



MIRPS

**Comprehensive
Regional
Protection and
Solutions
Framework**

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL
PROTECTION AND SOLUTIONS FRAMEWORK**

MIRPS 2021

CREDITS

We recognize the contributions of the MIRPS Pro-tempore Presidency Guatemala 2021, national technical teams of MIRPS countries and their partners for the development of this report.

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ACRONYMS

Generals

AECID: Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
 CABEL: Central American Bank for Economic Integration
 CAJP: Committee of Juridical and Political Affairs of the OAS
 CEAL: Latin American Business Council
 CentraRSE: Action Center for Corporate Social Responsibility in Guatemala
 COVID-19: Virus SARS-CoV-2
 ECLAC: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
 EU: European Union
 GRF: Global Refugees Forum
 IADB: Inter-American Development Bank
 ILO: International Labor Organization
 INTPA: European Commission's Directorate General for International Partnerships
 IOM: International Organization for Migration
 LGBTIQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer
 MIRPS: Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework
 NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
 NTT: National Technical Team of
 OAS: Organization of American States
 OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
 PAHO/WHO: Pan American Health Organization/ World Health Organization
 PTP: Pro-tempore Presidency
 QAI: Quality Asylum Initiative
 RedLAC: Latin American and Caribbean Network of Environmental Funds
 SGBV: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
 SICA: Central American Integration System
 TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training
 UN: United Nations
 UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
 UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
 UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund
 UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
 UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund
 UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
 VET: Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons
 WBG: World Bank Group

Belize

ETPT: Education, technical and professional training
 LTC: Labor Training Center
 SOP: Standard Operating Procedures
 UNMSDF: United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework

Costa Rica

CATEM: Temporary Attention Centres for Migrants
 CCSS: Costa Rican Social Security Fund
 CONAPAM: National Council for Older Persons
 CONAPDIS: National Council for Persons with Disability
 CVRE: Commission of Restricted Visas and Refugees
 DGME: General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs
 FIS: Social Information Sheet
 IAFA: Institute on Alcoholism and Drug Addiction
 IMAS: Institute for Social Welfare
 INA: National Learning Institute
 INEC: National Institute of Statistics and Census
 MIDEPLAN: Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy
 MINARE: Framework for protection and Solutions in response to Situation of Refugees in Costa Rica
 MIVAH: Ministry of Housing and Human Settlement
 MTSS: Ministry of Labor and Social Security
 PANI: National Children's Trust
 SINABI: National Library System
 SINEM: National Music Education System
 SINIRUBE: National Information System and Unique Registry of Beneficiaries
 TAM: Administrative and Immigration Court

El Salvador

CODER: Commission for the Determination of Refugee Status
 COMURES: Corporation of Municipalities of the Republic of El Salvador
 CUBO: Urban Centers for Welfare and Opportunities
 DNAVFMF: National Directorate for Victims attention and Forced Migration
 GAMI: Management for Migrant Attention
 INSAFORP: Salvadoran Institute of Vocational Training
 MIGOBTD: Ministry of Interior and Territorial Development
 MINEDUCYT: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
 MINSAL: Ministry of Health
 MJSP: Ministry of Justice and Public Security
 MRREE: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 MTPS: Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
 RIIS: Integral and Integrated Health Networks
 SIGES: Information System for Educational Management

Guatemala

AMN: National Immigration Authority
 ANAM: National Association of Municipalities of Guatemala
 CONARE: National Commission for Refugees
 CONJUVE: National Youth Council
 DRER: Department for the Recognition of Refugee Status
 IGM: Guatemalan Migration Institute
 INTECAP: Technical Institute of Training and Productivity
 JO: Judicial Organism
 MDMP: Departmental Migration and Protection Board
 MINEDUC: Ministry of Education
 MINEX: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 MINGOB: Ministry of the Interior
 MINTRAB: Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
 MSPAS: Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare
 NCP: National Civil Police
 PDH: Office of the Human Rights Ombudsperson
 PGN: Office of the Attorney General of the Nation
 RENAP: National Registry of Persons
 SBS: Secretary of Social Welfare from the Presidency of the Republic
 SOSEP: Secretary of Social Work from the President's Wife
 SVET: Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons
 UNIVET: Mobile Units for the Prevention of Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons

Honduras

CAMI: Center for Attention to Irregular Migrants
 CAMR: Center for the Attention of the Returned Migrant
 CAT: Temporary Isolation Center
 CENISS: National Social Information Center
 CONAPROHM: National Council for the Protection of the Honduran Migrant
 DINAF: Directorate for Infancy, Childhood, Adolescence, and the Family
 DIPPDV: General Directorate for the attention and protection of internally displaced persons
 FUNDAHRSE: Honduran Foundation for Corporate Social Responsibility
 INFOP: National Institute for Professional Training
 INM: National Migration Institute
 IP: Property Institute
 MAHE: Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Mechanism Handbook
 SEDH: Secretariat of Human Rights
 SENPRENDE: Services for Entrepreneurs in Honduras
 SRECI: Secretariat of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
 UMAR: Municipal Units for Attention to Returnees
 WVH: World Vision Honduras

Mexico

CECATI: Training Center for Industrial Work
 CJM: Women's Justice Centers
 CNBV: National Banking and Stock Commission
 CNDH: National Human Rights Commission
 CNPSS: National Commission on Social Protection in Health
 COMAR: Mexican Commission for Refugees
 CONAPRED: National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination
 CONAVIM: National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Violence against Women
 CURP: Unique Population Registry Code (Clave Única de Registro de Población)
 DIF: National System for the Integral Development of the Family
 INDESOL: National Institute for Social Development
 INEA: National Institute for Adult Education
 INM: National Migration Institute
 PFPNNA: Federal Attorney for the Protection of Children and Adolescents
 PNDH: National Human Rights Program
 PPNA: Attorney for the Protection of Children and Adolescents
 RENAPO: National Registry of Population
 SE-SIPINNA: Executive Secretariat of the National System for the Protection of Children and Adolescents
 SEGOB: Interior Secretariat
 SEP: Public Education Secretariat
 SEYT: Ministry of the Economy and Labor
 SNE: National Employment Service
 STPS: Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
 UPM: Migration Policy Unit
 UPMRIP: Migration Policy Unit, registration and Identity

Panama

CONARE: National Commission for Refugees
 INAMU: National Women's Institute
 MIDES: Ministry of Social Development
 MINSAL: Ministry of Health
 ONPAR: National Office for the Attention to Refugees
 SENAFRONT: National Border Service
 SENNIAF: National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family
 SNM: National Migration Service

FOREWORD

For the Government of Guatemala, it has been a privilege to represent the countries of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) as 2021 Pro-tempore Presidency. We assumed the Presidency at a crucial time for the region and the rest of the world as we were still dealing with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increasingly severe impact of climate change and natural disasters. These situations have exacerbated the vulnerability of the populations in our region, creating higher levels of instability in communities affected by violence and contributing to increased levels of displacement in MIRPS States.

Building up from the notable contributions of the previous presidencies of El Salvador and Mexico, the Pro-Tempore Presidency put forward an ambitious regional plan of action that has led to progress in the area of protection and the generation of solutions for displaced persons. Investments in the responsiveness of States to ensure effective admission to refugee/asylum systems, the granting of asylum and the provision of protection that includes health care, education, social services and access to labor market opportunities, reflect our shared commitment to a comprehensive and collaborative regional policy that addresses our common challenges.

Reflecting on the desire to facilitate substantive dialogue among MIRPS States and strengthen strategic partnerships for protection and durable solutions, four MIRPS technical working groups were established and provided a valuable forum for the mutual exchange of experiences and good practices. Complementing the specific consultations on internal displacement that were held in 2020, States engaged in constructive exchanges on the admission, reception and processing of persons in need of international protection, local governance, and labor market access and vocational training. The working group sessions provided an invaluable opportunity to receive contributions from members of the MIRPS Support Platform, UN agencies and experts in the field, as well as inputs from the MIRPS Technical Secretariat.

This dialogue between States has positively contributed to ensuring the participation of the government institutions that constitute the National Technical Teams. In addition, the participation of local authorities in the Working Group on Local Governance reaffirmed their fundamental role as frontline actors, responsible for identifying and responding to the needs of displaced persons. In particular, their willingness to adopt new approaches and tools to safeguard rights and effectively integrate displaced populations into local contingency and development plans is in accordance with the Cities of Solidarity Initiative implemented in the MIRPS States.

This year has been very important for the creation of new alliances and support for the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework. Guatemala worked with Costa Rica and Spain to organize the first “Solidarity Event for Forcibly Displaced Persons and the Communities that Host Them in Central America and Mexico”, which attracted broad participation from a variety of actors involved in this area. Engagement between the MIRPS and the business community has been essential, as dialogue spaces have been established with this important sector and concrete contributions have been made to the generation of lasting solutions for the populations served by MIRPS.

Guatemala’s Presidency concludes with the firm conviction that through a joint commitment to regional solidarity and the promotion of international burden-sharing and responsibility-sharing, MIRPS will continue to support joint operational responses to protection and solutions in collaboration with an increasingly diverse range of partners.

The IV MIRPS Annual Report documents the significant progress made in 2021 through the implementation of national action plans and related commitments in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Guatemala. As outgoing Pro-tempore Presidency, Guatemala expresses its gratitude to the MIRPS States and other partners for their collaboration throughout the year and wishes them success with mutual efforts that support protection and solutions for forcibly displaced persons in the year ahead.

MIRPS Pro-tempore Presidency, Guatemala

GUATEMALA'S PRO TEMPORE PRESIDENCY 2021

The 2021 Guatemalan Pro-tempore Presidency of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) was characterized for its work in the global positioning and consolidation for coordinated responses to common challenges. They opened spaces for the exchange of useful experiences and lessons learned between the MIRPS countries. Guatemala fostered the generation of integral solutions based on the principle of responsibility-sharing, as follows:

MEETINGS OF THE MIRPS PRO TEMPORE PRESIDENCY AND THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT (UNHCR-OAS)

The MIRPS Pro-Tempore Presidency and the Technical Secretariat have maintained constant and fluid communication, which has allowed coordination and follow-up at the MIRPS country level. Also, work meetings are held prior to the Plenary Meetings with the National Technical Teams of the MIRPS Countries.

VIRTUAL PLENARY MEETINGS OF THE MIRPS TECHNICAL TEAMS

The General Director of Consular and Migratory Affairs, Ambassador Arabella Woolfolk de Chinchilla, in her capacity as MIRPS Pro Tempore Presidency, has chaired four virtual plenary meetings during 2021 with the National Technical Teams of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama; representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Panama; the Organization of American States, as well as the Permanent Missions of the OAS of the MIRPS Countries in Washington, New York and Geneva, Switzerland.

- On March 3, 2021, the I Virtual Plenary Meeting 2021 was held in order to approve the 2021 Work Plan and begin the implementation of the related activities.
- On May 13, 2021, the II Plenary Meeting was held. This meeting focused on the presentation of the

progress on the implementation of the MIRPS Work Plan and to share information with the National Technical Teams about the “Solidarity Event”. The event was held in June and was organized by the Government of Spain as Presidency of the MIRPS Support Platform in coordination with the MIRPS Pro Tempore Presidency MIRPS (Guatemala) and the Pro-Tempore Presidency of SICA (Costa Rica) within the framework of the LIV Ordinary Meeting of Heads of State and of Government of the Member Countries of SICA.

- On June 24, 2021, the III Plenary Meeting was held. The meeting focused on the Presentation of the progress of the implementation of the MIRPS Work Plan and the National Action plans of the MIRPS countries; as well as sharing with the Technical Teams the outcomes of the “Solidarity Event”, organized by the Government of Spain as Presidency of the MIRPS Support Platform. Likewise, the MIRPS member countries shared their progress and experiences derived from the roundtables that were held in coordination with the Technical Secretariat.
- On August 26, 2021, the IV Plenary Meeting was held, with the presentation of the Working Group on Labour Market Access and Professional Training, led by Costa Rica. Likewise, during the plenary, progress in the implementation of the MIRPS Pro Tempore Presidency Work Plan was highlighted, providing an update on the Working Groups on Internal Displacement and Local Governance.
- On November 8, the V Virtual Plenary Meeting was held. Ambassador Arabella Woolfolk, General Director of Consular and Migratory Affairs, in her capacity as Pro Tempore Presidency of the MIRPS, chaired the IV Virtual Plenary Meeting 2021 with the National Technical Teams and officials of the Government of Canada, in their capacity as Chair of the Support Platform. The activity involved the presentation of Canada’s Work Plan, the reports of the Working Groups on Internal Displacement and Local Governance, as well as the review of the proposed agenda for the IV MIRPS Annual Meeting.

2021 WORKING GROUPS

In line with the implementation of the 2021 Work Plan, the meetings of the Work Groups began in April. The **working groups** sessions were realized through a round table methodology:

- **“Working Group on Reception, Processing and Admission of Persons with Protection Needs”**: As a follow-up to establishment of this Working Group during the management of the Pro Tempore Presidency of El Salvador, the sessions were organized with the MIRPS Support Platform and coordinated by the Spanish Agency Central FOR Humanitarian Cooperation in Central America, the Caribbean and Asia (AECID). This working group addressed the following topics: “Shelter Management”, “Identification of International Protection Needs, Case Management and Biometric Registry”, “Use of Differentiated Modalities in Processing of Cases” and “Management of Large Flows of Refugees”.
- **“Working Group on Internal Displacement”** made up of El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico. Currently, **Mexico leads this working group** which is a space for the exchange of good practices on: prevention of internal displacement; protection and assistance to displaced persons during their displacement; provision and facilitation of humanitarian assistance; and durable solutions for internally displaced persons.
- **“Working Group on Local Governance”** made up of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama. This working group has served to share good practices

between local governments to create policies for the inclusion of refugees within the host communities.

- **“Working Group on Access to the Labour Market and Professional Training”**. The member countries shared experiences and good practices regarding to the recognition of qualifications and work profiles, as well as entrepreneurship and business development for refugees, returned migrants and people with special protection needs to facilitate and support the process of labour insertion within host communities.

WEBINAR ON THE LOCAL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

On October 26, 2021, officials from the General Directorate of Consular and Migration Affairs participated in the Webinar on Local Governance, organized by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UNHCR, held within the framework of the Pro Tempore Presidency. During the opening session, Ms. Fabiola Mazariegos, Director of Migration Affairs, reiterated the commitment of the Government of Guatemala and expressed her gratitude for the valuable contributions of the agencies of the United Nations System to promote inclusive communities, and to facilitate the integration of refugees, asylum seekers, displaced persons and returnees in need of international protection in host communities.



WITHIN THE OAS FRAMEWORK

The Organization of American States (OAS), as part of the Technical Secretariat, is working to promote the rapprochement of the private sector, to sensitize this sector to support refugees and those in need of international protection.

- Ambassador Pedro Brolo Vila, Minister of Foreign Affairs, presented the 2021 Work Plan at the Meeting of the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) within the framework of the Organization of American States (OAS).
- Vice Minister Eduardo Hernández, on behalf of the MIRPS Pro Tempore Presidency, participated in the “Meeting of the Private Sector on the Opportunities and Positive Effects of the Inclusion of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons with Protection Needs in the Local Economies of Central America and Mexico”. During this activity, he participated, together with business leaders, who shared their successful experiences and best practices in the development of favorable conditions for the economic inclusion of refugees, engaging the private sector and host governments.
- On September 27 and 28, 2021, officials from the General Directorate of Consular and Migratory Affairs (DIGRACOM) participated in the “Inter-American Course on the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, Migrants, Asylum Seekers, Refugees, Returnees in Need of Protection, Stateless Persons, and Victims of Trafficking in the Americas”,

organized by the Organization of American States (OAS). The objective of this course was to increase the technical capacity of public officials.

- On September 28, Ambassador Arabella Woolfolk, as Chair of the MIRPS Pro Tempore Presidency, participated in the “Panel: Regional mechanisms to response to migration and forced displacement”, in which she reiterated the importance to ensure the well-being of people with international protection needs.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE DIALOGUE

“Practical tools for labour market inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers, displaced persons and returnees in the economies of Central America and Mexico”.

On October 27, 2021, officials of the General Directorate of Consular and Migratory Affairs, as the Pro Tempore Presidency, participated in the Public-Private Dialogue “Practical tools for labour market inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers, displaced persons and returnees in the economies of Central America and Mexico” organized by the OAS and UNHCR.

During the opening session, Ms. Fabiola Mazariegos, Director of Migration Affairs, thanked the United Nations Agencies for their valuable contribution in generating spaces for the development of good practices that serve as tools to guide public and private actors to encourage inclusion and access to the labour market for refugees,



asylum seekers, displaced persons, and returnees in Central America and Mexico. The dialogue involved the participation of members of the public and private sectors, including the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Costa Rica, the Tent Foundation, the Center for Action for Corporate Social Responsibility in Guatemala, Telus International, based in Guatemala and Western Union of Costa Rica.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER REGIONAL MECHANISMS

On May 28, 2021, Ambassador Eduardo Hernández, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, as Pro Tempore Presidency, participated virtually in the plenary meeting of the “VII International Technical Meeting on Human Mobility of Venezuelans in the region - Lima Chapter”, in the Regional Bodies segment.

On July 30, Ambassador Arabella Woolfolk participated as MIRPS Pro Tempore Presidency in the “Regional Consultation Group on Migration” within the framework of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), with the aim of making a rapprochement between both mechanisms and join efforts in favor of people with protection needs.

In September, Ambassador Arabella Woolfolk participated as the MIRPS Pro Tempore Presidency in the II Regional Consultation on the implementation of the Brazil Plan of Action (PAB for its acronym in Spanish) with the aim of evaluating the implementation of the Plan of Action at the regional level during the period 2018-2020. Ambassador Woolfolk also participated in a meeting with the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Regional Conference on Migration (CRM or its acronym in Spanish) together with the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid (COMAR) and the National Commission for Refugees of Guatemala (CONARE) with the aim of exchanging good practices in protection.

“SOLIDARITY EVENT” OF THE SUPPORT PLATFORM

The “Solidarity Event” was organized by the Government of Spain as the Presidency of the MIRPS Support Platform, in coordination with Guatemala as the Pro Tempore Presidency of the MIRPS and Costa Rica as the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Central American Integration System (SICA). On June 10, 2021, the Solidarity Event was held in San José, Costa Rica, with the participation and interventions of representatives of the organizing countries, MIRPS countries, members of the Support Platform, as well as other countries, international organizations, multilateral financial organizations and civil society.

The event led to the mobilization of global resources to support the development of projects in support of communities and people in need of international protection. As a result, more than \$ 110 million was raised as international cooperation from Spain, the European Union, the United States of America, Ireland, Switzerland, as well as private sector partners and foundations. The Government of Spain, in its capacity as Presidency of the Support Platform, also stated that it would contribute \$ 7.6 million dollars, for the period 2021-2022 as direct support to the national action plans of the MIRPS countries in support of displaced persons with protection needs.

MEETING WITH THE CANADIAN EMBASSY ACCREDITED IN GUATEMALA, UNHCR IN GUATEMALA AND THE OAS

On August 20, 2021, Vice Minister Eduardo Hernández chaired the working meeting with Her Excellency Ambassador Rita Rudiatis-Renaud, in her capacity as Presidency of the MIRPS Support Platform.

During the meeting, progress made by Guatemala as the Pro Tempore Presidency of the MIRPS, in accordance with the 2021 Regional Work Plan, was presented, as well as the achievements of the National Technical Team of Guatemala in the implementation of its National Action Plan.

The Pro Tempore Presidency reiterated its commitment to continue working in the search for solutions in support of refugees, asylum seekers, particularly for the most vulnerable; including women, girls, children and adolescents in need of international protection.

CANADA EVENT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ITS PRESIDENCY OF THE MIRPS SUPPORT

On October 18, officials from the General Directorate of Consular and Migratory Affairs (DIGRACOM) as Pro Tempore Presidency participated in the Technical Meeting with the Government of Canada in their capacity as Presidency of the Support Platform.

