PROTECTION CLUSTER VENEZUELA

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Protection Cluster

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FORWARD
A FEW WORDS FROM OUR REPRESENTATIVE

It is with great pleasure that I share the annual report of the Protection Cluster Venezuela for the year 2022. The report highlights the protection risks faced by the vulnerable Venezuelan population and people on the move due to the persistent economic and socio-political challenges, along with the protection response delivered to address these vulnerabilities.

The Protection Cluster observed an increase in protection risks, including instances of violence against children, youth and women and human trafficking. The persistent limited access to basic rights such as health and education, public services, and livelihood opportunities have compelled many to leave their communities and migrate to other states within Venezuela or other countries in the region.

Despite these challenges, the Protection Cluster's 145 partners continued to deliver lifesaving protection services to persons at heightened risk within the framework of the Humanitarian Response Plan. The Cluster upheld the core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence and ensured that protection was mainstreamed in all activities in the humanitarian response.

In 2022, the Protection Cluster and its Areas of Responsibility delivered life-saving services to roughly 900,000 persons despite being only 35% financed. In 2023, the Protection Cluster and its subclusters will continue to position protection at the heart of the Venezuelan response by continuing integrating the centrality of protection in all sectors.

Indeed, this work started in 2021 when the Cluster supported the drafting of the 2022 Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)'s Protection Strategy and contributed to the 2022-2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview and

Humanitarian Response Plan. We remain committed to ensure that vulnerable persons in Venezuela and people on the move receive the protection they need. We hope that this report serves as a valuable resource in understanding the protection landscape in Venezuela and in guiding the protection response in the coming year.

Enrique Vallés-Ramos
Representative
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Venezuela

Credits: Protection Cluster (2022)

PROTECTION LANDSCAPE IN 2022

Throughout 2022, Venezuela continued to face significant socio-political and economic challenges, including a significant economic downturn, chronic inflation with periods of hyperinflation, political polarization, and sectoral sanctions. These challenges have resulted in localized violence, institutional hurdles in service delivery, and limited access to resources and employment opportunities, leading to heightened protection risks.

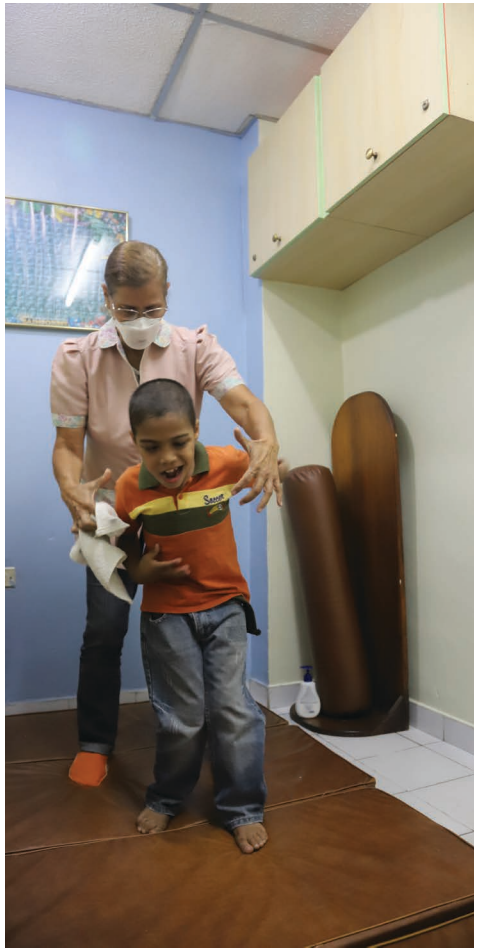
Venezuela remains the world's most inflationary country, with an inflation rate that has reached 156% (Trading Economics, 2022). Economic activity has slowed down, with a 7.2% contraction compared to the second half of 2021, and is expected to decline further in 2023 to 4.4% (ENCOVI, 2022). These economic challenges can be attributed to a range of factors, including deteriorating infrastructure, a decline in basic services such as energy, water, security, and telecommunications, limited access to bank credit, a lack of human capital, low consumer incomes, and political sanctions.

According to the ENCOVI, the share of households whose income is below the poverty line fell from 90.9 percent in 2021 to 82 percent in 2022, however income inequality continues to widen, and the education crisis worsens. By the end of 2022, Venezuela is considered the most unequal country in the Americas'. Its inequality level is compared with countries such as Namibia, Mozambique, and Angola in the African region.

The following is a brief analysis of the critical protection risks and vulnerabilities during 2022.

All forms of violence

Children and adolescents in Venezuela are at risk of experiencing violence, abuse (physical and emotional), neglect, including recruitment by armed groups, labour, and sexual exploitation, and are at heightened risk of Gender Based Violence (GBV), human trafficking, and smuggling. According to key informants who participated in the Protection Monitoring Tool (PMT) implemented by the Protection Cluster, the main protection risks across the country reported during 2022 include gender-based violence as the top one priority risk (45%), children exposed to violence as the second in order (39%), and family separation as the third (36%) (PMT, 2022). Despite the recent opening of the borders, refugees and migrants from Venezuela continue to use irregular crossing points, exposing men, women, girls, and boys to greater vulnerability to gender-based violence



Credits: UNHCR (2022)

(GBV), including rape, sexual assault, survival sex, trafficking, and other forms of sexual exploitation. According to the PMT (2022), GBV against women in Venezuela is often committed by an intimate partner or family member (94%), affecting numerous communities in the country. In border states such as Táchira, psychological or emotional abuse is frequently ranked as the fourth highest protection risk, above food insecurity (PMT, 2022). At the national level, psychological or emotional abuse is the fifth most reported protection risk (29%). In other states, such as Miranda, psychological or emotional abuse is ranked among the top two protection risks, on par with GBV and above food insecurity (PMT, 2022).

Human trafficking and smuggling

Human trafficking continues to be a major protection concern and a huge human rights violation in Venezuela. The lack of official disaggregated data and up-to-date statistics represents a significant challenge in determining the magnitude of human trafficking in the country. That said, according to what was reported from NGOs in the country, during 2022, young women, adolescents, and girls (age between 13 and 35) continue to be the most vulnerable group to trafficking in person (TiP) with the purpose of sexual exploitation, including forced prostitution, in some cases framed in the context of sex tourism and pornography. However, there is also a presence of forced labor, child labor, forced begging, irregular adoption, recruitment to irregular armed groups, and slavery-like practices (transfer of children and adolescents as debt payment, sexual slavery, use of people for rituals, forced marriage, forced pregnancies).

