quantitative data is not disaggregated by ethnicity.

Historical and current high levels of violence

As noted in the Introduction of this report, Guatemala has a recent history of conflict and current high levels of violence, in part due to organised crime. Both past and present violence have led to low levels of government spending on social development, shaping inequality within the country. It is noteworthy that two of the provinces that continuously register the highest number of births to girls and adolescents (see Section 2.1) are those along the Mexico–Guatemala border, where drug trafficking activities are concentrated (OC Index, 2023.).

Persistent historical and current high levels of violence have likely normalised its use within the country. While the Peace Accords were signed almost three decades ago, the internal conflict has produced lasting transgenerational consequences (KII, Civil Society 1). This legacy may include the normalisation of violence – both broadly and, as one of the interviewees emphasised, for conflict resolution more specifically (KII, UN Agency 1; Commission for Historical Clarification, 1999). It may also have led to widespread population trauma, an attitude of silence and fear, and a distrust of the State, particularly of its law enforcement arm (Gibbons et al., 2025; Tissera, 2024). This, coupled with a general lack of knowledge about human rights – only 25.4% of adults have a good understanding of human rights (UNICEF Guatemala, 2020) – can thus contribute to a high tolerance of violence, as people may not be able to identify violent behaviours. This may be especially the case for GBV as gender norms contribute further to its normalisation.

The normalisation of violence is closely linked to impunity (discussed in the next section), a problem with deep historical roots in the country due to the armed conflict. The National Reconciliation Law, enacted after the 1996 Peace Agreements, is widely seen as contributing to this impunity by forgoing individual criminal responsibility for human rights violations committed during the conflict. While recent

landmark cases for conflict-related sexual violence have achieved justice, most remain unpunished (Martin and SáCouto, 2020).

Impunity

Impunity for GBV in Guatemala is estimated at 96% (HRW, 2025). This is a major barrier to effective enforcement of the country's rule of law (IACHR and OAS, 2024). It hinders the country's legal progress in legislating against GBV (see Section 3.4), preventing the desired deterrent effect. Impunity results from low levels of reporting, dismissal of cases and lack of judicial resolution, corruption, and legal loopholes.

According to the 2023 National Survey on the Quality and Well-being of Households (ENCABIH), 96% of girls and women (over 15) who experienced violence in community spaces did not report it. This was also the case for 92% of those who experienced it in school, 90% of those who experienced it in the workplace, and 93% of those that experienced it in an intimate relationship or in the family (INE, 2024a).[27]

The reasons for not reporting are varied and range from fear of backlash or disbelief, shame, lack of trust in authorities, lack of resources, not knowing where and how to report it, not knowing the violence constituted a reportable offence, and believing it to be unimportant. The indicators on the last two reasons show that not denouncing GBV is linked, importantly, with the normalisation of violence. For example, of the women who had experienced violence in the community, 51.3% did not report it because they thought 'it was unimportant' and 13.2% because they did not know it was a reportable offence.[28]

Interviewees also stressed that girls and women often choose not to report or progress their cases because processes are very long and thus perceived as pointless or because these processes become emotionally taxing (KIIs, Government 1; Civil Society 5; also discussed in Section 3.3).[29] Interviewees and HRW (2025) stressed that delays in the progression of cases are in part due to a systemic lack of resources (KIIs, Government 1; Academia 1; Civil Society 5; see also HRW, 2025).

While available data is not disaggregated by age, it is less likely for girls to report GBV than adult women. Girls are less likely to have the knowledge and resources to report GBV, and their heightened vulnerability could make them more fearful of the consequences or more susceptible to being pressured into silence. Interviewees stressed that girls and young women are also pressured into 'forgiving' their aggressors and not denouncing cases – especially when family members are involved or when they are pregnant (KIIs, Civil Society 1, 3). This can be because of the normalisation of GBV, economic dependence on the perpetrator and/or fear of reputational damage in their communities.

---

27 These figures correspond to those who did not 'present a complaint to relevant authorities'. For some sections, this is different to the figure for women who did not report the offence to government authorities and in some categories, the figures are combined.

28 These figures should be treated with caution as the ENCABHI includes in the first reason for not reporting believing that it would be a waste of time and being convinced not to report, as well as believing that 'that is the way things are'. In the later reasons, this also includes not knowing where and how to report.

29 For example, a case may progress only years after the violence took place, and the victim-survivor might prefer to leave the episode behind rather than to keep reliving it throughout the judicial process.

At the same time, girls and young women who report GBV may not always see their case progress. According to a study by HRW (2025), between 2018 and 2023, prosecutors and judges dismissed 6,697 cases of sexual violence against girls under 14 years of age. The low proportion of cases that do progress is evident when considering the different numbers reported by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance (Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social; MSPAS), the Public Prosecutor's Office (Procuraduría General de la Nación; PGN), and the National Institute of Forensic Services (Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Forenses; INACIF) (HRW, 2025). While the MSPAS recorded 14,406 cases of pregnant girls under 15 years from 2018 to June 2024, PGN reported 2,646, and INACIF only reported 1,057 cases for the same period (ibid.).

Even when cases proceed, justice remains rare. Between 2018 and 2023, judges issued only 136 preliminary indictments and 102 convictions for cases involving sexual violence against girls under 14 years of age (HRW, 2025). This is the result of systems being under-resourced, of gender and age-related social norms and perhaps corruption. The obstacles girls and young women face in the legal system impact their mental and physical well-being, as discussed in the next section. Legal loopholes may also hinder justice, as even when sentences are decided, these may not be commensurate with the crime committed. For example, various interviewees highlighted how Guatemala's legal system considerably reduces criminal penalties for individuals who plead guilty (KIIs, Civil Society 4, 5; UN Agency 3).

Impunity for GBV extends beyond the state level and permeates institutions. Interviewees highlighted a lack of accountability within the education system, where teachers reported for GBV are often merely transferred to another school instead of being removed and reported to the police (KIIs, Civil Society 3, 4; HRW, 2025).

3.3 Consequences girls and young women face as a result of GBV: physical and mental health risks, education losses, and migration

GBV against girls and young women can have grave consequences for their physical health, mental health and future opportunities.

Physical health: GBV can have lasting impacts on the physical health of girls and young women. It can result in acute injuries, some of which can lead to disabilities, or to chronic pain. Sexual violence can lead to gynaecological trauma and increase the risk of vaginal and urinary tract infections, painful intercourse and chronic pelvic pain (WHO, 2012).

The risk of severe physical health consequences is greater considering the current deficiencies of the Guatemalan health care system. Inadequate public funding means community centres and health posts – the first level of healthcare available to the population – are under-staffed and often lack necessary medical supplies. The next levels of healthcare – specialised clinics and hospitals – however, are not easily accessible to rural communities. Rural residents must travel at their own expense to a nearby city, where they may be confronted with long waiting times or turned away due to staffing and resource shortages. As many girls and young women may not have the resources to be able to cover the costs associated with waiting for medical attention or afford to come back, they may end up not receiving the necessary attention (HRW, 2025).

As discussed in Section 3.1, it is estimated that GBV against girls leads to a significant proportion of adolescent pregnancies in Guatemala. Adolescent pregnancies can have serious health impacts on girls and adolescents, as their bodies are not yet equipped for birth. Girls and adolescents, therefore, have higher risks of developing high blood pressure, infections, eclampsia, obstetric fistula and anaemia. They are also at higher risk of maternal mortality (ibid.; Todhunter et al., 2022).

Poor access to quality healthcare is likely to be playing a role in sexual violence-related pregnancies. The absence of medical supplies, including emergency sexual violence kits containing emergency contraceptives, at first-level healthcare facilities, and the long time and distance involved in seeking medical attention at higher-level facilities means girls are very likely to miss the time window for effective prevention of a pregnancy. Once pregnant, the lack of antenatal, childbirth and postnatal care increases pregnancy-related risks. In provinces with a higher rate of rural and Indigenous populations – who struggle the most to access adequate healthcare – maternal morbidity and mortality are higher. The MSPAS reported 10 cases of adolescent maternal mortality between 2020 and 2024, with 8 of these being Indigenous girls, suggesting a severe under-reporting of the issue (HRW, 2025.).

Lack of access to safe, legal abortion worsens these risks. While CEDAW has issued a recommendation for Guatemalan authorities to reform the Penal Code (Art. 139) to decriminalise abortion in all cases, access to abortion remains severely limited and there are constant attempts to restrict it even further (HRW, 2025; Marsicovetere, 2022). The latest attempt came in the form of the Life and Family Protection Law (Law 5272), which extended the criminalisation of abortion to miscarriages and sought to increase the penalty for abortion in Art. 139 of the Penal Code from 1–3 years to 5–10 years of imprisonment for women and up to 12 years for medical personnel (Kitroeff et al., 2022; Amnesty International, 2022).[30]

These attempts have been driven by national and international conservative groups connected to the anti-gender movement. Three important influences have been the Asociacion la Familia Importa, Transformemos Guate and the US-based Institute for Women's Health. The first two organisations were connected to the 2018 rejection of Law 5376 – a proposed reform to grant abortion access to victim-survivors of sexual violence under 14 (Andres and Vílchez, 2024). The Institute of Women's Health – led by former Trump administration official Valerie Huber – seeks to promote the non-binding, anti-abortion Geneva Consensus Declaration under the Protego project. The Institute established a formal collaboration in 2023 with the Guatemalan Government to pilot Protego (Ipas, 2024).

Currently, the Penal Code only allows for what it calls 'therapeutic abortion' – meaning when the mother's life is at risk. What is more, interpretations of this article are narrow. Two doctors must agree that the mother is at immediate and certain risk of death and that all other medical options have been exhausted (HRW, 2025). At the same time, the legal provision for therapeutic abortion is not well-known by Guatemalan authorities and health personnel. In communications with HRW (2025), the MSPAS

30 President Alejandro Giammattei vetoed the law two days after Congress approval, amid widespread national protests and international pressure.

asserted that abortion is not legal in Guatemala and thus not performed in any of its hospitals. This means girls are likely not informed of their rights and that doctors tend to be unaware of this legal provision and so do not consider performing abortions even when a girls' life is at risk. This may also lead girls and young women to seek clandestine abortions, exposing them to life-threatening risks and criminalisation.

Mental health: As interviewees highlighted, GBV can also have profound impacts on mental health (KIIs, Civil Society 1, 3). GBV has been linked to increased risks of depression and a range of disorders, such as post-traumatic stress, anxiety, sleeping, eating and psychosomatic disorders (WHO, 2012; Todhunter et al., 2022). It also increases the risk of suicide (WHO, 2012). This is the result of the trauma experienced and of social stigmas, especially around having been a victim-survivor of sexual violence, that persist in Guatemala (HRW, 2025). Girls who have been victim-survivors of GBV, and especially of sexual violence, are held responsible for the violence inflicted upon them, as well as being seen as impure, dirty or shameful (ibid.).

According to the 2023 National Survey on the Quality and Well-being of Households (ENCABIH), girls and women reported seeing their mental health impacted. Of girls and women who experienced GBV in their communities, 10.4% reported feelings of anxiety, 7% decreased self-esteem, 5.7% isolated themselves and 20.2% changed their routines.[31] Of girls and women who experienced GBV at school, 11% reported symptoms of insomnia or anxiety and 3.5% reported isolation; and of girls who experienced it at the workplace, 9.8% reported decreased self-esteem.[32] Around 61% of girls and women who reported GBV in intimate relationships reported impacts on their mental health, such as anxiety, depression, nervous problems, changes in appetite and insomnia (INE, 2024b).

Adolescent pregnancies and re-victimisation by state institutions can worsen the mental health impacts of GBV on girls and young women. Harsh social stigmas, shattered future prospects, and, critically, a lack of sexual and reproductive knowledge (that is, not knowing what pregnancy means or entails) can create a severe mental health crisis for a pregnant girl or adolescent (HRW, 2025; Ramazzini and López, 2023). While probably an underestimated figure, the MSPAS recorded 16 suicides between 2020 and 2022 directly related to adolescent pregnancies (Barrios-Klee et al., 2021).

When girls and young women decide to report their cases, they are often re-victimised. Girls and young women are forced to navigate a system that is highly fragmented with multiple institutions and contradictory processes. The system is also frustrating, given its lack of adequate staffing and prompt responses, and does not prioritise victim-survivors' well-being (HRW, 2025).[33] What is more, they must confront discriminatory attitudes – fuelled by gender- and age-related social norms (KII, Civil Society 1). Government officials and

---

31 The last figure is calculated by adding up the percentage of women who reported planning their movements more and those who reported not going out at particular times.

32 The responses of 11.9% of girls and women who experienced GBV in the workplace were classed under 'other' – a category that includes anxiety and depression, and increased use of alcohol or drugs, but also includes transmission of HIV and pregnancy.

33 For example, by giving enough time and resources for prosecutors to build trust with victim-survivors and time for psychologists to prepare girls emotionally before trial and attend to them afterwards (HRW, 2025).

services providers may insist, for example, that cases of sexual violence were motivated by the girls' own behaviours or they may see pregnancy as a punishment for 'being flirtatious' and thus deny adequate care (HRW, 2025). They may also continue to question their statements, motivated by a belief that children are more likely to lie (KIIs, Civil Society 1, 4). Indigenous girls and young women and those with a disability are likely to be more at risk of mental health consequences, as they face added layers of discrimination, such as the lack of an interpreter or alternative means of communication (OHCHR, 2023).

As with physical health, the absence of access to quality emergency and longer-term mental health services plays an important role. In the context of an under-resourced healthcare system, 'the budget for [psychological attention] is almost non-existent' (HRW, 2025, p.56). Therefore, even in cases where judges do order mental health care provisions for victim-survivors, these do not materialise.

Education: GBV can have severe consequences for girls' schooling – both fear of it occurring and once it has been perpetrated. HWR (2025) documents that rural families are concerned about GBV and worry about their children's safety when they are going or returning from school. This fear increases in relation to secondary schooling as classes are held from the afternoon, requiring adolescents to travel back home at night. Thus, families might consider it safer to stop their daughters' schooling altogether.

When perpetrated, GBV – especially when linked to education spaces, to child marriages or to adolescent pregnancies – can lead girls to drop out. According to the 2023 ENCABIH, of the girls and women who reported experiencing GBV at school, 9.6% left school temporarily or permanently. This could have been to avoid their assailant, because of physical and/or mental health challenges, or because of social stigma.

When GBV is linked to child marriage and/or adolescent pregnancies, girls may be discouraged or forced by family members to drop out as they begin to be seen as adult women, pressured to stay at home, and/or tasked with caregiving roles at home or other responsibilities. Once they are young mothers, continuing their schooling is more complicated given the lack of an adequate support system that could help girls cope with the demands of childcare (HRW, 2025). This interacts with persisting discrimination against girls' schooling, meaning families are potentially less inclined to safeguard it (Greene, 2019). According to Guatemala's Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), in the first six months of 2024, there were only 756 cases of pregnant girls under 14 in school throughout the country, while according to OSAR, there were at least 1,953 pregnant girls aged 10 to 14 (HRW, 2025; OSAR, 2024). This was despite the existence of various mechanisms aimed at keeping pregnant girls in school (see Section 3.4 for more details).

While there is no data on this topic, GBV could also be affecting the learning of girls and young women who manage to stay in school. Physical or mental health problems can affect children's concentration, memory or cognitive ability and so can affect their school performance and educational attainment (Becker et al., 2014).

Other consequences: GBV can motivate girls and young women to migrate, as well as leading them into cycles of violence. The social stigma, lack of opportunities and impunity associated with GBV are important factors in girls' and young women's decisions to migrate. While there is limited age-disaggregated data, a study

by Plan International (2023) found that 23.7% of interviewed adolescents reported GBV as a reason to migrate (see also Save the Children, 2022). When migrating, girls and young women are at heightened risk of GBV (Marcus, 2024; Plan International, 2023). Girls and young women who are deported back to Guatemala are also at heightened risk of GBV, as deportation often forces them to return to the very homes or communities where they experienced harm and as there is no protocol or policy that helps ensure safety upon their return (ONU Mujeres Guatemala, 2025).

As the number of people deported is growing due to the policies of the current US administration, UN Women has recently launched a call to action (ibid.; see also Chapter 4 as returnees also face an elevated risk of trafficking and exploitation). GBV can also prompt girls to leave their homes. According to the Institutional Coordinator for the Promotion of Children's Rights (Coordinadora Institucional de Promoción por los Derechos de la Niñez; CIPRODENI), the number of children missing per day has been increasing, rising from 15 in 2019 to 20.5 in 2023 (CIPRODENI, 2022; 2023). Girls represent around 60% of the cases (ibid.); however, it is not known whether and to what extent the disappearances are related to escaping from violent situations. Yet when they lack resources and support mechanisms, it is likely girls who leave home are vulnerable to experiencing further abuse, and to being exploited or trafficked (see Chapter 4), pushing them into a different cycle of violence.

Deciding to migrate or to leave their homes can also lead girls and adolescents to abandon school (Plan International, 2023). Underpinning all these consequences is poverty (see Box 3).

Box 3 Interaction with poverty

All the consequences discussed in this section – physical health, mental health, education, migration and safety – interact with poverty. Not only do scarce economic resources increase the likelihood of severe consequences in these areas of girls' and young women's lives, but these consequences, in turn, have an impact on their current and future economic prospects.

Physical injuries, illnesses and chronic conditions, mental health disorders, and the legal process of seeking justice can put more strain on limited household resources. As already discussed, poor physical and mental health can also negatively affect school attendance or performance. Dropping out of school, can, in turn, severely hinder girls and adolescents' future earning potential and economic independence (Girls Not Brides, 2022; HRW, 2025). According to a UNICEF survey reported by Girls Not Brides (2022), 27% of Guatemalan women aged 20 to 24 who had entered a union before age 18 had worked in the past month, compared to 61% of women of the same age who had never been in a union

3.4 Policy and programme responses to prevent and respond to GBV against girls and young women

This section discusses current and/or possible areas of work to prevent and respond to GBV against girls and young women. There is limited information on the effectiveness of existing initiatives to prevent and reduce GBV. The section first discusses prevention programmes and policies (primary prevention), followed by responses to GBV (secondary prevention). Civil society organisations (CSOs) and UN agencies lead on both types of initiatives.

While not included in this section, GBV initiatives directed at women and men – as noted by an interviewee – can have a positive trickle-down effect on girls (KII, UN Agency 3). Interviewees highlighted how GBV can often be an intergenerational cycle and how it is more likely that abuse is experienced by younger generations where there is a mother or grandmother who suffered GBV (KIIs, Civil Society 1, 4; UN Agency 3). It is also likely that girls benefit from shelters and support services offered to women. This speaks to the importance of two-generation or 'whole-family' approaches that aim to improve children's well-being by also focusing on their parents' welfare (see Tissera, 2024).

Preventing GBV: addressing root causes

Social norm change: As discussed in previous sections, gender and age-related social norms are key drivers of GBV against girls and adolescents – directly and by sustaining child marriage. Moreover, they can also stifle intervention. In a study with over 1,000 university students in Guatemala, Lyons et al. (2023) show that gender norms that normalise GBV and blame its occurrence on women are also highly correlated with failure to take bystander action.

GBV prevention through gender norm change is led primarily by civil society organisations at the community level through workshops and campaigns. Table 7 shares examples of initiatives aimed at changing gender norms.

Table 7 Initiatives for GBV-related gender norm change

Organisation	Initiative
Pop'Noj Association	The organisation creates child-friendly brochures in Spanish, Popti' and Mam, which promote healthy masculinities, among other topics such as girls and women's rights (Tissera, 2024).
SERNiña	The organisation conducts workshops with girls, boys, mothers, fathers, teachers and community leaders aimed at challenging gender stereotypes. For example, it works with boys to promote gender-equitable masculinities that allow them to develop emotional literacy and healthy communication skills (SERniña, n.d.).
UNICEF	UNICEF promotes a digital campaign called *#PodriaSertuRealidad* ('it could be your reality') that aims to denormalise child marriage (UNFPA, 2019).
UNICEF	In 2022, UNICEF carried out community-level campaigns to challenge the social norms underpinning sexual violence against children (UNICEF, 2023).
UN Women	UN Women launched a campaign in 2024 and 2025 to denormalise and reduce sexual and physical violence on public transport, called *#Igualdadenruta* ('equality in transit') (UN Women, n.d.).
Women's Justice Initiative	WJI's programme, Adolescent Girls, works with community stakeholders to transform the gender norms that support child marriage and with parents and teachers to delay marriages (WJI, n.d.).

The present research found only one available evaluation of initiatives aimed at gender norm change in Guatemala. The 'Whole-Family Healing Program' was carried out with 30 families in the Kaqchikel Mayan community of El Hato by SERniña from July 2021 to July 2022. The project was family-centred and multifaceted, including separate weekly two-hour workshops for all family members, monthly workshops for men, therapy sessions and community action projects. The workshops used an arts-based and an 'edutainment' approach, using a variety of art forms and games to elicit engagement, dialogue and reflection. It delved into themes such as identity, women's and Indigenous people's rights, agency, bodily autonomy and consent, and fostering healthy relationships and communication. The project was also characterised by its incorporation of traditional Mayan beliefs and practices and its restorative justice approach, which prioritised solution-seeking over punishment and aimed to foster empathy towards the challenges that boys and men face.

This mixed-methods evaluation found that while the programme had good results, it was undermined by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the well-being of its participants. The project increased more egalitarian gender attitudes and feelings of safety at home, while it decreased perceived violence and some forms of emotional dysregulation. It also anchored beliefs on mutual respect, women's rights, women's and girls' agency, fatherhood and care, equal division of domestic work, better family communication, and prioritising children's well-being. However, post-programme, there was a decrease in self-efficacy, self-esteem, emotional regulation and psychological well-being, which the authors argue was most likely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic rather than a failure of the programme (Gibbons et al., 2025).

Interviewees, moreover, highlighted that when pursuing gender norm change, it is crucial to work with different community stakeholders – children, parents, teachers, and religious and community leaders – simultaneously. One interviewee explained the importance of working in this way:

> If you work with multiple stakeholders at the same time, then the same message reaches an individual through different channels, challenging much someone's previous knowledge or beliefs more effectively (KII, Civil Society 3).

In the view of another organisation, working with multiple stakeholders enables gender norm change to be promoted simultaneously among the different groups of adults that influence their lives: family, teachers and community members, and policy-makers, service providers, etc. (KII, Civil Society 1). This echoes wider literature on gender norm change work that stresses the importance of scaling up from individual change within a particular group (Alexander-Scott et al., 2016).

Interviewees also highlighted the importance of working in Guatemala with mass media communications – especially radio – as their reach is greater than that of digital platforms and technologies due to the population's still limited access to the internet (see Section 2.4). However, they emphasised the importance of doing so in Indigenous languages and in culturally sensitive ways.

