

Diverse Voices: Localization at Work

In October 2021, USAID launched Research in Education for Transformative Opportunities (RETO), a three-year Activity that seeks to create the demand for sustainable, effective solutions for youth violence prevention through evidence-based education programming across Northern Central America (NCA).

RETO's partnership approach aligns with USAID's recent push for greater localization in its programming worldwide. USAID Administrator Samantha Power has championed a focus on expanded engagement with local actors under three key areas.

First, USAID aims to partner with diverse actors. Implemented by International Rescue Committee (IRC), RETO has a core team of 12 national organizations, representing youth, researchers, policy advocates, educators, and representatives of the private sector.

Second, USAID has pushed for more equitable inclusion of marginalized voices. RETO's partners remain committed to working with youth to improve the enabling environment so that key education stakeholders no longer see youth only as part of the violence, but as leaders in finding context-specific solutions. RETO will engage youth from at-risk communities and youth from other under-represented communities, such as young mothers, youth with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ youth, indigenous and afrodescendant youth.

Third, RETO supports USAID's objective to be more responsive to local actors. RETO recognizes national partners as technical experts in their fields. As such, partners drive technical implementation, comprising Country Technical Teams, and providing guidance to IRC and USAID through implementation. RETO uses IRC's award-winning Partnership Excellence for Equality and Results System (PEERS) for working in partnership with the national organizations. All partners received significant subawards, which actively contributes to Administrator Power's commitment of 25% of USAID funding for local partners.¹

As a result of its unique partnership approach, RETO has immensely benefited from the active participation from all national partners, as representatives have actively engaged in the designing and validating of RETO's programming. The 12 national partners include: **El Salvador:** ConTextos NfP, Fundación para la Educación Integral Salvadoreña (FEDISAL), Fundación Empresarial para la Acción Social (FUNDEMÁS), Fundación Salvadoreña para Desarrollo Económico y Social (FUSADES), and Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (UCA); **Guatemala:** Empresarios por la Educación (ExE), Fundación para el Desarrollo de Guatemala (FUNDESA), Jóvenes contra la Violencia (JCV-GT), and Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (UVG); and **Honduras:** Fundación Hondureña de Responsabilidad Social Empresarial (FUNDAHRSE), Jóvenes contra la Violencia (JCVH), and Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Francisco Morazán (UPNFM).



Partners in Guatemala include IRC, ExE, FUNDESA, JCV-GT, and UVG. Credits: IRC



National partners in Honduras prepare for a RETO stakeholder mapping exercise. Credits: IRC

¹ <https://www.devex.com/news/samantha-power-lays-out-her-vision-for-usaid-102003>