



PUENTE VERDE

Bridging Climate Displacement and
Decent Work for Women in Central
America's Dry Corridor

Where climate change,
automation, and gender
inequality converge,
Puente Verde builds a bridge
to decent, protected work.

1 NO
POVERTY



5 GENDER
EQUALITY



8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



13 CLIMATE
ACTION





The Geneva Challenge 2026 Advancing Development Goals Contest
The Challenges to the Future of Work

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Abstract

Across Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, repeated drought is pushing rural households out of subsistence farming faster than cities or labour markets are prepared to absorb them (FEWS NET, 2025; Linke et al., 2023). Women are rarely the first to leave, but they are increasingly the ones who follow: taking on a departed husband's farm work and unpaid care responsibilities until that, too, becomes unsustainable, and then migrating themselves, usually not across an ocean, but to the nearest city or the nearest border (WEDO & CoopeSoliDar R.L., 2019; Rigaud et al., 2018). What they find there is narrowing. Entry-level clerical, retail, and customer-service jobs, long the first foothold for a new arrival with little formal education, are precisely the jobs employers expect to automate fastest over the next five years (World Economic Forum, 2025), and women's occupations show measurably higher

AI exposure than men's (World Bank, 2024). The rung that remains open such as paid domestic and care work, is also the one segment of Central American labour markets that three governments, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, have not extended baseline protection to, having never ratified the ILO's Domestic Workers Convention (WIEGO, 2023). The project, "*Puente Verde*", does not treat climate displacement, automation, and gender inequality as three separate problems needing three separate programmes. It targets the single point where all three converge: the moment a displaced woman arrives in an unfamiliar labour market with nowhere safe to land. Puente Verde combines a short, portable green-and-care-sector training pathway; a Portable Protection Account that lets informal and domestic workers accrue pension and health credits by attaching to registries (such as Honduras's existing Único Registro de Participantes) that already exist, rather than requiring new ones; and a lightweight regional dashboard that lets policymakers see where climate displacement, automation exposure, and gender inequality are stacking on the same women in the same places. We propose a two-year pilot in one Dry Corridor department, in partnership with municipal governments, the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), and regional financing institutions already active in the area.

Meet the Team





TEAM PUENTE VERDE

Policy • People • Purpose




- MA in Public Policy
- BA in Political Science
- Certified in Data Analytics, Project Management and IT support.
- Education and Politics Experience




- MA in Public Policy
- BA in Psychology
- Certified in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Functional Analytical Psychotherapy




- MA in International Affairs
- BA in Law and conciliation
- Experience in HHRR, tech and AI

 HUMAN RIGHTS
 MIGRATION
 SOCIAL POLICY

I. Introduction: A Region Where Three Transitions Collide

The Geneva Challenge's 2026 theme identifies three forces reshaping the future of work (technological change, demographic shift, and climate change) and notes that these forces interact to magnify existing inequality rather than acting in isolation. Nowhere is that interaction easier to observe, or harder to address, than in Central America's Dry Corridor, a drought-prone belt running through Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua that is home to roughly ten million people, most of them smallholder farmers (UNEP, 2023).

This is not only a labour-market question. The Call for Proposals for this Challenge ties the future of work directly to poverty reduction, decent work, reduced inequality, and gender equality as Sustainable Development Goals, and notes that the availability, quality, and distribution of work are what connect labour markets to development outcomes more broadly. The population this project follows sits at the intersection of four of those goals simultaneously: a woman who has lost her livelihood to drought (SDG 1), whose unpaid care burden already constrained her labour-force participation before she ever migrated (SDG 5), who is entering an urban labour market with no baseline protection in the one job segment open to her (SDG 8), and whose vulnerability compounds precisely because she is poor, rural, and female at once (SDG 10). We treat this convergence as the paper's organising fact, not a rhetorical flourish: a solution addressing only one dimension, training without protection, or protection without a route into work, would leave the others untouched.