As with all social-norm change work, it is imperative that initiatives are based on context-specific research that captures the constellation of gender norms at play and their interaction with other factors that influence people's agency (ibid.).

Efforts to change gender norms can be complemented effectively by initiatives that increase rights literacy. For instance, Guatemala's Public Prosecutor's Office (PGN) conducts workshops with girls in educational centres for this purpose. Asociacion Voz de la Niñez also runs workshops with community leaders to increase their knowledge and train them on how to respond to instances of GBV in their community and guide victim-survivors.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights knowledge: Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) aims to increase knowledge about sexual and reproductive health and rights. While CSE does not address the root causes of GBV unless it also includes a gender norm change component, it can contribute to denormalising it by increasing girls' and young women's knowledge of their rights – as well as the knowledge of others, especially that of boys and men. It can also help foster skills and values that are central to healthy relationships, as well as providing important information and nurturing skills that can help orient girls and young women when they are deciding what to do in instances of GBV.

Table 8 Comprehensive sexuality education initiatives

Organisation	Initiative
Pop'Noj Association	The organisation creates child-friendly brochures in Spanish, Popti' and Mam, with CSE content (Tissera, 2024).
SERniña	The organisation provides CSE workshops focused on consent, bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health. It also offers free access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, in collaboration with other organisations, and works with teachers to challenge the taboos that fuel opposition to CSE (SERniña, n.d.).
UNFPA	The United Nations Population Fund supports the capacity of the Guatemalan Government to strengthen the implementation of CSE, both in school and out-of-school settings (UNFPA, 2021).

CSE faces strong opposition from parents, teachers and community leaders in the country, as religious beliefs foster strong taboos around sexuality-related topics (Girls Not Brides, 2022). HRW (2025) found that teachers often avoid covering CSE due to personal discomfort, feeling of unpreparedness or fear of backlash from families. This was echoed by interviewees (KIIs, UN Agency 2, 3; Civil Society 1, 3; Government 1). Therefore, it is important that CSE is also directed at different community stakeholders to challenge these taboos. Doing so minimises the chances of backlash against children and adolescents when they assert their rights. As a civil society interviewee explained:

> It makes adults very angry when a child who now knows about his or her rights, asserts them, which can lead to higher levels of violence (KII, Civil Society 3).

While the 2005 Law on Universal and Equitable Access to Family Planning Services and the 2021 Social Development Law mandate the Ministry of Education (in coordination with the MSPAS) to include content on sexual and reproductive health and rights at all levels of the education system, its inclusion in the national curriculum has been very limited in terms of content, reach and quality (that is, in terms of teacher training)

(Monzón et al., 2017; HRW, 2025).[34] An analysis of government-provided CSE stressed, moreover, that the curriculum should move away from a biology-focused approach and towards a human rights approach, incorporate content on contraception and HIV, and should focus not only on increasing knowledge but also on fostering skills and values (Monzón et al., 2017).

Yet CSE mandates have been weakened in recent years. The 2021 Governmental Agreement on the Policy for the Protection of Life and the Institutionalisation of the Family (2021–2030) states that CSE is solely parents' responsibility and thus need not be included in the national curriculum. Moreover, the 2022 Life and Family Protection Law (Law 5272) – previously discussed for its content on abortion – also sought to limit the content of CSE (Kitroeff et al., 2022). As with abortion, attempts to limit CSE in the country are continuous and connected to conservative groups in Guatemala and abroad.

Legal and policy change: Guatemala has been strengthening its legal framework on GBV and child protection since the mid-1990s (see Table 9), in most part due to advocacy efforts from civil society organisations and the feminist movement in the country.

Penalties for GBV can go up to 12 years in prison, with the potential of aggravating factors increasing the penalty to up to 20 years. As Guatemalan law defines sexual activity involving girls under 14 as sexual violence, this means any person over 18 years is criminally responsible for GBV (HRW, 2025).

High levels of impunity (discussed in Section 3.2), however, hinder the effectiveness of criminal law reforms to deter GBV. Initiatives that aim to improve the access of victim-survivors to justice are, therefore, crucial. These also include initiatives aimed at transforming the patriarchal gender norms held by the police and justice officials, as they can help these groups respond more effectively to GBV (see next section). Addressing these norms would also allow for other landmark policies, such as those establishing specialised judicial courts for GBV cases and those mandating holistic attention to victim-survivors, to be more effective (KIIs, Government 3; Civil Society 5).[35]

Yet, a criminal law approach has clear limitations. For example, while child marriage was fully prohibited in 2017, the practice is still pursued informally and continues to be widespread (see Section 3.2). Moreover, a criminal law approach has the potential of increasing inequality as it tends to be applied disproportionately to marginalised groups (HRW, 2025).

---

34 This is also despite the Prevent with Education agreement between MINEDUC and MSPAS (created in 2012 and renewed in 2021) and the Governmental Agreement on the Law for Healthy Maternity created in 2012. Both agreements mandate MINEDUC to provide CSE in public schools (HRW, 2025).

35 As discussed in the next sub-section, however, for these policies to be effective it is also crucial to increase the capacity and resources of the judicial and healthcare system.

Table 9 Guatemala's legal framework on GBV against girls and young women

Year	Action
1996	Ratification of the Law to Prevent, Sanction and Eradicate Intrafamily Violence (Decree 97-1996), which creates protection measures for women in situations of domestic or intimate partner violence.
2003	Ratification of the Law for the Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents, which recognises children under 18 years of age as rights holders
2005	Creation of the National Commission of Childhood and Adolescence to coordinate all child-related policies.
2008	Ratification of the Law against Femicide and Other Forms of Violence against Women, which recognises and penalises the multiple forms that GBV can take, including femicide. The Law also mandates the creation of specialised services within the justice system.
2009	Ratification of the Law Against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking, which enhances the rights of victims, increases penalties for perpetrators, and mandates prompt action from government authorities.
2010	Ratification of the Law of the Alba Kenneth Alert System, which coordinates action to search for and protect children who have disappeared.
2016	Ratification of the Law for the Immediate Search of Missing Women, also known as the Isabel-Claudina Alert System, which coordinates action to search for missing women and prevent femicides.
2017	Second reform to the Civil Code to prohibit child marriage (under 18 years of age), with no exceptions.

Note: Additionally, Guatemala is also a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (ratified in 1982), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified in 1990) and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (not yet ratified)

Source: authors, using data from UNICEF (2024); Beck and Stephen (2021)

An important gap remaining in Guatemala's legal framework is the lack of recognition of bodily autonomy rights – namely, the right to abortion. The most recent attempt to guarantee its recognition was Law 5376 in 2018, which included, among other proposals, granting abortion access to victim-survivors of sexual violence under 14 years of age. However, it was shelved in Congress in the same year due to opposition from conservative organisations and policy-makers, some connected to the anti-gender movement – as briefly discussed in Section 3.3. While the proposal was promoted by the coalition Grupo Intersectorial, there is limited information on its membership. Organisations such as Mujeres Transformando Mundos (MTM), Asociación de Mujeres en Solidaridad (AMES), and Paz Joven Guatemala seem to have been part of the group and thus may be organisations working to close this legal gap (Quintela Babio, 2018; Andres and Vílchez, 2024).

As various interviewees highlighted, however, there have been important recent policy steps, such as the adoption of the laws to coordinate action to immediately search for missing women and children (the Isabel-Claudina and the Alba-Kenneth alerts, see Table 9) (KII, Government 3).

Between August 2018 and the end of June 2024, alerts were activated for 11,300 missing women. Subsequently, 10,682 of these alerts (95%) were deactivated, meaning 95% of the missing women were found (Ministerio Público, 2024). Assessing the true effectiveness of these alerts, particularly in preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV), requires further details, including whether the women were located alive and the support they received after being located.

More recently, women's rights organisations and SEPREM have also secured the inclusion of GBV in the country's security agenda. This helps reframe GBV, ensuring it is no longer perceived as a less serious form of violence and thus a lower priority, and fosters an intersectional understanding of peace and security (KII, UN Agency 2; Civil Society 2).

Responding to GBV: addressing consequences

Addressing biases in service providers and justice officials: As discussed in Section 3.2, patriarchal gender norms are hindering effective responses to GBV and subjecting girls to discrimination in the health, education and justice system. Thus, organisations like UN Women are pursuing social norm work with government officials and other service providers. In 2024, UN Women worked with justice officials to raise awareness about how gendered biases can hinder justice. They facilitated a conversation using the documentary 'Rita', which discusses the case of the Safe House Virgen de la Asuncion, under the purview of the Presidential Secretary of Social Well-being (discussed in more detail below) (see Barrios-Klee and Mazariegos, 2022; OACNUDH, 2018).

Legal assistance and protection: In 2016, two key policy measures were approved: the creation of the Victims' Institute (Instituto de la Víctima) and the launch of the 'Comprehensive Approach Route for Pregnancies in Girls and Adolescents under 14 years of age' (Ruta de Abordaje de Atención Integral de Embarazos en Niñas y Adolescentes Menores de 14 Años). The first was created to be responsible for providing legal representation and dignified reparations to victim-survivors – that is, comprehensive reparations to address the multidimensional harms caused by GBV (see SEPREM, 2024). The Comprehensive Approach establishes that when a girl attends a clinic or hospital, healthcare staff are obliged to pass on the information to the Public Prosecutor's Office (PGN) and the Attorney General's Office (MP) in a maximum of one working day, who will then be responsible for the investigation and criminal prosecution of all cases. However, as discussed in Section 3.2, the case dismissal rate is very high, and when cases do proceed the process can be complicated and lengthy. This is both due to discrimination, as discussed above, and lack of resources. As a result, civil society organisations, such as CIPRODENI, Asociacion Voz de la Niñez and Fundacion Sobrevivientes, also offer legal assistance to girls and young women.

Civil society is also a key provider of protection services. Interviewees highlighted the lack of government-run shelters for girls and young women who have suffered GBV (KIIs, Civil Society 1, 2, 5). Civil society organisations like CAIMUS, Fundacion Sobrevivientes and CIPRODENI therefore also offer emergency services to girls and young women. Moreover, the death of more than 40 girls at the Safe House Virgen de la Asuncion, where there were reports of sexual and physical violence against girls and of possible human trafficking since 2013, raises concerns about girls' safety in government-

run shelters where infrastructure is inadequate, spaces are overcrowded, there are no strict controls on staff behaviour and where gender-sensitive protocols are absent (Barrios-Klee and Mazariegos, 2022; OACNUDH, 2018).

Care for victim-survivors: The inter-Institutional Protocol on Sexual Violence and Trafficking seeks to prioritise comprehensive care for survivors, as does the mandate of the Victims' Institute to oversee dignified reparations. However, neither has been able to secure girls and young women's access to health. The Protocol has been challenged by the system's limited coverage and lack of resources to support victim-survivors (HRW, 2025), while the Victims' Institute was allegedly part of a corruption scheme under the previous leadership (Pérez Marroquín, 2024).

As discussed in Section 3.3, the low level of access to healthcare imposes heavy costs on girls and young women, as they need to travel to, and often stay in, the nearest urban centre with specialised care. Thus, many civil society organisations and UN agencies provide financial support to girls and young women, and/or provide direct mental health support. In 2022, for example, UNICEF provided psychosocial care for victim-survivors of sexual violence (UNICEF, 2023). Asociacion Voz de la Niñez also provides psychosocial care for children who are victim-survivors of GBV and their families.

Prevention of school dropout: There are two government initiatives that aim to support pregnant girls and young mothers to stay in school. First, the 2016 Comprehensive Approach Route for Pregnancies in Girls and Adolescents under 14 years of age, which mandates that information on adolescent pregnancies detected in the health system is shared with the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and MINEDUC's responsibility to ensure girls remain in school (HRW, 2025).

Second, the Vida Program, in place since 2017 and managed by the Ministry of Development (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social; MIDES), is the only available government programme that provides financial support for pregnant girls under 14. The programme, however, has very strict eligibility criteria. It is only available to Guatemalan girls whose legal case has been processed, who are not living with a partner and who receive no other state funds. Moreover, the fund only offers a small stipend of around 1,500 quetzales (Q.) and the frequency of the payments is not specified (HRW, 2025). Thus, while the programme may have the objective of reducing the need for young mothers to abandon school for work in order to cover the costs, it is not likely to be having that effect or having it only on a very small scale. There is no similar financial support programme for other victim-survivors of GBV.

4 Exploitation of children

In the last 15 years, Guatemala has developed a robust protective legal environment for children, including laws and policies to prevent and address exploitation (see Annex 2). Indeed, several government agencies and platforms have been created, such as the Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Human Trafficking (SVET) and the Inter-institutional Commission against Human Trafficking (Comisión Interinstitutional contra la Trata de Personas; CIT).[36] Guatemala also developed a National Plan for the Prevention of Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Human Trafficking (Plan Nacional para la Prevención de la Violencia Sexual, Explotación y Trata de Personas), aiming to prevent, protect, respond to and sanction these crimes through training, information, capacity building and awareness at the national level. Similarly, the Public Policy Against Human Trafficking (Política Pública contra la Trata de Personas) 2025-2040, will be approved in 2025 (SVET, 2025).

Despite this legal and policy framework, Guatemala is not considered to be fully meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of child exploitation, including trafficking (US Department of State, 2024), as several challenges to address child exploitation persist. This chapter examines the following research questions:

- What are the main types of exploitation of children (with a particular focus on girls) in Guatemala?
- What do we know about what works to prevent and mitigate the trafficking and exploitation of children (especially girls) in Guatemala?
- What is the role of digital technologies and the media in child and adolescent exploitation in Guatemala?

4.1 Main types of exploitation of children in Guatemala

Key data

As with other illegal activities, available data on the prevalence of different forms of exploitation is largely based on reported crimes, and information from recipients of support to victim-survivors provided by the government and civil society organisations. This means that the data presented in this section is likely to underestimate the extent of child exploitation.[37]

The most comprehensive data, available in biannual reports, is from SVET. Table 10 shows the most common forms of exploitation detected in Guatemala in 2023-2025.

---

36 The CIT is the national forum for coordinating and articulating efforts on human trafficking, coordinated by the Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Trafficking in Persons (SVET). The CIT is currently comprised of 20 state institutions, 6 civil society organisations, and 8 international organisations (SVET, 2025).

37 Note: This section draws principally and directly on government data, rather than on international reports such as the US Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report*, which also draws on government data (2024).

Table 10 requency of different types of exploitation experienced by victim-survivors of trafficking supported in shelters, 2023-2025[38]

Type of exploitation	Number of cases (2023)	Number of cases (2024)	Number of cases (first quarter of 2025)
Sexual exploitation	140	98	64
Labour exploitation	50	64	38
Pornography	10	3	NA
Forced marriage	9	NA	18
Recruitment of minors by organised crime groups	6	17	9
Prostitution[39] (*prostitución ajena*)	3	1	1
Irregular adoption	1	NA	2
Any form of slavery	1	NA	NA
Begging	1	1	NA
Begging and forced marriage	NA	NA	2
Begging and sexual exploitation	4	NA	NA
Sexual exploitation and pornography	NA	3	NA
Sexual and labour exploitation	NA	8	NA
Sale of people	NA	NA	1
Not specified	NA	NA	3
Total	225	195	138

Source: Data compiled by SVET (2024a, 2025), based on reports of residential service providers

SVET data shows the most common forms of exploitation detected among victim-survivors receiving support in shelters in 2024 were sexual exploitation (50%), labour exploitation (33%), the recruitment of minors by organised criminal groups (9%), sexual and labour exploitation (4%) and pornography (1%). Most of the victim-survivors supported by shelters were adolescents aged 13-17 years (66%) or children aged 0-12 years (24%) and disproportionately female (73%).

Most were exploited within Guatemala (98%), although they may have been trafficked outside the country. 76% were mestizo, 21% were Mayan and 2% were foreign (SVET, 2025). Two victim-survivors identified as LGTBQI+.

Age and gender: In 2024, a total of 420 possible victim-survivors of exploitation were reported to SVET, of whom 51 were adults, 364 were children and adolescents, and 5 did not specified their age.

38 Note: definitions of each of these forms of exploitation, some of which might appear to overlap, are not provided in the report.

39 SVET data distinguishes *prostitucion ajena* from *explotacion sexual commercial*.

Similarly, females represent the largest number of detected and identified victim-survivors, with 72.86% (306) compared to 24.52% (103) males (SVET, 2025). In the first four months of 2025, 236 victim-survivors had already been identified, of whom 193 were children and adolescents, 4 were adults and 39 did not specify their age. Adolescents aged 13-17 years represent the largest group of possible victim-survivors with 64% (270) in 2024 and 57% (136) in 2025. 2.62% (11) of victim-survivors detected in 2024 identified as LGTBQI+ (SVET, 2025).

Ethnicity and nationality: The ethnic breakdown varied by type of service provision (residential and non-residential),[40] as can be seen in Table 11. SVET data indicates in 2023, 12% of victim-survivors of child exploitation receiving residential support were Indigenous people. However, non-residential support data from the first four months of 2024 indicates that the largest number of victim-survivors who received this type of care were of Maya ethnicity (56%). SVET data also suggests the majority of victim-survivors are Guatemalan (SVET, 2024a).[41] In 2024, 21% of victim-survivors of child exploitation receiving residential support were Indigenous people, 76% were Mestizos and 2% were foreign (SVET, 2025).

Table 11 Ethnicity of victim-survivors of exploitation by type of support provided, 2023 (%)

Type of support	Ethnicity		
	Maya	Mestizo	Other [42]
Residential	12%	84%	4%
Non-residential	52%	45%	3%

Source: Data compiled by SVET (2024a)

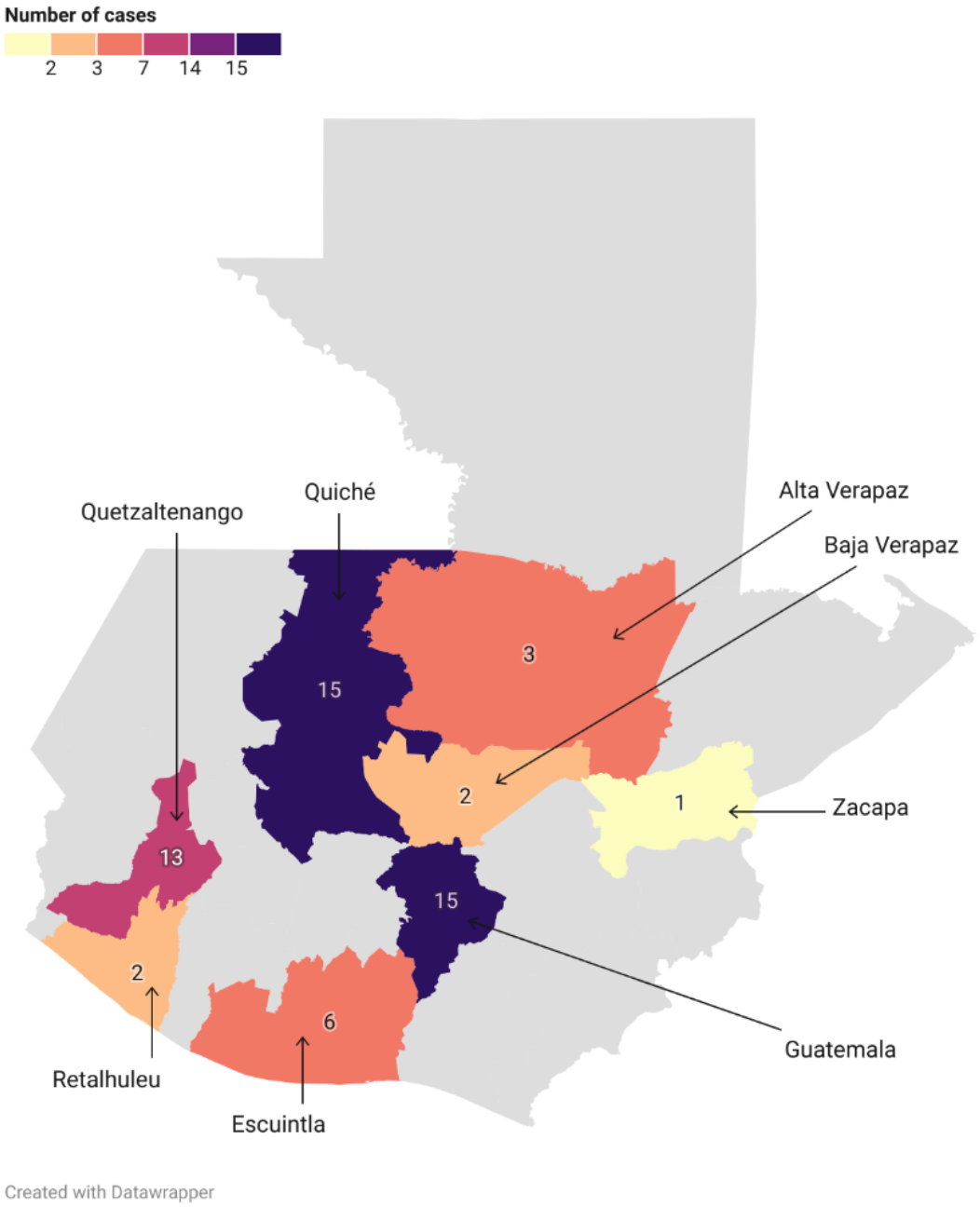
Children and adolescents: Data from the Public Prosecutor's Office shows 57 girls, boys and adolescents were rescued from potential cases of exploitation during 2024. Most cases were related to labour exploitation (51%), pornography (16%), irregular adoption (14%), begging (10%) and sexual exploitation (9%). Data from the first quarter of 2025 show that most potential cases of exploitation of rescued children and adolescents were related to child labour (51%), sexual exploitation (21%), begging (12%) and irregular adoption (12%) (SVET, 2025). No data disaggregated by rural and urban location was found, but Figure 18 shows the distribution of rescued children and adolescents' place of origin in 2024. Most cases of rescued children were identified in Guatemala and Quiché representing 26% (15 each), while Quetzaltenango reported 22% (13) of the rescues, Escuintla 10% (6), Alta Verapaz 5% (3), Baja Verapaz and Retalhuleu 3% (2 each) and Zacapa 2% (1) (SVET, 2025).

40 Women, their daughters under 18 and sons under 12 are provided temporary residential support (SVET, 2025).

41 In 2024, the numbers of victim-survivors of other nationalities were as follows: Congo – 1, Colombian – 1 and not specified – 2 (SVET, 2025). In 2023, the numbers of victims of other nationalities were as follows: Honduran – 5, Colombian – 2, Mexican – 1; and in the first quarter of 2024, Honduran – 2, Mexican – 1 and US – 1. These were not disaggregated by age or sex (SVET, 2024a). This may reflect a change from patterns in the mid-2010s when women and girls from neighbouring countries were trafficked to Guatemala for sexual exploitation (UNICEF, 2016), or it may also suggest that nationals of other countries were less likely to be detected or provided with support.

