Protection Monitoring 2023

Curaçao

Context

UNHCR conducted a protection monitoring exercise in Curaçao with refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants to better understand their profiles and protection needs. Data collection was implemented through **413 face-to-face surveys**, assessing **888 people** from **21 till 25 November, 2023**. Surveys were applied at a household level, with a member of each household answering on behalf of the family group. Assessed households had at least one person without permanent residency in Curaçao. Data was collected by UNCHR protection teams using KOBO Toolbox in places where people accessed social and religious activities. The findings of this survey, although indicative of the population of refugees, asylum-seekers, and undocumented migrants in Curaçao, **are not statistically representative**.

888
Total people assessed*

2 people
Average household size

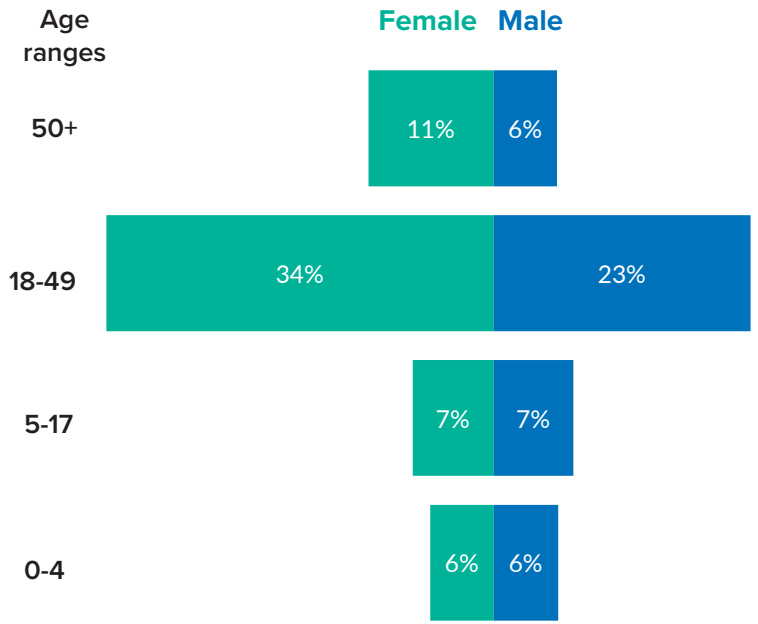
Assessed individuals were part of households with at least one foreign national **without permanent residency in Curaçao.*

41%
Male

58%
Female

Less than 1% of assessed individuals responded "other" or did not answer.

Sex and age of assessed individuals*



**Does not include assessed individuals that responded "other" or did not answer (less than 1%).*

Main data collection sites

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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Demographics and Respondent Profiles

Average age of assessed individuals

32 Years | **29** Years | **33** Years

Country of origin of assessed individuals

64% Venezuela

21% Colombia

10%* Curaçao

3% Dominican Republic

Other countries include: Ecuador, Haiti, Italy, Jamaica, Lebanon, Portugal and Netherlands.

*Including children born in Curaçao **that do not have access to Dutch nationality.**

5% of assessed individuals were **children at risk of statelessness** due to lack of access to documentation in their parents' country of origin.

Main languages spoken by assessed households

Spanish **98%**
English **14%**
Others **3%**
Papiamento **46%**
Dutch **7%**

Other languages include Arabic, Italian, and Portuguese.

4%

of assessed households reported living with pregnant or lactating women.

30%

of assessed households reported living with someone with a critical or chronic medical condition.

8%

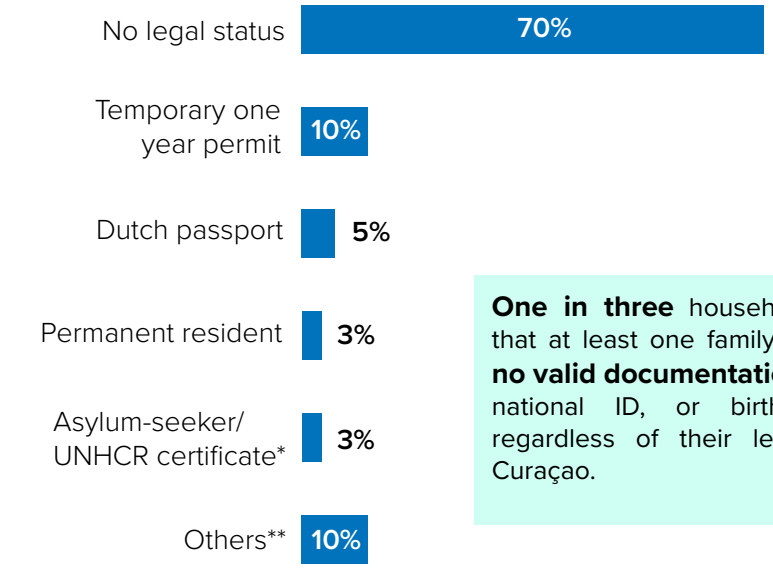
of assessed households reported living with someone with a disabilty.

