

ECUADOR

Situation Report – May 2019



RESPONSE FOR VENEZUELANAS

Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela

- During the month of May, a daily average of 2,500 to 3,000 entries of Venezuelan refugees and migrants was registered at the official border crossing points.
- Humanitarian personnel was trained on Protection of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse with a total of 321 people trained in May.
- The GTRM met with representatives of the French Agency for Development (AFD) during their visit to Ecuador, which included Carchi province. GTRM partners highlighted their mid-term and long-term interventions related to economic, social and cultural inclusion.
- **81,778 people assisted in total** ¹⁻²
- **50,576 people received humanitarian assistance**
- **30,111 people received protection assistance**
- **1,091 people received socio-economic and cultural assistance**
- **28% of people assisted were women and 52% were children and adolescents**
- **770 civil servants were trained on human rights, child protection, access to asylum and migratory alternatives.**

OPERACIONAL CONTEXT

Compared to the preceding month, the influx of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in May remained steady, with a daily average of 2,500 to 3,000 entries registered at the official border crossing points (Rumichaca and San Miguel). According to official data, 87,828 Venezuelans entered the country in May, while 69,137 departed, which resulted in a migratory balance of 18,691 Venezuelan nationals. Entries registered at the border crossing point of Rumichaca increased to a daily average of 2,400 arrivals, against an average of 2,200 daily entries registered in April.

A better picture of the needs of refugees and migrants can be obtained through the need assessments and data-collection exercises regularly carried out by GTRM members. Information collected in May indicates that the percentage of Venezuelan nationals with irregular status in Ecuador is high (40% of the people interviewed) as well as those indicating having a tourist visa or Andean card (38%)³. Access to regularization mechanisms is still problematic for Venezuelan nationals whose tourist visa has expired. While most refugees and migrants entered Ecuador as tourists, after three months of stay, the main obstacles to access regularization are the ability to comply with current requirements to process regular residency in Ecuador (in particular in terms of required documentation and associated costs) as well as accessing a formal job and validating their diplomas.

Other results have indicated that access to public health services is described as satisfactory. Out of the 33% people interviewed that indicated having needed medical attention, more than 91% stated that they had received it. On the other hand, regarding livelihoods, access to a formal job remains a major challenge, with only a minority of Venezuelan

¹ The quantitative data measures direct assistance and does not include information or advocacy activities. The numbers displayed correspond to people assisted and not to other metrics (e.g. institutions assisted, shelters).

² The numbers of persons assisted reflect direct and individual assistance interventions. These figures may, however, include people who have been assisted several times through different interventions.

³ Source: Protection Monitoring, total of 1,682 interviews held in Guayaquil, Quito, Santo Domingo and Cuenca. Monitoring was carried out jointly with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion.

refugees and migrants achieving stable employment. The vast majority of interviewees reported selling goods on the street (49%), performing other informal jobs (21%) or being unemployed (12%)⁴.

RESPONSE OVERVIEW

Area of Intervention 1: Direct emergency assistance

- **50,576** people assisted in May 2019, **61%** of the total assistance registered⁵.
- **26%** were **women**, **15% men** and **59%** were **children and adolescents**
- **6,224** refugees and migrants accessed **communication services** at the border⁶
- **4,963** people assisted with **multi-purpose cash transfers**

During the month of May, interventions designed to equip and habilitate shelters were reported by partners, including painting, provision of kitchen improvements, adequacy of laundry spaces and installation of WI-FI connection to reestablish communication from refugee and migrant population with their families. WI-FI connection continues to be provided in border areas, benefiting 4,453 persons in Rumichaca and 1,771 in Huaquillas. Temporary resting spaces continue operating at the border areas and were used by approximately 4,715 people in both Rumichaca and San Miguel in May. In addition, 4,533 blankets were provided to refugees and migrants passing through these points.

Regarding the water, hygiene and sanitation response, a total of 569 people received hygiene kits during the month of May. In addition, 2,837 people participated to activities promoting access to hygiene⁷ and a total of 1,536 received water containers as well as water purification tablets to be able to access safe water during their journey.