Exploitation happens inside as well as outside the country transporting victims through the land borders to Colombia and further to Peru and even Chile, and the maritime ones from Delta Amacuro and Sucre states to different areas in the ABC islands, Trinidad and Tobago and Brazil. Additionally, the independent report on human rights violations in Venezuela presented by OHCHR shows a wide range of exploitation within the Arco Minero (Mining Arc) del Orinoco (between the states of Bolivar and Amazonas), where regular and irregular mining of gold and precious stones is taking place and is controlled by the so-called “sindicatos” or trade unions. It continues to be an area of irregular exploitation and precarious jobs of mineral resources and people in Venezuela since 2017.
Furthermore, more illegal mining is happening in the Amazonas states, outside of the Arco Minero del Orinoco, where mines are mostly controlled by the Colombian guerrilla group (ELN).

Barriers to health and education

There are various barriers in access to education and health that affect the ability of children and adults to enjoy their rights. The return to face-to-face attendance in 2022 occurred with fewer students enrolled in 2022. There is an evident loss of educational opportunities without a response from the Venezuelan State to guarantee the right to education (ENCOVI, 2022) and a lack of a strong initiative in favour of children’s retention and reintegration into school; an initiative that should integrate pedagogical reinforcement measures, food, and transportation. Teachers in the country continue to have a low salary and the physical deterioration of educational infrastructure have led to the ongoing collapse of the education system. It is reported that the main reason that leads adolescents to leave their education is not the economic factor as many assume, but lack

PROTECTION LANDSCAPE IN 2022 (II)

of interest in studies, due to other reasons such as the need to work or early motherhood (ENCOVI, 2022). In terms of health, the use public services decreased in 2022 (70%) and private consultations became more expensive than before (13% increase in prices). The health crisis in Venezuela is worsening by the day, with most health centers nationwide without water, electricity, basic medical instruments, and most importantly professionals in the field. The majority of laboratory and hospitals' nutrition services are only available intermittently or are completely inoperative People are resorting to health care in pharmacies. (ENCOVI, 2022).

Limited access to public services

The political and socio-economic situation in Venezuela has created barriers which affect the population's access to rights, public services, and humanitarian assistance. Gas shortages and power outages are acute outside of Capital District and pose major challenges to normal functioning of families, the logistics of transporting goods and services and the treatment of persons with serious medical conditions.

Public institutions that provide access to many rights and services, including water, electricity, and health, face financial constraints because of the economic situation. Low public spending because of limited revenue negatively impacted investment to develop and maintain infrastructure and support programmes for sexual and reproductive health, GBV, mental health, and other protection services (ENCOVI, 2022). This has had a disproportionate effect on the most vulnerable – women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, persons with serious medical conditions, LGBTQI+ and indigenous communities - who depend on these programmes for protection services, food, and health care. At national level, drinking water was ranked as the top priority need (68%), and electricity/gas (57%), and medical services (54%), as the top third and fourth needs, respectively (PMT, 2022).

General wellbeing and negative coping mechanisms

The wellbeing of Venezuelans continues to be impacted by the country's economic situation. Children and adults are often exposed to violence, and problems of coexistence within the family, marital separation, GBV, sexual violence, physical punishment, and online and physical bullying. With the purchasing power of families further reduced, many continue to resort to negative coping mechanisms, which involve children, such as child labour, early marriage/union, recruitment of children into irregular armed groups and into criminal groups for economic reasons. Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) are the group most likely to experience different forms of violence, abuse, and neglect. Children on the move are also at greater risk of being victims of smuggling and trafficking. Additionally, as a coping mechanism young men decide to join irregular armed groups such as the ELN and FARC.

Persons on the move

The situation of people on the move involves persons leaving the country, returning, undertaking pendular movements between neighbouring countries and Venezuela or internal migration. This group continued to face numerous protection risks during 2022. Persons who decided to undertake cross-border movements, especially between Colombia and the Venezuelan states of Táchira, Zulia, and Apure, often do so using informal border crossings. The presence of irregular armed groups in these areas places migrants at heightened risk of violence and coercion, including forced recruitment, gender-based violence,

and human trafficking and smuggling. Further, people also irregularly migrate through maritime borders which could lead to deaths at sea. The Protection Cluster's PMT, indicates that the percentage of people who moved in 2022 is around 73% (54% permanently outside the country and 53% only temporarily outside the country). The main countries of destination are Colombia (69%), followed by Chile (31%), and Peru (26%), the United States of America (17%), and Ecuador (16%) (PMT, 2022). The main reasons of this mobility include lack of employment and financial income 91%, followed by the difficult access to food (51%). In addition to, difficulties to access health services (40%), family reunification (16%), and difficulties to access to education (16%) (PMT, 2022).

The loss of economic and livelihood capacities and family separation due to human mobility creates a situation of extreme vulnerability for those vulnerable family members that are behind. They are left with limited capacities to protect themselves and at greater risk of sexual and labour exploitation and other forms of violence. Particularly, elderly people left behind and without family support face great vulnerability and endure extremely harsh conditions related to food insecurity, limited access to medical care, housing, and financial resources. Whereas children left behind are often subject to grave child rights violations, being exposed to previously mentioned protection concerns such as sexual violence, being recruited into irregular armed groups, different forms of child labour and continuous psychological and physical abuse.

Documentation and identity

Persons throughout Venezuela keep encountering multiple challenges accessing civil registration documents (birth certificates from the Civil Registry, Cedulas de Identidad and other associated documents). According to the PMT (2022), people have reported that the main difficulties to obtain and/or renewing documents are geographic distances of main documentation offices (65%), the complexity of the process (39%), lack of information of the procedures (25%), closure of government offices (24%), inability to provide the required documentation due to the lack of human and operational resources (17%), among other reasons (27%).

Limited access to legal documentation, identity cards, passports, civil status certificates, travel authorizations, civil registration, and birth certificates keep limiting vulnerable groups in the country to access basic protection services and restrict their ability to participate in society. Regarding national identity cards, the Cluster's PMT (2022) indicates that 78% of the people report having difficulties in obtaining or renewing their cards since civil registry services (SAIME) offices are not accessible.

