2023 TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

INTERAGENCY PARTICIPATORY ASSSESSMENT

R4V
Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela

Special thanks to the R4V agencies and partners contributing to this Joint Participatory Assessment Exercise: The Caribbean Centre for Human Rights (CCHR), The Heroes Foundation, International Organization for Migration (IOM), La Casita Hispanic Cultural Centre, Living Water Community (LWC), The Rape Crisis Society of Trinidad and Tobago (RCS), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Their dedication and collaboration were instrumental in the success of this initiative, allowing for the collection of vital data to better understand the needs and experiences of refugees and migrants in Trinidad and Tobago. Gratitude is extended for their ongoing commitment to supporting vulnerable populations and promoting humanitarian efforts.

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Executive Summary: 2023 R4V Joint Participatory Assessment - Trinidad and Tobago

Background and Objectives

The 2023 R4V Joint Participatory Assessment focused on refugees and migrants in Trinidad and Tobago, primarily Venezuelans, aimed to improve understanding of the multifaceted needs, challenges, and aspirations of this diverse community. Through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), this qualitative study sought to provide a nuanced understanding that complements existing data, helping to guide support mechanisms and policy formulations for R4V partners.

Participant Demographics

This comprehensive assessment involved 236 participants encompassing a broad demographic spectrum, including individuals from Venezuela, Cuba, India, Ghana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the indigenous Warao people from Venezuela. The participants, ranging in age from 11 to 83 years, contributed to a rich diversity of perspectives through 24 FGDs and 17 KIIs.

Key Findings

The findings reveal that refugees and migrants in Trinidad and Tobago experience numerous barriers:

- Education access emerges as a critical area, with participants facing significant challenges due to administrative and language barriers, safety concerns, and a lack of familiarity with the local education system. These issues are particularly pronounced among rural and indigenous groups, who also express a need for orientation and support to integrate into the education system effectively.
- Employment opportunities are stark, with many refugees and migrants encountering obstacles in accessing stable jobs, compounded by inadequate wages, exploitative conditions, and stringent documentation requirements. These employment challenges are closely tied to broader issues of economic insecurity and instability within the host community.
- Financial Services are not readily accessible for the refugee and migrant community, largely due to a lack of documentation, financial literacy and stable employment, which together impede their ability to engage with banking systems and secure financial products.
- Safety and Security concerns are widespread, with numerous reports of harassment, xenophobia, and discrimination affecting their sense of security and well-being in both public and private spaces.
- Healthcare access to necessary medical and health services is limited by barriers such as language difficulties, discrimination, and the absence of recognized identification. .
- Housing and Shelter challenges include high rental costs, inadequate living conditions, and discriminatory practices in the housing market, which disproportionately affect women and vulnerable groups within the refugee and migrant communities.
- Community Participation is notably limited due to a combination of safety concerns, discrimination, and work commitments, which restrict involvement in local activities and impede social integration.
- Water, Hygiene, and Sanitation (WASH) access is inconsistent, especially in rural areas, where unreliable water supply and inadequate sanitation facilities pose significant hygiene challenges.

Recommendations

In light of these findings, several recommendations are proposed to improve the living conditions and integration of refugees and migrants. They include:

- Enhancing Safety and Security through increasing police presence, improving language access in public services, and providing education on self-protection to empower the community, particularly women.
- Improving Access to Services requires implementing programs that boost financial literacy, expand healthcare accessibility, and enhance educational support to bridge the gap between the community and local systems.
- Supporting Employment and Economic Opportunities by developing initiatives that create job opportunities, particularly in rural areas, and facilitating entrepreneurship through training and access to financial resources.
- Strengthening Community Engagement by fostering an inclusive environment, addressing discriminatory practices, and promoting wider participation in local community activities.
- Upgrading Housing and Infrastructure with policies aimed at ensuring affordable and adequate housing and improving the water and sanitation infrastructure to meet basic hygiene needs.

Conclusion

The 2023 R4V Joint Participatory Assessment underscores the critical need for targeted interventions to support the integration and well-being of refugees and migrants in Trinidad and Tobago. The recommendations aim to address the issues revealed through the assessment, advocating for a collaborative approach to enhance the quality of life and ensure effective integration of this vulnerable population into the broader community.

Overview

This report summarizes the qualitative data collected during the 2023 R4V Joint Participatory Assessment exercise involving refugees and migrants residing in Trinidad and Tobago, primarily from Venezuela. Through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KII), the study aimed to uncover the needs, challenges, and aspirations of various demographic groups of refugees and migrants to guide R4V partners' support and advise policy formulation, among other objectives.

In recent years, Trinidad and Tobago has become a destination country for refugees and migrants due to socio-economic unrest, political instability, and risks to life in their countries of origin. This increase in arrivals has prompted a need for comprehensive understanding and assessment to effectively address and support the integration, fulfill needs and ensure the well-being of these individuals alongside the local communities. The Joint Needs Assessment, via FGDs and KIIs, aimed to fill this knowledge gap, focusing on the lived experiences of these groups within Trinidad and Tobago.

Context

As of July 2023, the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V) estimates that there are approximately 36,218 refugees and migrants from Venezuela in Trinidad and Tobago.[1] R4V partners estimate total numbers to be higher as many Venezuelans enter Trinidad and Tobago irregularly, including via human trafficking and smuggling networks. As of July 2023, an R4V partner had registered 29,067 asylum-seekers and refugees in Trinidad and Tobago from 42 nationalities, of which 89 per cent are Venezuelan.

In 2019, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago registered and granted permits to approximately 16,500 adult Venezuelans through an amnesty exercise called the Migrant Registration Framework (MRF) that allowed them to work and stay in Trinidad and Tobago. Since 2019, the government has allowed individuals registered in the 2019 exercise to renew their permits annually — extended from the previous six-month renewal periods— with the renewal of approximately 13,800 Venezuelans in 2021, 9,133 in 2022, and approximately 7,000 in 2023.[2] To date, the Government has not re-opened or implemented similar initiatives for Venezuelans arriving after June 2019, nor for refugees and migrants of other nationalities in Trinidad and Tobago.

Trinidad and Tobago acceded to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol in November 2000. Nevertheless, the Government has not yet developed corresponding domestic legislation. Hence, asylum-seekers and refugees remain subject to the provisions of the 1976 Immigration Act, which does not legally recognize asylum-seekers and refugees.

[1] Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela. August 2023. https://www.r4v.info/sites/default/files/2023-09/Stock%20Map_Portrait_VF_Eng_1.pdf
[2] Government to Keep Re-registering Venezuelans. https://www.guardian.co.tt/news/govt-to-keep-reregistering-venezuelans-6.2.1828035.28d2cb59fd

Introduction

In July and August 2023, R4V partners met with refugees, migrants, and local communities across Trinidad and Tobago to understand their concerns about protection (including safety and security), health, education, integration (including livelihoods), and basic needs, gender-based violence (GBV), human trafficking and smuggling, shelter, and community participation.

The 2023 R4V Joint Participatory Assessment Exercise generated meaningful participation among diverse groups of refugees, migrants, and local population groups through FGDs, KIIs, and participant observation.[3] Emphasis was placed on understanding what participants expressed about challenges they face and their perceptions during structured and semi-structured dialogues. Particular attention was given to how participants used language, described their thoughts, and shared perspectives. The Joint Participatory Assessment was essential to understanding protection risks, gauging community capacities/resilience, proposing and implementing solutions, identifying root causes of concerns, and enhancing participation in rights and community-based approaches.

While the data gathered from the assessment does not represent the views of all members of the population groups involved, it offers *qualitative*[4] and *descriptive*[5] insights that may explain trends and anomalies identified during quantitative data collection efforts. The findings based on consultations with affected populations will contribute to planning and response programming for governmental, humanitarian, and development partners, including plans to design appropriate protection interventions and increase their participation in rights and community-based approaches.

This report is based on the insights shared by 236 participants who participated in 24 FGDs and 17 KIIs as the primary data collection methods. The participants included women, men, boys, and girls from diverse backgrounds and countries, including Venezuela, Cuba, India, Ghana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. Additionally, Indigenous Warao women and men from Venezuela participated in the discussions. Participants ranged from 11 to 83 years old, ensuring a broad spectrum of perspectives. The discussions were inclusive and were held in safe spaces, capturing experiences from persons with disabilities, people with diverse SOGIESC who shared views related to GBV, and Victims of Trafficking in Persons (VOTs)[6].

[3] Participant observation refers to the researcher's observations of the participant community's day to day activities including appearance, setting and environment, behaviours and attitudes and power dynamics. These observations may be used to develop questions within an interview or FGD.
[4] Qualitative- Relating to the nature, characteristics, or standards of something.

[5] Descriptive Data- refers to data research that aids in describing, demonstrating, or helpfully summarizing data points so those patterns may develop that satisfy all conditions of the data. It is the technique of identifying patterns and links.

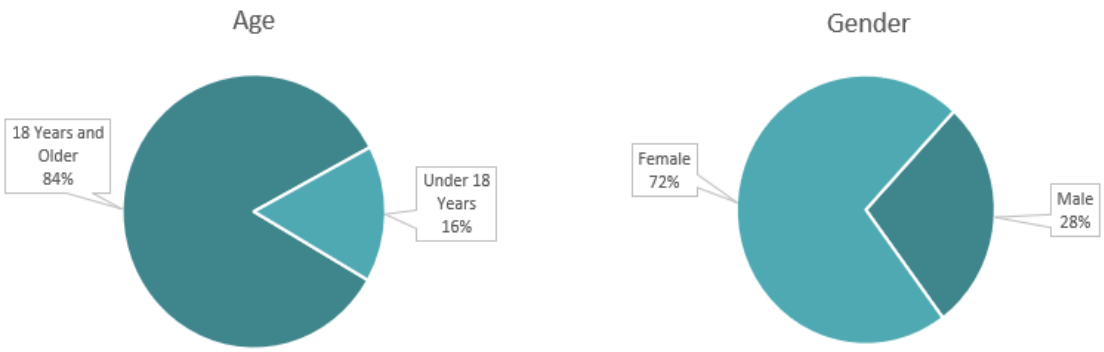
[6] Throughout this report, "victims of trafficking" (VOT) (or otherwise referred to as victims of human trafficking) refers to individuals who have been recruited, transported, transferred, harbored, or received through force, fraud, or coercion for exploitation, and who have already received support. This usage aligns with the R4V platform, which continues to classify individuals as VOT post-assistance. In contrast, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) distinguishes between 'victims' and 'survivors,' where 'survivors' indicate those who have undergone recovery assistance.

Methodology

Overview

The methodology for the 2023 R4V Interagency Participatory Assessment in Trinidad and Tobago was designed to collect qualitative insights into the experiences of refugees, migrants, and host community members. The participant breakdown by nationality and age, along with additional details, is provided below:

Figure 1 FDG Participant Demographics



Total Participants: 236

Venezuelan: 196

- Venezuelan Women over 18 years old: 130
- Venezuelan Men over 18 years old: 43
- Venezuelan Girls under 18 years old: 12
- Venezuelan Boys under 18 years old: 11

Non-Venezuelan: 40

- Women over 18 years old: 8
- Men over 18 years old: 4
- Individuals over 18 years old: 13
- Children under 18 years old: 15

Locations, Participant Selection, and Additional Considerations:

The assessments were conducted across various locations in Trinidad and Tobago to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the communities' challenges and needs. Key locations included Arima, Couva, Chaguanas, El Socorro, Icacos, Maturita, Mayaro, Port of Spain, Rio Claro, Scarborough, St. Helena, and two online sessions. These sessions included a range of participant profiles, from older individuals and persons with disabilities to women at risk of violence, exploitation, abuse, and discrimination, among others, and people with diverse SOGIESC.

