

# Caribbean Sub-Region

## Situation Report August-September 2019

Dominican Republic



Trinidad and Tobago



Guyana



Aruba



Curaçao



35 Appealing Partners



100K Venezuelan Refugees & Migrants<sup>1</sup>



35M Financial Requirements

\* FAO | ILO | IOM | PAHO | Save the Children | UNAIDS | UNESCO | UNFPA | UNHCR | UNICEF | UNODC | UNWOMEN | WFP

### Caribbean Sub-Region Refugees & Migrants Response Plan: Summary Figures

In recent years, **five countries** in the Caribbean have been hosting growing numbers of refugees and migrants from Venezuela: **Aruba, Curaçao, the Dominican Republic, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago**. As of September 2019, it is estimated that around **100,000** refugees and migrants arrived by air, land and sea to the Caribbean sub-region. Caribbean countries have adopted diverse approaches to respond to the influx of refugees and migrants from Venezuela as a result of their different geography, linguistic, legal and socioeconomic backgrounds. Considering the small size or limited absorption capacity of the concerned countries, the increasing number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela has had an impact on host communities, especially vulnerable local communities that had already limited resources. Concerns over growing number of Venezuelans arriving in the Caribbean sub-region have led some countries to introduce restrictions for Venezuelans to access their territories, including visa requirements and temporary closure of borders. The deteriorating situation in Venezuela has also led to significant numbers of Guyanese and Guyanese descendants to return to Guyana from Venezuela. Through the **2019 and 2020 Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP)**, partners have identified the priority needs for refugees and migrants as well as host communities. These are: protection, addressing gender-based violence (GBV), shelter, access to food, adequate nutrition and health care, including psycho-social support, as well as the provision of livelihoods and self-reliance opportunities.

### KEY FIGURES (as of September 2019)

No. of Registered Venezuelans asylum-seekers (Dec. 2015-Sept.2019)



Monthly registration of new Venezuelan asylum-seekers in the Caribbean sub-region from December 2015 to 30th September 2019<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Caribbean sub-region operational planning figures as of September 2019. Source: RMRP 2020 Planning Workshops.

## OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Access to **territory** and **public services** for refugees and migrants from Venezuela remain the most critical issues in the Caribbean sub-region. Limited access to basic services such as health, education, water, sanitation, and adequate shelter are persistent challenges among Venezuelans. The **R4V** partners continue to support Government authorities in putting in place an appropriate response to the Venezuelan situation and, where relevant, designing and adopting new policies and legislation to facilitate the integration of Venezuelans within host communities.

The widespread shortage of food and medicine has led to a higher exposure of diseases among refugees and migrants from Venezuela. In response to this health emergency, officials from **Argentina, Canada, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, Panama, Paraguay, Peru** and the **United States** approved the issuance of unified vaccination cards to Venezuelan refugees and migrants. These cards will be distributed from the middle of October and help ensure that Venezuelans are included in public vaccination campaigns. Implementing partners in these countries have also established a regional network aimed at connecting HIV positive refugees and migrants with clinics, hospitals, shelters and NGOs who can provide them with the necessary care.

The **Government of Curaçao** published a [revised procedure](#) for those seeking international protection, including Venezuelan refugees and migrants, under Article 3 of the **European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR)**. Article 3 of the ECHR prevents forced return of persons to a country where they would face torture or inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment. The procedure, which was published in Dutch, details the process for applying for international protection, the issuance of a decision, and the steps after a decision is issued. The revised policy has been strengthened in regard to the right to appeal and clearly mentions protection against *refoulement* for individuals who are appealing for protection under Article 3.

With the support of platform partners, the **Government of Guyana** is preparing to introduce a digitalized data management system to facilitate registration and documentation of Venezuelans. The biometric system will replace the paper-based system currently used by the **Immigration Department of Guyana** and is expected to provide a more streamlined procedure for regularization of status of Venezuelans and facilitate issuance of household registration certificates and government stay permits, which will allow for increased access to public services. The roll out of the digitalized system is scheduled for October 2019.

