Situation Report

January - February 2023

217,130 refugees and migrants from Venezuela in the Caribbean

Funding Situation: $812.6K funded of $72.65M required

1.1% funded

4456 persons reached with direct assistance

Refugees & Migrants from Venezuela

Women: 1839
Girls: 999
Men: 723
Boys: 895

Host Communities: 507

People Reached by Sector

Education: 1906
Protection: 1892

Food Security: 618
Child Protection: 64

Health: 202
GBV: 751

Humanitarian Transportation: 0
Human Trafficking & Smuggling: 59

Integration: 232
Shelter: 495

Nutrition: 0
WASH: 234

Cash and Voucher Assistance

USD $84K distributed to 615 persons for Food, Health, Integration, Protection, Shelter, and Multipurpose Cash

Capacity Building

54 persons trained to strengthen the protection environment.
27 persons trained on the prevention, identification, assistance, protection and prosecution of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants.

Campaigns

205 persons reached with awareness-raising and integration-promoting messages

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(1) Projected population by end of 2023 (2) Source: FTS. Funding can take some months to update, and does not include funding provided at regional level, so the actual figure may be higher. (3) All assistance figures are cumulative for the year to date.
Situation

- A UN Country Team mission to Aruba involving representatives from 11 UN agencies conducted a needs assessment from 2-3 February and met with UN and R4V organizations. The mission identified potential areas for collaboration with the government and people of Aruba to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which have guided R4V partners’ activities. The team consulted with various stakeholders, including government, civil society, trade unions, journalists, and university students.

- During the reporting period, the authorities used checkpoints to detect persons entering irregularly, including Venezuelans, who were then detained by the Guarda nos Costa. R4V partners could not confirm whether all Venezuelans were given the option to seek asylum or other forms of international protection in Aruba prior to their deportation.

- Curacao received a delegation from the Venezuelan government at the end of January for consultations about re-opening the borders. The Curacaoan government subsequently announced its intention to reopen its air and maritime borders with Venezuela on 3 April for commercial traffic.

- By February, 23,725 visas had been issued for Venezuelans in the Dominican Republic, who were registered in the country’s Normalization Plan for Venezuelans (PNV). R4V partners continued to emphasize the need to complete the process promptly with the Venezuelan community. Failure to complete phase three (to receive an ID card) after visa expiry might result in losing initial temporary permits.

- On 8 February, Venezuelan singer-songwriter Carlos Julián Martínez released the song “SOMOS”, featuring Dominican singer Lu Polanco. The song celebrates the peaceful coexistence between Dominicans and Venezuelans, depicting the story of a young Venezuelan arriving in Santo Domingo and discovering the shared bonds between the two nations with the help of a Dominican friend. Separately, the General Direction of Migration (DGM) reduced visa overstay fees to those whose residency expired 3+ years ago: 40% for 3-6 years expired and 50% for over six years. The deadline to renew and apply this discount was March 30, 2023.

- In Guyana, in February, the National Assembly approved the 2023 Budget worth $781.9 billion, including the allocation of $4.7 billion for the development of infrastructure, health, and education sectors in the hinterland regions’ indigenous communities, home to many Venezuelans in Guyana. Funds were also allocated by Guyana’s Ministry of Education to improve indigenous education, including a study on displaced children, an ESL program for preschoolers and a school mapping study. Venezuelan refugees and migrants will benefit from all these initiatives. Further, on February 16, an R4V partner in Guyana released a study entitled Invisible Movements: Recommendation for Facilitating the Cross-Border Migration of Indigenous Peoples in the Caribbean.

- In December, according to the media, over 1,000 Venezuelans in Trinidad and Tobago returned to Venezuela, reportedly due to high living costs and difficulty enrolling their children in schools. Meanwhile, the Minister of National Security of Trinidad and Tobago announced a one-year extension of Venezuelan registration permits. According to media reports, incidents involving Venezuelans as either victims or perpetrators of criminal activity contributed to xenophobia and fear among host communities as well as refugees and migrants.

