



Photograph: Sommer Hunte

SAN RAFAEL SHELTER PROJECT. UNHCR continues to support the self-sustaining livelihood activities of refugees and asylum-seekers under the San Rafael Shelter Project, led by implementing Partner Living Water Community. The shelter, which houses 19 adults and 13 children, continues to move towards sustainable livelihood efforts, which include the addition of a Cash-for-Work agricultural project involving six refugees and migrants, supported by UNHCR funding, who are expected to soon begin earning money from the sale of their crops. Living Water Community continues to meet the maintenance and repair needs of the shelter, while also working to improve the property through additions such as an upcycled playground for the children using car tyres and necessary infrastructure for the continuation of livelihood options. The property houses a diverse profile including LGBTI, indigenous Warao, as well as three locals who provide much needed support.

CURRENT CONTEXT

Notably, a general election which occurred on August 10 saw the incumbent government being re-elected to serve a second term, suggesting that the current government disposition toward refugee and migrant issues is expected to be maintained. Reports of new cases of COVID-19 increased in August, with an announcement made by authorities on August 15 that Trinidad and Tobago will now be regarded as having community spread of COVID-19. This led authorities to enact new restrictions aimed at curbing the spread of the virus, including the prohibition of in-house service at bars and restaurants. The restrictions continue to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities for refugees and asylum-seekers as many saw their livelihood opportunities curtailed.

An environment of increased fear has arisen, due to recent instances of detentions, deportations, evictions and a generally heightened xenophobic atmosphere, including [one instance](#) of severe physical assault against a female Venezuelan asylum-seeker. Authorities have published images of COVID-19 positive asylum-seekers, in one instance [referring](#) to a registered Venezuelan refugee who tested positive for COVID-19 as “a risk to the safety of citizens”. In another incident, the images of female Venezuelan minors who escaped from a quarantine facility were [published](#) on social media by authorities. Health authorities have also [reported](#) on the number of “non-nationals” who are infected with COVID-19. Partners reported notable spikes in mood disorders due to this environment. UNHCR is aware of at least 13 asylum-seekers who have tested positive for COVID-19 and were quarantined at state facilities.

Planning for the 2021 Refugee and Migrant Response Plan also commenced in August, with [R4V](#) partners coordinating the protection response for the next year.

POPULATION*



19,333

REGISTERED WITH
UNHCR

81.5% 18-59 YEARS

17.3% UNDER-18 YEARS

46.2%

FEMALE



53.8%

MALE

85.7%

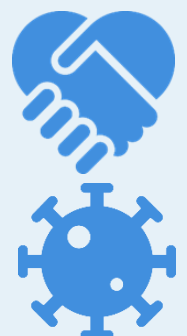
VENEZUELAN

*Figures are as at August 31st 2020. Registration at UNCHR premises had been temporarily suspended from March 13 to May 26 due to COVID-19. 3,402 individual records were inactivated in April due to registration documentation being expired for more than six months.

COVID-19 RESPONSE HIGHLIGHT

UNHCR SUPPORTS HEALTH AUTHORITIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

UNHCR Trinidad and Tobago extended support to the Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA), by facilitating a request for renewal of their Geographic Information System (GIS) Licenses software, that had been donated by UNHCR in 2018. This was the second such renewal for UNHCR TTO in 2020, given that earlier this year, separate GIS Licenses donated to the Ministry of Health were also renewed. The software enables the ERHA and subsidiaries to gather, manage and analyse data to formulate patterns, relationships and situations to assist with their planning and decision-making, particularly with respect to contact tracing and community spread of COVID-19. The ERHA also uses such software in their mapping of home-quarantined patients and in their community profiling exercises.

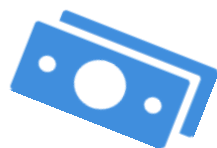


OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS



COMMUNITY HOTLINE COMMUNICATION

Calls to the UNHCR hotline continued to increase for the third consecutive month, with a 4% increase recorded in August. The number of queries relating to detention continued to rise with a 43% increase recorded for August when compared with July. The highest number of queries related to the provision of multi-purpose cash assistance, which formed 28% of the queries received this month, also recording an increase of 29% when compared to the number of queries received on this in July.



CASH-BASED INTERVENTION (CBI)

In August, **172 multi-purpose cash grants were approved** for individuals facing protection risks with very limited or no ability to achieve self-reliance. Applications for cash assistance continued to demonstrate the heightened protection risks faced by refugees and asylum-seekers due to the onset of COVID-19 and challenges of the operational context. Eighty-three percent of applicants reported not being able to meet their basic needs, while 39% of applicants were facing eviction or homelessness and 78% indicated that either they or their children/household members were reducing the quality and quantity of their food intake.



EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE

Implementing partner [Living Water Community](#) (LWC), provided **1,205 beneficiaries** with emergency food assistance in August. Beneficiaries apply for emergency food assistance remotely through an online form and once approved, receive QR coded e-vouchers that are redeemed at 29 supermarkets in communities nationwide.



EDUCATION ACCESS

Despite funding and connectivity challenges, **40 new beneficiaries** were able to access remote education services in July through [Equal Place](#), with a total of **993 students** accessing lessons for this month. Advocacy through collaboration with the Catholic Education Board of Management (CEBM) and other denominational school boards continues, to ensure as many migrant and refugee children as possible are accepted into schools.



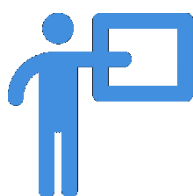
ACCESS TO MEDICAL HEALTH SERVICES

UNHCR implementing partner [Family Planning Association](#) (FPATT) conducted **152 consultations** on sexual and reproductive health for 125 refugees and asylum-seekers during August in addition to **12 pediatric care consultations**. These were delivered through a combination of telehealth and static clinic services.



MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES

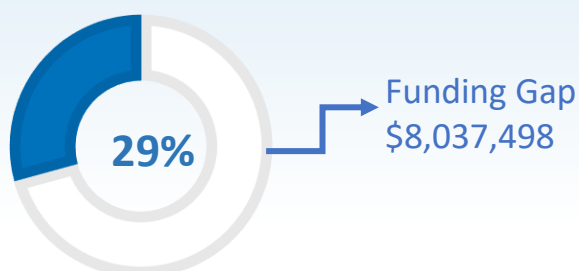
Psychosocial support was provided for 104 refugees and asylum-seekers in August, with implementing partner [Rape Crisis Society](#) facilitating **111 counselling sessions**, including victims of sexual and gender-based violence. LWC also conducted psychosocial interventions for **37 individuals** in August, with sessions held for an additional **five victims of trafficking** to help treat with the intense trauma of those experiences.



TRAINING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

UNHCR co-delivered a training on refugee protection principles and international human rights to **63 persons** through an online UWI training project funded by PADF and the US Embassy. Protection trainings were also delivered to a group of national security officers, consisting of coast guard, immigration, police and regiment officials.

FUNDING



UNHCR is extremely grateful for the crucial support provided by donors to the Trinidad and Tobago Operation and more broadly, global UNHCR programmes. Our donors include:

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For further details on anything included in this report, contact Shemuel London at london@unhcr.org. Find more information about UNHCR [here](#) and [click here](#) for more on the work of the UNHCR T&T Operation.