Credits: UNHCR (2022)

MONITORING THE PROTECTION RESPONSE: RESPONSE AND FUNDING

In 2022, 93 partners were sending reports to the monthly 5Ws. In total, from January to December 2022, a total of **817,207 individuals** with specific protection needs accessed specialized protection services, information, and capacity building sessions, including Child Protection and Gender-based Violence. Out of the total, over 51,000 vulnerable adults and older persons were provided with specialized services, including group and individual psychosocial sessions (25,000), legal support (3,900), temporary shelter (7,900) and material assistance (14,900). An additional 4,800 adults received legal documents though the support of Cluster partners. 167,000 individuals from the community and State-led institutions received information and training on the prevention and mitigation of protection risks. State-led institutions with a mandate to support persons access their rights were provided with physical resources to enhance their service delivery, which in turn benefited 13,700 individuals.

On the other hand, 32,000 children and women benefited from specialized GBV response services, including case management services (4,800), legal support (4,600), psychosocial assistance (9,000) and dignity kits (13,400). A total of 195,000 children and adults benefited from GBV prevention activities. 105,600 vulnerable children and their caregivers (49,800) benefited from individual and group psychosocial support activities. 58,300 children accessed civil birth registration and other documentation. 182,000 people from the community were trained or received awareness raising sessions on child protection.

Regarding the 2022 HRP funding requirements and funding breakdown by Cluster and AoRs, there is an estimated 305.3 million USD in funding for Venezuela which was tracked by the Financial Tracking Service (FTS). Total contributions allocated to protection reached 27.6 million USD.

Scan to get access to the list of products

Credits: UNHCR (2022)

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2022 STRATEGY

In 2022, the Protection Cluster continued to reinforce the centrality of protection in its activities and those of stakeholders in the humanitarian response. The seven objectives of the Protection Cluster's Strategy are listed below with corresponding outputs to reflect on the success of the Cluster's actions and lessons learnt to achieve this goal.

1. Facilitate access to protection, basic services, and livelihood opportunities

Humanitarian assistance to people on the move, children, women, girls, men, and boys affected by gender-based violence, indigenous communities, persons with disabilities, and people with specific needs strengthened. The Protection Cluster played a key role in evaluating 16 projects for the first allocation of the Venezuelan Humanitarian Fund (VHF), which had two allocations in 2022. The total amount for both allocations was USD 10,004,800. Specifically, for the first allocation in May-June 2022, the two areas of focus were: vulnerable adolescents and youth requiring support in education, livelihoods, mental health, sexual and reproductive health, and protection services in the states of Apure and Bolívar; and survivors of various forms of violence, including women, LGBTI people, victims of trafficking for labor and sexual exploitation, and survivors of gender-based violence associated with human mobility, including returnees and pendular migrants. The focus of the VHF was on providing and strengthening protection services and generating livelihoods in the states of Apure, Bolívar, and Zulia. 11 out of 16 projects with a protection component were selected and funded.

The second allocation in November 2022 prioritized three vulnerable groups in the states of Amazonas, Apure, and Sucre: women of reproductive age, elderly people at risk, including those with disabilities, and children and adolescents at risk. 13 out of 16 projects with a protection component were selected, and a technical evaluation was conducted to amend some of the submitted projects.

Further, the Protection Cluster also participated in the preparation of the CERF Underfunded Emergency (UFE) strategy in September 2022. The allocation prioritised WASH, food security and livelihoods, sexual and reproductive health, and protection with a focus on smuggling and trafficking in persons and case management as priority areas. Prioritized groups were children and adolescents, women in reproductive age and the elderly in Sucre, Amazonas, and Apure states. 40% of funding will be implemented by local NGOs. The Protection Cluster advised UN actors (UNHCR, IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF) technically who presented activities under the protection portfolio on strategic intervention on TiP in their projects.

Furthermore, ensuring complementarity with the CERF allocation, the Protection Cluster updated the sectorial logical framework of the second assignation of Venezuelan Humanitarian Fund (VHF) during the month of October. The update was centered in adding more focus on the livelihoods sector (since it is one of the main objectives of the HRP) for GBV and protection. In addition, the VHF updates aimed to ensure complementarity with the CERF allocation done in September, in terms of programmatic gaps (within or outside the CERF focus sectors), geographic gaps (in terms of the approach

at the municipal level within these states) or the strengthening of some activities within intersectoral lines.

Service mapping Implementation. A new update of the online service mapping form was developed jointly with both AoRs using ArcGIS Survey123 instead of KoBoToolbox. The new platform now allows partners to edit the services available online without submitting a new form. Services are now also available on real time.

Towards the end of the year, Protection Cluster organized a training session for the operators of the "Línea de Contacto Interagencial (LdCI)" on the service mapping. The service mapping is an online tool available for both community members with specific protection needs and service providers that was built to support access to protection services in any location, thus bringing protection service delivery closer to the people in need. OCHA requested a training on the service mapping to train LdCI operators on how to use the tool and better support community members who require access to different protection services. As a result of the training, it was decided that the service mapping will be included as part of the assistance flowchart.

II. Strengthen the protection information management capacities of partners; and monitor and evaluate the humanitarian response

Implementation of Protection Monitoring Tool. In March 2022, the Protection Monitoring Tool (PMT) was launched with the participation of 23 organizations. A total of 48 colleagues from 11 organizations, including UNHCR implementing partners, were trained on the principles of protection information management. Two additional trainings were held, and some other trainings were given on an ad hoc basis. The PMT is a valuable resource for the Protection Cluster to monitor and evaluate protection risks and to better understand the needs of vulnerable populations in Venezuela.

By the end of 2022, the PMT had received a total of 2,100 submissions from 18 states and one district of Venezuela, including Amazonas, Anzoátegui, Apure, Aragua, Barinas, Bolívar, Carabobo, Delta Amacuro, Distrito Capital, Falcón, La Guaira, Lara, Mérida, Miranda, Monagas, Sucre, Táchira, Yaracuy, and Zulia. A total of 26 partner organizations participated in the PMT. Notably, participation from UNHCR implementing partners increased significantly after field offices contacted their partners and emphasized the importance of the PMT.