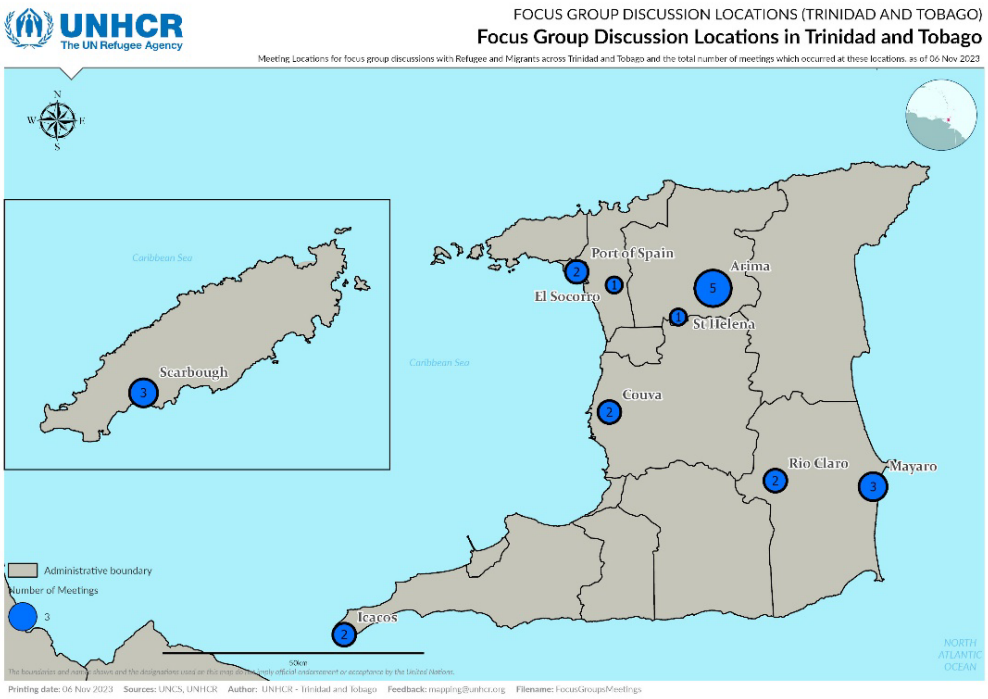
The participant selection process aimed to secure diverse representation across age groups, genders, nationalities, and locations in the host country to capture a broad spectrum of experiences. Venezuelans constituted most of the participants who responded to the call for participation. The study also incorporated two sets of online sessions for people with diverse SOGIESC and victims of trafficking (VoTs), acknowledging their safety concerns, preventing them from participating in person. This approach underscored the commitment to inclusivity and the safety of all participants. Participant selection adhered strictly to purposive sampling principles, focusing deliberately on diverse demographic groups of refugees, migrants, and host community members. This targeted approach

aimed to ensure representation across varied age groups, gender identities, nationalities, and geographic locations within the host country, alongside persons with disabilities and elderly individuals. Such selection was pivotal in aligning with the study's objectives, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter from multiple perspectives of affected stakeholders. The strategy enhanced data depth and relevance by capturing various experiences and viewpoints, crucial for nuanced analysis. By incorporating this diversity, the study reflected a commitment to inclusivity and leveraged purposive sampling to its fullest potential, ensuring rich, insightful findings crucial for informing policy and practice in a global context.

Notes:

- Most respondents (83%) were Venezuelans who responded to the call to participate in the discussions.
- Indigenous Warao individuals participated in focused discussions, emphasizing the assessment's commitment to including marginalized and often overlooked groups.
- The inclusion of host community members and both adults and children enriched the assessment by providing insights into the broader societal impacts and perceptions of the refugee and migrant presence.
- Online sessions for people with diverse SOGIESC and VoTs demonstrated adaptability in methodology, ensuring that the voices of those fearing for their safety were heard.

Figure 2 Locations FGD



Ethical Considerations: Confidentiality of All Participants and Protection of Vulnerable Groups

During the JNA exercise (FGDs and KII sessions), the highest ethical standards were upheld to ensure the confidentiality and protection of all participants, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups. Recognizing the sensitivity of their experiences and the potential risks associated with disclosure, the following measures were implemented:

Participant Anonymity and Data Security: All data collected during this study were anonymized to prevent any possibility of participant identification. Personal identifiers were removed or altered before analysis, and all electronic data were encrypted and stored on secure servers. Access to this data was restricted to the research team members who had completed ethical training and were fully aware of the confidentiality requirements. Details on individual cases discussed have been omitted from this report.

Separation of Services and Research Participation: Participants' inclusion was based on voluntary consent and did not influence the nature or extent of the services provided.

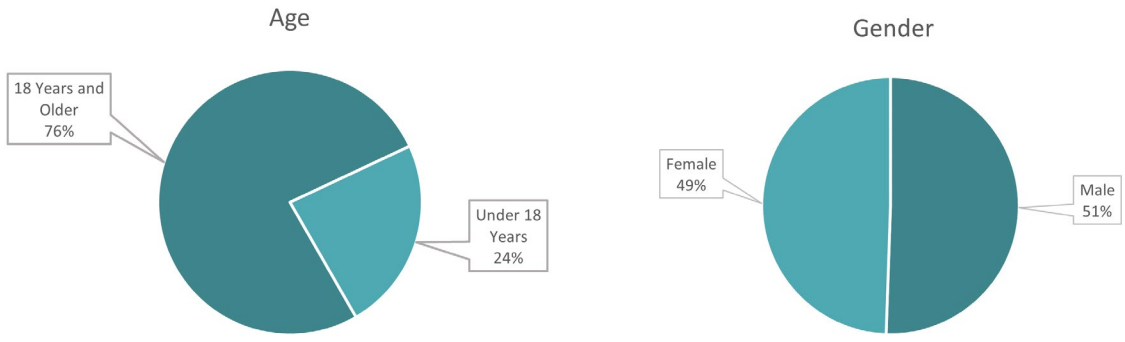
Informed Consent and Use of Disclaimers: Before each data collection session, whether KIIs or FGDs, participants were presented with a disclaimer and required to confirm informed consent. They were advised against discussing specific personal situations or identifiable information. Instead, participants were encouraged to share general observations and experiences related to the subject matter. This approach focused the discussions on collecting data pertinent to the objectives of the JNA while safeguarding individual privacy, protection, and emotional well-being. For children, written consent was obtained from their parents/guardians to ensure their participation was authorized.

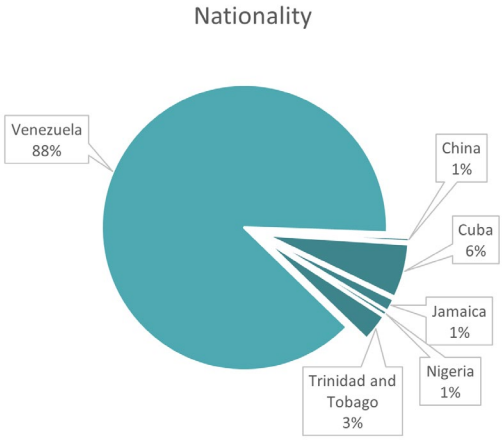
Participant Support: Acknowledging the potential emotional impact of discussing topics related to GBV and other trauma-related topics, participants were informed about available support services. They were provided with contacts for counselling and support, ensuring they could access professional assistance if needed.

This research was committed to the highest ethical standards, ensuring that all participants' dignity, rights, and well-being, especially the most vulnerable, were protected. Principles of respect and confidentiality guided the approach and the imperative to do no harm, contributing valuable insights while upholding ethical responsibility to all involved.

This comprehensive methodology facilitated an in-depth exploration of issues related to safety, security, health, education, livelihoods, and basic needs, among others, offering a nuanced understanding of the diverse challenges faced by the community.

Figure 3 The Ratio of UNHCR Registrations by Age, Gender and Nationality




Nationality
Venezuela
88%
China
1%
Cuba
6%
Jamaica
1%
Nigeria
1%
Trinidad and
Tobago
3%

Findings

Education

Access to Education

Participants that referred to issues related to Education:

- Women and men with children
- Children of Refugees and Migrants (General)
- Children of Indigenous Warao
- Victims of Human Trafficking/Children of VoTs
- Individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV topics

These groups face significant barriers, including language differences, safety concerns, and a lack of information about the local education system.

Educational Access Barriers:

- Refugees and migrants, including boys and girls from urban and rural settings and Venezuelan Indigenous Warao children, expressed significant challenges in accessing the local education system. The language barrier was a recurrent issue, as noted by one respondent: "Many of our children struggle to fit in the school system here due to language barriers and past trauma."[7]
- Rural refugee and migrant women shared that they felt education and attendance of their children in public schools was necessary because their children have been out of formal schooling for a long time, many do not speak and understand the language (English) well. They believe inclusion of their children in the education system will also help local children and parents have a better understanding of why the refugee and migrant children are in Trinidad and Tobago.
- **All women with children in their care** who were interviewed in the exercise had no information about the Trinidad and Tobago public school system. This information gap included the location of schools, transportation options for schools far from homes, the process to enter schools, and materials needed for their attendance. As a result, the women felt a great need for orientation on the local education context in Trinidad and Tobago to prepare for their children to enter public schools.
- Rural refugees and migrants and Indigenous Warao women, particularly from the Venezuelan Warao community, showed either uncertainty or unawareness regarding the attendance of refugee and migrant children at national schools. This group and all interviewed women expressed strong concerns about school safety as their children might experience xenophobia whether in schools or in-transit to schools. They also worried that the education received would be "wasteful and non-transferrable" to their country of origin or a third country owing to uncertainty around accreditation.
- Female participants from rural and urban areas also shared that they would likely need financial support to cover the cost of their children attending public schools, from materials to meals to transportation.
- Women interviewed had strong concerns that their children/youths would be unsafe in schools due to bullying and school violence. In Tobago, the women feared that their children would not be able to meet the documentation requirements for entry to public school.

[7] Participant- Focus Group Discussion. Trinidad and Tobago. 2023.

Economic and Informational Barriers:

- Economic barriers were pronounced among rural women in Rio Claro, who acknowledged public schools as the best option, considering they could not afford private schooling. They emphasized the importance of school integration, noting that their children have been out of formal schooling for a long time and that many do not speak and understand the language well. Many shared that they did not have the skills and knowledge to homeschool. They highlighted that it would be important to implement some type of school integration programme for refugee and migrant children, as well as for local children who will be welcoming them into their schools.
- Women with children in their care noted a lack of information about the Trinidad and Tobago school system. They lacked knowledge of the location of schools, transportation options for schools far from home, the process of entering schools, and the materials needed for attendance. The need for financial support to cover costs related to public schooling was a unanimous concern across rural and urban areas.

