



REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN THE SUBREGION*
150,000



PEOPLE REACHED WITH SOME FORM OF ASSISTANCE**
7,400

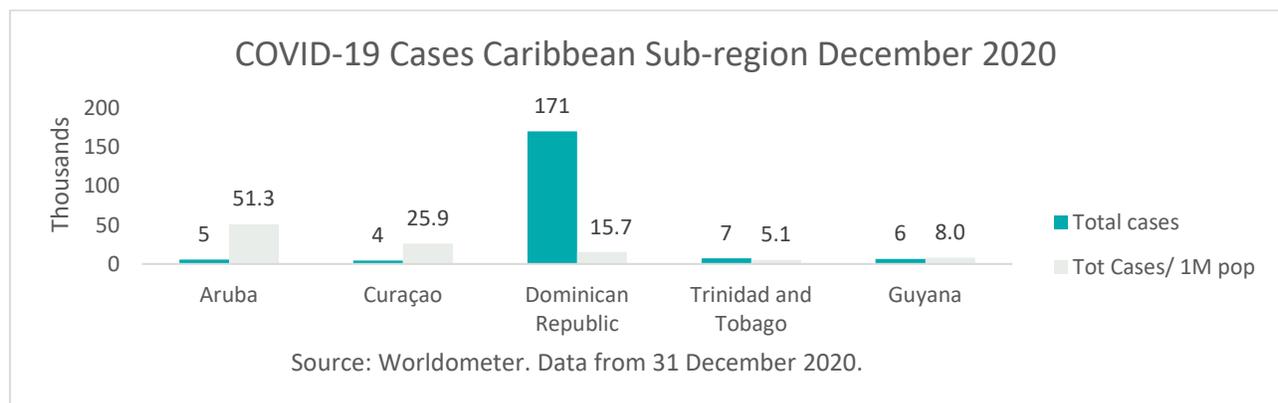


FUNDING SITUATION***
 FUNDED: \$34.92 MILLION
 REQUIREMENT: \$ 46.36 MILLION



Situation

- By 31 December, **Aruba** had a total of 5,489 COVID-19 cases, 291 active cases and 49 deaths. **Curaçao** COVID-19 infections reached a total of 4,260 cases including 1,321 active cases and the death toll moved to 14. **Trinidad and Tobago** reached 7,150 cases, 373 active cases with 127 deaths. **Guyana reported** 6,332 total cases, 348 active cases and moved to 164 deaths. The **Dominican Republic** stood out at 170,785 total confirmed cases, 37,186 active cases with 2,414 deaths. The high rate of unemployment caused by the pandemic and financial crisis led to continued food insecurity and increased threat of evictions of nationals and refugees and migrants in all Caribbean sub-regional countries. In December, the Dutch government announced a [code orange](#) alert for Aruba and Curaçao, advising against all but essential travel.
- On 10 December, the R4V regional platform launched its US\$1.44 billion regional ([RMRP](#)) plan to respond to the growing needs of refugees and migrants from Venezuela and the communities hosting them across 17 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. This was followed by Caribbean sub-regional countries' high-level national launches which were successfully held between the 14-16 December, and which showcased the Caribbean RMRP 2021 plan, its US \$40,019,241 budget, which will allow 26 appealing agencies (plus implementing partners), to target 128,176 Venezuelans across the Caribbean sub-region, with 382 activities.



- In **Aruba** persons were obliged to test upon arrival at the airport. Aruban restaurants provided in-house dining for 10 persons maximum, yet bars not serving food remained closed. [Covid outbreaks impacted schools](#) with boards evaluating temporary closures. 140 Venezuelans left Aruba on a fifth repatriation flight of 23 December. Resulting from the pandemic, approximately 6,000 refugees and migrants (to date)¹ of various nationalities, including Venezuelans [lost their jobs and subsequently their guarantors](#), placing them at the risk of becoming irregular. Restrictions to stay in regular status remained linked to [work availability, but jobs continued to be prioritized for Arubans](#). The authorities remained concerned about the future of the economy even as the Council of Ministers from the Kingdom of the Netherlands approved [Aruba Florins 71 million as an advance on a loan to Aruba for 2021](#). Also, the Minister of Justice visited [a building to be renewed for use by the Police and Immigration departments](#), highlighting focussed efforts on Aruba's frontier protection. Additionally, the government announced that from the 15 Jan 2021 visas will be required for Venezuelans entering Dutch Caribbean islands.
- On 8 December, **Curaçao** went into [partial lockdown](#). [Existing curfews and other internal restrictions remained in place through 11 Jan 2021 to respond to increased COVID-19 cases; severely constraining prospects for economic recovery and further disproportionately affecting refugees'](#) and migrants' abilities to meet their basic needs. The holiday season

¹ <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

was celebrated with limited company as a maximum of three visitors per day could be received at homes. The food service industry remained closed. Individuals were advised to work from home if possible, and the Red Cross re-started distribution of food vouchers for host community members and Venezuelans, coordinated by R4V partners. On first and 21 December, two return flights were organized from Curaçao to Venezuela, with some 230 Venezuelans onboard.

