


 REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN  
 THE SUBREGION\*

224,000


 PEOPLE REACHED WITH SOME  
 FORM OF ASSISTANCE\*\*

5,301



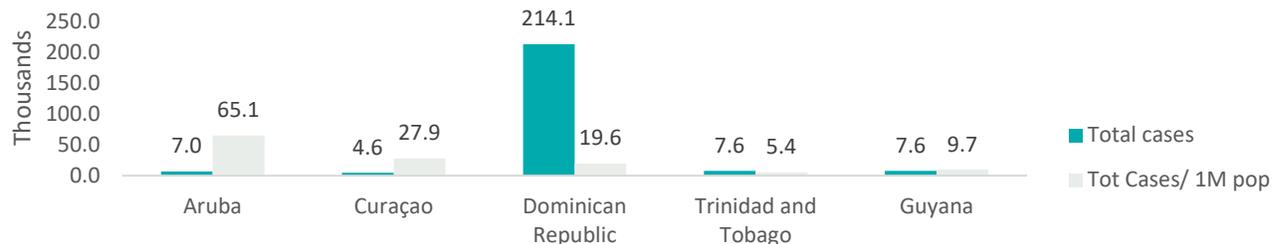
FUNDING SITUATION

REQUIREMENT: \$ 40.7 MILLION

## Situation

- By the end of January 2021, **Aruba** recorded a total of 6,966 confirmed cases of COVID-19, there were 341 active cases and 59 deaths. **Curaçao** COVID-19 infections reached 4,585 positive cases, 68 active cases and 21 deaths. While the incidence of new cases was on the decline in **Trinidad and Tobago (TT)** during December 2020, the number of new daily positive COVID-19 cases arose in mid-January with the country recording 7,564 positive tests to date, 262 active cases and 134 deaths. **Guyana** registered 7,641 total cases, 719 active cases and 172 deaths, and the **Dominican Republic (DR)** noted another spike with 214,060 total confirmed cases, 53,861 active cases with 2,666 deaths.<sup>1</sup> The Caribbean Sub-region continued to be negatively impacted by the effects of the pandemic and mitigating measures including mask-wearing and physical distancing continued to be enforced, to prevent the spread of the virus. Socio-economic impacts resulting in loss of livelihoods, increased basic needs related to shelter/rent, utilities, food and NFIs, continued to be noted throughout the sub-region. Vaccination plans were presented in sub-regional countries, as stakeholders awaited the arrival of the vaccines, and Aruba, Curaçao and Guyana confirmed that refugees and migrants would be included in their national immunization plans.

January 2021 - COVID-19 Cases in R4V Caribbean Sub-Region Countries



Source: Worldometer. Access on 31 January 2021.

- In January 2021 [Venezuela recorded its lowest level of oil in 77 years](#). Because the country's economy is closely tied to exports in the industry, this reduction is expected to further deteriorate the socio-economic situation that has already compelled millions of its citizens to leave.
- In the Caribbean Sub-Region, **Aruba** [closed its borders with Brazil](#) due to latter's rise in COVID-19 cases, and Island-wide measures to further maintain the health and safety of visitors and locals were implemented. All establishments were required to close by 10:00 p.m. As of 12 January, Curaçao officials also amended entry requirements for all travellers. However, officials removed the limit of 20,000 international tourists per month, and regular international travel re-started. Travel exemption requests and quarantine requirements for travellers from high-risk countries were discontinued. Starting on 15 January, Venezuelans were required to apply for a visa in Caracas before being allowed to enter both **Aruba and Curaçao**. In **Aruba**, there were exemptions only for travellers in transit, on business, on short stays at the port, and for those with permanent residence from some North American and European countries. However, borders with Venezuela remain closed, until further notice. Return flights from Aruba to Venezuela continue to operate on a monthly basis, although no regular schedule has been established. On 31 January, a repatriation flight departed Aruba for Venezuelan, with 142 Venezuelans onboard.
- In **Aruba and Curaçao** Venezuelans accessed food e-vouchers through the Government/Red-Cross distribution campaign, coordinated by R4V partners. The Kingdom of the Netherlands has committed to continue funding this project until April. In **Aruba**, this supports at least 15% of

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

the population who depend on Red Cross Food Vouchers Assistance, including refugees and migrants in an irregular status. In **Curaçao**, the number of refugees and migrants requesting food and shelter assistance remained high.