42 'Other' refers to citizens of other countries.

Figure 18 Number of cases of rescued children and adolescents from exploitation, by department, 2024



Source: Data compiled by SVET (2025: 78)

This data indicates long-standing geographical patterns of exploitation. In particular, the significant proportion of cases identified in Guatemala department is consistent with earlier studies (for example, ODHAG, 2019). This earlier study also found a relatively higher proportion of reports (*denuncias*) from border areas. The greater number of cases in Guatemala department is confirmed by interviewees, who indicated that child victim-survivors of exploitation are form the city or usually travel from other departments to Guatemala City given the higher demand for work (KIIs, Civil Society 6, 9).

Additional data from a report analysing 42 sentences related to the crime of human trafficking between 2020 to 2023 shows that most human trafficking cases with convictions corresponded to sexual exploitation (68%), followed by irregular adoptions (26%) and labour exploitation (5%) (ASFC and SVET, 2024). Of the 47 victim-survivors of human trafficking identified in the sample, most were Guatemalan (87%), and most were women and girls (85%). Regarding the age of the victim-survivors, most women and girls were between 14 and 17 years old (45%); followed by victim-survivors between 0 and 13 years old, and 18 and 35 years old (both 25%); and 36 and 45 years old (5%). Of the male victim-survivors, 71% were between 0 and 13 years old, and 29% were between 14 and 17 years old (ibid.).

Key forms of exploitation

The key forms of exploitation of children discussed in this section are commercial sexual exploitation, child labour and exploitation by organised crime.[43]

Commercial sexual exploitation

The SVET report does not provide a breakdown of victim-survivors by type of commercial sexual exploitation; as a result, the most recent disaggregated data is from the mid-late 2010s. Data from 2016–2019[44] shows that of the children identified as exploited sexually, 66% were adolescent girls, 19% pre-adolescent girls, 7% pre-adolescent boys and 8% adolescent boys (ODHAG, 2019).

Approximately 57% of crimes detected involving the sexual exploitation of children between 2016 and 2019 involved possession, circulation and/or creation of child pornography, while 42% involved sexual activities with children involving remuneration, whether directly to the child or to a third party (ibid.). More recent data compiled by SVET in 2023–2024 found that:

- Production of pornography with under-age children formed 14% of cases of exploitation of children recorded; 60% of these were female and 64% were aged between 13 and 17 years (reported in IIN and OAS, 2024). In 2024, production of pornography with under-age children formed 16% of cases of exploitation of children recorded (SVET, 2025).
- 150 children were identified as victim-survivors of grooming and 39 children were identified as victim-survivors of sextortion. In both cases, the majority of victim-survivors were girls aged between 13 and 17, with the greatest number in Guatemala department (IIN and OAS, 2024).

Victim-survivors were often deceived and coerced into commercial sex work after being offered work in bars, hotels, etc. While few studies have exposed these dynamics, media reports show that this kind of deceptive recruitment is common (for example, Asmann, 2022; Medinilla, 2023). Some studies also report girls being sold into commercial sexual exploitation by desperate parents and caregivers, sometimes when breadwinners have migrated and remittances are not forthcoming (for example, UNICEF, 2016). Apart from some qualitative evidence on associations with poverty, no quantitative data was found on the social groups who are particularly at risk.

---

43 Forced child marriage was discussed in Chapter 3, so is not covered here. Media reports provide additional insight into other forms of exploitation such as irregular adoption; no evidence was found on gender differences in vulnerability.

44 Compiled from the Sistema Informático de Control de Investigación del Ministerio Público (in ODHAG, 2019).

While the majority of exploitation of Guatemalan children and women detected took place within Guatemala, research also reports the sexual exploitation of Guatemalan women and children in settlements on either side of the Mexico–Guatemala border, largely in prostitution and pornography (for example, ECPAT Guatemala, 2010; Salinas, 2023). Data on the numbers involved could not be found.

Child labour

Much of the evidence on child labour in Guatemala is somewhat outdated, with many studies having been undertaken in the early 2000s. The key exceptions are more recent studies on child labour in agriculture (FAO, 2021a; 2022).[45] Periodic US Department of Labor (USDOL) reports, for example, list key hazardous sectors in which children are working as being agriculture (both on family farms and as contracted labour); industry, including gravel crushing and manufacture of fireworks; and services, including street vending, begging, shoe-shining and commercial sexual exploitation (see, for example, USDOL, 2023).

Interviewees indicated that girls work as paid employees at private houses as domestic workers, as cleaners, at food stalls and at '*tortillerias*' (small business where freshly made '*tortillas*' – a flat pancake made from maize flour – are produced and sold). Girls usually work in exploitative conditions (more than 12 hours each day), with low salaries, and are exposed to abuse, sexual violence, slavery and total deprivation of liberty. Boys are found working in agriculture (see next section), begging, in the fireworks industry and selling fried chicken from carts, also in exploitative conditions (KIIs, Civil Society 7, 9). As Table 12 shows, agriculture is the single largest sector employing children. Across all sectors, rates of engagement in economic activity are higher among boys than girls. However, as Box 4 demonstrates, once unpaid care and domestic work are considered, girls frequently work longer days.

Child labour in agriculture: Box 4 highlights key data revealed by a study by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) of child labour in coffee production, one of the most significant agricultural sectors for the Guatemalan economy. It emphasises the overall longer workloads of seasonally migrant children compared to local children and of girls compared with boys.

Table 12 Summary data on children working

Indicator	**Percentage of children of relevant age group**			
Proportion of children aged 7–13 economically active*	Boys	Girls	Rural	Urban
	21.0%	10.3%		
Proportion of children aged 10–14 working**	22.2%	10.4%	10.0%	19.6%
Proportion of children aged15–17 engaged in hazardous work**	47.2%	16.8%	21.4%	38.5%
Sectoral distribution of work for children aged 5–14**	Agriculture	Services	Industry	
	50%	31.5%	18.5%	

Sources: * INE, 2021 cited in Cetino (2024); ** USDOL (2023)

45 Examples include: Instituto Nacional de Estadistica, 2003; World Bank, ILO and UNICEF, 2003.

Box 4 Children's workloads in coffee production

A survey by FAO in a coffee-growing area of Huehuetenango during the coffee harvesting season, which investigated child labour among local and seasonal migrant workers, found that:

- 47% of those aged 7 to 17 were undertaking work considered as child labour.[46]
- More migrant children worked in coffee production: 85% of boys and 61% of girls from seasonal migrant families compared with 38% of local boys and girls.
- Migrant children started younger: 39% of 7–9-year-olds and 77% of 10–13-year-olds in seasonal migrant families were working, compared with 15% and 39% of local children, respectively.
- Girls undertook substantially more domestic work than boys: 8 and 3.3 hours per week, respectively, among local children, and 11.2 and 3 hours, respectively, among seasonal migrant children. Combining paid and unpaid work, girls averaged a 30-hour working week compared with 22 hours a week for boys.
- Migrant children worked longer hours (46 hours per week) compared with 26 per week for local children.

Source: FAO (2021a)

Data on the proportion of girls undertaking domestic work as paid employees could not be found, although one study suggests that 43% of Guatemala's paid domestic workers are aged between 14 and 26 (Solis, 2021).[47] Interviews with adult domestic workers indicate that some young women first started undertaking such work from six years of age. Domestic work is often informal, putting employees at risk of non-payment; because it is undertaken in private homes, employees are vulnerable to abuse, with adolescent and younger girls particularly at risk (ibid.).

Some data on girls' disproportionate contribution to unpaid care and domestic work was available, highlighting differences by ethnic group. For example, compared to the national average of 3.1 hours of unpaid work a day among girls aged 14–17, Garifuna girls undertake 5 hours, Xinka girls 5.5 hours and Maya girls 5.9 hours on average (FAO, 2022). For all ethnic groups, this exceeds the number of hours worked by boys considerably.

Exploitation by organised criminal groups

Reports on the exploitation of children by organised criminal groups distinguish between recruitment of children as members and coercion

46 Defined as work below age 14, or over 36 hours per week for 14–17-year-olds.

47 2021 data from the National Institute of Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadística; INE) indicates that 13.5% of girls and 0.1% of boys aged 14–17 were engaged in domestic work, but it is not clear if this was paid or not (INE, 2021:51).

by such groups (Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), 2017; Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH), 2023). Children and young people who are recruited as gang members are offered a degree of protection and some economic benefits in return for their activities. By contrast, where children are coerced into carrying out activities for organised criminal groups, this is usually because they fear lethal violence against themselves or family members; they may receive no support or economic benefits in return (Boerman and Golob, 2021).

These studies found adolescents – particularly boys and young men – being forced to participate in a continuum of activities, from acting as lookouts, to selling drugs, to killing. These reports also highlight girls and young women being coerced into sexual relationships with gang members, including during 'conjugal visits' to prisons, and being forced to smuggle drugs or phone chips into prison. If caught, they also face prison sentences, leaving any children the girls/young women have particularly vulnerable (Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), 2017; Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH), 2023). In February 2025, the Guatemalan Congress approved the Law to Prevent and Punish the Trafficking of Children and Adolescents in Prisons.

Factors underlying the exploitation of children

In brief, the following factors contribute to the patterns of exploitation of children outlined above.

Poverty is a key factor, which leads children to search for work, alongside or instead of attending school. In addition, traffickers in both rural and urban areas offer parents money in exchange for their children (ODHAG, 2019). This is exacerbated by climate change, which increases poverty and food insecurity, particularly in rural areas, with the Dry Corridor[48] especially affected, and underpins families' and children's independent labour migration (FAO, 2022). As noted by one interviewee, some children are recruited through criminal networks, while others are encouraged to work by their parents or family members to provide an additional income for the household, at times migrating from rural areas to Guatemala City or to semi-urban areas:

> In some cases, there's a [criminal] structure that goes to the municipalities and communities, offering work and bringing young girls to do this work [at tortillerias, as domestic employees]. Other times, when it's domestic work, it's the same family, a cousin, an aunt who's already working somewhere, and they bring the young girl to work. There are other cases where they [parents or criminal networks] use boys for begging. Criminal structures have been identified that bring boys in vans, offering 300 quetzales [equivalent to $38) per boy to come work in the capital. They sell candy at traffic lights, beg for money; there was a house where all the children would sleep, and the money was sent to their parents in the departments (KII, Civil Society 9).

48 The Central American Dry Corridor is a stretch of territory classified as tropical dry forest or dry tropics, which extends between Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. More than 10 million people live in the Dry Corridor (FAO, 2021b). In all, 8 of Guatemala's 22 regions are located in the 'dry corridor' (Valdivia Araica et al., 2023).

Low levels of educational participation, particularly among adolescents (see data presented in Chapter 2) contribute to exploitation. A lack of access to high-quality bilingual education, particularly in rural areas, is a key factor underpinning children's engagement in work (FAO, 2022). SVET data from 2024 shows the relationship between education and vulnerability to exploitation: 55% of victim-survivors of exploitation had only primary education; 18% had only basic education; and 20% had no education (SVET, 2025). Interviewees also considered that lack of educational opportunities beyond primary school in rural areas led children to join the labour market (at times encouraged by their parents) in exploitative conditions (KII, UN Agency 1; Civil Society 9).

Children out of school are more vulnerable to direct approaches from people seeking to exploit them, including by grooming or coercing them into criminal activities (ODHAG, 2019), or enticing girls into sexually exploitative situations or servile marriage. Out-of-school girls undertaking domestic work for their families are at greater risk of deceptive offers of alternatives, especially if they are exposed to abuse at home (ibid).

Migration from, within and through Guatemala, places both people on the move and households with absent migrant members at increased risk of exploitation. Where families have gone into debt to send a family member abroad (for example, Heidbrink et al., 2021), and/or are not receiving remittances, they are susceptible to offers of work for their children. Unaccompanied children on the move, in particular, are at risk of exploitation by unscrupulous actors (ODHAG, 2019). The presence of organised crime organisations along the migration route creates a high risk for migrant women and girls of becoming victim-survivors of human trafficking, both for sexual and labour exploitation (ONU Mujeres Guatemala, 2025). At border crossings, women have been involved in poorly paid domestic work or are being sexually exploited (ibid.).

Children returned to Guatemala (principally from Mexico and the US) often face challenges reintegrating into their home community, increasingly their vulnerability to deceptive job and migration offers (Tremeau, 2023). An involuntary return to Guatemala can make children more susceptible to exploitation:

> Returnee children are exposed to trafficking due to precarious economic conditions... the potential debts they incurred in making the journey, and the stigma attached to being 'returned' from the U.S; their families may not welcome them... many may not speak Spanish well or at all, making them more vulnerable [to trafficking] (KII, UN Agency 2).

Deep economic and social inequalities, by geographical location, gender and ethnicity, contribute to precarity. These include the absence of effective public services and state capacity, particularly in some rural areas, including those that are largely home to the Indigenous and Afro-Guatemalan populations. These inequalities can contribute to families' vulnerability to exploitation – for example, lack of childcare services contributes to poverty, increasing the attractiveness of offers of work, which may turn out to be deceptive (FAO, 2022). Underfinancing of services also limits state capacity to respond to exploitation: for example, the lack of familiarity with nuances of different crimes hampers effective prosecution (ODHAG, 2019). As discussed in the next section, strengthening state capacity to detect and respond to exploitation has been an important focus of interventions.

Intertwined with structural economic inequalities are norms among some sub-groups (for example, criminal organisations and parents/caregivers

without alternative options) in which women and children are seen as economic resources whose vulnerability can be exploited (UNICEF, 2016; ODHAG, 2019; KII, Civil Society 7). These norms sexualise adolescent (and younger) girls, making them particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation, as shown by SVET data. The exposure to violence during the years of the civil war also leads parents and the general population to normalise violence and exploitation, including that towards children (KIIs, UN Agency 1; Civil Society 9).

4.2 Policy and programme responses to address child exploitation

An overview of key initiatives addressing child exploitation in Guatemala in its two most common forms: commercial sexual exploitation and child labour, can be found in Annex 3. The remainder of this section discusses selected examples from Guatemala and the LAC region, which illustrate what works to prevent and/or mitigate child exploitation with a focus on sexual exploitation and child labour. This is followed by a section on limitations of existing initiatives. It is important to stress that the analysis below is based on practitioners' perspectives on what is working, and occasionally project data, but rarely on impact evaluations.

What works to address child exploitation

Interviewees and available data suggest that the following factors lead to successful interventions.

Initiatives that reach a wider population are more likely to work: This was the view of some interviewees (UN agency 1), who considered government-led interventions to be more likely to have wider reach. One example mentioned on several occasions was UNIVET (see Box 5).

Box 5 UNIVET: travelling thousands of kilometres to raise awareness on sexual exploitation

The Mobile Units for the Prevention of Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Human Trafficking (Unidades Móviles para la Prevención de la Violencia Sexual, Explotación y Trata de Personas; UNIVET) are designed to provide prevention and education services on sexual violence, exploitation and human trafficking, and to facilitate the referral of cases to available services (SVET, 2025). UNIVET's goal is to reach the most remote communities in priority departments, taking into account culture, age, gender, vulnerability and human rights as cross-cutting themes. These units are equipped with a television, chairs, a desk, a loudspeaker and a power generator (ibid.).

UNIVET targets the local population, migrants, returnees, asylum seekers, refugees and other populations at risk in priority regions in Guatemala covering 17 departments in 2024 (CORETT, 2024a). Implementers include the national government through the SVET, civil society, local authorities and the media (IIN and OAS, 2024).

By 2024, UNIVET had reached 84,240 people across 9 departments, reaching some of the most distant communities in the country (SVET, 2025). UNIVETs have been successful not only in disseminating information to the population, but also in identifying cases when community remembers report a case after being sensitised (KII, Government 4).

Work in partnership with multiple stakeholders: Interventions that work with multiple stakeholders (for example, parents/caregivers, health and education staff, local authorities, legal prosecutors, religious leaders) are more likely to address child exploitation. This approach can be effective when addressing the normalisation of gender norms that perpetuate violence towards children, particularly sexual violence (KIIs, UN Agency 1; Government 4; Civil Society 8).

Provision of holistic support to victim-survivors in parallel to legal advocacy: Interviewees stressed an effective way to address child exploitation is by offering direct support to victim-survivors through a holistic approach (shelter, protection, mental health support, legal advice). Support needs to be tailored to the needs of children from vulnerable groups (for example, LGBTQI+ children, adolescent mothers, returnees) (KIIs, Civil Society 8; Government 4). This work should be accompanied by legal advocacy to make sure victim-survivors receive legal justice and the restoration of their rights (KII, Civil Society 8). One example, implemented by La Alianza, is shown in Box 6.

Box 6 La Alianza: an example of victim support accompanied by legal advocacy

La Alianza is a civil society organisation that provides shelter, protection (for example, medical and mental health assistance) and access to justice support to children who are victim-survivors of exploitation[49] using a gender, human rights and intercultural approach (La Alianza, 2025).

Some of La Alianza's achievements include:

- support to 1,662 children benefitting from medical, mental health and legal support between 2011 and February 2025;
- in 2022, opening the first shelter in Guatemala for boys who are victim-survivors of sexual exploitation;
- 110 legal rulings in favour of victim-survivors of sexual exploitation;
- successful advocacy efforts leading to the creation of the Attorney's Office Against Human Trafficking (Fiscalía contra la Trata de Personas del Ministerio Público) in 2011; and
- the Law to Prevent Trafficking of Girls in Prisons (Decree 3-2025).

La Alianza is also in the process of developing the first gender-sensitive (with attention to LGBTQI+ children) and multicultural therapeutic model for victim-survivors of trafficking (La Alianza, 2025; KII, Civil Society 8).

49 La Alianza supports children who are victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation, in contexts of migration, adolescent mothers and children at 'social risk'. All children enter La Alianza by order of a competent judge.

Using multiple languages and different formats works to disseminate information: For example, the organisation, Asociación Pop No'j, has developed, printed and used educational brochures in Spanish, Mam and Popti' languages in its programmes on child protection, girls' and women's rights, and migration in Indigenous communities. These brochures cover topics such as migrants' rights, human trafficking and sexual exploitation, among others (see 'Mujeres Mayas Mam and Popti' en la migracion' or the 'yo soy especial' workbook) (Asociación Pop No'j, n.d.).

Other organisations partner with local community leaders (for example, priests, mayors, teachers) to raise awareness about exploitation risks, while also making use of local community radio stations that share information in Spanish and Indigenous languages. These strategies also create local ownership of initiatives and actions among local authorities and the population to address child exploitation (KII, UN Agency 1). SVET has developed activities to prevent human trafficking that use predominantly Mayan languages in the priority communities of Huehuetenango, Quiché, Chimaltenango, Alta Verapaz and Baja Verapaz, among others, through staff hired by the National Plan for the Prevention of Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Human Trafficking (SVET, 2024a).

Multilateral agreements and cooperation: Important initiatives carried out in partnership with other countries in the region have been helpful in preventing child exploitation. Some examples are the inter-American Training Programme on Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents (Formación de Recursos Humanos Curso semi-presencial sobre Explotación Sexual de Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes; see ANNA Observa, 2023) and the *'Voy a Paso Seguro'* ('I Will Walk Safely') programme to prevent human trafficking as part of a multilateral agreement between Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras (IIN and OAS, 2024). Box 7 highlights the example of the Central American Free Mobility Agreement (CA-4) as a key initiative to prevent human trafficking of children.

Box 7 CA-4: a regional initiative to prevent child trafficking

The CA-4 (established in 2006) is an agreement between Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. According to this agreement, nationals of the four countries can transit freely, without passports and with expedited migration procedures (IOM, 2025b). The agreement excludes migration for work and for transit to other regions, although it has been used by migrants in transit to the United States. Children are required to present their passports as a safeguard against trafficking and must be accompanied by their parents or carry notarised permission to prove to border agents that their journey does not contravene parental authority. One challenge of the initiative is implementation, particularly making sure that the initiative does not have the unintended effect of facilitating the trafficking of children across borders, since safeguards can be circumvented by organised criminals (Marcus et al., 2023).

Strengthening the institutional capacity and skills of duty-bearers: Interviewees highlighted the importance of strong institutions and skilled staff to respond to child exploitation, particularly highlighting the role that duty-bearers play in providing legal justice to victim-survivors, including reparations[50] (KIIs, Civil Society 7; Government 4). One example is the work by Abogados sin fronteras Canada (ASFC) and its 'Capacity Building for the Fight Against Human Trafficking' initiative (2022–2026), which aims to combat impunity for crimes related to human trafficking (Abogados sin fronteras Canada, 2024; KII, Civil Society 7). Activities under this initiative include:

- Strengthening the knowledge and capacity of frontline actors, including immigration agents, airport security agents, labour inspectors from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (Ministerio de Trabajo y Prevision Social), to improve detection of trafficking (in partnership with SVET). Topics include what to do when a victim of trafficking is encountered, how to identify them and, when identified, how to conduct a more in-depth interview, who to refer them to, how to approach them, etc.
- Strengthening the legal teams of civil society organisations that litigate and represent victim-survivors in court. This includes paying lawyers and working with specialised organisations on issues around victim-survivor reparations and other legal matters.
- Strengthening the investigation and punishment of crimes by working with the police, public prosecutors and judicial bodies to build their capacities in areas such as victim reparations, special investigative techniques and online child exploitation (in partnership with international and local experts).
- Improving national and regional coordination by supporting the work of the Regional Network of Specialised Prosecutors against Human Trafficking (Red Regional de Fiscales Especializados contra la Trata de Personas) (including prosecutors' offices in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama) on human trafficking. ASFC provides training, organises meetings and contributes technical studies.

As part of this initiative, the ASFC team analysed 42 human trafficking rulings from 2020 to 2023, which recommendations were presented to relevant government institutions on how to improve reparations for victim-survivors (ASFC and SVET, 2024). Similarly, during 2024 and the first quarter of 2025, SVET reported that 12,235 public servants received training and sensitisation about different forms of exploitation (SVET, 2025).

Box 8 presents a regional example highlighting the importance of capacity building and regular training for key stakeholders who are working to address child exploitation, such as sexual exploitation.

50 As a general rule, sentences awarded by Guatemalan courts include compensation, rehabilitation measures and non-repetition measures (ASF Canadá – SVET, 2024)

Box 8 The 'Human Trafficking in the Peruvian Amazon' project: an example of successful capacity building

The 'Human Trafficking in the Peruvian Amazon' project (implemented from 2014-2019) involved strengthening institutional capacity to identify situations of suspected trafficking, providing survivor-centred care and prosecuting offences (USAID, 2020). Institutional strengthening activities included technical assistance for the development of regional protocols and plans, and to ensure that the relevant authorities were aware of these plans. The evaluation of the project concludes that these activities were valuable, although inter-institutional roundtables were time-consuming (ibid.). The project also involved training members of the judiciary and service providers at shelters for trafficking victim-survivors. Despite the effectiveness of capacity strengthening efforts, which contributed to improved coordination, the evaluation concluded that service providers' treatment of trafficking victim-survivors needed to become more empathetic and less procedural, to avoid victim-survivors being deterred from reporting (ibid.).