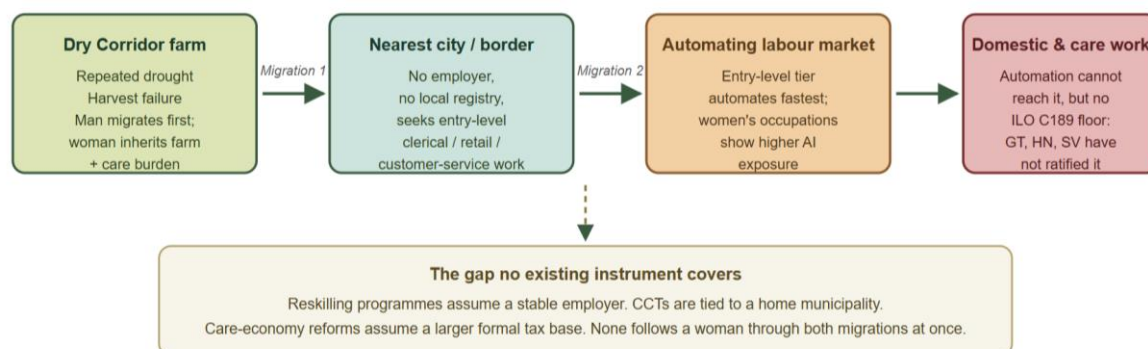
The climate signal here is no longer a future projection; it is the present operating condition of the region. As of late 2025, erratic rainfall and prolonged *canícula* (mid-summer dry spells) had delayed planting by up to forty days in parts of Guatemala's Dry Corridor, driving near-total maize and bean losses for poor households and pushing localized areas into IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) food insecurity expected to persist into mid-2026 (FEWS NET, 2025). This is not an isolated episode. Four of the Dry Corridor's countries ranked among the twenty most affected by extreme weather worldwide between 1998 and 2017, with Honduras and Nicaragua ranking second and sixth globally (FAO et al., n.d.), and the region has cycled through severe drought roughly every few years since 2014, each cycle leaving households with less capacity to recover before the next arrives (World Food Programme, 2019). A statistical analysis of six years of U.S. Border Patrol apprehension data found that dry growing seasons in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras were associated with a 70.7 percent increase in family emigration

relative to years of normal rainfall (Linke et al., 2023), one of the more precise empirical links available anywhere between a specific climate shock and a specific migration outcome. The World Bank's Groundswell modelling separately projects that the Mexico - Central America sub-region could see up to 3.9 million internal climate migrants by 2050 under a pessimistic scenario (Rigaud et al., 2018).

What existing research says much less about is what happens next for the women in these households, not whether they migrate, a question the literature addresses reasonably well, but where they land, and whether the destination is any safer than the place they left. This is the gap this project addresses. Our research question is narrow by design: as automation reshapes which entry-level jobs exist in Central American towns and cities, and as climate stress pushes a growing number of rural women toward those towns and cities, is there a feasible mechanism that follows a woman through both movements, geographic and occupational, rather than addressing either in isolation?

We argue that the answer is yes, but only if the mechanism attaches to infrastructure that already exists, rather than proposing new institutions the region's governments have neither the fiscal space nor the political bandwidth to build from scratch. Section II sets out the evidence for what we call the double migration: the compounding movement from farm to informal urban labour, and from a shrinking set of automatable entry jobs toward the one segment, paid care and domestic work, that automation does not reach but labour law mostly does not either. Section III explains why the region's current policy instruments each miss this population for a different, specific reason. Section IV presents our response, Puente Verde, with a phased implementation plan. Section V assesses impact across stakeholders, and Section VI is candid about the limits of what a training-and-registry intervention can and cannot fix.

II. The Double Migration: Evidence for a Compounding Mechanism



Puente Verde is designed to attach to this exact sequence — geographic and occupational — rather than treating each migration in isolation.

Source: Team analysis, based on Linke et al. (2023); WEDO & CoopeSoliDar R.L. (2019); World Bank (2024); World Economic Forum (2025)

II.1 The first migration: climate stress empties the farm

Household accounts from the Dry Corridor follow a fairly consistent pattern, documented across multiple droughts since 2014. When crops fail two seasons running, households first draw down savings and sell productive assets; when that is exhausted, at least one member migrates in search of wage income, usually toward the nearest urban centre first and toward Mexico or the United States only once the local labour market cannot absorb them (Huber et al., 2023). Research commissioned specifically to examine the gender dimensions of this pattern found that men are more likely to undertake the longer, riskier legs of the journey first, leaving women to manage both the remaining agricultural work and the household's care responsibilities, often for months or years, and often without a remittance flow reliable enough to compensate for the missing labour (WEDO & CoopeSoliDar R.L., 2019). This is consistent with a pattern documented globally: unpaid care responsibilities keep an estimated 748 million working-age people out of the labour force worldwide, 708 million of them women, and women perform more than three-quarters of all unpaid care work (International Labour Organization, 2022, 2023). In a Dry Corridor household that has just lost its harvest, this burden does not disappear when a man leaves; it is inherited, alongside farm tasks the household can no longer afford to hire out.