- In the **Dominican Republic**, stricter COVID related curfew measures were enforced for the holiday period, especially within major cities. Venezuelans' livelihoods and access to basic needs continued to be negatively affected. All [fuel prices dramatically increased on 5 December](#) adding to economic difficulties and prompting protests. Additionally, nearly [1,000 persons were arrested](#) on Christmas eve for violating imposed curfews.
- Although pandemic measures continue to have socio-economic impacts on the host community and refugees and migrants, **Guyana's** fast ascension to the rank of petroleum prompted positive outlooks from its government who announced plans to [establish a world-class petroleum institute and training centre in Guyana](#). Separately, they revealed intentions of providing [free university education by end of 2024](#). On 5 December the Health Ministry sets protocols for Guyana-Suriname border areas. On 11 December, an enabling environment and political stability in the country encouraged the [European Union to disburse €19.8 billion \(approximately US\\$92 million\) to Guyana, to aid in inclusive and sustainable development](#) as the country moved to create a "better life for all". Internally, following his promise for inclusive governance, President Ali [dispatched invitation letters to all of Guyana's previous presidents](#) for a meeting to discuss national issues. In his [New Year's address](#), he indicated that "Never again will anyone suffer the indignity of

losing their household appliances by virtue of missing a payment," creating also hope for vulnerable refugees and migrants in the country.

- **Trinidad and Tobago's** borders remained closed during December, and COVID-19 infection rates stabilized. On 5 December, the Prime Minister announced that schools would re-open virtually on 4 January 2021 and students preparing for exams would return to physical locations. All students would be required to follow distancing and hygienic protocols. Separately, the country plans to accept and administer COVID-19 vaccines that are certified and approved by the World Health Organization, even as partners recorded increased requests for assistance with secondary and tertiary health. Venezuelans continued attempts to enter T&T irregularly, facing detention by authorities and deportation. In one tragic incident, the bodies of over 30 Venezuelans, including children, were found 6.3 nautical miles from the city of Güiria, within Venezuela's jurisdiction, after the boat in which they were attempting to enter T&T territory sank. [The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights \(IACHR\) asked Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago "to immediately implement an impartial, effective investigation into the events"](#). The incident prompted a [joint statement](#) from UNHCR and IOM and another [statement](#) from the OHCHR which called on governments to "halt pushbacks at sea in violation of the principle of non-refoulement".² Venezuelan authorities stated that the boat sank due to extreme overcrowding, just off the coast of Venezuela. Meanwhile, detentions and deportations to Venezuela continued in December, with persons being returned. [The authorities articulated there will be no second registration exercise](#), however suggested that Venezuelans registered with the government would likely have their documentation renewed into 2021; official notice of this is yet to be released.

Response

- As needs increased due to economic hardship, R4V partners provided much needed **temporary shelter** support to vulnerable refugees and migrants, reaching 20 persons in the Dominican Republic and 40 in Guyana.
- In Aruba, **1,342** people received **NFI**s including 80 **dignity kits** for women and girls. Vulnerable Venezuelans in Guyana received **hygiene** and **baby kits**, while one partner in Curaçao distributed 50 NFI **'dignity' kits** to vulnerable refugee and migrant women, with the large majority of Venezuelan nationality. 1,133 Venezuelan and host community members in T&T received **protection kits**

² Under international human rights law, [the principle of non-refoulement](#) guarantees that no one should be re- turned to a country where they would face torture, cruel, inhuman or

degrading treatment or punishment and other irreparable harm.

consisting of a bath towel, toiletries, sanitary products, and **information kits** containing COVID guidelines, emergency hotline numbers, NGOs contact information and legal minimum wage rates.

