



REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN THE SUBREGION*
150,000



PEOPLE REACHED WITH SOME FORM OF ASSISTANCE**
2,676



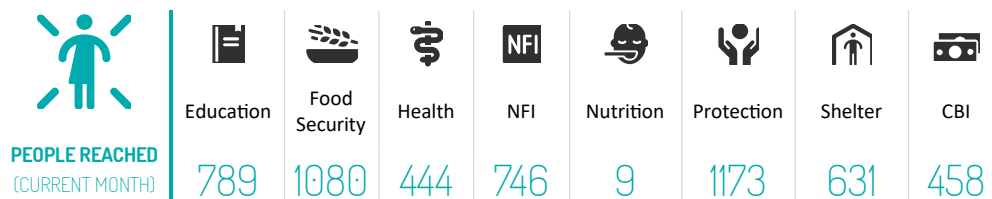
FUNDING SITUATION***
 FUNDED: **\$224,000**
 REQUIREMENT: **\$46.36 MILLION**

Situation

- **Aruba, Curaçao, the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago**, started lifting government-imposed restrictions previously enforced to curb the spread of COVID-19. With the exception of the Dominican Republic, which confirmed 17,285 positive cases by the end of the month, the number of new positive COVID-19 cases significantly reduced in the rest of the sub-region. There was one imported COVID-19 case in Trinidad and Tobago and no active cases in Aruba by the end of May. **Movement restrictions were partially lifted in all countries**, schools in Curaçao partially re-opened and curfew hours were reduced.
- Amid these initial reopening phases, many **Venezuelan refugees and asylum-seekers returned to the informal trade labor but remained in a state of heightened vulnerability**. In some instances, Venezuelans had trouble getting their former jobs back as public health measures and controls became stricter. Many do not have money to pay for basic needs such as food, health and hygiene products while others confront threats of eviction and homelessness.
- **In Trinidad & Tobago**, Police reported the murder of three Venezuelans, including a registered Venezuelan asylum-seeker, in what they described to be a drug-related incident. Negative press coverage remains a concern for R4V partners. Despite an adverse environment, Venezuelans continued to try to reach Trinidad and Tobago. In a press conference that was launched in May, authorities reported that [32 Venezuelan nationals were returned to Venezuela on 24 May](#) after being rescued from their sinking vessel when attempting to enter the twin island country.
- **Stricter measures remained in place in Guyana**. As Covid-19 cases reached a total of 153 by the end of the month and spread across the country to remote regions where resources are very limited, emergency measures were heightened. Region 4 became the epicenter, with containment efforts focused there while region 9 remained under scrutiny as it borders Brazil, a country with extremely high numbers of COVID-19 cases. **Although borders remained closed, irregular entries continued, particularly in the porous bordering areas in Regions 1 and 9**. This created difficulties in monitoring the influx as well as in identifying and containing COVID-19 cases. Additionally, May brought continued reports from sex workers facing evictions or being at-risk of eviction due to job loss. This situation increased their vulnerability to becoming victims of human trafficking, exploitation and GBV. Due to COVID-19 reduced staff rotation, the authorities experienced diminished capacity in detecting and responding to reports of trafficking. On the political front, the recount of the vote cast during the 2 March general and regional elections continued throughout May 2020, with the presence of a CARICOM electoral observation mission. Initially set for a period of 25 days, the recount was extended to June, then further extended to July, posing coordination and planning challenges for R4V partners.
- **Some refugees and migrants approached partners throughout the subregion to enquire about potential support to return to their country of origin**, reflecting the dire situation in which they have been living over the past months due to the pandemic. In Aruba, two return flights scheduled on 8 and 11 May were cancelled because Las Piedras airport in Falcón State (Western Venezuela) was not adequately prepared to receive passengers during the COVID -19 pandemic according to Venezuelan authorities. The 400 Venezuelan individuals who registered on the Ministry of Integration Website (DIMAS) in April requesting assistance to return to Venezuela, have not returned to Venezuela yet. Aruban authorities informed that the cost of 300 USD would be borne by passengers and that a re-entry ban with a duration depending on the time spent undocumented would apply. Returns are still pending clearance from Venezuela. R4V partners were also informed that the Government of Curaçao intended to deport Venezuelans held in immigration detention to their country of origin. The closure of borders with Venezuela, however, suspended the resumption of deportation.
- On 13 May, the Governor of Aruba conducted a visit to the **women's shelter**, concerned about reports of increased domestic violence cases resulting from stay-at-home measures. During the visit, much needed interventions conducted by the centre for the care of vulnerable women and children in Aruba was discussed. The Netherlands granted a subsidy package to the government to expand the reception from fifteen to almost forty Venezuelan migrant women GBV survivors.
- The Kingdom of Netherlands' Council of Ministers approved the allocation of funding for food and hygiene packages for those most in need in **Curaçao**; the