In the field of health and nutrition, a total of 1,506 boys and girls were provided with nutritional supplements and 2,157 were given baby kits⁸. Support to the Ministry of Public Health (MSP) is ongoing, to support epidemiology monitoring and surveillance including through provision of equipment and assets to health centers and hospitals located at the northern and southern borders. Vaccination is supported with the recruitment of dedicated health personnel. With this support, the MSP was able to provide medical assistance to 5,859 refugees and migrants at the northern border, the majority of whom presented respiratory and gastrointestinal conditions. The MSP could also realize screenings for 65,817 persons and administered 28,175 vaccines. 3,266 refugees and migrants received medical attention at the southern border.⁹

Information and counselling on access to asylum and migratory services continues to be provided and reached 8,589 refugees and migrants in May, through the distribution of information brochures, informative group sessions, and other group activities. Moreover, specific information material was delivered to 5,916 people regarding human trafficking prevention and information about LGBTIQ rights. Some key messages were also delivered to a total of 33,355 persons, which included tips on how to look after children during the journey and avoid family separation.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Percentage indicates the total assistance derived from areas of intervention that are established within the RMRP.

⁶ Communication services include: Internet/WIFI spaces and cellphone charging spots to facilitate contact between refugees and migrants with their families.

⁷ This information (hygiene promotion) is not included in the RMRP monitoring framework.

⁸ This information (baby kits) is not included in the RMRP monitoring framework.

⁹ January – May 2019

Area of Intervention 2: Protection

- **30,111** people assisted in May 2019, **37%** of the total assistance registered¹⁰
- **30%** were **women**, **29% men** and **41%** were **children and adolescents**
- **49** LGBTI people **assisted**

Gender-based violence

Providing protection assistance to survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) is a key component of the protection work of GTRM members, regarding GBV cases. In border areas, referral pathways are established, as well as orientation for legal, psychological and durable solutions assistance. Referral pathways of GBV cases with the Public Defender's Office were also clarified, which will facilitate referral of cases and subsequent filing of complaints for the issuance of State's protection measures.

Partners continue to implement safe spaces to assist GBV survivors in a situation of human mobility, including LGBTI persons, and allowing case management. These spaces are located in Tulcan, San Miguel, Huaquillas, Santa Rosa and Ibarra. Support is provided by GTRM members to different shelters that host GBV survivors and deliver specialized GBV services to cases requiring immediate assistance (*"Manos Unidas Tejiendo Progreso"*, *"Puerta Violeta"*, *casa de Acogida María Amor*, *campaign "Juntas Migramos"*). Training sessions were implemented in San Miguel in public schools, community kitchens and community centers regarding the *"Response pathway for GBV survivors in a situation of human mobility"* with the participation of 15 people (10 women and 5 men).

Child Protection

A total of 2,395 boys and girls received psycho-social assistance, including in child-friendly spaces that are currently located at the northern border (Tulcan and San Miguel) and which registered the presence of 1,445 boys and girls in the course of May. Child-friendly spaces provide a response to psycho-social needs of boys, girls and adolescents as well as to provide information on their rights in a context of human mobility.

LGBTI Protection

Several response protocols for LGBTI persons were reinforced, regarding both information and case management. Following the regional event that took place in March 2019, efforts are underway to consolidate a regional coordination network to assist and refer LGBTI people in need of assistance.

Area of Intervention 3: Socio-economic and cultural integration

- **1,091** people assisted in May 2019, **1.3%** of the total of assistances registered.¹¹
- **35%** were **women**, **23% men** and **42%** were **children and adolescents**
- **108 interventions** were done to facilitate access to employment and promote social cohesion¹²

¹⁰ Percentage indicates the total assistance derived from areas of intervention that are established within the RMRP.

¹¹ Percentage indicates the total assistance derived from areas of intervention that are established within the RMRP.

¹² 52 livelihoods interventions and 56 communication interventions to promote social cohesion.