Responses from Refugee and Migrant Men Regarding Education

- Across Trinidad and Tobago, refugee and migrant men were concerned about the inability of their children to speak English and how it would affect their inclusion in public schools. They believed parents would need orientation in Spanish on the documentation and processes needed to enrol children in schools. These respondents were also concerned that Trinidadian children would bully refugee and migrant children in schools. In Rio Claro, the men preferred schools exclusively for *Latino* children and youth.

Challenges for Specific Populations:

- Venezuelan Indigenous Warao mothers highlighted that their children were unable to participate in classes (Child-Friendly Spaces and alternative education classes) as they spent their time engaging in work/economic activities such as fishing and agriculture which is a part of the culture and their child rearing practices, but which is also necessary for the family's survival.
- A young man with disabilities and his caretaker father revealed the inadequacies in accommodating special needs within the education system. The father was especially concerned about the safety of his daughter from sexual harassment and assault if she had to travel to and from schools, highlighting safety and inclusivity concerns.
- Victims of human trafficking and individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV topics echoed the need for educational support to accommodate their unique educational needs, such as trauma-informed education, mental and psychosocial support, learning flexibility, empowerment through education programs such as vocational training, language support and safe learning environments which cater to privacy and confidentiality.

Integration

Access to Employment

Participants that referred to issues related to Employment:

- Diverse SOGIESC Individuals
- Men (Urban and Rural Areas)
- Persons with Disabilities
- Victims of Human Trafficking
- Individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV topics
- Women (General, Rural, Indigenous Warao)
- Refugee and migrant women in Trinidad and Tobago

Refugee and Migrant Women Responses Related to Employment/Livelihoods Issues

- Refugee and migrant women highlighted that they did not have access to stable/consistent employment, inadequate wages, and the necessity of working multiple jobs to meet basic needs, mainly due to the rising cost of food, rent and transportation in the host country. Despite rising costs, the lack of a wage increase has forced them into additional employment. The absence of formal work opportunities due to their inability to access work and stay permits was particularly challenging. Most respondents in this group shared that - having arrived after June 2019 - they could not access work and stay permits via the government's Migrant Registration Framework (MRF), which they said was a serious disadvantage to finding stable and formal work with decent pay.[8] Non-Venezuelan women said not having access to a similar registration exercise was also a serious disadvantage.
- Similarly, women in Chaguanas reported that access to employment was impeded by their lack of proper documentation, including visas, valid passports, and identification documents.
- Refugee and Migrant women employed informally in domestic work or as cooks faced limitations due to caregiving responsibilities or the lack of opportunities aligned with their qualifications and background. Most highlighted that they were employed informally in domestic work two or three days per week in private homes and businesses. Others were cooks in restaurants or made food to sell at roadside stalls.
- Older women shared that they were limited to domestic work to earn an income. In addition, those with qualifications reported being unable to access job opportunities commensurate with their qualifications due to their inability to prove their qualifications/accreditation of certification gained in their country of origin. This trend highlighted in the study was present in respondents settled in both urban and rural areas. Among all women respondents, very few women cited the need to send remittances to their home countries as a need to earn more wages.
- Indigenous Warao women said that their caregiving responsibilities for children and older people limited their ability to engage in income-earning activities but that their current domestic activities were not very demanding.
- Although women in Tobago did not believe gender roles impacted job access, they did believe that they were under-employed despite their education and employment background. For example, one participant, who was trained in information technology, was not able to work in her field in Tobago. Another worked in an oil company in Venezuela but now works as a cook.

[8] Decent Pay refer to access to at least minimum pay options in Trinidad and Tobago.

- Financial constraints and limited resources hindered the desire for entrepreneurship among rural and Indigenous Warao women. This group reported experiences of xenophobia, humiliation, and unfair treatment, though some women reported positive interactions with employers who were considerate and offered benefits like paid leave. The language barrier was less of an obstacle in Tobago, but challenges with employment conditions persisted.
- All women shared that they were struggling to meet their basic needs.
- Focus group moderators noted rural and Indigenous women collected food and drinks provided during the FGDs in Rio Claro and Icacos to take back home for family members or for when they were hungry later - a practice that did not occur in any other Focus Groups or interviews. A pregnant woman in Arima mentioned that she had nothing to eat in the past two days.
- Experiences in the workplace varied from person to person. Many women reported experiencing xenophobia, humiliation, and unfair treatment at the workplace, although a few shared positive experiences with their employers. An example is one respondent saying, "One lady told me, do not touch me, Spanish! While working at a beauty salon…"[9] – *Venezuelan woman, 18-59.*
- Some women reported having a good workplace experience with considerate, helpful and, in some cases, protective employers. For instance, some employers provide paid leave or paid sick leave despite being informal jobs. In Tobago, although the women expressed having challenges with getting leave from work, many felt that Tobago employers were more flexible. They believed the language barrier was less of an obstacle to finding and keeping work in Tobago. However, some women in Tobago shared that they did not have a good experience in the workplace. Women reported being overworked and underpaid by employers and, in some cases, reported that wages were not paid when the job was completed. In these cases, they reported that employers threatened to call immigration or the police to silence complaints from the victims. Women in urban centres like Arima and Port of Spain reported that they experienced rejection or mistreatment from female co-workers more often than they did from male co-workers. In Arima, Indigenous Warao women said they were willing and able to work in agriculture but could only find domestic jobs. Likewise, Indigenous Warao women in Icacos reported that they are willing to work in the fishing industry, but there are no opportunities.
- **Women across demographics** reported being paid less for more work because of their gender, noting that women are often paid less for more work "just because we're women,"[10] indicating systemic economic disparities.
- One respondent indicated that she provides childcare services for her adult family members, allowing them to go to work. This allows the family to pool resources and make financial decisions together about the household. However, despite her physical disability, the participant wanted more formal work opportunities, like in a factory or production facility.

Refugee and Migrant Men Responses Related to Employment/Livelihoods Issues

- **Men in both urban (often in construction or manual labour) and rural areas (agricultural or informal jobs)** expressed economic hardships. One participant noted that: ***"in the city, jobs are scarce, and in the countryside, they pay even less."***[11]
- In both islands, Trinidad and Tobago, **refugee and migrant men** reported working under exploitative conditions. They indicated that conditions varied between the two islands; however, particularly in Trinidad, they had difficulty finding stable jobs that offered decent pay. The use of the UNHCR registration card for work in Tobago and the community support in sharing job

[9] Participant- Focus Group Discussion. Trinidad and Tobago. 2023.
[10] Participant- Focus Group Discussion. Trinidad and Tobago. 2023.
[11] Participant- Focus Group Discussion. Trinidad and Tobago. 2023.

opportunities were noted. Challenges included limited income-earning opportunities in rural areas and the impact of employment struggles on social participation and family security.

- In the Tobago Focus Group, participants agreed that jobs were easier to find there for both men and women, though employers often paid salaries late. However, one participant in Tobago also reported that he was fired because he 'stopped to eat lunch.' Some reported that employers in Tobago accepted the UNHCR registration card to work. Men in Mayaro also reported that employers were not strict in requesting work permits for employment. These participants also said that they would like to seek asylum through UNHCR, but they could not afford to travel to Port of Spain and were afraid of being detained by police during the journey.
- All male refugee and migrant respondents reported that they were often not paid for work, as well as threatened with deportation if they tried to report it.
- The men reported that very often, both partners in the home worked to meet the basic needs of the family, although some women stayed at home to take care of the children.
- It was the perception of an older Venezuelan man that men usually do manual labour - generally in construction - and women sew or cook. Some participants expressed that, although they could self-manage with most things, they could not access work like younger men because they no longer had the physical strength required for manual labour. Similarly, another participant shared that he was denied work despite being fit to work because of his age. He reported that sustaining himself and his family is difficult due to a lack of access to jobs. Men in rural Mayaro similarly reported limited income-earning opportunities due to the area's remoteness.
- Few men interviewed in rural Mayaro and Rio Claro had migrant registration documents issued by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in 2019. Those who had the document reported that finding and keeping stable work was still challenging because they did not speak English. The participants in Rio Claro shared that they took care of each other by passing on job opportunities to each other when someone needed work. Others found work by standing on popular junctions where Trinidadians came in their vehicles to offer jobs.
- Refugee and migrant men highlighted exploitative work conditions and challenges in securing stable, decently paid employment.
- Some respondents reported that employers in Tobago accepted the UNHCR registration card to work. Men in Mayaro also reported that employers were not strict in requesting work permits for employment. These participants also said that they would like to seek asylum through UNHCR, but they could not afford to travel to Port of Spain and were afraid of being detained by police during the journey.
- Notable were the varied employment conditions between Trinidad and Tobago, with instances of unpaid work and threats of deportation for seeking justice.
- Older men highlighted that they faced barriers to employment due to age, affecting their ability to meet basic needs.

Individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV topics- Responses Related to Employment/Livelihoods Issues

- Interviewees in this group indicated they encountered labour exploitation even with the legal ability to work under the MRF. The permit did little to mitigate labour exploitation.
- Respondents inside this group who were unregistered said that they were either non-Venezuelans or Venezuelans who arrived after the June 2019 deadline. As a result, they noted that they had difficulty finding and keeping stable work with decent pay. Experiences varied from positive employer relations to sexual harassment and unfair treatment.
- Most respondents in this group reported working two to three jobs two or three days per week. These jobs were mainly domestic work in the beauty industry, such as hairstylist, nail technician, or restaurant cook. Participants reported varied experiences in the workplace. Some had positive experiences with their employers, often where they appreciated and rewarded their hard work.

- Other female identifying respondents reported incidents of sexual harassment, humiliation and unfair treatment by employers, co-workers, and customers.
- Respondents noted the difficulty of finding work while rebuilding their lives: One noted: "Finding work is hard when you're trying to rebuild your life."[12]

Responses of Persons with Disabilities Related to Employment/ Livelihoods Issues

- Persons with disabilities (PWD) and their caretakers face significant employment barriers, including widespread discrimination leading to immediate job application rejections and emphasizing the discriminatory practices that hinder their employment opportunities and means to cover basic needs. They underscored that the lack of documentation compounded these difficulties.