82%

of assessed households reported having dependants outside of the country.

Documentation

Legal status in the country



One in three households reported that at least one family member had **no valid documentation** (passport, national ID, or birth certificate), regardless of their legal status in Curaçao.

*-Assessed individuals were part of households with at least one foreign national **without** permanent residency in Curaçao.*
**UNHCR certificates were issued to refugees and asylum-seekers in Curaçao until 2017.*
***Others include Article 3 requests, family reunification permits, and both valid and expired tourist visas.*

58% of households with dependants abroad reported having at least one child (under 18) outside the country. Furthermore, **1 in 10 households** reported that a dependant had previously **been denied entry to or deported from Curaçao.**

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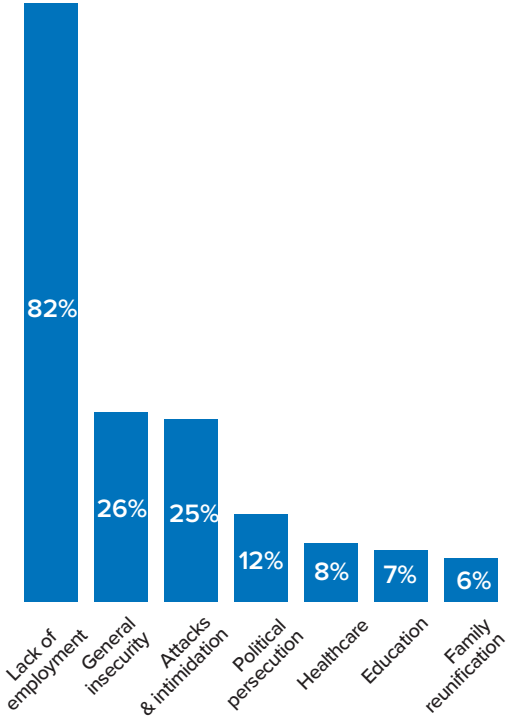
Push factors

Main reasons for leaving country of origin



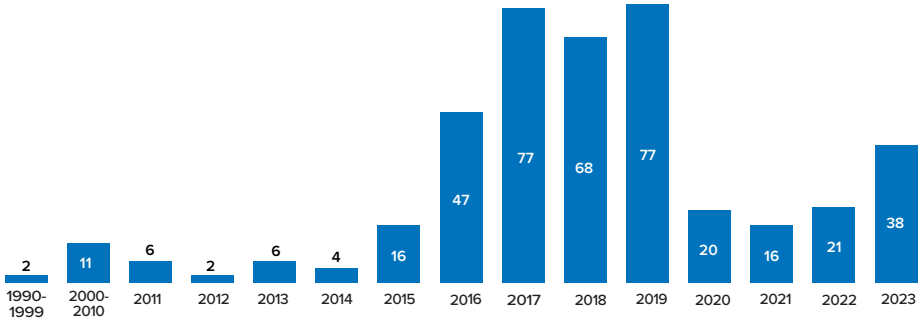
Half of the assessed households (49%) reported **two or more reasons** for leaving.
A similar proportion (46%) reported reasons related to violence.

For those interviewed households that reported leaving their country of origin due to attacks or persecution, the reasons were related to: **political opinion, gender-based violence, and gang violence.**

Access to territory and asylum

Respondents' year of arrival to Curaçao

42% of respondents reported arriving to Curaçao between 2019 and 2023.



83%
of respondents reported having the intention to stay in Curaçao during the next 12 months.

90%
of respondents reported entering the country regularly.

Eight per-cent of households were planning on leaving the island within the next year, and a similar proportion (9%) were undecided. **Sixty per-cent** of those planning to leave stated the **lack of regular residence status** as one of their main reasons for leaving.

