

# Annual Results Report

**2025**

**Costa Rica**

## Acknowledgements

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### **Note:**

The baseline values presented in this document reflect previous year's progress when available. If such data is not available, strategy baseline values are used instead.

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# Section 1: Context and Overview

## 1.1 Changes to the Operational Context

In 2025, Costa Rica remained one of the main host countries in the Americas for people seeking international protection relative to its population (around 4.5%). By the end of the year, the country hosted approximately 233,652 people in need of international protection, most of them Nicaraguans (76%).

The human rights situation in Nicaragua further deteriorated in 2025, marked by continued political repression, restrictions on civil and indigenous rights, and rising pressure in border areas. Regional policy changes, including reduced access to northward movement and increased returns of people on the move, placed additional strain on asylum systems, particularly in Costa Rica, both as the main destination country for Nicaraguans (51.8%) and as a transit country for other nationalities. In 2025, Costa Rica hosted 92% of all asylum-seekers and refugees in Central America. The execution of a high-profile Nicaraguan refugee, together with reported threats against others, points to risks of transnational persecution within Costa Rica.

At national level, the operational context combined continued political commitment to international protection with growing structural constraints. Although measures facilitating access to work for asylum-seekers remained in place, the asylum system continued to face major backlogs and institutional turnover, slowing the implementation of agreed reforms. Recent public statements on the possible expansion of detention capacity raised concern among protection actors and may signal a shift toward more restrictive practices.

The operating environment was further affected by severe budget cuts, which led to the suspension or reduction of activities, decreased territorial presence, and limited community outreach. At the same time, persistent socioeconomic inequalities continued to shape vulnerabilities among displaced and host communities. While Costa Rica did not face a humanitarian emergency, continued displacement flows placed sustained pressure on asylum and social protection systems.

## 1.2. Progress Against the Desired Impact

### 1. Impact Area: Attaining Favorable Protection Environments

**Refugees and stateless people enjoy unrestricted legal and physical protection in Costa Rica.**

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2025)
<b>1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	39.37%	37.60%
<b>1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%

In 2025, Costa Rica maintained a favourable protection environment for refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons, ensuring access to territory and lawful stay during asylum processing, while refoulement incidents remained rare. The asylum authority strengthened and digitized the system by organizing 330,000 files, closing 69,000 inactive cases, and developing the SINARE web-based case processing system, which reduced waiting times and increased predictability.

Decentralized processing in San Carlos and Paso Canoas, combined with same-day work permits, ensured consistent access to procedures. Each week, around 600 people accessed the asylum procedure and received work authorization the same day, strengthening their legal visibility, mobility and access to rights. Access to protection was further reinforced through UNHCR capacity building, which helped frontline institutions apply international protection standards and safeguards, enabling safer entry and stay for refugees and asylum-seekers. This included training officials from public institutions, including the National Police Academy, the Judiciary, in particular the Judicial Academy, the Public Prosecutor's Office, and local organizations on international protection, statelessness determination and non-refoulement. Although refoulement cases remained rare and Costa Rica continued to keep its doors open to refugees, there was a perceived increase in hate speech on social media. Rising homicide levels among Nicaraguans (25.4 per 100,000, compared to 16 among nationals) highlighted the urgency of stronger protection networks and timely referrals for those fleeing transnational persecution.

The Office for the Attention and Protection of Victims of Crime (OAPVD) continued to oversee case management and protection of individuals at high risk involved in criminal proceedings. In collaboration with UNHCR, OAPVD established a referral mechanism for victims of transnational persecution in need of international protection and provided interdisciplinary services in law, social work, psychology, criminology and sociology.

Progress by the Government and UNHCR in stabilizing first-instance processing times, maintaining safeguards, and reinforcing capacity to identify and address protection risks contributed to preserving protection space, improving access to rights, and strengthening responses for people with serious protection needs.

### 4. Impact Area: Securing Solutions

**A growing number of refugees and stateless people integrate into their communities and meet their needs in a sustainable manner and on an equal footing with nationals - in Costa Rica or in a third country.**

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2025)
<b>4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4,599	996
<b>4.3a Number of stateless people for whom nationality is granted or confirmed</b>		
Stateless Persons	144	41
<b>4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,888	984

During 2025, refugees and stateless persons in Costa Rica continued to exercise their rights. Despite fiscal and institutional constraints, access to essential services and living conditions remained stable or improved, preserving prior gains and supporting well-being and integration outcomes.

Poverty among refugees and asylum-seekers declined to 20.7 per cent in 2025 (from 22.9% in 2024), continuing the downward trend observed since 2021. The poverty gap between Nicaraguan refugees and nationals narrowed from 7% in 2023 to 3.7%, indicating stronger relative economic inclusion and improved capacity to meet basic needs through income generation and social protection mechanisms.