[Government of the Netherlands asked an R4V partner to coordinate the humanitarian response](#) across Curaçao and other Dutch islands. The Government announced that commercial and passenger inbound flights from the Netherlands and BES islands (Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba) would be allowed entry as of July. The partial reopening of borders came as a result of having only 4 active cases of the Covid-19 virus on Curaçao by the end of May.

- **Representatives across the Caribbean attended the Pledging Conference in solidarity with Venezuelan refugees and migrants** on 26 May, co-organized by the EU, Spain, Canada and Norway with the support of UNHCR and IOM. This online conference addressed the donor community and confirmed their committed support in the search of solutions for refugees and migrants from Venezuela in the region.



Response

- One R4V partner mandated to register asylum-seekers resumed its registration activities in **Trinidad and Tobago** on May 26, 2020, with the launch of online remote registration where registered individuals receive a card that shows their registration status and protects them against refoulement.
- Assistance provided by partners continued to be focused on providing disproportionately affected Venezuelans with **food assistance** in the forms of food vouchers, non-perishable food basket items and **NFIs** (especially hygiene and dignity kits for at risk women and girls). In Trinidad and Tobago, community-based groups were involved in the distribution of food baskets and partners also started to use QR code vouchers, i.e. electronic vouchers that refugees and migrants receive directly on their phones and can use in supermarkets to uphold social distancing measures. This was complemented by **multi-purpose cash-based interventions** in the form of vouchers, gift cards and physical cash, aimed at helping beneficiaries cover basic needs.
- Considering the importance of adequate housing to preserve health and comply with stay at home orders, providing long and short-term **shelter solutions** was a main priority in the subregion for the reporting period. R4V partners resumed and rapidly scaled-up efforts in this sector providing safe housing to respond to the many reports of evictions of Venezuelans who were unable to pay rent. **Victims of trafficking** and other 'at-risk', Venezuelans also benefitted from this activity. In the **Dominican Republic**, partners transferred 5,000 Dominican pesos (some 85 USD) to 200 female heads of families in Santo Domingo to assist with rental payments. Approximately 500 beneficiaries were able to take advantage of this grant. Additionally, members of the Dominican-Venezuelan Binational Symphony Orchestra, as well as 50 Venezuelan refugees and migrants from San Cristobal, also received similar grants to assist with housing.
- R4V partners and local civil society organizations conducted **needs assessment missions** in Icacos, located in the Southern tip of Trinidad island and one of the entry points for Venezuelans into the country. There, some 80 Venezuelan Warao refugees and migrants, including children, live on the beach in makeshift shelters and rely on well water for hygiene. Most of the individuals were registered with the relevant R4V partners and are not new arrivals. During the missions, needs related to access to water of sufficient quantity and quality, access to services for children (including education) and inadequate shelter conditions were observed. Exposure to communicable diseases such as mosquito borne diseases was also noted and conditions to follow good hygiene practices against COVID-19 spread were not optimal. Conversations were held with the local council and R4V partners to discuss recommendations, which include relocation to legal occupancy space, improvement of the water, sanitation and hygiene conditions and the extension of educational services for the children.
- As days in lockdown continued, partners in the subregion identified and provided **primary health care assistance**, including telehealth, nutritional screening and paediatric services to children. **Psychosocial support and psychosocial first aid**, as well as focused and non-specialized