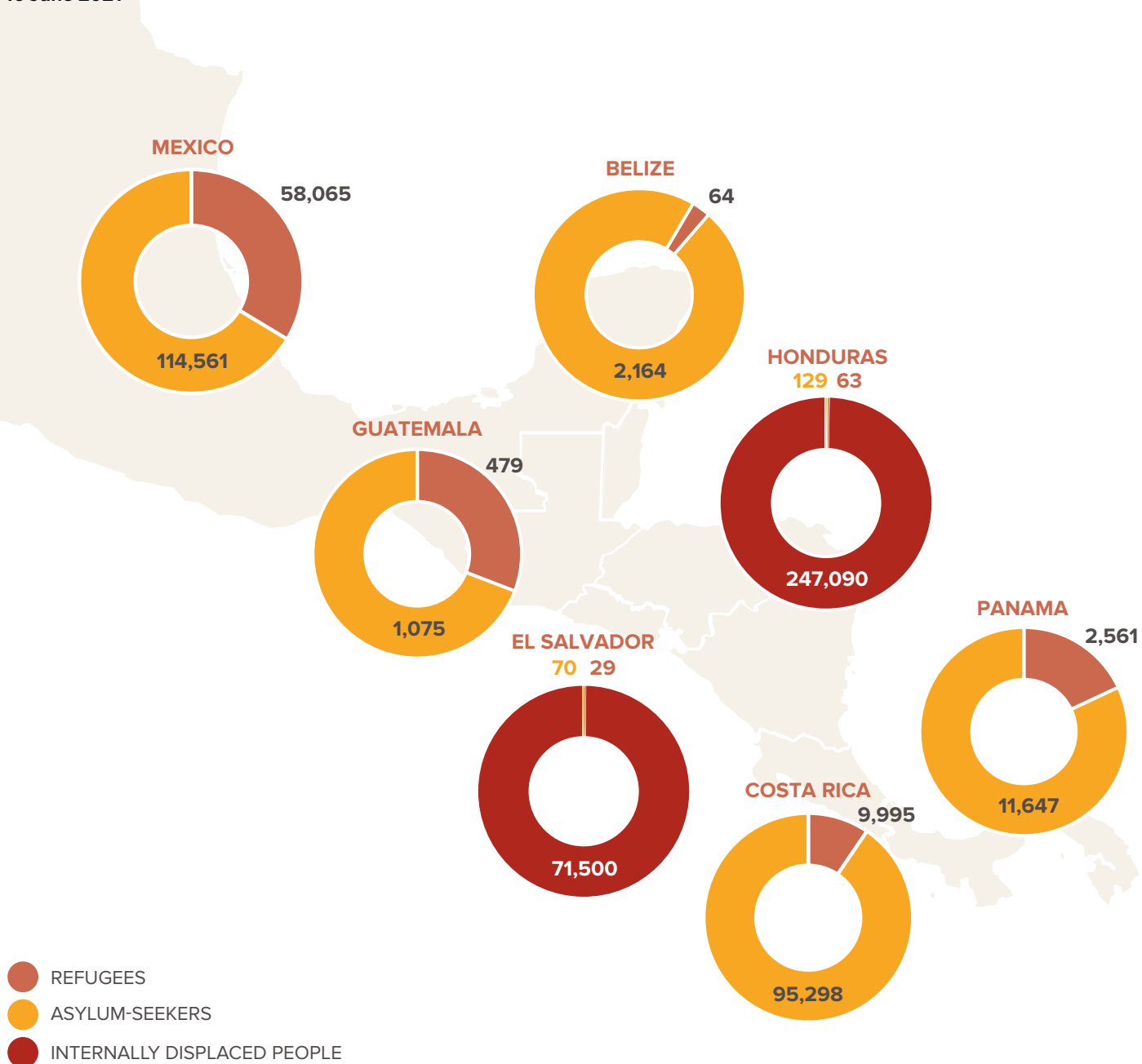
Participants in the event included the Government of Canada as Presidency of the Support Platform, member countries of the Support Platform, as well as the member countries of the MIRPS. The main objective of the event was to share the actions and strategies developed by the Government of Canada to strengthen the national plans of the member countries of the MIRPS in support of refugees, asylum seekers, displaced persons and returnees with protection needs.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

By the end of the year, more than one million people had been displaced in and from countries in Central America and Mexico. Social conflict, gender-based violence, climate change and the impact of COVID-19 are emerging factors that have exacerbated underlying vulnerabilities and accelerated mobility. Natural disasters, floods and droughts disproportionately affect people living in poverty and insecure environments.

Internally displaced people, asylum-seekers and refugees in MIRPS countries

To June 2021



Source: National governments, UNHCR

13,165 Refugees recognized

Between January and June 2021

	TOTAL RECOGNIZED	% TOTAL CASES DECIDED
Mexico	12,629	77
Costa Rica	414	23
Honduras	53	98
Belize	36	60
Guatemala	29	57
El Salvador	4	100
Panama	0	0

Source: National governments, UNHCR

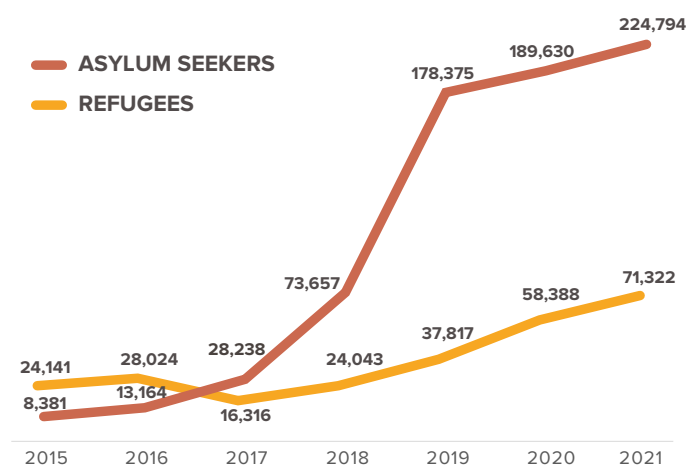
An increase in the cross-border movement of people has been observed as a result of the gradual easing of COVID-19 restrictions. This situation has presented a challenge for receiving and transit countries, which have strengthened their capacities to respond to this trend. While movements in large and loosely organized groups have continued, the majority of people moving through the northern region do so individually, in small groups and increasingly in family units.

At the beginning of 2021, there were 1.06 million people on the move in and from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala and 121,000 people who had fled Nicaragua.

In addition, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Panama had received 262,107 Venezuelan refugees by the end of 2020. While Mexico has remained an important transit country for people moving north, it has increasingly become a destination country, processing 51,200 new asylum applications during the first half of the year, particularly from Haitian nationals. Registration has helped mitigate protection and exploitation risks and supported access to basic services and the labor market for these populations. Overall, the number of asylum seekers and refugees in Central America has risen by 70% since the year before the adoption of MIRPS, increasing from 41,851 to 296,863 in 2021.

Refugees and Asylum-seekers

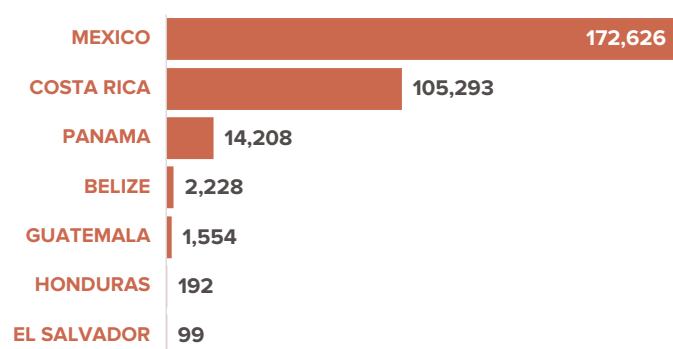
To June 2021*



*Source: National governments, UNHCR

296,200 Refugees and Asylum-seekers

To June 2021 in MIRPS countries

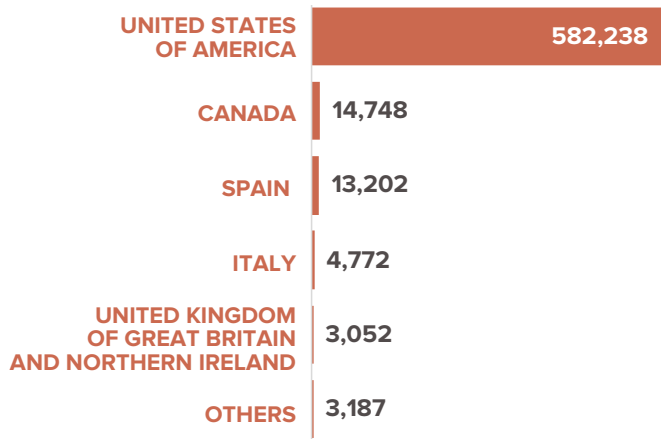


Source: National governments, UNHCR

The region has shown the increase and complexity of mixed and successive movements of people that has further deepened the needs and challenges of human mobility. Mixed movements to and from the region involve people traveling together, generally irregularly, using the same routes and means of transportation, but for different reasons. People traveling as part of mixed movements in the region have different needs and profiles and can include refugee applicants, refugees, stateless persons, trafficked persons, unaccompanied or separated minors, and migrants. The number of people entering the region from January to September 2021 through the Darien Gap, the zone that separates Panama and Colombia, reached 91,000 people with a peak average of more than 800 new arrivals per day in August. These movements generally consisted of Haitians, Venezuelans, Cubans and people from Asian and African countries.

621,199 Displaced persons from MIRPS countries in the world

(out of MIRPS countries)



Source: National governments, UNHCR

Among those moving north from Central America, a large proportion reported that they left their homes after suffering violence and persecution. Causes of displacement include sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, cases of domestic abuse that were exacerbated by lockdowns imposed during the pandemic, forced recruitment and violence against LGBTIQ+ people.

While the drivers of displacement have continued, forcing increasing numbers of people to flee, States have prioritized actions to improve access to protection. This has involved efforts to strengthen governments' presence in communities affected by violence and that are at high risk of displacement as part of municipal and local planning. This approach has also resulted in close collaborations with civil society to strengthen mechanisms for the identification and referral of persons in need of protection. In addition, the important role of national human rights institutions and institutions that tackle sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) has been noted.

It is necessary to provide education and health services, temporary protection alternatives (internal relocation) and, when possible, solutions that involve the expansion of sustainable local integration programmes. In Mexico, an internal relocation programme was implemented in partnership with regional governments, civil society organisations and the private sector. The main objective of the programme is to support the socio-economic integration of refugees and asylum-seekers. Around 20,000 people benefited from the initiative during the year. El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have faced a high number of deportees being returned to their home countries. This demonstrates the prevailing circular nature of human mobility in the region and the limited capacity of

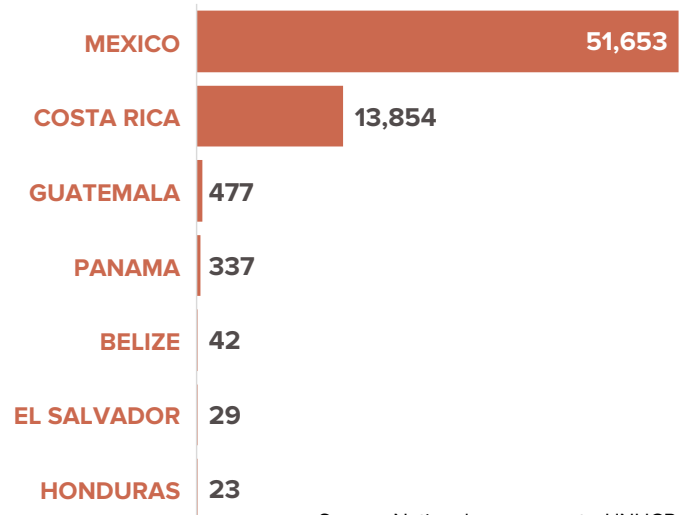
these States to provide comprehensive and sustainable reintegration.

While proactive steps were taken at the end of last year to consider expanding labour and social protection programmes, initial coordination actions, pre-planning and financial costing did not generate substantive dialogue with international partners. As a result, there is a significant need for scaled international development cooperation and funding to support investments in at-risk communities that mitigate the drivers of displacement and facilitate the inclusion and reintegration of displaced persons, providing a more comprehensive response to the migration cycle. MIRPS States have continued to explore opportunities to align the MIRPS with each country's humanitarian response plans and broader regional development and integration initiatives, including the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Comprehensive Development Plan. This will ensure that the situation of forced displacement in these countries sufficiently informs planned responses.

The scale of the forced displacement crisis, exacerbated by the pandemic and climate change, and the projection of a potential increase in the number of displaced people seeking safety and protection, require the expansion of an ambitious humanitarian and development agenda to address the underlying causes of displacement, provide safer protection alternatives for those fleeing and restore a sense of security in communities overwhelmed by violence. In the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees, international burden-sharing is essential to ensure the comprehensive implementation of the MIRPS National Action Plans in the seven participating States. In addition, resettlement and complementary pathways should be expanded, including family reunification, education and labour mobility schemes.

66,415 New asylum applications

January to June 2021



Source: National governments, UNHCR



MIRPS

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THE MIRPS IN THE COUNTRIES



BELIZE

BELIZE

NATIONAL CONTEXT

The current government administration inherited in Nov 2020 a stagnant asylum system and has generated, within the first 100 days after installation, plans to revitalize critical components of that system, while putting in temporary measures to control the spread of the coronavirus. Government continues to abide by a 2020 court ruling related to deactivating the term limitation for registering asylum claims and prepares to embark, with the technical support from Canada and UNHCR, on an effort to systematically reduce the backlog of asylum cases backlog over the next 20 months and strengthening the refugee status determination process from start to finish.

All persons, remaining in the national territory, including documented and undocumented asylum seekers, have been included in the national vaccination programme that has been gaining momentum since its start in the last

week of March 2021. By the end of September, almost 50% of the population has received at least one dose of the vaccine. The proportion of refugees and asylum-seekers with at least one dose of the vaccine, is estimated to reflect at least the national figure of 50%.

Furthermore, Government has made a first step in making changes to the existing policy of the immigration authorities in view of asylum-seekers' access to national labor markets. Anticipating, in the near future, improved time frames for the processing of asylum claim, which on its turn will reduce the pressures on the provision of temporary humanitarian assistance, the Government of Belize has enabled that adult asylum-seekers, who have been enrolled in the asylum procedure and who have been recommended by the Refugee Eligibility Committee for recognition as refugee, be employed in the bananas, citrus and sugar cane industries.

INDICATORS

Data for selected indicators (January - June 30, 2021)



309

Of registered asylum-seekers and refugees supported with technical, vocational, language, employability, and/or entrepreneurship training.



97%

Primary

57%

Secondary

<10%

Tertiary

Percentage of girls, boys and adolescents of concern enrolled in the formal national education system.



2,164

Of PoC with legally recognized identity documents or credentials.

*Source: Profiling of POC in Belize: 2018 – 2019, UNHCR



PROTECTION

In the second year of the coronavirus pandemic, there have been limitations in the implementation of several national commitments. Although several attempts were made, including hybrid in-person and virtual event formats, the training events as a follow-up to the development of Standard Operating Procedures for Identification and referral of refugees, were almost permanently placed on hold. Furthermore, as the Covid-19 infections remained at increased levels, stringent protection measures were put into effect, highlighting constitutional government's obligations to safeguard the national public health situation. The Covid-related special measures as well as the new regime in relation to the court-mandated deactivation of the 14-days term limitation for asylum claim registration require that alterations and/ or addendums will be made to the 2020 SOPs. In the course of 2022, institutional socialization of the revised SOPs will be undertaken.

Government has fully embraced the opportunity to strengthen the technical-institutional capacities to achieve that its asylum system is efficient and fair. Apart from ongoing efforts to increase specific skills and techniques of the current staff contingent of the Refugees Department, a larger-scope 2-year project is envisioned to provide technical assistance, human resources and operational capacity to improve the national asylum system and the underpinning domestic legislative and policy framework.



JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

While strengthening the asylum system continues to be the principal concern, strengthening access to livelihoods and training opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers remains a priority to enable greater self-sufficiency and local integration, while individuals await the outcome on their asylum request, Inter-ministerial collaboration at the political level has resulted in May 2021 in a pilot-like initiative of issuing temporary work permits for selected registered asylum-seekers in the primary agriculture sector. Meanwhile, planning has remained with a focus on the delivery of support initiatives for livelihood security with the national small business development institutions and civil society organizations. As standard procedure, this includes English language training, referrals to formal technical vocational training and/or basic business training options as well as access to modest business seed capital.



SOCIAL PROTECTION

Belize continues to provide low-cost basic healthcare to refugees and asylum seekers, who have benefited from the health care response to the pandemic, including vaccination, on an equal basis with nationals. Primary education remains tuition free for all children, regardless of their migratory status. Access to secondary education remains in need of continued attention as the earlier enrollment bottlenecks have been aggravated by Covid-19 related movement restrictions and the closure of schools, forcing many to convert to online education modalities, requiring -for nationals and refugees alike-major investments in ICT systems and infrastructure. In the context of the pandemic, it remains a national priority to institute measures to keep those, who are already enrolled, in school and to open avenues of learning for those who have dropped out or are at risk of doing so. Lastly, progress has been made with providing access for asylum-seekers to government's Institutes for Technical Vocational Education and Training- ITVET, one of government's key instruments for the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and also the most preferred post-primary education pathways of asylum-seekers. Further investments were made in this sector to ensure that services are responsive to labor market needs and support the development of key sectors within the economy.

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

As Belize is a small state, the governance system for national development is based on centralized planning, decision-making and delivery of public goods and services. To that extent, local government entities are operating with limited authority and resources for operating within the normative and operational domains of the state. In the delivery of services, a limited number are outsourced to the private sector or civil society. The whole-of-society concept is foremost at work in the planning phases through consultations.

Government's strategic partners in the implementation of the MIRPS National Action Plan are: (i) Private Sector (i.a. pilot project temporary work permits); (ii) Civil Society Organizations, including the Belize Network of NGOs-BNN; (iii) the UN System, especially in the normative and operational planning of development cooperation; (iv) the International Financing Institutions, providing financing avenues for development priorities; and (v) the international community for targeted enabling financing avenues and political dialogue.



BELIZE VACCINATES REFUGEES AND LOCALS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. FOR PEOPLE FORCED TO FLEE LIKE LORENA, GETTING THE COVID-19 JAB MEANS SHE CAN CONTINUE REBUILDING HER LIFE AFTER ESCAPING VIOLENCE IN HONDURAS.

When authorities announced COVID-19 vaccines would be available to all regardless of immigration status or nationality, 42-year-old Lorena Mejia could not have been more excited. By mid-May she was among the first group of refugees who received vaccines in this Central American country.

“I feel safe now because I can move around more freely and securely, and I feel safer for my daughter as well,” said Lorena. After waiting for her turn, Lorena received her appointment and only needed to present an ID from her country of origin to register herself.

There are over 2,500 asylum seekers and refugees living in Belize. Like Lorena, they are all eligible to get the vaccine. “I thought that I could not get the vaccine because I was not a Belizean, and I felt so good when I learned that I qualified,” she said.

For Lorena, being vaccinated has benefits beyond being protected from complications from the coronavirus. It means she can now continue caring for

her family on her own – something she could not do back home in Honduras.

Forced to stay in an abusive relationship with a gang member in Honduras, Lorena spent nearly a decade fearing for her and her young daughter’s life. One day, Lorena came home from work and her eight-year-old ran to her, telling her that her father’s friends were trying to rape her. “I knew we needed to leave.” Lorena and her daughter ran for their lives and started over in Belize twelve years ago.

Since arriving in Belize, Lorena has been selling food to make ends meet. But when the COVID-19 pandemic struck the country, her income quickly dwindled. Through a project supported by HUMANA People to People, she is currently learning to sew at a community resource center where refugees and community residents can expand their skills that they can use to start a business and sustain themselves and their families.

“I had never learned how to sew. I’m not only learning the skill, but it is also giving me peace and hope,” she says. Lorena hopes that one day she can start her own business.



COSTA RICA



COSTA RICA

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Changes and recent developments in the legal and institutional framework on displacement and international protection

The COVID-19 pandemic altered the dynamics of displacement and made it even more difficult for millions of people to seek international protection outside their home countries. Across the globe, states implemented measures to limit human mobility to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus. However, situations of forced displacement continue and people continue to cross international borders.

In 2020, and through Executive Decree 42227-MP-S, the national government of Costa Rica adopted health measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19, which included the closure of international borders and the temporary closure of public institutions. In accordance with these provisions, the Directorate-General for Migration and Aliens (DGME) issued a series of administrative measures in relation to the provision of its services. This included, inter alia, the temporary suspension of services to the public, a reduction in the number of staff in offices, the transition of procedures online and the opening of border posts to receive asylum claims.

Even though these changes were designed to facilitate people's access to the Costa Rican refugee system in the context of the pandemic, they created additional challenges for asylum claimants. These included using virtual tools and platforms, a lack of clarity regarding the changes to procedures and increased delays due to the cancellation of appointments and their subsequent rescheduling.

Following a review of health measures by the national government, in 2021 the DGME updated provisions for the processing of asylum claims and gradually resumed the provision of services in its central offices. The DGME enabled the scheduling of appointments by telephone in accordance with biosecurity protocols, avoiding the risk of COVID-19 infection. During this period, the DGME has made additional efforts to simplify procedures for issuing identity documents and work permits to asylum claimants. In July, and in accordance with circular DG-14-07-2021, the DGME authorized the issuance of a provisional asylum seeker identity card, which is valid for two years and allows the claimant to remain in the country.

Based on this directive, the DGME began issuing identification cards to asylum claimants that authorizes them to freely work three months from the date of issue of the card. This measure means that asylum claimants don't have to go in person to the DGME offices in the capital

to submit an additional claim for a work permit three months after the formalization of their asylum claim. At the same time, this avoids the risk of COVID-19 contagion due to overcrowding, provides increased clarity to asylum claimants about the validity of their work permit, supports their search for employment and contributes to the integration and social inclusion processes.

Public policy initiatives to address displacement

In accordance with its international commitments, Costa Rica designed the National Comprehensive Framework for Responding to Refugees (MINARE) to guide the country's response to forcibly displaced persons. The MINARE enshrines the commitment from the Costa Rican state to protect the human rights of the refugee population and respect for the right to seek asylum based on international instruments of which the country is a signatory. MINARE facilitates a platform for inter-institutional coordination that facilitates discussion and decision-making on refugee issues as well as the implementation of actions to suitably respond to the needs of this population.

In 2021, Costa Rica reaffirmed its commitment to protect refugees and asylum-seekers. On the occasion of the visit of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to Costa Rica last February, and in accordance with the agreements adopted in the framework of the Global Compact on Refugees, the President of the Republic reaffirmed the importance of MINARE for the response and protection of asylum-seekers and refugees. In order to strengthen MINARE and taking into account the additional challenges posed by COVID-19, the National Technical Team (ETN) initiated an analysis of the country's commitments and their relevance in the current context of displacement. As a result of this exercise, adjustments were made to existing agreements and the institutional support base for MINARE was broadened. This involved inviting the participation of other institutions that are essential for the response to this population, including the Ministry of Public Education, the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, the Costa Rican Social Security Fund and the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce.