Eventually, in a large share of these households, women migrate too. This second departure is less visible in migration statistics than the international, US-bound movement that dominates policy attention, because it is overwhelmingly internal or intra-regional: to the nearest departmental capital, to Guatemala City, San Salvador, or Tegucigalpa, or across the nearest border. It is precisely this move, short in distance but decisive in what kind of labour market a

woman subsequently enters, that the most rigorous recent studies of Central American migration say the least about, since they are built by design on international border-crossing data (Linke et al., 2023).

II.2 The second migration: an automating urban labour market

The labour market a climate-displaced woman enters on arrival in a Central American city is undergoing its own transition, driven not by drought but by the artificial intelligence and automation trends this Call for Proposals identifies as a defining feature of the future of work globally. Employer surveys find the share of workplace tasks performed by humans alone is expected to fall from 47 percent in 2025 to roughly a third by 2030, with the difference absorbed mostly by automation rather than human-machine collaboration (World Economic Forum, 2025). These are global averages, but the occupations most exposed sit disproportionately at the entry level: routine clerical work, data entry, basic customer service, and retail, precisely the jobs that have historically served as a first foothold for a recently arrived migrant with little formal education. The World Bank's occupation-based exposure analysis finds women's jobs show systematically higher exposure to AI than men's across the countries it covers (World Bank, 2024), not because women adapt less well, but because women are disproportionately concentrated in the clerical, administrative, and routine service occupations that automation tools now perform competently. Regional research on Latin American labour markets similarly finds occupational structures shifting away from routine tasks toward those requiring either advanced digital skills or non-routine interpersonal skills (Azuara et al., 2019), a polarization that squeezes the entry-level middle rather than the top or bottom. Evidence from other automation-exposed labour markets suggests these effects are not merely theoretical: robot adoption has measurably depressed local employment and wages in exposed commuting zones elsewhere (Acemoglu & Restrepo, 2020).

A related channel deserves separate mention because it is often mistaken for opportunity rather than risk: app-based platform work. Delivery, ride-hailing, and online microtask platforms are frequently the first income source a new urban arrival finds, precisely because they require no local references and minimal onboarding. But platform work replaces one form of vulnerability with another. A global ILO survey of microtask workers across 75 countries found average pay of US\$4.43 per hour for paid working time, falling to US\$3.31 once unpaid time, searching for tasks, waiting, contesting rejected work, is counted (Berg et al., 2018), and algorithmic management systems that assign, monitor, and rate workers shift effective control over pay and hours from a human employer to a platform's rules, with little of the transparency or recourse ordinary labour law assumes (International Labour Organization, 2021). For a

woman navigating an unfamiliar city, a platform job can look like the safer, more flexible option precisely because it asks so little of her on entry, while offering her almost nothing in return once she is in it.

This matters because it changes what "first job in the city" means for a Dry Corridor migrant relative to a decade ago. It is not that automation destroys jobs these women already hold; most arrive with no job to lose. It is that automation narrows the set of jobs available to move into, at exactly the rung a new arrival would use to establish herself. Some evidence suggests this is not simple job destruction but reallocation: research on human-AI collaboration finds human judgement retains value even as AI adoption rises (Loaiza & Rigobon, 2024). But reallocation is only good news for a worker who can access whatever the AI-complementary jobs turn out to be, typically jobs requiring credentials, digital literacy, or capital a woman arriving from a Dry Corridor farm rarely has on day one.



II.3 Where the ladder still has a rung, and why that rung has no floor

As the entry-level clerical and retail tier narrows, informal urban labour markets in the region increasingly funnel new arrivals, and women in particular, toward one segment automation cannot easily reach: paid domestic work and direct care for children, older people, and people with disabilities. In one sense this is good news: it is growing, resilient demand, driven by the same population ageing this Call for Proposals identifies as a defining global trend, and unlikely to be displaced by the technologies displacing other entry-level work (International Labour Organization, 2018a).

It is not, however, a safe rung. Domestic work across much of Central America sits almost entirely outside the region's principal international labour standard for the sector. The ILO's Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189), which entitles domestic workers to baseline protections, including rest periods, minimum-wage coverage, and social-security access, has been ratified across most of Latin America, including Nicaragua; as of the most recent assessment, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras are the only Latin American countries that have not ratified it (WIEGO, 2023). These are, not coincidentally, three of the four Dry Corridor countries generating the bulk of the displacement described above. A woman who has made two migrations, out of agriculture and into the one occupational segment automation has not reached, arrives in exactly the part of the region with the least legal floor beneath her.