Protection Information Management and 5W reporting enhanced. In 2022, a total of 93 partners submitted reports to the monthly 5Ws, providing valuable information for the Protection Cluster's analysis of protection risks and needs in Venezuela. The Protection Cluster also provided a total of 14 training sessions on various topics related to Information Management for partners, ensuring that both subnational and national Cluster members were aware of the reporting mechanisms. In addition, the Cluster provided other bilateral information management training to UNHCR and partner staff as needed, in alignment with the Protection Cluster strategy. In total, 547 people were reached through both in-person and virtual trainings on topics such as the 5Ws, reporting, service mapping, and HPC.tools, among others.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2022 STRATEGY (II)

These trainings are critical in ensuring that all stakeholders have the skills and knowledge needed to contribute to the Protection Cluster's efforts in Venezuela.

The Protection Cluster delivered:

1. Three (3) virtual trainings on HPC. tools, targeting 161 staff members from partner organizations to support both the HRP 2022 and HRP 2023 project submission phase.

2. Four (4) virtual trainings on the 5W, targeting 203 staff members from partner organizations to support monthly reporting of project activities.

3. One (1) in-person training on the 5W, targeting 21 staff members from partner organizations.

4. Six (6) virtual trainings on the service mapping, targeting 162 staff members from partner organizations. One of the sessions exclusively targeted the operators of the interagency contact line.

5. Other bilateral and ad-hoc training sessions for partners, as needed.

Also, the Protection Cluster finalized its manual of activities for 2022 – 2023, and produced a Manual of Intersectoral Activities under the umbrella of the AAP Working Group.

Monthly information management products to monitor the humanitarian response. The Protection Cluster continued to create and distribute the following monthly information management products that can be found on the Protection Cluster's Website: interactive dashboard on the implementation of the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan, online mapping of protection services available at a national level, a monthly summary factsheet, monthly coverage maps at municipality level, and 2 two-pagers both for people from the community and service providers regarding access to protection services in emergencies.

III. Strengthen capacity of stakeholders to ensure access to rights and to respond to protection issues

NEXUS Workshops. During the last quarter of the year, the Protection Cluster organized two in person workshops to train Protection Cluster partners on how to operationalize the Humanitarian, Development, Peace Nexus within Venezuela. The workshops intended to trigger the nexus and a sustainable collaboration among partners with the aim of finding sustainable solutions to structural protection risks, threats, or chronic vulnerabilities that go beyond humanitarian response. During the events it became clear that the Nexus in Venezuela has the potential to be a key accelerator for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within Venezuela. Next step will be to identify agreed shared Nexus priorities among humanitarian, development, and peace actors to move from delivering aid to reducing risks, vulnerabilities and ultimately ending humanitarian needs.

Technical Working Groups on the assistance of victims of trafficking (VoTs). IOM, together with two Protection Cluster Partner organizations, as part of their efforts of implementing the WGTiP workplan, have created two Technical Working Groups on the assistance of victims of trafficking in Sucre and Apure with relevant

government institutions, local NGOs, INGOs and UN Agencies. The Protection Cluster CT in Crisis Specialist has advised the coordination of these spaces and supported the mapping of services offered by institutions and humanitarian organizations in both states to create pathways of assistance.

Orientation session and capacity-building on human trafficking with local government. During a field visit to the Táchira State that borders with Colombia, a mentoring session was held with police personnel from San Antonio and Ureña, the Ombudsman's Office and personnel from the OIM and the Diocese on human trafficking.

Further, in Amazonas state, two sessions were organized on a training on for officials and officials of first contact for the detection, identification, and referral of possible victims of human trafficking. This foresaw the participation of local authorities (Omundsman's Office, police, Public Defenders, etc.) and military bodies in Puerto Ayacucho.

S4V initiative on disability mainstreaming. The Age and Disability Working Group lead by the Protection Cluster organized a meeting with Shapers for Venezuela Foundation (S4V). S4V presented the disability mainstreaming initiative to promote inclusive actions in the project design and execution. The program included training and support to NGOs on how to mainstream the topic of disability. S4V requested the support of the Age and Disability Working Group to select the organizations that will benefit from this program. The Protection Cluster proposed to create 3 categories of participants: i) Organizations scored low on the disability section of the HRP projects and have active services; ii) Organizations that are currently participating in other S4V programmes and that still require improvement on disability and inclusion, and III) Other organizations that might be interested and that could be selected through a public call.

Communication Strategy of Online Service Mapping. Through the end of November 2022, 132 service providers submitted information about 810 services available in Venezuela and continued updating the information about services that are already submitted. During this month, the Protection Cluster has also allocated some efforts to develop a communication strategy for the online service mapping platform. Considering the limited accessibility of this platform to different vulnerable groups, this strategy aims to develop an inclusive toolkit, informative communication materials, and strengthen the quality of information that are accessible and that will help in spreading the disposal of protection services across the country towards diversity. This strategy was revised with the two Areas of Responsibility of the Protection Cluster and was discussed with the subnational clusters, which supported in defining a timeline for the planned actions points and gather realistic and feasible suggestions for a successful implementation.

IV. Mainstream and integrate protection into all clusters to promote durable solutions

Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plan 2022-2023. The Protection Cluster received 98 projects that were jointly reviewed within the Inter-cluster Coordination Group (ICCG). A total of 70 projects were evaluated in the month of February. All projects

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2022 STRATEGY (III)

were shared with the sub-national protection clusters for their insights in terms of access, relevance, and efficiency. As per the cross-sectional areas, two evaluation sessions were held to include the necessary recommendations for project improvement. After the merge of some projects, the Cluster had a total of 78 projects of which 30 were approved.

Finally, including both AoRs, a total of 82 projects were approved by the Protection Cluster for a total appeal of 79.8 million US$, disaggregated as follows: 57 projects with a general Protection component and a requirement of 25,253,483 US$;60 projects with a Child Protection component, with a target of 1.4 million beneficiaries and a requirement of 20,528,731 US$; 69 Projects with a GBV component, with a target of 60,000 beneficiaries and a requirement of 34,302,080 US$. The total target for the Protection Cluster was of 2.8M beneficiaries which roughly cover 70% of the People in Need (PiN) number of 4.2 million vulnerable people. This percentage is considered as an optimal figure according to the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) standards.