In February of this year, the Temporary Special Category of Complementary Protection for Venezuelan, Nicaraguan and Cuban persons whose refugee claims have been denied was adopted, which had been approved in 2020 through Resolution No. DJUR-0190-12-2020-JM. This measure guarantees legal right to stay in Costa Rican territory for people of these nationalities who have not been granted asylum, who are in a situation of vulnerability and cannot return to their country of origin. This measure

allows them to work, engage with national institutions and access government services and programs. This facilitates their integration into Costa Rican society and enables them to contribute to the social, economic and cultural development of their host communities and the country as a whole.

INDICATORS

Report data for selected indicators as of June 30th



4 years

Average processing time (in years) from the submission of an asylum claim to the issuing of a decision.



2,175

Number of asylum claimants or refugees living in poverty or extreme poverty.



13,843

Number of asylum claimants with legally recognized identity documents or credentials.



1,050

Number of child or adolescent asylum claimants or refugees living in poverty and extreme poverty who benefit from a study grant.



2,6%

Proportion of asylum claimants as a percentage of the national population.



5,293

Number of asylum claimants who have a work permit.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

In 2021, the challenges for the country increased, with the worsening of the epidemiological situation and a complicated economic context. The national government made a significant cut to the budget in order to protect its fiscal situation. This had implications for the institutions that serve the refugee and asylum-seeking population. Despite this, and in accordance with its international commitments, Costa Rica has never interrupted its unrestricted compliance with the principle of non-refoulement. On the contrary, Costa Rica has continued its efforts to meet the needs of this population, taking important steps in the areas of international protection, social protection and access to employment and livelihoods, which are detailed below.



PROTECTION

The national government adopted fundamental measures to strengthen the Costa Rican refugee system and ensure international protection for vulnerable persons.

As mentioned above, in February the Special Temporary Category of Complementary Protection for Venezuelans, Nicaraguans and Cubans whose refugee claims have been rejected came into force, providing a series of benefits for people of those nationalities who are in a vulnerable situation in the country. According to estimates by the DGME's Refugee Unit, this measure could benefit 26,863 persons. In February, 1,526 people were approved for this category.

In June 2021, a new commitment was included in the national chapter of Costa Rica related to the streamlining of procedures for the determination of refugee status. The DGME's Refugee Unit, with technical support from UNHCR, is designing a project to digitalize the system for the registration of asylum claims and determination of refugee status. This initiative seeks to address the limitations of the DGME's computer systems, with the purpose of improving the quality of the service and connectivity between the entities involved in the process of determining refugee status. During the January-March 2021 period, 48,455 cases were digitized. The project is currently awaiting the resolution of some technical aspects.

Since the opening of international land borders, the number of asylum claims has been steadily increasing,



rising from 1485 in May to 5379 in July this year. This is more than the number of asylum claims received in July 2018, which was three months after the beginning of the social and political crisis in Nicaragua. The pressure on the Costa Rican refugee system has intensified, not just because of the increase in the demand from people seeking asylum, but also because of the decrease in economic resources available to public institutions. This problem specifically affects the DGME, as it needs to expand its institutional capacity to meet this demand, open regional offices and strengthen its presence at the borders. The cut in resources allocated to the DGME in the most recent national budget imposes significant challenges. This situation will affect the agency's procedural burden and the excessive time taken to resolve cases due to its limited human resources.

PROTOCOL THAT ESTABLISHES ZONES FOR THE PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE TO POSSIBLE NEW ASYLUM CLAIMANTS/ STRANDED MIGRANTS WHO ARE PART OF THE MIGRATORY FLOWS IN TRANSIT THROUGH THE COUNTRY IN THE FRAMEWORK OF COVID-19

This consists of a model to provide protection and assistance to meet the basic needs of persons in need of international protection who enter or transit through the country during the pandemic and are in a situation of vulnerability. This mechanism is part of the Ministry of the Interior and Police's Emergency Plan and is implemented by the DGME. Its objective is to strengthen the response to refugee seekers and migrants through inter-agency coordination, in order to contain the pandemic and promote a more suitable approach to this population. The project involved the establishment of physical spaces for the reception, triage and care of persons who have recently entered the country and are not domiciled in Costa Rica. The implementation of this mechanism began in 2020 and increased the institutional management capacity in Costa Rica for the care of people in need of international protection during the pandemic. This was achieved through the articulation of local, national and international efforts to provide safer conditions for people on the move and the communities that welcome them.

PROJECT TO DIGITIZE THE REFUGEE PROCESS

The sustained increase in asylum claims has had an impact, not just on the procedural burden and waiting times for case management at the DGME's Refugee Unit, but also on the digital systems for registering and processing asylum claims. The digital systems currently used by the DGME were not designed to meet the current level of demand for asylum and are focused on the needs of other categories of migrants. The current digital system also do facilitate connectivity between the DGME's Refugee Unit and the Migration Administrative Tribunal, which is the second entity in the refugee status recognition process. These limitations directly affect the quality of service (longer waiting times, duplication of procedures due to lack of adequate information) and communication gaps between agencies. It also makes it difficult to generate statistical data for decision-making processes. In response to this situation, the DGME has received technical and financial support from UNHCR to develop a project that will improve the system by incorporating technology at all stages of the asylum claim procedure. This system will enable the Refugee Unit to reduce the number of asylum claims that have yet to be formalized and/or are waiting for eligibility interviews.



SOCIAL PROTECTION

In the social sector, the national government is continuing its efforts to ensure the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in the country's social protection and development systems. The Joint Institute for Social Assistance (IMAS) is the lead agency for the formulation and implementation of national policy on social and human development and guarantees access for asylum-seekers and refugees and offers them the same access to the programs and services that are available to nationals. Through the claim of the Social Information Form (FIS), IMAS identifies the socio-economic and demographic data of the asylum claimant and refugee population, which enables it to characterize and classify members of this population living in poverty and extreme poverty.

During 2021, the Costa Rican government guaranteed access to public health services for people in need of international protection through the agreement signed between the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS), which is the entity responsible for the administration of public health services in the country, and UNHCR, providing public health services to 10,000 people living in

situations of economic vulnerability and with chronic health conditions. In August, the Ministry of Health and the CCSS published a Procedures Manual for the implementation of vaccinations at the national level. This manual included the refugee population and asylum claimants who are at different stages of the process, from a wide range of age groups and are experiencing different types of risk situations in accordance with the criteria established by the health authorities.

The social institutions that respond to the different segments of the refugee and asylum-seeking population have made progress with the design of assistance protocols to meet the specific and differentiated needs of this population. In the case of minors in need of international protection, the National Children's Trust (PANI) has allocated funds for the provision of DNA tests to refugee or asylum claimants families when there are doubts about the filial link to prevent trafficking and other activities that are detrimental to minors, thus safeguarding the best interests of minors. The Institute on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (IAFA) is developing a protocol for the provision of care to asylum-seekers and refugees with problematic use of psychotropic substances. This will coordinate the work of different regional bodies when providing assistance to this population. The protocol establishes a clear mechanism for referring cases to enable the provision of appropriate and comprehensive care.



JOB AND LIVELIHOODS

In 2021, the country's economic activity experienced a rebound from the sharp fall it suffered in 2020. This gradual recovery process for the national economy responds to an increase in production and international demand, as well as the relaxation of lockdown measures in the country. The increase in economic activity has been accompanied by a drop in the unemployment rate in Costa Rica. At the start of 2021, the unemployment rate was 19.1%, however, the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC) reported that this indicator had reached a rate of 16.4% by August. Despite this reduction, the rate is considered high and represents a total of 402,000 unemployed people in the country.

The economic impact of the pandemic disproportionately affects those who are in a situation of vulnerability, including the refugee and asylum-seeker population. Taking into account this situation, the national government adopted measures to facilitate the incorporation of this population into the labor market through free and public access to the employment programs operated by the General Directorate of Employment, which is part of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS). This directorate registers 100% of the job claims submitted by refugees and asylum-seekers who have a work permit.



To improve the employability of the refugee population, the MTSS implemented the Empléate (Get Employed) program, which is a public-private initiative led by the MTSS that promotes employment through certified technical training and agreements with companies in areas with high demand for labor. In 2021, 69 people were part of the program. From this group, 21 received technical or technological training, 30 were trained in the provision of care or assistance to people and 18 received training in languages.

INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS AIMED AT BUSINESSES TO PROMOTE NATIONAL LEGISLATION, IDENTITY DOCUMENTS, HIRING AND EMPLOYABILITY OF ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

The MTSS is working with UNHCR to implement an information and awareness-raising campaign aimed at the business sector. This campaign aims to reduce misinformation regarding the documentation required for the hiring of refugees or asylum-seekers, national legislation that protect this population and their labor rights. In 2020, the DGME implemented modifications to processes related to identity documents and work permits for asylum claimants that included the automatic extension of expired identity documents and work permits. These changes were intended to avoid the need for people to visit the DGME offices in person, mitigating the risk of Covid-19 infection and supporting the search for employment opportunities for this population. Although these new guidelines were socialized as public information through the DGME's institutional media, they did not have an effective reach with Costa Rican employers, creating barriers to employment opportunities for refugee claimants with expired documentation. In July 2021, the DGME implemented a new modification to the provisional identity document for asylum claimants, which includes the date from which the work permit becomes valid on the card. This date is calculated as three months after the date on which the asylum claim is formalized. This measure makes it necessary to inform companies about the identity documents that are valid for this population. There is a need to implement a communication campaign that closes the information gap in the business sector and prevents possible cases of discrimination and xenophobia against asylum claimants and refugees in terms of access to job opportunities.

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Four multinationals team up in Costa Rica for refugee inclusion

In the framework of the visit to Costa Rica by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, in February 2021, an event was held with the private sector in which the multinationals Western Union, Boston Scientific, Accenture and ManpowerGroup agreed to implement activities that favor refugees.

This first meeting led to a series of meetings between management executives at these four companies to assess the possibility of working together. In May, a working group was established that met weekly to discuss the objectives of joint collaboration. The common goal became clearer in June, when the companies made a pledge in favor of more inclusive corporate policies at the UNHCR Solidarity Event.

“The offices of Western Union, Accenture, Boston Scientific and ManpowerGroup in Costa Rica will carry out an affirmative action that involves forming a coalition of companies with the aim of promoting more inclusive business policies, promote the hiring of refugees and asylum claimants in Costa Rica and combat racial discrimination and xenophobia internally,” reads the statement from the four companies.

“This group of companies will design a set of tools that will be used as a guide for selection and recruitment processes for displaced people. Communication channels will also be generated to highlight the potential that this population has to generate value for companies, share best practices within our organizations and create spaces so that more organizations can join this initiative”, it continues.

The tools they have developed are used as a guide for hiring refugees and asylum claimants and are designed for human resources staff. The tool also include a guide to best business practices for inclusion, which identifies positive examples that can be replicated to include this population in the labor market.

The guides were presented in early October at a meeting convened through CINDE, Costa Rica's foreign investment agency. Due to the successful results, this group of companies was invited to participate in the event “Public-private dialogue: Practical tools for the inclusion of internally displaced persons, asylum claimants, refugees and returnees in labor markets in Central America and Mexico”, which was convened by the Technical Secretariat of MIRPS. This event had the purpose of sharing Costa Rica's experience in developing these guidelines for recruitment and labor inclusion.



ACCESS TO PUBLIC HEALTH: HOPE AMIDST CHALLENGES

Ernesto is a young Nicaraguan agricultural engineer. In 2018 he participated in the protests in Nicaragua, so he had to leave the country and come to Costa Rica. In 2020, his wife suffered heart problems, combined with COVID-19, and was treated in a hospital operated by the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS). Sadly, she passed away.*

Ernesto is currently living in a small house where he does cleaning work. "I already wish I could go back to Nicaragua," Ernesto says. "I used to work there as an engineer, and I have my mother and an adopted son there".

Due to his chronic health problems, particularly asthma and the after-effects of COVID-19, Ernesto was admitted to the UNHCR-CCSS agreement, through which more than 9,000 refugees and asylum claimants can access public health care in Costa Rica. Through the agreement he has been able to obtain medical treatment for his chronic condition, which has occurred in addition to all of the adversities he has faced.*

The UNHCR-CCSS agreement supports Costa Rica's tradition of respecting people's rights, as well as the CCSS' founding principles of universality, solidarity and equal access to health care. The initiative fills a protection gap for asylum claimants who do not have the required documentation to access insurance schemes or who do not have formal employment.

It also help people like Ernesto to manage their chronic conditions under control so they can earn an income. The UNHCR-CCSS agreement was the precursor to one of the country's commitments at the Global Forum on Refugees, specifically the commitment to promote health insurance coverage for 100% of refugees and asylum claimants referred by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security. In addition to Ernesto*, the goal is that by the end of 2021 there will be 10,000 refugee and asylum claimants covered by this agreement who will be able to access public health services in Costa Rica.*

**Name changed for protection reasons.*



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EL SALVADOR



EL SALVADOR

NATIONAL CONTEXT

El Salvador continues to make progress with its comprehensive approach to forced displacement and the protection of refugees. The different multidimensional challenges that COVID-19 continues to cause highlight the need to generate innovative responses and strengthen social services that have a strong focus on assisting the most vulnerable populations.

This has required a process of institutional transformation to provide, installing the necessary structure and capacity to respond to the current challenges posed by forced displacement for both victims and host communities. A decision was made to create the Vice-Ministry of Diaspora and Human Mobility within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRREE). This unit is responsible for coordinating and articulating public policies, processes and actions in the areas of humanitarian management, reintegration and development for populations on the move.

Another change in El Salvador's institutional framework has been the creation of the Directorate for the Protection of Rights in the Education System within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MINEDUCYT). The strategic priority of this unit is to ensure that public and private educational services for children, adolescents and young people are respectful of their rights and are provided in an inclusive, equitable and quality manner.

In terms of regulatory frameworks, El Salvador's draft constitutional reforms include fundamental changes to the areas of international protection, nationality and statelessness. The Commission for the Determination of Refugee Status (CODER) is currently analyzing a draft bill on granting international protection in El Salvador. This will update and strengthen the existing legal framework to ensure increased application of international instruments on human rights and international refugee law.

INDICATORS

Data for selected indicators (January - June 30, 2021)



38

Number of people with possible international protection needs received in border areas or transit areas.



365 days*

Average processing time (in days) from registration to first decision on the granting of asylum.

*Estimated time period, which may vary depending on the particularities of the case and external factors.



20 documents issued*

Number of persons with international protection needs who possess legally recognized identity documents or credentials.

*These documents can be of temporary or definitive validity.



227

Number of victims of forced internal displacement who have received immediate assistance services.



127 people

Number of people benefiting from specific support programs for returnees or deportees.



61

Number of cases of forced internal displacement that have filed a complaint with the competent authority regarding the victimizing event.



336 young people

Number of refugees and internally displaced persons who have accessed job placement programs.



1,799 students *

Children and adolescents at risk or victims of forced internal displacement who are enrolled in the regular and flexible education modalities of the National Education System.

* 111 students in the Accelerated Education I and II program in the public education system and 1,688 student returnees and internally displaced persons who received assistance (sufficiency tests and other modalities).



PROTECTION

In the second year of implementing the MIRPS in El Salvador, the violence prevention strategy has been strengthened through the opening of more Urban Centers for Wellbeing and Opportunities (CUBO) in municipalities with the highest rates of socioeconomic vulnerability. Young people can access technical training and comprehensive leadership workshops at these centers.

The Ministry of the Interior and Territorial Development (MIGOBDT) is currently formulating the National Policy and Plan for Territorial Planning and Development, both of which are key instruments for coordinating responses to disasters at departmental and municipal levels. The policy and plan will be incorporated as guidelines for providing immediate assistance to people who have been forcibly displaced by natural disasters and have specific protection needs. MIGOBDT operates 19 mobile emergency shelter spaces.

A comprehensive care route has been designed for returnees with protection needs. This will be implemented by the 11 institutions¹ that have a presence in the Migrant Care Management Office (GAMI). A protection module is being designed within the Unified Migration Registry to systematize and refer cases based on their specific needs with a focus on age, gender and diversity. Computer systems have been improved and well qualified staff have been hired to work on this initiative.

Information material was prepared on the asylum process in El Salvador. This was disseminated and socialized through visits and information sessions at the country's four busiest border crossing points (La Hachadura, Las Chinamas, El Poy, El Amatillo and the international airport).





JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

The promotion of initiatives aimed at generating lasting solutions and economic inclusion for forcibly displaced persons or those at risk of being displaced has been a priority area of work this year. Through the “My First Job” program implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTPS), 336 young people have gained their first work experience through an apprenticeship contract. Actions have been promoted to strengthen the employment insertion roundtable for the LGTBIQ+ population, which consists of approximately 13 civil society organizations and the Ministry of Culture.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP) is implementing the “Livelihoods” program, which aims to facilitate the reintegration of forcibly displaced persons who have been relocated to safe areas or are returning to their community of origin. Inter-institutional and intersectoral self-employment initiatives are coordinated based on previous work experience, technical and vocational training and the provision of seed capital to strengthen the sustainability of the installed capacity of operating small businesses.

The Vice-Ministry of Diaspora and Human Mobility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has opened 11 units for returnees, which aim to provide comprehensive assistance in the areas of health, technical, basic, secondary and higher education, with specific accompaniment through their economic reintegration process by presenting them with different initiatives for entrepreneurship and employment, located in the departments of San Salvador, San Miguel, Usulután, Santa Ana, Chalatenango, Morazán and La Libertad. Based on vulnerability profiles, specialist areas have been established to work with women returnees.

MY FIRST JOB

My First Job is a program promoted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTPS) in partnership with the private sector and with support from UNHCR and World Vision El Salvador. My First Job is a youth employment strategy using an apprenticeship contract.

The young people who are the beneficiary population of this program are internally displaced persons or at risk of displacement. The program targets specifically vulnerable profiles such as female heads of household, single women and

members of the LGTBIQ+ population who do not have any work experience that would allow them to access formal employment. It is expected that at the end of the apprenticeship the young people will be better positioned within the labor market to obtain formal employment.

Although this initiative has been implemented for the first time in El Salvador this year, it has demonstrated how the private sector can work with host communities to benefit from the knowledge, skills and experiences of forcibly displaced persons. This is reflected in the positive results obtained in this short period, with the placement of 336 people from 14 departments in 109 companies.



EDUCATION

Emergencies don't just create challenges; they also provide a space for overcoming them and developing new capacities. For MINEDUCYT, COVID-19 became an opportunity to diversify teaching-learning processes through the implementation of different educational modalities: : 1) Regular and 2) Flexible (accelerated, distance, blended, evening and virtual baccalaureate), using a range of technological platforms including online television, radio and other communication channels. As a result of this work, 25,098 students and 18,968 teachers have been equipped with technological tools² to facilitate these platforms and minimize the digital divide.

In this context, the accelerated education curricular modality has been consolidated as a strategy that responds to the educational needs of the student population who, for reasons of forced displacement, migration or refugee status, have abandoned their studies. This modality continues to be strengthened through the printing of 263 copies of educational materials, as well as the adaptation of infrastructure in five educational centers that have high rates of children and adolescents in situations of social vulnerability.

A guide on supporting children, adolescents, young people and teachers affected by this phenomenon is being updated, along with an operations manual. The provide guidelines and practical tools to guide technical and teaching staff in the public education system to manage cases of students who have been forcibly displaced or are returnees.

1. The institutions that are members of the GAMI include: the Ministry of Labour and Social Security; the Local Office for Assistance to Victims and Forced Migration; the National Registry of Natural Persons; the Salvadoran Institute for Women's Development; the Office of the Attorney-General of the Republic; the National Council for Children and Adolescents; the Salvadoran Institute for the Comprehensive Development of Children and Adolescents; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Ministry of Health; the National Civil Police; and the Directorate-General for Migration and Foreigners.

2. Ministry of Education Science and Technology, June 2020 - May 2021 Annual Report

In addition to MINEDUCYT's 14 physical and virtual school counselling centers, cases of students at risk of forced displacement who require closer psychosocial assistance have been monitored in six prioritized schools. A total of 300 cases have been identified and are receiving the support they need.

SCHOOL COUNSELING

The School Counseling Program has been operated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology since 2019 to prevent, protect, and restore the rights of girls, boys, from a perspective of gender equality and human rights. This program works to generate safe school environments and strengthening psychosocial skills, contributing to the personal development of students.

School counsellors provide dynamic and safe spaces, offering psycho-emotional care and legal advice to students, teachers and their families whose rights have been violated through different forms of violence. There are currently 14 school counselling centers in operation in the departmental capitals, which all have sufficient private physical spaces for this work. Counselling is also offered through telephone assistance and a digital platform, which made it possible to continue this program despite the health crisis caused by COVID-19.

Web: <https://consejeriaescolar.com.sv/index.php>

Three units for the comprehensive care for victims of violence, located in the departments of San Salvador, La Unión and Usulután, are being adapted and equipped. A person has been hired to provide psychological support for each equipped unit, applying existing protocols to expedite the provision of care³.

An awareness-raising and information campaign is being implemented with multidisciplinary health personnel regarding the right of access to public health care for forcibly displaced persons, to be disseminated nationwide in the health system.

USER-FRIENDLY VERSION OF THE TECHNICAL GUIDELINES FOR COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE FOR PERSONS AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE

In 2019, and as part of establishing general procedures for addressing all forms of violence in all Comprehensive and Integrated Health Networks (RIIS), MINSAL designed its Technical Guidelines for Comprehensive Health Care for Persons Affected by Violence so that RIIS staff can detect signs and symptoms in affected persons in a timely manner and provide services for the restoration of their physical and psychosocial health.