Responses of Diverse SOGIESC Individuals Related to Employment/Livelihood Challenges

- Diverse SOGIESC individuals experienced extreme challenges in securing safe and decent work, often resorting to multiple jobs or long hours to meet basic needs.
- The absence of positive workplace experiences and instances of abuse without avenues for redress were highlighted.
- Respondents reported workplace discrimination based on their identities. One stated: "Being myself shouldn't mean losing job opportunities,"[13] highlighting discrimination across urban and rural employment sectors.
- This group of respondents mentioned the challenge of lack of documentation. 100% of refugee and migrant participants of diverse SOGIESC shared that they were not registered in the government registration exercise because they were not Venezuelan. They comprised Jamaican and Guyanese refugees and migrants.
- All diverse SOGIESC respondents shared that employers preferred Venezuelans with registration cards, so they often were disadvantaged when seeking safe, stable work with decent pay.
- Refugees and migrants of diverse SOGIESC in Trinidad and Tobago shared extreme challenges related to their physical safety when finding and keeping decent work with decent pay. Most participants interviewed were unemployed at the time of the FGDs. When they could find work, participants shared that they often had to work between two to three jobs or work 16-hour days just to meet their basic needs, including rent, food, and transport.
- All participants reported experiencing job situations where breaks, even to the bathroom, were not allowed.
- One male-identifying participant shared that he was anxious about his inability to send remittances to his ageing mother in his country of origin. While only one participant had a dependent family member, all respondents said they had difficulty meeting their basic needs, and the majority were in some form of debt they could not repay.
- Like refugee and migrant women respondents, this group felt their access to employment was inconsistent in terms of wages, duration, and overall stability.
- Most respondents with jobs were employed in some form of domestic work two or three days per week in private homes and businesses; others worked graveyard shifts as security guards, and others were restaurant cooks. One interviewee did informal work such as painting homes by finding jobs through posts on the *Venezuelans in Trinidad and Tobago* Facebook page.
- Refugee and migrant people with diverse SOGIESC could not share a positive workplace experience with co-workers or employers in Trinidad and Tobago.

[12] Participant- Focus Group Discussion. Trinidad and Tobago. 2023.
[13] Participant from Focus Group Discussions. Trinidad and Tobago. 2023

- Although the participants said that they fled far worse situations in their countries of origin, all participants reported experiencing xenophobia, humiliation, and unfair treatment in the workplace.
- Participants reported being overworked and underpaid by employers. In some cases, agreed wages were not paid when the job was completed, and when addressed with employers, these interactions often included threats of calling immigration or the[14] police to silence complaints from the victims.
- The participants also shared that they were not aware of avenues for redress in the event of an incident of abuse.
- One female-identifying participant reported that one night during a graveyard shift, she was intentionally locked out of the building, and she could only huddle in a corner until the next day when her shift replacement arrived. Her employers did not follow up on her incident report.
- *Another Respondent shared: "They treat us as if we are not human beings; that is the fear we have in our lives,"*[15] *Male* ***person with diverse SOGIESC***

Victims of Human Trafficking Responses Related to Employment/Livelihoods Issues

- Victims of Trafficking (VoTs) described being forced into exploitative labour conditions. One shared: "I was forced into working under conditions I never agreed to."[16]
- Victims of Trafficking (VoTs) respondents also expressed a strong interest in professional development and access to entrepreneurial funding, aiming to achieve self-sufficiency.

The collective responses highlighted that employment challenges disproportionately affect diverse groups within Trinidad and Tobago, including refugees, migrants, the indigenous Warao population, individuals with disabilities, survivors of gender-based violence and Victims of Human Trafficking, among others. Respondents identified key issues such as unstable employment, exploitation, and discriminatory practices. Specifically, refugee and migrant women struggle with inadequate wages and the necessity of securing multiple jobs, while men, particularly in manual labor, report exploitative working conditions. The lack of proper documentation, age-related barriers, and disabilities were highlighted as significant obstacles to accessing decent employment opportunities. Despite these challenges, these groups strongly desire entrepreneurship and professional development, highlighting the critical need for inclusive employment strategies and protections to ensure safe, stable, and fair work opportunities.

These findings depict a challenging employment landscape for diverse groups within the refugee and migrant communities in Trinidad and Tobago, marked by discrimination, economic struggles, and systemic barriers to stable and fair employment.

Challenges to Access Financial Services

Participants that referred to issues related to Financial Inclusion:

- General Refugee and Migrant Population
- Host Community Members
- Women (General, Urban, Rural)
- Men (General, Rural Areas)
- Indigenous Warao Communities
- Persons with Disabilities
- Victims of Human Trafficking
- Individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV topics

[14] Participant-Focus Group Discussion, Trinidad and Tobago. 2023
[15] Participant- Focus Group Discussion. Trinidad and Tobago. 2023.
[16] Participant- Focus Group Discussion. Trinidad and Tobago. 2023.

General Observations:

Key Challenge: Many refugees and migrants possess limited knowledge regarding the local banking system and access to financial services. This deficiency exacerbates their vulnerability, impeding their economic integration and potential for growth. Most women shared that they had little to no information on the local banking system.

Affected Demographics and Specific Challenges:

- Women (General, Urban, Rural) Encounter difficulties in accessing financial services due to gender discrimination, lack of stable employment, and insufficient identification documentation. This situation severely limits their capacity to open bank accounts, secure loans, or send remittances. Very few women cited the need to send remittances to their home countries.
- Men (General, Rural Areas): Like women, men reported a lack of information on accessing banking services. This challenge is exacerbated by their often informal or unstable employment, which complicates meeting banking requirements for account openings or credit access. Men in Mayaro and Rio Claro indicated a lack of information on banking, labour rights, decent pay such as minimum wages, and other rights and responsibilities.
- Indigenous Communities: Experience added barriers due to language differences, cultural misunderstandings, and their communities' physical remoteness from banking institutions, limiting access to financial literacy resources. The Venezuelan Warao community was highlighted in this context.
- Persons with Disabilities: This group expressed facing both physical barriers in accessing banking facilities and discrimination, alongside a lack of financial services tailored to their specific needs. Participants also shared that they had little to no information on the local banking system and how to access financial services. As a result, the refugees and migrants with disabilities interviewed had difficulty meeting all their basic needs and experienced significant dissatisfaction with their quality of life. At the end of one interview, a refugee woman with disabilities asked for financial assistance because she did not have money for food and hygiene items, in addition to items needed to mitigate the effects of her disability. Participants like her needed more information on employment opportunities, education and financial services, and other assistance-related information. They felt this information could support their local orientation and integration into the community. Interviewees also desired a community meeting with other refugees and migrants to discuss and agree on activities they would like to do.
- Victims of Human Trafficking: Struggle with financial service access due to a lack of identification documents, trust issues, and the psychological impacts of their experiences, which may inhibit their engagement with financial institutions.

The collective experience across demographics:

A general sentiment regarding the challenges related to financial inclusion across all groups was summarized as a significant hurdle, impacting their ability to provide for their families and secure a stable future.

Respondents across groups highlighted significant challenges to financial inclusion affecting a wide range of demographics, including the refugee and migrant population, host community members, women, men, indigenous Warao communities, individuals with disabilities, victims of human trafficking and persons experiencing GBV. Key challenges identified include limited knowledge of the local banking system, gender discrimination, lack of stable employment, insufficient identification documentation, cultural and language barriers, physical access issues for refugees and migrants with disabilities (which encompass insufficient ramps, narrow doorways, non-accessible restrooms, challenging sidewalks and

crosswalks, inaccessible public transportation, missing signage, walkway obstacles, limited parking, workspaces, and inaccessible recreational facilities, among others), and the psychological impact of past traumas. Specifically, women face severe limitations in accessing financial services due to gender discrimination and documentation issues, while men and indigenous communities struggle with a lack of information and cultural misunderstandings. Persons with disabilities encounter both physical barriers and discrimination, severely impacting their quality of life and financial independence. According to all, victims of human trafficking and GBV survivors face unique obstacles related to trust and legal identification. These challenges hinder economic integration and growth, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to enhance financial literacy, access, and inclusion across all affected groups, thereby supporting their ability to provide for their families and secure a stable future.

Protection

Safety and Security Challenges

The responses emanated from the following groups:

- General Refugee and Migrant Population
- Women (General, Urban, Rural)
- Men (General, Rural Areas)
- Indigenous Warao Communities
- Persons with Disabilities
- Victims of Human Trafficking
- Individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV topics

General Observations:

Responses of Refugee and Migrant Women Related to Safety and Security Issues in Trinidad and Tobago

- Refugee and migrant women report experiences of verbal harassment, physical assault, robbery, and sexual assault, leading to a pervasive sense of unsafety both in public and private spheres. Instances of xenophobia, workplace humiliation, and unfair treatment amplify their struggles.

<u>Highlights include:</u>

- Xenophobic verbal assaults in public spaces, exemplified by Venezuelan women constantly facing derogatory remarks when out in public.
- Widespread feelings of insecurity among women, irrespective of the time of day, with many reporting victimization through crimes like robbery and sexual assault.
- Women in urban areas and Tobago feel particularly vulnerable due to language barriers and limited community engagement, respectively. In Tobago, despite a relative sense of safety, women report sexual harassment and abuse.
- Respondents from this group generally reported feeling unsafe, both in public and in private, and this feeling of insecurity did not vary much between day or night times.
- Most women participating in the study in Trinidad reported being victims of crime, including robbery and sexual assault. Others admitted knowing at least one refugee or migrant who was a victim of crime, both women and men.
- Women in urban centres shared that they essentially feel unsafe moving about Trinidad because they do not speak the language. In Tobago, the women reported that they did not

participate in community activities, and although Tobago is generally safer than Trinidad, they were exposed to sexual harassment and sexual abuse.

- Participants, rural, urban and Indigenous Warao women, were unfamiliar with the UN's definition of GBV. The closest description came through an example of domestic violence between a husband and a wife.
- To protect themselves, women reported not going out for leisure. Many shared that they go to work and home and even limit the places they visit when they have to run errands. Some women specified that they would only shop at places not near bars and avoided places with "too many men."[17] The adaptive strategies by women to enhance safety include limiting outings and avoiding areas perceived as risky.
- Most women reported fearing for their safety even in their homes; they fear police and immigration invading their homes or communities and then deporting them. There were reports of refugees and migrants being removed from their homes during immigration raids, detained for a period and then (sometimes) released. Venezuelan women in urban areas shared that they often avoided living in areas or residential compounds with many other Venezuelans; this quickly attracted raids and detentions by local authorities.

Responses of Refugee and Migrant Men Related to Safety/Security Issues in Trinidad and Tobago

- All men highlighted concerns over police interaction and deportation fears, restricting access to services and mobility.
- For men interviewed in Tobago, GBV is synonymous with domestic violence and abuse of women. They shared that physical violence and criminal activity went unreported in Tobago due to their fear. They reported knowing of several instances of GBV between Trinbagonian men and Venezuelan women who were in relationships. These participants believed that the problem of GBV is limited primarily to this group. In Mayaro, the men felt that GBV mostly took place among the local population and not among the refugees or migrants.

Responses of Persons with Disabilities Related to Safety/Security Issues in Trinidad and Tobago:

- Refugee and Migrant individuals with disabilities express heightened fears for their safety, influenced by reports of kidnappings and forced prostitution among "Spanish"[18] (Venezuelan and Cuban) women.
- Interviewees from this group shared that they did not feel safe in Trinidad and Tobago because they were in a foreign country and were at risk of violence by strangers.
- Their strategies for safety include limited public exposure and reliance on police for potential assistance. One refugee and migrant woman with a disability stated that she was fearful due to reports she heard of Spanish (Venezuelan and Cuban) women being kidnapped and forced into prostitution. This participant believed that her strong faith in God keeps her safe, but she has also limited her time in public, only going to and from home, her workplace, and the grocery. She also always keeps her home locked up. This respondent indicated she believed she could approach the police for help if needed.

