

Placing Communities at the Center in the Response to migrants and refugees from Venezuela



Participants of the Regional Workshop on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) organized by UNICEF within the framework of the inter-agency coordination of R4V.

BOGOTA, Colombia, October 21, 2019 - What is needed to develop an appropriate and relevant humanitarian response to refugees and migrants from Venezuela? What does it mean to use our power as humanitarian workers accountably, and what are the implications? How can we include the perspectives and demands of refugees and migrants in our response actions? How do we build trust and empower affected populations to engage in these processes?

In humanitarian day-to-day work, these questions present challenges that are difficult to resolve in isolation. For this reason and in search of new approaches, more than 40 participants from 18 different UN agencies, NGOs and CSOs in Latin America and the Caribbean gathered to discuss and exchange experiences on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) during the Regional Learning Workshop on AAP, aimed at National, Sub-Regional and Regional Interagency Groups and/or regional members of the Regional Interagency Coordination Platform for Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants (R4V).

The activities, presentations and exchange of experiences at the workshop helped rethink and challenged the way in which humanitarian workers provide information regularly and participate in a sustained dialogue with host communities. Similarly, the representatives of the different countries had the opportunity to share anecdotes and examples on how they ensure that the views of the communities are incorporated in response planning and design; as well as on how evaluation and feedback mechanisms allow these communities to assess the humanitarian work.

As part of the workshop presentations, we learned from experiences from other regions of the world that are also experiencing situations of human mobility and displacement. Through games and team exercises, the importance of empathy, coordination and efficiency in working with affected populations was reaffirmed. In addition, country teams developed joint plans that served as models to be implemented in 2020.

Given the diversity of humanitarian actors involved in the response to Venezuelan refugees and migrants, it is important to reinforce a common understanding of AAP principles, as well as sharing the best practices, skills and tools available to enhance and strengthen action in the field.

This meeting was convened by the regional R4V Communication with Communities and Communication for Development (Cwc/C4D) working group, as part of the 2019 work plan, which identifies AAP as one of the areas to be strengthen, in compliance with the Grand Bargain, the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) on Quality and Accountability and the IASC Commitments.

The first AAP Regional Workshop led by UNICEF with the support of IOM, UNHCR and WFP, was the initial kick to continue reinforcing the key AAP principles: ensure that communities are at the centre of and drive humanitarian action to deliver adequate and timely, as well as effective and ethical assistance.



Group photo: Regional Workshop on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) coordinated by UNICEF within the framework of the inter-agency coordination of R4V.

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