



REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN THE REGION

218,164


PEOPLE REACHED WITH SOME FORM OF ASSISTANCE*

1,714


FUNDING SITUATION**

-%

FUNDED: -

REQUIREMENT: 14.8 M

Situation

A significant change in trend was identified by the partners in Panama during the month of January. The Venezuelan population, mainly residing in urban settings, is moving towards the interior of the country due to the limited economic opportunities in Panama City, and the high cost of living. A considerable percentage of cases contacted during the protection monitoring reported that they have changed their residence to the Province of Panamá Oeste, Province of Herrera and Province of Veraguas, which are mainly rural settings.

A report published by the Organization of American States (OAS) noted Costa Rica's efforts to maintain an open border policy for Venezuelans, such as accepting expired passports. The report¹ also highlights that Venezuelans who arrived in Costa Rica during the last five years face greater vulnerability than those who arrived between 2010 and 2014. To produce the report, experts visited the country and met with various groups to understand their situation in Costa Rica, confirming that most Venezuelans flee from widespread violence, disruption of public order, and violation of human rights. The report states it is essential to create the bases for a regional consensus that grants refugee status to Venezuelans according to the Cartagena Declaration, as expressed by the OAS working group for this topic in a June 2019 regional report. The report also calls to speed up creation of a complementary protection pathway and encourages foreign donors to provide assistance – be it financial or technical.

In January 2020 UNHCR Costa Rica announced that refugees and asylum seekers could request medical insurance at their main offices. This insurance program is being funded by UNHCR (La Nación, 2020).

In Mexico, January started with a total of 52,982 permanent and temporary residents, students and humanitarian visa holders (as of 31st December 2019) and 18,501 Asylum applicants². Partners in MX informed that obtaining accurate figures of Venezuelans applying for asylum in Mexican airports remains a challenge.

Response

PANAMA

In Panama with the aim of reducing the risks of Gender-based violence (GBV) among refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants, partners organized a community-based activity for providing information regarding prevention and response to GBV. A total of 17 Venezuelan women had actively participated in this event. Furthermore, to continue supporting access to asylum in Panama, one of the partners provided legal orientation at the premises of the National Refugees Office (ONPAR). A total of 15 Venezuelans (10 women and 5 men) were provided with legal orientation.

During the reporting period, a R4V partner in Panama through the Employment Centre, provided access to computers and laptops for refugees and migrants to write resumes, for ensuring access to employment web platforms and access to different courses through Coursera platform. On January 24 Venezuelan (13 women and 11 men) had access to this service.

In addition, Cash-based intervention continues in Panama, as one of the partners delivered multipurpose cash for educational inclusion and medical attention to 168 people (90 women and 78 men). In the provinces of Panama and Panamá Oeste, one of the partners provided 32 Food Coupons, reaching 86 beneficiaries (33 women, 27 men, and 26 children), allowing the beneficiaries to

¹ Full report is available in OAS webpage <https://www.oas.org/documents/spa/press/informe-migrantes-venezolanos-en-Costa-Rica.pdf>

² Instituto Nacional de Migración/Dirección General de Regulación y Archivo Migratorio (2020), "Flujo migratorio de nacionales de Venezuela", con datos del Sistema de Integración y Procesamiento de Información Migratoria (SIPIIM), con base en los registros administrativos del Sistema Integral de Operación Migratoria (SIOM). Fecha y hora de consulta: 27 de febrero a las 10:00 horas. Información preliminar UNHCR and Instituto Nacional de Migración/Dirección General de Regulación y Archivo Migratorio (2019), "Población venezolana residiendo en México con documento migratorio vigente en 2019", con datos del Sistema de Integración y Procesamiento de Información Migratoria (SIPIIM), con base en los registros administrativos del Sistema Electrónico de Trámites Migratorios (SETRAM). Fecha y hora de consulta: 13 de febrero de 2020 a las 18:00 horas. Información preliminar.

cover their basic needs while continuing their efforts to find job or livelihoods opportunities. A total of 124 Venezuelan (75 women and 49 men) were given multipurpose cash for ensuring access to shelter, and some civil rights.

In Panama, partners are organizing continuous trainings on topics related to social and economic integration. Additionally, information dissemination and counselling regarding access to asylum seeker, migratory regularization, work permits, referral to existing services such as humanitarian assistance, medical attentions, GBV, legal representation towards regularization, among other legal services was provided to 449 refugees and migrants (312 women, 137 men). One of the partners in Panama provided legal counselling and migration advice to 56 families (97 adults and 78 children).

COSTA RICA

In Costa Rica, a partner and the Costa Rican Social Security entity (CCSS), is providing health insurance to 6,000 persons. Partners continue to implement activities to strengthen soft skills and promote economic integration. These include digital marketing, financial skills training, business model design, among others.

Psychological group sessions for the elderly were implemented to reduce stress and anxiety levels, and identify possible mental illnesses for referral.

Partners continue to provide legal assistance and legal aid to Venezuelans in Costa Rica, on the migratory and asylum procedures, with referral pathways established with relevant partners and institutions. These occur at partner offices as well as the Refugee Unit.

Partners trained 8 public servants from 8 different public institutions including: Coopesana/health cooperative, The National Children's Board (PANI) in Golfito, the Santa Ana Municipality, Police and R4V partner Alianza VenCR.

Partners are conducting border monitoring missions, 71 in January, with a focus on the southern border and monitoring public institutions (Children's Center/PANI, the Migration Authority (DGME), health centers, and educational facilities). Through these missions, a large Venezuelan population has been identified in Playa Hermosa, Jaco and Herradura. Unlike the Venezuelan population that reside in the San Jose metro area, these do not have a regular status and have lower socioeconomic levels. Many of these individuals face barriers in accessing healthcare.

MEXICO

In January, 27 e-wallets (vouchers assistance) were delivered to migrants from Venezuela for food items in 4 cities in Mexico. Furthermore, 33 beneficiaries received top ups.

Partners delivered 6,100 maps of services for refugees and migrants in four cities (Cancún, Playa del Carmen, Tulum and Chetumal) in the State of Quintana Roo. Distribution places were immigration, labor, justice and women services offices.

As of 31 January, 211 Venezuelans benefitted from CBIs in Mexico. 207 out of 211 received MPGs to meet their basic needs such as: food, household and domestic products, and a contribution towards housing and utility bills while 4 received sectoral top-ups addressing some protection related risks identified.

Two Venezuelans have submitted its naturalization process to the competent institution. Five Venezuelan refugees were accepted to the scholarship programme for tertiary education. 34 Venezuelans have been accepted to the programme as of today.

R4V partners participated in mid-January in a TV program hosted by the official channel of the National Supreme Court regarding the protection and integration situation of Venezuelans in Mexico.