

strip, characterised by high environmental vulnerability due to seismic activity, floods, and drought. Forest degradation aggravates the usual floods in the lower basin, and droughts occur in the upper basin even during the rainy season. Their principal economic activity is agriculture and livestock. These municipalities are characterised by high percentages of the population living in extreme poverty. They are areas that have historically been affected by migration and are dependent on remittances. The level of poverty of this region and the scarce economic resources of families are ones of the factors that influence social violence and gender violence. The intervention proposed has been fully integrated into the UNFPA Country Programme 2022-2026.

Over the past years, the EU has been a strong supporter of education as a means to preventing violence in El Salvador, in particular against girls and women. This has been a key strategy to prevent early pregnancies which – in many cases - are a consequence of sexual violence. In El Salvador, girls and adolescents face conditions of greater vulnerability that expose them to being victims of sexual violence. Unequal power relations between men and women predominate, relationships of domination and violence are exerted by men on women, and women and girls suffer exclusion by reason of gender and age. This situation, in many cases, results, in early unions and pregnancies, abandonment of the educational process and fewer opportunities development, among others.

In that sense, the proposed Action will also build on progress achieved in the Spotlight Initiative, implemented by specialised agencies of the United Nations System, including UNFPA. The Spotlight Initiative strengthened capacities in key institutions for the response and prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) from a multisectoral perspective, including by sensitising and training personnel for the provision of essential services and the development of methodologies for the transformation of social norms and harmful cultural practices that are critical to preventing violence against girls, adolescents and women.

2.2. Problem Analysis

Specific problems

Pregnancy and motherhood in adolescent girls is a sensitive issue in El Salvador. Pregnancy and early motherhood affect lives significantly and are linked to multiple complex situations such as sexual violence, and are influenced by harmful social norms that enable discrimination against and exclusion of women at all stages of life.

Pregnancy, during the childhood and adolescence, is of concern as it : i) generates problems of health in the pregnant woman and in the fetus; ii) causes discontinuity in their educational process, sometimes aggravated by expulsion from the educational system as a consequence of moral judgment; iii) limits the options to find and carry out an activity paid labour in the formal sector; and iv) is more common among poor people, thus generating the transmission circle intergenerational poverty; v) occurs at outside of stable relationships, for what parenting ends up in charge of mothers and their families of origin; and vi) is frequent that its origin is the product of a violation by of adults.

According to the latest map of adolescent pregnancy published by UNFPA in 2021, 48 adolescent pregnancies are registered daily in El Salvador, of which two are of girls between 10 and 14 years of age. The Institute of Forensic Medicine reports six daily reports of sexual violence of girls between 10 and 19 years of age of which 53% are under 14 years of age. In 2021 the estimated coverage of adolescents expected to be attending high school was only 49.5% indicating that half of the adolescents were not in the educational system. The evidence is clear that remaining in school is a key protective element against teenage pregnancy.

The situation is aggravated when teaching staff do not have the skills to teach comprehensive sexuality education, while it is difficult to find, outside the school, adequate information that responds to age-appropriate concerns about sexual and reproductive health. In addition, conservative groups, especially of a religious nature, are fiercely opposed to adolescents receiving comprehensive sexuality education by any means which further limits the options for this population.

The development of vulnerable adolescent girls is characterised by a sexist context which stymies their empowerment and their realisation of bodily autonomy. There are limited spaces promoted by the state for the