Furthermore, in October the Protection Cluster participated in the organization of needs assessment sessions/interactive groups that took place in 15 states of Venezuela to collect information on the needs faced by Venezuelans. The needs assessments were conducted together with humanitarian and development actors that shared information regarding risks and gaps. The information gathered was used to adjust/update the HRP/HNO 2023, but also to orientate humanitarian and development actors to better plan protection activities, avoid duplication, reduce gaps, and obtain a stronger overall vision of the changing Venezuelan's situation.

Cross cutting topics areas coordination in the humanitarian response. The Protection Cluster gave two online briefing session on cross cutting issues like Centrality of Protection, PSEA, Gender Mainstreaming, Disability Inclusion, and Nexus for 177 participants. The session was facilitated by the Protection Cluster Snr. Adviser, the PSEA Coordinator, the VbG AoR Coordinator, the Humanitarian affairs Officer (OCHA), and the Protection Cluster Associate.

Further, in coordination with the PSEA Network Coordinator a common training was organized for the Health Cluster partners on PSEA and Trafficking for health personnel in June. Moreover, a training on Gender and "Trafficking in Person in a mixed migration setting" for the Food Security Cluster partners was held together with the GenCap in July with a follow-up session including GBV with the AoR was held in September. The TiP components were facilitated by the Counter-Trafficking in Crisis Specialist.

As part of this coordination, inputs were given to OCHA's "Training for facilitators of the needs evaluation instrument" on TiP, gender, GBV and CP in communities. This led to the creation of key messages and recommendations shared and included in OCHA's Training for facilitators of the needs' evaluation instrument for the 2023 HNO.

Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Latin America Regional Forum. The Protection Cluster participated in the GPC regional Forum in Panama that took place in April 2022. During the forum coordinators and IM officials reviewed gaps, challenges,

and opportunities in protection coordination, discussed protection challenges and solutions, and planned activities to be undertaken to ensure centrality and mainstreaming of protection at field levels.

GPC and Anti-Trafficking Task Team (ATT) briefings on human trafficking response. Two meetings were held with the GPC Anti-Trafficking Task Team (ATT) of the GPC to update on the achievements on the human trafficking response within the Venezuela Protection Cluster. The first one was in July and the second one in November.

In November, a briefing for the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) was organized on the Venezuela trafficking context, the Venezuelan Protection Cluster response, and on the next steps. A notorious interest in the Protection Cluster's response was shown, especially in the human trafficking strategy, the inclusion of people with disabilities in communication campaigns, and advocacy efforts.

R4V and Protection Cluster Workshop in Panama. A two-day workshop between the R4V and the Protection Cluster took place in Panama. The Regional Protection Sector together with the Venezuela Protection Cluster met to discuss issues related to Trafficking and Smuggling, Child Protection, Gender-based Violence Subsectors, and the Support Spaces Working Group. The discussion focused on finding common ways to tackle these issues through a joint workplan that aims at strengthening the protection response and increase the prevention of protection risks in a coordinated and consistent manner.

Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) and DRC Meeting. The Protection Cluster, jointly with UNHCR, attended a virtual meeting with the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) and DRC staff members to discuss ways of collaboration and joint work on human mobility in Venezuela and the Americas region. The interest of the MMC and DRC staff was to know in which states or geographical areas information is currently being collected and what are the gaps that they could address as priority in case confirmed the interest in working in Venezuela. Currently, they are working on a communication strategy with R4V to inform the population in mobility about the protection risks in the Darién region. The meeting concluded in two action points: first, in the planning of a bilateral meeting with IM for more detailed product presentation and to find information gaps where MMC/DRC could work and second, The Protection Cluster, jointly with UNHCR, attended a virtual meeting with the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) and DRC staff members in the need to clarify whether MMC/DRC can participate in working groups related to human mobility/return dynamics in Venezuela.

Protection Analysis Update (PAU) 2022. The Protection Cluster drafted the two Protection Analysis Updates (PAUs) for the year 2022, which guide humanitarian interventions in Venezuela. The PAUs are bi-annual reports designed to analyse the country's context and identify the main protection risks faced by Persons of Concern (POCs). The reports identify the most affected groups and geographical areas that require specific attention. In the case of Venezuela, the main protection risks identified in both reports include all forms of violence, human trafficking, human mobility and family separation, limited

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2022 STRATEGY (IV)

access to documentation, and abuse, exploitation, and neglect of children. These reports provide a critical framework for understanding the humanitarian situation in Venezuela and guide the Protection Cluster's efforts to address key protection challenges.

Within these reports, recommendations or action points are given to different actors in the field such as, humanitarian, government, protection sector, among others. Some of the recommendations included in this reports for the year 2023 were: the need for the humanitarian actors to enhance the capacity of state and non- state organizations to provide quality protection services and prevent and respond to all forms of violence and the need for the Humanitarian Country Team (HTC) to advocate with the donor community, the private sector, and other relevant actors to secure funding for the humanitarian response 2023, prioritizing and integrating protection in all sectors of the response.

Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Coordination. In 2022, the Protection Cluster, in close coordination with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), developed the HCT Protection Strategy. The strategy provides a strategic framework to address the most pressing multisectoral protection risks within the current operational landscape in Venezuela. The strategy focused on four key protection priorities that were identified through ongoing protection monitoring and analysis and bilateral consultations with individual HCT agencies. These priorities are the prevention of all forms of violence, access to rights and services, sustainable livelihoods, and attention to persons on the move. The strategy offers strategic guidance to HCT agencies to address these priorities through a coordinated, coherent, and multi-sectoral approach. An action plan was also developed to operationalize the strategy by setting specific and measurable objectives, collective protection outcomes, and assigning actions. The strategy and action plan are living documents that can be adjusted as needed to meet the dynamic context of Venezuela.

Additionally, the Counter-Trafficking in Crisis Specialist of the PC presented to the HCT the work done on human trafficking including the achievements and challenges of the current counter-trafficking strategy and key messages. Consequently, the HCT emphasized the need to prioritize the components of the human trafficking strategy focusing on the identification of cases and the provision of services. Moreover, they accentuated on the need to strengthen the capacities of local partners and continue promoting awareness

V. Strengthen accountability to affected populations through their involvement in all phases of decision-making processes

Accountability to affected population (AAP) Working Group. The Protection Cluster also participates in the AAP Working Group and developed, under the umbrella of this WG, the Manual of Intersectoral Activities, which highlights the importance of reporting of both AAP and PSEA related activities in the 5W template. The manual was developed by the Protection Cluster jointly with the PSEA network and was approved by the Inter Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG).