These guidelines include a clear health assistance and referral route for women, children and adolescents who are victims of violence in its different forms, as well as for the LGTBQI+ and forcibly displaced populations and other vulnerable groups. It is particularly important to design a user-friendly version of these guidelines that will facilitate their dissemination and implementation at the different levels of the RIIS. This process is expected to be completed at the end of the current year.



HEALTH

El Salvador has continued to guarantee universal access to health care for the entire population living in the country, highlighting a best practice of including the asylum claimant, refugees and foreigner populations into the COVID-19 national vaccination scheme. While the pandemic has posed a challenge in maintaining a balance between pandemic and non-pandemic care, it has provided an opportunity to strengthen infrastructure, human talent, and technology.

This improvement in all health services has included efforts to make progress with MIRPS commitments in this area. A virtual training module on forced internal displacement is currently being developed for health staff to strengthen their knowledge of care, case registration, and referrals for this population. A user-friendly version of the "Technical guidelines for comprehensive health care for people affected by violence" was produced in 2019.

3. <http://asp.salud.gob.sv/regulacion/pdf/lineamientos/lineamientosatencionintegralpersonasafectadasviolencia2019.pdf>



“MY FIRST JOB” SUPPORTS THE DREAMS OF A FORCIBLY DISPLACED YOUNG PERSON

Carmen is a young woman who enjoys playing soccer in her free time. She excitedly says that she has been interested in the sport since she was a little girl. “We always played soccer with my friends during recess,” she recalls. Carmen currently works as a salesperson at a sporting goods store in San Salvador and, among many other things, has learnt about the different types of soccer balls that exist. She had this opportunity thanks to the “My First Job” programmed of the Ministry of Labor of El Salvador with the support of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and World Vision.*

Through this job placement initiative, hundreds of young people affected by forced internal displacement and those at risk in El Salvador have gained their first work experience through a UNHCR-supported apprenticeship in different areas - including customer service and sales. “They helped us to design a better CV and how to manage a job interview,” says Carmen. People who participate in the program start their relationship with the companies as apprentices. In this scheme, young people without work experience, with the support of the Ministry of Labor, sign agreements with companies to receive vocational training in a trade and receive a salary from the government.

Re-establishing the livelihoods of this population helps them mitigate the impact of forced displacement. At the end of the apprenticeship program, participants may be hired by the same company with a formal employment contract that includes all legal benefits. Employment positively contributes to their new lives in host communities. In Carmen’s case, she and her family fled from a rural area in El Salvador to the country’s capital because of threats. “We never had any problems. Suddenly, people came and told us to move,” she says.

Carmen plans to restart her university studies next year and continue her professional development. “I’m going to work and finish my degree and see what I can do to achieve my dreams,” she says. “I dream of having economic stability and helping my family”.

The “My First Job” program is an initiative implemented by the Government of El Salvador that supports the employability of forcibly displaced and at-risk youth. The program contributes to the Comprehensive Framework for Protection and Solutions (MIRPS) and the regional implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees in Central America.

**Name changed for protection reasons*



GUATEMALA



GUATEMALA

NATIONAL CONTEXT

As part of its mandate, the Guatemalan Migration Institute (IGM) coordinated a number of meetings with the National Registry of Persons (RENAP) to comply with the provisions of Article 53 of the Migration Code, Decree No. 44-2016 of the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala, concerning the right of asylum claimants and refugees to obtain an identity document. This document facilitates access to public education and health services and also permits them to obtain formal employment in accordance with current legislation. Following coordination between the two institutions, on 19 July 2021 the RENAP Board of Directors Decision No. 31-2021, "Regulations for the issuance of the special personal identity document" was published, establishing the rules and regulations for its issuing.

Currently, asylum claimants and refugees who have been recognized by the State of Guatemala since 2002 can visit the different RENAP offices throughout the country and obtain this document free of charge. The existence of this document contributes to their local integration, allowing them the possibility to access formal employment, even though some services such as health and education were already available to this population. The identity document will also allow them to generate business initiatives, once RENAP socializes this initiative and it is accepted by State institutions. This document will contribute to improving their living conditions, given that it is issued by the national authority responsible for personal documentation.

INDICATORS

(January to September 2021)



9

Number of migration officials who received training on international protection



70

Number of people assisted through Turi-integra (integration of refugees and asylum claimants into the labor market)



38

Number of work permits granted to refugees



1,643

Number of staff from the national migration authority, National Civil Police, the Army, legal bodies and security officers at borders and airports who received training on international protection.



287

Number of work permits granted to asylum claimants



19%

Proportion of refugees in formal employment



PROTECTION

In 2021, the IGM strengthened the response capacity of its Department for the Recognition of Refugee Status (DRER) through a contribution from UNHCR, which included human and technological resources to improve the National Migration Authority's (AMN) process of analyzing and resolving asylum claims.

Public officials from the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, the National Civil Police, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Education, municipalities, the National Refugee Commission and IGM received training on international protection. The main challenge with continuing to strengthen the refugee system in Guatemala is the regionalization of the DRER in areas that have the highest number of people on the move.

The IGM has led efforts with the Judicial Body (OJ) and the Office of the Attorney General of the Nation (PGN) to establish comprehensive assistance mechanism for cases of unaccompanied children and adolescents in need of international protection. This has also involved work with the corresponding unit of the OJ for the issuing of criminal records. Coordination between IGM and MINTRAB has also been strengthened in order to facilitate the issuing of work permits.

The Social Welfare Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic (SBS) received support from UNHCR to replicate its Casa Joven (Youth House) program model. The SBS will open an office in Amatitlán, Guatemala in November. This model will provide assistance and a comprehensive approach in the areas of psychology, social work and education to children, adolescents and parents on the move.

GUATEMALA IS COMMITTED TO STRENGTHENING THE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PROTECTION SYSTEM

The SBS has designed and implemented a "Model of Care for Unaccompanied or Separated Children and Adolescents on the Move, Asylum Claimants, Refugees and Others in Need of International Protection integrated into Temporary Foster Families". This protocol has been in force since June 2021 and will provide specialized and differentiated care, with a specific focus on offering alternatives to institutionalization. Psychologists and social workers will be hired and the model will be implemented in the departments of Huehuetenango, San Marcos, Chiquimula, Petén and Alta Verapaz.

GUATEMALA IMPLEMENTS MOBILE UNITS FOR THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE, EXPLOITATION AND TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (UNIVET)

The Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons (SVET) launched Project UNIVET in August 2021 to strengthen the institutional protection response at the local level for children, women, members of the LGBTIQ+ community and people in need of international protection who are in transit. The objective of the project is to disseminate information for the prevention of VET crimes and gender-based violence, as well as to refer cases to existing services in the country. The project consists of 6 mobile units that provide services in 17 departments across the country. A total of 9,000 people and 300 public officials received training from the project in 2021. The project will contribute to the provision of prevention and counseling services in communities and on transit routes and aims to build trust with this population so that they file criminal complaints.



HEALTH

In the context of COVID-19, Guatemala has implemented a range of actions to address the pandemic through the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance (MSPAS). In coordination with the IGM, a vaccination post was established at the Centre for Returnees, located in the Guatemalan Air Force facilities. Asylum claimants and refugees in some of the country's departments have been fully vaccinated.

MSPAS has coordinated actions with SBS to carry out COVID-19 tests on unaccompanied children in transit and returning Guatemalans. Responding to an increase in the number of positive cases and the overloading of the hospital network, the National Emergency Law for the Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic (Decree No. 11-2021 of the Congress of the Republic) was recently approved, which approves the vaccination of children between the ages of 12 and 17.

Within the framework of the Cities of Solidarity program, health services have been strengthened at the point of entry to the department of Petén (southeast) through the donation of biosecurity and prevention materials for COVID-19 and ecofilters. This action has benefited six health centers and the Poptún District Hospital. This contribution from UNHCR aims to improve health services for migrants in transit, asylum claimants, refugees and the community. One of the major challenges facing the health system is the implementation of the new COVID-19 law and the strengthening of primary health care networks and hospitals.



JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

The Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MINTRAB) and UNHCR signed a Letter of Understanding with the aim of contributing to the livelihoods and economic integration of asylum claimants, refugees, returnees in need of protection and people with high levels of social vulnerability. This has strengthened joint actions to promote employment opportunities, education and vocational training for this population. In addition, MINTRAB's capacities were improved for the provision of assistance and the issuing of work permits for asylum claimants and refugees. This has the goal of creating formal employment opportunities and promoting communication and awareness-raising campaigns in different sectors, strengthening social and labor inclusion and access to national employment services.

The National Youth Council (CONJUVE), with support from UNHCR, organized a motivational workshop aimed at promoting employability and entrepreneurship with the participation of 30 young people. This facilitated the inclusion of youth refugee and asylum claimants CONJUVE's Emprendi2 initiative. Despite the progress made, there are still challenges to improve the livelihoods of asylum claimants and refugees as they do not meet requirements to obtain a formal job in the private sector, including access to financial services, social security and others.



GUATEMALA PROVIDES TECHNICAL TRAINING FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS TO TRANSFORM THEIR LIVES

With the objective of developing the technical and operational skills of young people and adults so that they can obtain employment, start their own business and update and certify their knowledge to facilitate their inclusion in the labor market, the Technical Institute for Training and Productivity (INTECAP) has received support from UNHCR, to implement a pilot program with 04 components:

1. Strengthening of the virtual training program.
2. Access to a range of certified vocational training programs for asylum claimants and refugees.
3. Strengthening of the training center in the department of Izabal to facilitate the inclusion of asylum claimants, refugees and the host community in available programs and services.
4. Identification and systematization of barriers that impede access for asylum claimants and refugees to the services provided by INTECAP.

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Within the framework of the Cities of Solidarity program, in February 2021 the Municipality of Flores in Petén opened the first Multisectoral Centre for Information, Guidance and Humanitarian Assistance at the Santa Elena bus terminal with support from UNHCR and the Departmental Bureau of Migration and Protection (MDMP) that coordinates the operation of the center. The MDMP consists of the Ministry of Interior (MINGOB), National Civil Police (PNC), the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office (PDH), IGM, PGN, SVET, SBS, Guatemalan Red Cross, Casa del Migrante and Refugio de la Niñez. This Centre provides information, legal and psychosocial advice and humanitarian assistance to persons in need of international protection, refugees, migrants and the community. Between its launch in February and August 2021, 1,800 persons in transit have been assisted at the center, of whom 124 were identified as being in need of international protection.





ASYLUM CLAIMANTS FROM VENEZUELA

When Rafael and Luisa* arrived with their eldest son Carlos* from Venezuela to seek asylum in Guatemala, they started a business selling handmade sweets from their country.*

Carlos prepares and packages the coconut, guava, chocolate and banana sweets while his parents are responsible for business administration, taking orders and home delivery of products.

As the business grew, and with the purpose of reaching more customers, the family was able to purchase a vehicle. However, one of them needed a Guatemalan driver's license, which they were unable to obtain because they were waiting for their asylum claim to be resolved.

Recognizing their dilemma, and in the framework of MIRPS actions, the Traffic Department of the National Civil Police of the Ministry of the Interior modified and simplified some of the requirements so that refugees and asylum claimants could obtain or renew their driver's license.

This change means that people like Rafael and Luisa have been able to access a driver's license, which allows them to sell their sweets to more people through bakeries, neighborhood stores and other small businesses. Their dream is to be able to sell their products in other areas of the country.



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HONDURAS

NATIONAL CHAPTER

Within the framework of the MIRPS, the State of Honduras has as its primary objective the establishment of a legal framework and the consolidation of a system that prevents displacement, protects and assists returnees, refugees, asylum claimants and internally displaced persons in need of protection and moves towards durable solutions.

In response to forced internal displacement, the draft Law for the Prevention, Care and Protection of Persons Internally Displaced by Violence was passed in 2021 by the Justice and Human Rights Commission of the National Congress. It is hoped that the bill will soon be debated and approved by the legislature. Progress is also being made with the design of the Single Registry System for Internally Displaced Persons in Honduras, which will act as a public tool for the management of humanitarian assistance and protection of displaced persons in Honduras. Its design will be completed in 2021 and its pilot and implementation is scheduled for 2022.

In response to the conditions faced by asylum claimants and refugees, in 2021 the National Institute for Migration (INM) implemented specialized units within the Human Rights and Migrant Services Management to enable the standardization of registration, referral and refugee status determination processes. The INM increased the capacity to provide access to the asylum system through registration/interview brigades. This also made it possible to provide comprehensive services such as health care, coordination for educational integration and humanitarian assistance.

Work is currently being carried out to design and implement a system for the registration and admission of asylum claims and is part of the goal to digitize the asylum system. This will optimize the management, follow-up and referral of cases. It is important to note that 62 cases have been analyzed and received a decision through the Internal Commission for the Review, Analysis and Ruling on Asylum Claims. Work also continues to promote integration and improve the provision of humanitarian assistance to this population.

INDICATORS

October 1, 2020- September 30, 2021



56
asylum claimants

62
refugees

Identified, assisted and referred to services in border/transit areas



40
Number of suspected abandoned assets identified through community exercises.



166
returnee migrants received livelihood support

Number of returnees/deportees in prioritized municipalities accessing programs to support their safety and dignity



2,404
Number of displaced persons or persons at risk of displacement assisted by State protection mechanisms.

(Municipality SPS = 124, SEDH = 148, CONADEH = 2,132)



PROTECTION

INM has activated a scheme for identifying persons in need of international protection through a vulnerability assessment tool. This tool is being used in the Irregular Migrants Assistance Centers (CAMI) at the national level and in some migration offices. Instructions for border officials and a manual for determining refugee status are being prepared.

Between July and the date of writing this report, the Choluteca office, the interior control office in Trojes and the Toncontín CAMI have been refurbished and equipped to provide better care for asylum claimants, refugees and migrants in transit with international protection needs. Between January and September, nine registration brigades were established in the north, south and west of the country to monitor asylum claimants and refugees. The Refugee Commission held 10 meetings during this period.

The pilot project for emergency humanitarian assistance to assist persons internally displaced by violence will be implemented by the Secretariat for Human Rights (SEDH), starting in 2021. This action complements the pilot project for the provision of assistance to returned migrants in need of protection that began in 2019. Both initiatives seek that Honduran institutions acquire the experience and knowledge necessary for the design and implementation of a national care program based on evidence and previous experience. With the systematization of this pilot project, it will be possible to establish an estimate of costs per case and the identification of administrative and regulatory gaps, gaps in access to rights and inter-institutional coordination needs, risk profiles and other key elements that allow the State of Honduras to assume primary responsibility for assisting victims of internal displacement in the country. The goal for 2021 is 50 cases from both returnee and internally displaced population. To date, 38 cases have been attended and protection measures have been provided to 17 cases.

In 2021, the Property Institute (IP) and the SEDH, with support from UNHCR, have been working on a proposed mechanism for the protection of property that has been dispossessed or abandoned due to violence. This mechanism ensures legal protection of the property of persons displaced by violence and who have received assistance from the SEDH. The mechanism is activated when a protection request is submitted to the SEDH's Directorate for the Protection of Persons Internally Displaced by Violence (DIPPDIV). A property identification form is filled out, followed by a cross-check of information using the IP's Unified Registry of Property Ownership. A ruling is made regarding the case and finally the property is registered in the IP's information system. In 2021, this tool will continue to be reviewed, socialized and, followed by a pilot program in 2022.

The Directorate for Children, Adolescents and the Family (DINAF), the government entity responsible for guaranteeing the rights of children and adolescents, has received support from UNHCR and World Vision Honduras (WVH) to implement a range of activities that strengthen the Protection Antenna Program in its offices in Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, Olancho and Ocotepeque. This has been achieved through the recruitment of psychologists, legal officers, protection officers and social workers, ensuring the presence of DINAF on the country's border and in high-risk communities. In addition, child protection offices were built and equipped on the borders of Corinto and Agua Caliente to guarantee minimum care and protection standards for children and adolescents who are at risk and in transit between two countries.

COMMUNITY ART AS A STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION OF AT-RISK COMMUNITIES IN SAN PEDRO SULA

Community Art is a community intervention strategy led by the Municipality of San Pedro Sula and implemented in collaboration with Children International and UNHCR. This strategy seeks to promote social inclusion and participation in communities affected by violence and forced displacement, while also strengthening protective environments for young people in high-risk urban communities in the city of San Pedro Sula. The initiative promotes art and culture to facilitate engagement and dialogue between local authorities, organizations, community leaders and young people.

The objective of this initiative is to strengthen protective environments for young people in the community through the implementation of artistic and cultural initiatives which will: support the development of soft skills and technical competencies in different artistic disciplines; strengthen dialogue between local authorities and communities through innovative and participatory methodologies that promote social inclusion; and strengthen social cohesion, dialogue spaces and participation in the community using the art and culture as a means of expression.

The implementation of the strategy has consolidated a multidisciplinary team with diverse experience in the areas of protection, community strengthening, promotion and cultural management, psychosocial intervention, artistic disciplines, coordination and program management. This design has meant that the intervention is enriched and comprehensive. The strategy has helped establish an atmosphere of trust for the intervention and generated support for community leaders who constantly accompany actions in the field.

A study was carried out on the risk situation faced by children and adolescents who are victims of forced internal displacement due to violence and other situations. The results of this study strengthen arguments regarding the need for reform of the law that requires authorization for minors requiring international protection measures to leave the country. An assessment of this situation was conducted and a proposal was designed for a mechanism to allow access to international protection measures for displaced children and adolescents and those at risk of displacement.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation updated the Protocol on Assistance to Honduran Returnees in Need of Protection. The Ministry also provided training on the topics of “International Protection and Internal Displacement” for staff of the Directorate-General for the Protection of Honduran Migrants, Returnee Migrant Assistance Centers and Municipal Returnee Assistance Units. This initiative had the purpose of strengthening the capacities of public officials who directly deal with Honduran migrants abroad and returnee migrants in the country.

IMPLEMENTING PROTECTION MECHANISMS FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN HONDURAS USING A DIFFERENTIATED APPROACH

The Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Mechanism Manual (MAHE) consists of an institutional humanitarian assistance mechanism implemented by the SEDH, which manages individual cases of displaced persons and persons at risk of displacement. Through MAHE, different forms of assistance are provided during a period of three months to cover the needs of temporary accommodation, internal relocation, food, early childhood supplies, supplies for school-age children, cash support to pay for the cost of transport and communication. Its implementation began in 2019, through a pilot project that attended to 27 cases within the framework of a project financed with funds from the National Council for the Protection of Honduran Migrants (CONAPROHM). This project focused on providing assistance to returnees with protection needs. MAHE is currently being implemented with funding from UNHCR, which has enabled SEDH to broaden its experience and knowledge of humanitarian assistance. The project has responded to 38 cases to date, 17 of which have protection measures.

The MAHE pilot experience is one of the first steps towards the establishment of a protection system for this population. However, the lack of a current legal framework continues to be one of the main challenges for the coordination of the different state

protection mechanisms, in accordance with the competencies of each institution. There is a need to ensure that protection responses and durable solutions for displaced persons and persons at risk are comprehensive, timely and inclusive.



JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

As part of its monitoring and follow-up of the refugee and asylum claimant population, INM has made progress by carrying out brigades so that eligibility officers can visit remote areas and provide humanitarian assistance (hygiene and biosecurity kits, clothing, snacks and other items to meet immediate needs).

From January to September, nine brigades were held in the north, south and west of the country, delivering 287 hygiene kits, 337 adult clothing kits and 74 food baskets to asylum claimants, refugees and migrants in transit with international protection needs. Through field visits and ongoing communication with asylum claimants and refugees, an initial mapping of livelihood management needs was carried out, identifying 40 cases distributed across 10 family units whose livelihoods had been affected and needed to be reactivated.

The SEDH, as part of pilot projects for internally displaced persons and returned migrants with protection needs, has designed tools and mechanisms for the provision of seed capital. These have included initial eligibility assessments, business plans, evaluations of the use and investment of funds and others. It is expected that at least 16 cases will benefit from resources and technical support focused on the establishment of productive initiatives, which will promote the generation of livelihoods. This also contributes to the systematization of the pilot experience and the design of a National Strategy for Durable Solutions.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, through the project “I start a business in my homeland” and in partnership with SENPRENDE, benefited 151 returned Honduran migrants in August through the delivery of seed capital to start their own business. This program is designed to strengthen migrants’ employability profile, allowing them to adapt to the labor market and generating employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for this population. Working with the National Vocational Training Institute (INFOP) and through financial support from GIZ, a workshop titled “Start your own business” was held for 25 young people. The aim of this workshop was to provide Honduran migrant returnees-entrepreneurs with the tools they need to design a business plan and identify business opportunities. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) supported 15 migrant returnees in the area of livelihoods.



EDUCATION

Between April and the time of writing this report, INM has held meetings to coordinate the integration of refugee and asylum claimant children and adolescents into the national education system. A total of 45 children have been identified. The Southern Zone Liaison Office has begun the process of integrating seven children and adolescents who are already enrolled in the national education system and their integration is being monitored.