Involving the private sector as key partners alongside government and civil society when implementing cross-cutting initiatives: These initiatives aim to address child exploitation by preventing, reporting or protecting victim-survivors. For instance, the business network '*Los Niños y las Niñas a la Escuela*' ('Boys and Girls to School') is a coalition of 18 business organisations, 4 non-governmental organisations (NGOs), 2 government institutions and 2 international organisations. The 2021–2025 strategy aims to prevent and eradicate child labour through three axes:

- compliance with national legislation regarding prevention and eradication of child labour;
- influencing the continuous improvement of educational coverage and quality in areas with a high incidence of child labour; and
- increasing the level of knowledge and awareness of the population about the risks and consequences of child labour (CACIF, 2021).

In 2024, the network was recognised by the International Organization of Employers (IOE) by being awarded first place in the International Award 'Change Leader for the Eradication of Child Labor' (CACIF, 2024).

Working with communities while adopting their perspectives: Interventions that work with community members have a better chance of addressing child exploitation (KII, UN Agency 1; Government 4). In Guatemala, ECPAT has developed strong partnerships with targeted communities that have been effective at identifying cases of exploitation through community-led protective spaces or '*espacios protectores*' (at schools, health clinics, churches or sports facilities). At the '*espacios*', community members raise awareness on child exploitation and encourage reporting of cases (KII, Civil Society 6).

The Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), through its 'Safe Path' (Camino Seguro) project, aimed to strengthen strategies and services for the prevention of human trafficking and protection of victim-survivors, including in migration contexts. One of its activities included training local leaders as Community Volunteer Facilitators in the communities of origin of

migrants. The initiative trained and certified 350 local leaders as Community Volunteer Facilitators for the prevention of human trafficking along the migration route. These local leaders raised awareness among 2,000 people in high-migration communities about human trafficking and the risks along the migration route (PADF, 2024).

Evaluations of other regional initiatives show the importance of community-led interventions that adopt intercultural perspectives to address child exploitation (see Box 9).

Approaches that address poverty and underlying causes: Although interviewees stressed the importance of interventions that address poverty and other factors that underpin child exploitation (for example, harmful gender norms that normalise violence towards children, violence and insecurity) (KIIs, UN Agency 1; Civil Society 9; Independent Consultant 1), there is a lack of these kinds of interventions. Some interviewees identified that initiatives looking to prevent child labour aim to address poverty and food security, while promoting education support to avoid school dropout (see Annex 3). Box 10 provides an example of an intervention that, although not designed to address child exploitation directly, aimed to improve community resilience to violence and address the root causes of migration – a cause of child exploitation.

Box 9 The positive effects of adopting intercultural perspectives

A process led by the civil society organisation, Fundación Regional de Asesoria en Derechos Humanos ('the Regional Foundation for Human Rights Advice') in the Imbabura province of Ecuador aimed to strengthen community-level protection mechanisms. It facilitated community-level discussion around the risks that children encounter when migrating for the purposes of work. Indigenous tradition in these areas includes the practice of '*mindalae*', a form of mobility in exchange for products or luxury goods, but also knowledge, beliefs, values and cultural practices.

Children often help and travel with their parents – it is a moral duty to accompany their parents or to contribute with productive work – but children can also travel alone. Children who move alone are exposed to risks that include accidents, violence, disappearance, deportation, kidnapping, extortion, and abuses and exploitation by organised crime networks such as drug cartels or trafficking networks. In these communities, talking about the elimination of adolescent labour exploitation was understood to be an interference in their way of life and organisation.

Dialogues started from the principle of protecting children and adolescents from harm, and of adopting intercultural perspectives instead of assuming labour exploitation to be the central issue. The dialogues led to the development of principles to guide tackling situations of exploitation and abuse that occur through '*mindalae*' and other forms of labour mobility, using both Indigenous and formal/state justice mechanisms. A study of this initiative by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC, 2018) found that it had increased awareness of the risks children face, including risks of trafficking, and participants were better able to evaluate the 'opportunities' offered by labour recruiters.

Box 10 CONVIVIMOS: an initiative working on community violence prevention

In Guatemala, CONVIVIMOS (implemented from 2015-2019) worked in 115 municipalities over a period of five years to strengthen community and local government structures, with a particular focus on young people, including older adolescents, at risk of engaging in and becoming victims of violence. The project involved the development of violence-prevention plans, with funding to implement them. An end-of-project evaluation found that the programme was successful at changing young people's attitudes about their prospects at home, in a positive way, and helped youth raise their self-esteem and sense of hope. Interviewees also mentioned positive changes within their communities through the programme's engagement with municipal governments and local community structures. The evaluation also found that 68% of CONVIVIMOS participants were not interested in migrating, compared with 42% of non-participants (MercyCorps, 2019).[51] The study concluded that the project had a greater impact on attitudes about whether young people had a viable future in Guatemala than on reducing rates of violence (ibid.).

Finally, some interviewees mentioned the importance of efforts to address organised crime and criminal networks that contribute to child exploitation. Examples include the Attorney's Office Against Human Trafficking and its specialised units to combat child trafficking (see Annex 3) or the Online Child Protection System of the Anti-Trafficking Attorney's Office (Sistema de Protección Infantil en línea de la Fiscalía contra la Trata de Personas) (see Section 4.3.2). However little or no evidence was found regarding the effectiveness of these kinds of initiatives.

Challenges and gaps faced by interventions

Interviewees and the literature identified the following challenges faced by interventions.

Interventions not reaching key marginalised groups: Some interviewees noted that existing campaigns to address child exploitation (even those that use digital technologies to reach wider audiences) tend not to reach key marginalised groups such as children out of school, LGBTQI+ or migrant children (KIIs, Civil Society 6; UN Agency 1). This is illustrated by insights from the evaluation of the #Aquiestoy digital campaign in Mexico (see Box 11).

51 MercyCorps points out that the direction of causality is unclear: whether the project attracted participants who were less interested in migration, or whether it reduced participants' desire to migrate. Also, the evaluation does not present disaggregated data on interviewees' ages

Box 11 Advantages and limitations of digital campaigns to address child exploitation

A UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) project in Mexico supported an awareness-raising campaign, '#AQUIESTOY', looking to address all forms of trafficking. This multimedia initiative shared videos and messages on social media, the radio, TV and news media and held face-to-face events, including street theatre, fairs, community dialogues, mobile cinema and a drawing competition. The evaluation suggested that these activities helped raise awareness about human trafficking and victim-survivors' rights, but that it should have targeted LGBTQI+ populations at risk more effectively. While the digital emphasis of much of the campaign was considered effective in reaching large numbers of people, the evaluation also questioned whether it excluded the most marginalised people – whose access to social media is much more limited. The study also noted the inability of these campaigns to address long-standing cultural patterns and harmful gender norms that perpetuate child trafficking (UNODC, 2020b).

Persistent normalisation of child exploitation: Several interviews expressed that harmful gender norms among the general population lead to child exploitation and affect efforts to report, persecute and achieve justice for child victim-survivors (KIIs Civil Society 7; UN Agency 1; Government 4). This was illustrated by one interviewee:

> ...this normalisation of boys and girls as objects for the use of men leads us to human trafficking, which in turn is not identified, prosecuted, and much less punished... these cultural, patriarchal norms put us in trouble when it comes to prosecuting these crimes because, for instance, some women and girls do not see themselves as victims (KII, Civil Society 7).

Initiatives that are often scattered and sometimes disconnected, with little exchange of resources or lessons learned between them: Similarly, although Guatemala has a National Plan for the Prevention of Crimes of Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Human Trafficking (Plan Nacional para la Prevención de los Delitos de Violencia Sexual, Explotación y Trata de Personas) and strategies in place to address sexual exploitation and trafficking, there is a lack of coordination among key stakeholders. This demonstrates the need for even greater interagency and intersectoral coordination to overcome fragmentation in their approaches (IIN and OAS, 2024).

Limited budget: Interviewees stressed the need for continued advocacy to secure finance from government or international organisations. Civil society interviewees emphasised the existing financial pressure that their organisations face upon the cancellation of funding from international partners, particularly USAID:

> We had to cancel ongoing projects, lay off consultants, researchers, social workers, cancel trainings to police and prosecutors because with what funds are we going to pay all this without a source of financing? It was a brutal collective dismissal, we were left with only four staff after having 45 (KII, Civil Society 6).

Limited capacity from duty bearers: Despite efforts from civil organisations and the SVET outlined above, interviewees noted a lack of government staff with the necessary skills to implement initiatives and make sure policies are implemented. The literature also indicates a lack of knowledge on the part of public servants or prosecuting staff (the National Civil Police) on human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, which affects child victim-survivors' administrative and judicial processes (ODHAG, 2019). The lack of skilled staff hinders the detection of criminal acts, proper identification of victim-survivors and criminal investigations (ibid.). Similarly, one report observed that service providers (mental health professionals in the justice sector) lack capacity to provide adequate support to victim-survivors of human trafficking (Calel Tzunux, 2023).

Few initiatives that focus on preventing child exploitation target adults: Interviewees noted a pressing need to educate caregivers and communities about the importance of child protection and the human rights of children, particularly in a context where violence is normalised. This is particularly the case with the increased use of digital technologies. As one interviewee stressed:

> Since the country is very violent, mothers are happy if their children stay at home because of the violence outside, and there's a high level of trust when a child uses social media... but how do you reach parents?... The use of social media requires a lot of training for adults so they can talk to their children about how to use them (KII, UN Agency 1).

Most prevention initiatives target predominantly children at school and their teachers (KII, Civil Society 7). For instance, prevention campaigns tend to avoid holding adults accountable for child exploitation (ODHAG, 2019).

Impact data is rarely collected: Interviewees and the literature both identify a lack of evidence on the scope and effectiveness of initiatives that aim to prevent or address child exploitation. This gap prevents us from understanding campaigns' and interventions' impact, whether they have met their objective of training and educating the general public about child exploitation (ibid.) or if they are successful in preventing or reducing crimes of child exploitation (KII, Civil Society 6).

Persisting challenges within national agencies: Interviewees mentioned little knowledge among the population about the SVET and its legal system, poor support for victim-survivors for their comprehensive recovery, the existence of only one government shelter for child victim-survivors of sexual violence, exploitation and human trafficking (see Annex 3), and little presence of SVET at the national level. These situations mean that the population does not know where to go when their physical integrity is violated, they are exploited or they find themselves victims of trafficking (Calderón Reyes, 2015).

4.3 The role of digital technologies and media in exploitation of children

Children are exposed to a series of dangers due to violence and sexual exploitation via digital technologies (ECPAT, 2014; Cruz Lorente, 2024; Cetino, n.d.). For instance, a survey conducted by UNICEF (1,834 respondents; 52% women and 48% men aged 15 years old and older) found that 37% of adolescents aged 15–19 years old knew someone who had encouraged violence online; 42% knew someone who had been a victim of online violence; but only 42% knew the

term 'sexting' and 3% knew the term 'grooming'. Only 48% responded that they had blocked and reported online when they felt threatened by a message, photo, video or conversation with a 'friend'; and 70% said they did not know which authority to contact to report a case of online harassment (UNICEF Guatemala, 2019).

Another study by UNICEF[52] found that most adolescents in Guatemala had access to social media: 65% of adult respondents indicated that their children had personal access to the internet and/or social media at home through phones, computers, tablets or outside the home, through internet cafes, family or friends, at school or other public places (UNICEF Guatemala, 2020). Most adult respondents reported an ambivalent (48%) or a positive (44%) opinion towards the use of the internet and social media by their children. Only 21.6% of adult respondents were aware of the dangers or forms of violence to which their children could be exposed through social media and the internet (ibid.).

The Guatemalan Government has taken important steps to address exploitation via digital technologies. In 2022, Guatemala adopted Decree 11-2022 (see Annex 2), with amendments to the Criminal Code in relation to crimes committed against children through technological means (the Cybercrime Act 2022).

The following sections outline the ways that networks that engage in exploitation use digital technologies and the ways in which existing programming aims to address the risks to children.

The use of digital technologies and media platforms by networks engaging in exploitation

Interviewees mentioned the social media platforms mostly used by networks for exploitation are Facebook, X (former Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, TikTok, OnlyFans and Snapchat.

No evidence was found regarding the differential use of these platforms targeting children from **urban and rural areas**. Interviewees reported mixed perceptions. Some indicated that children in urban areas are more likely to interact and be affected by exploitation networks than children in rural areas, given low internet and mobile coverage in these areas (KII, Civil Society 8; Section 2.4). However, other interviewees observed that exploitation networks target children regardless of their geographical location – given that most children have access to social media and a digital device, particularly mobile phones, either owned by them or borrowed from relatives (KIIs, Government 4; UN Agency 1). This is confirmed by data showing that most households – even those in extreme poverty – have significant access to mobile phones, as discussed in Section 2.4 and the study by UNICEF Guatemala (2020). Further, exploitation networks target children not only via internet, but also via text messages, so an internet-enabled device is not needed.

The evidence suggests that digital technologies and media are used by trafficking and exploitation networks to recruit potential victims. They are also used to access, produce and disseminate pornographic and/or erotic material for economic gain in the following ways.

---

52 The sample included 842 parents and caregivers, 481 adolescents (aged 13–18 years old), and 207 children aged 7–12 years old) across 52 communities in 17 departments (UNICEF Guatemala, 2020).

Recruitment of potential victims: Digital technologies and media are used to recruit girls and young women to exploit them sexually. Networks engaged in trafficking and exploitation use social media or advertisements in the press to invite girls and young women to work at hotels, night clubs and spas, and to later force them into prostitution (Asmann, 2022). Social media is used to advertise fake jobs by bogus modelling or employment agencies (UNICEF, 2016).

Criminal organisations from Guatemala and Mexico also use social media to advertise fake lucrative jobs in private security companies targeting Guatemalans with military or security experience, some of them youth. For these young men, the promise of a salary higher than those they could earn as police officers in Guatemala leads them to take the risk (Aquino, 2024). Some evidence also suggests the use of local radio stations to recruit children. For instance, in Retalhuleu, networks engaging in exploitation used local radio station, 'La Patrona', to advertise various events, such as beauty contests, where children were recruited (ibid.).

Access to sexual content: Networks engaging in trafficking and exploitation can use digital technologies and social media to access sexual content from adolescents via sexting. 'Sexting' (the act of sending or receiving sexually explicit texts, images or videos via cell phone, usually using text messaging) is a fairly common behaviour among Guatemalan adolescents who exchange these images or videos with people they have very close relationships with or with their very close peers (Cruz Lorente, 2024).

To gain adolescents' trust, trafficking and exploitation networks use 'groomers', who create a false identity and pretend to be younger than they are. They then become the 'friends' or 'boyfriends' of potential victims, to then recruit them (see above) or to ask them to share sexual content (KII, Independent Consultant 1). To achieve this, groomers express in their conversations the same tastes, use the same expressions, language and emoticons (faces) as the adolescent to build rapport with them (UNICEF Guatemala, 2022).

Production of sexual content: Digital technologies and media are increasingly used to produce sexual content, particularly child pornography in Guatemala, as in other countries. For instance, ECPAT reported cases of child pornography via live streaming. This content is produced using simple digital tools, such as webcams and computers connected to the internet or cell phone cameras with internet access. In most cases, pornography sessions are not recorded by an internet service provider (ISP) and proof of the abuse can only be obtained at the time when the situation is taking place, live (ECPAT, 2014). Through these channels, children can be accessed almost without any risk to the perpetrator, who produces economic benefits since production costs are minimal (Cruz Lorente, 2024). Some adolescents are also involved in the production, manufacturing and preparation of pornographic and/or erotic material by filming their classmates, girlfriends or themselves in explicit sexual activities with their cell phones, cameras or video cameras (ibid.); some may be working for criminal organisations (KII, Independent Consultant 1).

Media news outlets have also reported over the past two years, that new artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are being used by trafficking and exploitation networks worldwide to create explicit images and videos of children. Some of these networks use photos of children scraped from school websites and social media (Kang, 2025).

Others are using AI to create sexually explicit images of children which are then used to blackmail these victims. Some children use apps that take images of real people and undress them, creating what is known as a deepfake nude (Kang, 2025). In Guatemala, AI is also used by adolescent boys to create pornographic material. In 2024, the Public Prosecutor's Office (PGN) received six reports from adolescent girls whose images were allegedly created with AI by classmates who aimed to sell them as pornographic images (EFE, 2024).

Distribution of sexual content: Trafficking and exploitation networks disseminate pornographic photography and films of boys, girls and young women through email, meeting rooms or chat rooms, virtual communities and websites (ECPAT, 2014; Cruz Lorente, 2024). Pornographic material obtained or produced in Guatemala is also distributed by digital technologies through international distribution networks (ECPAT, 2014). Pornographic material created by AI intelligence is typically shared among users in forums, via messaging on social media and other online platforms (Kang, 2025).

Adolescents do not need to have access to exclusively pornographic pages to view videos or photographs. This material reaches them through their own emails or through social networks. The most affected areas can be found in Guatemala City, which has the majority of cases of cyberbullying of a sexual nature (data not shown) (Cruz Lorente, 2024). Networks engaging in exploitation distribute sexual content of victims via social media to attract clients to the venues where the young people are exploited. As one report indicated in the case of a young girl recruited with false promises to work in a call centre that turned out to be a 'spa':

> 'The manager forced her to wear a Spanish national soccer team jersey, and this photo was quickly uploaded to Facebook, offering it to customers online. Then a customer arrived; she refused to have sex but was forced to do so under threat from the staff' (UNICEF, 2016: 109).

This venue advertised itself online with a Facebook page where it displayed photographs of women in erotic positions and wearing light or suggestive clothing (ibid.).

Programmes in Guatemala addressing risks of child and adolescent exploitation related to technology

Several awareness-raising programmes to address child and adolescent exploitation related to technology rely on digital campaigns. This is because digital campaigns cost little, can have wider coverage, and can take advantage of social media to enable rapid dissemination of information, ideas and content about child exploitation (KII, Civil Society 9; UN Agency 1; Cruz Lorente, 2024).

Table 13 shows key initiatives in Guatemala that have been developed to raise awareness about the risks of digital technologies for online child sexual exploitation. Some initiatives were also identified to support online crime reporting and strengthen the capacities and knowledge of duty bearers working to address online child exploitation.

The remainder of the section discusses selected examples for which a greater level of information was found; these are shown in bold in table 13.

Table 13 Initiatives to raise awareness about risks of child and adolescent exploitation related to technology

Approach and area of action	Example and source
Online sexual exploitation (prevention, protection, prosecution)	
Awareness raising and information (children and adolescents, parents/ caregivers, teachers, general population)	Beware of Grooming – to inform children and adolescents about risks related to sexual exploitation (IIN and OAS, 2024)
	ECPAT's digital communication campaign to prevent the exchange of sexual messages (sexting) on social networks (Cruz Lorente, 2024)
	Guía: Prevengamos la violencia sexual contra niñas, niños y adolescentes en nuestra comunidad (component regarding online sexual violence) (UNICEF Guatemala, 2022)
	Jóvenes Nueva Generación magazine ('Youth New Generation'), which contains information aimed at adolescents on preventing cybercrime (IIN and OAS, 2024)
	Me conecto sin clavos ('I connect with no hassle') is a website and app (Castro Juárez, 2022; IIN and OAS, 2024; Fundacion Sobrevivientes and UNICEF, n.d.)
	Millicom Training targets youth and teachers on the benefits and risks of digital technology through child online protection programmes (COPs). In Guatemala, Millicom has trained around 2,400 teachers and 30,000 children (timeframe not specified) (Millicom, n.d.)
	Mini Guide to Internet Safety (miniguia de seguridad en internet) by SVET, produced in coordination with the Ministry of Education. It is financed by UNODC and the Government of Canada (UNODC, 2023; IIN and OAS, 2024)
	Modo Digital is an information and awareness initiative led by SVET to help children, parents/caregivers, teachers and relevant stakeholders to identify and prevent online sexual exploitation (AGN, 2025; Gobierno de la Republica Guatemala, 2025b).
	'Puedes verme' is a campaign with an online component (SVET, 2025)
Prosecution and access to justice	
Crime reporting (children and adolescents, general population)	**Crime Stoppers portal and WhatsApp number –** to report crimes related to online sexual violence and exploitation (Crime Stoppers Guatemala, 2025b)
	CyberTripline, established by the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (Global Platform for Child Exploitation Policy, 2024)
	Internet Watch Foundation portal – used to report internet child sexual abuse (Internet Watch Foundation, 2021)
	Online Child Protection System of the Anti-Trafficking Attorney's Office (Sistema de Protección Infantil en línea de la Fiscalía contra la Trata de Personas) (Prensa Libre, 2017; KII, Civil Society 7)
	Tu Amig@ Svet promotes safe browsing on the internet and an online chat for reporting crime (IIN and OAS, 2024)
Training/capacity building (duty bearers)	EDUSVET training is an online course on institutional professionalisation for capacity building in cybersecurity and combating cybercrime (IIN and OAS, 2024)
	SVET participates in the Global Forum 'WeProtect' to gain knowledge and strengthen capacities around online sexual exploitation of children (Embajada Britanica en la Ciudad de Guatemala, 2019)
Cross-cutting	
Coalitions and agreements (mobile companies, government)	There is a cooperation agreement under the 'We Care About Guatemala' campaign between mobile operators, including Claro, Movistar and Tigo, to prevent, detect and protect children from different forms of violence through the use of ICTs (GSMA, 2017)
	Guatemala participates in the 'Global Taskforce on Child Sexual Abuse Online' (led by the 'WeProtect' Global Alliance) to drive transnational cooperation and deliver a global, coordinated and strategic response to child sexual abuse via digital platforms (WeProtect Global Alliance, 2024)

Prevention and education

Modo Digital is an information and awareness-raising initiative targeting children and their parents/carers or teachers to help them identify and prevent online sexual exploitation (AGN, 2025; Gobierno de la Republica Guatemala, 2025b; KII, Government 4). Modo Digital has four main components:

1. Cyberguardians: Online characters (Esteban, Emilio, Isabel, Elena and Alex) who share stories (through animations, virtual stories and episodes) that depict real-life scenarios based on the characters each represents. These characters reflect situations that young people might face in the digital world and strategies to prevent digital exploitation.
2. Olivet: An online counselling chat designed to support children, adolescents and caregivers, where they can ask questions about crimes of sexual violence.
3. Prevention guides: These are informative documents aimed at specific audiences that offer practical advice and recommendations for preventing and addressing risky situations online. Four guides have been developed: *Guide for Young People*; *Guide for Parents*; *Guide for Teachers;* and *Guide to Taking Care of Your Mental Health* (aimed at young people).
4. U-Report Platform Guatemala: U-Report is a free tool implemented by UNICEF that targets adolescents. The platform allows users to ask and answer questions about issues that concern them and that are important today, including online sexual violence. With support from UNICEF, the U-Report platform is used to develop Olivet and enable the broader reach of this tool (UNICEF Guatemala, 2019).