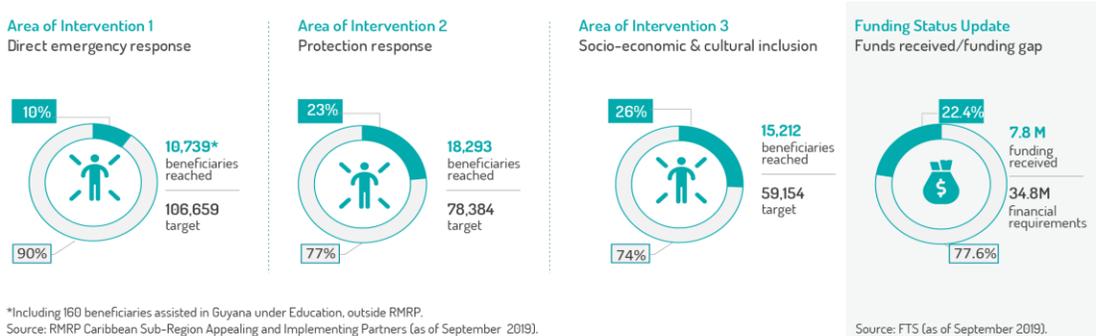
In September, the **Government of Trinidad and Tobago** [announced](#) that it is ready to issue over 3,000 government registration cards to **16,523** adults and **2,421** children Venezuelans who were registered during the two-week registration exercise conducted by the Government in June 2019, while verification of the remaining registered population is still ongoing. Cardholders are granted the right to work for **six months** with the possibility of **one extension** for the same period, however, they cannot access the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) or welfare and have limited access to secondary and tertiary health care and education. Persons in possession of the registration card will need a **visa** if they wish to exit and re-enter **Trinidad and Tobago**, in accordance with the new visa policy instituted in June 2019.

## RESPONSE OVERVIEW AND FUNDING UPDATE (August – September)

*The activities described under the “Area of Intervention” sections are based on the monthly contributions shared by the appealing partners as of the reporting period. The contents included in these sections are intended to provide an overview of the status of the response in the five Caribbean countries within the framework of the RMRP by presenting some of the **key highlights** per country and are therefore not exhaustive<sup>2</sup>.*

---

<sup>2</sup> The number of activities implemented and persons reached by partners are limited to the funding received so far.



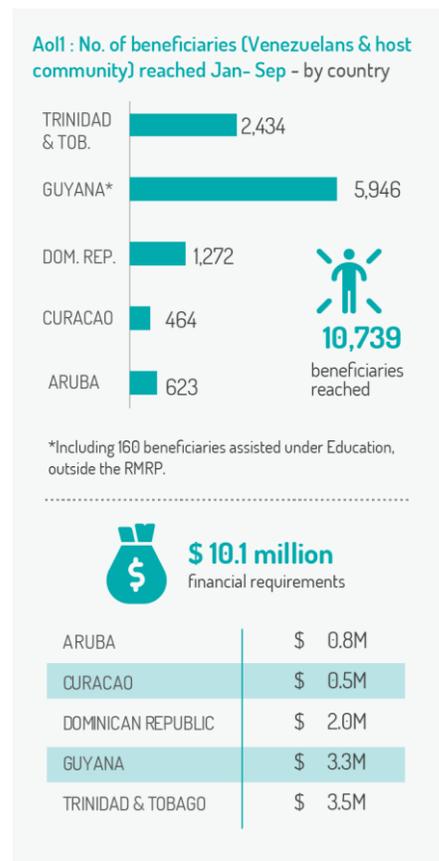
## AREA OF INTERVENTION 1: DIRECT EMERGENCY RESPONSE

R4V partners continued to provide direct emergency assistance in **Aruba**, **Curaçao**, the **Dominican Republic**, **Guyana** and **Trinidad and Tobago** to Venezuelans already present in these countries and to new arrivals, reaching **10,739** individuals since the beginning of the year. The type of direct emergency assistance provided to those in vulnerable conditions included shelter, food and non-food items (NFIs), water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), emergency medical assistance and cash-based interventions.

Many refugees and migrants from Venezuela continue to arrive in the Caribbean with no or limited assets. As their access to livelihoods opportunities in host countries is limited, many do not have the resources to secure adequate housing. As part of their emergency support, partners provided different forms of **temporary accommodations** and **emergency shelter** to a total of **648** individuals in **Curaçao**, the **Dominican Republic**, **Guyana** and **Trinidad and Tobago** as of September 2019. Partners in the **Dominican Republic** provided temporary accommodation and rental support to **182** Venezuelans with specific needs, including health-related issues.