- In **Aruba**, electricity company (EIMAR) workers threatened to [protest](#) against a 12% reduction of salaries. Furthermore, additional Venezuelans requested help to pay for utilities (water and electricity), as they risked an interruption of services. A [CBS \(Statistics department\) report published in January](#), indicated the minimum wage requirement in 2020 for a single individual to live was 2,226 florins (around 1,237 USD) and for a family of two adults and two children was 4,759 florins (some 2,644 USD); while in 2019, these stood at 2,266 and 4329 florins respectively. The indicator, though lower for an individual in 2020 was notably higher for a family unit with children and suggests that costs related to children might drive up the indicator. Noteworthy is that unregistered Venezuelans struggle to obtain the minimum wage. Moreover, partners reported more requests for psychosocial support related to Gender-based Violence (GBV), underscoring observed gaps in law enforcement's gender sensitivity techniques, especially related to interviews on crimes against women.
- Separately, positive [statements](#) were made by the PM Rhuggenaath in **Curaçao** on the [migration policy plans, which will consider some form of accommodation for undocumented Venezuelans and those in an irregular status who are already on the island and thus should open the door for](#) Venezuelans and other undocumented persons to contribute to the host society and to integrate.
- The **DR** government published the operational resolution to establish a regularization /normalization pathway for Venezuelans. [Resolution N° 00119-2021](#), made public on 22 January, represents a positive step towards allowing Venezuelans who regularly entered the country between January 2014 and March 2020 to apply for the migratory category of non-resident and obtain work and student stay permits. January 2021 also marked a [ban of child marriages in the country](#), amid fear of a global rise. Additionally, the local press highlighted that the pandemic affected not only the health of citizens and businesses, but

also the local currency. In 2020, [the Dominican peso faced its worst blow in 15 years](#) with an exchange rate depreciation of 10.13% last year, moving from 52.96 pesos for every dollar at the end of 2019 to 58.32 pesos for every US dollar at the end of 2020.

- **Guyana's** International airports became fully operational, requiring that COVID-19 PCR tests be done within three days before departing and entering Guyana. Furthermore, schools partially re-opened for children preparing for exams. Subsequently, 45 students and 13 teachers tested positive for the virus; many were asymptomatic and were quarantined to prevent further spread. The local population continued to breach curfews with reports on bars and restaurants operating without permission. Several villages saw spikes in COVID cases and remain under strict monitoring by the Ministry of Health<sup>2</sup>. More health supplies are needed to combat the rise in infection cases, particularly as monitoring schools, teachers and students remains challenging, since many of them use public transportation and are from areas currently showing spikes in transmission. In the latter part of January, the [Venezuelan Navy detained two vessels that were fishing in Guyana's exclusive economic zone](#), the latest dispute in a long-running border dispute between the two South American nations.
- **Trinidad and Tobago's** borders remained closed to commercial flights throughout January, although chartered flights continue to be permitted. Persons entering the country must provide a PCR negative test dated no more than 72 hours before their flight into the country. Schools will be re-opened on a phased basis, starting with students who must undertake exam preparations. Although borders remained closed indefinitely, it was announced that Royal Caribbean Cruises [scheduled a return trip to Trinidad and Tobago for its 2021/2022 cruise season. On 21 January 2021, Trinidad and Tobago confirmed its first case of the UK COVID-19 Variant](#). Moreover, on 22 January, a T&T Judge ruled that a Venezuelan mother could [challenge a deportation order](#) signed by the Minister of National Security on 14 January.