The Modo Digital resources are promoted nationally by SVET, the National Plan and the Mobile Units (UNIVET) working in partnership with civil society, local communities and other relevant stakeholders (Gobierno de la Republica Guatemala, 2025b)

'I connect with no hassle' ('me conecto sin clavos') seeks to protect children from the risks that exist on the internet. This campaign includes three virtual tools:

1. A website showing a variety of resources, such as guides, videos, comics and video games, to provide information on topics such as grooming, sexting, sextortion and other types of crime committed via digital media. It is aimed at the general population, especially those who interact with children.
2. An app targeting children to strengthen – in an entertaining way – their knowledge of cybercrime and the risks of surfing the internet.
3. A consultancy page called 'Tu Amig@SVET', which is a tool to inform and advise children about the crimes of sexual violence, exploitation and human trafficking. It has professionals who answer their queries on WhatsApp, Facebook or Instagram, 365 days a year, 24 hours a day (IIN and OAS, 2024).

Through its different modalities, the campaign aims to reach 4,852,839 young people between 8 and 17 years old, and their parents, guardians and social leaders (Fundacion Sobrevivientes and UNICEF, n.d.).

The **'Puedes verme' campaign** includes videos and infographics shared on social networks to raise awareness, informing and encouraging the population to report human trafficking. Part of this campaign includes national film forums aimed at high school and university students accompanied by dialogues regarding the prevention of human trafficking. By July 2025, the 'Puedes verme' campaign had reached 449,832 views through the SVET website (SVET, 2025).

The **Mini Guide to Internet Safety** was developed by SVET in coordination with the Ministry of Education and with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Government of Canada. The guide provides a training tool for children, adolescents, mothers, fathers and workers in the education system, which disseminates information on the techniques used by criminal individuals or groups against children and adolescents through the internet. The guide is translated into the four main Mayan languages: Mam, Cakchiquel, Q'eqchi, K'iche' (IIN and OAS, 2024). The Ministry of Education distributed 250,000 mini guides to students who were studying remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic; it could also be downloaded (UNODC, 2023).

Prosecution and access to justice

The **Online Child Protection System of the Anti-Trafficking Attorney's Office** was created in 2018 and deals with any reports of crimes of online sexual abuse. It also aims to monitor social media continuously to detect content that disseminates child pornography in Guatemala (Prensa Libre, 2017). One interviewee stressed the importance of this new agency to detect and prosecute online sexual abuse crimes:

> We were able to access the reports prior to this very recent system and we could see that before its creation, there were very few reports... based on this system and the alerts [reports have increased], there is now a structured unit in charge of analysing digital violence, conducting criminal analysis, and a prosecutor's office that litigates the cases (KII, Civil Society 7).

The same interviewee also noted the Online Child Protection System is still unable to determine the nationality of victim-survivors, given that its focus is on identifying and prosecuting paedophiles and other related criminals.

Internet Watch Foundation (UK-based charity) in partnership with the General Attorney's office (MP), the Office Against Child trafficking of Guatemala and UNODC set up a portal for the general public to report images and videos of children suffering sexual abuse should they find them on the internet. Once reported, Internet Watch Foundation's analysts in the UK assess reported images and videos, and block and remove them from the internet. Internet Watch Foundation and partners have also created a video to show the public how to use the portal to make a report (Internet Watch Foundation, 2021).

Similarly, **Crime Stoppers Guatemala** is an international platform (also known as tupista.gt) that facilitates anonymous, reliable, and secure citizen participation to report crimes online, including those related to sexual and labour exploitation (Crime Stoppers Guatemala, 2025b). The platform receives information from citizens about criminal activity in their community and shares the information with the National Civil Police, contributing to the capture of criminals with warrants, the opening of new investigations, and the provision of data for intelligence and investigation teams. An example of its positive impact is a citizen complaint filed on the platform that allowed staff from the Specialised Criminal Investigation Division (División Especializada en Investigación Criminal; DEIC) of the National Civil Police to rescue 18 children who were being exploited for labour and the detention of 9 people accused of trafficking (Crime Stoppers Guatemala, 2025a). The platform also reported that between 2024 and May 2025, 69 children were rescued from sexual and labour exploitation thanks to anonymous reports (SVET, 2025).

5 Future research agenda and policy recommendations

This chapter outlines aspects of a research agenda related to the two focal topics of this report and makes programming and policy recommendations for government and development partners.

5.1 Violence against girls and young women

Future research agenda

- **Increase collection of and access to age-disaggregated GBV data, especially for girls under 15**. Ensure data is disaggregated further by other demographic characteristics – Indigenous group, level of education, disabilities, etc. – in order to support intersectional analyses.
- **Undertake a more in-depth study of digital GBV** and how this is affecting girls and young women from different demographic groups.
- **Further document GBV initiatives taking place in the country**, analysing what factors or characteristics contribute to their success. Insights would be valuable for future programming.

Policy recommendations

Invest in addressing the patriarchal gender norms that underlie GBV and those that block progress to GBV prevention and response

- **Support long-term and intersectional gender norm change programmes led by local organisations** and aimed not only at girls and young women, but at all different community and government stakeholders.
- **Include intersectional work with boys and men in GBV prevention programmes** to promote gender-equitable masculinities in order to address one of the root causes of GBV: masculinity norms.
- **Promote the transformation of taboos around CSE and abortion**, bearing in mind that abortion is a very politically sensitive topic in the country. Although there is strong opposition to CSE in both school and out-of-school contexts, and to abortion, lack of access to CSE puts girls and young women at greater risk in cases of GBV, while lack of access to therapeutic abortion puts girls' lives at risk when sexual violence results in pregnancy. To strengthen the provision of CSE, it is important to invest in reforming the Governmental Agreement on the Policy for the Protection of Life and the Institutionalisation of the Family (2021–2030) discussed in Section 3.4, as it has weakened the government's responsibility to provide such education, and to advocate for a reform that recognises the right to bodily autonomy.
- Until the criteria for therapeutic abortion can be expanded, or abortion rights can be fully recognised, **work with the MSPAS is necessary to ensure medical personnel are aware that provisions for therapeutic abortion exist,** are confident that it is legal and are willing to perform the procedure.

Focus on improving the recovery of victim-survivors

- **Take measures to ensure effective access to justice**, such as training justice officials in gender, cultural and age-sensitive approaches, improve coordination between agencies,

increase resources and increase dignified reparations in substance (HRW, 2025). Dismissals, delays and biased processes can have severe consequences for girls' and women's well-being – as well on Guatemala's rule of law. This would help to increase the number and the speed of cases that progress through Guatemala's judicial system and would encourage increased GBV reporting.

- **Expand access to healthcare and ensure GBV programmes are also accompanied by increased healthcare access** for all groups of girls and young women and by increased resources to sexual violence units. Inadequate health infrastructure is putting girls and women at greater risk of health problems, whether physical or mental.
- **Invest in medium- and long-term response plans** that promote the well-being of victim-survivors comprehensively, taking into account the complexities and length of their journey.
- When pursuing this work**, be sure to understand and address the needs of diverse girls and young women,** such as Indigenous, disabled, migrant and LGBTQI+ girls and young women.

Accompany GBV programmes and policies with efforts to reduce poverty and criminal activity and to improve human rights literacy

- **Embed GBV-focused policies and programmes in wider efforts to increase economic well-being**. This is especially important in relation to child marriage, as economic concerns are a key driver sustaining the practice.
- **Consider GBV-focused policies and programmes in relation to other security challenges,** as these are likely to influence GBV occurrences and patterns.
- **Invest in increasing the population's knowledge and understanding of universal human rights** and how these are recognised in Guatemalan law. This is crucial to promote GBV reporting.

Support the strategies and priorities of national and local organisations working to prevent and respond to GBV

- **Support embedding GBV within the country's security agenda**. As discussed in Section 3.4, this has been an important step for women's rights organisations as they see it as promoting a gender-sensitive understanding of peace and security in government institutions. They also see it as a strategy to increase attention and resources to this area.
- **Promptly support action to address the challenges identified by the government, civil society organisations or UN agencies in the country,** such as those identified by UN Women in relation to the increased number of deportations from the US.
- **Support the well-being and safety of people working in civil society organisations on this topic,** as they may be at risk of violence, intimidation and burnout.
- **Keep in mind the organised transnational efforts** that are seeking to stall or backtrack the recognition of women's and girls' rights, so that support is adequate and timely.

Invest in coordinating and centralising data

- **Establish a national unified registry** that identifies and explains discrepancies in data as this would be a valuable tool to monitor progress in coming years (HRW, 2025). It would also be valuable as GBV data – especially that on sexual violence against girls under 18 – is scattered across the various government institutions that interact with girls at different stages of the processes, such as the MSPAS, INACIF and RENAP.

- **Establish a national unified system that allows organisations to share and access victim-survivor's information** to reduce re-victimisation and trauma and provide adequate and coordinated support and follow-up.

Support collaboration between UN agencies and the government

- **Increase collaboration between the government and UN agencies** to help address the government's lack of implementation capacity and of resources. Where UN agencies are more trusted by the population than the government, UN agencies could also help connect and mediate between government and civil society actors.

5.2 Exploitation of children

Future research agenda

- **Address the lack of disaggregated and intersectional data on patterns of exploitation of children.** Having this data would help fill gaps on vulnerabilities related to rural/urban location, disabilities, and LGBTQI+ identities, early/late adolescence, adolescent mothers, seasonal and long-term migrant children, and others. Focused studies should also probe evidence on the exploitation of Afro-descendent, Xinka and Garifuna children, for whom there is almost no evidence other than in relation to child labour.
- **Carry out further research on the specific ways that networks engaging in exploitation use digital technologies to communicate, recruit and exploit children.** For instance, the kinds of devices and platforms used, if using the internet or text messaging, if mobile phones (when used) were owned or borrowed by the child, and from whom. Understanding pathways of recruitment and further exploitation via digital technologies and media is also important.
- **Invest in generating evaluative evidence to better understand what works to prevent and address child exploitation**. Most studies describe programmes/initiatives or provide numbers of participants reached by interventions, rather than providing evidence on their effectiveness.
- **Support civil society organisations to generate evidence** that they consider important and to share such evidence in simple language and in ways that are accessible to the public, including local populations.
- **Support evidence on less researched factors that lead to exploitation of children** (for example, return migration; gender and social norms/values that underpin exploitation; environmental hazards) to support the design of better programming and interventions to address existing structural factors.

Policy recommendations

Invest in research and evaluations on programming and policies to address child exploitation and to fill the gaps outlined in the research agenda section above

Increase funding for shelters to improve their number and coverage, including for children from vulnerable groups

- **Enhance shelter capacity and adequate support for children from vulnerable groups** in need of tailored approaches, such as adolescent mothers, migrants (who might not speak fluent Spanish), returnees (who might face stigma and poverty upon their return) or LGBTQI+ children.
- **Expand shelters across the country, taking an intersectional approach**. The coverage of existing shelters for child victim-survivors of sexual exploitation is very limited. There are just three across the country – one implemented by

the Secretariat of Social Welfare of the Presidency of the Republic, one by La Alianza, and one by Asociacion del Refugio de la Ninez – is limited.

- **Enhance shelter capacity for boys who are victim-survivors of sexual exploitation**. Only one such shelter exists, implemented by La Alianza. Further investments are needed to expand the coverage of similar shelters with relevant staff.

Help build the capacity of duty bearers and other stakeholders providing support to victim-survivors

- **Provide technical support and support training initiatives for duty bearers,** particularly those implementing the new Law to Prevent Trafficking of Girls in Prisons (Decree 3-2025).
- **Support efforts to strengthen knowledge on child exploitation and its different forms by prosecutors** (*fiscales*) and other duty bearers from key agencies such as the Attorney's General Office (MP) and the National Civil Police (Policía Nacional Civil). Staff from these agencies need regular training on prevention, case detection, different types of exploitation and guaranteeing an adequate response to victim-survivors (ODHAG, 2019; KIIs, Civil Society 6, 7). This should be undertaken in partnership with civil society organisations (for example, Abogados sin Fronteras) and the government.
- **Promote learning activities targeted at relevant stakeholders providing support to children victim-survivors of exploitation** (for example, case managers, health and mental health providers) who can address the needs of victim-survivors related to the restitution of their rights, their emotional recovery and their psychosocial support.

Support victim-survivors of child exploitation at their reintegration and around reparations of their rights

- **Support efforts that address the economic, social and psychological needs of survivors.** For instance, make sure that survivors are psychologically, socially and financially ready to return to their family and local community or to an alternative environment where they feel safer. For adolescents, this might involve supporting their return to education or initiatives that support their transition to economic autonomy and independence.
- **Support advocacy efforts around financial reparations to victim-survivors of child exploitation**. Civil society organisations noted a financial fund should cover symbolic, economic and emotional reparations (KIIs, Civil Society 7, 9).
- **Work with communities to avoid stigma towards survivors of exploitation** (particularly sexual exploitation), ensuring that community members can protect victim-survivors from further exploitation, violence and stigma.

Support community structures to prevent and address child exploitation

- **Support positive initiatives led by community members to prevent exploitation and support victim-survivors of child exploitation.** Examples include the '*espacios protectores*' (led by ECPAT) or the 'Sistemas Comunitarios de Protección' (led by UNICEF).[53] Roundtables with civil society organisations can be supported to exchange perspectives, learning and action plans. Potential partners for this work are ECPAT, PADF and UNICEF.

---

53 See: https://xn--sistemaproteccionniez-ubc.gt/sistema-comunitario

- **Support activities led by community members with support from local leaders and relevant stakeholders** (for example, mayors, school and health staff, religious leaders, etc.) to raise awareness among the population about existing laws and the risks of child exploitation, as well as available support services, including the role of SVET or the Ministry of Labour and Social Security in providing support for adolescents who seek guidance on labour rights and obligations.[54]
- **Work with civil society organisations and the government to strengthen the knowledge and capacities of local duty bearers** (for example, local authorities, prosecutors, police) to prevent and address child exploitation.

Support efforts to disseminate information via different languages, channels and structures about child exploitation

- **Support the dissemination of prevention and relevant information through co-developed messages** (by community leaders, children, local authorities, civil society, etc.) via local communication channels (for example, community radios, local TV) and local leaders who are respected by the population and speak local languages.
- **Support prevention activities in high-risk locations and risky seasons to reach potential victim-survivors who are out of school and/or working in exploitative conditions**. High-risk locations can include ports, informal employment sectors or important crossing points such as borders or junctions on highways like those leading to Chimaltenango, Amatitlán, Barberena or Sanarate) (UNICEF, 2016). Risky seasons can include the sugarcane or coffee harvest seasons.
- **Initiate advocacy efforts to extend existing government initiatives that aim to prevent labour exploitation among youth** to children who are allowed to work (those over 15 years old). Examples could include the '*mi primer empleo*' ('my first job') initiative,[55] which currently targets youth aged 18–24.

Support efforts and collaboration to tackle online child exploitation

- **Facilitate knowledge exchanges and collaboration between Guatemala and international partners to address online child exploitation and abuse.** Potential exchanges could take place between the UK's National Crime Agency's Child Exploitation and Online Protection (NCA – CEOP),[56] and its equivalent in Guatemala (for example, the Cybercrime Unit of the Prosecutor's Office in the section that addresses human trafficking). Exchanges can also be facilitated with the Internet Watch Foundation, members of the Global Taskforce on Child Sexual Abuse Online (by the 'WeProtect' Global Alliance) and/or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).
- **Support the enactment of laws that tackle the threat of child sexual abuse materials generated by AI** by making it illegal to possess, create or distribute AI tools designed to create such materials. Consider criminalising the possession of AI paedophile manuals (which teach people how to use AI for sexual abuse), the running of websites where paedophiles can share child sexual abuse content, and the provision of advice on how to groom children. Guatemala could, for example, collaborate with the UK on the introduction of new laws to address the threat of child sexual abuse images generated by AI as part of its Crime and Policing Bill.

---

54 See: https://www.tramites.gob.gt/servicio/3299
55 See: https://becaempleo.mintrabajo.gob.gt/login
56 See: https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/child-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation

- **Support parents/caregivers and other relevant adults (for example, school authorities) to better protect children** from the risks they face when using digital technologies, including safe practices to prevent online exploitation. International partners (for example, UN agencies, UK universities) can support trainings that offer tailored support to adults with lower digital literacy.

Support initiatives that provide legal protection

- **Support initiatives that encourage children to identify and report cases of exploitation**, including suggestions to overcome potential obstacles or fears that prevent them from reporting.

References

Abbott, J. (2025) 'Migrants recall painful deportations during Trump's first 30 days in office'. El Paso Times (www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/immigration/2025/02/23/migrants-painful-deportations-during-trumps-first-30-days-in-office/79328647007/).

Abogados sin fronteras Canada (ASFC) (2024) *Informe Anual 2023–2024*. Québec, Canada: ASFC (https://asfcanada.ca/es/medias/informe-anual-2023-2024/).

AGN – Agencia Guatemalteca de Noticias (2021) 'SVET informa sobre la violencia sexual y ruta de denuncia'. AGN, 16 August (https://agn.gt/svet-informa-sobre-la-violencia-sexual-y-ruta-de-denuncia/).

AGN (2022) 'Socializan material didáctico sobre riesgos del trabajo infantil". AGN, 9 June (https://agn.gt/socializan-material-didactico-sobre-riesgos-del-trabajo-infantil/, https://agn.gt/socializan-material-didactico-sobre-riesgos-del-trabajo-infantil/).

AGN (2025) 'SVET presenta Modo Digital, estrategia para la ciberseguridad de menores'. AGN, 19 February (https://agn.gt/svet-presenta-modo-digital-estrategia-para-la-ciberseguridad-de-menores/).

Alexander-Scott, M., Bell, E., and Holden, J. (2016) 'Shifting social norms to tackle violence against women and girls'. London: Violence Against Women and Girls Helpdesk (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7ff8e3e5274a2e87db717b/Shifting-Social-Norms-tackle-Violence-against-Women-Girls3.pdf).

Amnesty International (2022) 'Guatemala: discriminatory law puts lives and rights at risk'. Urgent Action 23/22. London: Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/discriminatory-law-puts-lives-and-rights-risk).

Anacafé (2021) 'Funcafé, Anacafé y Rainforest Alliance presentan Guías de Sistematización, Programación de Prevención del Trabajo Infantil'. Noticias Anacafé. Guatemala City: Anacafé (http://demo.anacafe.org/articles/funcafé-anacafé-y-rainforest-alliance-presentan-guías-de-sistematización-programación-de-prevención-del-trabajo-infantil/).

Andres, A. and Vílchez, D. (2024) 'Hidden in plain sight: The lobby group restricting rights in Latin America'. openDemocracy, 26 November (www.opendemocracy.net/en/afi-guatemala-opus-dei-anti-abortion-restrict-rights-latin-america/).

ANNA Observa (2023) 'Formación de Recursos Humanos Curso semi-presencial sobre Explotación Sexual de Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes' (www.annaobserva.org/es/formacion-de-rr-hh/).

Aquino, M. (2024) 'Reclutamiento en Guatemala: engañados con un futuro mejor'. Aquinoticias.mx, 5 August (https://aquinoticias.mx/reclutamiento-en-guatemala-enganados-con-un-futuro-mejor/).

ASFC and SVET (2024) *Análisis de sentencias de trata de personas en Guatemala 2020–2023: Un enfoque en la reparación a las víctimas de trata de personas*. Québec, Canada: ASFC and SVET (https://asfcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/ANALISIS-SENTENCIAS-TRATA-DE-PERSONAS-BN-WEB.pdf).

Asmann, P. (2022) 'Guatemala sex traffickers earn millions through deception'. InSight Crime, 10 August (http://insightcrime.org/news/guatemala-sex-traffickers-earn-millions/).

Asociación Lambda (2024) 'Estadísticas – Observatorio Nacional LGBTQIIQ+'. Guatemala City: Asociación Lambda (www.asociacion-lambda.org/estadisticas-observatorio-nacional-LGBTQIiq/).

Asociación Pop No'j (n.d.) 'Recursos'. Guatamala City: Asociación Pop No'j (www.asociacionpopnoj.org/recursos/).

Barrios-Klee, W. (2015) '¡Me cambió la vida! Uniones, embarazos y vulneración de derechos en adolescentes'. Guatemala City: MSPAS, FLACSO and UNFPA (https://guatemala.unfpa.org/es/publicaciones/%C2%A1me-cambi%C3%B3-la-vida-estudio-nacional-de-uniones-embarazos-y-vulneraci%C3%B3n-de-los-derechos#:~:text=El%20estudio%20Uniones%20tempranas%2C%20embarazos%20y%20vulneraci%C3%B3n%20de,con%20el%20apoyo%20financiero%20de%20la%20Fundaci%C3%B3n%20Ford).

Barrios-Klee, W., Ramazzini Morales, A.L., Álvarez Peruch, K., et al. (2021) *Vidas silenciadas: Registros y políticas para prevenir suicidios por embarazos en adolescentes*. Guatemala City: FLACSO Guatemala (https://flacso.edu.gt/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Vidas-Silenciadas-Segunda-Edicion-Redes-Sociales-2-1.pdf).

Barrios-Klee, W. and Mazariegos, D. (2022) 'Identities, body and territory: 56+1 girls at the "Hogar Seguro, Virgen de la Asunción" fire', in M.B. Jimenez and D.T.C. Hernandez (eds) *Bodies, territories, and feminism: Latin American compilation of political practices, theories, and methodologies*. New York NY: Columbia University Press.

Bautista, M.J.L. (2023) 'Sólo el 3.5 % de las municipalidades serán dirigidas por mujeres', *Agencia Ocote*. (www.agenciaocote.com/blog/2023/08/23/solo-el-3-5-de-las-municipalidades-seran-dirigidas-por-mujeres/).

Beck, E. (2022) 'The long-term struggle for violence against women legislation: the Guatemalan women's movement and the politics of patience' *Politics and Gender* 18(4): 1043–1076 (https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X21000349).

Beck, E. and Stephen, L. (2021) 'From Legislation to Everyday Practices in Guatemala's Violence against Women Courts' *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 53(4): 741–766.

Becker, K.D., Brandt, N.E., Stephan, S.H., et al. (2014) 'A review of educational outcomes in the children's mental health treatment literature' *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion* 7(1): 5–23 (https://doi.org/10.1080/1754730X.2013.851980).

Boerman, T. and Golob, A. (2021) 'Gangs and modern-day slavery in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala: a non-traditional model of human trafficking' *Journal of Human Trafficking* 7(3): 241–257 (https://doi.org/10.1080/23322705.2020.1719343).

