Situation

- Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governments of Aruba and Curaçao adopted measures such as border closures, stay-at-home orders and suspension of non-essential businesses and services, which has impacted the economy, particularly the tourism sector. As a response to the emergency, the Governments of Aruba and Curaçao have indicated that all individuals on the islands, including those without a regular status, have access to COVID-19 related health care.
- Refugees and migrants from Venezuela are disproportionately affected by the lock down and the subsequent loss of income, as most of them work in the informal labour market with no access to social protection systems. This is anticipated to result in a surge in food insecurity and emergency shelter needs.
- Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the implementation of the visa requirement for Venezuelans scheduled to start on 1 April was postponed until further notice. Venezuelans remain visa exempted for all Caribbean islands of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, though they are affected by the border closures.
- The difficulty in regularizing stays and its consequences on everyday life, in particular the lack of access to the national healthcare system, were identified as the main concerns of participants in an inter-agency participatory assessment carried out in Curaçao prior to the implementation of stay-at-home measures. Eight focus group discussions and interviews were carried out with Venezuelan women, men, girls and boys.

Response

- In Aruba, partners have been working towards a Memorandum of Understanding with ‘Fundacion Pa Nos Comunidad’ for distribution of food baskets to vulnerable refugees and migrants. Meanwhile in Curaçao, 45 vulnerable Venezuelan households were provided with food assistance, and partners undertook procurement to expand on the food distribution activities.
- In Curaçao, a partner provided primary medical services to 391 Venezuelans and 331 persons from the host community who were not able to benefit from national health insurance. Some 218 persons (112 Venezuelans and 106 from the host population) benefitted from sexual and reproductive health, prenatal and maternity care services.
- A partner provided psychosocial support to Venezuelans in Aruba, (including 4 men, 11 women & 7 children). In Curaçao, 14 Venezuelans (4 men and 10 women) also benefitted from psychosocial services through counselling, support groups and referral to specialized psychological care.
- Partners in Aruba provided 81 individuals with Cash-Based Interventions for humanitarian needs.
- Nine frontline service providers from the Venezuelan community received capacity building training in GBV prevention and response in Aruba. A partner also delivered a webinar on Psychosocial First Aid for other partners’ staff including 8 from Curaçao.
- In late March, partners opened a Facebook page dedicated to translating and disseminating informational material in Spanish from the Government of Aruba, WHO and R4V partners on 28 March Willemstad, Curaçao.

* Estimated population by end of 2020 | ** From 1/3/2020, total calculated from sectoral maximum | *** Source: FTS Website
Operational Overview - Who does What and Where

Activities by Sector

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