Access to safe housing and basic services remained high. In 2025, 90.5% resided in physically safe and secure settlements with access to adequate housing, water, sanitation, electricity and clean cooking solutions. Reliance on clean fuels remained consistently high at 96.5%, supporting positive health and environmental outcomes. Secure tenure arrangements remained stable, with 84.1% reporting secure housing arrangements, reinforcing residential stability.

Coverage under national social protection systems expanded to 74.6% in 2025 (up from 72% in 2024), narrowing the gap with nationals from 19.5% to 18% and approaching the 75% target, strengthening inclusion in contributory and non-contributory schemes.

Overall, 2025 saw sustained progress toward greater self-reliance and integration, with refugees and stateless persons increasingly accessing opportunities on an equal footing with nationals, building the foundation for longer-term socio-economic inclusion.

As of December 2025, UNHCR supported 959 individuals in Costa Rica through resettlement processing as part of efforts to secure durable solutions... This progress was notable given the global reduction in resettlement quotas and the phase-out of programmes such as the Safe Mobility Office.

## Other Core Impact Indicators

Country	Population Type	Baseline	Actual(2025)
<b>2.1 Proportion of people living below the national poverty line</b>			
Costa Rica	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	23.35%	20.70%
<b>2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities</b>			
Costa Rica	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	90.22%	90.50%
<b>2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services</b>			
Costa Rica	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	71.67%	74.30%
<b>3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work</b>			
Costa Rica	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Costa Rica	Stateless Persons	100.00%	100.00%
<b>3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education</b>			

Costa Rica	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	85.91%	93.50%
<b>3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education</b>			
Costa Rica	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	74.12%	68.41%

## 1.3 Challenges to Achieving Impacts

Progress towards the strategy's impacts in 2025 was constrained by financial and operational challenges, despite Costa Rica maintaining a favourable protection environment with access to territory, legal safeguards and national services. The protracted scale of displacement continued to place pressure on asylum and social protection systems, limiting progress towards integration-related impacts.

A key challenge remained the limited capacity of the asylum system to process claims and issue final decisions, compounded by the authorities' continued reliance on UNHCR support due to staffing freezes under Law No. 9635 and broader budgetary restrictions affecting the operational capacity of migration authorities. Persistent institutional constraints and a growing backlog delayed access to legal status and documentation for many asylum-seekers, with downstream effects on access to formal employment and social protection. Although access to procedures showed signs of stabilization compared to 2024, lengthy processing times continued to hinder progress towards durable solutions and sustainable inclusion.

Socioeconomic barriers also constrained the realization of rights on an equal footing with nationals. While poverty levels among refugees and asylum-seekers declined, and access to financial services and social protection schemes improved, structural challenges such as labour informality, coverage gaps, lower levels of human capital, including education, and uneven housing conditions continued to undermine the ability of some groups to translate access into long-term self-reliance.

Operationally, funding volatility and severe staffing reductions in 2025 further narrowed delivery capacity. In response, UNHCR prioritized core protection interventions and efforts to reinforce and leverage national systems. Nevertheless, these constraints limited the scale, continuity and follow-up needed to accelerate impact-level change.

Looking ahead, overcoming these challenges will require greater efficiency in asylum processing, stronger alignment with national social protection and employment systems, and the restoration of sustainable, multi-year financing, alongside targeted investments in formal employment pathways, social protection inclusion and human capital, supported by evidence-based advocacy and strategic partnerships.

## 1.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

MINARE remained the cornerstone of Costa Rica's international protection commitments and the main platform for the country's engagement in the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS), for which Costa Rica held the Pro Tempore Presidency in 2025, as well as in other regional and international mechanisms. It continued to strengthen inter-institutional coordination among key ministries, including Foreign Affairs, Interior, Education, Social Protection and Labour, as well as national institutions such as INA, DGME, IMAS and CCSS, reinforcing protection-centred and whole-of-government responses to forced displacement. Through this coordination architecture, efforts continued to promote the inclusion of forcibly displaced people in national systems and to safeguard access to territory, documentation, social services and employment.

This alignment with national systems remained a strategic priority, contributing both to the fulfilment of national protection obligations and to broader international protection frameworks and global cooperation

agendas. Engagement with international financial institutions supported more sustainable responses to forced displacement. Collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank on the asylum strategy complemented UNHCR support to migration authorities to reduce the backlog, while dialogue on education financing and applied research on refugee populations generated evidence to inform policymaking. Coordination across the UN and development partners further strengthened the humanitarian-development nexus and supported the transition from emergency assistance towards greater self-reliance.