Bolaños (2021) 'Iniciativa empresarial contra el trabajo infantil recibe premio internacional'. Prensa Libre, 16 June (www.prensalibre.com/economia/iniciativa-empresarial-contra-el-trabajo-infantil-recibe-premio-internacional/).

CACIF – Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras (2021) 'Sector privado lanza actualización de Estrategia para la prevención y erradicación del trabajo infantil 2021–2025'. 24 July. Guatemala City: CACIF Guatemala (https://cacif.org.gt/sector-privado-lanza-actualizacion-de-estrategia-para-la-prevencion-y-erradicacion-del-trabajo-infantil-2021-2025/).

CACIF (2024) 'Iniciativas que erradican el trabajo infantil en Guatemala'. 12 June. Guatemala City: CACIF Guatemala (https://cacif.org.gt/iniciativas-del-sector-privado-que-previenen-y-erradican-el-trabajo-infantil/).

Calderón Reyes, Y.Y. (2015) 'Análisis de los programas de proyectos de la secretaría contra la violencia sexual, explotación y trata de personas, en la Ciudad de Guatemala'. Guatemala City: Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala (http://www.repositorio.usac.edu.gt/1965/).

Calel Tzunux, M.L. (2023) 'Abordaje psicosocial a víctimas de y trata de personas y la aplicación del protocolo de Palermo en la atención a la víctima vulnerable'. Masters thesis. Guatemala City: Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala (http://www.repositorio.usac.edu.gt/19633/).

Canelas, C. and Gisselquist, R.M. (2018) 'Human capital, labour market outcomes, and horizontal inequality in Guatemala', *Oxford Development Studies*, 46(3), pp. 378–397. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13600818.2017.1388360.

Canizales, S.L. (2023) 'Between obligations and aspirations: unaccompanied immigrant teen workers' transnational lives and imagined futures' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 50(10): 2510–2528 (https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2023.2278398).

Castro Juárez, O. (2022) 'Ciberseguridad en Centros Educativos Públicos de Guatemala, un mecanismo para la protección de niños, niñas y adolescentes en el ciberespacio'. CyberSecurity Información & Privacidad, 5 February. Rome: Asociación Universitaria en Ciencias de la Investigación (AUCI) (https://csecmagazine.com/2022/02/05/ciberseguridad-en-centros-educativos-publicos-de-guatemala-un-mecanismo-para-la-proteccion-de-ninos-ninas-y-adolescentes-en-el-ciberespacio/).

Cetino, V. (2024) 'La realidad de las adolescentes en el trabajo doméstico'. RUDA, 18 April (www.rudagt.org/temas/la-realidad-de-las-adolescentes-en-el-trabajo-domstico).

Cetino, V. (n.d.) 'Aumenta violencia cibernética para la niñez'. RUDA (www.rudagt.org/temas/aumenta-violencia-ciberntica-para-la-niez).

CICIG – Comision Internacional contra la Impunidad en Guatemala (2019) *Informe de cierre. El legado de Justicia en Guatemala.* Guatemala City: CICIG (www.cicig.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/InformeLegadoJusticia_SI.pdf).

CIDH – Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (2023) 'Crimen organizado y derechos de niñas, niños, adolescentes y jóvenes: desafios y acciones estatales'. Washington DC: CIDH (www.oas.org/es/cidh/jsForm/?File=/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2023/077.asp).

CIPRODENI (2020) 'Niñas y adolescentes en Guatemala: las múltiples violencias que las afectan'. Boletín de Análisis No. 12. Guatemala City: CIPRODENI (www.ciprodeni.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Boleti%CC%81n-ODN-NORAD-OCTUBRE20.pdf).

CIPRODENI (2022) *Análisis de situación de los derechos de las niñas, los niños y adolescentes en Guatemala 2022, Impacto de la crisis de gobernabilidad.* Guatemala City: CIPRODENI (www.ciprodeni.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/BoletinODNNov2022FINAL.pdf).

CIPRODENI (2023) *Análisis situacional de los derechos de la niñez y adolescencia*. Guatemala City: CIPRODENI (www.ciprodeni.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Bolet%C3%ADn-CIPRODENI-Nov23-2.pdf).

Commission for Historical Clarification (1999) 'Conclusions and recommendations' in *Guatemala memory of silence. TZ'INIL NA'TAB'AL*. Report of the Commission for Historical Clarification (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico) (https://hrdag.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/CEHreport-english.pdf).

CONACMI (2020) 'Reunión mensual de la RED – CONACMI', 20 August. Guatemala City: CONACMI (https://conacmi.org/reunion-mensual-de-la-red-conacmi/).

CONACMI (2022) 'Guía para sobre la seguridad de los niños y las niñas', 24 May. Guatemala City: CONACMI (https://conacmi.org/guia-para-sobre-la-seguridad-de-los-ninos-y-las-ninas/).

CONACMI (2025) 'Proyecto Promover la protección especial a través de la aplicación del marco político de salud y justicia en Sololá, Jalapa'. Guatemala City: CONACMI (https://conacmi.org/proyectos/).

CONACMI (n.d) 'Aula Virtual – CONACMI'. Guatemala City: CONACMI (www.aulavirtual.conacmi.org/).

CONADI (2024) 'Datos estadísticos de personas con discapacidad en Guatemala: segunda edición – 2024'. Guatemala City: CONADI (https://datosestadisticos.conadi.gob.gt/revista2/).

Congreso de la Republica de Guatemala (2019) 'Presentan iniciativa para dinamizar búsqueda de mujeres'. Guatemala City: Government of Guatemala (www.congreso.gob.gt/noticias_congreso/2867/2019/1).

CORETT – Coalición Regional contra la Trata de Personas y el Tráfico Ilícito de Migrantes (2024a) 'Guatemala: Con unidades móviles, se busca prevenir la violencia sexual, explotación y trata de personas'. CORETT, 17 September (www.coalicioncorett.com/noticias/guatemala/guatemala-con-unidades-moviles-se-busca-prevenir-la-violencia-sexual-explotacion-y-trata-de-personas).

CORETT (2024b) 'Denuncias por delito de Trata en el 2024, superan las del año anterior'. CORETT, 18 November (www.coalicioncorett.com/noticias/guatemala/denuncias-por-delito-de-trata-en-el-2024-superan-las-del-ano-anterior).

CORETT (2024c) 'SVET lleva a cabo feria contra la trata en la Plaza de la Constitución'. CORETT, 31 July (www.coalicioncorett.com/noticias/guatemala/svet-lleva-a-cabo-feria-contra-la-trata-en-la-plaza-de-la-constitucion).

CORETT (n.d.) 'Corazon azul Guatemala' (www.coalicioncorett.com/campanas)

Crime Stoppers Guatemala (2024) '8 víctimas de trata de personas rescatadas y una mujer capturada'. 6 December. Guatemala City: Crime Stoppers Guatemala (https://tupista.gt/posts/8-v%C3%ADctimas-de-trata-de-personas-rescatadas-y-una-mujer-capturada).

Crime Stoppers Guatemala (2025a) '9 capturados y 18 menores de edad rescatados'. 15 April. Guatemala City: Crime Stoppers Guatemala (https://tupista.gt/posts/9-capturados-y-18-menores-de-edad-rescatados).

Crime Stoppers Guatemala (2025b) 'Acerca de Crime Stoppers'. Guatemala City: Crime Stoppers Guatemala (https://tupista.gt/nosotros/).

Cruz Lorente, D.E. (2024) 'Campaña de comunicación digital para prevenir el intercambio de mensajes sexuales por redes sociales "sexting". Trabajo realizado para la Asociación Eliminemos la prostitución infantil, la pornografía infantil y la trata de niños con fines sexuales'. Guatemala City: Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala.

Disability Rights International (n.d.) 'International Aid Funds Institutionalization in Guatemala'. Washington DC: Disability Rights International (www.driadvocacy.org/reports/international-aid-funds-institutionalization-guatemala).

Disability Rights International (2021) 'Still at Risk – Death and Disappearance of Survivors of the Fire at Hogar Seguro Virgen de la Asunción'. Washington DC: Disability Rights International (www.driadvocacy.org/reports/still-risk-death-and-disappearance-survivors-fire-hogar-seguro-virgen-de-la-asuncion).

ECLAC (2024) 'Bulletin Femicidal violence in figures. Latin America and the Caribbean – No 3. Urgent action to prevent and eliminate femicides'. Santiago: ECLAC (https://oig.cepal.org/en/documents/bulletin-femicidal-violence-figures-latin-america-and-caribbean-no-3-urgent-action-prevent).

ECLAC (2025a) 'Statistics and indicators'. Santiago: ECLAC (https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/dashboard.html?lang=en).

ECLAC (2025b) 'Teenage maternity'. Gender Equality Observatory. Santiago: ECLAC (https://oig.cepal.org/en/indicators/teenage-maternity).

ECLAC (2025c) 'Guatemala – country profile'. Gender Equality Observatory. Santiago: ECLAC (https://oig.cepal.org/en/countries/14/profile).

ECLAC (2025d) 'Autonomy in decision-making'. Gender Equality Observatory. Santiago: ECLAC (https://oig.cepal.org/en/autonomies/autonomy-decision-making).

ECPAT (2014) *Informe de monitoreo de país sobre la explotación sexual comercial de niños, niñas y adolescentes: Guatemala*. Bangkok: ECPAT International (https://ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/CMR_GUATEMALA_FINAL.pdf).

ECPAT (2022) 'Preventing the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (GARA)'. 24 May. Bangkok: ECPAT International (https://ecpat.org/action-protocol-model-for-tour-guides-gara/).

ECPAT Guatemala (2010) *La explotación sexual comercial de niños y adolescentes varones en Guatemala*. Guatemala City: ECPAT Guatemala with ECPAT International (https://ecpat.lu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Guatemala_Research_Web.pdf).

EFE (2024) 'Polémica en Guatemala por uso de la inteligencia artificial para acosar a mujeres menores'. El Confidencial, 13 August (www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/2024-08-13/polemica-guatemala-inteligencia-artificial-mujeres-menores_3942716/).

Equaldex (n.d.) 'LGBTQI Rights in Guatemala'. Los Angeles CA: Equaldex (www.equaldex.com/region/guatemala).

Embajada Britanica en la Ciudad de Guatemala (2019) 'Guatemala participa en Foro Global para luchar contra la explotación sexual de la niñez en línea'. 12 December. London: UK Government (www.gov.uk/government/news/guatemala-participates-in-global-summit-against-online-sexual-exploitation-of-children.es-419).

EU Election Observation Mission (2023) 'Final Report: European Union Election Observation Mission to Guatemala - General elections 25 June 2023 Presidential run-off 20 August 2023'. Guatemala City: European Union Election Observation Mission (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/279781/Guatemala-General-elections-Final-report.pdf).

FAO (2021a) *El trabajo infantil en la caficultura: causas, tendencias y repercusiones para el desarrollo territorial en Guatemala*. Rome: FAO (https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7867es).

FAO (2021b) 'Land of opportunities Dry Corridor in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras'. Rome: FAO (https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/9dcf35cd-dd1d-4080-bc3a-7125a81c4d02).

FAO (2022) *Estudio subregional sobre las causas estructurales del trabajo infantil en la agricultura en El Salvador, Guatemala y Honduras*. Santiago: FAO (https://doi.org/10.4060/cc3077es).

FAO (2023) *Country gender spotlight – Guatemala*. Rome: FAO (https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/a1931a72-0ece-41e2-89f4-0f323298b9bb/content).

Funcafé (2021) '¿Sabes cuáles son los programas de Prevención del Trabajo Infantil?'. Guatemala City: Funcafé (www.funcafe.org/articulo/sabes-cu%C3%A1les-son-los-programas-de-prevenci%C3%B3n-del-trabajo-infantil/).

Fundacion Sobrevivientes and UNICEF (n.d.) *Guía de implementación "ME CONECTO SIN CLAVOS"*. Guatemala City: Fundacion Sobrevivientes, We Protect Children Online and UNICEF (https://sobrevivientes.org/docs/conecto_sin_clavos/_no-implementacion_estrategia%20(incluye%20redes).pdf).

Georgetown Institute for WPS (2023) '2023 Women, Peace and Security Index'. Washington DC: GIWPS (https://giwps.georgetown.edu/the-index/).

Gibbons, J.L., Skogen, D. and Bogue, A. (2025) 'Using "our brave voice": a holistic family intervention to reduce gender-based violence in an Indigenous Guatemalan community' *Violence Against Women* (https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251320582).

Girls Not Brides (2022) 'Child, early and forced marriage and unions in Guatemala'. Thematic brief. London: Girls Not Brides (www.girlsnotbrides.org/documents/1776/CEFMU_in_Guatemala.pdf).

Global Disability Fund (2023) 'Breaking down barriers, inclusion in Guatemala'. New York NY: Global Disability Fund (https://globaldisabilityfund.org/breaking-down-barriers-inclusion-guatemala/).

Global Fund for Women (2024) *We need to know the humanitarian sector stands with us. The active but underfunded role young women and girls play in crises*. San Francisco CA: Global Fund for Women (www.globalfundforwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/The-Active-but-Underfunded-Role-Young-Women-and-Girls-Play-in-Crises-Web-1.pdf).

Global Platform for Child Exploitation Policy (2024) 'Guatemala: Informes derivados'. Alexandria VA: Global Platform for Child Exploitation Policy (www.globalchildexploitationpolicy.org/content/gpp-ncmec/us/es/data-insights/guatemala.html).

Gobierno de la Republica Guatemala (2025a) 'Campaña "PROTEGIENDO NUESTRO MAYOR TESORO"'. Guatemala City: Gobierno de la Republica Guatemala (https://gobernacionsacatepequez.gob.gt/campana-protegiendo-nuestro-mayor-tesoro/).

Gobierno de la Republica Guatemala (2025b) 'Vicepresidenta lanza estrategia para la prevención del acoso y explotación sexual digital'. Guatemala City: Gobierno de la Republica Guatemala (https://mail.vicepresidencia.gob.gt/noticias/2025-02-20/vicepresidenta-lanza-estrategia-para-la-prevencion-del-acoso-y-explotacion).

Gómez-Lugo, F. and Jones Pérez, M. (2023) *Progress and challenges in legal gender identity recognition in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico, and the role of Advisory Opinion 24/17 issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights*. New York NY: Arcus Foundation (https://www.arcusfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Legal-Gender-Recognition-in-Four-Latin-American-Countries.pdf).

González Vásquez, R. (2023) 'Violencia sexual dentro de la red social Instagram y estrés psicosocial en las mujeres jóvenes guatemaltecas'. Thesis. Guatemala City: Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (https://repositorio.uvg.edu.gt/xmlui/handle/123456789/4900).

Government of Guatemala (2018) 'Portal de Resultados del Censo 2018 – dondeestamos'. Guatemala City: Government of Guatemala (https://censo2018.ine.gob.gt/dondeestamos). https://www.mides.gob.gt/ipmgt/

Government of Guatemala (2025) 'Pobreza multidimensional en Guatemala: Actualización del IPM-Gt con datos de la ENCOVI 2023. Guatemala City: Ministerio de Desarollo Social de Guatemala (https://rub.mides.gob.gt/ipmgt/)

Government of Guatemala (2025) 'Informes Estadísticos'. Guatemala City: Instituto Guatemalteco de Migración (https://igm.gob.gt/informes-estadisticos/).

Government of Mexico (2023) 'Cuadro 3.1.5. Eventos de niñas, niños o adolescentes en situación migratoria irregular, según continente, país de nacionalidad, grupos de edad, condición de viaje y sexo'. Mexico City: Government of Mexico (www.politicamigratoria.gob.mx/es/PoliticaMigratoria/CuadrosBOLETIN?Anual=2023&Secc=3).

Grech, S. (2016) *Disability and Poverty in Rural Guatemala: Conceptual, Cultural and Social Intersections.* London: London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Greene, M. (2019) *Una Realidad Oculta para niñas y adolescentes. Matrimonios y uniones infantiles, tempranas y forzadas en America Latina y el Caribe.* Reporte Regional. Panama City: Plan International Americas y UNFPA.

GSMA (2017) 'Los operadores móviles de Guatemala firman compromiso para la protección de las niñas, niños y adolescentes frente a la violencia y explotación sexual en línea'. 29 March. Buenos Aires: GSMA Latin America, (www.gsma.com/about-us/regions/latin-america/es/guatemala-proteccion-ninos-nosimporta/).

Guttmacher Institute (2014) 'Sexual and Reproductive Health of Young Women in Guatemala'. Fact sheet. New York NY: Guttmacher Institute (www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/sexual-and-reproductive-health-young-women-guatemala).

Health Information Platform for the Americas (2025) 'Tablero de los indicadores básicos'. PAHO/EIH Open Data. Washington DC: Organización Panamerica de la Salud (https://opendata.paho.org/es/indicadores-basicos/tablero-de-los-indicadores-basicos).

Heidbrink, L., Batz, G. and Sánchez, C. (2021) '"Why would anyone leave?": Development, overindebtedness, and migration in Guatemala' *Maya America: Journal of Essays, Commentary, and Analysis* 3(3) (https://doi.org/10.32727/26.2022.2).

Hernández, M.A. (2023) 'Children shut away: disability rights in Guatemala' *Denver Journal of International Law and Policy* (https://djilp.org/children-shut-away-disability-rights-in-guatemala/).

HRW (2021) *"It's What Happens When You Look Like This" - Violence and Discrimination Against LGBTQI People in Guatemala.* New York NY: Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2021/03/%E2%80%9CIt%E2%80%99s%20What%20Happens%20When%20You%20Look%20Like%20This%E2%80%9D_0.pdf).

HRW (2025) '*Forced to give up on their dreams*'. *Sexual violence against girls in Guatemala.* New York: New York NY: Human Right Watch (www.hrw.org/report/2025/02/18/forced-give-their-dreams/sexual-violence-against-girls-guatemala).

IACHR and OAS – The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and Organization of American States (2024) *Preliminary Observations: On-site visit to Guatemala, July 22-26, 2024*. Washington DC: IACHR and OAS (www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/2024/preliminary_observations_guatemala.pdf).

IFRC – International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2018) *Rights of migrants in action: child protection projects synthesis report of lessons learned in Benin, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, and Indonesia.* Geneva, Switzerland: IFRC (www.ifrc.org/document/rights-migrants-action-child-protection-projects).

IIN and OAS – Inter-American Children's Institute and Organization of American States (2024) *Addressing the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in the states of the region. Inter-American Cooperation Programme for the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Exploitation, Smuggling of and Trafficking in Children*. Montevideo: IIN and OAS (www.annaobserva.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CSE-Report-to-the-OAS-Secretary-General-2024_compressed.pdf).

ILGA – International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (2025a) 'Legal Frameworks: Criminalisation of consensual same-sex sexual acts'. Geneva, Switzerland: ILGA (https://database.ilga.org/criminalisation-consensual-same-sex-sexual-acts).

ILGA (2025b) 'Legal Frameworks: Legal gender recognition'. Geneva, Switzerland: ILGA (https://database.ilga.org/legal-gender-recognition).

ILO (2014) 'Action to prevent and prosecute human trafficking in Guatemala'. Geneva, Switzerland, ILO (www.ilo.org/projects-and-partnerships/projects/action-prevent-and-prosecute-human-trafficking-guatemala).

ILO (2024) 'Country profiles: Guatemala'. ILOSTAT. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO (https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/country-profiles/).

ILO (2025) ‚ILOSTAT data explorer – informal employment'. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO (https://rshiny.ilo.org/dataexplorer32/?lang=en&id=SDG_0831_SEX_ECO_RT_A).

Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2003) 'Estudio cualitativo sobre el trabajo infantil en Guatemala informe final'. Geneva, Switzerland: Organización Internacional del Trabajo (https://www.ilo.org/es/publications/estudio-cualitativo-sobre-el-trabajo-infantil-en-guatemala-informe-final).

INE (2021) 'COMPENDIO ESTADÍSTICO NIÑEZ Y ADOLESCENCIA'. Guatemala City: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (www.ine.gob.gt/sistema/uploads/2021/12/31/20211231617 34p41WtmnIFozQRIPoDSFETahEHwHIr67m.pdf

INE (2023a) 'Datos demográficos y de pobreza de los pueblos indígenas según la ENCOVI 2023'. Guatemala City: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (www.ine.gob.gt/sistema/uploads/2024/12/05/20241205142224hb2DT5INXvYSKOiMBuPeeIOjO8GrLLIT.pdf).

INE (2023b) 'Condiciones de pobreza en Guatemala'. Guatemala City: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (www.ine.gob.gt/sistema/uploads/2024/08/22/20240822114108C8yVRfg31LHXw3XQoGrbhsliMBSp9HFC.pdf).

INE (2023c) 'Principales resultados de pobreza y desigualdad'. Guatemala City: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (www.ine.gob.gt/pobreza-menu/).

INE (2023d) 'Principales resultados de empleo población y vivienda'. Guatemala City: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (www.ine.gob.gt/sistema/uploads/2024/10/08/20241008134527DG406HPyK1noFGisuuEp7dgBn6AfNrJe.pdf).

INE (2023e) 'Estadísticas de educación'. Guatemala City: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (www.ine.gob.gt/educacion/).

INE (2024a) Informe Encuesta Nacional de Calidad y Bienestar de los Hogares (ENCABIH)'. Guatemala City: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (www.ine.gob.gt/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Informe-ENCABIH-aprobao-12-septiembre-2024.pdf).

INE (2024b) Principales resultados: Encuesta Nacional de Calidad y Bienestar de los Hogares (ENCABIH). Guatemala City: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (www.ine.gob.gt/encabih/).

Integral Human Development (2022) 'Guatemala'. Vatican City: Migrants and Refugees Section, Integral Human Development (https://migrants-refugees.va/country-profile/guatemala/).

International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (2017) 'Guatemala Policy and Legislation'. Alexandria VA: International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Guatemala-Policy-and-Legislation.pdf).

Internet Watch Foundation (2021) 'Call for Guatemalan people to "denounce" online child sexual abuse as new portal launches'. 30 March. Cambridge, UK: IWF (www.iwf.org.uk/news-media/news/call-for-guatemalan-people-to-denounce-online-child-sexual-abuse-as-new-portal-launches/).

IOM – International Organization for Migration (2024) 'Migration in transit'. Geneva, Switzerland: IOM Information Unit for the Countries of the North of Central America (https://infounitnca.iom.int/en/migration-in-transit/).

IOM (2025a) 'C.A. North Returns'. Geneva, Switzerland: IOM Information Unit for the Countries of the North of Central America (https://infounitnca.iom.int/en/c-a-north-returns/).

IOM (2025b) 'Integración Regional'. Geneva, Switzerland: IOM Information Unit for the Countries of the North of Central America (https://nortedecentroamerica.iom.int/es/integracion-regional).