[17] Participant- Focus Group Discussion. Trinidad and Tobago. 2023
[18] The term *"Spanish"* here is a slang term used by some Trinbagonians to refer to Cubans and Venezuelans

Responses of People with Diverse SOGIESC Related to Safety/Security Issues in Trinidad and Tobago:

This group reports a constant fear for their safety due to past violence and discrimination, compounded by employment challenges. It should be noted that these interviews and FGDs were conducted virtually over Zoom because the participants could not agree on a safe physical space to meet, in addition to work conflicts and fear of moving through their neighbourhoods.

Notable Responses include:

- A lack of safety felt in all settings, attributed to previous experiences, resulting in a preference for virtual meetings over physical gatherings.
- Experiences of violence, detention, and robbery, with ambiguity over the role of sexual orientation, identity, or migrant status in these incidents.
- Participants reported that to protect themselves, they felt the need to carry self-defence items and use private taxis for discretion.
- People with diverse SOGIESC expressed a pervasive fear for their safety due to previous experiences of violence and discrimination. They indicated their challenges were further complicated by difficulties finding and retaining safe, stable employment.
- Refugee and migrant men strongly expressed a sense of insecurity in the workplace, specifically attributing it to concerns about their sexuality. Conversely, women reported feeling unsafe but were unable to determine whether their gender, sexuality, or migrant status was the primary factor contributing to their insecurity.
- More than one participant reported an experience of being held at gunpoint, being detained, snatched, or being robbed. When asked, they were not sure if the harassment was linked to perceptions of their sexual orientation and identity or their refugee/migrant status. They reported feeling unsafe at all hours of the day, and for some, staying at home is also dangerous because they live in high-crime areas because that is the housing they can afford.
- Most respondents from this group reported fear of having their doors kicked in by criminals or the police, and in one instance, the former happened.
- Participants shared that seeking protection from the police as a person of diverse SOGIESC was useless. Male-identifying participants explained that it was hazardous for them to report incidents of abuse to the police because they would be subject to additional abuse by the police due to their sexual orientation or identity or due to their migrant status. One participant *said: "Definitely not the police…they see you as an outsider, they see you as a joke."*[19]- ***Male-identifying person of diverse SOGIESC***-.
- Some participants, male- and female-identifying, shared that they had friendly neighbours who helped them to move around because they knew of their fear of being in public alone. Participants reported that staying at home is the safest; they go to work and then home—no social life. This made safe and secure homes a critical need for all participants in FGDs and KIIs.

Responses of Victims of Human Trafficking Related to Safety/Security Issues in Trinidad and Tobago:

- Victims of human trafficking also shared their feelings of fear residing in Trinidad and Tobago. They expressed fears of being deported, kidnapped, or killed. This view was also in relation to traffickers continuing to issue threats and not being convicted. These fears have also led to an unwillingness of victims to leave children with others. Their testimonies indicate a need for comprehensive support services, including housing, education, healthcare, and professional development opportunities.

[19] Participant from Focus Group Discussion. Trinidad and Tobago. 2023

Responses of Individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV topics- Related to Safety/ Security Issues in Trinidad and Tobago

- Respondents highlighted a lack of awareness regarding GBV definitions/issues, with some equating it solely with domestic violence.
- Security risks for GBV survivors, including males and those within the host community, involve heightened vulnerabilities to violence, exploitation, and discrimination.
- GBV Survivors face barriers to reporting incidents due to fear of deportation or mistrust in law enforcement, exacerbating their sense of insecurity. This situation is compounded for male GBV survivors, who may confront additional stigma and lack of recognition for their experiences, further deterring them from seeking support.
- Focus group Respondents reported feeling unsafe, both in public and in private, at all times of the day.
- All respondents had experienced one or more incidents of GBV while in Trinidad and Tobago, and they shared that these experiences exacerbated their feelings of insecurity in the country.
- Most individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV topics reported being victims of sexual harassment, domestic violence, robbery and/or sexual assault.
- Respondents indicated they feel unsafe moving about in Trinidad because they do not speak the language. In Tobago, however, they felt much safer moving about, although they reported experiencing a lot of verbal street harassment. These included sexual statements or derogatory references to their origin, like "Spanish." To mitigate their exposure to risks from perpetrators, participants reported that they only go out to work, run errands, and return home.
- Several respondents disclosed that, as a precautionary measure, they consider carrying self-defence items. This was highlighted as a direct response to their heightened awareness and concern for personal safety, stemming from the widespread acknowledgement of the risk of experiencing violence again. Such measures indicate the pervasive nature of violence they have encountered/observed and the continuous effort to reclaim a sense of security in their daily lives.
- Women and people with diverse SOGIESC in urban areas shared that they use registered private taxi service apps like *TT Rideshare* when they can afford them.
- Individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV topics in the Chaguanas areas shared concerns about being unable to identify legitimate taxis to make their commute home safely. In these cases, they expressed a strong fear of being abducted, physically harmed, or assaulted.
- The majority of refugees and migrants who had encountered instances of GBV said that they do not think the police can or would protect them, so they are unlikely to seek help from them. There were reports of what is perceived as "police abuse of power"[20] where refugees and migrants have been detained due to their status in the country. Due to a lack of documentation and fear of arrest, refugee and migrant women revealed that they often chose not to report incidences of violence/crime. They indicated fears that, in turn, they may suffer police victimization and be mistreated as the criminal and not the victim. They further noted that the police do not respect the UNHCR card. Accordingly, mistrust exists towards police officers. Stakeholders shared that refugees and migrants may be more willing to report violence by strangers versus GBV or intimate partner violence.

[20] Participants' views from Focus Group Discussions. Trinidad and Tobago. 2023

- While acknowledging the increasing level of crime within Trinidad and Tobago, refugee and migrant females who disclosed experiencing GBV reported being at increased risk for GBV within Trinidad based on the hypersexualized way in which they are viewed. They indicated that they experienced verbal harassment, physical assaults in the streets, abduction, sexual harassment and being at risk when using public transport or travelling alone. Many within the assessment felt increased risk because they were non-national and Venezuelan.

- The 2023 R4V Joint Participatory Assessment highlights significant safety and security concerns among refugees, migrants, women, men, indigenous Warao, individuals with disabilities, diverse SOGIESC populations, human trafficking victims, and Individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV indicated they faced challenges including verbal harassment, physical and sexual assaults, robbery, xenophobia, and fears of deportation, undermining their safety in both public and private spheres. Women face additional vulnerabilities due to language barriers and limited community ties, often limiting their public activities for safety. Men report police interaction fears, contributing to underreported violence. Disabilities and diverse SOGIESC identities introduce further risks, leading to isolation and restricted mobility. Trafficking victims experience distrust towards law enforcement, heightening their exposure to violence and exploitation. These findings underscore the urgent need for targeted support services and improved law enforcement responses to protect the safety and security of vulnerable groups in Trinidad and Tobago.

Health

Access to Healthcare

- Refugee and Migrant Women (General, Urban, Rural)
- Refugee and Migrant Men (General, Rural Areas)
- Refugee and Migrant Indigenous Warao Communities
- Persons with Disabilities
- Victims of Human Trafficking
- Individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV topics

Health Access Challenges Among Refugees and Migrants in Trinidad and Tobago

The 2023 R4V Joint Participatory Assessment exercise in Trinidad and Tobago unveiled significant health-related challenges diverse demographic groups face within the refugee and migrant communities. See respondents' perspectives and findings for a detailed perspective on these issues.

General Health Access Challenges:

- **Language Barriers and Lack of Recognized Identification:** Rural and Indigenous Warao women, persons with disabilities, and victims of human trafficking struggle with accessing healthcare due to language barriers and the absence of recognized identification documents.
- **Limited Accessibility and Discrimination:** Discrimination in healthcare settings is a common challenge, with refugees and migrants reporting a lack of access to services and feeling excluded or mistreated due to language barriers and their non-national status.
- **Lack of Knowledge on Available Services:** Across all groups, there is a notable lack of information regarding the availability and accessibility of health services, which hampers the ability of individuals to seek timely medical care.
- **Transportation and Cost Barriers:** The logistical and financial challenges of reaching healthcare facilities, especially during emergencies, significantly hinder access to necessary medical services for men working in demanding physical jobs and other vulnerable groups.

Specific Demographic Challenges:

Responses of Refugee and Migrant Women Related to Health Access in Trinidad and Tobago

- Refugee and migrant women from rural and urban areas indicated that they experience heightened vulnerabilities, including sexual and gender-based violence, which exacerbates their physical and mental health needs.
- They spoke of health needs from reproductive to general health. In rural areas, they face additional access barriers due to distance.
- Rural refugees and migrants, including Indigenous Warao women, reported that they had difficulty accessing medical services due to a lack of identification documents recognized by Trinidad and Tobago government authorities, a lack of ability to communicate with English speakers, and the distance from the nearest hospital.
- The rural women in Rio Claro further explained that when they interact with doctors and nurses, it is challenging to communicate their symptoms, which affects the quality of care. Sometimes doctors use Google Translate to communicate, but the situation is usually complicated, and the translation app may not accurately capture the situation. They also reported that the ambulances do not have specialised equipment to treat emergencies. In Tobago, some women believed that locals were taken care of before refugees and migrants in the health centres and hospitals. One participant reported that she had to wait 4 or 5 hours at night before she was attended to; she also shared that she was put on a six-month waiting list for an appointment. Another participant agreed that refugees and migrants spend many hours waiting when they go to the hospitals. A woman shared the story of her friend who was eventually diagnosed with gallbladder stones, but she went to the hospital at night and had to wait until the following afternoon to be seen by a doctor. All women respondents in Tobago explained that there was a language barrier in the reported incident.
- Regarding seeking assistance for services, refugee and migrant women in Chaguanas felt that, in general, to access any service, they would not satisfy the eligibility criteria and, therefore, refrained from seeking help unless the situation became dire. Stakeholders working with refugees and migrants corroborated this view, acknowledging that because they may not be able to afford services not accessible to non-nationals, they would not reach out or address it unless it became a critical emergency. This approach was particularly referenced for health matters.
- Rural refugee and migrant respondents in Rio Claro strongly expressed a need for dental health care services. In Trinidad and Tobago, the only dental service offered in public health is tooth extractions, and this service is offered in limited locations on a schedule.

Responses of Refugee and Migrant Men Related to Health Access in Trinidad and Tobago

Men (General, Rural Areas): Face physical health issues related to exploitative work conditions and lack access to emergency medical services due to transportation challenges and fear of deportation.

- Male respondents in Tobago reported that they often suffered pains and minor injuries that they associated with hard labour and long hours of work. One older man in East Trinidad, over the age of 80, shared that he has never visited a doctor since he arrived from Venezuela, although he has chronic pain in his legs. The interviewers observed at the time of the interview that although he was mobile, he had significant difficulty moving about quickly. This older man did not know if he had access to health care in Trinidad, so since his arrival, he has used home remedies when ill.
- Men in Tobago shared that in medical emergencies, access to transport to take people to hospitals was a challenge. If the emergency happened at night, they might have to wait until

the next day to take the person to the hospital because they could not pay for a car to take them to the hospital.