Peacebuilding Fund financing implemented jointly with UNDP and IOM in northern border communities promoted peaceful coexistence, with active participation by local institutions and governments. Private-sector engagement also expanded through the “Vivir la Inclusión” framework and its seventh edition, which recognizes companies with inclusive hiring practices. Through this platform, participating organizations reported socioeconomic inclusion actions with an estimated value exceeding USD 1.5 million, supporting employment opportunities, skills development and inclusive practices aligned with the Global Compact on Refugees and principles of shared responsibility.

Grassroots civil society organizations also continued to play a vital role, particularly in supporting the protection and inclusion of Nicaraguan refugees. UNHCR partners worked across the country to advance protection and solutions, making an essential contribution to improving the lives of forcibly displaced people.

## Section 2: Results

### 2.1. Outcomes and Achievements

#### 1. Outcome Area: Access to Territory, Reg. and Documentation

An increasing number of refugees and stateless people access documentation through a more efficient, accessible and fair international protection system, or through other legal stay arrangements.

##### Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator			
Population Type	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>1.1 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	99.23%	100.00%	98.99%
<b>1.3 Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	84.87%	100.00%	95.56%

##### Core Output Indicators

Indicator		Actual (2025)
Population Type		
<b>01.1.1 Number of people registered on an individual basis</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers		1,447
<b>01.2.1 Number of people supported to obtain civil status, identity or legal status documentation</b>		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers		55,473

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Costa Rica's international protection system became more accessible in 2025, enabling refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons to obtain documentation and protection. Institutional strengthening included the organization of 330,000 files, closure of 69,000 inactive cases, and approval of the SINARE digital case management system, which improved efficiency, procedural clarity and backlog reduction. Access to refugee status determination also improved, with around 600 new claims registered weekly and 100% of working-age applicants receiving same-day work permits, enabling them to exercise basic rights and support self-reliance. UNHCR advocacy led the Government to request technical advice on a documentation solution to address lengthy waiting periods for people seeking to formalize asylum claims. The backlog declined by 18%, from 217,587 cases in 2024 to 177,971 in 2025, largely due to early closure of inactive cases.

UNHCR conducted a representative profiling of Nicaraguan asylum-seekers to strengthen adjudication and differentiated processing. Preliminary findings from 100 case analyses helped identify recognition trends,

with a final report expected in 2026. In parallel, UNHCR developed a differentiated approach for Miskitu and other Indigenous applicants, supporting more timely, consistent processing.

UNHCR promoted a more effective protection environment by reinforcing frontline institutions' capacity to identify people in need of international protection. With UNHCR support, the National Police Academy incorporated a mandatory human rights-based module on the protection of refugees and stateless persons into its curriculum, and 232 officers were trained. In the Northern Zone, nearly 900 community actors and coordination bodies strengthened their understanding of asylum procedures and rights, improving identification of protection needs.

UNHCR improved early detection of people in need of protection. Through a community-based approach, a digital contact form reached 1,116 people and automatically flagged individuals at risk of refoulement or threats, including possible cases of transnational persecution. This contributed to more timely legal assistance and protective measures. In the Northern Zone, Mobile Information Centres reached remote communities, enabling over 300 people to access information on international protection and rights with the participation of more than ten national institutions.

Costa Rica also made progress in addressing statelessness. In 2025, the country received 185 new applications and recognized 71 stateless persons, reflecting increased access to the determination procedure. UNHCR technical support helped strengthen institutional capacity, integrate age, gender and diversity considerations, and deepen understanding among national and local institutions. Some 500 officials were trained, while community outreach in Sarapiquí and Pococí improved awareness and identification of individuals lacking documentation.

## 6. Outcome Area: Safety and Access to Justice

**Authorities and communities facilitate non-discriminatory access to protection services for refugees and stateless people.**

### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>06.1.1 Number of people who received legal assistance</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	9,252
Stateless Persons	110

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2025, a central pillar of UNHCR's work was strengthening institutional capacities across the justice sector. UNHCR deepened collaboration with the Sub-Commission on Access to Justice for Migrants and Refugees (CONAMAJ), the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Office for the Attention and Protection of Victims of Crime (OAPVD), and the Judicial Academy to help ensure that justice officials were better equipped to apply international protection standards in their daily work.

A joint monitoring and case management procedure implemented with OAPVD enabled the timely identification and protection of more than 40 high-risk cases involving transnational persecution. Through this mechanism, affected individuals received legal aid, psychosocial support, shelter, health care, material assistance and access to resettlement pathways, strengthening the availability of comprehensive protection responses for those facing acute risks.