In **Guyana**, the lack of livelihood opportunities and the limited availability and high cost of non-food items have increased humanitarian needs of Venezuelans, especially those living in remote areas of the country. During the reporting period, partners provided **food assistance** to **88** Venezuelans in **Regions 4** and **9** and **non-food items** to **47** Venezuelans in **Region 9**. Partners also provided food assistance to **186** vulnerable Venezuelan refugees and migrants in **Aruba** and the **Dominican Republic**. Additionally, **NFI kits** containing hygiene and household items were delivered to 59 individuals in **Curaçao** and the **Dominican Republic**.

R4V partners continued to promote access to health care and adequate nutrition across the region. In **Guyana**, **935** Venezuelans were vaccinated against yellow fever, tetanus, diphtheria, measles, and rubella. Similarly, **162** Venezuelans benefited from emergency health care in the **Dominican Republic** during the reporting period. Partners organized medical clinics in Port of Spain and rural areas of **Trinidad and Tobago** to allow refugees and migrants to access primary medical care. Challenges to access health care in the sub-region include language barriers, lack of knowledge of the services available, strains on existing public health systems, and inability of refugees and migrants to afford the cost of medical interventions, especially of specialized care.



**Early childhood development** sessions were undertaken with host communities and Venezuelans engaging **58** children (29 girls, 29 boys) in Region 1 in **Guyana** in September. In **Trinidad and Tobago**, **44** children under five were screened for



*In the Dominican Republic, emergency health care services were provided to Venezuelan migrants and refugees during August and September*

their nutritional status and counselling was provided to **158** Venezuelan caregivers with children between 0-23 months on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF).

**Lack of job opportunities** in the formal sector in host countries continue to impact Venezuelans' ability to be self-reliant and sustain themselves and their families. As part of the response, partners provided cash-based assistance grants to enable some of the most vulnerable refugees and migrants to fulfill their needs in a dignified manner. Since the beginning of the year, 2,398 vulnerable Venezuelans in **Trinidad and Tobago**, and 348 in **Aruba** have received cash-based assistance to meet a variety of their needs, including access to food, water, healthcare and shelter.

## AREA OF INTERVENTION 2: PROTECTION RESPONSE

The assistance and protection of those who are particularly vulnerable is at the center of the response to the Venezuela situation in the Caribbean. Advocacy and support for the registration and documentation of new arrivals, the regularization of status of refugees and migrants, and of refugee status determination continue to contribute to improving the lives of refugees and migrants from Venezuela in receiving countries and allow them to access basic services.

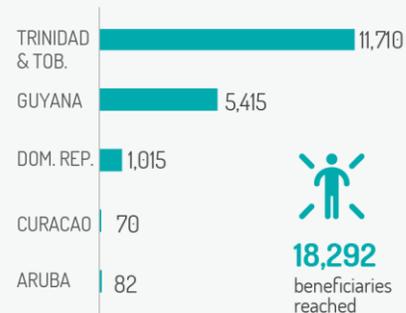
Since the beginning of the year, more than **18,292** of the most vulnerable refugees and migrants benefited from coordinated protection activities thanks to the joint efforts of ten appealing agencies and 18 implementing partners.

Partners in the region have adopted a community-based approach in their interventions to identify protection risks and jointly assess responses through consultations and meaningful participation of communities. In August, 13 Venezuelans provided their feedback and opinions to inform interventions of partners in **Guyana**. Partners have also organized 23 focus groups discussions in the country, reaching 434 individuals (189 Venezuelans) since January 2019.

Between January and September 2019, partners provided counselling and legal advice to Venezuelan refugees and migrants across the sub-region, including 532 in the Dominican Republic, 5,079 in **Guyana** and 455 in **Trinidad and Tobago**. Topics included access to asylum, residency and employment. In **Curaçao**, partners trained five lawyers and eight volunteers from a locally-based Dutch NGO on international protection and assistance programs for refugees and migrants during the month of August.

