

Argentina

March 2022

Hosting some **180,227 refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants, most of them from Venezuela**, UNHCR works with the Argentine government, civil society and population of concern to **guarantee, access to the territory, asylum, regularization and family reunification**, while also providing **goods and services** to cover basic needs such as housing, health and clothing items, both through cash-based and in-kind assistance. UNHCR

and its partners are present in strategic border areas and major urban centers in the country through **Points of Attention and Orientation (PAO)** in the cities of La Quiaca, San Salvador de Jujuy, Mendoza, Posadas and Puerto Iguazú where those who enter the country by land receive information and assistance. Aiming at the full **enjoyment of rights through socio-economic inclusion**, UNHCR also implements a multi-stakeholder strategy for the **inclusion of**

refugees and migrants in national social protection programs and the local labour market. It also works for the creation of enabling conditions for decent work and wage earning; to enhance routes for access to financial services; to promote a conducive environment for business creation; and supports the execution of admission programs and complementary pathways.

POPULATION OF CONCERN (PoC)

180,227

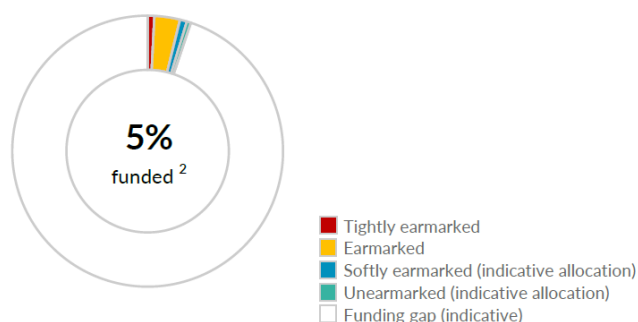
Refugees	4,075
Asylum-seekers	11,082
Others of concern*	448
Venezuelans displaced abroad	164,662

Source: Official information provided by the Government, as of December 2021

FUNDING

USD 49.2 MILLION

requested for the **Multi-Country Office including Argentina**



UNHCR PRESENCE

The UNHCR Regional Office for Southern Latin America based in Buenos Aires covers operations in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Staff in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Uruguay:

- 63** National staff and affiliated workforce
- 11** International staff

Field presences in Cordoba, Mendoza and Salta



Photo: UNHCR/Juan Le Baus. Venezuelan entrepreneurs offering their products during the Festival del Reencuentro in Buenos Aires.

Results in 2021

- Some **3,314** refugees and migrants in vulnerable situations were through **multi-purpose cash assistance** to cover their basic needs; while **1,579** were provided with **temporary accommodation** and **4,718** received clothing items as part of the **winterization campaign** implemented with PoC led organizations.
- Some **3,685** refugees and migrants received **free orientation and socio-legal assistance** to access asylum, regularization, health services and social protection programs, **27 gender-based violence survivors** received psychosocial counselling and safe referral to specialized services and **17 children and adolescents** facing protection risks were also assisted and had protection systems activated through safe referrals
- 6,400 refugees and migrants** (65 per cent women) were reached through **17 projects** interventions jointly implemented with **26 different counterparts** (local governments; community-based refugee and migrant associations and civil society organizations) within the framework of the **regional response for socioeconomic recovery**. In addition, **307 entrepreneurs** received cash transfers as seed capital and technical assistance to start or strengthen their productive initiatives.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR co-leads jointly with IOM the **National Response Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela** where 11 partners –UN, CSOs, Refugee’s and Migrants’ organizations implement the Response Plan 2022 for the **Southern Cone**, complementing governmental capacities in main urban and border areas of the region.
- ADRA** (Agencia Adventista de Desarrollo y Recursos Asistenciales), **CAREF** (Comisión Argentina para Refugiados y Migrantes) and **Fundación MIRARES** (Migrantes, Refugiados y Argentinos Emprendedores Sociales) are UNHCR’s partners implementing projects aimed at providing counselling, socio-legal orientation, psychological support, basic humanitarian assistance and support for socio-economic inclusion and sustainable livelihoods to refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers.
- UNHCR works in close coordination with **governmental counterparts**, namely the National Refugee Commission (CONARE), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Migration Directorate, National Office of the Public Defender, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Education, the National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism, and ANSES.
- In order to foster the burden sharing in line with the **Global Compact on Refugees**, UNHCR boosted the **Cities of Solidarity** initiative, increased involvement of the private sector and reinforced community-based solutions for inclusion. The national network of Cities of Solidarity aims to facilitate access to information, orientation and improve reception conditions as well as to better integrate refugees and migrants in their local communities, strengthening their access to rights. In Argentina, **14 local governments** are part of the initiative. Under this framework, UNHCR provided expert guidance and support for the designing and implementation of socio-economic recovery projects in close coordination with the Government of the city of Buenos Aires and the municipalities of Cordoba, Mendoza and Salta, aiming to promote PoC’s employability and strengthen self-employment in the local labour markets
- UNHCR, the Government and IOM coordinate a joint workplan to support policy design, implementation and capacity building of **a resettlement and humanitarian visa programme** with the active participation of civil society partners, local governments and hosting community groups, and the financial and technical support of the Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative (CRISP). A new pilot resettlement program started to be implemented through community sponsorship with the support of the Fundación ACNUR Argentina.
- Alliances with **70 private sector companies** were established to generate awareness and promote the labor insertion of refugees and migrants in the local market.
- UNHCR worked side by side with at least **20 refugee and migrant led organizations** in a wide range of activities oriented towards the enhancement of their organizational processes.

