

REACHING INDEPENDENCE THROUGH SUPPORT AND EMPOWERMENT (RISE)



LOCATION: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras

TIME FRAME: October 2023–September 2030

Overview

Reaching Independence through Support and Empowerment (RISE) is a youth empowerment project that works with adolescents and youth in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras through two programs: Youth Ready and Teen Ready. RISE aims to help young people ages 12 to 29 to develop life skills as they continue their education, participate in and create economic opportunities, and contribute to their communities. Through the project, young people develop positive self-identity, foster a sense of purpose and hope, and build skills such as curiosity, teamwork, communication, and agency. RISE emphasizes system strengthening by building the capacity of youth-led and youth-serving organizations—including the government, the private sector, and faith-based organizations—and by building networks with the private sector, financial organizations, and other stakeholders.

BY THE NUMBERS

BUDGET: \$30 million

PARTICIPANTS: 60,000 youth and adolescents



RISE PROGRAM MODEL



Youth Ready

Youth Ready equips vulnerable youth ages 15 to 29 in fragile contexts to become positive agents of change in their own lives and communities. The program helps young people discover their potential, plan for their future, and build the skills, character, confidence, and support needed to succeed in both work and personal life. Youth Ready promotes an enabling environment for young people, links them to social and economic opportunities, and empowers them to make healthy choices while contributing to the wider good and care for others.

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Youth Ready follows a two-stage approach. In **Stage 1**, youth participate in club-based sessions that meet twice a week over four to six months. Guided by trained facilitators, participants complete four core modules: *Finding Myself and My Way*, *Ready for Employment*, *Ready for Entrepreneurship*, and *Ready to Change the World*. In **Stage 2**, youth select a pathway aligned with their goals—education, employment, or entrepreneurship—while receiving ongoing facilitation, mentorship, and support. Through RISE, participants may also access financial assistance, including support for tuition and books, transportation stipends for job interviews, and seed capital for aspiring entrepreneurs based on approved business plans.

Teen Ready

Teen Ready is a locally driven curriculum designed for in-school adolescents ages 12 to 17. Developed by Youth Ready facilitators in Central America, the model engages and motivates teens to stay in school while equipping them with the skills needed to contribute to their communities as they approach adulthood. Teen Ready aims to reduce dropout rates and increase motivation for learning through art, sports, science, and technology. The program affirms positive identity, strengthens social integration, helps adolescents explore vocational interests, and fosters their sense of purpose and belonging.

Teen Ready is organized around four core modules: *Health and Well-being*, *Transcend and Transform*, *Entrepreneurial Culture*,

and *Active Citizenship*. The curriculum promotes values such as peace, responsibility, perseverance, reflection, planning, diversity, dialogue, and justice. Implementation takes place in local schools and youth organizations, with coaching, mentoring, and monitoring support provided by World Vision.

The Teen Ready curriculum was finalized in March 2024 and piloted across the three RISE countries in the second half of that year. In 2025, more than 10,000 adolescents participated in Teen Ready. The curriculum has generated strong enthusiasm among participating teachers, and the project is working closely with Ministries of Education in all three countries to support broader adoption.

Innovations

RISE has developed a Youth Talent Bank, a digital platform that connects young people with companies offering employment opportunities. The project is also piloting a micro franchise model, enabling youth to launch businesses under established brands with low start-up and operating costs. In addition, RISE is partnering with financial institutions to design youth-friendly loan products with favorable terms, strengthening financial inclusion and expanding access to affordable financing for young entrepreneurs.

Results

As of September 2025:

- 12,618 adolescents completed Teen Ready
- 7,623 youth completed Youth Ready
- 1,329 youth chose to continue their education to reach their goals
- 1,546 youth became entrepreneurs and started their own business
- 367 youth participated in an internship or work practicum
- 1,964 youth were connected to employment