Together with CONAMAJ, the Public Prosecutor's Office, OAPVD and the Judicial Academy, UNHCR also

supported the integration of international protection standards into judicial procedures. Five training sessions reached around 100 judicial staff, including specialized content for prosecutors working on Indigenous Affairs, while 32 judicial officials received specific training on statelessness. These efforts strengthened institutional understanding of protection risks and improved the quality and consistency of responses within the justice sector.

Given that free legal assistance is not guaranteed in administrative procedures such as asylum processes, UNHCR and its partners provided information, counselling, assistance and legal representation to 9,824 people, helping them navigate key procedural steps and maintain equitable access to due process. UNHCR also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ombudsperson's Office, improving coordination and reinforcing institutional responses to protection needs.

Stateless persons and those at risk of statelessness also benefited from improved access to protection services. Coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Civil Registry strengthened access to documentation and consular support, including in remote areas. Access to the statelessness determination procedure improved in 2025, reflected in 185 applications received and 71 recognitions issued. Community outreach in Sarapiquí and Pococí facilitated earlier identification of individuals lacking documentation, while collaboration with refugee-led organizations helped address barriers related to documentation, access to health care and academic degree recognition. More than 500 institutional actors were trained through 14 workshops, further expanding national capacity to prevent and respond to statelessness.

In the Northern Zone, updated referral pathways, new coordination tools and stronger inter-agency collaboration through the Human Mobility Working Group and the Northern Protection Group resulted in better access to support services related to gender-based violence, emergency assistance, trafficking prevention, international protection and services for unaccompanied children.

## 7. Outcome Area: Community Engagement and Women's Empowerment

**The local community includes and recognizes the contributions of refugees and stateless people.**

### Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>07.1.1 Number of people consulted through Participatory Assessments</b>	
Host Community	33
Others of Concern	29
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	101
Stateless Persons	4
<b>07.2.1 Number of people who used UNHCR- supported feedback &amp; response mechanisms to voice their needs/ concerns/feedback</b>	
Host Community	783
Others of Concern	235
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,927
Stateless Persons	34
<b>07.3.1 Number of people who received protection services</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	55,473
Stateless Persons	110

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

UNHCR strengthened refugee empowerment by promoting the participation and leadership of forcibly displaced people, particularly children, adolescents, women and Indigenous groups, while reinforcing community networks that support social cohesion. Through its partner DNI, the Children's Club and the Refugee Youth Network created spaces for 374 refugee and host community youth, including Miskitu adolescents, to engage in leadership development, skills-building and community-led activities. Through the Sports for Violence Prevention strategy and partnerships with local governments and community organizations, these initiatives fostered safer, more cohesive neighbourhoods and highlighted the positive contributions of refugee youth.

UNHCR expanded community-based protection for women through its partner CENDEROS. Safe spaces provided information, psychosocial support and referrals for 520 survivors of gender-based violence, while training programmes equipped refugee and host community women, including Miskitu leaders, to serve as human rights and protection promoters and replicate sessions within their communities, strengthening referral pathways and support networks.

Access to reliable information improved significantly nationwide. UNHCR's digital contact form directly reached 2,760 people, while over 10,000 were reached indirectly through social media and the Help website. To address digital gaps, 12 leaders from refugee-led organizations were trained in communication tools and the national asylum system, extending accurate information to harder-to-reach groups. Additional communication channels expanded outreach to tens of thousands more users, helping individuals understand their rights and make informed decisions about protection.

World Refugee Day strengthened recognition of refugees' contributions through coordinated engagement across public institutions, academia and the private sector. Activities included the *ExpresArte* exhibition at the Judiciary, entrepreneurship fairs with INA, private-sector sensitization with Boston Scientific, academic dialogues at UCR, and cultural events with COPAL. The official ceremony with national authorities reinforced inclusive narratives and refugees' role in Costa Rica's development. Overall, these initiatives amplified refugee voices and promoted a human-centred understanding of displacement, reaching over 800 people.

In the northern region, protection networks in 11 communities enhanced early identification and referral of people with international protection needs. More than 80 community leaders strengthened their ability to identify and refer cases, and over 500 people improved skills in conflict transformation and peaceful coexistence. UNHCR and its partners strengthened community-driven initiatives in recreation, art and sports. Through participatory assessment, refugees, asylum-seekers and institutions developed joint priorities and adjusted programmes to identify and respond to protection gaps.