Asylum system

Currently, international protection requests in the country are processed by the Government of Curaçao under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.
Until June 2017, UNHCR conducted refugee status determination (RSD) under mandate, and issued certificates to persons in need of international protection. These certificates are validated by biometric data, and can be renewed by Agency every two years. To date, 88 people with such certificates are still living in Curaçao.

No individuals with international protection recognition (granted Art. 3 requests) were interviewed during the Protection Monitoring excercise.

13%
of assessed households reported that at least one family member had applied for International Protection (article 3) in Curaçao.

50%
of households that reported applying for asylum had not received confirmation from the Admissions Organization.

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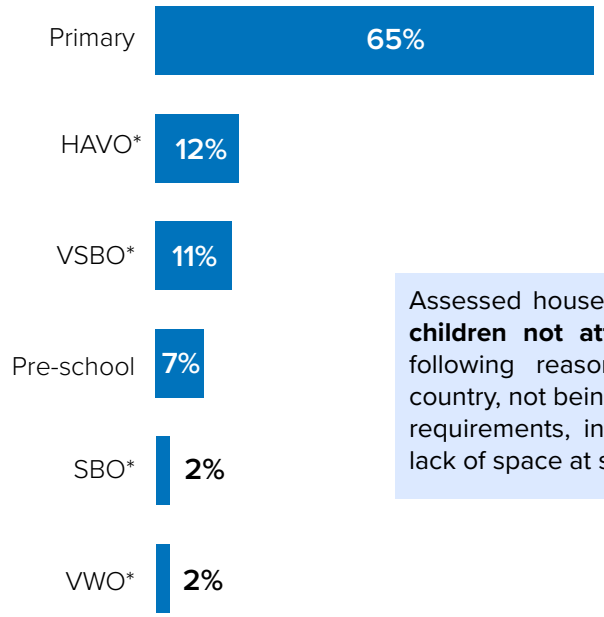
Education

98% of assessed school-aged children (4-17) were **currently enrolled** in school.

100% Boys

95% Girls

Education level assessed children were enrolled in



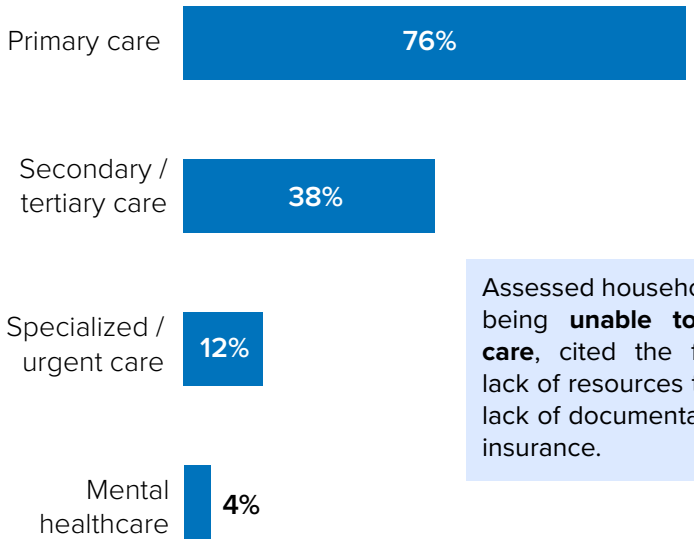
Assessed households that reported having **children not attending school,** cited the following reasons: recent arrival to the country, not being familiarized with the entry requirements, inability to cover costs, and lack of space at schools near their homes.

HAVO: *higher general secondary education*
VSBO: *lower vocational education*
SBO: *secondary vocational education*
VWO: *pre-university education*

Health

14% of respondents that needed **health services** during the past 6 months reported being **unable to access care.**

Type of healthcare required during the past 12 months



Assessed households that reported being **unable to access medical care**, cited the following reasons: lack of resources to cover expenses, lack of documentation, and of health insurance.

Three in five households that were able to access primary care services did so through UNHCR partner ***Salú Pa Túr*, which operates the only clinic that offers primary healthcare to uninsured refugees and migrants in Curaçao.**

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Livelihoods

72% of assessed adults reported working during the previous 30 days.