Main Activities

Protection and Durable Solutions

- UNHCR **provides technical support and advice to national authorities involved in the implementation of relevant legislation** to promote efficient refugee status determination procedures (RSD). Capacity building activities are aimed at strengthening the **National Refugee Commission**, and its Technical Secretariat to ensure due process in admission, registration, eligibility interviews, RSD assessments and right to appeal.
- UNHCR advocates for the **facilitation of the naturalization procedure for refugees and stateless persons**, providing the necessary information to ensure they are able to make an informed decision on this option, as well as to ensure the implementation of the new legal framework establishing a statelessness determination procedure.
- UNHCR **produces information and identifies protection risks, promotes human rights and identifies coping mechanisms of Venezuelan nationals** through the implementation of the **Protection Monitoring Tool (high frequency survey)**, while at the same time refers individual cases with specific needs to partner agencies.
- UNHCR promotes actions aimed at identifying, preventing and **responding to situations of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)** through regular protection dialogues and empowerment activities, while also providing **psychosocial support and socio legal orientation to GBV survivors**.
- UNHCR, CONARE and the **Committee for integral assistance and protection of refugees and asylum-seekers of the National Office of the Public Defender** work under a tripartite agreement to **guarantee legal assistance for asylum-seekers to access asylum and during the refugee status determination procedure**. The legal assistance is free and provided by expert lawyers from the National Office of the Public Defender. The National Office of the Public Defender also provides legal aid is also provided to stateless persons.
- In the framework of **Regional Response for the Socioeconomic Recovery of PoC in the COVID-19 Crisis**, UNHCR and partners provides expert contribution for the design and implementation of socioeconomic recovery projects aiming at widening opportunities for refugees and migrants and guaranteeing their labor insertion and resilience, such as **Nosotras Conectadas**, aiming at women between the ages of 18 and 35, and which provides training on the information technology and telecommunications sector; **Experiencia Activa**, targeting women over 40 years of age, which includes training activities and development of soft skills; a project with the **Association of Venezuelan Doctors in Argentina** (ASOMEVENAR) aiming at facilitating the homologation process of professional diplomas of Venezuelan doctors and promote their socioeconomic inclusion; a professional training scheme in the **Care Economy** aiming at providing certified professional skills for PoC and attain better work conditions; a **climate impact project** focused on environmental conservation and green economy (ReciclAR), aimed at promoting labour inclusion of PoC in areas of the circular economy, including waste reduction, recycling, and reuse.
- In the framework of the **Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative (CRISP)**, UNHCR promotes **opportunities for resettlement and complementary pathways** for admission of refugees by providing technical support to relevant authorities on case identification and selection, pre-departure orientation and travel, as well as to specialized government entities, universities and sponsors to improve settlement services (counselling, language training, psychosocial support, social inclusion, etc.). UNHCR supports regional efforts led by Argentina to consolidate resettlement and complementary pathways, by introducing **innovative legal and procedural frameworks for community sponsorship**, by convening regional meetings and exchanges of best practices with other countries, and by supporting the States' participation in global fora and high-level meetings with more experienced countries
- UNHCR has supported the establishment, training and mutual assistance of a **network of community sponsors** who offer their own resources to expand opportunities **for resettlement and integration of refugees** in their communities. The network is currently comprised of nine faith-based and civil society organizations which encompass over 59 hosting communities and over 254 sponsor groups, creating a country-wide protection network for refugees.
- A **global pilot project on resettlement, GROW - Growing funding and solutions for refugees**, is being implemented in cooperation with the **Fundacion ACNUR Comité Argentino**. With an aim to promote the community sponsorship scheme, families expected to arrive in April 2022 will count with the accompaniment of mentors (individual donors of Fundación ACNUR) to guide them in their integration process during their first year in the country.
- UNHCR **engages with refugee and migrant led organizations**, working side by side with them in the identification of priority needs and the strengthening of their role as community protection networks. Specific activities include participatory assessments, trainings, institutional strengthening, joint advocacy efforts and financial support.
- UNHCR maintains a **two-way communication channel with refugees and migrants** through the activation of a protection hotline where they can directly chat with UNHCR, in addition to email and face-to-face orientation.