- In Rio Claro, participants were concerned that they had no access to sexual and reproductive health services (SRH), in particular prostate exams.

Responses of Refugees and Migrants in Rural Areas and Indigenous Warao Women Related to Health Access in Trinidad and Tobago

Indigenous Communities Encounter unique barriers due to geographical remoteness and cultural differences, leading to difficulties in accessing culturally sensitive healthcare.

- Rural and Indigenous Warao women reported that they had difficulty accessing health services due to several reasons. These reasons included a lack of identification documents recognized by Trinidad and Tobago government authorities, an inability to communicate with English speakers, and a prohibitive distance to and from the nearest hospital.
- In Icacos, Indigenous women shared that, although they had accessed the Icacos Health Centre, sometimes they did not receive services at the health centre and were directed to the San Fernando General Hospital (approximately 73 kilometres from Icacos). The indigenous Warao women could not state clearly the reason for the referral because they had difficulty communicating with staff at the clinic, so one interviewer followed up with nurses at the Icacos clinic following the FGD. The nurses shared that they had no significant issues when providing the services to the Indigenous people in the area. They clarified that clinic services were limited and often required an ID document for record-keeping, but they readily accepted the UNHCR registration card. When a service was unavailable, they referred patients to the San Fernando Hospital. In Rio Claro, the women shared that only simple medical cases were treated at the Rio Claro Health Centre. In emergency cases, the patients were transferred to the Sangre Grande Hospital. The women expressed anxiety around a lack of access to emergency care during nights and weekends - when the health centre was closed, and there was difficulty in getting transport to the hospital.
- One respondent from Icacos reported that it was difficult for ambulances to come in case of emergency due to the state of the roads and distance.
- Respondents highlighted barriers in remote areas. One said, “Our communities are forgotten by healthcare services,” indicating neglect of Indigenous health needs.
- On this same subject, rural and Indigenous Warao women shared that they experienced discrimination when seeking services or assistance at public institutions. As a result of the language barrier, they could not give a clear explanation about what was said to them. They, however, described receiving a lack of attention and feeling a sense of exclusion - which they interpreted as discrimination due to an inability to speak English and being ‘different.’ Indigenous Warao women often encountered cultural insensitivity in healthcare provision. One highlighted that *"Being a woman shouldn't mean harder access to healthcare."* [21]This statement reflects this group’s perception of gender-based disparities in health services.
- These respondents from Rio Claro further explained that in interacting with doctors and nurses, there was difficulty in communicating their symptoms, affecting the quality of care. Sometimes, doctors use Google Translate to communicate, but on most occasions, the translation app does not necessarily accurately capture the situation, complicating communication. They also reported that the ambulances do not have specialized equipment to treat emergencies.

[21] View from One participant of a Focus-Group Discussion. Trinidad and Tobago. 2023

- In contrast, the Indigenous women in urban centres reported that they had never experienced discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago and had access to primary health care with the support of bilingual community members. Respondents from the Arima area shared that access to health care varied depending on the location or hospital. They reported good treatment and easy access to health care services at the Sangre Grande General Hospital and all hospitals and health centres, except for Arima and Mt. Hope, where they indicated they received poor service.

Responses of Persons with Disabilities Related to Health Access in Trinidad and Tobago

- Persons with Disabilities: reported significant obstacles in accessing healthcare services that cater to their specific needs, including mobility challenges and communication barriers.
- Some respondents shared that they have never tried to access public health services in Trinidad and Tobago since they have not been seriously ill. There was also a lack of awareness that they could be attended to and treated at public hospitals since they had heard many stories of refugees and migrants being turned away from public healthcare facilities. Instead, some respondents accessed health services at the Family Planning Association, which provides basic health screenings and doctor's visits. Some families also purchase medication from local pharmacies and home remedies when unwell. They suggested that refugees and migrants with disabilities should have access to social workers as a source of support.

Responses of Victims of Trafficking Related to Health Access in Trinidad and Tobago

- Victims of Human Trafficking highlighted the need for comprehensive support services, including healthcare, due to the physical and psychological trauma experienced. A key informant indicated that Victims of Human Trafficking have specific health needs which often remain unmet.
- Stakeholders who work with VoTs also reported an observation of pregnant refugee and migrant women being trafficked, which also impacted healthcare needs.

Responses of Individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV topics Related to Health Access in Trinidad and Tobago

- Respondents emphasized the importance of accessible and sensitive healthcare services, including mental health support, to address the impacts of gender-based violence.
- The lack of safe and confidential healthcare services for survivors of violence was highlighted as a critical gap.
- A key informant indicated that survivors need trauma-informed healthcare, emphasizing that "After violence, the hospital was another battlefield."[22]

Responses of Persons of Diverse SOGIESC Related to Health Access in Trinidad and Tobago

- Respondents from this group indicated they faced discrimination and safety concerns that affected their mental health and limited their access to health services due to fear of exposure and further victimization and/or judgement.
- One participant highlighted that "seeking medical help means preparing for judgement," emphasizing the need for sensitization in urban and rural healthcare settings.[23]

[22] Participants from Focus Goup Discussions. Trinidad and Tobago. 2023
[23] Participant- Focus Group Discussion Trinidad and Tobago, 2023.

- Non-Venezuelan participants reported that some service providers prioritize Venezuelans over refugees and migrants from other nationalities, so an additional level of discrimination is felt. However, they reported good experiences when receiving services from CAISO, a local social advocacy NGO for people with diverse SOGIESC, the Family Planning Association and the Rape Crisis Society, where they receive counselling to help with fear management.

Responses revealed extensive health access challenges across refugee, migrant, indigenous Warao communities, individuals with disabilities and human trafficking victims. Common barriers identified included language difficulties, lack of recognized identification, discrimination, inadequate knowledge of services, and logistical and financial constraints in accessing healthcare. Specifically, rural and indigenous Warao populations struggle with geographic remoteness and cultural insensitivity, while persons with disabilities face accessibility and discrimination issues. Refugee and migrant women face additional challenges related to sexual and reproductive health, often exacerbated by gender discrimination and communication barriers. Men reported difficulties related to physical injuries from laborious work and a lack of sexual and reproductive health services. Victims of human trafficking and persons who encountered GBV emphasized the need for comprehensive, trauma-informed care, highlighting gaps in mental health support. The responses underscore a critical need for accessible, culturally sensitive, and inclusive healthcare services to address the diverse needs of these vulnerable populations, ensuring they receive adequate care and support.

Shelter and Housing

- Refugee and Migrant Women (General, Urban, Rural and Older Women)
- Refugee and Migrant Men (General, Rural Areas)
- Refugee and Migrant Indigenous Warao Communities
- Persons with Disabilities
- Victims of Human Trafficking
- Individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV topics

Responses of Women (Rural, Urban, Indigenous Warao, and Older Women)

- High Rent and Inadequate Housing/Undignified Conditions: Refugee and Migrant Women in Trinidad lamented the high rent costs, which often led to many families sharing housing space to split costs. Single women indicated their inability to afford rent, which prompted them to join others to secure housing. They spoke about this situation inevitably resulting in overcrowding and fears of the landlord increasing the rent. Women also highlighted tensions between tenants and landlords over rental payments and the conditions of their living spaces.
- Inadequate Conditions- Concerns were raised about the adequacy of housing offered, often described as inadequate and unsanitary. Women also indicated that late wages, underpayment, unemployment, and underemployment affect their ability to maintain rental payments sustainably. This can create tensions between tenants and landlords. They further indicated that when landlords were willing to rent to Venezuelan women, housing spaces that were offered or affordable were often inadequate and unsanitary. Women reported accepting live-in employment arrangements to reduce the added cost/burden of seeking personal accommodations. Added to this, stakeholders who work with the refugee and migrant community shared that upon arrival, migrants desperate for housing may enter risky and/or exploitative living arrangements.
- Insecurity and Fear of Eviction: Rural and Indigenous women specifically mentioned living in insecure housing, such as wooden and galvanized structures with non-lockable doors, sometimes without doors at all, raising safety concerns. They also expressed fears of eviction and being homeless due to an inability to pay rent.

- Participants mentioned knowing of incidents of domestic violence during interviews, in many cases with migrant women in relationships with local men and living within family homes. Accordingly, the inaccessibility of adequate and affordable shelter has resulted in overcrowding, risk of eviction, exposure to violence, and unsanitary conditions intersecting with safety and security, quality of life, and integration challenges.
- Discrimination in Housing Market: In Tobago, women believed they were charged more for rent and utilities than locals, with reports of landlords refusing to make necessary repairs or return deposits and not providing receipts for payments. Women in Trinidad also reported paying for amenities such as water, electricity, and internet as a separate rental payment. Notable is that this practice is expected even for locals.
- In Tobago, the women interviewed believed they were being charged more for rent and utilities than locals. One participant said her landlord refused to fix a water issue in her rental unit. As a result, she could only access water by carrying it upstairs in buckets. Two other participants reported that their landlords refused to return their deposit when they moved out. In one case, the landlord threatened to call the police to deter her from asking for her deposit. Another participant noted that landlords typically did not give receipts to refugees and migrants, denying them any proof of payment.
- Women also reported being unaware of where to seek assistance if they were experiencing challenges with finding housing/shelter.

Responses of Men (Urban, Rural, Indigenous Warao, and Older Men)

- The responses do not explicitly detail refugee and migrant men's experiences with shelter and housing. However, they spoke of challenges related to employment and safety influencing their housing stability and living conditions.

Responses of Persons with Disabilities

- Refugees and migrants with disabilities spoke broadly about challenges faced in employment and safety, which could indirectly affect their access to adequate housing.

Responses of People with Diverse SOGIESC

- Difficulty Finding Stable Housing
  Participants from this group reported challenges in finding safe and stable housing, highlighting a landscape marked by instability and the looming threat of eviction. Concerns primarily revolve around the inability to afford rent, despite some respondents indicating that their current living situations were considered stable.
- Discrimination in Housing Market
  Discrimination emerged as a significant barrier in the housing market, with reports of landlords explicitly refusing to rent to people with diverse SOGIESC. To navigate this, participants frequently conceal their sexual orientation or identity to secure and maintain housing. Despite these challenges, there are instances of understanding landlords who provide leniency, such as granting additional time to manage rental arrears. The struggle to find housing extends across the broader spectrum of refugees and migrants, including people with diverse SOGIESC. A Venezuelan participant's experience with using Pin.TT for home rentals illuminates both the opportunities and explicit discriminations within housing listings, including direct statements such as ‘No Venezuelans.’ Additionally, the necessity to hide one’s sexual orientation or identity from landlords and other tenants further emphasizes the pervasive challenge of eviction avoidance within these communities.
- Living in Precarious Situations

A contrast is noted where, despite some individuals describing their rental situations as stable, the persistent fear of eviction underscored a precarious state of housing stability. This paradox reflects the underlying uncertainties and anxieties experienced by people with diverse SOGIESC in securing long-term housing.

Individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV topics.

- While the individuals who had encountered GBV did not provide detailed shelter and housing information specifically, they spoke of their experiences with safety, employment challenges, and discrimination, which impacted their ability to secure stable and dignified shelter options and conditions.