Partners continued to provide protection, prevention and response services to vulnerable refugees and migrants from Venezuela, especially to survivors of GBV, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals (LGBTI) persons, unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) and other people with specific needs. As part of this process, a

**Aol 2: No. of beneficiaries (Venezuelans & host community) reached as of Jan -Sep - by country**



**\$7.6 million** financial requirements

ARUBA	\$ 1.1M
CURACAO	\$ 0.8M
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	\$ 2.5M
GUYANA	\$ 0.8M
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	\$ 2.4M

workshop on international protection of LGBTI persons took place in the **Dominican Republic** in September. The workshop was part of the **Free and Equal campaign** [“Ser LGBTI en el Caribe”](#).



A workshop on international protection of LGBTI persons was conducted in Santo Domingo, DR on 13 September Free and Equal campaign [“Ser LGBTI en el Caribe.”](#)

Since January 2019, partners in the **Dominican Republic** identified and referred 169 persons with specific needs (PSN) to appropriate services. In **Aruba**, 72 PSN have accessed appropriate services, including children at risk and people with disabilities. In **Trinidad and Tobago**, **1,123** children were provided with psycho-social support, including access to child friendly spaces. Partners in the **Dominican Republic** continued to provide Venezuelans with psychological support individually or through community support groups reaching **769** individuals since the beginning of the year.

Along with **GBV**, human trafficking is among the most prevalent protection risk faced by persons arriving from Venezuela. Access to safe shelter and housing for victims of trafficking continue to be a challenge due to limited availability of emergency shelters, the high cost of renting, and security risks. This situation coupled with lack of capacity of officials at entry points to identify victims of trafficking and of service providers to assist them with minimum standards of care often prevent victims of trafficking and other PSN to access appropriate services.

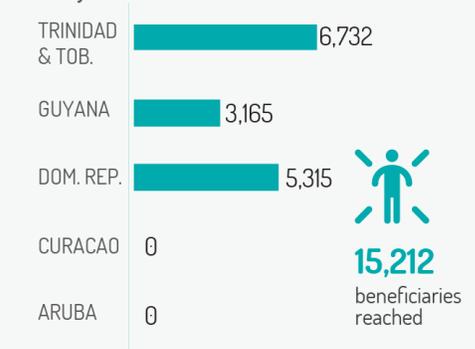
Despite challenges, as of September 2019, partners supported the government of **Trinidad and Tobago** to provide accommodation and food assistance to 38 women and two girls to meet their urgent needs. Partners have also been working towards establishing and enhancing referral pathways, providing services to victims of trafficking and developing the capacity of host governments in the region.

### AREA OF INTERVENTION 3: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION

In the Caribbean, local integration is impacted by **language barriers** and the **lack of regular migratory status** of the majority of the refugee and migrant population from Venezuela. This hinders their access to the formal labor market, financial systems and, in some cases, higher education, thus exposing refugees and migrants from Venezuela to exploitation and abuses. Dialogue with governments and local authorities was maintained across the Caribbean sub-region during the reporting period to advocate for legal status and access to basic rights, including access to employment, to Venezuelans.

Partner engagement in the area of socio-economic and cultural integration remained high in the Caribbean sub-region, benefiting **15,212** Venezuelans and members of the host community since January 2019. With a view to improve the living conditions of Venezuelans, small grants were provided for the development of businesses in the **Dominican Republic** and **Guyana**, benefiting 44 Venezuelans between January and September.

Aol 3: No. of beneficiaries (Venezuelans & host community) reached as of Jan -Sep- by country



**\$ 8.6 million**  
financial requirements

ARUBA	\$ 0.5M
CURACAO	\$ 0.3M
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	\$ 1.1M
GUYANA	\$ 1.6M
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	\$ 5.2M



*In August and September, sessions were held to train educators in English-as-a-second-language (ESL)*

Partners continued to engage in initiatives to provide education to refugee and migrant children in the Caribbean sub-region during the reporting period. In **Guyana**, partners in collaboration with local education authorities and community leaders mobilized 12 volunteers in Region 1 to run a community-based English as a second language (ESL) initiative for children not enrolled in school. This project will run in parallel with another initiative to provide ESL classes to children enrolled in school. These initiatives, which are expected to start in October, aim at fostering social cohesion between Venezuelans, returning Guyanese and indigenous Warao children by facilitating their integration with the host

community.