<sup>2</sup> Villages being monitored: New Amsterdam in region 6, Waramdongn region 7, St Cuthbert's Mission in region 4 and Moraikobai in region 5.

## Response

- Amidst continuing challenges posed by the pandemic, R4V partners provided **temporary shelter** solutions to vulnerable refugees and migrants, reaching 187 persons in Guyana. R4V partners also provided support with **temporary accommodation** and **rental support** to eight vulnerable refugees and migrants in Curaçao and 49 in T&T.
- In Aruba, Curaçao and T&T, 48 Venezuelans received **cash and voucher assistance** including multipurpose transfers to cover basic needs. This assistance was part of a socio-economic support program initiated in January that included the provision of cash-based assistance, training and workshops for families.
- **Food assistance** reached 244 beneficiaries in the Caribbean, with 143 Venezuelans benefitting from **food hamper distribution** in Guyana, and 97 beneficiaries in the DR. Four vulnerable refugees and migrants were assisted in T&T with **food-vouchers**.
- To boost **integration** through livelihood and self-reliance, two partners in Guyana supported 70 Venezuelans with access to employment opportunities and production of masks as an income generating activity.
- The R4V partner's **online learning program, 'Equal Place'** in T&T continues to benefit 1,080 refugee and migrant students. In Aruba, one R4V partner ensured the provision of scholar insurances, assistance with registrations and uniforms to vulnerable Venezuelan families, reaching 33 beneficiaries.
- In Curaçao, R4V partners assisted Venezuelans with direct **psychosocial support**, including for cases of gender-based violence (GBV), while T&T partners offered **clinical services via telehealth assistance**, including Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) consultations, to 76 beneficiaries. These consultations were offered on an appointment-only basis aligned with the country's Public Health Ordinance related to COVID-19. The services received during these consultations included a doctor's consultation, examinations, STD testings, emergency contraceptives, pregnancy tests, urinalysis, vitals and weight checks. Consultations and services were facilitated by bilingual staff and were offered in a private and confidential atmosphere. In the DR, partners provided pregnancy **clinic consultations, medical appliances** such as wheelchairs, and **medicines** for 16 Venezuelans with chronic diseases. Furthermore, in Guyana 253 beneficiaries received **individual counselling**, participated in support groups to promote well-being and positive coping mechanisms, through child advocacy centers.
- In the context of insecurity and exacerbated challenges, **protection** and life-saving activities continued to be implemented prominently across the Caribbean sub-region. R4V partners in T&T assisted 514 beneficiaries with several activities, including **counselling sessions** to Venezuelans victims of GBV, Victims of Human Trafficking (VoT) and with mental health conditions, referrals of protection cases to authorities and, **rental assistance** delivered to VoTs through the [Gender Transformative Humanitarian Response Project](#).
- A T&T partner also hosted specialised "Know Your Rights" sessions for women on birth registration in various parts of the country. In Guyana, 1,566 Venezuelans were supported with **sensitization sessions, individual counselling, referrals, GBV support, case management, advocacy interventions** and **community-based activities** on GBV prevention. In the DR, as part of the campaign #Informedmigrant or #MigranteInformado of the R4V platform, partners assisted 125 beneficiaries with information on Resolution 119-2021, which will provide migration normalization pathways for around 100K Venezuelans, currently in irregular status. An Aruba partner provided **case management** and **legal assistance** through legal counselling and information to detainees, as well as services to survivors of GBV. Language courses and social activities were also delivered to Venezuelans in the country.