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

With the objective of promoting inter-institutional alliances at central and local levels to facilitate access for displaced persons and persons at risk of displacement to vocational training programs and income-generating initiatives, the National Vocational Training Institute (INFOP) signed a Letter of Understanding with UNHCR to strengthen the training programs it provides by making them more inclusive. This Letter of Understanding will also help guarantee access for the displaced population

and persons in need of international protection through the design of a certified course on soft skills using a protection approach that will be delivered in both virtual and face-to-face modalities. This course responds to the needs identified through consultations at community and private sector levels. In addition, INFOP, with support from UNHCR, has initiated a certification process for technical training at the Community Youth Centre in the Rivera Hernández neighborhood. This is a pilot project that will help ensure the delivery of training that is more suitable and inclusive for this population. The Municipality of San Pedro Sula, in collaboration with the FUNDAHRSE Youth Employability and Entrepreneurship Board and the private sector, along with support from UNHCR, is designing a proposal for a sustainable internship system for young people who complete their technical training in the Municipal Technical Centers in this municipality.

Through strategic alliances in the framework of the joint UNHCR-ILO project, the Municipality of San Pedro Sula and the private sector are working together to strengthen entrepreneurial capacities for the creation of a micro-enterprise group in the Rivera Hernández sector.





LIFE STORY

The life of Ana Lucía, a 26-year-old Garifuna woman, used to be quiet. She had a small business selling clothes in the San Pedro Sula market in Honduras and was studying marketing. She had dreams of growing her business, but in March 2021 she received a notice that she had to pay a “war tax” to a gang.*

She did not file a complaint for fear of reprisals and did not return to her stall. Ana Lucía says that at that moment her world shattered into a thousand pieces.

Ana Lucía had to relocate to her sister’s house in another city to protect her life. Unemployed and unable to return home, in April 2021 she left for the United States but was returned to Honduras from Guatemala.

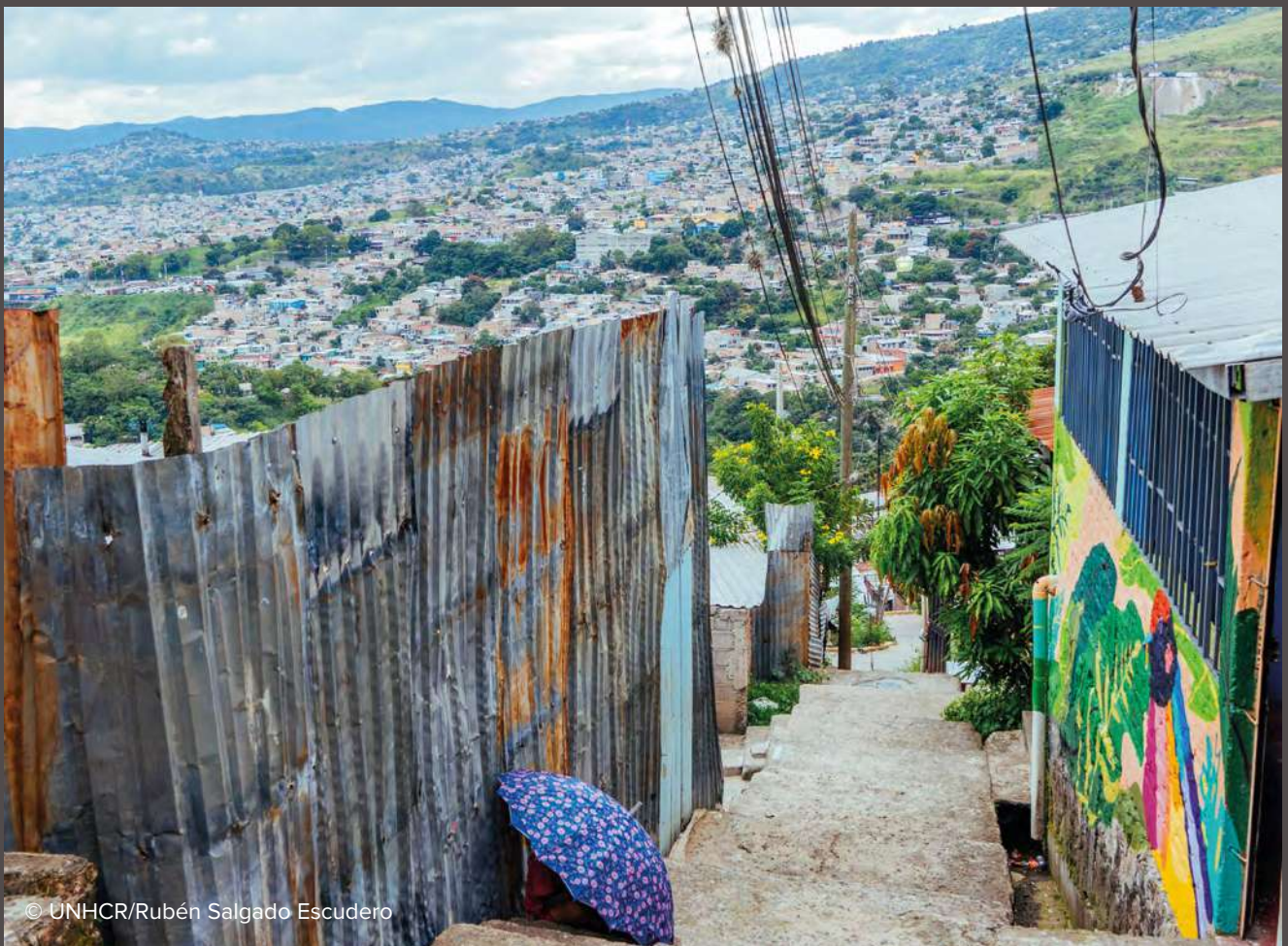
Overcoming her fear and drawing on her desire to rebuild her life, she found assistance and accompaniment from the Directorate for the Protection of Persons who have been Internally

Displaced by Violence (DIPPDIV), part of the Human Rights Secretariat. She felt that someone finally understood what she needed and was willing to support her.

The Human Rights Secretariat, in the framework of its pilot program to provide assistance and protection to the displaced population, identified Ana Lucía’s basic needs. After conducting a risk and vulnerability analysis, they provided her with humanitarian assistance for internal relocation. This also included a basic household goods kit with items to support independent living.

She also received a grocery shopping card and the DIPPDIV psychologist helped her overcome fears that prevented her from returning to her business.

With this assistance, Ana Lucia started her business again in another city. Little by little, she is regaining a normal life.



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MEXICO

MEXICO

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Latest developments in the legal and institutional framework on displacement and international protection

During the health emergency caused by COVID-19, the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid (COMAR) has continued with the reception of asylum claims and registration of refugees. COMAR has prioritized institutional assistance for claimants in urgent cases. The obligation for asylum claimants to visit the COMAR offices every week to confirm their migratory status is still suspended. In order to strengthen COMAR's operational capacity and respond to the increase in the number of asylum claims in the country, in 2021 a Representative Office in Palenque, Chiapas, was formally opened. In addition, a Representative Office was opened in Tijuana, Baja California, a liaison office was established in Guadalajara, Jalisco and another one will be opened soon in Saltillo, Coahuila.

In January 2021, amendments were made to the Law on Refugees, Complementary Protection and Political Asylum and to the Law on Migration to strengthen the protection of migrant and refugee children and adolescents. The National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents (SIPINNA) has coordinated the implementation of these reforms through updating workshops. These workshops have generated a series of observations aimed at improving state systems for the protection of migrant and refugee children and adolescents in the 32 states. In addition, the "Operational Guide for managing the asylum claims of accompanied, separated and unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents" was produced for COMAR's First Contact Officers. This guide facilitates harmonization with the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents.

Public policy initiatives to address displacement

As a result of the Thematic Round Table on Educational Inclusion, which was an extension of the Inter-Agency Round Table on Refugees and Complementary Protection, the Ministry of Public Education included asylum claimants and refugees in the National Strategy for the Safe Return to Classes for the 2021-2022 school year.

In terms of health and response to the COVID-19 pandemic, claimants, refugees and people who received complementary protection have access to the COVID-19 vaccine, in accordance with the stages defined in the National Vaccination Policy by the Ministry of Health.

In accordance with the provisions of the National Human Rights Program and the draft law on forced internal displacement approved by the Chamber of Deputies, Mexico made progress with public policy initiatives in this area in 2021. Of note was the design of two pilot programs aimed at providing durable solutions: 1) For women who have been displaced due to gender violence, implemented by UNHCR and INDESOL; 2) For the relocation and accompaniment of internally displaced persons, implemented by SEGOB and UNHCR.

INDICATORS

Over the last few years, Mexico has seen a significant increase in the number of people applying for asylum. In 2018, 29,630 people claimed asylum with COMAR. In 2019, 70,000 claims were received and 41,155 were received in 2020 (decrease due to the mobility restrictions established to reduce the spread of COVID-19). During 2021, a substantial increase has been identified, with 90,314 claims as of September 30, which is a record number. 74.7% of claims have been submitted in the state of Chiapas. The main nationalities of claimants include Honduras, Haiti, Cuba, El Salvador and Venezuela.

As of September 2021, COMAR issued 35,891 resolutions for asylum claims, representing an increase of 78% in average monthly resolutions compared to 2020. Of this number, 76.4% were substantive decisions, 8% were abandonment of the claim, 1.6% were rejected and 14% of claims were closed due to an inability to make contact the claimant.

INDICATORS



523

Number of refugees and asylum claimants benefiting from departures through Migration Stations
From January to September 2021



829

Number of persons of interest referred to public health services by COMAR.
From January to September 2021



4,270

Number of asylum claimants and refugees benefiting from the Local Integration Program (LIP).
From January to September 2021



96,000

Number of asylum claimants with a temporary CURP



98

people in accelerated educational certification programs

36 in the area of literacy, 33 with primary level studies and 29 with secondary level studies. A total of 59 refugees have completed a level with INEA.

Number of asylum claimants and refugees served through the Education Without Borders program (INEA).



100%

Proportion of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and adolescents (UAC) channeled by COMAR to child protection authorities.



PROTECTION

Simplified procedures have been implemented that use the definition of refugee from the Cartagena Declaration for nationals of Honduras, El Salvador and Venezuela with a view to achieving a more agile, efficient and quality procedure. In addition, a merged procedures project was established as a service mechanism that combines the registration and eligibility stages for specific profiles of claimants with the nationalities mentioned above in most COMAR offices nationwide (except Tijuana and Acayucan).

At the end of 2020, work began to digitize the COMAR archive in Mexico City and in the Representative Offices in: Tapachula, Chiapas; Acayucan, Veracruz; and Tenosique, Tabasco. Work continues to streamline the registration and processing of asylum claims, based on the use of forms that were designed with support from UNHCR's

Quality Asylum Initiative (QAI). These forms collect data so that cases can be better triaged for assignment.

The departures program implemented by the Migration Stations for asylum claimants continues. During the period from January to September 2021, 523 people have benefited from this initiative.

During the year, COMAR has continued to train its staff across the country on topics such as family reunification, management of registration flows, differentiated procedures and triage techniques. COMAR staff have received training from other agencies on topics including women's autonomy and human rights, sexual diversity and discrimination against people living with HIV or AIDS, all provided by CNDH.

Liaison with government agencies, international organizations and civil society continues to be strengthened to promote the integration of refugees. This was achieved through work by the Inter-Agency

Roundtable on Refuge and Complementary Protection and its four thematic roundtables (labor inclusion, educational inclusion, access to health services, identity and documentation). Results include the dissemination of infographics on the right to apply for asylum, refugees and benefits of complementary protection in the areas of health services, employment, education and identity documents. This material has been disseminated through COMAR's social networks, on its institutional website and through UNHCR's Facebook page "Trust the Jaguar".

Local round tables have been established to promote the protection and integration of refugees at the local level in different parts of the country, including: Monterrey, Nuevo León; Palenque, Chiapas; Tenosique, Tabasco; Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas; and Tijuana, Baja California. The COMAR Representative Offices have replicated the establishment of thematic round tables at state and municipal levels in Tijuana (thematic round table on identity and documentation), in Palenque (thematic round table on health) and in Monterrey (on identity and documentation, health, education and labor inclusion).

In December 2020, and in coordination with the National Population Registry (RENAPO), the Government of Nuevo León and COMAR, a project was launched to issue temporary CURPs for asylum claimants through the State Civil Registry. This was completed in July 2021, with 269 temporary CURPs issued with photograph and QR code by 31 July. Efforts will be made to improve the registration equipment to generate temporary CURPs that include photo and biometric data (fingerprint, face and iris) in less than 15 minutes. This model could be replicated in other states.





JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

Facilitating access to work has been another priority this year. Asylum claimants are directly channeled to job offers available from the National Employment Service (SNE). Job vacancies and the job fair schedule nationwide are publicized through posters in COMAR offices. In collaboration with UNHCR, three consultants have supported the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (STPS) to: 1) train SNE staff at the national level; 2) design internal information materials; and 3) create a digital portal with the objective of helping refugees in host communities access job offers in other parts of the country. In October 2021, the STPS through the SNE signed a collaboration agreement with UNHCR. The Chiapas Ministry of Economy and Labor (SEyT) will sign an agreement with UNHCR with the purpose of modernizing SNE offices in the state and improving access to its services.

To facilitate the financial inclusion of refugees, coordination meetings have been held between the National Banking and Securities Commission (CNBV), the National Population Registry (RENAPO), the National Migration Institute, the Banks Association of Mexico (ABM) and the Welfare Bank.

COMAR works with the labor integration and relocation program promoted by UNHCR to decongest the southern states and promote the local integration of refugees in locations such as Saltillo, Monterrey, Guadalajara, Aguascalientes, Puebla, Leon, Irapuato, Silao, Torreón, Querétaro and San Luis Potosí. Relocated people are supported with temporary housing, job placement (with formal employment with social security) and support with finding housing, access to public services and psychosocial accompaniment. As of the 27th of September 2021, a total of 4,270 people had benefited from the local integration program, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 12,422 since its inception in 2016.



SOCIAL INCLUSION

In two inter-institutional forums, the Inter-institutional Round Table on Refugees and Complementary Protection and the Integration Group of the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Comprehensive Care in Migration, mechanisms are being developed to enable the formal inclusion of children and adolescents, claimants, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection in compulsory school education. This work has also involved staff from the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) and the National Institute for Adult Education (INEA). As a result, child asylum claimants and refugees were included in the SEP's National Strategy for a Safe Return to Classrooms. To facilitate the validation of their previous studies, an

agreement was published on 12 February 2021 in the Official Gazette of the Federation, which establishes obligatory electronic procedures for the validation and recognition of studies and educational qualifications. These will facilitate access to the labor market for claimants and refugees.

In 2021, partnerships were established with the National Coordination of Scholarships for Benito Juárez Welfare (CNBBBJ) that is part of the Ministry of Public Education (SEP). This partnership facilitates access for COMAR's target population to the BENITO JUÁREZ SCHOLARSHIPS that are granted to students enrolled in any public school in the National Education System from Early Childhood through to High School.

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

On 12 February 2021, a coordination agreement was signed between the Government of Jalisco and COMAR to strengthen the Commission's institutional capacities for asylum claimants, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection measures. On 17 June 2021, a coordination agreement was signed with the Government of Coahuila for this purpose.

It is important to highlight collaboration with the Federal Institute of Public Defense to detect cases of asylum claimants who are in immigration stations or airports to guarantee the principle of non-refoulement.

Finally, an agreement on the creation of higher education opportunities for refugees is expected to be signed between COMAR, SRE, UNHCR and the DIMA organization (scheduled for November 2021). This in compliance with the joint agreement signed in the framework of the Global Forum on Refugees in December 2019 that aims to support 100 refugees in Mexico so that they can access university education through the university scholarship program created by Proyecto Habesha, one of the main projects implemented by DIMA.



SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA BRINGS REFUGEE AND MEXICAN CHILDREN TOGETHER

At age 15, Luis, his younger sister and mother fled gang violence when one of his cousins was murdered by gangs. Now living in Aguascalientes and awaiting a decision on his asylum claim, Luis is one of 15 refugee and asylum claimant children and adolescents who are members of the Symphony Orchestra of Jesús María, a municipality located in the Aguascalientes metropolitan area.

More than 21,000 children and adolescents have claimed asylum in Mexico to date in 2021. At a local level, authorities in municipalities such as Jesús María have included this population in their projects and programs, such as the popular Symphony Orchestra that involves both local and refugee children and young people. These initiatives promote peaceful coexistence and support for host communities, which are fundamental concepts in the work carried out by MIRPS and the Mexico Plan of Action. Inclusion initiatives at the municipal level help prevent possible xenophobic reactions to the arrival of refugees.

For Luis, attending the Casa de Música (Music House) and being a member of the Symphony Orchestra has

been an experience that has allowed him to make friends, learn to play several instruments and teach what he has learnt to children and adolescent who join the orchestra.

“Being here has been very different, and at the same time very fun, because the people here are very friendly. They have been really welcoming, I have made new friends and I have learned a lot at the Casa de Música. Children and young people who join the Casa de Música have asked me to help them and I have taught them some things,” he said.

Ángela, a percussionist who was born and raised in the municipality of Jesús María, is a member of the orchestra. She said that the inclusion of refugee children has been very positive, because they are responsible, studious and good people who can extract themselves from complicated situations through their passion for the arts.

“I really like that they are here, that they are learning about our culture and we learn about theirs. We mix together and create our own culture, it’s very nice,” he said.



A close-up photograph of a young child with dark hair and a pink flower hair clip, looking directly at the camera. The child is being held by an adult whose shoulder and arm are visible in the foreground. The background is blurred, showing other people in a crowd.

PANAMA

PANAMA

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Latest developments in the legal and institutional framework on displacement and international protection

Panama is a country that receives refugees and migrants in transit due to its geographical and strategic location in the continent. As of June 2021, Panama hosts 2573 refugees and 11,500 claims for asylum are still awaiting a decision. The asylum claimant population primarily consists of Nicaraguans, Venezuelans, Colombians, Cubans and people from northern part of Central America.

The Government of Panama is a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol. The Convention and the Protocol were ratified in October 1977 through the adoption of Law No. 5. Panama has also acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in 2011. On 10 January 2018, the national government approved Executive Decree No. 5, which amended the refugee system established in the previous legislation (adopted in 1998). This was a positive development, as the new legislation strengthens the country's commitment to providing international protection and reaffirms compliance with due process standards. The legislation also incorporates gender-based persecution as a specific ground for seeking asylum. It explicitly includes the protection of children through specific safeguards for children and adolescents in need of international protection, taking into account their best interests. The legislation also requires the implementation of measures that are necessary for their protection. The frequency of meetings of the National Commission for the Protection of Refugees (CONARE) increased from four to six meetings per year, which will increase the number of cases evaluated by CONARE annually.

In terms of the issue of statelessness, there has been an initial inter-agency meeting involving the participation of different ministries. This meeting identified gaps in the existing executive decree and established mechanisms for its full implementation in the future. Panama has recognized the first case of statelessness in the country.

In addition to being a country that provides international protection, Panama is also a transit country for many people migrating to the north of the continent. The main nationalities that transit through Panama include Haitians, Cubans and people from different countries in Asia and Africa. A recent increase in the Venezuelan population has been detected. The province of Darién has become one of the main routes for the transit of mixed migratory movements. This situation is exacerbated by the socio-economic effects of COVID-19, among others.

This province presents challenges in terms of socio-economic development, which increases issues with the management of mass and irregular mixed migratory movements. Based on official figures for the year up until October 2021 issued by the National Migration Service, more than 100,000 people have crossed the border with Colombia through the Darién province.

Public policy initiatives to address displacement

The context of the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected the majority of refugees and asylum claimants. This has had an impact on their employment due to the mobility restrictions imposed by the pandemic, affecting the availability of employment and access to casual job opportunities. This has limited this population's ability to meet their basic needs and has increased their level of debt due to the inability to pay rent and bills. In order to address this situation and attend to the most vulnerable population in accordance with previously defined criteria, the national government is launching an emergency social assistance relief plan for people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic called Plan Panama Solidario (Solidarity Plan Panama). This plan has an inclusive approach that does not discriminate against beneficiaries due to their country of origin or nationality.

With the purpose of reaching a national agreement in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner on the main issues affecting the country, including inequality and poverty, the national government is launching an initiative called the "Closing Gaps" Bicentennial Pact. This is a process of consulting with the population to build consensus and establish a roadmap that lays the foundations for a better Panama. Although the Agora platform guarantees transparency, participation and inclusion, it also creates a serious limitation for refugees and claimants for refugee status, as in many cases refugees and asylum claimants did not have identity cards, which meant that they could not upload their proposals, making their voice invisible.

To overcome this limitation, the Protection Committee agreed to hold a consultation process with the population of refugees and asylum claimants for refugee status between 25 and 29 January 2021, with the participation of about 50 people including men, women, young people and adolescents from different nationalities (including Venezuela, Nicaragua, Colombia and El Salvador). This consultation process has the purpose of designing proposals on relevant issues that affect this population

and constitute “gaps” for their local integration and access to basic rights. This process resulted in the production of 14 proposals based on the experiences of the people consulted and their opinions on how access to basic needs could be improved.

The proposals were uploaded by the civil society organizations that are members of the Protection Roundtable, specifying that they were proposals from refugees and claimants for refugee status residing in the country. Panama adopted a mass vaccination program

that was accessible to the entire population, regardless of their nationality or immigration status in the country. This has meant that the refugee population and asylum claimants can obtain their vaccinations in a timely manner. In addition, for those refugees affected by COVID-19, they have been able to access health services.

INDICATORS

Data for selected indicators to October 2021



1,193

Number of asylum claimants and refugees who received an official identification document during 2021.

Issuing of certification of submission of asylum claim (new claimants) 471

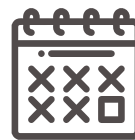
Asylum claimants whose identity cards have been admitted for processing: 236

Renewal of Refugee Identity Card: 257

Permanent Resident Identity Card: 225

Certificate of recognition of statelessness: 1

Certificate of people in the process of having their statelessness recognized: 3



6 to 12

months from submission to final decision

Average processing time of asylum claims from receipt to final decision.