This compounds a protection deficit already documented globally: women's effective coverage for at least one social-protection benefit stands at 50.1 percent worldwide, against 54.6 percent for men (International Labour Organization, 2024a), and informal work, which accounts for an estimated 60 percent of global employment, roughly 2 billion workers, falls almost entirely outside contributory social insurance by design (International Labour Organization, 2018b). The same displaced population is not uniform: women migrating with a disability face a documented wage penalty of roughly 12 percent even after accounting for observable characteristics (International Labour Organization, 2024b), a gap that a domestic-work sector with no minimum-wage enforcement is poorly placed to correct and may in practice widen. None of the existing global instruments were built with this specific, compounding sequence in mind, which is the gap Section III examines and Section IV proposes to close.

III. Why Existing Policy Responses Miss This Population

Three categories of intervention already operate in the Dry Corridor, and each addresses part of the problem above, but none addresses the sequence as a whole.

Reskilling and active labour-market programmes are built around a stable employment relationship this population rarely has. Employers globally expect to finance more than four-fifths of workplace training themselves (World Economic Forum, 2025), which works for a worker already inside a formal firm and fails, by construction, for a worker who has just arrived in a city with no employer at all. Public training programmes exist, but eligibility and outreach are typically organised around municipal residency and formal registration, exactly the administrative footprint a recent arrival has not yet established.

Conditional cash transfer programmes, well established across the region, are designed to keep vulnerable households afloat where they are, not to follow a beneficiary who moves. Honduras's Bono Vida Mejor alone reaches 234,000 extremely poor rural households, ninety percent headed by women, through the country's Único Registro de Participantes (World Bank, 2020), but eligibility is tied to a household's registered municipality. A woman who migrates to escape agricultural collapse can lose the very transfer cushioning that collapse at precisely the moment she needs income support most.

Care-economy reforms, of the kind pioneered by Uruguay's Sistema Nacional Integrado de Cuidados, which recognises care as the fourth pillar of national social protection and has measurably advanced the recognition and partial redistribution of care work since 2015 (Uruguay, Ley N.º 19.353, 2015; UN Women, 2019), offer the clearest regional evidence that formalising care work is achievable policy rather than aspiration. But these reforms have so far been built for economies with a larger formal tax base and lower informality than Guatemala, Honduras, or El Salvador, and none yet extends to workers who cross a border in the course of finding care work, which is common in Central America's more established intra-regional labour migration.

Regional climate-adaptation programmes, coordinated through the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD) and the Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (SICA), are the most directly relevant instruments the region already has, and are largely, appropriately, oriented toward keeping people on the land: drought-resistant seeds, watershed restoration, early-warning systems (UNEP, 2023). They have comparatively little to offer the household that has already concluded farming is no longer viable this season, or the woman who has already left.

The gap that remains is specific: no existing instrument follows a woman through both movements at once, the geographic move from farm to city or border, and the occupational move from agriculture through a narrowing set of automatable entry jobs toward domestic and

care work. Puente Verde is designed to close that gap using infrastructure these other programmes have already built, rather than replacing it.

IV. Proposed Solution: Puente Verde

Puente Verde has three components, designed to layer onto institutions that already exist rather than requiring new ones. This is deliberate: the region's governments have limited fiscal space and administrative capacity to stand up new agencies, and previous interventions in Central America have often stalled at exactly this step. Building on existing rails is what separates a proposal from something a municipal government could plausibly start within a single budget cycle.