## 8. Outcome Area: Well-Being and Basic Needs

**The Government, communities, the UN System and other relevant actors respond effectively and in a timely manner to emergency situations affecting refugees and/or stateless persons.**

### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>8.1 Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	5.02%	5.00%	7.43%
<b>8.2 Proportion of people with primary reliance on clean (cooking) fuels and technology</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	95.85%	95.00%	96.50%

## Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>08.1.1 Number of people who received cash assistance</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,577
<b>08.2.1 Number of people who received non-food items</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	13,076

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Emergency response capacities were strengthened at both local and national levels to ensure the systematic inclusion of refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons, and individuals in mixed movements within humanitarian and contingency mechanisms. In the northern zone (Upala, Los Chiles, Guatuso), UNHCR supported municipalities and local platforms, including the Human Mobility Roundtable, reinforcing preparedness structures and embedding protection considerations into municipal contingency plans. Referral pathways were updated in cantons experiencing significant inflows, contributing to clearer service routes and faster referrals of highly vulnerable cases.

Community-level detection and referral systems were reinforced through training of community associations to identify high-risk cases and activate early referral mechanisms. UNHCR provides training to community associations and shelter staff to identify high-risk cases and enhance referrals. Legal information was disseminated at border points and shelters, and more than 1,700 individuals received legal guidance, reducing exposure to exploitation and strengthening informed decision-making. Strengthened community leadership networks improved early risk identification and facilitated initial response steps at the local level.

UNHCR also improved the operational capacity of local institutions to respond to violence against women and girls, human trafficking, accidents and fatalities, unaccompanied and separated children, and broader international protection needs. Material support complemented institutional strengthening efforts. A total of 1,963 hygiene kits, kitchen sets and refugee housing units, as well as 273 mosquito nets, were delivered to Municipal Emergency Committees and local authorities in Los Chiles, San Carlos, La Cruz, Guatuso and Upala. Targeted assistance to individuals with heightened vulnerabilities further reinforced local government and Ministry of Health response capacities, including malaria alert attention in rural areas.

In parallel, the United Nations Response Plan was revised to incorporate operational considerations linked to evolving border dynamics, contributing to a more coherent and anticipatory emergency framework.

UNHCR supported the operation of safe houses in San José and Upala, providing temporary shelter, psychosocial support, food assistance, legal orientation and facilitated access to services. Between January and June 2025, 66 individuals received comprehensive assistance under protection-compliant and dignified conditions.

Frontline response capacity was further strengthened through training of shelter and accommodation providers on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, child safeguarding, confidential data management, and identification and referral of trafficking risks. These efforts enhanced response quality and reduced protection risks, particularly for women, children and individuals at heightened risk.

## 15. Outcome Area: Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

Refugees have better access to resettlement or other complementary pathways.

### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>15.1 Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement</b>			
Others of Concern	Data not available	184	184
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	10,660	575	487

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Despite the complete suspension of the Safe Mobility Offices initiative, resettlement in Costa Rica continued to be a critical protection tool, alleviating pressure on the host country while creating additional protection pathways and durable solutions for individuals facing heightened risk. Costa Rica held the largest resettlement quota in the region (575 cases), and the Office exceeded this quota by submitting 671 individuals by the agreed deadline to Spain in 2025. In 2025, UNHCR Costa Rica was able to identify and submit resettlement cases to Spain, focusing on Nicaraguan refugees facing heightened vulnerabilities and meeting the criteria established by the resettlement country, which reduced their exposure to prolonged insecurity and protection risks. UNHCR Costa Rica exceeded this quota by submitting 671 individuals by the agreed deadline.

Spain's response was decisive in saving lives and providing solutions, particularly for refugees from Nicaragua. Its exceptional capacity to process urgent cases swiftly enabled timely protection responses for individuals at risk. A total of five cases involving nine individuals with acute protection risks were submitted as urgent or high-profile cases. These cases were submitted in August, interviewed by Spanish authorities in September, and departed in October. This expedited procedure had a direct and transformative impact on the safety and well-being of the individuals concerned.

Furthermore, a charter flight was organized on 4 November 2025 for 245 individuals departing to Spain, with urgent cases prioritized for earlier travel. Over the course of the year, 959 individuals successfully departed to new host countries in 2025, of whom 460 travelled to Spain, reflecting sustained implementation capacity despite operational constraints.

## 16. Outcome Area: Integration and other Local Solutions

Refugees and stateless people have effective access to decent work, social security, financial services, education, health, housing and social protection.

### Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
<b>16.1 Proportion of people with secure tenure rights to housing and/or land</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	83.16%	90.00%	84.10%
<b>16.2 Proportion of people covered by national social protection systems</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	72.03%	75.00%	74.60%

## Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>16.1.1. Government Social protection system is inclusive of forcibly displaced and stateless people</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Partially
<b>16.2.1 Number of people supported by UNHCR to acquire nationality, permanent residency status or to access naturalization procedures</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	74
Stateless Persons	1

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2025, progress was observed in access to decent work, financial inclusion, and labour market integration for refugees and asylum-seekers in Costa Rica, despite funding volatility. A total of 664 refugees and asylum-seekers accessed employability support, skills development, job intermediation, and self-reliance pathways.

