

CARIBBEAN



REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN
THE SUBREGION*
224,000



PEOPLE REACHED WITH SOME
FORM OF ASSISTANCE**
3,094

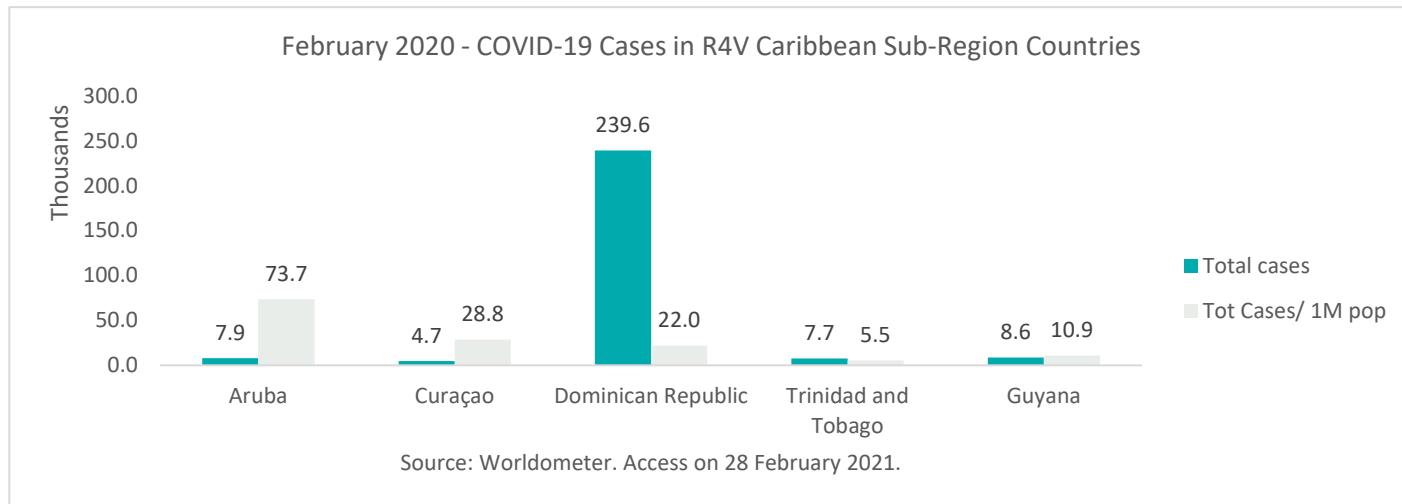


FUNDING SITUATION

REQUIREMENT: \$ 40.7 MILLION

Situation

- **Vaccination campaigns** were launched in February 2021 across many R4V Caribbean sub-regional countries where four of the five countries included refugees and migrants in their national vaccination plans.¹ On 18 February, **Aruban** frontline workers started receiving COVID-19 vaccinations, along with 10 famous press personalities, in the 'high-risk' category who encouraged the general population to receive the vaccines, while the DVG (Department of Health) continued its campaign promoting vaccines as safe. Days later, immunizations started for individuals in the 60+ category. All Venezuelans, regardless of migratory status will have access, and the national vaccination plan was published, underscoring steps on signing up completing a pre-registration in an MFA Government office where persons would receive a QR code and subsequently, an appointment date for the vaccine. Some Venezuelans in Aruba expressed concern to R4V partners, as they cannot access medical attention², should they have a negative reaction to the COVID-19 injections. Similarly, individuals in **Curaçao** will receive COVID-19 vaccines regardless of legal status. One R4V partner is a part of the organizing committee which indicated that Curaçao intends to complete vaccination of everyone on the island by 1 June. Prioritized persons started registering via a hotline since 19 February. Subsequently, all other persons over 18 will register separately. The first batch of vaccinations are for persons over 60 and medical front-line workers, for a total reach of 44,000 persons. The **Dominican Republic's** vaccine plan focussed on Dominican nationals and is not including refugees and migrants at this stage. In **Guyana**, refugees and migrants are included in immunization plans; however, prioritization of specific groups has yet to be defined beyond medical staff and high-risk groups, targeted under the initial 20% to receive vaccines through the GAVI Covax facility. Timelines for Venezuelans to receive vaccines remained unspecified. Guyana received its first donation of 3,000 doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines from Barbados on 10 February. This was allocated to 1,400 frontline health workers; while 200 doses were allocated to CARICOM to reach 100 persons. Furthermore, Venezuelan refugees and migrants in **Trinidad and Tobago** will receive the COVID-19 vaccine when campaigns are rolled out across the country.
- By the end of February 2021, **Aruba** registered 7,891 COVID-19 infections, 223 active cases and 73 deaths. **Curaçao** reached 4,730 COVID-19 infections, with 67 active cases and the death toll stood at 22. **Trinidad and Tobago** rose to 7,713 cases, reduced to 108 active cases and recorded five more deaths than the previous month, bringing the tally to 139. **Guyana**