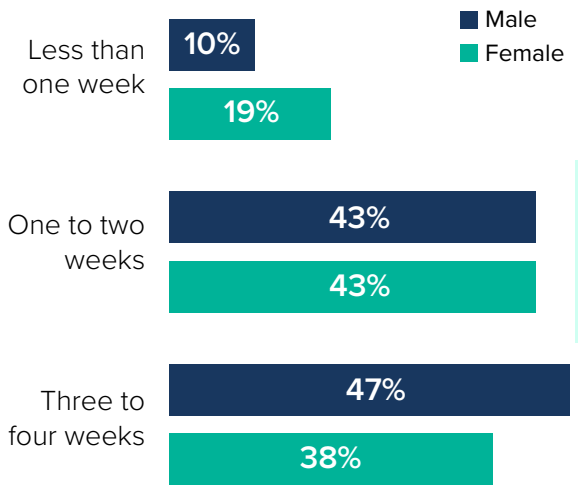
82% Men

66% Women

However, most of this work was informal. **At least 92% of assessed adults of working age reported working informally,** without a contract.
The most common reasons reported for not working were **lack of documentation (19%)**, **lack of opportunities (9%), childcare (6%), health issues, disabilities, and pregnancy.**

Working informally placed respondents **at risk of exploitation** in Curaçao. Several assessed individuals who had worked informally **reported incidents related to the lack of payment by the employer**, even after several days or months, with the threat of being reported to the police for being undocumented.

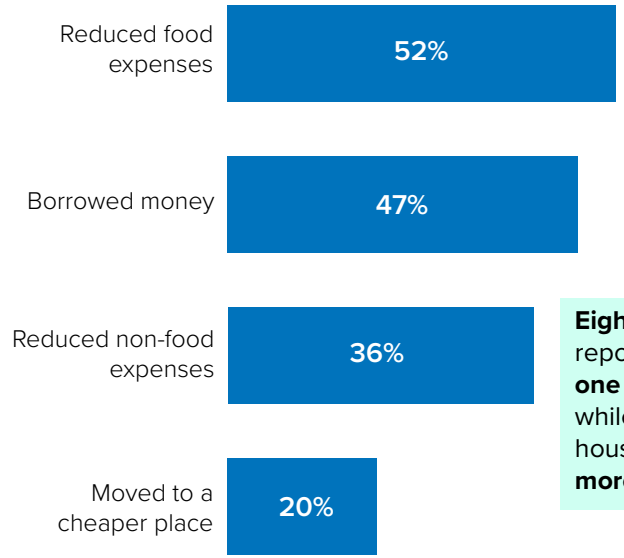
How long did this person work for during the last 30 days?



One in three (36%) households reported having **two or more different sources of income.**

The main reported sources of income during the last 30 days were **wage labour (81%)**, **gifts from relatives/ friends in Curaçao (26%)**, and **income from businesses (10%)**. Other reported income sources include assistance from NGOs, savings, remmitances, credit, and sale of assets.

Negative coping strategies reported during the last 30 days



Eight in ten (84%) households reported engaging in at least **one negative coping strategy**, while **six in ten (56%)** households engaged in **two or more**.

Percentages do not add up to 100% as respondents could select multiple answers

Other reported negative coping strategies include spending savings (11%), buying goods on credit (10%), selling productive assets (4%), sending household members to work elsewhere (2%), and involving children in income-generating activities (1%).

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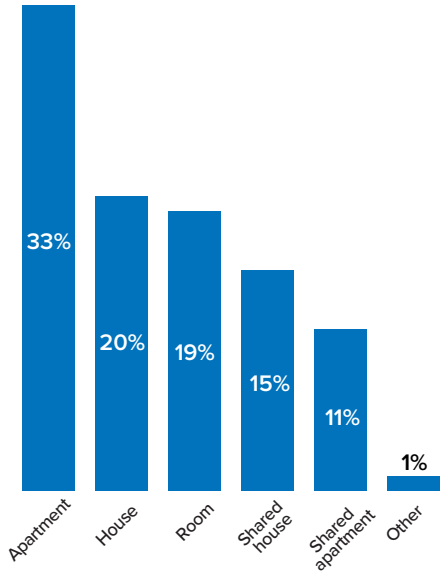
Housing

Type of dwelling the household lives in



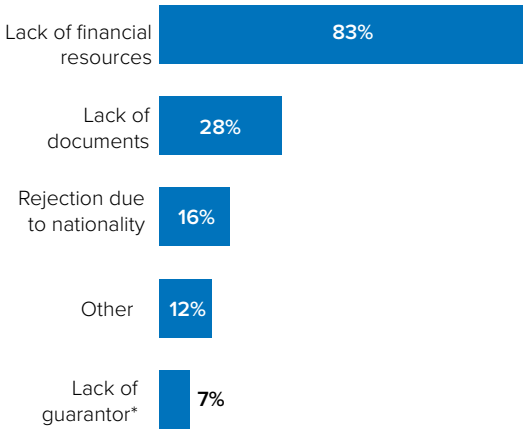
68%

of interviewed individuals do not have a rental contract for their current housing, only a verbal agreement.