LGBTI and Persons with Disabilities and Older Persons (WGPDOP) Working

groups. The two working groups created in 2021 by the Protection Cluster (PC) continued to further facilitate the participation of affected populations in the humanitarian response. The Working Group on Persons with Disabilities and Older Persons (WGPDOP), promoted the equal access for persons with disabilities and older persons to protection solutions and the Working Group on LGBTI persons, kept its work towards the inclusion of LGBTI persons within the humanitarian response plan and protection analysis context.

Specifically, in 2022 the PC provided two trainings on the topic of inclusion to more than 100 partner organizations that participated in the humanitarian response plan and a special training on inclusion was provided to IOM. This was given to staff of the field offices and for the staff of the implementing partners who manage the Temporary Accommodation Centers on the migratory route. Additionally, the WGPDOP, focused on improving the process of data collection to obtain disaggregated data by modifying the template of the HRP project to include more details on people with disabilities and the LGBTI community. Also, in the second semester of the year, a guide was designed for the incorporation of transversal responsibilities that included a section for inclusion of people with disabilities

Regarding, the LGBTI working group, in November the PC hired a consultant for the creation of a training module for partner organizations on the principle of equality and non-discrimination in humanitarian action. These trainings will be conducted for partners in 2023.

VI. Prevent and response to serious forms of abuse and exploitation, including GBV and trafficking in persons through timely identification and referral mechanisms

Counter-Trafficking in Crisis Specialist Joins Protection Cluster. A new anti-trafficking expert joined the Protection Cluster on the 15th of February. The CT Specialist reviewed the Protection Cluster Human Trafficking Strategy to adapt it for the dissemination with Cluster partners. The final version has been presented in March 2022 firstly at the National Protection Cluster as well as Child Protection (CP) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Areas of Responsibility (AoR) meetings and later at the subnational and local PC and AoRs' level as well as at the Inter-Cluster meeting. To continue the work on counter-trafficking within the Protection Cluster, a 2023 Human Trafficking Strategy will be designed. A first revision of the 2021-2022 strategy has been completed by the WG coordination as well as for the 2022 WG work plan. To involve WG members, a workshop for the design of the new strategy will be organized in January. The new strategy should be finalized by mid-February 2023.

The CT in Crisis Specialist has also supported partner organizations with capacity-building on TiP. A total of 237 people were trained of which 161 were female (68%), and 76 were male (32%), which shows a predominant presence of female staff working on protection issues, but also a predominant female interest on the topic. During the field mission in Amazonas, also government officials (national police, military bodies, judicial bodies, and authorities receiving reports) were trained

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2022 STRATEGY (V)

constituting 27% of the total number of people trained. The rest of 73% of trained people are humanitarian and peacebuilding actors from local NGOs (aprox. 40-50%), INGOs (aprox. 25%), UN Agencies (aprox. 20%) and Red Cross movement (aprox. 5%). Specific data cannot be calculated as for online trainings it was difficult to determine many of the organizations people were members.

In March a training session on human trafficking in humanitarian and mixed-migration contexts was held with the San Cristóbal (Táchira) subnational Protection Cluster and in July at the OCHA Coordination meeting in Barquisimeto (Lara state). In August, during a field mission to Amazonas state, a training was also held with humanitarian actors in Puerto Ayacucho on the same topic. Further, specific sessions with partners of the subnational Cluster in Maracaibo were organized to identify trafficking trends and needs of organizations which led to have human trafficking issues more highlighted in the monthly meetings. Further, support was given to partner organizations to integrate TiP response into their protection programming. The Protection Cluster was also invited in the presentation of the trafficking context and dynamics in La Guajira (Colombia) by Renacer NGO organized by the Maracaibo Protection Cluster and UNHCR Riohacha Office.

In addition to the already mentioned field missions to Táchira, Amazonas, Zulia and Lara states, a mission to Falcón state was also organized to better analyse transnational trafficking to Aruba, Curacao, and Bonaire, and to Sucre to support the creation of Technical Working Group for the assistance of VoTs.

Later, in October a training on trafficking in person (TiP) was held with different departments of the OHCHR office, specifically on the definition, international and national legal background, the difference between trafficking and smuggling, and finally on the detection and identification of TiP cases. A discussion on their involvement in the work against TiP followed.

Moreover, a discussion was held on their need to refer cases to different services offered by different Cluster members. The Protection Cluster shared a link to the service mapping as well as contacts to subnational Cluster colleagues to ease the identification of service providers.

Working Group on the prevention and response to Trafficking in Person (WGTiP). Alongside the revision of the strategy, Protection Cluster partners were contacted to provide information on their services and activities in the response and prevention of human trafficking and organizations working on TiP were mapped. This helped the creation of the Working Group on the prevention and response to Trafficking in Person (WGTiP) as part of the first objective of the Human Trafficking Strategy coordinated by the Protection Cluster and officially established on May 6th, 2022. By May 2022 the ToRs were revised by the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) and approved by WG members and a workplan was prepared. The WG currently has 11 members including the CP and GBV AoRs Coordinators, IOM, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF, OHCHR, two international NGOs, four local NGOs as well as GenCap and PSEA Network coordinators. The WG has the objective to support the implementation of the Human Trafficking Strategy and the standardization of the TiP response in the

humanitarian assistance in Venezuela. Specific products prepared by the WG are quarterly bulletins which highlight the contemporary trends in the recruitment of victims of trafficking and their exploitation, as well as examples of the response of WGTiP member organizations in Venezuela, which include COOPI, Éxodo, HIAS, IOM, UNHCR, and Tinta Violeta.