In **Trinidad and Tobago**, classes for **Equal Place/Espacio de Equidad**, the joint education initiative to provide access to accredited education to refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants began in September. Over **700** children between the ages of 5-17 attended the program across the country. Partners are working to secure new learning spaces with the aim of accommodating at least **1,000** students by the end of 2019.

Still in **Trinidad and Tobago**, integration activities involved community dialogues and workshops on **prevention of xenophobia** for **409** host community members and **70** Venezuelans during the reporting period. Activities included an event hosted by the Trinidad and Tobago Economics Association held on the topic of opportunities for economic development, as well as screenings of *Lifted*, a film aimed at showcasing the need for diversity and exchange. In August, platform partners also organized a series of workshops and training sessions for **444** members of the host community and **34** Venezuelans, covering topics on the rights of refugees and migrants and overcoming language and cultural barriers.

#### **AREA OF INTERVENTION 4: STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF HOST GOVERNMENT**

Under Area of Intervention 4 of the **RMRP**, partners have continued working with host governments across the Caribbean sub-region to support access to and the delivery of essential services such as education, health, and social protection, while strengthening governments' capacity to ensure international protection for those in need. Partners supported host Governments with local capacity building, including promoting knowledge of and access to asylum procedures and legal pathways through material support and training.

In August, partners organized a regional course in Costa Rica on **International Refugee Law and Statelessness**, which was attended by 19 officials from various Caribbean countries, including Aruba, Curacao, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago. The training provided an opportunity for States to exchange good practices on refugee protection and statelessness.

In September, in the **Dominican Republic**, partners conducted a training on **Refugee Status Determination (RSD)** with officials from the **National Office for Refugees (ONR)**, seeking to build the capacity of the office to receive and assess asylum claims. Partners also organized a training on international refugee law with the participation of judges from the Administrative Court, Public Defender's Office and other government officials. The training enhanced the judiciary's knowledge of the international legal framework and standards relating to refugee law and asylum procedures.

Efforts to increase awareness of the principle of *non-refoulement* in **Trinidad and Tobago** involved a monthly police training on the principles of international refugee protection that targeted 23 police officers in August and 24 police officers and two immigration officers in September.

## COORDINATION

In August and September 2019, 10 National Platform/RMWG meetings were convened in **Aruba**, **Curacao**, the **Dominican Republic**, **Guyana**, **Trinidad and Tobago**. The main focus of these discussions was to plan for the Venezuela situation response in 2020. The **R4V** Caribbean sub-regional platform together with 22 organizations in Aruba, Curaçao, Dominican Republic, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago finalized the **Caribbean Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) submission for 2020**. In total, USD 45.6 million is requested for 396 activities in shelter/NFI, food security, nutrition, wash, health, education, protection and integration.

In **Aruba** and **Curacao**, with the support of **RMRP** partners, NGOs

continued to meet bi-weekly to better coordinate their interventions to assist Venezuelans on the island and working towards the formalization of a national inter-agency coordination mechanism as part of the wider R4V Caribbean Sub-regional Platform. Case management coordination meetings continue to take place to ensure a comprehensive response to the needs of vulnerable Venezuelans and avoid duplication of efforts.

In **Guyana**, the Government continued to maintain a leading role in the coordination of the response to the Venezuela situation in cooperation with the **National Platform/Working Group**, setting a good example in the response process. A sub-committee on Communication was also established to support a coordinated and harmonized development of content on health, immigration, social protection, social cohesion and sanitation to be disseminated to Venezuelans in Guyana and entering Guyana.

In **Trinidad and Tobago**, the **Protection Coordination Working Group** continued to bring together UN agencies and civil society actors to promote the implementation of a common framework and approach to case management standards and operating procedures. The Working Group is currently defining the referral pathways, identifying solutions to challenges in the protection response, and finalizing the national mapping of services available by verifying the services operating in the territory.



*Dominican Republic National Platform RMRP 2020 planning meeting, September 2019.*



*Trinidad and Tobago National Platform RMRP 2020 meeting with Government authorities, embassies, UN agencies and NGOs, September 2019.*

# OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW: WHO does WHAT and WHERE (3Ws)

\*Activities pertaining to social inclusion, communication, etc. are under the "Other" sector.