42%

of assessed households reported having difficulties finding a place to stay.

Reported obstacles finding a place to stay



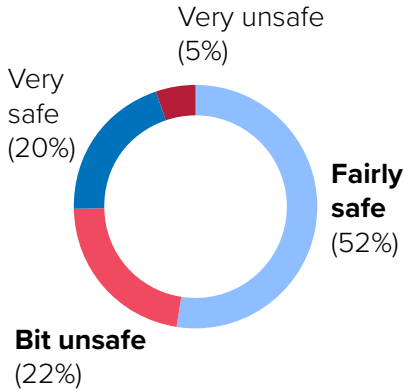
**Having a guarantor is not a requirement by law, but is often requested by landlords as a liability measure.*

Eighty five per-cent of households experiencied dificulties affording to pay their rent.

On average, respondents living in a house had **two** separate habitable rooms, while respondents living in an apartment had a **single** habitable room.

Safety

How safe do you feel walking alone in your area/neighbourhood after dark:



Most reported feeling unsafe due to fear of police / government agents, lack of documentation , and the risk of deportation

At least two in ten households (23%) reported members who had experienced **issues related to their safety** in Curaçao during the last 12 months.

Reported incidents included work abuse, verbal harassment, threats, theft, injuries, sexual harassment, physical assault, and bullying at school. In most cases, incidents were not reported due to **fear of deportation, and lack of confidence in authorities.**

Two in three assessed households described their interactions with host community members as **positive or very positive.**

Eighty four per-cent of households reported there were areas in their community where girls and women felt unsafe or were at increased risk for violence. The reported risks were associated with the sale or use of drugs, sexual harassment, and being mistaken for sex workers.

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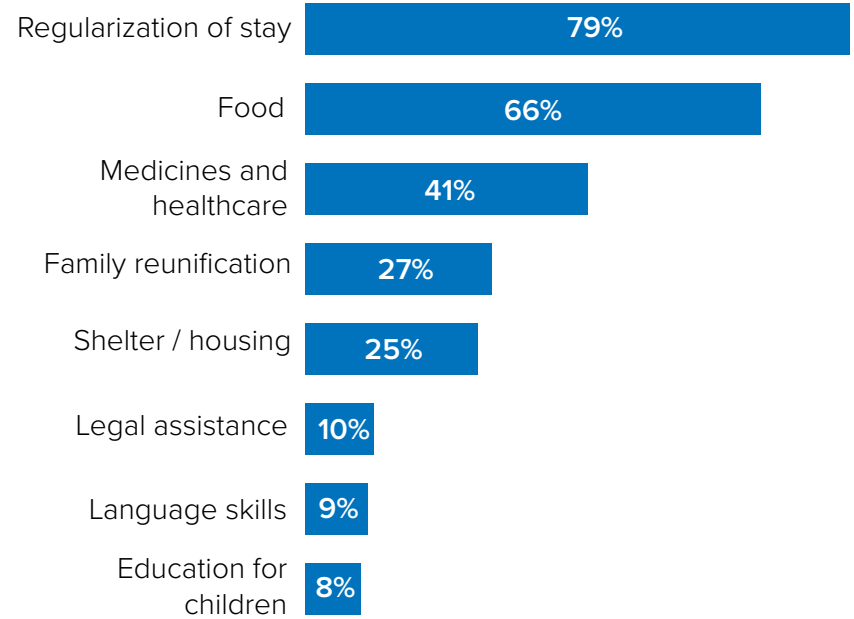
Main needs

What are your three priority needs to improve your household's current living conditions?



Other reported needs included language skills, psychosocial support, childcare items, access to credit, Internet and telephone access, and drinking water...

One in ten households reported knowing of vulnerable population in their community, with humanitarian needs and **not receiving assistance** from organizations or the government.

UNHCR Multi Country Office for Belize, Cuba, Panama, Nicaragua and Southern Caribbean
Data Sources: UNHCR Protection Monitoring, conducted from the 21st to 25th November 2023
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