- Moreover, 279 Venezuelans in Aruba, Curaçao and T&T received **cash and voucher assistance** including multipurpose transfers and vouchers, to cover basic needs.
- More than 6,394 beneficiaries in the Caribbean received **food assistance**, with 166 Venezuelans receiving **food vouchers** in Aruba, and 2,272 beneficiaries receiving **food hampers**, including masks and soaps in the DR. A total of 430 persons including 392 Venezuelans benefitted from targeted emergency **food hamper** distributions in Guyana and 3,526 in T&T were assisted with **QR coded e-vouchers**, allowing one partner to clear a backlog of applications for assistance.
- To boost **integration** through livelihood and self-reliance, one partner in the DR supported 33 Venezuelan entrepreneurs with seed capital to start their own businesses. Additionally, as part of a Gender Transformative Humanitarian Response Project in T&T, and in light of its importance, partners supported a Sewing and Design Course for Venezuelan refugee and migrant women, where 80 graduates will receive sewing machines as a part of vocational training to promote economic empowerment and increased socio-economic integration, .
- T&T partners continued providing **remote study** sessions to 1,039 refugees and migrant students. Classes ended on 11 December following academic assessments, end-of-year celebratory activities and distribution of grade cards. The following week, 40 facilitators completed a week-long **training session on ESL**. The **education** team continued exploring creative ways to foster effective and sustained online engagement and to support **remote learning** challenges once classes resume. Efforts to transition refugee and migrant children into the local school system remain delayed, pending governmental approvals. Separately, in Guyana 28 Venezuelan children in grades 6 and 10 continued receiving special **language support** classes.
- In Aruba, 15 Venezuelans received **dental assistance** from one R4V partner, while in Curaçao the R4V partner clinic carried out 1,108 **primary health consultations** for 621 beneficiaries; 369 of whom were Venezuelans. DR partners supported Venezuelans with **medicines**, chemotherapy, and orthopaedic materials. A **medical fair** was also held at the Quisqueya school in Santo Domingo on 5 December, organized and coordinated by grassroots organizations and community leaders, and led by five specialist doctors and volunteers. From this, 52 individuals accessed **medical consultations** in paediatrics, odontology, urology, cardiology, and psychology. Additionally, in T&T, health services including paediatric consultations continued to be delivered via **telehealth** and **static clinic** modalities.
- In a context of insecurity and exacerbated hardship, **protection** and life-saving activities continued to be featured prominently across the Caribbean sub-region. R4V partners in T&T and Guyana focussed efforts on supporting **child protection** and prevention/response to **Gender Based Violence (GBV) activities**, through sensitization related to prevention and response services, **mental and psychosocial support (MHPSS)** and **Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)** services. Furthermore, another partner carried out a sensitization workshop for 10 women on defining GBV, the signs of impending violence; the psychology of violence; legal protections, remedies, procedures; and self-defence skills. Moreover a "Know Your Rights" panel was hosted with a focus on Gender-Based Violence and the right to justice. Further, counselling, food, NFIs and safe shelter were prioritized for **Victims of Trafficking (VoT)** in T&T, and as a part of a sensitization campaign on preventing trafficking and smuggling of refugees and migrants. Aruba partners in collaboration with the Aruban Taskforce, distributed flyers, and Curaçao partners designed brochures to be printed and distributed from the end of January. In Guyana, partners conducted walk through public awareness campaigns in two regions, and a two-day awareness and distribution drive took place in one of Guyana's interior regions, related to awareness raising and sensitization on the issue of **Trafficking in Persons**. During the sessions, several novelty items, posters, and brochures branded with anti-trafficking messages were distributed.
- An Aruba, partner provided case management and **legal assistance** through legal counselling and information via hotlines and drafting legal objection letters related to administrative decisions, such as detention, deportation or asylum decisions on behalf of Venezuelans on the island. In T&T, partners continued assessments and assigned case workers to design targeted plans to meet refugees and migrants' specific needs. In addition, DR partners completed 118 remote surveys/interviews to identify needs and prioritize assistance for refugees and migrants, while Guyanese partners engaged in similar exercises and guided 46 Venezuelans on how to access basic services and renew stay permits.

Sewing and Design Course for Venezuelan refugee and migrant women in T&T



CARIBBEAN

People Reached*

SECTOR	ARUBA	CURAÇAO	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	GUYANA	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	TOTAL
 EDUCATION				88	1039	1127
 FOOD SECURITY	166		2272	430	3526	6394
 HEALTH	15	435	89		180	719
 INTEGRATION			33			33
 MULTIPURPOSE CBI	61	3	0		279	343
 NFI	80	50		79	1133	1342
 PROTECTION	139	24	118	1001	334	1616
 SHELTER			20	40		60
 WASH						
 COVID-19 (CROSS-SECTOR)	166	50	2272	191	3054	3054