- Also in Trinidad and Tobago, the Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings) Amendment Act fast-tracked prosecutions for certain sexual and human trafficking offenses to reduce the adverse effects of delay on victims and witnesses. At the same time, according to R4V partners, refugees and migrants showed reluctance to report gender-based violence (GBV) concerns to state authorities. In media interviews US Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago Candace Bond promised to collaborate with Trinidad and Tobago on human trafficking and the welfare of Venezuelan refugees and migrants.
Response

Education
In Aruba, an information session was held for parents and guardians to educate them on children's rights and access to education for refugees and migrants. The afterschool program “Sinja Merdia” also offered Dutch language classes and support for other courses as needed to 27 Venezuelan children. In Curaçao, partners offered language and vocational courses to adult refugees and migrants to improve integration and employment prospects. Learners were provided with English, Dutch, and Papiamentu language lessons and vocational and technical training, acquiring the ability to hold basic conversations and learn local colloquialisms and customs. The first cohort of language classes was completed in January. Additionally, the ongoing after-school program "Coquito" focused primarily on Dutch language classes, but also provided tutoring to children struggling in other subjects. In Trinidad and Tobago, formal online classes within the Equal Place Program resumed on 9 January, with daily in-person activities in Icacos and Monday activities in Siparia. Emphasis was placed on English as a second language (ESL) and preparing secondary level students to transition to Dawere Global programme.

Food Security
In Curaçao, R4V partners provided food vouchers for refugees and migrants to purchase supplies at a local supermarket on the island. In Trinidad and Tobago, food vouchers were distributed by partners to refugees and migrants, and the host community in vulnerable situations. A total of 366 Venezuelans and host community members received vouchers, with a total value of USD 17,957.35.

Health
An Aruba partner facilitated emotional resilience workshops and offered individual support with an in-house social worker, reaching 37 Venezuelans. A partner’s clinic in Curaçao provided primary health care to Venezuelans and members of the host community. Another partner offered prenatal care through three visits to a midwife for each expectant mother. Another partner provided mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services, with up to 8 consultations per person. Refugees and migrants without healthcare insurance were also provided with dental care. In Curaçao primary healthcare was provided to Venezuelan and host community members through outreach sessions, house visits, and in-clinic care. Meanwhile, Guyana partners provided information sessions on "Menstruation and hygiene", “papillomavirus” and "Myths of romantic love" to refugees and migrants in an initiative focused on empowering women and girls and reducing risks of GBV. In Trinidad and Tobago, in January, MHPSS counselling sessions for refugees and migrants were paused during the first half of the month while counsellors were retrained. Sessions resumed in the third week of January. Trinidad and Tobago partners also provided MHPSS services, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and diagnostic services to Venezuelans in need. An R4V partner expanded the provision of counselling sessions to refugees and migrants with the onboarding of a new counsellor and provided more refugees and migrants with counselling sessions. In January, refugees and migrants had their health needs addressed with the provision of specialized medical services such as cardiology, orthopaedics, and paediatrics, to address refugee and migrants' health needs adequately. Another partner provided quality healthcare services to those in need, with 10% of clients receiving support via telehealth services.

Integration
In Aruba, a partner organized a legal workshop based on four themes suggested by refugees and migrants during their legal orientation sessions. The themes included obtaining Venezuelan/Aruban visas, family reunification
In January, R4V partners in Trinidad and Tobago together with government authorities, strengthened interagency coordination on Child Protection matters with the establishment of a Best Interest Determination (BID) Panel, including the Children’s Authority and the Children’s Court. Active Partners*
Aruba: HIAS, IOM, Panamerican Development Foundation, VeneAruba Solidaria

Curacao: IOM, Panamerican Development Foundation, Fundashon Duna Lus, Fundashon Perspektiva i Sosten Integral, Human Rights Defence Curacao, Orthodont Orthodontic Clinic, Salú pa Tur Foundation, Stima Foundation, Venex Curacao Foundation

Dominican Republic: UNHCR, UN Habitat

Guyana: HIAS, UNHCR

Trinidad and Tobago: IOM, Rape Crisis Society, UNHCR, UNODC, UN Habitat, Archdiocesan Ministry for Migrants and Refugees, Families in Action, Family Planning Association, Living Water Community

* Including both appealing partners in the RMRP and implementing partners, based on monthly activities reported via ActivityInfo to the R4V Platform.

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R4V - RESPONSE FOR VENEZUELA: HTTPS://R4V.INFO/EN/CARIBBEAN