346

Number of asylum claimants and refugees who applied for or renewed work permits during 2021.

Work permit for asylum claimants: 51

Renewal of work permit for refugees: 121

Indefinite work permit for refugees who obtained permanent residence: 174

During 2021, the National Office for the Care of Refugees continued to maintain a response time for asylum claims between 6 and 12 months, depending on the complexity of the cases. This time period is below the average response times in previous years.

In the area of documentation, in 2021 a total of 1,193 persons were able to receive a number of official documents related to their asylum claims. A total of 471 certificates recognizing the submission of asylum claims were issued. In addition, 236 persons applied for an identity card for asylum claimants whose claims are being processed by the National Migration Service while another 257 people renewed their refugee identity cards.

A total of 225 people completed the procedures for obtaining permanent resident status, a migratory category that can be obtained three years after having been granted asylum in Panama. A statelessness identity card was provided to the first person recognized as stateless in Panama. Identification documents were also provided to three people applying for statelessness status. In 2021, a total of 346 refugees and asylum claimants applied either an initial work permit or a renewal of their work permit in Panama. 174 people were able to obtain a permanent work permit.



PROTECTION

The effects of the pandemic extended until the year 2021, directly impacting the population of interest in different areas of their lives in Panama.

In terms of access to the procedure, ONPAR facilitated the submission of asylum claims by persons in need of international protection. It is important to highlight the strong coordination between border authorities (National Border Service and the National Migration Service), especially in relation to the referral of persons in need of international protection who entered the country via land or as part of mixed migratory movements. This strong coordination has been primarily achieved through the different training delivered by public officials this year, as well as the designation of ONPAR liaison officers in key points such as Darién.

With the relaxation of restrictive mobility measures and the reduction of the average number of COVID-19 infections, it was possible to again undertake migrant documentation tours in the province of Darién. This activity had to be suspended in 2020 due to the pandemic. During these tours, nearly 600 procedures were collected for the renewal of identification documents and work permits for refugees. It should be noted that many of these people had not renewed their documents for more than three years because they did not have the financial resources to travel to the city where the main offices of the National Migration Service are located. It was possible to exempt all of these people from the fine for expired identity documents. This makes it easier for them to renew their documents and frees them from paying considerable sums of money.

It is important to highlight the implementation of Executive Decree No. 10 of January 5, 2019, which approves the procedure for the recognition of statelessness. In 2021 Panama made its first recognition of stateless persons and the procedure was initiated for around 20 people.

The Panamanian State recognized the “stateless” status of an 83 year old man. He claims that he was born on December 25, 1936 in Darien and that he currently resides in Burunga, Arraijan. However, his birth is not registered in the civil records and he only appears as the father of one of the seven children he claims to have had. The Electoral Tribunal even denied him a request for late civil registration, since there were “inconsistencies in the testimonial and documentary evidence as he had different names, ID card numbers and nationalities, both in the birth registrations of his children and in his personal documents”. Information was requested from the National Registry of Civil Status of Colombia and

they responded that most of the births of this man’s children.

After his recognition as a stateless person, the man expressed his pleasure at finally having an official identity document.



EDUCATION

Thanks to a letter of understanding signed between the Ministry of Government and the National Institute for the Development of Human Resources, refugees continue to have access to public education courses that previously only Panamanian nationals could access.

The University of Panama continues to support the cost of tuition for refugees pursuing undergraduate or technical studies, which allows this population to access tertiary education under the same conditions as a national. Although certain barriers have been identified when refugees have obtained permanent residency, constant advocacy is carried out to resolve any circumstances that limit refugees’ access to tertiary education.



JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

During 2021, work continued to facilitate access to employability and livelihoods mechanisms for refugees and asylum claimants. Approaches have been made with business associations including the Panamanian Association of Business Executives, the American Chamber of Commerce and bilaterally with some companies in the framework of the Employability Program known as Talent without Borders. These meetings made it possible to raise awareness among these groups about who is a refugee, their capabilities and especially their resilience as the engine that drives their lives and helps them to move forward. Work continued with the City of Knowledge Foundation as part of a businesswomen’s mentoring project, which enabled around 71 people to implement tools for the development of their livelihoods.



SOCIAL PROTECTION

During 2021, the Panamanian State promoted a series of initiatives that have the purpose of providing social protection to all people residing in Panamanian territory. Both refugees and asylum claimants also benefited and participated from these programs. The national government led a broad and inclusive vaccination process that included foreigners as well as undocumented people. With the objective of addressing the effects of the health crisis, a social assistance program was implemented through which financial assistance and food were provided to vulnerable people.

Work continued with the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns through which messages of equality, integration and peaceful coexistence were shared with primary school students and the general public with a view to eradicating discrimination and xenophobia. The national government also continued to build the capacities of local authorities to strengthen social protection issues through the creation of community spaces and the empowerment of persons of concern.

The National Office for the Care of Refugees (ONPAR), in partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), participated in the closing ceremony of a training workshop in which 22 asylum claimants and refugees (12 men and 10 women) received training on human rights, the prevention of gender-based violence, conflict resolution in communities and leadership skills. This will strengthen them in their roles as multipliers of information within their communities.



HEALTH

Mental health care protocols were established for refugees and migrants. These provide mental health professionals with specialized tools to work with this population to address the consequences of having to leave their place of origin and will ensure their access to this type of service.

OTHER MIRPS PROGRESS IN PANAMA

- *During 2021, more than 500 state security officials (from the National Police, National Border Service, National Naval Air Service, Ombudsman's Office, National Women's Institute, CONARE, ONPAR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) received training.*
- *A consultancy was carried out on progress with the implementation of the commitments made in 2016 by the Quality of Asylum Initiative. This new analysis resulted in 20 new commitments related to improvements to the interview process, analysis of country of origin information, management of individual cases and others. This will be incorporated into ONPAR's work plan.*
- *A request has been made to revisit the draft agreement and include new mobility contexts so that it can meet current population needs.*
- *Work has been implemented regarding the incorporation of biometric measures and the issuance of ID cards with QR codes and other security measures. This will provide increased support for the population in terms of official documentation. Tests are being carried out with the new card issuing machine and work has been undertaken to update the documentation of the population seeking asylum and their contact details.*
- *In 2021, we continued to reduce the backlog of cases and also reduce response times. In the year 2021 up until October, more than 2,500 cases have been processed, which represents a reduction of 20% of pending cases.*
- *UNHCR continues to support ONPAR by strengthening its team with the hiring of four new eligibility officers to process new cases, as well as reviewing existing cases in order to reduce the backlog.*
- *Technical sessions continue to be held with CONARE, allowing a more detailed review of cases and expediting decision-making. A resolution was signed authorizing the Technical Secretariat of CONARE (ONPAR) to hold these meetings.*
- *Although no birth registration campaigns have been carried out, the Electoral Tribunal, with the support of the Ombudsman's Office and the National Migration Service, has registered the births of 16 children of Haitian parents who are in transit in Panama. The children received birth certificates, child identity cards and in some cases, even their passports.*

- In 2021, a tour was conducted of remote villages on the country's Caribbean and Pacific borders and the central part of the Province of Darien. This tour facilitated the renewal of residence cards, claims for permanent residence (for those who have the right) and work permits. Nearly 600 procedures were received during this tour and ONPAR, the National Migration Service, the Civil Registry and the Ministry of Labor supported this activity.
- An inter-institutional meeting was held for the implementation of Executive Decree No. 10 of 5 January 2019 to strengthen access to basic rights for stateless persons, facilitating the issuing of work permits, travel document and mechanisms so that they can eventually access Panamanian nationality.
- Through the Gender Sub-Table, which includes participation from UNHCR, HIAS, RET, CRP, ONPAR, INAMU, SENNIAF and UNFPA, a guide to services and information pamphlets were prepared and shared with various authorities at national and local levels.
- There is an agreement between the University of Panama and the Ministry of Government to receive students carrying out their professional practice. This has allowed a number of students to complete their professional practice with ONPAR, supporting the various procedures and formalities carried out by this agency.
- The General Assembly of the University of Panama approved that refugees will pay the same tuition fees as nationals.
- In 2021, the Talento Sin Fronteras program was relaunched. This is an employability program for refugees and Panamanians living in vulnerable conditions that has been implemented by UNHCR, HIAS and ManPower Group in Panama. The Program began in 2018 and sought to strengthen the capacities and skills of refugees and nationals so that they can obtain formal employment and contribute to the development of the country and promote/strengthen local integration for refugees through economic inclusion and employability. Its main objective is to consolidate employment opportunities for the refugee population. To date, a total of 395 people have graduated from this program: 241 refugees and 154 nationals.



- Through the “We are the same” campaign, UNHCR and IOM held a forum with private sector companies in Panama to raise awareness about the current situation faced by refugees and migrants in Panama and the challenges and opportunities related to their economic inclusion. Through a short online play, discrimination and unconscious prejudices were addressed as part of the overall objective of raising awareness among companies. A total of 22 companies that form part of the American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) in Panama participated in the forum and engaged in discussions, highlighting positive comments and interest in strengthening future awareness-raising initiatives within their companies.
- In Panama, a broad and inclusive COVID-19 vaccination program has been implemented, including refugees and migrants as beneficiaries.
- During the pandemic, the Panama Solidarity Program was launched with an inclusive approach. Through the program, food parcels and vouchers for the purchase of food were provided to refugees and asylum claimants.
- With the goal of reaching a national agreement in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner on the main issues of concern to the country, including inequality and poverty, the national government is launching an initiative called the “Closing Gaps” Bicentennial Pact. This is a consultation process with the population that has the aim of building consensus and establishing a path that lays the foundations for a better Panama.
- To collect contributions from the refugee and asylum claimant population, a consultation process was carried out with the refugee asylum claimant population. This involved the participation of 50 people including men, women, young people and adolescents of different nationalities (including Venezuela, Nicaragua, Colombia and El Salvador). This has the objective of building proposals on relevant issues that affect the population and constitute “gaps” for their local integration and access to basic rights. This process resulted in the design of 14 proposals based on the experiences of the people consulted and their opinion on how access to basic needs could be improved.
- Work continued with the implementation of virtual non-discrimination campaigns with primary school students, as well as raising awareness of refugees in Panama through initiatives that included sport as a catalyst for social integration, tolerance and peaceful coexistence.
- A range of awareness-raising and training processes were promoted for justices of the peace on international protection issues.
- With the support of UNHCR, ONPAR and other international agencies and civil society organizations, MINSA developed a mental health protocol for the refugee and migrant population that focuses on border regions and urban areas. The protocol was implemented with input from different UN agencies and civil society and is the first of its kind in Panama. The protocol was recently launched at a formal event and presented by the Minister of Health. The protocol is now being socialized and an initial session was held in the border area of Chiriqui, aimed primarily at staff from the migration agency, Senafront, Red Cross, Ombudsman and public health workers. The socialization process is being accompanied by UNHCR, partners and other agencies.

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Manpower, UNHCR and HIAS have joined forces for the implementation of the “Talent without Borders” program, which was launched in 2018 to foster employability for refugees and asylum claimants in Panama. Participants in the program received training on skills, communication and tools to construct their CVs, as well as to prepare for job interviews related to employment opportunities. A total of

393 people (148 men and 245 women) have participated in the program since its inception. In conjunction with the ONPAR Office, awareness-raising sessions have been held for different companies and entities to raise awareness about refugee issues in Panama.



GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE BRINGS KEY DOCUMENTS TO REFUGEES IN REMOTE AREAS OF PANAMA

When Wilson and Sunilda settled in the remote Darien community with their three daughters, their priority was to save their lives and survive Colombia's armed conflict.

In 2006, they arrived in Panama after fleeing from Bojayá. In 2007, the family received documents proving their refugee status, which had to be renewed every year. But for a family living in a remote area, keeping these documents up to date has been difficult.

"It's very difficult to renew the identity card. If we go to Panama to renew it, they fine us. We don't have a lot of resources to get from Alto Playona to (Panama City)," says Wilson. Without valid identity documents, access to health services, education, and state support programs is impossible, as is obtaining formal employment or engaging in entrepreneurship in the country.

In 2021, different Panamanian government entities conducted tours in communities in the Darien and Guna Yala Comarca -- which have been home to refugees for more than 20 years -- to support the population with updating their identity documents, work permits and permanent residency.

The National Office for the Care of Refugees (ONPAR), the Ministries of Labor and Foreign Affairs, the National Migration Service and the Electoral Tribunal participated in the tour.

"Having a valid ID is a first step for refugees to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity," said Hussein Pitty, Director of ONPAR, "For the Ministry of Government it is a priority to bring institutions closer to hard-to-reach areas and make it easier for people to obtain valid documentation".

With the valid document, Wilson and Sunilda's daughter Berenicia, who has a disability, can receive regular medical care. Her sister Elicia will be able to apply for financial support for uniforms, school supplies and transportation for her three Panamanian children. Most importantly, the entire family will be able to continue to live in Panama on a regular basis until they are eligible for permanent residency.



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MIRPS

Comprehensive
Regional
Protection and
Solutions
Framework

THE MIRPS IN THE REGION

THE MIRPS IN THE REGION

By 2021, the Government of Guatemala, as Presidency Pro-Tempore assumed the firm commitment to serve as facilitator in the generation of opportunities, conditions and solutions for the protection and attention of asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons and persons in need of international protection. To do this,

it adopted innovative methodologies, coordination efforts as well as joint initiatives with the various actors in this process, such as civil society organizations, the private sector, international multilateral and regional organizations.

PROTECTION

WORKING GROUP ON ADMISSION, RECEPTION AND PROCESSING OF PERSONS WITH PROTECTION NEEDS

WORKING GROUP ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

SOLUTIONS

WORKING GROUP ON LOCAL GOVERNANCE

WORKING GROUP ON LABOUR MARKET ACCESS AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

PARTNERSHIPS

CIVIL SOCIETY

PRIVATE SECTOR

MIRPS SUPPORT PLATFORM

STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF MIRPS BY THE OAS

PROTECTION

WORKING GROUP ON RECEPTION AND ADMISSION

In light of the significant increase in asylum claims in the region in recent years, MIRPS States have committed to strengthening national reception and admission systems (including case management and eligibility procedures) to safeguard fairness, efficiency, adaptability and integrity. The Reception and Admission Working Group has provided a platform for MIRPS States to share their experiences and expertise in the reception, processing and admission of persons with international protection needs. In 2021, MIRPS countries undertook a mapping exercise to identify areas related to protection and strengthening asylum systems in which they would like to receive bilateral cooperation. Building on this exercise, the MIRPS Support Platform, in coordination with the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), organized a series of expert roundtables to promote the exchange of good practices, peer learning and bilateral cooperation. The sessions were held in April and May and brought together representatives from all MIRPS States along with technical experts from Brazil, Canada, Spain and the European Union.

The topics covered in the sessions included: the management of large-scale refugee movements, which provided an opportunity to learn about approaches for the reduction of delays in processing asylum claims, including the use of digital tools, reception standards and coordinating actions with humanitarian partners; the identification of international protection needs, which

promoted understanding of individual case management (registration, documentation and biometrics), the interoperability of case management tools with government and partner systems; the use of differentiated case processing modalities, including group recognition, the presumption of inclusion and simplified, accelerated and merged refugee status determination modalities; and shelter management, with a focus on comprehensive shelter and settlement strategies for refugees, IDPs and returnees with protection needs.

Among the conclusions that emerged from the consultations, it was noted that temporary protection had not been widely adopted or developed in the Americas and countries have applied the expanded definition of refugee (from the Cartagena Declaration) to provide international protection. The humanitarian situation in the region presents new and considerable challenges that require a complementary and human rights-based approach along with strengthening assistance capacities and harmonizing international protection and migration statutes. This was considered particularly relevant in countries national asylum systems have been overwhelmed in the context of large-scale, multi-causal migration movements. While a State may establish a system of choice between different migration statuses, no one should be forced or encouraged to withdraw their claim for asylum or should have to choose between different fundamental rights, for example, between the right to work or the right to asylum. In this area the experts agreed that protection against refoulement is a central element of any status that requires international protection.



WORKING GROUP ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

In 2020, the first specific working group for internal displacement was formed within the MIRPS. The Group focused on addressing internal displacement, acting as a space to strengthen capacities and develop legal and institutional frameworks that allow them to respond to internal displacement in their countries. The group consists of El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico, with the participation of Costa Rica as an observer country. Since its creation, the Group has been supported by a panel of international experts on internal displacement from Colombia and Italy.

The Group continued its work during the MIRPS Pro-Tempore Presidency held by the Government of Guatemala in 2021. During its second year, and with Mexico as the lead country, the Group decided to follow up on the needs and issues of concern identified in the recommendations presented in 2020, with consultations focusing on: normative frameworks for addressing internal displacement; a harmonized approach to the use of statistics; prevention of underlying causes of displacement; and community-based and differentiated approaches to generating solutions. The consultations have informed the implementation of the following programs in the three States:

NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS FOR ADDRESSING INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT



GENERAL LAW TO PREVENT, ADDRESS AND COMPREHENSIVELY REDRESS FORCED INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN MEXICO.

The main objective of this law is for the State to have a legal instrument that forms the base of preventing, addressing and generating lasting solutions to the phenomenon of forced internal displacement in Mexico. This is made possible through the positioning of the public problem of forced internal displacement as the result of a range of structural causes, including: agrarian, armed, community and property conflicts, natural disasters, large-scale development projects, human rights violations and others. Different forums and spaces for discussion have been held along with other actions to learn about the benefits and challenges that this Law represents for the Mexican State. Meetings have been held with legislators interested in the issue to explain the phenomenon and distinguish it from other human mobility issues.

HARMONIZED APPROACH TO THE USE OF STATISTICS



UPDATE OF THE STUDY ON THE CHARACTERIZATION OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT DUE TO VIOLENCE IN EL SALVADOR.

The Supreme Court of Justice of El Salvador, through a ruling issued in July 2018, noted that there is a phenomenon of forced displacement due to violence and insecurity that affects different geographical areas of the country. The same year, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, published the statistical study "Characterization of internal mobility due to violence in El Salvador" of the affected population between 2006 and 2016.

Since this publication, El Salvador has made significant progress with the legal protection of victims of displacement. The study was updated this year to capture current evidence on the magnitude, trends and demographic profile of the affected population. The results of this study will inform the design and implementation of institutional responses.

This study will include six phases: 1) Consolidation of a working group; 2) Establishment of the methodology; 3) Collection of information; 4) Presentation and validation of the information; 5) Implementation of a dissemination plan among stakeholders.

ROOT-CAUSE PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES.



COMMUNITY ART AS A STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN THE PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION OF COMMUNITIES AT RISK IN SAN PEDRO SULA, HONDURAS.

“Community Art” is a community intervention strategy led by the Municipality of San Pedro Sula and implemented in collaboration with Children International and UNHCR. It seeks to promote social inclusion and the participation of communities affected by violence and forced displacement, as well as the strengthening of protective environments for youth in high-risk urban communities in the city of San Pedro Sula. This initiative promotes art and culture as a means and space for engagement and dialogue between local authorities, organizations, community leaders and young people while improving the skills and capacities of young people in these communities.

DIFFERENTIATED APPROACHES TO THE GENERATION OF SOLUTIONS



IMPLEMENTING PROTECTION MECHANISMS FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN HONDURAS USING A DIFFERENTIATED APPROACH.

The Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Mechanism Manual (MAHE), implemented by the Human Rights Secretariat (SEDH), is an institutional humanitarian assistance mechanism that case manages individual cases of displaced persons and persons at risk of displacement. Through MAHE, different forms of assistance are provided for a period of three months to cover the needs of: temporary accommodation; internal relocation; food; early childhood supplies; supplies for school-age children; communication; and cash support to cover transport. The assistance mechanism began in 2019 through a pilot project in which 27 cases were attended to within the framework of a project that was focused on returnees with protection needs that was financed with national funds from the National Council for the Protection of Honduran Migrants (CONAPROHM).



PILOT PROJECT FOR THE INCLUSION OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN MEXICO.

The program funds the physical relocation of the person, as well as their employment, education, access to health care and housing. It envisages the integration of a certain number of internally displaced persons and/or families into the refugees program in some cities in the country, with favorable results in terms of integration into host communities and personal benefits for participants. Due to the State’s responsibility in this area, the pilot program will be implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior (SEGOB) to facilitate the coordination coordinating of the relevant agencies across the three levels of government.



NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM 2020-2024 (MEXICO).

The PNDH 2020-2024 is a program that forms part of the National Development Plan designed by the Federal Government’s Democratic Planning System. It is the programmatic document that defines the Federal Government’s human rights policy and is the leading document in Mexico that recognizes the problem of forced internal displacement and proposes a road map for addressing it.

Thematic forums were held to gain input on the design of the PNDH, which resulted in the inclusion of 7 specific actions: disseminating information on the phenomenon of forced internal displacement; providing comprehensive care to victims; providing durable solutions and building a displaced persons registry; implementing special of comprehensive care measures for voluntary return, reception, integration or relocation; conducting a risk analysis to identify, prevent and address the causes of forced internal displacement in a timely manner; guarantee the implementation of participation mechanisms in the processes of prevention, care and comprehensive reparations; undertake an assessment of the situation of forced internal displacement to understand, prevent and comprehensively address the problem; and promote training and awareness-raising activities aimed at public servants.