As part of the efforts to raise awareness on human trafficking in Venezuela, the WGTiP has organized two initiatives for the World Day against Trafficking in Person at the beginning of August. A movie screening of the Uruguayan movie “Tan frágil como un segundo" (for which IOM RO Panamá has the rights of) was organized followed by a discussion on TiP implications in Venezuela by four experts from local NGOs. Further, a webinar on trafficking in humanitarian aid in Venezuela, Chile, and Uruguay (organized with the GBV AoR and UN Women) with NGOs from these countries was organized. The July Protection Cluster meeting was dedicated solemnly to TiP for World Day against Trafficking in Person. The meeting foresaw the presentation of the new technical working groups in Sucre and Apure states, the presentation of IOM’s and other PC partners’ work, and the presentation of the research on networks and sex for survival activities in Cucuta, Colombia by a Venezuelan researcher. Whereas, for the 16 Days of Activism against GBV WGTiP Coordinators have participated in an Instagram Live session organized on November 28th by the UN Office, UNHCR and IOM for the 16 Days of Activism campaign. The Instagram live session concentrated on the prevention of trafficking in person in Venezuela explaining the definition of TiP, presenting global and national numbers of interest, and answering questions from connected viewers.

VII. Advocate for protection of vulnerable groups

Visibility of the Protection Cluster improved. The Protection Cluster in hand with the Public Information (PI) Unit of UNHCR initiated the development of videos and social media products for its partners’ impact stories to increase their visibility on social media. These products support the promotion of the Protection Cluster’s public visibility and advocate for the protection of the most vulnerable.

Additionally, the Protection Cluster conducted monthly meetings (the last Thursdays of the month) along the year with its partners and organizations providing spaces of discussion, coordination, specialized trainings, and follow ups on the implementation of the humanitarian response. The average attendance was of 75-80 participants per meeting.

Meeting with USAID and BPRM. A briefing session was held with USAID and BPRM to update them on the Protection Cluster’s yearly achievements and priorities for the year of 2022. Both agencies were very interested in PSEA and mental health and psychosocial support activities and how Cluster partners continue their protection programming during the ongoing pandemic. The agencies also reiterated their support for the Cluster for the year.

Mission of Spanish Delegation and UNHCR Venezuela. Together with UNHCR Venezuela, the Protection Cluster participated in a mission to accompany a delegation from the Spanish Embassy led by Chargé d'Affaires Ramón Santos.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2022 STRATEGY (VI)

Credits: IOM (2022)

It was a week-long mission of several indigenous communities in the Gran Sabana municipality, in the south of Bolívar State. The Spanish diplomatic delegation, accompanied by the UNHCR Representative, Enrique Vallés, the IOM Chief of Mission, Jorge Vallés, and Protection Cluster Coordinator, Virginia Santoro, had the opportunity to visit several aid projects developed and implemented by the two UN agencies.

The projects support and improve lives conditions of indigenous communities that were impacted by the humanitarian situation in Venezuela, the effects of the COVID-19 epidemic, climate change, and the metal pollution from gold mines present in the area. The joint mission was able to learn first-hand about the challenges faced by the Pemones and specifically the Kavanayen, Paraitepuy de Roraima, San Rafael de Kamoirán, Santa Cruz de Mapauri and Manak Krü communities.

The five communities visited are part of the 30 vulnerable indigenous communities of the Gran Sabana that UNHCR and IOM have prioritized to be part of the tripartite program that focuses on the implementation of shelter, energy, health, protection, water and sanitation, food security and agriculture projects. The implementation of these projects by UN agencies and their partners is made possible by the generous contributions of their donor.

Credits: IOM (2022)

ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THE FIELD: SUBNATIONAL CLUSTERS

Sub-cluster Bolivar. The sub-cluster in Ciudad Guyana, which coordinates de states of Bolivar, Sucre, Delta Amacuro, and Anzoátegui, has implemented the 2022 workplan, which was approved and validated to contribute to the strategic objectives of the HRP and the National Protection Cluster strategy. The first objective of the plan was related to facilitating birth registrations, protection, and legal services to the affected populations with an emphasis on human mobility, indigenous communities, people with disabilities and people with other specific needs. Additionally, a parallel action plan was created with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), HIAS Venezuela, Red Cross, and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) to support indigenous communities in the municipality of Gran Sabana in the Bolivar state. Similarly, in the Sucre state, mobility persons, returnees and deportees were assisted in close coordination with local authorities, including the Sucre Ombudsman and Caritas Carúpano. Also, nutritional services and attention for people with disabilities and indigenous communities' services were carried out in various communities in Delta and Pedernales, both municipalities in Delta Amacuro

During 2022, one of the most important activities conducted by the sub-cluster was to strengthen the local organization's capacity, authorities, service providers, and civil society. Protection services were improved in coordination with the GBV AoR. Prevention and response workshops were facilitated for case management purposes with safety referrals targeting institutions and organizations in Valdez and Bermúdez, municipalities in Sucre state, and in Caicara del Orinoco and Los Pijiguaos, Cedeño municipality in Bolívar. In total, 201 persons were trained in Bolívar and Sucre.

Furthermore, another activity developed was the Interagency Emergency Rain Plan update. In this regard, the sub-cluster, in coordination with the Coordination Field Unit (CCT) of Ciudad Guayana led by OCHA, served as a space to coordinate the floods response in the states of Anzoátegui, Bolívar, Delta Amacuro, and Sucre, specifically, for the provision of essential NFI's and hygiene kits to affected and local communities.

Sub-cluster Tachira. The sub-cluster in San Cristóbal, covering the states of Táchira, Mérida, Apure, Amazonas, held monthly and ad hoc meetings with partners to discuss developments in the protection environment and to coordinate community and individual protection responses. The ad hoc meetings addressed joint advocacy strategies before the civil registry authorities and the situation of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) identified in information points for people on the move. Additionally, the sub-cluster improved its relationships with regional authorities in Táchira and Mérida and local representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through regular meetings and the establishment of technical work groups in protection. As for capacity building, partners of the sub-cluster in San Cristóbal received training on the prevention of human trafficking and international and national refugee law, as well as PSEA and AAP. Also, in Mérida, the partners were trained on humanitarian principles, centrality of protection, the prevention of human trafficking and international and national refugee law, as well as the Humanitarian Response Plan. Furthermore, a joint inter agency training was provided to the students of the National