Victims of Trafficking

- **Sustainable Housing Assistance:** VoTs indicated a need for sustainable housing assistance alongside other needs such as food security, access to healthcare, and other basic needs.

Responses revealed substantial shelter and housing challenges among refugees, migrants, indigenous Warao communities, individuals with disabilities, people with diverse SOGIESC, and victims of human trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago. Key concerns include high rents causing overcrowding, inadequate and unsanitary living conditions, fears of eviction, and discrimination in the housing market. Women particularly face exploitative rent demands, unsatisfactory housing conditions, and difficulties in resolving disputes with landlords, making them vulnerable to undignified living situations. People with diverse SOGIESC reported discrimination that forces them to conceal their identities to secure housing, yet they live with the constant fear of eviction. The expressed need for sustainable housing assistance, especially among victims of trafficking, highlights how shelter challenges are intertwined with issues of safety, employment, and discrimination. These insights stress the urgent necessity for dedicated measures to provide vulnerable populations in Trinidad and Tobago with housing that is not only affordable and adequate but also secure, stable and dignified.

Participation in Community Activities

- Refugee and Migrant Women (General, Urban, Rural)
- Refugee and Migrant Men (General, Rural Areas)
- Persons with Disabilities
- People with Diverse SOGIESC
- General

Women (Rural, Urban, Indigenous, and Older Women)

- In Tobago, women reported not participating in community activities due to safety concerns and possible discrimination.
- Rural and Indigenous Warao women in Icacos participate in local community activities, especially those organized for children by community churches or local government councillors.
- In Rio Claro, rural women mentioned they do not have opportunities to participate in community activities outside of informal leisure activities among themselves, like Bingo games. They shared that in the absence of community decision-making power, the women and children participate in local community activities instead. The children are invited to art activities by the community churches, and the local government councillor for the area invites them to skills-building and social activities, which mostly women attend, and are also mostly attended by Venezuelans, then Trinidadians.

- Rural refugee and migrant women in Rio Claro shared that they did not have any opportunities to participate in community activities unless they were events organized at the churches to which they and their families have been invited.
- Older women in Tobago reported that they do not participate in any activities in Tobago. In particular, they would like to attend church, but they knew no church services or masses in Spanish where they could participate.
- Venezuelan women in Chaguanas did not feel accepted in their communities, affecting their children's interaction with local children and their participation in community-based activities.

Men (Urban, Rural, Indigenous Warao, and Older Men)

- Men in rural areas like Rio Claro expressed a desire for more community participation but found opportunities limited to religious activities.
- Participants in Tobago and Mayaro do not participate much in community activities due to work obligations, expressing a desire for more engagement in sports and recreational activities. Still, they are usually unable to due to conflicting and heavy work schedules. They, however, shared a desire to participate in more sporting activities such as softball and basketball.
- An older man in Tobago reported no activity participation, highlighting feelings of isolation.
- Another elderly Venezuelan man in East Trinidad shared that he socializes with some of his Trinidadian neighbours and has Spanglish conversations with a school-aged neighbour who is learning Spanish in school, but he does not participate in the community because that is his way of keeping safe.
- In Chaguanas, continuous employment search and working hours restricted social participation, with a lack of invitations from the host community also cited as a reason for non-participation.
- 100% of the men interviewed showed a significant lack of knowledge of services available to them despite seeking asylum through UNHCR and other forms of assistance from other UN agencies and local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) like Living Water Community. One older man in East Trinidad had limited knowledge about the services available to him. He shared with interviewers that internet access was critical because it helped him follow the news in Venezuela and communicate with his family since he was in Trinidad alone.
- The concepts of advocacy and self-organizing as a mechanism of empowerment and protection were not clearly understood by male respondents in Tobago.
- Most male respondents in Tobago linked advocacy to finding employment for each other with local employers.
- Men in Rio Claro perceived it was not their role to speak out more on mass detentions.
- 100% of men participating in Focus Groups or KIIs preferred word-of-mouth or in-person communication to receive and understand information.

Persons with Disabilities (PWD)

- Reported that they and their families do not participate in community activities, especially if mobility is limited due to disabilities. They expressed a lack of accessible public spaces for participation.
- Noted a desire for community meetings to discuss and agree on activities they would like to participate in, indicating a wish for more engagement and inclusion in community activities.
- Refugees and migrants with disabilities shared that they knew of few public spaces in their neighbourhood accessible to them for activities, and due to fear of xenophobia, they and their families do not participate in anything.
- One PWD interviewee said that when the family previously lived in Cunupia, Central West Trinidad, they could play sports at the local Savannah Park. However, they no longer had that access since moving. The father of another interviewee previously played sports in his community, but since the family moved to another part of Trinidad, he works longer hours, so

he is no longer able to participate. This participant and his family are unaware of activities in their current neighbourhood.

People with Diverse SOGIESC

- Respondents from this group shared a desire to participate in community activities but refrained due to fear of being identified based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.
- The timing of the FGD and KIIs during Pride Month revealed a conflicted desire of respondents within this group to participate in Pride events but ultimately decided against it due to safety concerns and fear of exposure. Participants were afraid that people who knew them would become aware of their sexual orientation and identity. *"Fear blocks one's ability to advocate,"* said one respondent who described such fear as "paralyzing."[24] Another participant felt that if they had the opportunity and the protection, they could advocate for their safety and acceptance in society as a refugee and migrant person of diverse SOGIESC. Participants felt that partner organizations could provide support through advocacy.

- **Responses from Individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV topics**Individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV shared that they did not actively seek out leisure activities unless it was related to an organization they trusted. Most participants interviewed across Trinidad and Tobago reported that the organizations they have the most access to are IOM, UNHCR, La Casita and Living Water Community.

General Feedback on Communications Across FGDs

- The mention of a need for enhanced information and awareness to prevent and combat human trafficking was reflected in the generalized and collective feedback from various stakeholders and participants across respondent groups.
- The need for language support for refugees and migrants, including for GBV survivors, was broadly acknowledged as a challenge faced by refugee and migrant groups in accessing services and participating fully in their host community due to language barriers. This gap was identified through consultations across groups.
- Across groups, respondents highlighted the need for information and support services to refugees and migrants with disabilities on various fronts, suggesting an understanding of the multifaceted needs of refugees and migrants with disabilities.
- Both stakeholders and refugees and migrants highlighted that refugees and migrants were largely unaware of where services can be accessed to address concerns regarding safety and security, as well as knowledge of safe spaces. Few refugees and migrants reported feeling ashamed to seek assistance and fearful of approaching legal agencies. Others raised concerns about the duration of support, the response time, who is classified as vulnerable and in need of support, and the level of transparency and equality in the services provided by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and state agencies.
- Some respondents from this group in Rio Claro speculated that because they often change phone numbers and do not update their data with UNHCR regularly, they do not receive service information.
- Responses across diverse groups in Trinidad and Tobago, including refugees, migrants, individuals with disabilities, people with diverse SOGIESC, and Individuals who participated in FGDs and KIIs related to GBV, reveal significant barriers to participating in community activities.

[24] Participant Focus Group Discussion- Trinidad and Tobago. 2023

Concerns around safety, discrimination, and lack of accessibility limit their involvement. Rural and Indigenous women engage in limited activities, primarily for children, while others, including older individuals and men, participate minimally due to safety fears, work commitments, and social isolation. Persons with disabilities and those of diverse SOGIESC express a desire for more inclusive activities but face challenges accessing public spaces and fear discrimination. Persons who encountered GBV prefer engaging through trusted organizations. A common highlighted thread is the lack of awareness about services and activities, indicating a need for improved information sharing and language support to enhance community inclusion.

Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH)

Groups that highlighted Challenges with Wash access

- Refugee and Migrant Women in Rural Areas of Trinidad
- Refugee and Migrant Men
- Indigenous Warao Women

Rural and Indigenous Women

- Refugee and migrant women from rural areas indicated that pipe borne water was sometimes unavailable. One Venezuelan respondent said her landlord refused to fix a water issue in her rental, so she could only access water by carrying it upstairs in buckets.
- They reported paying separately for water facilities, aside from their rent and other utility bills [this is usual practice in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Indigenous Warao women in Icacos reported issues accessing an adequately clean water supply. The village's dependency on rainwater due to the limited schedule of pipe-borne water was underscored, with mentions not having pipe-borne water for extended periods (up to almost two years for some).
- They reported having to purchase water, with water costs from supply trucks mentioned as being "prohibitive,"[25] affecting the ability to maintain hygiene within the community.
- They also reported difficulties obtaining an adequate supply of feminine hygiene products, impacting overall hygiene and sanitation.

Responses from Refugee and Migrant Men

- Men in Rio Claro reported that their monthly expenses were higher because they buy bottled water; they shared that they do not like the taste of pipe-borne water in the area.

General Observations Across Demographics

- WASH-related challenges for other demographics like men, persons with disabilities, or people with diverse SOGIESC were not captured during interviews or FGDs.
- The focus on the rural and indigenous women's challenges regarding water supply and hygiene products points to a significant area of need, emphasizing the importance of targeted interventions to improve WASH access and infrastructure in their communities.

Refugee and migrant women highlighted challenges with water, hygiene, and sanitation (WASH) access in rural areas, men, and Indigenous Warao women in Trinidad. Rural and Indigenous women faced

[25] Participant- Focus Group Discussion. Trinidad and Tobago. 2023

issues with unreliable pipe-borne water, leading to reliance on rainwater or purchasing water at prohibitive costs. Some had to carry water to their homes due to unresolved water issues in their rental properties. The water cost from supply trucks significantly impacted their ability to maintain hygiene. Feminine hygiene products were also difficult to access, affecting overall sanitation. Men in Rio Claro mentioned higher expenses from buying bottled water due to the undesirable taste of local piped water. General feedback did not specifically address WASH challenges for other demographics, underscoring a notable need for targeted interventions to improve WASH access and infrastructure, particularly among rural and Indigenous communities. The highlighted challenges in accessing clean water and maintaining hygiene for rural and Indigenous communities underline the need for targeted interventions to bolster WASH infrastructure and ensure better accessibility to impacted groups.

Natural Hazard Preparedness:

- Across all demographics, a notable lack of preparation for natural hazards exists. The report concludes a need for access to information and strategies to mitigate natural disaster risks, emphasizing community support among refugees, migrants, and host communities.
- One refugee and migrant felt that Spanish-speaking refugees and migrants in Trinidad and Tobago were not receiving information on disaster preparedness in Spanish. This interviewee said that he did receive a notification about a recent earthquake, but after the fact, it was in English and had no more information about risk mitigation or disaster-preparedness.
- This exhaustive assessment underscores the multifaceted security challenges refugees and migrants face in Trinidad and Tobago, calling for targeted interventions to enhance their safety, wellbeing, and integration into the community.
- The men interviewed in Tobago showed significant awareness about natural hazards. They believe there might be a risk of tsunamis on the island; however, they shared that they do not receive information on natural disasters from the relevant authorities.