Ipas (2024) 'PROTEGO: Operationalizing the Geneva Consensus Declaration'. Chapel Hill NC: Ipas (www.ipas.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Ipas-Protego-Operationalizing-the-Geneva-Consensus-Declaration-OPPPROE24.pdf).

IWGIA (2023) 'The Indigenous World 2023: Guatemala'. Copenhagen: IWGIA (https://iwgia.org/en/guatemala/5093-iw-2023-guatemala.html).

Jiménez Thomas Rodriguez, D. (2022) *Feminist activism to end gender-based violence in the public sphere*. ALIGN Working paper. London: ALIGN/ODI (www.alignplatform.org/resources/report).

Kang, M. (2025) 'A.I.-Generated Images of Child Sexual Abuse Are Flooding the Internet'. New York Times, 10 July (www.nytimes.com/2025/07/10/technology/ai-csam-child-sexual-abuse.html?smid=url-share).

Kelly, U. (2025) 'Mayans in Guatemala call on multinationals to stay away'. RTE, 11 March (www.rte.ie/news/2025/0311/1501506-guatemala-mayans/).

Kidman, R. (2017) 'Child marriage and intimate partner violence: a comparative study of 34 countries' *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 46(2), pp. 662–675. (https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyw225).

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) (2017) *Neither security nor justice SGBV gang report – FINAL*. Washington DC: KIND (https://supportkind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Neither-Security-nor-Justice_SGBV-Gang-Report-FINAL.pdf).

King's College London (2024) *Representing women in Latin America*. London: King's College London (www.kcl.ac.uk/research/representing-women-in-latin-america).

Kitroeff, N., López, O. and García, J. (2022) 'Guatemalan women face up to 10 years in prison under new abortion bill', The New York Times, 10 March (www.nytimes.com/2022/03/09/world/americas/guatemala-abortion-prison.html).

Khalil, I. and Richardson, E.Z. (2019) '"When you least expect, this happens, it's already growing": Problematizing the definition of unmet need for family planning' *Open Access Journal of Contraception* [preprint] (www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2147/OAJC.S184909).

La Alianza (2025) 'La Alianza Guatemala, somos Alianza'. Guatemala City: La Alianza Guatemala (https://la-alianza.org.gt/).

Liliane Fonds (2024) 'Building an inclusive society together in Guatemala'. 's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands: Liliane Fonds Foundation (www.lilianefonds.org/news/building-an-inclusive-society-together-in-guatemala).

López, K. (2023) 'Muertes violentas de mujeres y femicidios: las vidas perdidas del 2022'. Guatemala City: Diálogos (https://dialogos.org.gt/muertes-violentas-de-mujeres-y-femicidios-las-vidas-perdidas-del-2022/#:~:text=El%20Ministerio%20P%C3%BAblico%20es%20la,donde%20se%20registraron%20138%20casos).

Luna, J.R. and Ramazzini, A.L. (2020) '¿Cuál es el problema? Masculinidades y matrimonios infantiles, uniones tempranas y forzadas en las asimetrías del poder' *Revista Punta de Género* 13: 79–108.

Lyons, M., Brewer, G., Chopen, N., et al. (2023) 'Barriers to Bystander Action in Sexual Violence in Guatemala: The Role of Rape Myth Acceptance' *Sexuality & Culture*, 28(1):155–167 (https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-023-10106-x).

Marcus, R. (2024) *Migration and displacement of children in Latin America and the Caribbean: a gender perspective*. Panama City: UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (www.unicef.org/lac/en/media/48836/file/COTM%20-%20Gendered%20Migration%20brief%20EN%20v7%20WEB.pdf.pdf).

Marcus, R., Leon-Himmelstine, C., de Carvalho, T., et al. (2023) *Children on the move in Latin America and the Caribbean: review of evidence*. UNICEF (www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/children-on-the-move-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean).

MARN, SEPREM and UICN – Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, Secretaría Presidencial de la Mujer and Unión Internacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (2024) *Plan de acción de género y cambio climático de Guatemala*. Guatemala City: MARN, SEPREM and UICN (https://doi.org/PLAN DE ACCI%C3%93N DE G%C3%89NERO Y CAMBIO CLIM%C3%81TICO DE GUATEMALA).

Marsicovetere, N. (2022) 'Guatemala's attempted ban on LGBTQI+ rights shows just how far we are from equality'. Oxfam Blog, 28 June. Oxford, UK: Oxfam (https://views-voices.oxfam.org.uk/2022/06/guatemalas-attempted-ban-on-LGBTQIqia-rights/).

Martin, C. and SáCouto, S. (2020) 'Access to Justice for Victims of Conflict-related Sexual Violence: Lessons Learned from the Sepur Zarco Case' *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, 18(2): 243–270 (https://doi.org/10.1093/jicj/mqaa006).

Medinilla, A. (2023) 'Cuatro condenas por cada 100 denuncias por trata de personas en Guatemala Agencia Ocote'. Agencia Ocote, 30 January (www.agenciaocote.com/blog/2023/01/30/impunidad-trata-de-personas-en-guatemala/).

MercyCorps (2019) *Subsist or persist? Assessing drivers of migration and effects of foreign assistance programs on migration from the Northern Triangle*. Boone IA: Mercy Corps (www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/subsist-or-persist).

Millicom (n.d.) 'Stop cyberbullying' (Conectate Segura@. Detén el Ciberacoso). Luxembourg: Millicom (www.millicom.com/stop-cyberbullying-spa).

Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, P.V.L. (2022) 'Alianza para prevenir explotación laboral y trabajo infantil', 21 April. Guatemala City: MIDES (www.mides.gob.gt/alianza-para-prevenir-explotacion-laboral-y-trabajo-infantil/).

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (2025) 'Servicio Call Center 1552'. Guatemala City: MINEX (www.minex.gob.gt/Visor_Pagina.aspx?PaginaID=37).

Ministerio de Trabajo y Prevision Social (2022) 'Instituciones abordan estrategias para prevenir y erradicar el trabajo infantil en Guatemala – Gobierno de Guatemala'. Guatemala City: Ministerio de Trabajo y Prevision Social (https://guatemala.gob.gt/instituciones-abordan-estrategias-para-prevenir-y-erradicar-el-trabajo-infantil-en-guatemala/).

Ministerio Público (2024) 'En su sexto año de funcionamiento, el Mecanismo de Búsqueda Inmediata de Mujeres Desaparecidas alcanza el 95% de efectividad'. Noticias, 9 August. Guatemala City: MP (www.mp.gob.gt/noticia/en-su-sexto-ano-de-funcionamiento-el-mecanismo-de-busqueda-inmediata-de-mujeres-desaparecidas-alcanza-el-95-de-efectividad/).

Mixed Migration Centre (2023) 'MMC Latin America and the Caribbean: Quarter 4 2023'. Copenhagen: MMC at the Danish Refugee Council (https://mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/QMMU_Q4_2023_LAC.pdf).

Monzón, A.S., Keogh, S., Ramazzini, A-L., et al. (2017) *De la normativa a la práctica: la política y el currículo de educación en sexualidad y su implementación en Guatemala*. New York NY: Guttmacher Institute (www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/politica-de-eduacion-sexual-guatemala.pdf).

Morales, J. (2021) 'Sección de Delitos Cibernéticos de la PNC ha contribuido a investigar 733 casos en 2021'. Agencia Guatemalteca de Noticias (https://agn.gt/seccion-de-delitos-ciberneticos-de-la-pnc-ha-contribuido-a-investigar-733-casos-en-2021/).

MSPAS, INE and ICF International – International Coaching Federation (2017) *Encuesta nacional de salud materno infantil 2014-2015: informe final*. Guatemala City: MSPAS, INE and ICF International (https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/fr318/fr318.pdf).

Naya, Z. (2025) 'Resaltan en Guatemala Ley para prevenir trata de niñas en cárceles' Noticias Prensa Latina, 20 February (www.prensa-latina.cu/2025/02/20/resaltan-en-guatemala-ley-para-prevenir-trata-de-ninas-en-carceles/).

OACNUDH – Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas (2018) 'Las víctimas del Hogar Seguro Virgen de la Asunción. Un camino hacia la dignidad'. Guatemala City: OACNUDH en Guatemala (https://oacnudh.org.gt/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/InformeHSVA-1.pdf).

OC Index – Organised Crime Index (2023) 'Global Organised Crime Index'. Website. Geneva, Switzerland: Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (https://ocindex.net/).

ODHAG – Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala (2019) *La trata de personas y su impacto en la niñez y adolescencia en Guatemala*. Guatemala City: ODHAG (www.odhag.org.gt/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/InformeNNA_TratadePersonas2019.pdf).

OECD (2023a) 'Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) 2023'. Paris: OECD (https://data-explorer.oecd.org/vis?df[ds]=DisseminateFinalDMZ&df[id]=DSD_SIGI%40DF_SIGI_2023&df[ag]=OECD.DEV.NPG&dq=..&lom=LASTNPERIODS&lo=5&to[TIME_PERIOD]=false&ly[cl]=MEASURE&ly[rw]=REF_AREA&vw=tb).

OECD (2023b) 'Social Institutions and Gender Index dashboard'. Paris: OECD (www.oecd.org/en/data/dashboards/social-institutions-gender-index.html).

OHCHR – Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (2023) 'Experts of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women welcome women's increased participation in public life in Guatemala, ask the state about political violence and gender stereotyping'. 14 October. Meeting summary. Geneva, Switzerland: OHCHR (www.ohchr.org/en/meeting-summaries/2023/10/experts-committee-elimination-discrimination-against-women-welcome-womens).

Olivas, E.T., Valdez, M., Muffoletto, B., et al. (2023) 'Reducing inequities in maternal and child health in rural Guatemala through the CBIO+ Approach of Curamericas: 6. Management of pregnancy complications at Community Birthing Centers (Casas Maternas Rurales)' *International Journal for Equity in Health* 21(2): 204 (https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-022-01758-6).

ONU Mujeres Guatemala (2025) *Llamado para la atención a mujeres en movilidad humana*. Guatemala City: Grupo de Trabajo de Género del Equipo Humanitario de País (GTGEHP).

Organismo Judicial (2019) 'Instrumentos para el adecuado abordaje de niñas, niños y adolescentes víctimas y testigos de delitos'. Guatemala City: Instituto de Enseñanza para el Desarrollo Sostenible (IEPADES) (https://iepades.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/INSTRUMENTOS-PARA-EL-ADECUADO-ABORDAJE-DE-NINEZ-VICTIMA-Y-TESTIGO-PUBLICADO.pdf).

Oropa, M., Chavarría Garcia, P.I., Contreras Chávez, et al. (2024) 'Violencia sexual digital contra las mujeres en México: El papel de Ley Olimpia en la transformación de los mandatos de género que la sostienen'. London: ALIGN/ODI.

OSAR (2018) 'Embarazos, partos y registro de nacimientos de madres adolescentes entre 10 y 19 años – año 2018'. Website. Guatemala City: OSAR (https://osarguatemala.org/embarazos-y-partos-de-madres-entre-10-y-19-2018/).

OSAR (2019) 'Embarazos y registro de nacimientos de madres adolescentes – año 2019'. Website. Guatemala City: OSAR (https://osarguatemala.org/embarazos-y-registro-de-nacimientos-de-madres-adolescentes-ano-2019/).

OSAR (2020) 'Embarazos y registro de nacimientos de madres adolescentes – año 2020'. Website. Guatemala City: OSAR (https://osarguatemala.org/embarazos-y-registro-de-nacimientos-de-madres-adolescentes-ano-2020/).

OSAR (2021) 'Embarazos y registro de nacimientos de madres adolescentes – año 2021'. Website. Guatemala City: OSAR (https://osarguatemala.org/embarazos-y-registro-de-nacimientos-2021/).

OSAR (2022) Embarazos y registros de nacimientos de madres adolescentes – año 2022. Website, Guatemala City: OSAR (https://osarguatemala.org/embarazos-y-registro-de-nacimientos-2022/)

OSAR (2023) 'Registros de nacimiento en madres entre 10 y 19 años – año 2023'. Website. Guatemala City: OSAR (https://osarguatemala.org/registros-de-nacimiento-y-embarazos-en-madres-adolescentes-ano-2023/).

OSAR (2024) 'Registros de nacimiento en madres entre 10 y 19 años – año 2024'. Website. Guatemala City: OSAR (https://osarguatemala.org/registros-de-nacimientos-y-embarazos-en-madres-adolescentes-ano-2024/).

Outright International (2025) 'Country overview – Guatemala'. New York NY: Outright International (https://outrightinternational.org/our-work/americas/guatemala).

PADF (2024) 'Camino seguro: combatiendo la trata de personas en la ruta migratoria'. Washington DC: PADF (www.padf.org/mexico-centralamerica/caminoseguro/).

PAHO (2024) 'Guatemala – Country Profile, Health in the Americas'. Washington DC: Pan American Health Organization (https://hia.paho.org/en/country-profiles/guatemala).

PAHO (n.d.) 'Inclusive participation of persons with disabilities in health risk management – Guatemala'. Washington DC: Pan America Health Organization and World Health Organization (www.paho.org/en/stories/inclusive-participation-persons-disabilities-health-risk-management-guatemala).

Pérez Marroquín, C. (2024) 'Denuncian a Alejandra Carrillo por supuestos delitos en el Instituto de la Víctima'. Prensa Libre, 4 April (www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/denuncian-a-alejandra-carrillo-por-supuestos-delitos-en-el-instituto-de-la-victima/).

Peruch Álvarez, J.k. and Paredes Cruz, A.D. (2017) *Informe de línea de base del estado situacional de los derechos de la juventud en Guatemala: 2014-2017*. Guatemala City: UN Population Fund (UNFPA) Guatemala (https://guatemala.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Informe%20digramada%20Juventud%2019.pdf).

Plan International (2023) *Mujeres adolescentes en crisis: la vida en contextos de movilidad en la región de Centroamérica y México*. Madrid: Plan International España (https://plan-international.org/uploads/2023/03/Full-report-available-in-Spanish-only.pdf).

Prensa Libre (2017) 'MP detectará a personas que compartan pornografía infantil'. Prensa Libre, 24 February (www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/justicia/mp-detectara-a-personas-que-difundan-pornografia-infantil-en-internet/).

Quintela Babio, C. (2018) 'La ley "anti-derechos" abre la puerta a la violación de normas y tratados internacionales'. Plaza Pública, 29 August (www.plazapublica.com.gt/content/la-ley-anti-derechos-abre-la-puerta-la-violacion-de-normas-y-tratados-internacionales).

Ramazzini, A.L. and López, E.A (2023) *Contar con datos para dejar de contar vidas: Vidas silenciadas, Registro y políticas para prevenir suicidios por embarazos en adolescentes*. Guatemala City: FLACSO Guatemala (https://flacso.edu.gt/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Paper-Contar-con-datos-Vidas-Silenciadas-FLACSO-final.pdf).

Richardson, E., Allison, K., Gesink, D, et al. (2016) 'Barriers to accessing and using contraception in highland Guatemala: the development of a family planning self-efficacy scale' *Open Access Journal of Contraception* 7: 77–87 (https://doi.org/10.2147/OAJC.S95674.

Salinas, G.A.S. (2023) 'La trata de personas con fines de explotación sexual en Centroamérica y México desde el punto de vista de derechos humanos'. Tegulcigalpa: Universidad Tecnológica Centroamericana UNITEC (https://repositorio.unitec.edu/xmlui/handle/123456789/10858).

Save the Children (2022) 'Should I stay or Should I go? Understanding children's migration decisions in northern Central America'. London: Save the Children (https://resourcecentre. savethechildren.net/document/should-i-stay-or-should-i-gounderstanding-childrens-migration-decisions-in-northerncentral-america/).

SEPREM (2024) *La reparación digna y transformadora* Guatemala City: SEPREM (https://seprem.gob.gt/wp-content/uploads/02-011-REPARACION_DIGNA_Y_TRANSFORMADORA.pdf).

SERniña (n.d.) 'Programas'. Antigua, Guatemala: SERniña (www.sernina.org/programs).

SITEAL and UNESCO – El Sistema de Información de Tendencias Educativas en América Latina and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2019) *Perfil del pais: Guatemala, Fecha de actualizacion 05/2019*. Buenos Aires: SITEAL, UNESCO (https://siteal.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/sit_informe_pdfs/siteal_ed_guatemala_20190516.pdf).

Solis, N. (2021) 'Niñas de seis años son empleadas en casas particulares'. Guatemala City: Federación Guatemalteca de Escuelas Radiofónicas (FGER) (www.fger.org/ninas-de-seis-anos-son-empleadas-en-casa-particulares/).

Suarez, J. and Jordan, M. (2007) *Three thousand and counting: a report on violence against women in Guatemala*. Washington DC: Guatemala Human Rights Commission/ USA (GHRC).

SVET (2022) 'Si tienes conocimiento de uno de estos delitos, denuncia!'. Guatemala City: SVET (www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=548937827442314 8&id=799032440124445&set=a.801511379876551).

SVET – Secretaría Contra La Violencia Sexual, Explotación y Trata De Personas (2024a) *Informe de estado en materia de trata de personas 2023-2024*. Guatemala City: SVET.

SVET (2024b) 'National issues and priorities related to child trafficking (Cuestiones y Prioridades nacionales relativas a la trata de niños)'. Guatemala City: SVET (www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/WG_TIP_2023/Panellists_Presentations/7._Sandy_Guadalupe_Recinos_Acevedo_Child_Trafficking.pdf).

SVET (2025) *Informe de estado en materia de trata de personas 2024–2025*. Guatemala City: SVET.

Thakkar, V. (2024) 'Modernizing Traditional Maternal Care in Guatemala, Think Global Health' 12 March. New York NY: Council on Foreign Relations (https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/modernizing-traditional-maternal-care-guatemala).

Tissera, M. (2024) 'Localization for early childhood development and child protection in Guatemala'. Collaborative Insights series. Washington DC: Georgetown University.

Todhunter, L., Hogan-Roy, M. and Pressman, E.K. (2022) 'Complications of Pregnancy in Adolescents' *Seminars in Reproductive Medicine* 40(1–02): 98–106 (https://doi.org/10.1055/s-0041-1734020).

Tremeau, V. (2023) 'Análisis de las tendencias de los riesgos de protección relacionados con la violencia'. Global Protection Cluster.

UN – United Nations (2000) 'Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime'. Geneva, Switzerland: OHCHR (www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-prevent-suppress-and-punish-trafficking-persons).

UN (2021) 'Count me in: Working together for disability inclusion in Guatemala'. UN Blog, 3 December. New York NY: UN (https://unsdg.un.org/latest/blog/count-me-working-together-disability-inclusion-guatemala).

UN (2025) 'Unmet need for family planning: Any method (percent)', Population Division Data Portal. New York NY: UN (https://population.un.org/dataportal/data/indicators/4/locations/320/start/1990/end/2025/table/pivotbylocation?df=da585a4c-cfe5-4f8b-9eb4-8904864bd970). https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/countryprofiles/gtm

UN (n.d -a) 'UN and Guatemala Peace Process'. The Yearbook of the United Nations. New York NY: UN (https://www.un.org/en/yearbook/un-and-guatemala-peace-process#:~:text=On%20this%20day%20in%201996,integration%20after%20years%20of%20war.)

UN (n.d. -b) 'SDG country profile: Guatemala'. SDG Indicators Database. New York NY: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/countryprofiles/gtm).

UNDP (2022a) *Gender Development Index (GDI)*. Human Development Reports. New York NY: UNDP (https://hdr.undp.org/gender-development-index).

UNDP (2022b) *Gender Inequality Index (GII)*. Human Development Reports. New York NY: UNDP (https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index).

UNDP (2023a) 'Análisis sobre vulnerabilidades y violencia hacia la población LGBTQIQ+'. Presentation. New York NY:UNDP América Latina y el Caribe (www.undp.org/es/latin-america/publicaciones/analisis-sobre-vulnerabilidades-y-violencia-poblacion-LGBTQIq).

UNDP (2023b) '2023 Gender Social Norms Index'. UN (Human Development Perspectives). New York NY: UNDP (https://doi.org/10.18356/9789210028028).

UNFPA (2019) '"Podría ser tu realidad" campaña interagencial sobre matrimonios, uniones y embarazos tempranos y forzados', Nota de Prensa. New York NY: UNFPA (https://guatemala.unfpa.org/es/news/podr%C3%ADa-ser-tu-realidad-campa%C3%B1a-interagencial-sobre-matrimonios-uniones-y-embarazos-tempranos--0).

UNFPA (2021) 'Country programme document for Guatemala'. New York NY: UNFPA (www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/portal-document/ENG_DP.FPA_.CPD_.GTM_.8%20-%20Guatemala%20CPD%20-%20FINAL%20-%202Jul21.pdf).

UNFPA (2023) 'Measuring technology-facilitated gender-based violence. A discussion paper'. Melbourne, Australia: University of Melbourne and UNFPA (https://www.unfpa.org/publications/measuring-technology-facilitated-gender-based-violence-discussion-paper).

UNFPA and FLACSO (2017) '¿Cuál es el problema? Masculinidades hegemónicas y su influencia en uniones'. Serie de cuadernos analíticos matrimonios y embarazos en mujeres adolescentes y jóvenes. Guatemala City: UNFPA Guatemala (https://guatemala.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Cuaderno%204%20completo%20digital.pdf).

UNICEF (2016) *Trata de personas con fines de explotación sexual en Guatemala*. Guatemala de la Asunción: UNICEF and Comisión Internacional contra la Impunidad en Guatemala (www.unicef.org/guatemala/informes/trata-de-personas-con-fines-de-explotaci%C3%B3n-sexual-en-guatemala).

UNICEF (2023) *Country office annual report, 2023 Guatemala*. Guatemala City: UNICEF Guatemala (www.unicef.org/media/152401/file/Guatemala-2023-COAR.pdf).

UNICEF Guatemala (2019) *U-Report Guatemala*. Guatemala City: UNICEF Guatemala (https://guatemala.ureport.in).

UNICEF Guatemala (2020) *Comportamientos individuales y sociales sobre derechos de la niñez y formas de autoprotección conta la violencia en la niñez y adolescencia: línea basal*. Guatemala City: UNICEF Guatemala and Suecia Sverige (https://xn--sistemaproteccionniez-ubc.gt/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FOLLETO-ESTUDIO-CAP-MEDIADO.pdf).

UNICEF Guatemala (2022) *Guía: prevengamos la violencia sexual contra niñas, niños y adolescentes en nuestra comunidad*. Guatemala City: UNICEF Guatemala (www.unicef.org/guatemala/informes/gu%C3%ADa-prevengamos-la-violencia-sexual-contra-ni%C3%B1as-ni%C3%B1os-y-adolescentes-en-nuestra).

UNODC (2019) *Cybercrime teaching Guide*. Vienna: UNODC (https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/uploads/pdf/education/tertiary/Crime%20Type/Cybercrime/Cybercrime_Teaching_Guide.pdf).