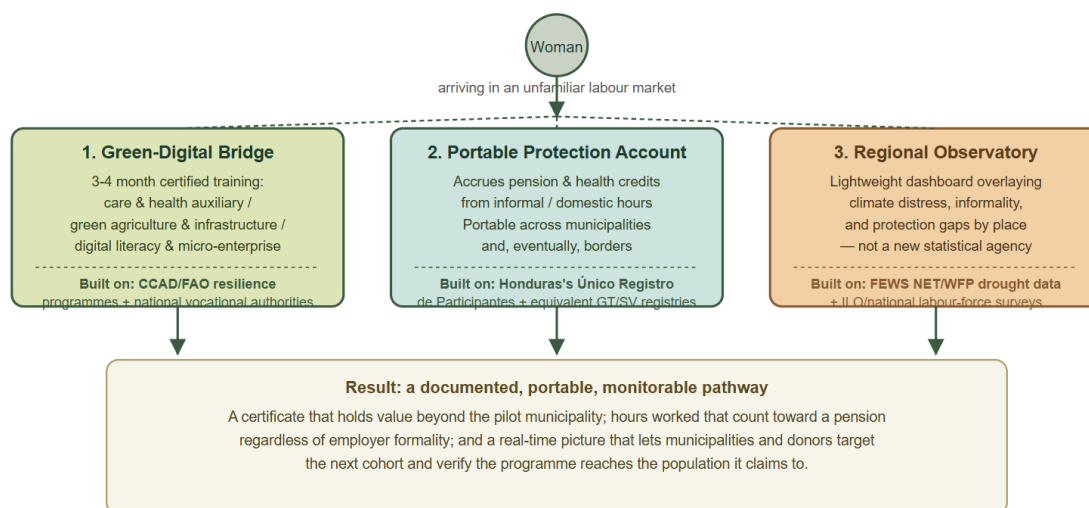
Component	Function	Existing infrastructure used	Lead partner
Green-Digital Bridge	3 - 4 month certified training: care work, agroecology/green infrastructure, or digital micro-enterprise	CCAD/FAO watershed and resilience programmes; national vocational-training authorities	Municipal governments and regional NGOs (e.g., CoopeSolidaR R.L.)
Portable Protection Account	Accrues pension/health credits from informal and domestic-work hours; portable across municipalities and, eventually, borders	Honduras's Único Registro de Participantes and equivalent Guatemalan and Salvadoran social registries	National social-registry authorities, coordinated via SICA
Regional Observatory	Real-time dashboard overlaying climate distress, informality, and protection gaps	FEWS NET/WFP drought monitoring; ILO and national labour-force surveys	CCAD/SICA statistical units

Consider Rosa, 29, who left her family's maize plot outside Chiquimula after a second failed harvest in three years. She arrives in Guatemala City with no employer, no local ID history, and two children left with her mother. Under the status quo, Rosa searches informally for domestic work, and her hours, wages, and safety depend entirely on whoever hires her that week. Under Puente Verde, Rosa's first stop is a municipal Bridge intake point, where she enrolls in the care-and-health auxiliary track, receives a training stipend, and her hours from her first placement logged against a Portable Protection Account tied to her national ID. Six months later, that account holds pension and health credits regardless of which household

employed her that month, and a documented, portable certificate travels with her if she moves to a second city. Rosa's situation it is not resolved by Puente Verde, but her hours now count toward something, and her arrival leaves a trace an inspectorate, a mentor, or a grievance line can act on.

Puente Verde: Three Components Built on Existing Infrastructure

Each component attaches to institutions the region already runs, rather than creating new agencies



Source: Team design, Section IV, Puente Verde proposal

IV.1 The Green-Digital Bridge

The first component is a short, three-to-four-month certified transition pathway connecting newly arrived women to the segment of the labour market growing fastest and hardest to automate, structured as three tracks.

A care-and-health-auxiliary track trains and certifies community eldercare and childcare workers to a recognised standard, addressing rising demand for paid care in ageing high-income economies (International Labour Organization, 2018a) and, closer to home, in Costa Rica and Panama, both established destinations for Central American care migration. A green-agriculture and small-infrastructure track covers agroecology extension work, drought-resilient farming techniques, and basic maintenance of small-scale solar and water-catchment systems, building on watershed and seed-resilience work CCAD and FAO already run in the region (UNEP, 2023), but opening it to women who have left farming rather than only those still on the land, and paying a stipend during training rather than treating participation as unpaid civic virtue. A digital-literacy and micro-enterprise track, for participants with some secondary education, covers basic digital tools, mobile money, and the paperwork of formalising a small service business, responding directly to evidence that women's lower rates of internet use are

themselves a barrier to digital work and job search (International Telecommunication Union, 2024).

Each track ends in a portable, nationally recognised certificate, issued jointly with each country's vocational training authority, so it holds value with employers beyond the pilot programme and pilot municipality.

IV.2 The Portable Protection Account

The second component addresses the protection gap in Section II directly, rather than waiting on ratification of ILO Convention 189 in three countries where it has not moved in over a decade. A Portable Protection Account is a record, attached to a woman's national identity document, that accrues verified hours worked and a small co-contribution, from the worker, an engaging household employer where one exists, and a subsidised top-up from the programme during the Bridge period, toward pension and health-insurance credits, regardless of whether the employer is formal or informal, and regardless of which municipality, or which SICA member country, the hours are logged in.

Given uneven smartphone penetration among new arrivals, registration is designed to be channel-flexible rather than app-dependent: hours can be logged by a community registration agent at municipal intake points, via a basic USSD menu for feature-phone users, or through periodic syncing of a physical passbook where connectivity is weakest. This mirrors the multi-channel approach Honduras's own Único Registro de Participantes already uses to reach informally employed populations, rather than requiring a new digital-first infrastructure the target population may not have the hardware to access.

