

With almost 1.8 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants settled in Colombia, 413,000 in regular transit and half a million returnees by the start of 2020, promoting access to safe shelter, housing and neighborhoods is more than just providing a roof – it is a guarantee for protection and integration.

Emergency response

Despite the expansion of the number and capacity of shelters in the country, the demand for emergency shelter is far greater than existing offer at the border, and even greater in some reception and transit areas. This is evidenced by the increase in the number of refugees and migrants sleeping rough, as well as the use of negative coping mechanisms, such as occupation of public spaces or abandoned structures, transactional sex in exchange for housing or sexual violence in these locations.

The existing response is also insufficient for some individuals with specific needs, such as survivors of gender-based violence, persons living with disabilities and indigenous groups, as well as profiles that are not usually prioritized by humanitarian actors working with limited resources, such as adult men travelling on their own. The lack of safe and quality accommodation is also reflected in the lack of access to safe drinking water and exposure to the elements and to communicable diseases.

At the same time as the humanitarian organizations' response has increased, civil society organizations and some religious communities have also started to establish their own shelters, particularly in areas where the response has been limited. These initiatives require support to improve the quality of their services and ensure their sustainability.

In response to these needs, in 2020 the Subgroup is working to (1) increase the availability of emergency shelter in areas where the gap between demand and offer is the greatest, as well as supporting existing shelters with construction, adaptation, improvement, rehabilitation and management, (2) increase the offer for individuals with specific needs, such as indigenous populations, persons living with disabilities, LGBTI individuals, unaccompanied children and survivors of sexual violence, and (3) improve the quality and range of modalities for temporary accommodation assistance outside shelters, such as emergency housing, and shelter exit strategies.



Families at the community shelter in Puerto San Salvador in Tame, Arauca, which is supported by PADF. © PADF [2019].



Shelter and settlements: 2020



22 main partners



20 departments



\$38.16 M USD requested

Stabilization

In the medium term, the main need is regular and safe access to rental accommodation.

The main barrier is the high cost of rent, which often makes access to decent housing impossible. Additionally, in some cases discrimination and the need to provide documentation that refugees and migrants often lack are also barriers, and can lead to risky behavior, such as living in unsafe housing that does not fulfil minimum standards, overcrowding and cohabitation of individuals with no pre-existing family or social ties, which create considerable protection risks.

In response, the Subgroup's key activities focus on comprehensive rental support – including information, case management and rental subsidies –, alternative housing modalities, such as host families, and to a lesser degree support with household items.

Durable solutions

In the long term, the influx of refugees and migrants from Venezuela is becoming a factor in the creation of new informal settlements, as well as the expansion of pre-existing settlements. These are usually located in high-risk areas, have limited access to domestic public utilities and face structural problems related to tenure and property of plots and buildings. At the same time, this population increase also creates additional pressure on host communities, as it intensifies the demand for public space and for access to community infrastructures.

In this area, the Subgroup works with authorities and communities to improve and expand community infrastructures and advance in improvement projects in informal settlements, promote their insertion in urban planning processes and support the development of public policies.

Shelter and settlements: main partners at the national level

ACTED | Caritas Germany | Caritas Switzerland | Colombian Red Cross | DRC | PADF | iMMAP | IOM | JRS Colombia | JRS LAC | Lutheran World Federation | Malteser | Médecins du Monde | NRC | PAHO/WHO | Samaritan's Purse | Solidarités International/Première Urgence Internationale | SOS Children's Villages | Techo | UN Habitat | UNHCR | ZOA

GIFMM: Multisector Subgroup

The Multisector Subgroup coordinates assistance and services to refugees, migrants and host communities through interventions on shelter and settlements, non-food items, humanitarian transportation and telecommunications.

PEOPLE IN
NEED



1.56 M

TARGET
POPULATION



0.23 M

FINANCIAL
REQUIREMENTS



\$ 50.92 M USD

PARTNERS AT
NATIONAL LEVEL



24

Contact:

<https://r4v.info/en/working-group/216>

Nicolás Rodríguez Serna
Coordinator
rodrigu@unhcr.org

Natalia Ramírez
Coordinator
natalia.ramirez@cruzrojacolombiana.org

Hugo Sánchez
Coordinator
husanchez@iom.int