Outcome-level indicators show improvements in financial access and labour market participation. In 2025, 71.4% of refugees and asylum-seekers reported access to formal financial institutions, approaching the 72% target and exceeding the 61% baseline (Impact Evaluation Survey, 2026) and reaching the highest level since 2021. According to National Household Survey data (ENAH0, 2025), the unemployment rate among Nicaraguans decreased to 4.7% in 2025, a reduction of 2.4% compared to baseline levels and aligned with national averages. The Continuous Employment Survey (ECE, 2025) indicates that informal employment among refugees and asylum-seekers increased 2.2% points to 47.4% average in 2025, with the gap expanding relative to nationals. This indicates that Nicaraguans are still being placed in the labour market but the quality of their jobs is not improving.

These results reflect the combined efforts of national institutions, implementing partners, academic actors and private-sector employers facilitating access to skills development, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. Private-sector engagement deepened through the VII Edition of the Vivir la Inclusión Seal, which recognized 40 organizations across sectors. Participating organizations reported socioeconomic inclusion actions, including hiring initiatives, training programmes and workplace inclusion measures, with an estimated aggregated value of USD 1.58 million, representing the reported value of actions implemented by participating organizations rather than financial contributions to UNHCR.

UNHCR contributed through coordination, referral pathways and partnership management, prioritizing access to national systems, private-sector opportunities and existing labour market mechanisms.

In 2025, in line with Action 11 of the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness 2.0, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs convened the Fifth Session of the Interinstitutional Commission on Statelessness, consolidating the National Plan for the Attention of Stateless Persons and Individuals at Risk of Statelessness. The plan, aligned with the “Solution Seekers” Program of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness, strengthens coordinated institutional action to advance protection and solutions. The Commission agreed to establish a Child Protection Technical Working Group to strengthen access to nationality and to develop a Training of Trainers module to strengthen institutional capacity with UNHCR providing technical assistance.

## Other Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Baseline	Target(2025)	Actual(2025)
<b>2.1 Average processing time (in days) from registration to first instance asylum decision</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,080.00	365.00	866.00
<b>3.1 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol</b>			
None	Broadly aligned	Broadly aligned	Broadly aligned
<b>3.2 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness</b>			
None	Broadly aligned	Broadly aligned	Broadly aligned
<b>13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider</b>			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	61.22%	72.00%	71.41%

## Other Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Actual (2025)
<b>02.1.1 UNHCR has provided capacity development support to strengthen the national status determination system(s), in accordance with international standards</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Stateless Persons	Yes
<b>03.1.1 UNHCR has engaged in legislative and judicial processes to strengthen laws and policies for the protection of refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless people and/or the reduction and prevention of statelessness</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
Stateless Persons	Yes
<b>04.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from specialized GBV programmes</b>	
Host Community	224
Others of Concern	91
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	447
Stateless Persons	13
<b>05.1.1 Number of children and caregivers who received child protection services</b>	
Others of Concern	180
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	649
Stateless Persons	7
<b>09.1.1 Number of people who received shelter and housing assistance</b>	
Others of Concern	57
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	310
<b>10.1.1 Number of individual consultations in UNHCR supported health care services</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	6,095
<b>10.2.1 Number of consultations in UNHCR supported mental health and psychosocial support services</b>	

Host Community	486
Others of Concern	194
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,057
Stateless Persons	19
<b>11.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from education programming</b>	
Host Community	239
Others of Concern	225
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,209
Stateless Persons	1
<b>13.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	664
<b>14.1.1 Number of people who received counselling and/or information on voluntary repatriation</b>	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0

## 2.2. Age, Gender and Diversity

In 2025, UNHCR advanced the Age, Gender and Diversity Policy by strengthening inclusive, culturally appropriate and participatory protection responses that reduced barriers and expanded meaningful participation for groups at heightened risk. A priority was improving access to asylum and State services for Miskito Indigenous people. UNHCR established a Miskito interpreter pool and, with CONAMAJ and the refugee-led organization, PRILAKA, developed access-to-justice materials in the Miskito language, fostering linguistic and cultural inclusion. In Pavas, an information fair enabled 135 asylum applications and connected around 500 Indigenous and Afro-descendant Nicaraguans with essential services through coordinated work with local governments and Indigenous organizations.

UNHCR and its partners also enhanced child and youth-sensitive protection activities. In collaboration with DNI and national institutions, 374 children and adolescents identified their priorities for inclusion, guiding the expansion of the Children's Club, Refugee Youth Network, and Sports for Violence Prevention initiatives that promoted leadership, protection and social cohesion among refugee and host community youth. The fourth edition of *ExpresArte* amplified refugee children's voices and reinforced child-sensitive practices across institutions by elevating their experiences through art.