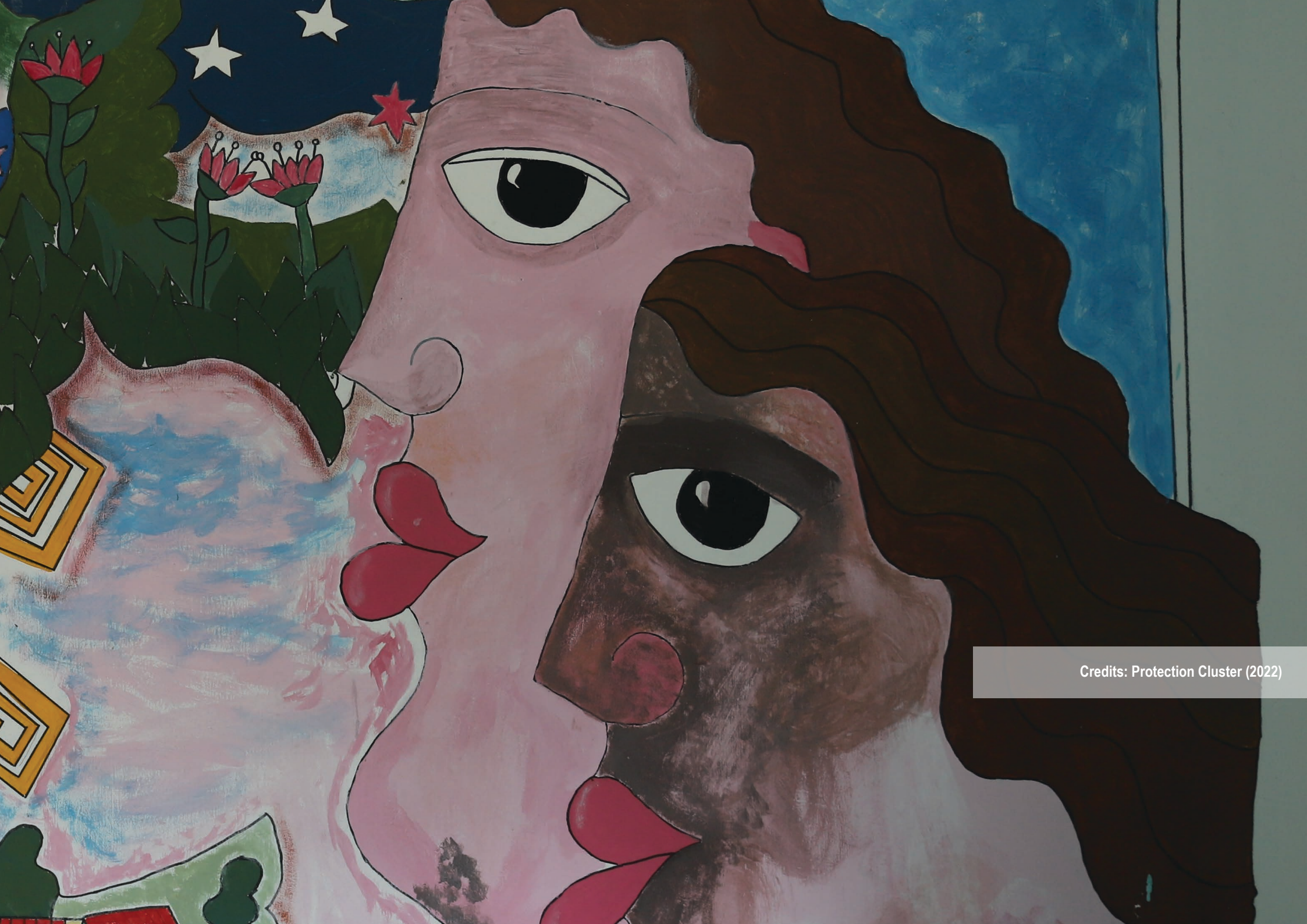
Bolivarian Guard (GNB) by UNHCR, IOM, OCHA and UNFPA on several protection themes.

The subcluster monitored the human mobility situation through 20 information points providing key protection messages, the location of the protection services, potable water, CRIs, food, clothes, and medicines. These protection spaces, 6 of which served as temporary shelters, are managed by Cáritas, the Catholic Diocese of Táchira, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and local authorities with the support of UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA and IOM. Three main protection issues were identified for people on the move: risks of human trafficking, sexual violence and UASC. Therefore, the sub-cluster took action to address these situations by training the partners and volunteers, drafting the terms of reference of the technical work group on human trafficking, executing joint missions with the health subnational Cluster to link the information points to the nearest health centers and ensure the availability of PEP kits, as well as draft a document to present the UASC situation to the authorities and offer technical support to address the situation.

Along the year, the sub-cluster also conducted joint missions to several communities in Táchira and Mérida, carried out seventy joint needs assessments and collected information from 564 key informants in Táchira as part of the national Protection Cluster's PMT pilot exercise. In parallel, the sub-cluster, along with the subnational Health Cluster and the GBV AoR, promoted the MHPSS Working Group led by one of the partners and the GBV and Protection Case Managers Working Group.

Sub-cluster Zulia. In 2022, the Maracaibo sub-cluster, which covers the states of Zulia, Falcon, and Lara, further strengthened the inclusion of organizations based in the states of Lara and Falcón, through the constant invitation to meetings, the referral of cases and the delivery of joint trainings with the GBV and Child Protection AoRs. Additionally, coordination with the CT in Crisis Specialist of the National Cluster facilitated the incorporation of more organizations to work on this issue, which translates into greater capacity for case identification and prevention strategies.

Furthermore, national organizations such as Save the Children and CESVI collected through the Cluster information of interest for the implementation of their projects in the CCT area and on grassroots organizations to strengthen their pool of partners; respectively, which contributes to the expansion of the humanitarian response. Additionally, the design of two public information products/materials on birth registration were finalized. The content was provided by Fundación Casa Bonita and Save the Children, with the approval of the rest of the member partners. These information products represent the first phase of the campaign, which aims to access registration of births that will continue in 2023. Another relevant achievement to consider was the inclusion of the issue of human mobility as a fixed point in the agenda of the sub-cluster since this space allows to share figures and trends of interest that guide the humanitarian response in this regard. the state of Zulia, the sub-cluster coordination, together with partner organizations, supported the intersectoral needs assessment.



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Annual Report Protection Cluster 2022

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The Protection Cluster is a broad-based participatory forum of protection partners which brings together United Nations agencies, human rights and development organisations and actors, as well as local and international non-governmental organisations. The Protection Cluster is led by UNHCR.

All our information products, including reports, maps and factsheets are available on the Venezuela Protection Cluster website:
https://ven.protectioncluster.org

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