NOTE: Some of the sectors listed under "Organizations by sector" are not presented in the country maps as geographic information are not available.

## ARUBA



**3 ORGANIZATIONS**

ORGANIZATIONS BY SECTOR\*

- UNHCR/HIAS
- UNHCR/HIAS
- UNHCR/HIAS
- UNHCR/HIAS/IOM
- IOM/UNHCR

\*Sectors cover all regions.

## CURACAO



**5 ORGANIZATIONS**

ORGANIZATIONS BY SECTOR

- UNHCR
- IOM / ADRA / CARITAS / VENEX
- IOM

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



**11 ORGANIZATIONS**

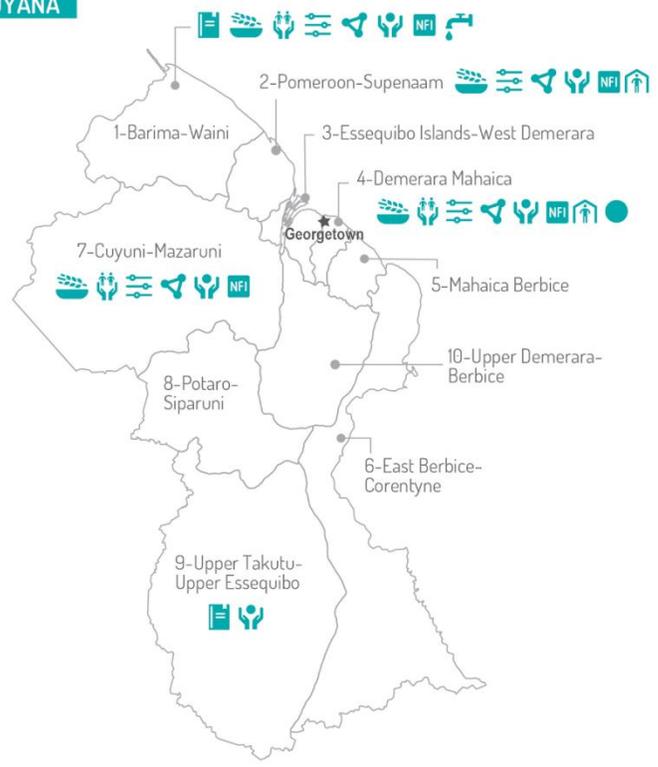
ORGANIZATIONS BY SECTOR

- UNHCR/IDDI, IOM/Fundacion Colonia Venezolana en Republica Dominicana
- UNHCR/IDDI, IOM/Fundacion Venezolana en Republica Dominicana
- IOM/Convenios con Fundacion de Cultura y Desarrollo/Artesanos de Paz/Fundacion Colonia Venezolana en Republica Dominicana/Fundacion Encuentro Danza Contemporanea/Thinking Box, UNHCR/IDDI/ENM
- IOM/Fundacion Colonia Venezolana en Republica Dominicana, IOM/Fundacion Venezolanos de San Cristobal, UNHCR/IDDI
- IOM/Artesanos de Paz
- UNHCR/IDDI
- UNHCR, IOM
- UNHCR/IOM
- UNHCR/IOM

Cash-based assistance	Coordination	Education	Food Security/ Nutrition	GBV/Child Protection	Health	Info Managt.	Multi-Sector	Other*	Protection	Shelter/NFIs	WASH

\*Activities pertaining to social inclusion, communication, etc. are under the "Other" sector.