# CARIBBEAN

## People Reached\*

SECTOR	ARUBA	CURAÇAO	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	GUYANA	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	TOTAL
 EDUCATION					1080	1113
 FOOD SECURITY			97	263	4	364
 HEALTH		3	29	254	79	365
 INTEGRATION				70		70
 MULTIPURPOSE CBI	56	3			13	72
 PROTECTION	28	12	125	1946	859	2970
 SHELTER		8		219	49	276
 WASH				5		5

## Operational Overview\*

	ARUBA	CURAÇAO	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	GUYANA	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
<b>PARTNERS</b>	HIAS, IOM, UNHCR	IOM, UNHCR, <i>Famia Plania</i> , <i>Unitat di Barrio</i>	FUNCOVERD, Globalizate Radio, IOM	HIAS, IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR, <i>Blossoms Inc</i> , <i>Guyana Sex Workers Coalition</i> , <i>Ministry of Education</i>	IOM, UNHCR, <i>Family Planning Association</i> , <i>Living Water Community</i> , <i>Rape Crisis Society</i>
<b>SECTORS</b>					

[Appealing Partner, *Implementing Partner*]

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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

\*Based on current month reports

## Featured Story

### Venezuelan Musician Gives Back to Guyanese Host Community

Several days a week, Kelly, a shy 35-year-old Venezuelan musician from El Tigre Anzoátegui State, meets a band of 50 young kids and teenagers for their two-hour music lesson. As they quickly fill the air with the sounds of classical and other modern music, Kelly closes his eyes and listens carefully to the rhythm. They are now playing one of Venezuela's traditional songs which brings a flood of emotions to him.

**“Music enhances culture and gives you tools to be more creative. It does not create barriers, it builds unity,”** said Kelly.

Trained in postular and classical music, Kelly was once a member of the youth orchestra in Venezuela before forming part of a music programme, supported by a humanitarian agency that works to assist refugees and migrants in Guyana. From a young age, he learned to play the guitar, the cuatro, the bass keyboard, drums, the mandolin, the violin, the maracas and the cello. In Guyana, he now teaches kids how to play these instruments. “I am bringing cultures together. Integrating the Venezuelan Cuatro and sharing my roots with the Guyanese people who have been accepting of our culture,” he said. In the music school, Kelly works with many displaced children of various nationalities, and others with specific needs. “Music is a powerful tool to support their emotional and psycho-social needs after having left their countries.”

One of the Kelly's projects is called Soje (Symphonic Orchestra of Jesus), a local Guyanese orchestra school that he created. It is a project to create national system of orchestras, not only classical music but also other popular music. It brings all aspects of music together at the academy to train children and young people to provide society with better cultural development. The initiative also promotes social cohesion, mental health and psychosocial well-being among refugees and migrants and host community members.

During COVID-19, this music programme has been key in helping refugee, migrant and local children to cope with stress and find positive ways to promote integration and solidarity. The pandemic has worsened an already dire situation across Latin America and the Caribbean. Refugees and migrants are among the most vulnerable, who lack access to regular status, work permits, education and medical assistance. Like Kelly, over 5 million Venezuelans have left the lack of basic services and insecurity in their country. 30,000 of them are estimated to be in neighbouring Guyana, a country Kelly holds close to his heart. When on his way to Guyana, he embarked on a small boat, having met the boatman only fifteen minutes before setting off on an uncertain journey to rebuild his life in a home away from home.

Born to Guyanese parents in Venezuela, Kelly had heard stories of a beautiful land filled with hidden treasures all around and found in its people a welcoming environment. He no longer thinks of it as his parents' homeland. “This is now my land and there are many things that I still need to learn,” he said. For Kelly, the most rewarding thing about being part of the project is to be able to give something back to the people that opened the doors for him, especially in a field he is passionate about. **“Teaching music is not just teaching, but preparing the next generation to grow as human beings, spiritually. It is a great challenge, but it is also a blessing to share with them.”**

This English-speaking country in South America has given Kelly a chance to contribute and to rebuild his life in the meantime. Soon after beginning his job as a teacher, he was able to bring his wife and children to join him in their new home. He continues to look forward to breaking barriers, and helping his learners to be more supportive, wholesome persons, who search out unity and integrate in a positive way.

He maintains his lifelong philosophy that music is one of the most powerful tools. For Kelly, music is food for the soul that helps people from different walks of life to unite into one common society, and he is optimistic that it will have the same powerful and positive impacts on his students as it has done for him.