Education

Based on the latest information collected by partners, the percentage of children not attending school remains high (with 41% of interviewees indicating that children aged between 5 to 11 y/o and children were out-of-school and 53.33% of interviewees indicating that children aged between 12 to 17 y/o were out-of-school). Access to education for Venezuelan refugees and migrants increases after six months of stay in the country. Several reasons for not attending school were identified and demonstrate the difficulties face by Venezuelan refugees and migrants in terms of socioeconomic integration, along with the limited capacities of the public education system. The main issues regarding enrollment of children are lack of resources, lack of documentation, insufficient public-school enrollment quotas and lack of information.

Regarding the education response in May, partners followed up individual cases to promote and facilitate their access to education. A list of children and adolescents that do not have access to public school or who suffered violations of their right to education was created in order to conduct targeted advocacy with the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC). The school year in the Sierra Region is about to end, which explains a high rate of out-of-school Venezuelan children and adolescents in this area. In this context, several families were given counselling about procedures to access to the public-school system for the next school year. In border areas, partners provide advice to newcomer Venezuelan refugees and migrants about how to access education services in Ecuador. This information also highlights the risks related to children being out-of-schools.

Access to daycare centers providing early education for children is limited; however, the Ministry of Social and Economic Inclusion (MIES) will identify cases of Venezuelan children that do not access them to be able to increase enrollment. Some public childcare centers operate and enable preventing child labor within the Venezuelan population; GTRM partners have therefore promoted referral to these spaces. Partners also monitor daycare centers operated by MIES and local institutions to promote access of Venezuelan children to early education.

Livelihoods

GTRM members continue to implement and adapt programs, tools, and activities to promote access to employment and entrepreneurship within Venezuelan refugees and migrants. For example, the participation of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in handicraft training centers has been coordinated, as well as the participation of adolescents and young people to dance, taekwondo and English workshops. In May, several refugees and migrants benefitted for the first time of employment and entrepreneurship initiatives; while others have been put in contact with different companies, including the Pichincha Bank, to explore job opportunities. In addition, seed capital for entrepreneurship keeps being provided on the basis of a vulnerability analysis conducted by partners.

Advocacy activities with the public and private sector is underway to promote the inclusion of Venezuelan refugees and migrants into professional trainings. In this sense, scholarships have been granted in different professional fields. Workshops with the Ecuadorian Service for Professional Training (SECAP) were carried out to allow Venezuelan refugees and migrants to access the Job Qualification Certification procedure, which is then registered at the Secretary of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (SENESCYT). Outreach conducted with public institutions led to signing an agreement with the SECAP that should generate increased access to job opportunities and stable employment. Contacts with the private sector has allowed to determine the professional profiles that are currently sought after by employers, to fit them with Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

Social cohesion

Continue raising awareness of Ecuadorian citizens on the issue against xenophobia to the refugee and migrant population, GTRM partners have carried on with the campaign "***Abrazos que unen***"¹³, as for May the campaign reached 8,433 women and 5,311 men using social networks.

Communication campaigns to prevent xenophobia are ongoing, with the addition of the ***Somos Migrantes***¹⁴ campaign in the course of May, which became viral through the ***#Econtrémonos*** and is estimated to have reached about 2 million people. This campaign has developed six videos showing the reality of the humanitarian situation for Venezuelan refugees and migrants, cases of harassment and violence suffered by Venezuelan women in public spaces while also highlighting how Venezuelans and Ecuadorians could gather around ideas, sports, and music. Likewise, the "***Juntemos Manos hoy ...mañana podrás necesitar una***"¹⁵ campaign was broadcasted through national and local TV stations of Lago Agrio and Tulcan. This campaign produced advertising spots for radios and information for social networks, reaching approximately 55,000 people. Lastly, "***NO A LA DISCRIMINACIÓN***"¹⁶ campaign which includes topics about xenophobia inside public schools that host Venezuelan population in order to advocate for social inclusion and against discrimination and bullying in schools, is also to be highlighted.

Also in May, workshops for life capacities and prevention of xenophobia were carried out in public schools, reaching 2,709 girls and 2,378 boys and adolescents. Moreover, teaching methodologies for inclusive education were given to 822 female teachers and 496 male teachers.