This is not new infrastructure invented for this proposal. Honduras already operates a Único Registro de Participantes, built with World Bank support to deliver its Bono Vida Mejor transfer to 234,000 extremely poor households, ninety percent headed by women (World Bank, 2020), and has recently begun layering biometric identity verification onto that registry to solve the last-mile identification problem a mobile, informally employed population creates. Puente Verde proposes extending this registry's function, rather than building a parallel one, to also log care and domestic-work hours toward portable benefits, and proposes that Guatemala and El Salvador, which operate comparable social registries for their own transfer programmes, adopt an interoperable data standard so hours logged in one country's registry are recognised in another's. This is a smaller institutional lift than it sounds: SICA already coordinates social-policy harmonisation across member states for other purposes and would be the natural convenor for the interoperability standard itself.

Because domestic work carries a well-documented history of exploitation, and in some placements physical and sexual abuse, in precisely the kind of informal, unsupervised household arrangements this project will route more women into, the Portable Protection Account is designed to double as a safeguarding channel, not only a benefits ledger. Registering an employer relationship, however informally, creates a record of who a participant is working for and where; the same mobile registration point used to log hours can carry a direct, confidential line to a grievance mechanism operated by the technical partner organisations described below, rather than by the employer or the government body administering the benefit itself, so that a woman reporting abuse is not reporting it to the same authority that controls her registration status.

In practice, this channel is staffed by the technical NGO partners named in Section IV.4 rather than by government registry staff, reachable via a toll-free number and through community mentors trained under the Bridge programme, so a woman does not need literacy or smartphone access to report concerns. Reports trigger a case-management process run by the partner organisation, with referral to national labour or protection authorities only where the worker consents, preserving her control over whether and how a complaint proceeds.

IV.3 The Regional Labour-Climate-Gender Observatory

The third component is a lightweight public dashboard, not a new statistical agency, sitting atop data three kinds of institutions already collect: FEWS NET and WFP's existing food-security and drought monitoring, national labour-force and informality surveys ILO and national statistics offices already run, and the anonymised, aggregated data the Protection Account itself generates on where care and domestic-sector hours are worked. Overlaying these streams lets a municipal government or regional body see, close to in real time, where climate distress, informal-sector growth, and protection gaps are stacking geographically, which is both the targeting information the Bridge needs to open its next cohort and the accountability information that lets donors verify the programme reaches the population it claims to.

IV.4 Implementation Partners and Phasing

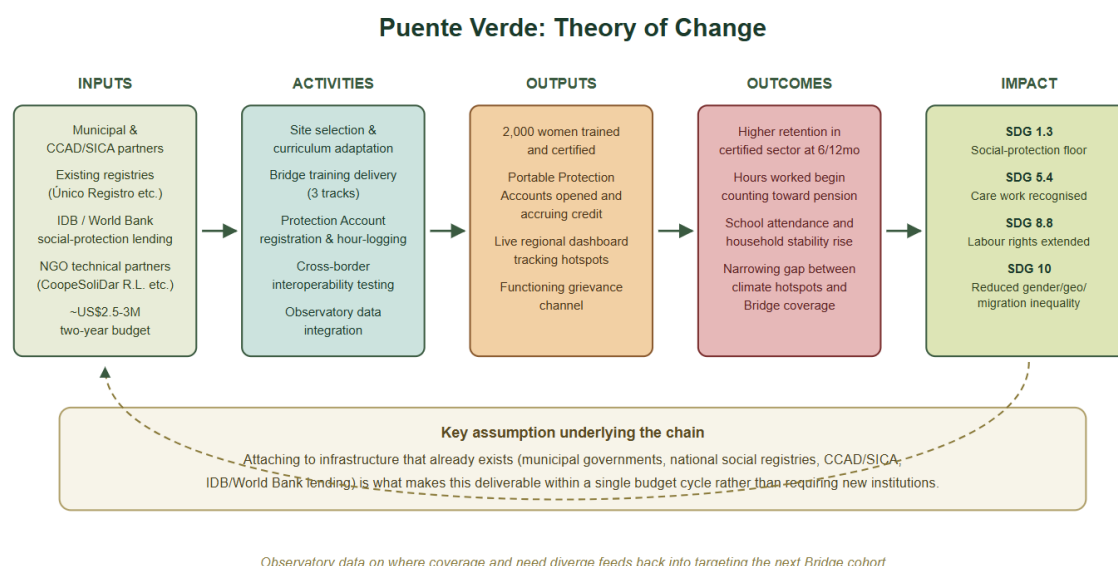
We propose a two-year pilot in a single Dry Corridor department with above-average recent drought exposure and an existing municipal cash-transfer presence, a description currently fitting several departments in eastern Guatemala or western Honduras; final site selection should be made jointly with in-country partners rather than fixed from Berlin.