SOLUTIONS

WORKING GROUP ON LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Local governments play an important role in responding to the unprecedented levels of displacement in Central America and Mexico. When people are forced to flee their homes, the majority move to urban centers in search of safety and opportunities. In 2020, the MIRPS States established strengthening the operational response and capacities of local authorities as a cross-cutting regional priority. Framed in the context of the “Cities of Solidarity” initiative, States identified a number of municipal authorities and/or associations of municipalities across the region that host significant displaced populations as key partners for future collaborations. This involves scaling up a comprehensive approach to assistance that includes the needs of all municipal residents, including displaced persons and other marginalized constituents within the host communities. In 2021, the municipalities of Guatemala City and Puerto Barrios in Guatemala joined the Cities of Solidarity initiative following the signing of specific agreements.

This year, a MIRPS Working Group on Local Governance was formed with the participation of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama to provide a shared platform for consultation, exchanges and joint planning. This initiative included the municipal participation of Upala, Los Chiles, La Cruz, Escazú and Cantón San Carlos in Costa Rica; Esquipulas and Villa Nueva in Guatemala; San Pedro Sula in Honduras; and Panama City in Panama. A supporting Advisory Panel provided technical guidance to the consultations. This included representatives from the Municipality of São Paulo, Brazil, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with the support of the MIRPS Technical Secretariat.

The Working Group held four thematic sessions addressing topics such as: legal frameworks for refugees and IDPs and other specific characteristics of other vulnerable and at-risk populations; coordination, partners and services; local development planning processes and identification of multi-sectoral needs; community consultation and validation of local development plans with representatives of local authorities.

Informed by consultations within the Working Group, UNDP and UNHCR formally launched a new initiative in October designed to support municipal authorities in Central America and Mexico with the inclusion of refugees, asylum claimants, internally displaced persons, returnees and others with protection needs in local development planning and programming. The UNDP-UNHCR Regional Local Governance Framework, as a regional claim of the

UNDP-UNHCR Global Partnership Framework for Rule of Law and Governance, serves as a support tool to generate more substantive engagement between local authorities, the UN Country Team and civil society. The framework includes four complementary pillars: (i) mainstreaming forced displacement into local development planning; (ii) protection and access to essential services; (iii) rule of law and e-governance; and (iv) socio-economic integration and social cohesion.

THE MUNICIPALITY OF ESQUIPULAS

Esquipulas, one of two municipalities in Guatemala that participated in consultations this year and signed the Cities of Solidarity agreement in 2020, is located in the central east of the country and covers an area of 532 km². It consists of twenty villages and an urban center. The municipality shares borders with neighboring Honduras and El Salvador. As such, it is part of a major transit route in the country and plays an important role in the coordination of assistance for people identified as in need of international protection. These include Guatemalans, Hondurans, Salvadorans, as well as people from other South American, Caribbean and African countries.

As part of the assessment of local partners and services, the municipality noted that the local coordination structure between partners was comprehensive but would benefit from more agile approaches to strengthen time-based operational responses and increase links between public institutions. It was also noted that the lack of disaggregated data on all assistance provided to displaced persons by partners was considered an area that requires additional coordination to support joint planning. In terms of essential service delivery, investments in protection, education and health services could be complemented by additional investments in social protection, employment and livelihoods. The establishment of a human mobility office, which will act as an information and referral channel to available services for people in need of international protection, as well as the pre-positioning of a temporary municipal emergency reception center to manage large population movements, were both identified as priorities for the coming year.

WORKING GROUP ON ACCESS TO THE LABOR MARKET AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The Working Group on Labor Market Access and Vocational Training, led by Costa Rica, involved Belize (observer), El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama with an advisory panel consisting of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), with the support of the MIRPS Technical Secretariat. We shared a forum on experiences and knowledge, identifying joint solutions that inform a series of practical recommendations to strengthen protection and solutions at the national level. The Working Group sessions were held between June and July 2021.

These sessions included consultations on: administrative framework for the facilitation of labor integration and vocational training; the recognition of previous studies, degrees, diplomas, prior knowledge and educational trajectories; transitions, flexibility and strengthening of education; the recognition of qualifications and competencies for the creation of labor profiles; the contribution of displaced persons to local development and partnerships with the private sector in the area of livelihoods. The consultations highlighted that the region does not currently benefit from a regional labor inclusion strategy that provides a roadmap for the self-sufficiency of forcibly displaced persons. The ratification by the MIRPS States of the Regional Convention for the Recognition of Studies, Degrees and Diplomas in Higher Education in

Latin America and the Caribbean, Buenos Aires, 2019 is pending.

A number of regulatory frameworks for the recognition of degrees, diplomas, skills and educational trajectories were identified as not comprehensively responding to the specific circumstances of displaced persons who are often forced to flee at short notice and are unable to collect essential information related to their skills and qualifications. While different public-private mechanisms for the recognition of qualifications and certification of competencies exist in most countries in the region, they are primarily targeted at migrant populations. The COVID-19 pandemic led to an increased use of information and communication technology for the recognition of qualifications and the certification of competencies for both migrants and forcibly displaced persons.

It was noted that the lack of disaggregated data on the occupational profiles of the displaced population affects the provision of support by public employment services and national vocational training centers and their broader socio-economic integration. With the exception of Mexico, there were no guidelines for the private sector regarding the employment of forcibly displaced persons. A number of successful partnerships with the private sector had been established in support of MIRPS that have provided a low number of internships and formal employment opportunities.

To support the implementation of the commitments by the participating States within the MIRPS National Action Plans, the recommendations were approved by all of the countries, including actions until the end of the year and medium-term actions for the period 2022-2023.



INITIATIVES UNDERWAY TO FACILITATE ACCESS TO THE LABOR MARKET AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING



COSTA RICA

Intégrate al Empleo (Integrate yourself into employment) program; “PRONAMYPE” program; Circular DM-036-09-2017 for the recognition of primary and secondary school diplomas or studies carried out abroad; support for the recognition of educational certification by the National Institute of Apprenticeship.

The “Intégrate al Empleo” program is part of the joint ILO-UNHCR project “Promotion of Decent Employment and the Protection of Refugee and Refugee Seeker Populations in Central America and Mexico” with funding from the European Union, through INTPA (ex-DEVCO). In 2021, the program hired 30 people. The project aimed to improve the technical capacity of the profiles of persons of interest through certified technical training courses provided by the Empléate program, operated the National Employment Directorate, which provides technical certifications recognized by the Ministry of Labor (MTSS) and the possibility of being employed through the National Employment Program with participating private sector companies.



EL SALVADOR

Flexible Education Modalities, Labor Market Information System; certification of skills for the returned migrant population to achieve their labor market integration; “My First Job” Program; “Youth Building the Future” binational program (Mexico - El Salvador).

The “My First Job” program supports young people without any work experience to gain it through an apprenticeship modality, with a special emphasis on young people in situations of forced displacement, asylum claimants, deportees with protection needs and refugees. The objective for 2021 is to provide this opportunity to 324 young people.



GUATEMALA

Tur-integra Program, Technical Training for Employment Program with a gender perspective, operated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security in partnership with the Technical Institute for Training and Productivity (INTECAP); Regulation of Equalization and Equivalence of Studies at the Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Education levels and in the School and Out-of-School Education Subsystems (Ministerial Agreement 1752-2019).

Green Jobs Program: refugees and asylum claimants are hired as guards in national parks in Guatemala. They are responsible maintaining trails used by visitors and monitoring and protecting native flora and fauna.



HONDURAS

INFOP agreements to design projects for displaced persons and returnees, CaPaz initiative with training services, “Alternativas” (Alternatives) program to provide job internship opportunities for returnees, “Yo emprendo en mi tierra” (I start a business in my homeland) program.



MEXICO

Integration Program in Mexico; National Employment System fairs; educational programs provided by the General Directorate of Vocational Training Centers; occupational specialties at Vocational Training Centers; elimination of the apostille requirement and official translations by an expert for the validation of educational certifications; “Mexico recognizes your experience” program.

The Mexico Integration Program connects refugees and asylum claimants from cities in southern Mexico to municipalities in north-central Mexico, areas characterized by a high demand for workers.

The program is an example of a win-win-win situation: companies benefit because they find staff and no longer have problems with turnover, as refugees tend to stay rather than look for new opportunities (86% retention rate); refugees are employed and can become self-employed; and the government benefits because people who work start paying taxes.



PANAMA

Talento sin Fronteras (Talent without borders) program; opportunities and courses provided by the Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional y Capacitación para el Desarrollo Humano (National Institute for Professional Education and Training in Human Development).

Talento Sin Fronteras is an employability program for refugees implemented by UNHCR, ManpowerGroup and HIAS in Panama. The program enhances the skills and abilities of refugees in Panama to contribute, through decent employment, to the development of the country. Talento sin Fronteras has been included in the resilience strategy led by the Municipality of Panama, representing a contribution by UNHCR, Manpower Group and HIAS to integration between Panamanians and foreigners.



PARTNERSHIPS

CIVIL SOCIETY

One of the objectives established in the 2021 Pro-tempore Presidency work plan was monitoring, collaboration and exchange with civil society organizations.

More than 65 organizations from the countries that form the MIRPS have participated in a series of consultations and working sessions in which they designed a proposal for the formalization of the MIRPS Regional Dialogue Mechanism among Civil Society Organizations.

As proposed by the organizations, the main purpose of the Regional Dialogue Mechanism is “to offer technical support for dialogue between international humanitarian organizations, civil society organisations and the States that form the MIRPS. This mechanism aims to improve coordination of national action plans that provide comprehensive responses to displacement, strengthening protection in the countries of origin and improving international protection for asylum seekers and refugees fleeing these countries.

In order to achieve this purpose, the following objectives were proposed:

1. Present proposals regarding opportunity areas identified by the national mechanisms in the MIRPS dialogue spaces so that they become an advocacy tool to guarantee the fulfillment of the commitments acquired by the States.
2. Promote the necessary actions to make forced displacement visible in the region and support the implementation of the MIRPS National Action Plans.
3. Participate in and support regional solidarity and responsibility-sharing mechanisms in the region through the promotion of coordinated communication between national authorities and donors.
4. Promote joint analysis of the humanitarian situation and responses in the region.
5. Guarantee the commitment of civil society organizations in the design and implementation of actions, in coordination with and complementing actions implemented by national authorities, international agencies and the population in need of protection.
6. Propose and implement innovative and comprehensive solutions for populations of interest in the region.

Coordinated actions with civil society organizations make it possible to align the progress made by MIRPS with others in the region including the Regional Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants (in which some MIRPS countries also participate) and RedLAC.

PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector has a fundamental role in supporting the efforts of MIRPS member countries to address the challenges of protection and inclusion for internally displaced persons, asylum claimants, refugees, returnees and communities affected by displacement in the region. During 2021, the MIRPS countries have continued to implement actions designed to strengthen their relationships and partnerships with various private sector actors in Central America and Mexico, which began in 2020.

As a result of the work carried out during 2021, private sector initiatives have been made visible in a more integrated way in relation to the MIRPS priorities. The identified initiatives are in some key business sectors such as tourism and hospitality, the food industry, convenience stores, telecommunications, human capital services, customer service and others.

Engagement between the MIRPS countries and private sector actors has highlighted and positioned the actions being implemented by different companies at the regional level. This has also led to creating spaces for innovative collaboration between the MIRPS member countries and the regional private sector, which has translated into tangible results that benefit all asylum claimants, refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees in need of international protection. For example, as part of its support for the implementation of the MIRPS, an agreement has been signed between the General Secretariat of the OAS, Rotary Districts of Central America and the Metro Bethesda Rotary Club of the United States for the implementation of initiatives that provide employment for young Guatemalan returnees. Within the framework of the Solidarity Event for Forcibly Displaced Persons and the Communities that Host Them in Central America and Mexico, the private sector also demonstrated its commitment in a tangible way. Business organizations including Rotary International, FEMSA, Accenture, Western Union, Boston Scientific and ManPower Group announced specific contributions during this international solidarity event and reaffirmed their commitment to the protection of vulnerable people in the region.

In the framework of dialogue spaces between private and public sector actors, Regional Business Roundtables were

organized that initially focused on the opportunities and positive effects of the inclusion of refugees, returnees and displaced persons with protection needs in the local economies of Central America and Mexico. These events had a high level of participation from companies with regional operations in the MIRPS countries including Manpower Group, Western Union, FEMSA, corporate social responsibility such as CentraRSE in Guatemala (part of the Integrase Network in Central America), Americas Society/Council of the Americas and the Business Council of Latin America (CEAL), bringing together more than 200 entrepreneurs from the region, including the United States. As a result of this first Roundtable, 7 action areas were identified to strengthen public-private actions within the MIRPS:

- *Action 1: Improve the knowledge of employers so that they understand the regulatory and administrative framework relating to the labor rights of refugees, returnees and displaced persons.*
- *Action 2: Identify and verify the skills of refugees, returnees and displaced persons.*
- *Action 3: Develop and strengthen employability skills for refugees, returnees and displaced persons.*
- *Action 4: Match the skills of displaced persons, refugees and returnees with the needs of employers.*
- *Action 5: Provide equal opportunities in the area of employment and combat xenophobia that affects displaced persons, asylum claimants, refugees and returnees.*
- *Action 6: Improve dialogue and coordination between the private and public sectors to support the inclusion of displaced persons, refugees and returnees.*
- *Action 7: Publicize success stories that involve the integration of displaced persons, refugees and returnees and go beyond corporate responsibility actions.*

In a second stage, actions focused on further connecting existing initiatives in the private sector with MIRPS' technical work, based on the identified areas and the findings of the MIRPS Working Group regarding access to the labor market and professional certification. More concrete mechanisms were established to help guide companies regarding the hiring processes used in the public sector and to highlight the practical tools that have

been developed by the private sector to facilitate this recruitment. Experiences were shared by the Tent For Refugees Business Network, CentraRSE in Guatemala and Western Union in Costa Rica, as well as Accenture, Manpower Group and Boston Scientific and Telus International. All of these companies and organizations have already carried out a process involving information gathering, identification of challenges and good practices and the dissemination and implementation of business inclusion policies in private sector organizations in the region.

Based on the actions carried out in 2021 with private sector organizations in the framework of the MIRPS, the 2022 Regional Strategy for the Private Sector will focus on generating durable solutions for the MIRPS member countries and addressing the structural causes of displacement. Guided by the technical work undertaken by the MIRPS Working Groups and the areas of action defined in the business dialogues, the 2022 Regional Strategy for the Private Sector aims to strengthen dialogue with these partners in strategic meeting spaces, facilitate articulation with the MIRPS Support Platform led by Canada and mobilize the private sector in MIRPS solidarity events through signing cooperation agreements and agreeing to specific commitments. A series of products and practical tools will be designed and consolidated in a toolbox as part of this strategy, which will support the work carried out by the private sector that is focused on the generation of solutions for forcibly displaced persons in the framework of the MIRPS.

MIRPS SUPPORT PLATFORM

Two years after the establishment of the MIRPS Support Platform during the first Global Refugee Forum in 2019, the Support Platform has become a firm and concrete mechanism to mobilize the international community to support the MIRPS countries to further comprehensive protection and solutions and coordinated responses based on the shared responsibility principle to address forced displacement in Central America and Mexico.

As envisioned in the Global Compact on Refugees, the Support Platform is poised to redefine how the international community supports refugees and host communities and sets a mechanism to help galvanize action to respond to forced displacement. This approach seeks to ensure a broad base of support that includes not just States, but other actors who are critical to a comprehensive response such as development partners, civil society, the private sector, amongst others.

Current members of the MIRPS Support Platform are Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, the European Union, France, Spain, Switzerland, Uruguay, the United States of America, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB),

the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Organization of American States and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). [GDW1] Members contribute, whether through political, financial, or material support and in line with the operational priorities laid out by the MIRPS countries in the National Actions Plans.

During the first half of 2021, Spain as a first chair of the MIRPS support Platform, played a fundamental role in laying the ground for the operationalization of the platform, bringing together States and other actors to agree on a common plan, setting the objectives, and bolstering international cooperation to support the MIRPS countries to enhance protection of the forcibly displaced and expanding access to solutions.

Spain acknowledged that a regional response to forced displacement needs to incorporate a humanitarian and development dimension and made efforts to mobilize support from key development actors, with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) joining the platform during the Spanish chairmanship. Moreover, the World Bank Group (WBG) and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE in Spanish) participated in the Solidarity Event expressing their support to the MIRPS.

Four roundtables on strengthening asylum systems brought together in May experts from the Support Platform (the EU, Canada, Brazil, Colombia, and Spain) and from the MIRPS countries, under the umbrella of the Asylum Capacity Support Group. The tables were organized by the MIRPS Support Platform, with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), and its Training Center in La Antigua Guatemala that works for the creation of spaces for dialogue, learning and capacity building for officials from Central America and Mexico. In the Round Tables the following topics were discussed: 1. Shelter management; 2. Identification of international protection needs, case management and biometric registration; 3. Use of differentiated modalities in case processing and 4. Management of large refugee flows. These round tables were the continuation of a course on Asylum Applications Management and Refugee Integration that was facilitated by the Government of Spain in November 2020 in which over seventy government officials from the seven MIRPS countries participated.

In June 2021, the Governments of Spain, Costa Rica, and Guatemala, with the support of UNHCR the UN Refugee Agency, and the OAS organized the Solidarity Event for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities in Central America and Mexico held in San José, Costa Rica, on the margins of the 30th Anniversary of the Central American Integration System (SICA). The Support Platform mobilized the international community and reaffirmed its solidarity with forcibly displaced people in Central America and Mexico and with the MIRPS countries in the region. During the event commitments were presented at both

the humanitarian and development levels with substantive contributions totaling US\$110 million.

In July 2021, Canada assumed the leadership of the MIRPS Support Platform and established three main objectives (1) galvanize political, financial, technical and material commitments toward the fulfillment of the humanitarian and development needs identified by the MIRPS countries, (2) increase international visibility of MIRPS, and engagement in support of MIRPS from a wider range of actors (i.e. State and non-State actors), and (3) reinforce the Support Platform as an effective mechanism to mobilize comprehensive responses for the forced displacement situation in the region.

A key focus of Canada's term as Chair will be to advance the empowerment and protection of women and girls on the move, and it will press for enhanced and focused international cooperation through a series of high-level events and thematic workshops on key issues identified in the MIRPS national action plans, including a further MIRPS solidarity event.

STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF THE MIRPS BY THE OAS

The OAS General Secretariat has been closely following the alarming humanitarian and protection situation in Central America, which include mass mixed migratory movements and forced displacement of millions of people from Central American countries and Mexico in search of protection and assistance. This population consists of internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum claimants and returnees.

The OAS General Secretariat works to make more rights a reality for more people, based on the principles of solidarity and shared responsibility. The protection of asylum claimants, refugees and displaced persons in the Americas is a top priority in the hemispheric agenda established by OAS. Following this vision, and since the adoption of the Declaration of San Pedro Sula that led to the creation of MIRPS in 2017, as the MIRPS Technical Secretariat we have accompanied and supported work by the 6 Central American States and Mexico that are members of MIRPS in the implementation of their national and regional commitments, in partnership with UNHCR.

Specifically, over the past four years, we have supported the work that the Organization's permanent missions in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Panama have carried out to strengthen MIRPS through joint work with the Department of Social Inclusion and the teams in their countries responsible for implementing the commitments established in this comprehensive framework.

As part of this work, we have made our technical and political forum available to MIRPS countries for discussions

on lessons learned, good practices and possible ways of improving protection and solutions for refugees and displaced persons in the region. Using the key tools to position MIRPS in the Organization's strategic dialogue spaces between 2019 and 2021, the results of actions carried out by MIRPS States has been presented annually to the Committee on Legal and Political Affairs (CAJP). This space has highlighted the magnitude of the displacement crisis in the region and MIRPS has been strengthened as a reference point in the Americas for the coordination of responses to the shared challenges faced by these countries in their response to forced displacement. These discussions have highlighted the value of MIRPS as a platform for technical cooperation, the exchange of experiences and generation of knowledge between these countries.

MIRPS provides a space to seek regional and multilateral solutions to problems that transcend national borders and have different impacts at national and regional levels. MIRPS has also been a part of the hemispheric agenda. It has been consecutively recognized in the resolutions that have been adopted since 2018 by the Foreign Ministers of the Americas during the OAS General Assembly. This included the 2021 resolution sponsored by Guatemala. Part of this recognition refers to MIRPS as an exemplary model of collaboration and cooperation that has mobilized technical, political and financial support from the Member Countries of the Support Platform. MIRPS has produced tangible results for asylum claimants, refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees in need of international

protection. Work has been carried out to support MIRPS Member State Missions with the adoption of the Political Declaration from the MIRPS Annual Meetings. These statements represent the primary political communication from these States regarding the San Pedro Sula Declaration. Three Political Declarations have been adopted between 2019 and 2021, including the 2021 Guatemala City Political Declaration, which emphasizes the need to continue efforts that address the structural causes of displacement. This declaration also contains actions to protect and integrate displaced persons in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in MIRPS member countries.

In accordance with the joint work strategy proposed by the MIRPS States and the MIRPS Support Platform, the MIRPS Fund established by the OAS Permanent Council was made available for the first time at the Solidarity Event organized in 2021. This is one of the key mechanisms for raising resources and coordinating the support required by MIRPS countries to complement existing mechanisms at national and regional levels to address the displacement crisis in the region.

Through the Organization's inter-American forums and instruments, as part of the MIRPS Technical Secretariat we will continue to contribute our experience, knowledge, and convening power to promote all strategic hemispheric actions that further strengthen MIRPS as a regional and coordinated response mechanism to generate sustainable and lasting solutions for the protection of displaced populations in the region.