interventions including counselling to Venezuelans in crisis was forthcoming. Separately, 138 children from the refugee, migrant and host community children were provided with psychosocial support through the Child Advocacy Centres specialised in **child protection services** and **prevention and response to violence**. In parallel, efforts to support national prevention campaigns against COVID-19 continued. In the Dominican Republic, thanks to a joint initiative by R4V and the Office of National Immigration, [a video clip featuring Dominican singer Xiomara Fortuna, in Spanish and Haitian Creole, was released](#) on social media on May 13. The song [Sácale Lo Pie](#) is an Afro Caribbean tune that promotes stay at home measures and solidarity during the pandemic. Furthermore, in the Dominican Republic, one R4V partner donated 25 Refugee Housing Units (RHU), respectively, to be transformed into quarantine facilities/medical facilities, with the objective of enhancing governmental response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Aruba, Curaçao and Guyana were next in line to receive 61 RHUs by June. In Curaçao, the staff of the local clinic, which is supported by R4V and mostly treats Venezuelans, was trained to perform COVID-19 testing.























- Public outreach in the **GBV** sub sector was conducted by RMRP partners via **social media** to facilitate **community awareness** initiatives and empowerment through community-based groups. These addressed topics of Rape, Domestic Violence and Incest and reached 1,325 persons in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Online **educational** services reached 789 children through the 'Equal Place' initiative in Trinidad and Tobago, with referrals for new students coming in weekly from implementing partners on the ground. Further, discussions aimed at having 119 children accepted and transitioned into Roman Catholic primary schools took place between R4V partners and the Catholic Education Board (CEBM), which is a positive step towards the integration of refugee and migrant children. Alternately, Government schools in the other sub-regional Caribbean countries announced partial re-opening to facilitate national exams only.
- On 27 May, in an event hosted by the National Immigration Institute and in presence of national authorities, R4V

partners launched a joint market assessment on **livelihoods** for the Venezuelan population in the Dominican Republic. The study highlighted that Venezuelan refugees and migrants bring skills and expertise to the Dominican Republic and are an added value to the country's development strategy. In order to maximize benefits for the receiving country, it will be crucial to support the regularization of Venezuelans since the vast majority do not hold regular migratory status and cannot access the formal labour market. The [complete study in Spanish](#) is available on the R4V website. In Guyana, in the framework of a quick impact project aimed to sustain livelihoods and to promote social cohesion, 70 Guyanese and Venezuelan Warao women were involved in the production of hammocks, commonly called chinchorros. The hammocks, weaved with traditional techniques, will be bought by R4V partners and used for distribution to vulnerable individuals. Other integration activities included support to sustainable livelihoods and economic independence where R4V partners in collaboration with a local NGO supported 12 Venezuelan refugees and migrants with business development online courses. Upon successfully completing the course and following the submission of business plans, the participants will be granted 'in-kind' support to start up their businesses.













Figure 1: Hammocks being cleaned at the local laundry before distribution, Mabaruma, Region 1

Who/What/Where*

	ARUBA	CURAÇAO	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	GUYANA	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
PARTNERS	HIAS, IOM, UNHCR	IOM, UNHCR	Globalize Radio, ILO, IOM, UNHCR	HIAS, IOM, PAHO/WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF	IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF
SECTORS	   	  	    	    	    

People Reached*

SECTOR	ARUBA	CURAÇAO	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	GUYANA	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	TOTAL
 EDUCATION					789	789
 FOOD SECURITY	323		352	177	228	1080
 HEALTH		364	31	37	12	444
 INTEGRATION						
 MULTIPURPOSE CBI	213	21	213		11	458
 NFI	53			175	518	746
 NUTRITION					9	9
 PROTECTION	286		73	678	136	1173
 SHELTER		2	522	107		631
 COVID-19 (CROSS-SECTOR)	663	21	1476		1263	3423

PARTNERS IN THE RESPONSE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF: GOVERNMENT OF CANADA, EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S HUMANITARIAN AID AND CIVIL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND, UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND, UNICEF NATIONAL COMMITTEE/CANADA, US FUND FOR UNICEF **

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

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