We envisage the two years unfolding in four stages: months 1-3 for site selection, partner agreements, and adapting the Bridge curriculum to local languages and context; months 4-9 for the first cohort's training and initial Protection Account registration; months 10-18 for a second, larger cohort alongside the first cross-border interoperability test with one neighbouring registry; and months 19-24 for independent evaluation and a costed proposal for scale-up, so the pilot produces a decision-ready recommendation rather than an open-ended programme with no natural evaluation point.

Realistic partners include the relevant national social-registry authority, building on the precedent of Honduras's Único Registro de Participantes; municipal governments, the appropriate scale for delivering the Bridge; CCAD and SICA, as natural regional convenors for the cross-border interoperability standard the Protection Account requires; and financing instruments the Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank already operate in the region for social-registry and cash-transfer infrastructure (World Bank, 2020), which the Protection Account is designed to extend rather than duplicate. Organisations already working on the gender dimensions of Dry Corridor climate migration, including CoopeSoliDar R.L. and the InspirAction–Christian Aid partnership behind the most detailed gender assessment of this migration pattern to date (WEDO & CoopeSoliDar R.L., 2019), are natural technical partners for the Bridge's care-track curriculum and for community trust-building, which matters more than most technical design choices in a first pilot.

On cost: using Honduras's own reported per-household transfer value of roughly US\$225-500 per year as a reference point for what regional institutions already treat as a fundable per-household intervention (World Bank, 2020), a pilot cohort of 2,000 women, receiving a four-month training stipend plus the programme's co-contribution to their Protection Account, is unlikely to exceed US\$2.5-3 million over two years including the Observatory build, a figure well within the scale of existing IDB and World Bank social-protection lending already active in Central America, rather than requiring a new, standalone funding vehicle. This is our own costing exercise, offered as an order-of-magnitude anchor for feasibility discussions, and would properly be refined following site selection and partner confirmation.

V. Expected Impact



Source: Team design, based on Sections IV-V of the Puente Verde proposal

For participating women, the most immediate effect is a change in what arriving in the city means: instead of searching informally for domestic or service work with no record of hours worked and no route to a pension, a participant exits the Bridge with a portable certificate and a Protection Account already accruing credit. This does not eliminate the vulnerability of informal work, but it changes its trajectory: hours worked begin to count toward something, rather than disappearing into an arrangement with no paper trail once the workday ends.

For households, and particularly children left with grandmothers or older siblings during a mother's transition period, the effect runs through two channels the literature already links to maternal income stability: school attendance, using the same conditionality mechanism CCT programmes already rely on, extended here to a population CCTs currently under-reach because of the residency-tied eligibility problem described in Section III; and reduced pressure toward the household's next, more distant and more dangerous migration decision, since a woman with a stabilising urban income is a household with one less reason to send its next member north.

For origin communities, the effect operates at one remove: remittances from a mother in domestic or care work nearby, arriving reliably because her income is more stable than day-labour, become a buffer the household can draw on during the next drought cycle without anyone else leaving. This does not solve rural climate vulnerability; nothing here claims to. It gives a household one more tool for weathering the next shock in place.

For destination municipalities and the domestic-work sector, formalising even a portion of the local care and domestic workforce through the Protection Account creates a data trail, hours worked, wages paid, that municipal labour inspectorates currently lack, and that is the precondition for eventually enforcing minimum-wage and working-hours standards in a sector historically invisible to labour law precisely because no records exist. Employers who currently compete by paying no benefits at all would, over time, compete on more even footing with those covering the co-contribution, a modest but real step toward the sectoral formalisation Uruguay achieved nationally (UN Women, 2019).

For regional institutions, CCAD, SICA, and the national statistical offices feeding the Observatory, the project's most durable output may not be the pilot itself but the data infrastructure it leaves behind: a template for overlaying climate, labour, and gender data that a region confronting recurring drought will need again, regardless of what happens to this specific pilot.

We propose monitoring the pilot against indicators tracked from the outset: the number of women completing each Bridge track and the share still employed in that sector at six and twelve months; hours logged and credits accrued per participant; time-to-registry, since delay is where most registry programmes lose the populations that most need them; and, at the aggregate level, whether Observatory data shows measurable narrowing of the gap between climate-distress hotspots and Bridge coverage over the pilot, the clearest test of whether targeting reaches the households described in Section II rather than the easiest-to-reach households in a given municipality.