Final Recommendations informed by refugees and migrants

1) Promote Safety and Security Measures

- Enhance **access to regular status**, including advocating for reopening the government's registration process for Venezuelans who arrived after 2019 and refugees and migrants of other nationalities.
- **Enhance safety measures**, particularly for women, in both public and private spaces. This could involve increasing police presence, addressing language barriers, and providing support services, including counselling and legal assistance, specifically for rural and Indigenous women/communities.
- Provide refugees and migrants, particularly women, **safety tips and self-protection measures**, including self-defence classes.
- Address safety concerns by improving trust through **sensitization** and awareness-raising sessions and collaboration/partnership between law enforcement agencies and refugee and migrant communities, as well as with cultural organizations, private sectors, and local business owners.
- Facilitate **regular pathways** for regularization of persons with irregular status.
- Explore options for providing ID **documents** to facilitate travel between Trinidad and Tobago islands.

Mitigate the risk of and Respond to Gender-Based Violence

- Promote support seeking behaviour among GBV survivors by raising more **awareness** about gender-based violence and providing education on its various forms to both refugee, migrant and host communities. Invest in prevention: identify and implement community interventions to address social norms related to GBV, such as community workshops, campaigns, and training programmes to promote a culture of respect and gender equality.
- Provide s**pecialized and targeted services** for survivors of GBV, including health services, psychosocial support, safety and protection, and access to justice.

2) Increase access to income-generating and economic activities, improve working conditions, and address labour exploitation

- Enhance access to f**ormal employment opportunities** and address labour exploitation by developing programs with employers to promote job creation, particularly in rural areas.
- Develop programmes and initiatives working with employers to promote job creation and **economic opportunities**, particularly in rural areas.
- Advocate with the government on increasing **access to work** and stay permits to formal employment to promote self-reliance and access to basic services.
- Implement initiatives to address women's lack of stable employment opportunities, such as **vocational and technical skills and language training programmes**. Implement vocational and language training programs targeted at improving the employability of refugees and migrants, with a focus on women and those from marginalized groups such as people with diverse SOGIESC and persons with disabilities.
- Promote opportunities for **entrepreneurship** and facilitate access to financial resources for starting businesses, including through training programmes and seed capital. Strengthen measures to prevent and combat xenophobia, including through anti-xenophobia campaigns, unfair treatment, low wages, and exploitation in the workplace. This may involve enforcing

labour laws, raising awareness about workers' rights, including the right to report exploitative conditions and labour violations without fear of deportation, and providing support for victims of workplace abuse. Provide legal assistance, including facilitating greater access to existing complaint mechanisms.

- Launch **awareness-raising campaigns** and training programmes to prevent GBV and promote respectful workplace practices. Implement measures to ensure equal employment opportunities for individuals of diverse SOGIESC, including addressing discrimination in the workplace.
- Support the development and guide **regulations** that prioritize the safety and well-being of all workers, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or migrant status. This could include protocols with measures such as mandatory breaks, protection against harassment and abuse, and avenues for reporting incidents of abuse.
- **Support refugees and migrants with disabilities**: Employers should be educated about the abilities and potential contributions of individuals with disabilities, and discrimination based on disability should be actively discouraged.
- Foster entrepreneurship through training programs and **access to financial resources**, and address workplace xenophobia and discrimination through awareness campaigns and legal support for victims of exploitation.
- Sensitize employers on the importance of maintaining **decent work conditions** and practices, as well as foster interculturalism and diversity within the workplace.
- Provide **training on financial literacy**, as well as educational initiatives on accessing financial and other services in Trinidad and Tobago.

3) Recommendations for Improving Financial Inclusion:

- **Enhance Financial Literacy:** Propose targeted programs to educate refugees and migrants about the local banking system, savings, credit, and financial services navigation.
- **Simplify Banking Requirements:** Advocate for banking policies that accommodate the unique situations of refugees and migrants, such as accepting alternative forms of identification and proof of residence.
- **Provide Language and Cultural Support:** Offer banking services information in multiple languages and ensure staff training on cultural sensitivity to better serve the refugee and migrant population.
- **Promote Financial Products Tailored to Refugees and Migrants:** Support the development of financial products meeting the needs of this group, such as low-entry savings accounts, microloans, and remittance services.
- By addressing these specific barriers to financial inclusion, the potential for economic empowerment and integration of refugees and migrants into Trinidad and Tobago society can be significantly enhanced, leading to more stable and prosperous communities.

4) Enhance communication and information dissemination

- **Improve communication channel**s and methods to ensure that refugees and migrants receive timely and relevant information about available services and support.
- Consider opening a H**umanitarian Orientation/Information Office** in Tobago to provide localized assistance, information, and support.
- Host community-based **orientation sessions** for newly arrived refugees and migrants to inform them about Trinidad and Tobago (e.g. cultural practices, transportation system, services, safety tips, and other issues).

- Provide **language support** for refugees and migrants, including GBV survivors who do not speak the local language. This can include language training programmes and/or translation services to facilitate communication and reduce vulnerabilities.
- Provide **information and support service**s to refugees and migrants with disabilities on rights, employment opportunities, education, financial services, and health care. Social workers can play a crucial role in supporting and guiding individuals with disabilities and their families.

5) Specific communication initiatives to be enhanced are:

- Implement targeted interventions to enhance women's safety, including **improving public and private space security**, and promote gender equality and respect through GBV awareness campaigns.
- Advocate for the regularization of undocumented migrants to reduce fears of deportation.
- Provide **information** to refugees and migrants on access to **financial services,** including accessing the local banking system. This could include targeted outreach programs, financial literacy training, and collaboration with financial institutions to address specific needs and concerns, such as informative sessions with financial institutions themselves.
- Enhance **information and awareness** to prevent and combat human trafficking, including through communications campaigns and sensitizing refugees and migrants about human trafficking recruitment strategies, especially online approaches, before and after leaving Venezuela.
- Conduct **sensitization or refresher sessions** for police officers on GBV and protection, as well as sensitization on how to engage with refugees and migrants.
- Increase **public awareness** of the political and socio-economic circumstances occurring within Venezuela and around humanitarian management of mixed movements and the rights of refugees and migrants.
- Continue to conduct well-designed and balanced training programmes where refugees, migrants and members of the host communities can engage with each other more meaningfully.

6) Housing and Living Conditions

- **Address housing insecurity**, discrimination, and inadequate living conditions. This may involve improving access to affordable housing, enforcing tenant rights, and providing support for vulnerable populations, such as Indigenous Warao women.
- Tackle housing insecurity and inadequate living conditions by **improving access to affordable housing,** enforcing tenant rights, and supporting vulnerable refugee and migrant populations in finding safe and stable housing.
- Address discrimination in the housing market, especially against individuals of diverse SOGIESC and Indigenous communities to effectively tackle discrimination in the housing market against individuals of diverse SOGIESC and Indigenous communities, such as the Warao, a **multifaceted strategy** is vital. This strategy must intertwine enforcing robust anti-discrimination policies with penalties for violations and creating accessible recourse systems for victims. Building partnerships is crucial, involving NGOs, inclusive real estate platforms, and landlords committed to non-discriminatory practices, thereby establishing a network of safe and verified housing options. Support services are fundamental, providing legal, financial, and emotional assistance to prevent eviction and support mental health. Additionally, engaging in community education is necessary to cultivate acceptance and understanding, aiming to shift cultural attitudes toward

inclusivity. Monitoring and research play a key role in assessing ongoing discrimination and the effectiveness of interventions, allowing for the adaptation of policies as needed. Lastly, leveraging technology enhances the strategy's efficiency and impact, facilitating access to resources, enabling safe reporting of discrimination, and disseminating information on rights and support. Through a cohesive blend of **legal measures, collaborative networks, comprehensive support, educational initiatives, and technological advancements**, the goal is a housing market where everyone can access safe and stable homes regardless of their SOGIESC or Indigenous background.

7) Support Community Empowerment

- Promote the **participation of women** and older people in decision-making processes within their communities. This could include creating platforms for dialogue, supporting leadership development, and fostering partnerships between different community groups.
- Support Warao indigenous communities from Venezuela in strengthening their internal structure by supporting elections of leaders and periodic meetings. This could include **fostering partnership and collaboration** with the First Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago.
- **Strengthen meetings and activities** that can be organized to foster a sense of belonging and empowerment among survivors of GBV.
- Accessible **public spaces** and transportation should be prioritized to enable participation in community activities of refugees and migrants, including persons with disabilities.
- Foster a sense of belonging and inclusion by **creating safe spaces and community activities** where individuals of diverse SOGIESC can freely express themselves without fear of discrimination or harm. Collaborate with organizations, including local NGOs, to provide community support, advocacy, and resources.
- Support individuals of diverse SOGIESC advocating for their safety, acceptance, and societal rights. This could involve **providing resources, training, and protection** for those who wish to engage in advocacy efforts and become leaders.

8) Access to health care

- Improve **access to health care services** for refugees and migrants, including women, mainly through addressing language barriers and ensuring culturally sensitive care. This may involve training healthcare providers, ensuring there are female providers, improving interpretation services, recruiting bilingual professionals, and expanding healthcare facilities in underserved areas.
- Increase **awareness** among refugees and migrants about available health care services and their entitlement to access them, including in remote areas.
- Develop **transportation** solutions for medical emergencies, particularly during nighttime and in remote areas like Icacos.
- Provide **information** and resources on sexual health and reproductive services, including how to access specific services, including prostate exams.
- Efforts should be made to ensure that refugees and migrants with disabilities have **access to public healthcare facilities** without fear of being turned away. Collaboration between humanitarian organizations and local healthcare providers can help address this issue.
- Organizing **informative sessions** with local government authorities on how refugees and migrants can access the health system.
- Create information **brochures** to guide refugees and migrants on accessing services within the public health system, highlighting which services are openly available to them and with

emergency numbers and health center information per geographic location across the two islands.
- Ensure health facilities can implement **clinical management of rape protocols** and personnel is trained to support survivors of GBV.

9) Address Xenophobia/Discrimination and Language Barriers and foster Integration

- Address discrimination and **language barriers** faced by refugees and migrants when seeking services or assistance at public institutions through language support services, cultural sensitivity training for service providers, and promoting and guiding inclusive practices.
- Continue **advocacy** efforts to ensure access to national public education for all refugee and migrant children. Children with disabilities should have meaningful access to public national schools, with the necessary support and resources provided to ensure their inclusion and success. This may include assistance with school supplies and access to translation apps for language support.

10) Communicate information and preparedness on natural hazards/disasters

- Ensure that d**isaster-prepared information** is accessible to all refugees and migrants, including in languages other than English.
- Translate important notifications and provide comprehensive **risk mitigation and preparedness information** in multiple languages. Include those messages in informative materials, projects, and initiatives.
- Identify channels of disseminating important **information** to reach refugee and migrant communities.

The recommendations from refugees and migrants call for comprehensive efforts to enhance economic empowerment, labour rights, financial inclusion, and access to information, among others. Key strategies for achieving these include fostering formal employment opportunities, improving financial literacy, simplifying banking requirements, and enhancing communication channels. Additionally, a focus on safety, security, and addressing gender-based violence is crucial, alongside efforts to improve housing conditions and healthcare access. These actions can support the integration and wellbeing of refugees and migrants in Trinidad and Tobago, ensuring their participation in community life and access to essential services.