Women's participation and protection were also strengthened. During the 16 Days of Activism, UNHCR convened refugee women leaders to address digital and other forms of violence and to advance community-based prevention and empowerment strategies, and the engagement of the High Commissioner amplified their voices. In the northern region, collaboration with INAMU enhanced services and non-discriminatory support for women and girls, improved understanding of international protection processes among survivors and community leaders and expanded outreach.

## Section 3: Resources

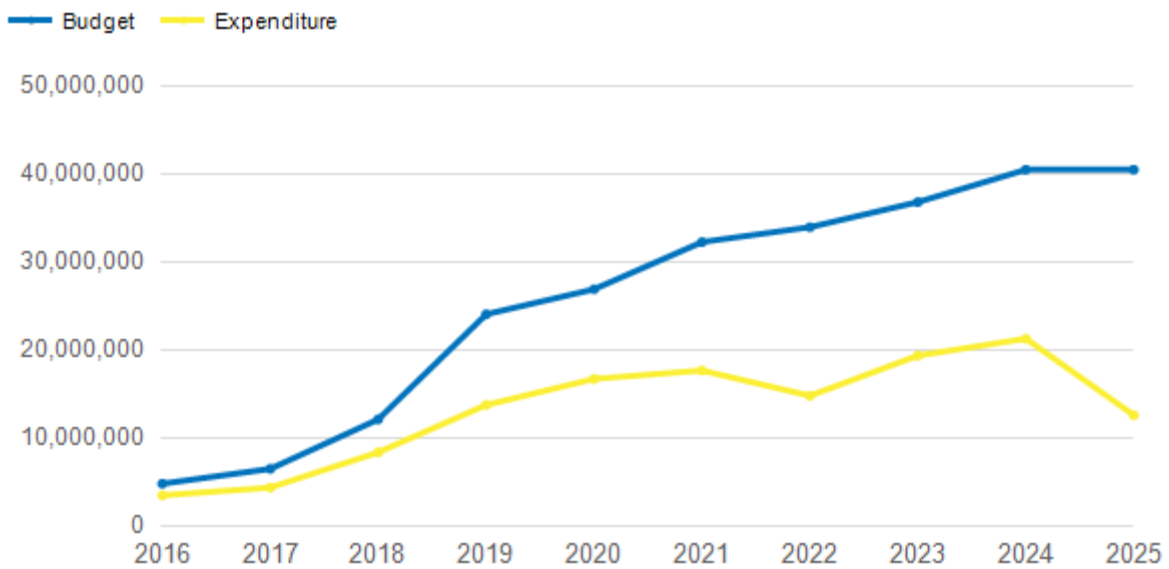
### 3.1 Financial Data

(Financial figures in USD)

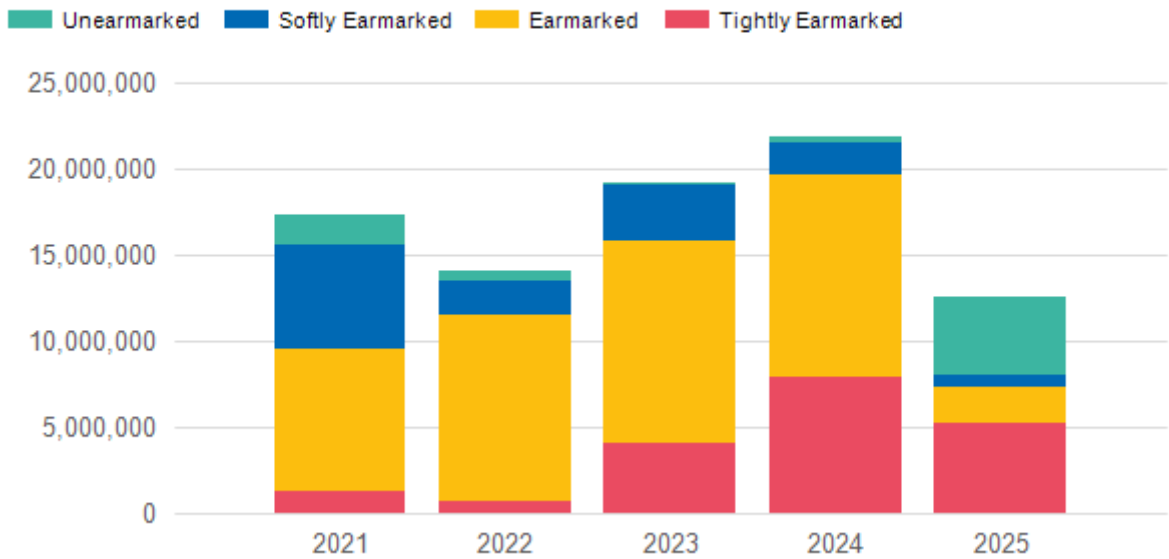
Impact Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
IA1: Protect	18,457,288	5,648,960	30.61%	5,648,960	100.00%
IA3: Empower		16,457			
IA4: Solve	21,969,359	6,917,503	31.49%	6,904,502	99.81%
All Impact Areas		59,790			
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,426,647</b>	<b>12,642,710</b>	<b>31.27%</b>	<b>12,553,462</b>	<b>99.29%</b>