Humanitarian assistance

- UNHCR provides **cash-based, shelter and in-kind assistance** to most vulnerable refugees and migrants, so they can cover for their most vital and essential needs. Due to the impact of COVID-19 the number of people in need remains on the rise. Food and access to shelter as well as to hygiene kits is provided in border areas. A winterization campaign has started in coordination with refugee and migrant organizations.

Community-based approach in practice: participatory assessments 2021

Participatory assessments in 2021 carried out by UNHCR and partners involved **13 focus groups where 116 refugees and migrants from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Haiti, Peru, Turkey and Venezuela – living in Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area and the provinces of Misiones, Mendoza, Córdoba, Salta and Jujuy** – shared their views on current protection risks and barriers to rights access, as well as proposals on how to face them. Three main topics were addressed in depth during this exercise: access to asylum, socioeconomic inclusion, and gender issues.

Border management without protection safeguards had a direct impact on transits, which became more dangerous, with protection incidents happening more frequent and irregularity becoming an issue as PoCs who could not seek asylum at border crossings or were redirected to the migratory system when attempting to do so. PoCs expressed their feelings of uncertainty who could not access the territory in a regular manner, especially children without valid travel documents, and they made proposals focused on the need to access clear and public information from authorities to take informed decisions.

All focus groups highlighted the **COVID-19 pandemic's consequences in terms of socioeconomic inclusion**. Protection risks related to livelihoods and housing ranked on top for most participants, including eviction – and sometimes family separation –, overcrowding, informality, dismissals without guarantees as well as labour exploitation and abuse. In terms of coping mechanisms, informal renting and subletting, labour reconversion, self-employment, and barter of humanitarian assistance (e.g.: food for hygiene kits) were mentioned. PoCs made proposals for UNHCR to advocate for the relaxation of requirements to access social protection schemes without national ID, support to cover costs for the recognition of foreign degrees, seed capital and trainings on regulations for entrepreneurship.

Groups focused on **gender-based violence (GBV)** and on the specific protection needs of TTT (transgender, transexual and transvestite) population discussed about rights access with a gender perspective. The first group, women participants highlighted experiences of discrimination and abuse during transit, the affectation of emerging community networks as people moved again due to the pandemic and the difficulties to manage work with household activities and childcare. Participants proposed the implementation of activities to raise awareness on different types of GBV and to disseminate information on prevention and response. The TTT community highlighted the lack of awareness on the right to seek and receive asylum matched with restrictive access to justice. Prostitution as a coping mechanism derived from structural discrimination to access livelihoods constitutes a major protection risks and proposals to address it involve scholarships to access education and self-employment opportunities.

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External Relations

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