## GUYANA

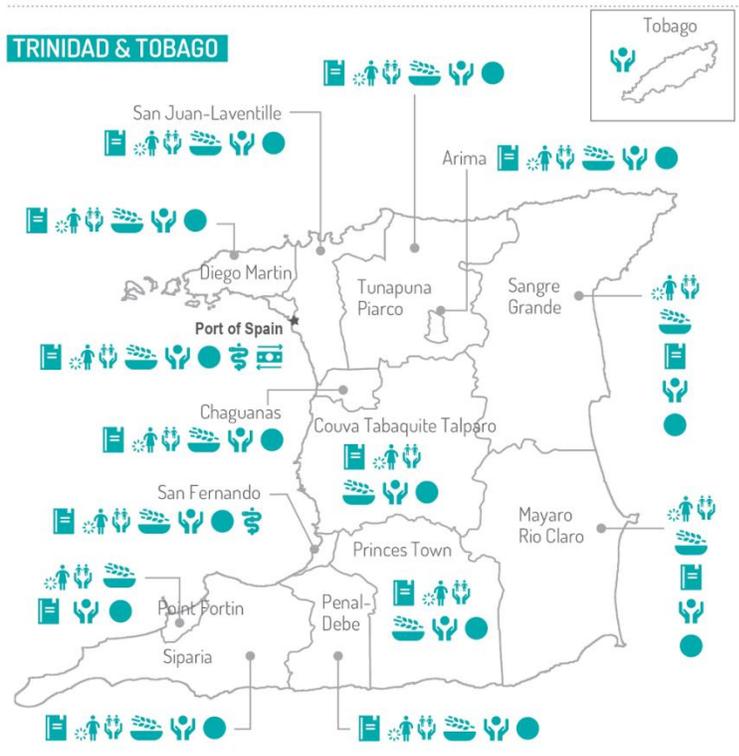


### 12 ORGANIZATIONS

ORGANIZATIONS. BY SECTOR	
	UNICEF/MoE, RDC, UG Faculty of Engineering and Technology-/MoPH*
	IOM, UNHCR/GNYC/MSN
	UNICEF
	PAHO
	IOM, UNICEF
	IOM, UNICEF
	IOM, UNHCR/VoG/GNYC/MS N, UNICEF/Ministry of Citizenship*
	IOM
	UNICEF
	UNICEF