Outcome Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
OA1: Access/Doc	8,708,431	3,483,758	40.00%	3,483,758	100.00%
OA6: Justice	6,454,839	1,294,199	20.05%	1,294,199	100.00%
OA7: Community	3,256,338	1,309,450	40.21%	1,279,992	97.75%
OA8: Wellbeing	3,294,019	871,003	26.44%	871,003	100.00%
OA15: Resettle	3,092,236	1,291,449	41.76%	1,291,449	100.00%
OA16: Integrate	15,620,784	4,333,061	27.74%	4,333,061	100.00%
All Outcome Areas		59,790			
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,426,647</b>	<b>12,642,710</b>	<b>31.27%</b>	<b>12,553,462</b>	<b>99.29%</b>

### Budget and Expenditure Trend



### Contributions Trend by Type



## 3.2. Resources Overview

At the beginning of the year, UNHCR Costa Rica had a budgetary need of USD 40,426,647 of which only 34% were available (USD 13,941,000). The available funds were channeled for direct implementation and implementation through 12 partners with presence in the northern (Upala, Los Chiles), central and southern (Ciudad Neilly) areas of the country. Financial planning aimed to sustain previous geographical and thematic coverage, particularly legal assistance, community-based protection, humanitarian response and socioeconomic inclusion for forcibly displaced and stateless people.

However, significant and sudden funding shortfalls required progressive reprioritization. UNHCR

concentrated resources on critical lifesaving and protection activities, while other activities had to be reducing, postponed or cancelled. Agreements with four partners were terminated early for financial reasons, leading to the discontinuation of services in several locations, fewer community reference spaces and lower capacity for individualized legal and psychosocial support. Two field offices, in Los Chiles and Ciudad Neilly, were also closed, further reducing UNHCR's fixed presence in high-need areas.

By year-end the operational budget was reduced by 24%, well below initial planning figures, resulting in implementation levels that fell short of both operational capacity and the needs of people we serve. The operation mitigated the impact of cuts by reallocating resources towards essential protection activities, strengthening coordination with national institutions and humanitarian actors, and adjusting its resource mobilization strategy to seek more predictable, multiyear funding. This strategic reorientation preserved key protection and assistance services, although on a reduced scale, and generated lessons learned to inform the resumption or redesign of affected activities when additional funding allows.

## Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

### 4.1 Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

#### Lessons learned:

The 2025 Annual Review reaffirmed that sustainable inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers depends on timely access to legal status and documentation. Delays in asylum processing continue to create structural barriers to formal employment and social protection. Increasing the rate of decisions on the merits of claims is essential to advance protection and help regain donor engagement for the full modernization of Costa Rica's asylum system.

Stronger State leadership also proved essential. More active engagement by MIDEPLAN would enhance policy coherence and alignment with national development priorities, reinforcing the need to embed international protection within broader public planning frameworks.

A further lesson was the importance of using evidence on the contributions of foreigners, including refugees, to counter negative narratives. UNHCR supported studies showing that foreigners in Costa Rica contribute at least 6.5% of GDP, while their fiscal contributions offset public expenditure on the social services they receive, around 1.1% of GDP. The data also show that, when afforded conditions similar to nationals, foreigners contribute to social security at comparable levels, 40%, pointing to a virtuous cycle in which greater regularization leads to higher fiscal and social security contributions.

#### Future outlook:

Looking ahead, UNHCR's strategy will focus on consolidating gains in asylum system efficiency, strengthening alignment with national social protection and employment systems, and expanding partnerships across government, civil society and the private sector. Advocacy and technical support will continue to target backlog reduction, improved documentation processes, and equitable access to rights and services.

At the same time, UNHCR will continue to promote community engagement and inclusion-oriented initiatives, building on evidence of the contributions of refugees and stateless persons to Costa Rican society and supporting the Government to identify and address remaining integration gaps.

Ultimately, the outlook for 2026 and beyond will depend on advancing durable solutions through shared responsibility.



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The UN Refugee Agency

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