 **Trinidad and Tobago**



CONVERSATIONS. In celebration of World Refugee Day (WRD) 2020, UNHCR T&T screened a short film entitled ‘[Conversations](#)’ which showcased recorded dialogues between Venezuelan refugees and Trinbagonians. The similarities and differences of their life experiences were discussed, as the film explored the ways in which conversations can change perspectives and foster solidarity between refugees and their host communities. The film screening was the culmination of a four-event festival held virtually in celebration of WRD 2020, from June 18-26, 2020. Other events included; a [storytelling event](#), with two children (Trinidadian & Venezuelan) who read a bilingual story on refugee solidarity; a [concert](#), featuring top Trinidadian acts — Kes the Band and Freetown Collective — as well as refugee and asylum-seeker musicians from Venezuela and Nigeria; and a [screening](#) of the films “This Being Human” and “Little Rebel”, featuring Iraqi and Gambian former refugees, along with a Q&A with the stars and filmmaker. The events were shown on the [United Nations Information Centre](#) social media and garnered a significant amount of positive feedback and media coverage.

CURRENT CONTEXT

COVID-19 restrictions continued to ease in June with hairdressers, barbers, spas and domestic workers being allowed to work from June 8 and beaches, bars, cinemas, and in-house dining at restaurants resuming operations from June 22. Additionally, the T&T Prime Minister announced that Venezuelans previously registered with the Government in June 2019, would receive a further extension of their documentation, which will now be valid until December 2020. Amid these developments, many refugees and migrants remained vulnerable with reduced access to basic needs, as many commenced their search for employment in an economy adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The use of negative coping mechanisms given inadequate social assistance available to this population remained a concern, while attempts to access territory via irregular means were also [noted](#).

The UNHCR Trinidad and Tobago Operation continued to provide protection assistance for refugees and asylum-seekers during this period, reopening its premises to persons of concern on an appointment-only basis from June 1 2020, prioritizing emergency cases and persons with specific needs. Refocused protection operations continue with the implementation of expanded community communication channels and enhanced community-based protection operations.

POPULATION*



18,882
REGISTERED WITH
UNHCR

82% 18-59 YEARS
17% UNDER-18 YEARS

46% FEMALE  **54% MALE**

85.6% VENEZUELAN

*Figures are as at June 30th 2020. Registration had been temporarily suspended from March 13 due to COVID-19. Registration activities resumed on May 26 3,402 individual records were inactivated in April due to registration documentation being expired for more than six months.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS



COMMUNITY HOTLINE COMMUNICATION

The expanded hotline service continues to be heavily utilized by the population of concern for receiving assistance referrals and needed information. For the month of June, hotline operators responded to **1,111 queries** from persons of concern, a 29% increase from the number received in May. This can be attributed to the resumption of registration activities as a significant proportion of the queries (31%) were about registration and pre-registration procedures. The hotlines also continued to receive a significant number of calls requesting cash assistance (23%).



FOOD ASSISTANCE

UNHCR implementing partner [Living Water Community](#) (LWC), provided emergency food relief support via e-vouchers to **555 households**, in June, reaching a total of **2,357 beneficiaries**. On receiving the e-vouchers, beneficiaries visit participating supermarkets to purchase items that meet their basic emergency needs for food assistance. In total, **3,908 persons of concern** from **948 households**, have received assistance through this programme, which began in April as a response to extensive food insecurity among the refugee community amid the COVID-19 lockdown.



CASH-BASED INTERVENTION (CBI)

In June, CBI grants were approved for **112 beneficiaries**, for individuals facing protection risks with very limited or no ability to achieve self-reliance. While the majority of beneficiaries were Venezuelan, nationals of Cuba, Jamaica, Dominica, as well as one stateless Rohingya unaccompanied minor, also benefitted from this intervention. CBI application procedures were further revised to extract more relevant information about the impacts of COVID-19 and to capture more contact information for the highly mobile population.



EDUCATION ACCESS

Despite persisting connectivity challenges, **806 students** were provided with remote access to education in June through [Equal Place](#), 17 of which were new beneficiaries to the service. In addition to these, a number of children in coastal areas are receiving education support from facilitators who make visits to those areas, though this support is hindered by a lack of physical space to shelter activities with children. The Education Working Group continues to work with the Catholic Education Board of Management (CEBM) to facilitate the registration of **119 students** to be placed in CEBM-run schools. The students, all at the primary level, are all children of parents registered in the Government's 2019 registration of Venezuelans. Psychosocial support sessions for education facilitators, were also held throughout the month of June.

ACCESS TO MEDICAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH SERVICES OFFERED

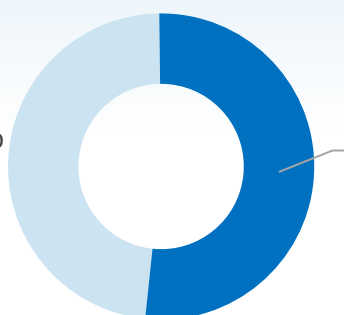
UNHCR implementing partner [Family Planning Association](#) delivered medical health services to **183 persons of concern**, through their previously launched Telehealth initiative, through a static clinic in Port of Spain and also via a mobile migrant clinic mission to the village of Icacos. The migrant clinic saw many high-risk and vulnerable persons of concern, of which 54% were children. [Rape Crisis Society](#) also provided **58 counselling sessions** to refugees and asylum-seekers via telephone, instant messaging and interactive videoconferencing. Fifty-seven percent of the beneficiaries of counselling were victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

SUPPORTING COORDINATION EFFORTS

UNHCR continued to support efforts to provide sustainable protection solutions for a group of approximately 100 Venezuelans, the majority of whom are from the indigenous Warao community. The Venezuelans are currently occupying makeshift domiciles in the Icacos area of South Western Trinidad. Living Water Community (LWC) has taken the lead in coordinating possible interventions, and has facilitated discussions between the group, the First People's Community of Santa Rosa, a local coalition of persons of indigenous descent, as well as with a local Presbyterian church.

FUNDING - 2020

Funding Gap,
5,468,406 USD
48%



Current Operating Level,
5,891,472 USD
52%

UNHCR is extremely grateful for the crucial support provided by donors to the Trinidad and Tobago Operation and more broadly, global UNHCR programmes. Our donors include the United States, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Denmark, United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, the European Commission through the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and other private donors.