¹ Aruba COVID campaign to include refugees and migrants: [Dialuna awo ta cuminsa vacuna adultonan 60+ - 24ora.com](https://dialuna.awo.ta.cuminsa.vacuna.adultonan.60+-24ora.com)

² For more information on access to health services in each National Platform, please see [Health Background Notes – Caribbean](#).

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reported 8,585 total cases, 418 active cases and moved to 195 deaths. The **Dominican Republic** stood out at 239,617 total confirmed infections, 45,179 active cases and 3,106 deaths.

- In **Aruba**, curfews and a ban on public gatherings remained in place and businesses' closing times moved to 11 p.m. Additionally, [a group of parliamentarians visited the Guardia nos Costa \(GNC\) detention center](#) to gather information about the daily running of the facility, where individuals who entered Aruba via irregular means, or overstayed their tourist visas are being held, pending deportation. The authorities increased the budget for the center and intend to upgrade the facilities, emphasizing that they wish to improve the center's conditions. Additionally, a judge will decide if individuals must stay in the GNC detention center while waiting for deportation flights and [deportations remained in place](#). Moreover, next year, a total of 45 million euros will be invested in [strengthening border protection](#), as Venezuelans continued to arrive, attempting to seek asylum amid the pandemic. Separately, regardless of continued pandemic restrictions, [elections](#) are set to take place in Aruba on 24 September.
- **Curaçao** R4V partners met with the coordinator of the national counter trafficking unit on 23 February, in the context of Migration Governance Framework (MiGoF)³, to discuss the migration governance needs assessment, which is being done in Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten. Focal points from the central bureau of statistics and line-ministries such as Economy, Health and General Affairs, civil society organizations and R4V partners were also present in the meeting. Moreover, the Council of Ministers approved the SOPs on Trafficking in Persons which defines what Human Trafficking is, highlights the principles for protection and assistance including an victim-centered approach while outlining pathways, and the various phases and steps involved in identification, assistance, investigation, return and integration.
- In the **Dominican Republic**, curfews were extended to 8 March. The [Central American Bank gave US \\$800 million](#) to the DR and Central America for vaccines. Plans for the regularization process of refugees and migrants continued amidst COVID restrictions with one R4V agency

assisting with furnished space and personnel to physically facilitate the registration/regularization process carded to start on 05 April.

- Two fishing vessels and 12 crew members detained by the Venezuelan navy on 21 January were [confirmed released](#) and on their way to **Guyana**. The reasoning behind their release was not immediately available, but Venezuela had been subject to significant international pressure following the detention of the vessels. Additionally, the **Guyana-Suriname** ferry service resumed operations to residents. Passengers must show a negative PCR test result. Curfews and restrictions remained in place as COVID-19 infections increased. Reports of persons using fake tests to enter Guyana surfaced, prompting advisories against using [fake COVID-19 tests](#), and avoid prosecution by law.
- In **Trinidad and Tobago**, an Opposition Senator [questioned why Venezuelan fishing boats were allowed to dock on TT jetties](#) with their occupants allegedly allowed to frequent supermarkets and pharmacies while borders remain closed depriving TT citizens of the right to return home. Also, a CARIFORUM report on human trafficking in the Caribbean [linked local police in facilitating trafficking rings](#) between TT and Venezuela, even as authorities in Venezuela made their latest attempt to [target trafficking networks working between the two countries](#). Venezuela has made further efforts to disband a ring dedicated to sending victims to Trinidad and Tobago where they would be sexually exploited, Attorney General Saab [announced](#). On the other hand, local TT media highlighted that with the [support of authorities in both countries, more than 18 small shipping companies currently work between Venezuela and TT](#), transporting items that Venezuelans buy to send to their relatives back home. This comes on the heel of announcements that Venezuelans living in TT under the Registration system would have [to re-register](#) and receive new migrant cards and a further six-month extension. Furthermore, on 26 February, a repatriation flight that had been cancelled a few days before was cleared to leave, repatriating 97 Venezuelans.