UNODC (2020a) 'Cybercrime Module 12 key issues: online child sexual exploitation and abuse'. Vienna: UNODC (https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/cybercrime/module-12/key-issues/online-child-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse.html).

UNODC (2020b) *Evaluación Final Independiente Asistencia técnica a México para la implementación del Protocolo de Palermo contra la trata de personas*. Vienna: UNODC (www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/evaluation.html).

UNODC (2023) 'Miniguía de seguridad en internet. ¡Todo lo que tienes que saber!' Panama City: UNODC, Oficina Regional para Centroamérica y el Caribe en Panamá (ROPAN) (www.svet.gob.gt/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/mini-guia.pdf).

UN Women (2018) 'Indigenous women's maternal health and maternal mortality'. Fact sheet. New York NY: UN Women (www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/4/Indigenous-womens-maternal-health-and-maternal-mortality).

UN Women (2023) 'Guatemala'. Panama City: UN Women Americas and the Caribbean (https://lac.unwomen.org/en/donde-estamos/guatemala).

UN Women (2025a) Women political leaders 2025. New York NY: UN Women (www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/06/poster-women-political-leaders-2025).

UN Women (2025b) 'Guatemala – country fact sheet'. New York NY: UN Women Data Hub (https://data.unwomen.org/country/guatemala).

UN Women (n.d.) 'Campaña Igualdad en la Ruta', Website. Panama City: UN Women Americas and the Caribbean (https://lac.unwomen.org/es/stories/noticia/2025/02/igualdad-en-ruta-guatemala).

USAID – US Agency for International Development (2020) *Mid-Term evaluation of 'Human Trafficking in the Peruvian Amazon'*. Washington DC: USAID (https://encompassworld.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/USAID-MELS_CHS-final-report-7.05.20_-approved-rev2-to-share.pdf).

USDOL – US Department of Labor (2023) 'Guatemala. Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor'. Washington DC: USDOL (www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/guatemala)

US Department of State (2024) *2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Guatemala*. Washington DC: US Department of State (www.state.gov/reports/2024-trafficking-in-persons-report/guatemala/; https://gt.usembassy.gov/2024-trafficking-in-persons-report-guatemala/#:~:text=Authorities%20opened%20investigations%20into%20452,involving%20unspecified%20forms%20of%20trafficking).

Valdivia Araica, A., Navarro, C. and Hernández, M. (2023) 'Climate Services: A strategy for increasing resilience in Guatemala's dry corridor'. Rome: Alliance Biodiversity & CIAT (https://alliancebioversityciat.org/stories/stories/climate-services-strategy-to-increase-resilience-corridor-dry-guatemala#:~:text=Guatemala%20is%20one%20of%20the,with%20greater%20impacts%20on%20communities.)

Vílchez, D. (2023) 'Meet the Indigenous women taking on corruption in Guatemala's elections'. openDemocracy, 22 June (www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/meet-the-Indigenous-women-taking-on-corruption-in-guatemalas-elections/).

WeProtect Global Alliance (2024) 'Global Taskforce on Child Sexual Abuse Online'. London: WeProtect Global Alliance (www.weprotect.org/news/global-taskforce-on-child-sexual-abuse-online/).

Wise (2025) 'Guatemalan quetzal to British pounds sterling historical exchange rates'. Currency Converter (https://wise.com/gb/currency-converter/gtq-to-gbp-rate/history).

World Bank (2017) Improving maternal and neonatal health in the Department of Sololá, Guatemala. What We Do: Projects & Operations. Washington DC: World Bank (www.worldbank.org/en/results/2017/03/23/improving-maternal-neonatal-health-solola).

World Bank (2023) 'Gender-Based Violence Country Profile: Guatemala'. Social Sustainability and Inclusion, Global Practice Latin America and the Caribbean Region. Washington DC: World Bank. (https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/4e23653e-6941-434a-860b-acb558b1df56).

World Bank (2025a) ' Poverty headcount ratio at societal poverty line (% of population)'. World Bank Open Data. Washington DC: World Bank (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.SOPO).

World Bank (2025b) 'Share of youth not in education, employment or training, female (% of female youth population)'. World Bank Open Data. Washington DC: World Bank (https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/indicator/sl-uem-neet-zs).

World Bank (2025c) 'Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)'. World Bank Open Data. Washington DC: World Bank (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.MMRT).

World Bank (2025d) 'Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19)'. World Bank Open Data. Washington DC: World Bank (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT).

World Bank (2025e) 'Labor force participation rate, female (% of female population ages 15+) (national estimate)'. World Bank Open Data. Washington DC: World Bank (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.NE.ZS).

World Bank (2025f) 'Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24) (national estimate)'. World Bank Open Data. Washington DC: World Bank (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.FE.NE.ZS).

World Bank (2025g) 'Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%)'. World Bank Open Data. Washington DC: World Bank (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS).

World Bank (2025h) ' Proportion of women who have ever experienced intimate partner violence (% of ever-partnered women ages 15-49)'. World Bank Gender Data Portal. Washington DC: World Bank (https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/indicator/sg-vaw-ipve-zs?view=trend&geos=WLD_GTM_LCN).

World Bank (2025i) 'Population, total – Guatemala'. Washington DC: World Bank (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=GT).

World Bank (2025j) 'Individuals using the Internet (% of population)'. World Bank Open Data. Washington DC: World Bank (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS).

World Bank (2025k) 'Lower secondary completion rate, male (% of relevant age group'. World Bank Open Data. Washington DC: World Bank (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.SEC.CMPT.LO.MA.ZS).

World Bank (2025l) 'Share of graduates by field, female (%)'. World Bank Gender Data Portal. Washington DC: World Bank (https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/indicator/se-ter-grad-fe-zs).

World Bank (2025m) 'Literacy rate (%)'. World Bank Gender Data Portal. Washington DC: World Bank (https://liveprod.worldbank.org/en/indicator/se-adt?view=trend&geos=WLD_GTM https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS).

World Bank (2025n) 'Life expectancy at birth, female (years)'. World Bank Open Data. Washington DC: World Bank (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.FE.IN).

World Bank (20250) 'Contraceptive prevalence, any method (% of married women ages 15-49)'. Washington DC: World Bank (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.CONU.ZS).

World Bank (2025p) 'Vulnerable employment (% of employment) (modeled ILO estimate)'. World Bank Gender Data Portal. Washington DC: World Bank (https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/indicator/sl-emp-vuln-zs).

World Bank (2025q) 'School enrollment, gender parity index'. World Bank Gender Data Portal. Washington DC: World Bank (https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/indicator/se-enr?education=Primary).

World Bank, ILO and UNICEF (2003) *Understanding children's work in Guatemala*. Washington DC: World Bank (https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/pt/399941539231102975/pdf/130714-WP-ENGLISH-PUBLIC-ADD-SERIES-Understanding-Childrens-Work-Program-Country-Report-Series-child-labour-Guatemala20110628-113313.pdf).

WHO – World Health Organization (2012) 'Understanding and addressing violence against women: Health consequences'. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO (https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/77431/WHO_RHR_12.43_eng.pdfhttps://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/77431/WHO_RHR_12.43_eng.pdf).

WJI – Women's Justice Initiative (n.d.) 'Adolescent Girls Program'. Website. Guatemala City: WJI (https://womens-justice.org/program/adolescent-girls-program/).

Annexes

Annex 1. List of key informant interviews

Table 1A List of key informant interviews

KII number	Topic(s)
Government 1	GBV and exploitation
Government 2	GBV and exploitation
Civil Society 1	GBV and exploitation
UN Agency 1	GBV and exploitation
Civil Society 2	GBV and exploitation
Government 3	GBV
Academia/Think Tank 1	GBV
Civil Society 3	GBV
Civil Society 4	GBV
Civil Society 5	GBV
UN Agency 2	GBV
UN Agency 3	GBV
Civil Society 6	Trafficking and exploitation
Government 4	Trafficking and exploitation
Civil Society 7	Trafficking and exploitation
Civil Society 8	Trafficking and exploitation
Civil Society 9	Trafficking and exploitation
Independent Consultant 1	Trafficking and exploitation

Annex 2. Laws and policies on child exploitation in Guatemala

Table 2A Laws and policies on child exploitation

Law/policy	Key content
Decree 17-73 – Criminal Code (1973) with amendments in 2009 and 2022 (see below)	The Decree classifies and punishes criminal conduct related to Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents (IIN and OAS, 2024).
Guatemalan Constitution (1985)	The Constitution establishes fundamental principles and rights for the protection of children and adolescents against sexual exploitation and to guarantee their comprehensive well-being in the country. Article 102 forbids the employment of children below 14 years of age subject to exceptions provided by the law (IIN and OAS, 2024).
Decree 27-2003 – Act on the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents (2003)	The Decree aims to promote the protection of children and adolescents in the enjoyment of their rights, including protection against all forms of sexual exploitation or abuse (Art. 56). Provides for 'prevention, protection, sanction and interagency coordination measures to safeguard their comprehensive well-being and their right to a childhood free of violence and exploitation' (IIN and OAS, 2024).
Decree 21-2006 – Act against Organised Crime (2006)	The Decree aims to combat various forms of organised crime, including the crime of trafficking in persons, which includes the sexual exploitation of children as one of its forms (IIN and OAS, 2024).
Adoption Act (2007)	This Act addresses irregular international adoptions with reference to The Hague Convention, in accordance with the best interest of the child and prioritising placement of children with their family and national adoption before considering international adoption (International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children, 2017).
Law against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons (2009)	The Law aims to prevent, repress, punish and eradicate sexual violence, exploitation and trafficking in persons, as well as provide care and protection for victim-survivors and compensation for the damage caused. It creates a Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons (SVET); creates and modifies crimes in matters of child sexual exploitation as defined in the Criminal Code (1973); and incorporates the perspective of sexual exploitation rather than procuring or corruption of minor (IIN and OAS, 2024).
The Alba-Keneth Alert System Act (2010)	This Act regulates and activates protection systems to locate, recover and protect children from disappearance and trafficking (International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children, 2017).
Interagency Detection and Operating Protocol (2017)	The Protocol aims to 'establish procedures, rules and institutional provisions for the detection and interagency coordination of possible criminal acts of sexual exploitation against children in travel and tourism' (IIN and OAS, 2024).

Table 2A Laws and policies on child exploitation continued

Law/policy	Key content
Decree 260-2019 (2019)	Ministerial Agreement 260-2019 seeks to regulate child labour, establishing a minimum age (15 years old) and prohibiting hazardous work, with the aim of protecting the health and development of minors and guaranteeing access to education (Bolaños, 2021).
National Plan for the Prevention of Crimes of Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons (2020)	The National Plan is implemented by SVET, with the aim of preventing these crimes and thus reducing the number of victim-survivors. It promotes awareness raising, information, training, support for departmental networks against crimes involving sexual violence, exploitation and trafficking in persons (VET), as well as prevention strategies (IIN and OAS, 2024).
Decree 11-2022 – Amendments to the Criminal Code in relation to crimes committed against children and adolescents through technological means (Cybercrime Act 2022)	The Decree adds to the Penal Code the crimes of 'Seduction of children or adolescents through the use of information technologies' (Art. 190 bis) and 'Blackmail of children or adolescents through the use of information technologies or technological means' (Art. 190 Ter), which punish those who contact, seduce and threaten children and adolescents through the use of information and communication technologies (IIN and OAS, 2024). However, grooming, sexting and sextortion are not yet classified as crimes in Guatemala (Cetino, n.d.).
Law to Prevent Trafficking of Girls in Prisons (Decree 3-2025) (2025)	In February 2025, the Guatemalan Congress approved the Law to Prevent and Punish the Trafficking of Children and Adolescents in Prisons. This law orders strict control to access to prisons by minors (minors can only access prisons if visiting a relative) and monitor visits, and will create the crime of 'Illegal access to prisons of children and adolescents' (Naya, 2025).

Annex 3. Key initiatives addressing the exploitation of children in Guatemala

Initiatives are classified by: prevention and education; prosecution and access to justice; protection; and cross-cutting (see table 3A). Most are implemented by government, and by national and international NGOs through partnerships with the Government.

The Government of Guatemala reported providing services to 225 victim-survivors in 2023, including 13 adults and 212 minors. These victim-survivors included 198 women and girls and 27 men and boys; 2 were persons with disabilities and 8 were foreign nationals (SVET, 2024a). In the first eight months of 2023, the Government referred 188 victim-survivors to NGO and government shelters, an increase compared to the 161 victim-survivors referred to shelters in 2022. Here they received services such as psychosocial support, medical care, legal assistance, and education and/or vocational training. The victim-survivors referred to shelters included 24 adults and 164 children; 156 were women and girls and 32 were men and boys. The Ministry of Social Welfare (SBS) operated one specialised shelter for underage victim-survivors of trafficking, and the Ministry against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Trafficking in Persons (SVET) operated a shelter for migrant women victim-survivors of trafficking (ibid.). Institutions that manage shelters for the care and protection of adult women who are victim-survivors of human trafficking, include care and protection of their daughters under 18 years of age and sons under 12 years of age, as well as women from the LGBTQI+ community (Ibid.). In the first four months of 2025, it was reported that 11.59% (16) of victim-survivors who received support in specialised shelters were male, while 88.41% (122) were female (SVET, 2025).

Regarding prosecution, 71 sentences were handed down in cases of human trafficking between 2020 and 2023. According to a report that analysed 42 of those sentences, 85 people were charged with human trafficking (46 women and 39 men); they ranged in age from 31 to 59. Of this number, only 49 people were convicted of human trafficking (29 women and 20 men); 92% were Guatemalan nationals and 8% were foreign nationals (ASFC and SVET, 2024)

Table 3A Programmes addressing commercial sexual exploitation of children and child labour in Guatemala

Approach and area of action and target population	Example and source
Commercial sexual exploitation	
Prevention and education	
Awareness raising and information (general population, educators, children and adolescents, caregivers, population in the context of human mobility)	'Protecting our greatest treasure' (protegiendo nuestro mayor tesoro) – campaign to prevent sexual exploitation in tourism-related activities (IIN and OAS, 2024)
	Educa-VET guide – a pedagogical guide for facilitators of information processes on the prevention of sexual violence, exploitation and trafficking in persons for adolescent (IIN and OAS, 2024)
	Mobile Units for the Prevention of Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Human Trafficking (UNIVET) (CORETT, 2024a; IIN and OAS, 2024)
	Educational materials in Spanish and Indigenous languages (Asociacion Pop No'j, n.d.)
	Workshops by civil society organisations for the prevention of sexual violence and human trafficking (SVET, 2024a)
	'Corazon azul', 'Puedes verme' and 'Voy a paso seguro' campaigns to raise awareness and prevent human trafficking and exploitation (CORETT, 2024b; SVET, 2025)
	Information focused on the prevention of crimes of sexual violence, exploitation and trafficking, organised by SVET (CORETT, 2024c)
	Guía: Prevengamos la violencia sexual contra niñas, niños y adolescentes en nuestra comunidad (UNICEF Guatemala, 2022)
	The 'Lover Boy' strategy – designed to inform adolescents and young people about the strategies that traffickers use to seduce their victim-survivors, gain their trust and subsequently exploit them (SVET, 2024a)
Community and youth-led initiatives	Youth Network for the Prevention of the Crimes of Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons (IIN and OAS, 2024).
Multilateral agreements and cooperation (government agencies)	'I will walk safely' – aims to prevent human trafficking as part of a multilateral agreement with El Salvador and Honduras (IIN and OAS, 2024)

Table 3A Programmes addressing commercial sexual exploitation of children and child labour in Guatemala continued

Approach and area of action and target population	Example and source
Commercial sexual exploitation continued	
Prosecution and access to justice	
Crime reporting (tour guides, general population)	GARA Action Protocol Model for Tour Guides (ECPAT, 2022)
	Call Center Service 1552, established in 2007 to provide information and assistance to victim-survivors of trafficking in Guatemala (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2025). Other phone numbers to report crimes to different government agencies include the police (110), the Attorney's General Office (Ministerio Público) (1572) and the Public Prosecutor's Office (Procuraduría General de la Nación) (1584) (SVET, 2022)
	'Protecting our greatest treasure' – campaign to raise awareness among key stakeholders in the tourism sector (for example, tourist companies/guides, hotels, restaurants, transporters) about their social and legal responsibility to prevent and report sexual exploitation of children. It also seeks to inform the general population about the risks minors face (Gobierno de la Republica Guatemala, 2025a)
Access to justice (children and adolescents)	Criminal courts of first instance and criminal sentencing courts with specialised jurisdiction in crimes of trafficking in persons, including crimes of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents (IIN and OAS, 2024). Courts and tribunals have a presence in the departments of Guatemala, Quetzaltenango and Zacapa (SVET, 2024b)
	National Civil Police's Section against Human Trafficking – works in coordination with Attorney General's Office. Its headquarters are in the departments of Guatemala, Quetzaltenango and Chiquimula (SVET, 2024b)
	The Attorney's Office against Human Trafficking (Fiscalía contra la Trata de Personas del Ministerio Público) has four specialised units to combat child trafficking: 1. Unit against Online Child Sexual Exploitation; 2. Unit against Child Pornography; 3. Unit against Labor Exploitation and Child Labor; and 4. Unit against the Sale of Persons and Irregular Adoptions
Guidelines supporting detection and access to justice (duty-bearers, judges, mental health and social services providers)	*Guide for the Detection and Identification of Victims of Human Trafficking* – which aims to offer an effective framework for the early identification of victim-survivors (SVET, 2025)
	Guidelines on Good Practices – for receiving statements from children who are victim-survivors or witnesses of sexual abuse or other crimes for the effective protection of their rights in criminal proceedings (Organismo Judicial, 2019)

Table 3A Programmes addressing commercial sexual exploitation of children and child labour in Guatemala continued

Approach and area of action and target population	Example and source
Commercial sexual exploitation continued	
Protection	
Shelters (child victim-survivors)	Specialised temporary government shelters for girl and boy victim-survivors of human trafficking run by the government (SBS) and civil society organisations (Asociacion la Alianza and Asociación El Refugio de la Niñez) (SVET, 2024b).
Training/capacity building (duty bearers)	EDUSVET Training Programme – focusing on the protection of children and adolescents against sexual violence and trafficking (IIN and OAS, 2024)
Care and support services for child and teenage victim-survivors of sexual exploitation (child victim-survivors)	The Institute for the Assistance and Care of the Victim of Crime – provides assistance and free specialised care to victim-survivors of crime (IIN and OAS, 2024)
	Comprehensive Care Model for Children and Adolescents (Modelo de Atención Integral de Niñez y Adolescencia; MAINA),) – an immediate and comprehensive care system to provide a differentiated and efficient response to children and adolescents who are victim-survivors of violence and avoid secondary victimisation (IIN and OAS, 2024)
	Interinstitutional Coordination Protocol for the Protection and Care of Victims of Trafficking (SVET, 2024b)
	Support from health and legal services to children who are victim-survivors of mistreatment and sexual abuse in the departments of Jalapa and Sololá (CONACMI, 2025)
	Clinic for Victims and Survivors of Sexual Violence at the facilities of the National Hospital of Retalhuleu. People who attend receive medical, legal, social and psychological assistance (AGN, 2021)
	Interinstitutional Coordination Protocol for the Repatriation of Victims of Trafficking (SVET, 2024b)

Table 3A Programmes addressing commercial sexual exploitation of children and child labour in Guatemala continued

Approach and area of action and target population	Example and source
Child labour	
Prevention, education and schooling support	
Schooling support (adolescents, teachers)	Temporary educational centres for children whose parents are working on coffee harvesting (Anacafé, 2021)
	Los Niños y las Niñas a la Escuela ('Children and Girls to School') – promoted by Camagro and the Business Network (Bolaños, 2021; CACIF, 2021a; 2024)
	Education with Values and the Ability to Dream by Fundacion Magdalena (CACIF, 2024)
	Coffee Kindergarten, Centros Coffee Camp, 'Child Labour Prevention Programme' (Programas de Prevencion del Trabajo Infantil) and Programa Escuela Rural Activa ('Active Rural School Programme') by Funcafé (CACIF, 2024)
	Various initiatives offering schooling support by Fundaciones, including the Miguel Torrebiarte, Fundación Pantaleón, Funsepa and La Union educational centres (CACIF, 2024)
Promotion of food security among at risk populations (women)	Mejores familias by Fundazúcar (CACIF, 2024)
Awareness-raising and information (parents, caregivers, children)	Schools for parents to raise awareness of the negative effects of child labour (Anacafé, 2021)
	Socialisation and awareness-raising activities on child labour targeting children, led by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance. Materials include flipcharts, stories and fables, with the aim of highlighting the importance of continuing with studies and not starting work at an early age (AGN, 2022)
Coalitions and agreements (multinational corporations)	Funcafé, Anacafé and Rainforest Alliance cooperation agreement to raise awareness about child labour through digital and non-digital material in Spanish and Indigenous languages (Funcafé, 2021)

Table 3A Programmes addressing commercial sexual exploitation of children and child labour in Guatemala continued

Approach and area of action and target population	Example and source
Cross-cutting	
Awareness raising; training/ capacity building, support of adoption of policies (government agencies, adolescent workers)	Action to prevent and prosecute human trafficking in Guatemala with a focus on victim-survivors of trafficking for labour exploitation (ILO, 2014)
	Online platform with data on rescued children to be referred to appropriate services; implementation of six 'Comprehensive Care Centers for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor' and a Child Labor Risk Identification Model; training for 5,177 adolescents on their labour rights (from 2020 to 2022); provision of 3,787 employment admission certificates (constancias de admisión al empleo) for adolescent workers; and inspections of 400 workplaces, resulting in the rescue of 10 minors from poor working conditions (Ministerio de Trabajo y Prevision Social, 2022)
Interinstitutional coordination and cooperation (government agencies)	Alliance to Prevent Labour Exploitation and Child Labour (Alianza Para Prevenir la Explotación Laboral y el Trabajo Infantil), implemented in partnership by several government agencies (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, 2022)
Discussion tables and committees (government agencies)	Thematic Table for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor (Mesa Temática de Prevención y Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil) (MTPETI) and the Departmental Committees for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor (Comités Departamentales de Prevención y Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil) (Codepetis) (CACIF, 2021b)
General child exploitation (cross-cutting)	
Awareness raising and information (parents/caregivers)	Guide for parents about the personal safety of their children (CONACMI, 2022)
Interinstitutional coordination (government and civil society)	The CONACMI network, a space for inter-institutional coordination between government and civil society organisations that work on the promotion and protection of the rights of children (CONACMI, 2020)

ODI Global

ODI Global advises leaders on driving positive change. We turn bold ideas, evidence, and broad expertise into actionable strategies for a more resilient, just and equitable future.

ODI Global
4 Millbank
London SW1P 3JA
United Kingdom

+44 (0)20 7922 0300
info@odi.org

odi.org
www.linkedin.com/company/odi/
bsky.app/profile/odi.global