Mapped against the Sustainable Development Goals this Call for Proposals identifies as the stakes of the future of work, a successful pilot would generate evidence relevant to social-protection floors for informal workers (SDG target 1.3), the recognition and redistribution of unpaid care work (SDG target 5.4), the extension of labour rights to workers in precarious employment (SDG target 8.8), and the reduction of outcome inequality tied to gender, geography, and migration status (SDG 10), not as separate results reported against separate targets, but as four readings of the same underlying change in one population's circumstances.

VI. Risks, Limitations, and Safeguards

Four risks deserve explicit acknowledgment rather than being assumed away.

The first is registry exclusion. Any mechanism built on a national identity document risks excluding precisely the women least likely to hold one, including recent arrivals without local

documentation, seasonal and cross-border movers whose home registry does not recognise their current location, and women from the region's more remote rural communities, who face the steepest barriers to formal identification in the first place. We propose a documentation-assistance function within the Bridge itself, delivered alongside training rather than as a precondition for it, so the programme does not reproduce the exclusion it is meant to address. This will not close the gap entirely within a two-year pilot, and we say so rather than promising otherwise.

The second is the risk that a portable-benefits mechanism, poorly designed, becomes a justification for further informalisation rather than a bridge toward formalisation: an employer might treat a small co-contribution as a substitute for eventual compliance with minimum-wage or ratified-convention obligations, rather than a complement to progress toward them. We regard the Protection Account as a floor, not a ceiling, and propose pairing it explicitly with continued advocacy, led by existing regional labour and domestic-worker organisations rather than by this project, for eventual ratification of Convention 189 in the three countries that have not yet done so. A registry that quietly substitutes for that goal, rather than building toward it, would represent a failure of the model, not a variant of its success.

The third is regional-coordination risk. The interoperability standard the Protection Account depends on requires sustained cooperation between at least three national registry authorities and a regional body, SICA, whose political bandwidth fluctuates with member states' domestic priorities. Should that coordination stall, the Account can still function as a valuable national-level instrument in each participating country independently; cross-border portability is the more ambitious layer, and the pilot's design deliberately does not make the national-level benefit contingent on the regional layer succeeding first.

The fourth is that this proposal is drafted from Berlin, not from the Dry Corridor. None of the three tracks, the registry-interoperability standard, or the grievance mechanism described above should be finalised on the basis of this document alone; each is written here as a defensible starting design, to be revised by the municipal, NGO, and registry partners named throughout Section IV, who understand local labour markets, language, and household dynamics in ways a graduate research team cannot from a distance. We treat local partner revision of the Bridge curriculum and the grievance mechanism as a precondition for launch, not an optional refinement to be added later.

Finally, and most importantly: this project does not claim to solve climate-driven displacement, automation-driven labour polarisation, or gender inequality in Central America. It claims

something narrower, that the specific, compounding sequence described in Section II, currently unaddressed by any single existing instrument, can be interrupted with a feasible, two-year, single-department pilot built on infrastructure the region already has. Climate mitigation, migration policy reform, and ratification of international labour standards remain necessary and are explicitly outside this project's scope. We see Puente Verde as a floor beneath a specific population during a transition that will not reverse on its own timeline, not a substitute for the larger structural changes that would prevent the transition from being necessary at all.

VII. Conclusion



The Geneva Challenge's Call for Proposals observes that the future of work will be shaped less by whether jobs disappear than by whether workers can move into the jobs that remain, and that public policy, not technology or demographics alone, determines whether that transition is inclusive. Central America's Dry Corridor is a clear test case: forces this Call identifies as globally significant, technological change, demographic shift, and climate displacement, are already colliding on one population, in a pattern precise enough to trace household by household. The women making this double migration, out of agriculture and into an urban labour market where automation is narrowing the entry rungs toward the one



segment with the least legal protection, are not a hypothetical future case. They are arriving in Guatemala City, Tegucigalpa, and San Salvador this year, during the drought FEWS NET is tracking as this proposal is written.

Puente Verde does not propose to reverse the drought, the automation trend, or the informality structuring Central American labour markets. It proposes a floor: a portable certificate, a portable benefits record, and a shared picture of where the two migrations are happening at once, built deliberately on the registries, regional bodies, and training infrastructure the region already has, so a first pilot could plausibly begin within the coming year rather than the coming decade.

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