Area of Intervention 4: Support to the host Government

- **9,602** members of the civil society **trained**
- **770** public servers **trained**
- **38** public health servers **trained**

In the north of Ecuador, several activities were implemented to strengthen capacities of the local governments of Tulcan and Ibarra, in particular regarding the response to human mobility, the inclusion of human mobility into communication contents. These activities also enabled to cooperate on the elaboration of a Local Ordinance on Human Mobility to be implemented in Tulcan.

GTRM members continue participating in different coordination spaces led by local institutions, in a variety of locations, which allows raising human mobility related issues and highlighting risks faced by Venezuelan refugees and migrants. Several technical roundtables were held in May to discuss matters regarding the inclusion and protection of Venezuelan population. As a result, main challenges and gaps within government services, including health, economic inclusion, case management, access to education, administrative procedures, access to financial services, analysis of unaccompanied minors' cases, emergency management at borders, assistance to vulnerable groups, security, access to shelter were discussed and identified.

¹³ United Nations' Campaign in Ecuador

¹⁴ CARE's Campaign in Ecuador

¹⁵ Jesuit Refugee Service's Campaign in Ecuador

¹⁶ HIAS' Campaign in Ecuador

Moreover, the active participation of GTRM partners have created spaces allowing the development of training workshops for public servants. For example, representatives of the Ministry of Public Health (MSP) in Sangolquí were trained on the psychological effects of forced displacement, including impact of acts of torture that refugees and migrants might have faced as well as secondary victimization. Likewise, police aspirants at the Tulcan Police Commando received first aid capacity-building, as well as information on the psychological effect of forced displacement and migration. The personnel of MIES participated to training sessions regarding best practices to eradicate poverty within vulnerable groups. Another training was carried out for representatives of the Secretary of Youth and the Bolivarian Technical Institute about entrepreneurship programs, aiming to design a pilot monitoring the activities of entrepreneurs in Guayaquil who had benefited from a credit.

Finally, advocacy with Government institutions to promote and protect the rights of Venezuelan refugees and migrants continues. For example, a request was transmitted to the Ecuadorian Social Security Institution (IESS) to provide information about documents that were required to obtain a social security affiliation code, given that individuals in possession of a humanitarian visa are being asked to present their passport, a document that not all refugees and migrants are able to obtain. Outreach was conducted with the Service of Domestic Income to create RUC/RISE (taxpayer records required for tax declaration) for people with an electronic visa who require this record both for the formalization of their entrepreneurship as well as to be able to provide their services.

GTRM COORDINATION

- The **Food Security** working group is focusing on harmonizing the content of food kits. In this sense, information about food kits content (prizes, foodstuff, units and nutritional values) has been gathered, including the location where the activities are implemented. In addition, main results of the available assessments for this area of intervention were presented.
- The **Cash-based Interventions** working group approved its Terms of Reference (ToR). A better understanding about multipurpose cash transfers was prioritized in order to better articulate sectoral interventions that have a cash component. Being a cross-sectional group, it was agreed to divide the work by priority themes for the next 6 months, which will allow the group to link up with the other sectoral working groups, as relevant.
- The **Protection** working group carried out a national training process on PSEA for UN agencies and NGOs' humanitarian staff during April and May with a total of 397 people trained to date. This provided an opportunity to strengthen the abilities of the humanitarian staff that deliver direct emergency assistance and to detect and follow-up on PSEA cases.
- The **WASH/Shelter/NFI** working group approved their Terms of Reference (ToR). Red Clamor expressed its interest to designate a focal point to co-lead this WG; which was approved by all partners. A mapping of available shelters across the country will be initiated in order to have a better understanding of services that are currently provided and analyze the aspects that need to be reinforced.
- On May 30th, **a meeting between GTRM partners and representatives of the French Development Agency (AFD)** was held. The functioning of the coordination platform as well as the operational response in the context of the Venezuela response were presented, in particular regarding area 3 of the response plan (Socioeconomic and Cultural Integration), where funding gaps are identified, as it involves long-term interventions.

GTRM MEMBERS

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Plan International Ecuador | Red Cross Ecuador | RET International | UNDP | UNESCO | UNFPA | UNHCR | UNICEF | UNOCHA | UNWOMEN | World Vision Ecuador | WFP | WHO

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