³ The MiGOF, defines governance as the traditions and institutions by which authority on migration, mobility and nationality in a country is exercised

Response

- In February, partners continued to provide **unconditional multipurpose cash grants** to the most vulnerable refugees and migrants with specific needs or those in emergency situations, including persons with serious risks to their health and physical integrity, requiring immediate intervention. Multi-purpose cash grants were approved for 128 people in Aruba, Curaçao, Guyana and TT facing protection risks and with very limited or no ability to achieve self-reliance. Increased applications for **cash assistance** continued to demonstrate the heightened risks faced by refugees and migrants. Furthermore, 57 individuals received **multi-purpose cash-based interventions (CBI)** in the form of paper-based vouchers to assist with basic needs.
- Amidst multifaceted challenges posed by the pandemic, R4V partners continued to provide **temporary shelter** solutions to vulnerable refugees and migrants, reaching 96 persons in the Dominican Republic and Curaçao.
- Moreover, in the Caribbean sub-region, 93 persons in need were provided with **food assistance**, with 70 Venezuelans benefitting from **food hamper distribution** in the DR and 23 receiving **food vouchers** in Aruba. A new food relief strategy for 2021 was also finalised by an R4V agency in Aruba, based on feedback from beneficiaries, staff and donors. The strategy will ensure that funds are provided in a timely manner. Separately, **food assistance** reached 2,390 Venezuelans in need in Region 1 (Barima-Waini) while another partner supplied 389 more persons with food in a different region of Guyana.
- R4V partners in **Trinidad and Tobago** provided NFI support in the form of personal care vouchers, valued at TTD \$250.00 each to survivors of GBV. Additionally, 85 Venezuelans and one host community member received **NFI** hygiene supplies and services that incorporated hygienic items, facilities, and menstrual products.
- Health services** continued to be delivered through a combination of telehealth and static clinic modalities, reaching 276 beneficiaries in February, as partners in Aruba, Curaçao, DR, Guyana and TT provided access to support groups, primary health consultations, paediatric care, mental health, psychosocial support, and medicine.
- A total of 1,080 refugee and migrant children in TT continued to access **remote education services** through the Equal Place initiative, during the reporting period.
- Protection and life-saving activities** continued to be delivered across the Caribbean sub-region, reaching 1,235 beneficiaries. R4V partners in TT further assisted 866 people through various activities, including **case management**, **legal aid**, registration, and refugee status determination services, among others. In Guyana, partners facilitated capacity development in **child protection** and provided support to Child Advocacy Centres (CACs). A partner in Aruba also provided **case management** and **legal assistance** through counselling and information to detainees, as well as services to survivors of GBV. Partners also delivered services through hotlines, and delivered case management and **self-support groups**, and social activities, among others.
- To continue delivering **WASH** services, one partner in Guyana constructed a well, with Photovoltaic (PV) solar pumping and safe water distribution system for the host community of Kurutuku in Region 7 (border with Venezuela), inhabited by 150 people including refugees, migrants and returnees (*see feature story below related to WASH activities in Region 1*).
- To boost **integration** through livelihood and self-reliance, one partner in TT organised livelihood training sessions, liaising with companies about vacancies, providing technical support, oversight, and host community on information about livelihood opportunities related to agriculture in San Rafael and in the construction sector in Arima. Support was also provided for the San Rafael Collective through sourcing and delivering supplies, networking with distributors, and getting soaps stocked in shops, organising markets, collecting, and delivering payments, managing social media and technical support. R4V partners in the country organised an organic gardening workshop in Spanish and an empowerment and leadership *train the trainer* workshop for Venezuelan refugee and migrant women.