Operational Overview*

	ARUBA	CURAÇAO	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	GUYANA	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
PARTNERS	HIAS, IOM, UNHCR	Famia Plania, IOM, UNHCR, Unitat di Barrio, Salú pa Tur	AVES, Churun Meru, Diáspora Venezolana, Duendes de Vino Tinto, FUNCOVERD, Globalizate Radio, Heartland Alliance, IDDI, INM, IOM, UNHCR, UN-Habitat, Venezolanos en San Cristóbal	Blossoms Inc, HIAS, IOM, PADF, UNHCR, UNICEF, PAHO/WHO, GSWC	FPATT, IOM, Living Water Community, Rape Crisis Society, UNHCR, LWC
SECTORS					

PARTNERS IN THE RESPONSE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF: GOVERNMENTS OF AZERBAIJAN, CANADA, ESTONIA, GERMANY, GREECE, IRELAND, NORWAY, SPAIN, SWEDEN, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, UNITED KINGDOM, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; COVID-19 HUMANITARIAN THEMATIC FUND, EUROPEAN COMMISSION, EUROPEAN COMMISSION EUROPEAID DEVELOPMENT & COOPERATION, EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S AND HUMANITARIAN AID & CIVIL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT, UNICEF NATIONAL COMMITTEE/CANADA, US FUND FOR UNICEF, WORLD BANK **

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Catalina Acevedo, Caribbean Sub-Regional Coordination Officer, IOM, cacevedo@iom.int.

Miriam Aertker, Senior Field Coordinator, UNHCR, aertker@unhcr.org.

R4V- Response for Venezuela: <https://r4v.info/es/situations/platform/location/7493>

FINANCIAL TRACKING SYSTEM: [HTTPS://FTS.UNOCHA.ORG.APPEALS/726/SUMMARY](https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/726/summary)

* Names changed for protection concerns

CARIBBEAN

FEATURED STORY

Coordinated support helps children return to school, brings peace of mind to Venezuelan family in Aruba

The sun shines brightly over the small Caribbean island of Aruba. It is ten o'clock and Jorge's face is once again full of smiles, as he watches his children practice Dutch lessons and do their homework, something he thought for a long time, they might not be able to do again.

"My kids are going to school. We don't have to worry about their safety while we go to work," he said, relieved, adding that they continue working hard to rebuild their lives after fleeing their country.

It has been two years since Jorge Vasquez* came to Aruba from his native Venezuela. With only the clothes on their backs and a few savings they had collected over time, he, his wife Carolina* and their two young children; Pedro*, 13, and Veronica*, 10, fled their home, leaving behind the life they had built together. The lack of access to basic services and rights, including to food, medicine and water, along with repeated threats to stop Jorge from making reports, finally drove the family to flee. They knew they may not be able to return in the near future.



Over 5.4 million Venezuelans have left their homes in one of the largest external displacement crises in the world. Like Jorge and his family, some 17,000 Venezuelans have found a haven in Aruba; hosting one of the largest number of Venezuelans displaced abroad, relative to the national population. Here, agencies and organizations work together with the government to help respond to the pressing needs of people like Jorge and his family, under the response for Venezuelans platform (R4V).

Integrating in Aruba has not been an easy task. Without any family or social support networks, limited information on available services and procedures, and notable differences in language, customs and practices on the island, they struggled to get by.

Jorge and Carolina remembered seeing their savings become depleted, worried about not being able to pay rent or the fees and insurance to register their kids at school, leaving the children out of school for several months.

Through fellow Venezuelans in Aruba, the family reached out to organizations working under the R4V platform, including public institutions, that offer lifelines to refugees and migrants like them, in particular, people facing specific needs or especially difficult circumstances.

Through this support, the Vasquez family was able to enrol the children in school, and received assistance to pay school fees, insurance and uniforms for the two kids. This allowed the family to prioritize the rest of their resources for rent and food.

Country-wide, the R4V platform strives to help Venezuelans integrate in local communities, providing support to help them become self-reliant and to contribute to their hosts. These responses have been particularly necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly impacted Venezuelans and local communities alike. For Jorge's family it has meant they can once again have dreams of a future.

"My children are so motivated to learn, especially because they know how it feels to be out of school. They both feel so lucky now," said Carolina as she prepped her children's uniforms. **"We are so grateful; it means a lot that our children can go to school and be happy."**

Though the family continues to struggle amid compounding challenges, they remain hopeful. Jorge keeps smiling - he doesn't say a word, but Carolina understands. They know that they can work towards rebuilding their lives, one day at a time.

* Names changed for protection concerns