\*Activities outside the RMRP

## TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

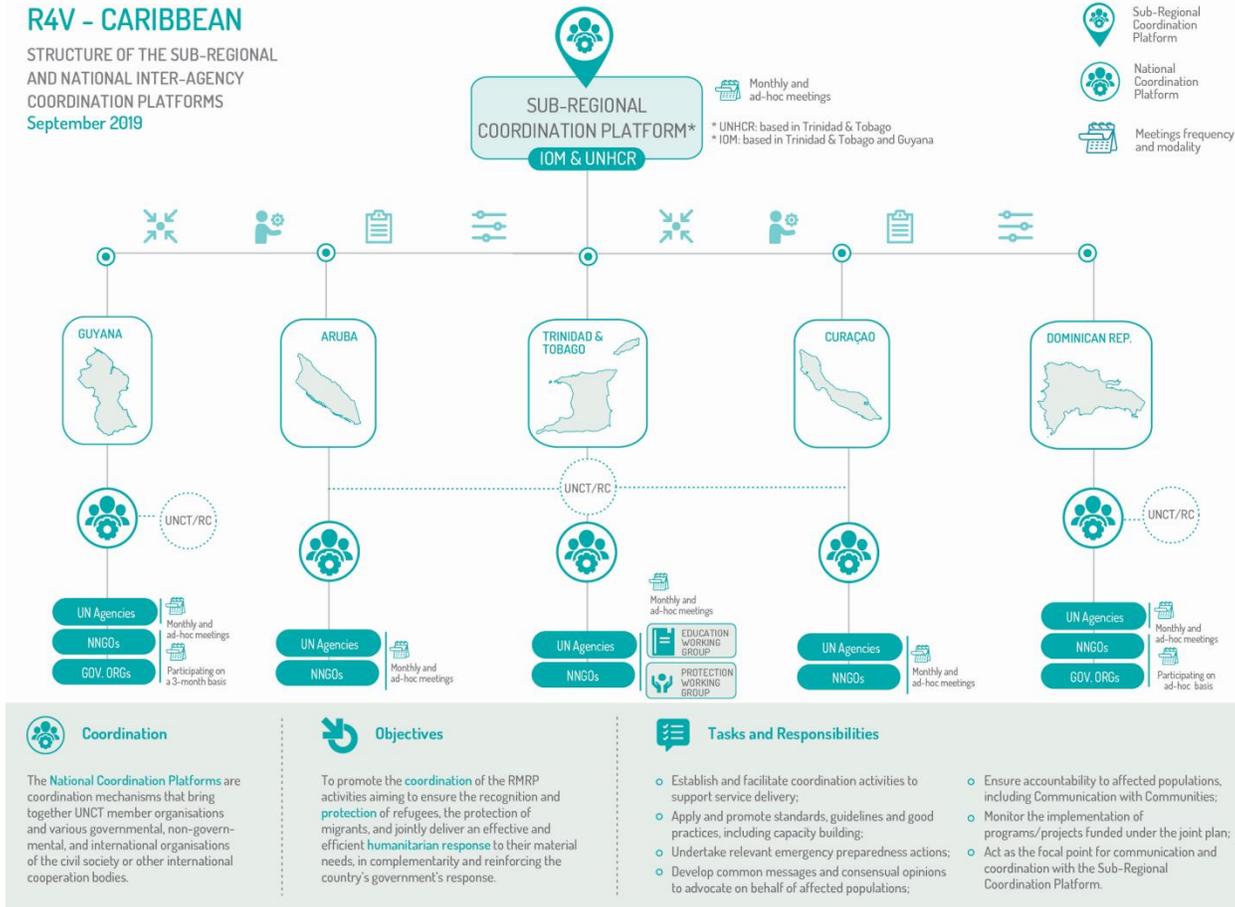


### 12 ORGANIZATIONS

ORGANIZATIONS. BY SECTOR	
	UNHCR/LWC
	UNHCR/LWC, UNICEF/LWC
	UNICEF, UNFPA/FPATT/UNHCR, UNICEF/LWC, ChildLine, Freely Give Foundation
	UNFPA, UNHCR/RCS/LWC/FPATT
	UNICEF/LWC/FPATT
	UNFPA, FPATT, UNFPA/FPATT, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNHCR/LWC, UNWOMEN
	IOM
	IOM
	UNHCR, UNHCR/LWC/Rape Crisis, UNICEF/LWC/Jabulous/FPATT/ Create Future Good, UNHCR, UNHCR/LWC, UNICEF/LWC/Jabulous/FPATT

## R4V - CARIBBEAN

STRUCTURE OF THE SUB-REGIONAL AND NATIONAL INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION PLATFORMS  
September 2019



## CONTRIBUTIONS

Partners in the response are very grateful for the financial support provided by donors, contributing to their activities with un-earmarked and earmarked funds.

Government of Canada | European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department | Government of Germany | Government of Iceland | International Labour Organization | Government of Ireland | Government of Italy | Government of Netherlands | Government of New Zealand | Government of Norway | Private (Individuals & Organisations) | Government of Sweden | United Nations Children's Fund | United States of America

## PLATFORM PARTNERS

Adra | ARTESANOS DE PAZ | Bureau of Statistics (GY) | Caritas | Childline | CONVENIOS CON FUNDACION DE CULTURA Y DESARROLLO | Create Future Good | EDANCO|ENM | FAO | FPATT | Freely Give Foundation | FUNDACION COLONIA VENEZOLANA EN REPUBLICA DOMINICANA| FUNDACION ENCUENTRO DANZA CONTEMPORANEA | FUNDACION VENEZOLANOS DE SAN CRISTOBAL | GNYC | GRPA | HIAS | IDDI | ILO | Institución gubernamental DEFENSA PUBLICA | IOM | Jabulous | LWC | Ministry of Citizenship (GY) | Ministry of Health (TT) | Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development (TT) | Ministry of National Security (Immigration Division Counter Trafficking Unit) (TT) | Ministry of Social Protection (GY) | MSN | PAHO | RCS | Save the Children | THINKING BOX | TTVSolnet | UNAIDS | UNESCO | UNFPA | UNHCR | UNICEF | UNODC | UN WOMEN | Venex | VoG | WFP

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

**Catalina Acevedo**, Caribbean Sub-Regional Coordination Officer, IOM, [cacevedo@iom.int](mailto:cacevedo@iom.int).

**Miriam Aertker**, Senior Field Coordinator, UNHCR, [aertker@unhcr.org](mailto:aertker@unhcr.org).

R4V- Response for Venezuela: <https://r4v.info/en/situations/platform>

Financial Tracking System: <https://fts.unocha.org.appeals/726/summary>