Food Distribution in Guyana -
March 2021

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People Reached*

SECTOR	ARUBA	CURAÇAO	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	GUYANA	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	TOTAL
EDUCATION					1080	1080
FOOD SECURITY	23		70			93
HEALTH	57	4	44	15	156	276
INTEGRATION			6		30	36
MULTIPURPOSE CBI	105	4			19	128
PROTECTION	69	20		267	879	1235
SHELTER		3	93			96
WASH				150		150

Operational Overview*

	ARUBA	CURAÇAO	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	GUYANA	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
PARTNERS	HIAS, IOM, UNHCR	Famia Plania, IOM, UNHCR, Unitat di Bario	FUNCOVERD, Globalize Radio, IOM, UNHCR, FEV	Blossoms Inc, HIAS, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, GSWC, Ministry of Education, Guyana Water Inc.	FPATT, IOM, Living Water Community, Rape Crisis Society, UNHCR, UN Women
SECTORS	 	 	 	 	

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Catalina Acevedo, Caribbean Sub-Regional Coordination Officer, IOM, cacevedo@iom.int.

Miriam Aertker, Senior Field Coordinator, UNHCR, aertker@unhcr.org.

R4V- Response for Venezuela: <https://r4v.info/es/situations/platform/location/7493>

FINANCIAL TRACKING SYSTEM: [HTTPS://FTS.UNOCHA.ORG.APPEALS/726/SUMMARY](https://fts.unocha.org.appeals/726/SUMMARY)

* Based on current month activities

FEATURED STORY

A Water-Boatful of Hope for Water-less Communities in Guyana

Harsher dry seasons are leaving communities in Guyana's region one – along the northern border with Venezuela - without potable water. Saline wells and water sources resemble the impact of drought at villages like Imbetero, Smith Creek, and Morawhanna. Thousands of Amerindian villagers and their recently established guests – Warao Venezuelan refugees and migrants – have been forced to deplete their resources to find fresh water. They must cross mangler-filled rivers towards Cariabo, a village approximately 100 kilometers away, and not accessible via road, thus requiring water boats.

"Safe sources of water are not always available, and I barely make a living to feed my family," said one Venezuelan resident. "I am unable to buy clean water in the dry season." Local villagers mirrored the same concern, adding to the equation heightened risks of exposure to water-borne diseases and the deadly Coronavirus pandemic.

For years, people living in these remote and sparsely populated areas have suffered from limited fresh water supplies during the dry season. Until a new project by an R4V Platform Partner became the beacon of hope for at least five communities in late 2020. A 19 by five feet boat began to sail across large rivers to gather and deliver purified and fresh water.

At minimal cost and workforce, the *Villagepump* had provided safe-drinking water to over 2,200 people at the end of 2020. By early 2021, the boat was delivering regular supplies and was expanded to incorporate a water trestle and offloading landing to facilitate distribution.

"Getting clean water was a pipe dream, but now, the dream has become real," mentioned one of the villagers. "We finally will have a constant supply of clean water reaching every one of us in the dry season."

The *Villagepump* will be handed over to the Guyana Water Incorporation (GWI), the national provider of water and sanitation services in the country, which will make the deliveries in coordination with village leaders during the dry season. The GWI will assume the costs to maintain, fuel and operate the boat to continue delivering this vital service to locals and Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

Guyana is estimated to host around 30,000 Venezuelan refugees and migrants who sought access to basic services and safety in the neighboring country. Many indigenous Warao fleeing from Venezuela found a safe haven in Region one, where locals have welcomed them despite the many challenges.

Alongside Guyanese national institutions, R4V partners work to support Venezuelan refugees and migrants and their host communities across the country. Apart from tackling protection and documentation issues, R4V Platform Partners make efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and water-borne diseases like cholera by rehabilitating or installing water, sanitation and hygiene systems.

In addition, partners can now ensure the delivery of clean water to the people across the hinterland areas of Guyana. As climate change continues to increase temperatures worldwide, Venezuelans and their host communities in Guyana will no longer have to choose between food and water.



Imbetero community in Guyana. Photo: UNHCR/Katherine Aguero