ANNEXES – NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

COMMITMENTS BY COUNTRIES

BELIZE

PROTECTION

- Ensure the implementation of Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) to facilitate the comprehensive identification and referral of persons with international protection needs
- Ensure that persons arriving at official border points, including at the international airport, are provided with essential information on the right to claim asylum and related procedures.
- Promote understanding amongst the general population of the right to asylum, foster a climate of tolerance and mutual coexistence.
- Guarantee that all refugees and asylum seekers are provided with access to birth registration
- Conduct a review of existing data availability, essential information needs, and potential digital tools and systems to integrate a comprehensive approach to Registration and Identity Management.
- Strengthen the timeliness, efficiency and quality investigation and adjudication processes of the national asylum system.
- Ensure the inclusion of up-to-date refugee and asylum seeker population data within national data, national development planning and implementation processes.

EDUCATION

- Ensure equitable access to primary and secondary education for refugees and asylum seekers on an equal basis as nationals.
- Support investments within the national TVET system, to ensure the delivery of demand-driven courses in key economic sectors associated with climate change, benefiting refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, and Belizean youths.

JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

- Provide access to employment opportunities in priority sectors of the economy to respond to the needs of the private sector and labor market

COSTA RICA

PROTECTION

- Presence at the border: Strengthen the agreement that exists between the DGME and UNHCR to maintain the current presence of personnel at border migration posts in Peñas Blancas, Los Chiles and Tablillas in the north, Paseo Canoas in the south; as well as extend it with at least one person in the ports of Golfito, Limón, Caldera and in both international airports.
- Regionalization of the Shelter Unit: Advance in the regionalization of the Shelter Unit in Upala, Liberia, Paso Canoas and Limón to decentralize the functions of this Unit.
- Strengthening CATEM: Ensure the allocation of funds for the maintenance of the infrastructure, equipment and administration of CATEM as a good regional practice as an alternative to administrative detention.

- Promote national or international public-public and/or public-private alliances for fundraising and response to the needs for legal assistance and sponsorship for applicants in procedures for determining refugee status.
- Project for the prevention of delays: Project for the prevention of delays: Increase the number of specialized officers in refugee matters, in at least 6 people for each of the instances.
- Strengthening the CVRR: Assign a full-time Specialized Legal Advisor to each Commissioner, by the respective Ministries in order to assist in the review of files received by the Unit of Shelter, and in the elaboration of draft resolutions of the CVRR.
- Modernization of the TAM: Establish the Migratory Administrative Court (TAM) with two specialized administrative sections: one for refugee matters and another in immigration.
- Documentation for refugee applicants: Submit the provisional identification document with DIMEX numbering and temporary work permit at the time of filing the application for the condition of refugee.
- Maintain no-cost documentation for the applicants for refugee status and reduce the cost of documentation for refugees.
- Guarantee the non-refoulement principle: Establish complementary protection or other mechanisms to guarantee the non-refoulement principle for people who do not meet the requirements to be recognized as refugees but should not be returned to their country of origin, because of reasonable risk of suffering harm.
- Adaptation of the RSD Procedures for people with disabilities: CONAPDIS will advise the DGME to develop a mechanism to assist asylum-seekers with cognitive, physical or sensory disabilities during the refugee status determination procedures.

EDUCATION

- Flexible requirements for academic training: The INA will develop an alternative mechanism to check the academic requirements and / or the matching of technical skills of refugees who want to enter technical training courses. Likewise, it will carry out joint actions with the private sector for the promotion of learning internships and the certification of competencies through dual training opportunities.
- Provision of alternative evidence for the recognition of academic degrees: CONARE will incorporate the Consular Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the agreement of understanding with UNHCR for the provision of alternative evidence for the formalization of the application for recognition of academic degrees and professional degrees in country of origin in favour of refugees.
- Technological Literacy Project: The Ministry of Culture, IMAS and the Ministry of Science and Technology will promote the technological literacy of asylum-seekers and refugees through literacy activities of the National Library System (SINABI) and the National Strategy of Costa Rica Digital (access to equipment).
- Project for the recognition of the contributions of the population to the culture of the host communities: The Ministry of Culture and Youth will strengthen the information and training processes of the cultural advisors of the local governments that are carrying out activities with population of interest, to promote the recognition of refugees to the cultural dynamics of the host communities.
- Refugee children in the National Music Education System (SINEM) project: SINEM will give free access to refugee minors to music education processes, including # to musical instruments.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

- Inclusion of a category of “refugee or asylum-seeker” in the Social Information Sheet: The Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion will instruct all institutions of the social sector and the National Registration System of Beneficiaries (SINIRUBE) to include the categories in their information sheets.
- Protocols for refugee assistance in the social sector: The Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion will provide technical support to all institutions in the social sector to establish protocols that allow the standardization of the assistance provided to refugees and asylum-seekers, and for the implementation of internal awareness processes that guarantee the application of these protocols at all levels within the institution.
- National programmes for the reduction of poverty: The Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion will include refugees and asylum-seekers in the poverty reduction programmes implemented by the Institute of Social Assistance.
- Protocol for the attention of refugee women: INAMU together with the DGME, PANI and UNHCR will develop a protocol for the assistance of women, adolescent mothers and victims of gender-based violence that allows the coordination and attention of refugees and asylum-seekers cases in Costa Rica; this will include women in Attention Centres.
- Protocol for the protection and attention of refugee children: The PANI, with support from UNHCR and DGME, will update the Protocol for the protection and attention of refugee children following international standards. The protocol shall include actions for the protection of unaccompanied or separated children and at risk of Statelessness.
- Fund for DNA testing: The PANI will develop a project for the creation of a fund for DNA testing for refugee families or asylum-seekers, to be used when in doubt of the filial link to prevent trafficking or other type of activities that affect children.
- Protocol for the elderly refugee population: The Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion in coordination with CONAPAM will manage the development of a specialized protocol for the attention of elderly refugee populations, allowing access to public services and the right to health.
- Protocol for the attention of refugees with problematic use of psychoactive substances: The IAFA will develop a protocol for the attention of refugee population in recovery centres for people with addition and under the supervision of the Institute.
- Solidarity networks for refugees: The Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion, with the collaboration of UNHCR, will promote the participation of civil society in the attention of refugees through research and professional practice initiatives with public and private universities.
- Methodology for the quantification of the state’s contribution to refugees: The Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN), with technical support from the OECD, will develop a methodology for quantifying the state’s contribution on refugees. Formulation, validation and implementation of a system of simultaneous generation of actual data on financial gaps to cover all the programmes available for refugees and asylum-seekers. Also, training for officers at institutional levels for the optimal use and analysis capacity that facilitates decision-making and the collection of resources in international cooperation.
- MINARE permanent team: The MINARE Technical Team will be a permanent mechanism for monitoring, evaluation and fundraising that ensures the sustainability of the MINARE’s implementation. The team will be coordinated by the Ministry of Governance and Police through monthly meetings. UNHCR will participate as a technical Secretariat.
- Temporary housing program: The Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements (MIVAH) will look for ways to incorporate

asylum-seekers into their services in order to facilitate a housing solution, with an inclusive approach.

JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

- Employment opportunities for LGTBI populations: The Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion, in coordination with the Costa Rican Chamber of Commerce and with the support of UNHCR, will develop a training and job placement program for refugees from LGTBI communities.
- Digital Consultation initiative for Work Permits: The DGME, in coordination with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the support of UNHCR, will create a digital consultation mechanism that allows refugees to certify the validity of their work permit to potential employers.
- Intermediation for the inclusion for refugees in the labour market: (a) The Ministry of Labour and Social Security will provide effective access to labour intermediation programs such as www.buscoempleo.go.cr, EMPLEATE Program, My First Job and PRONAE 4x4, in addition to the micro-enterprise support programs. (b) The National Labour Inspectorate will consider refugee persons in its procedures with the objective of ensuring that their labour rights and employer obligations are recognized on equal terms as nationals. (c) Informative actions will also be carried out on current legislation to improve the recognition of ID documents and reduce discrimination and xenophobia during recruitment and selection processes.
- Project for the promotion of entrepreneurship: The Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce will include ventures led by refugees in the Entrepreneurs Registry and will encourage their participation in business meetings and other activities organized by the Ministry to strengthen micro and small businesses.

EL SALVADOR

PROTECTION

- Creation and installation of shelters and shelters to serve internally displaced persons and deported persons in need of protection (with a focus on the family unit); that have adequate protocols for their management.
- Training of personnel in specialized legal assistance (economic, social and cultural rights), and on the protection of property and assets for populations of interest
- Review and update of existing protocols and roadmaps in the GAMI to include specialized care for vulnerable populations (children and adolescents, women, families, LGTBI population, persons with disabilities, elderly).
- Implementation of the single migratory registry by all institutions in the GAMI; design and implementation of a module on protection, to strengthen the identification and management of cases of deportees with protection needs (children and adolescents, women, families, LGTBI population, people with disabilities, elderly).
- Establishment of a training plan for the GAMI personnel, which fills the identified needs with the involvement of competent institutions according to their expertise.
- Creation, printing and dissemination of informative material on the services available in the GAMI.
- Training processes on the identification of people with protection needs, for the consular networks in Mexico, the

United States and Guatemala.

- Design of a protocol for the identification and assistance of people with protection needs outside the country, including roadmaps for the direct linkages with national services.
- Conduct training on international protection and Refugee Status Determination for DGME officers and child protection institutions at the borders and in other institutions involved.
- Strengthen the CODER Secretariat and Subcommittee, and increase their capacities for the analysis and resolution of applications.
- Design and disseminate educational materials on Refugee Status Determination in El Salvador.
- Establish a document that certifies that a person has started the Refugee Status Determination and is awaiting for a resolution.
- Review and update the protocol for the assistance for internally displaced persons, establishing roadmaps according to specific profiles and their needs, for monitoring cases and mapping existing services.
- Establish a specialized unit for displaced populations with technical teams trained to attend to those with different profiles within the DAV.
- Creation of the Single Registration of displaced populations and people at risk of forced displacement, carrying out annual statistical analyses.
- Update the study on internal displacement profiling.
- Develop studies and analyses on the types of dispossession of property and housing; analyse the legal, regulatory and institutional framework to propose possible protection actions
- Identify spaces for the installation of shelters for asylum-seekers
- Design and implement a strategy with a community approach, for monitoring protection services at local offices
- Design and implement contingency plans at the municipal level to generate early alerts and responses to forced displacement.
- Strengthen the community approach of local offices through interinstitutional and intersectoral coordination.
- Present the project for the creation of a Special Law for the Attention of Populations At-Risk of Forced Displacement and other regulatory frameworks that provide greater protection for internally displaced persons.
- Coordinate with COMURES for the elaboration of guidelines and principles related to the implementation of policies and roadmaps for the attention on forced displacement at the local level, to boost the participation of local governments in the response.
- Promote the development of a policy for the attention, protection and solutions for internally displaced persons at the national and local levels.
- Present the Law initiative for the granting of “International Protection and Statelessness”. Integration of the refugee population in El Salvador.
- Encourage the creation of spaces for dialogue, participation and consultation between the central and local government and the forcibly displaced population to promote their participation in the design of local, municipal or departmental plans or policies for comprehensive care.
- Promote, together with the municipalities, the creation or adjustment of mechanisms, programs, plans or local, municipal or departmental policies for humanitarian assistance and reception for internally displaced persons in prioritized municipalities that have a greater number of displaced population or at risk of being displaced.

EDUCATION

- Develop and implement an internal roadmap for the protection of displaced children and adolescents, and for at-risk teachers.
- Inclusion of variable on school dropout due to displacement

in the SIGES NID SYSTEM, to get reliable information on the magnitude of the impact on the educational community.

- Include courses on forced displacement caused by violence, and on primary psychological attention, in the training programmes for teachers.
- Implement psychosocial care programs to mitigate the impact of violence, with children and adolescents in contexts of social violence and at risk of dropping out of school.
- Design and implement an educational strategy in schools, to raise awareness on the inclusion of displaced children and adolescents.

HEALTH

- Design and implement information and awareness campaigns on the right of access to health for displaced persons, deportees in need of protection, refugees and asylum seekers.
- Preparation of a specialized protocol for comprehensive health care (medical and psychosocial) for displaced persons, deportees in need of protection, refugees and asylum seekers.
- Provide specialized training to health system officials on psychological, psychiatric and psychosocial care for people affected by forced displacement (internally displaced people, deportees in need of protection, refugees and asylum seekers).
- Coordinate comprehensive mobile care (Medical and psychosocial) for health services in shelters and reception areas to care for displaced people, deported people in need of protection, refugees and asylum seekers.
- Design a model of psychological / psychosocial care for people affected by violence (internally displaced people, deportees in need of protection, refugees and asylum seekers).
- Design indicators of internal forced displacement for inclusion in the MINSAL Information System for the analysis of the impact on health of internally displaced persons, as an input for the design of programs and interventions.
- Include within its policies and protocols of comprehensive health care (direct medical care, psychosocial care, care for chronic diseases, special health conditions) to guarantee the continuity of care and access to specific medicines for displaced people, deported people in need of protection, refugees and asylum seekers, without discrimination.

JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

- Design campaigns to inform and raise awareness on the rights of displaced populations and existing services
- Disseminate information to raise awareness in governmental institutions and the private sector about the rights and issuance of identity documents for asylum-seekers and refugees.
- Prioritize displaced and at-risk women and youth in employment rosters
- Strengthen and coordinate the Roundtable for Labour Insertion, and coordinate with different LGBTI associations and INSAFORP for the technical training of populations of interest.
- Awareness campaign with the private sector to promote the recruitment of LGBTI population.
- Expand and strengthen the entrepreneurship programme to support and sponsor displaced persons, asylum-seekers and deportees with protection needs.
- Create a Specialized Centre that promotes technical and vocational programs, access to tertiary education, livelihoods, and labour insertion (in coordination with the private sector) for displaced populations.
- Promote a programme for skills training for displaced populations.
- Design of a local integration model for refugees and asylum-seekers that includes legal, economic and social actions.
- Dissemination of the new Migration and Foreigners Law for the population nationwide

GUATEMALA

PROTECTION

- Strengthen the institutional capacity of the General Directorate of Migration / Guatemalan Institute of Migration, particularly those capacities related to attention and protection.
- Awareness raising and training of migration delegates, National Police, Army, Jurisdictional Bodies and border security personnel and airports in the field of international protection.
- Inclusion of refugee-related courses in the training programmes for authorities involved in the national protection systems, including information from the Migration Code, the Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents, and other international protection measures and instruments.
- Prepare and update the regulations and protocols for attention and protection of refugees and asylum-seekers, in accordance with the Migration Code, including information on refugees and other measures taken by the Government, such as the humanitarian visa.
- Strengthen the awareness raising and training processes for border migration delegates on the identification of people with protection needs.
- Preparation and distribution of informative materials on access to refuge and other systems of international protection and care for migrants.
- Strengthening of the Reception Centres for the identification (in situ) of returned Guatemalan people with protection needs and victims of rights violations in the returning process.
- Training and awareness raising of officials who work with the migrant population, for a comprehensive approach, taking into account the age, gender and diversity of the people, with special attention to unaccompanied girls, boys and adolescents, women at risk, LGTBI population, victims trafficking, the elderly and people with different abilities.
- Strengthening the governing institutions for the protection of children and adolescents, especially in border areas.
- Develop the Regulation of the Migration Code for the continuity of the permit mechanism for people in transit, in order to ensure regular transit through the country.
- Design, create and implement a mechanism for registering cases and complaints about human rights violations against migrants in transit through Guatemalan territory.
- Create and/or improve adequate spaces with interview rooms that guarantee the confidentiality of the information of asylum-seekers, as well as specialized and friendly spaces for children and adolescents.
- Expand the staff of eligibility officers that process refugee applications at the General Directorate of Migration / Guatemalan Migration Institute.
- Start the creation of a multidisciplinary team for the international care and protection of refugees and refugee applicants.
- Preparation of a diagnosis for the creation of open shelters in decent conditions, specialized for the population with international protection needs, with specialized and trained teams.
- Restructure the Temporary Foster Care Program, for the care of returned girls, boys and adolescents in transit with international protection needs.
- Strengthen inter-institutional and intersectoral coordination to expand basic service options to refugees and refugees.
- Create the international protection mechanism in transit for people at high risk who need support for safe and regular access to countries of refuge (MINEX-UNHCR)
- Include in the Institutional Strategic Plans, Multiannual Plan and Annual Operational Plan the provision of basic services to people with international protection needs.

EDUCATION

- Negotiation and implementation of regional and international

agreements for the recognition of study certificates with special attention to the specific needs and difficulties of refugees in presenting documentation from their countries of origin.

- Coordination of actions with local authorities and educational institutions throughout the country for the inclusion of children and young people into the national education system. These include awareness campaigns about the risks and consequences of the migration route; and the socialization of the guide for the attention of the student population on the move. Preparation and implementation of the roadmap for the attention of the Guatemalan migrant population in the process of accreditation and certification of labor competencies. Implementation and socialization of Ministerial Agreement 696-2017 which establishes “to validate the studies of deported Guatemalans who will continue their training in the National Educational System” (Agreement 696-2017 was repealed, by Ministerial Agreement 1753-2019 “Regulation of Equalization and Equivalences of studies at the levels of pre-primary, primary and secondary education, and in the subsystems of school and extracurricular education ”)

HEALTH

- Strengthening of the Directorate for the Attention to Migrants of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance.

JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

- Propose changes to the labour regulations to allow the access to work permits for refugees and asylum-seekers.
- Design awareness campaigns for the private sector and public officers on rights of refugees, especially on labour market and access to services (job fairs).
- Strengthening information campaigns for general public on labour rights and insertion of refugees and asylum-seekers.
- Prioritize the process and resolution of work permits requests for refugees and asylum-seekers.
- Facilitate access to Spanish language courses for refugee and refugee applicants.
- Create an intersectoral mechanism for the establishment of roadmaps and national strategies for the labour insertion of returned Guatemalans with or without needs of international protection.
- Give continuity to statistical studies and improve registration systems to understand the profiles of returnees, asylum seekers or refugees, including labour profiling, for their integration and, if necessary, internal relocation.
- Design awareness campaigns for the private sector on labor inclusion of returned Guatemalan migrants.

HONDURAS

PROTECTION

- Strengthen the capacity to identify people with international protection needs.
- Undertake training processes for migration public officials in border areas to strengthen their capacity to identify protection needs.
- Provide information material in offices and border areas.
- Increase the capacity of municipal officials who assist returnees, migrants and their families.
- Follow-up on the protocol to assist returnees/deportees with protection needs.
- Develop a referrals protocol to follow-up on cases of returnees with protection needs through the Municipal Units for the Attention to Returnees.
- Strengthen and update existing capacities of consular officials for the identification and referral of cases with protection needs abroad.
- Implement the assistance and protection roadmap to facilitate the reception, assistance and referral of cases, and strengthen the technical and financial capacities of the DPPDIV.
- Undertake awareness-raising activities for decision-makers on internal displacement and the assistance and protection roadmap.
- Continue strengthening humanitarian and legal assistance mechanisms
- Provide humanitarian and legal assistance at CAMIs at the national level.
- Develop an awareness-raising initiative for authorities and the private sector on the category of refugees and asylum seekers, and their rights.
- Strengthen mechanisms of referral and legal orientation abroad.
- Establish partnerships with free legal representations abroad to provide effective assistance
- Implement a roadmap to coordinate the actions and services provided abroad.
- Socialize protection services to Honduran population abroad and locally.
- Technical assistance to institutions that manage and implement programmes for the prevention of violence to guarantee the inclusion of a protection and prevention approach for forced displacement.
- Create a contingency plan in cases of massive displacements due to violence.
- Implement a humanitarian assistance mechanism articulated with the existing state response.
- Update the characterization study on internal displacement
- Establish a unique registration system for people who have been internally displaced by violence
- Strengthen the institutional response, through coordination and case referral
- Include displaced population in the prevention and protection in affected communities.
- Establish spaces for dialogue to achieve the inclusion of the population in prevention and protection mechanisms.
- Guarantee the participation of internally displaced persons for violence in the design and implementation of plans and policies public on displacement matters.
- Include the interests of refugees, as well as continuing to strengthen the capacities of their groups or organizations through the Refugee Commission.
- Promote initiatives for the participation of the Refugee Committee to incorporate your needs through the Commission of Refuge.

- Encourage the creation of communities of returnees at the local level
- Advance in the establishment of a mechanism for registering abandoned goods.

EDUCATION

- Establish a dialogue with the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Education to resolve obstacles in the access to employment and education for refugees and applicants for refugee status

JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

- Promote the reinsertion of returnees to livelihood programmes through the Municipal Units for the Attention of Returnees, at a central and local levels.
- Facilitate access to vocational training programmes and initiatives to generate income.

MEXICO

PROTECTION

- Increase COMAR's presence in INM Immigration Stations for a greater number of applicants for refugee status.
- COMAR will train INM personnel in airports, where there is greater flow of people requesting refugee status.
- Promote permanent information campaigns that inform about rights and the process for the recognition of refugee status, in a simple and understandable way.
- Provide training to public servants who assist or work directly with refugee applicants, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection, to ensure decent attention; institutions that make up the Interinstitutional Roundtable on Refugee and Complementary Protection will be prioritized.
- COMAR and UNHCR will promote the "Jaguar" information and awareness campaign on the rights of applicants and refugees in the areas of greatest transit and destination.
- SE-SIPINNA, the DIF and the PFPNNA will strengthen alternative care centres for temporary housing, preventing the use of Migration Stations for shelter.
- INM, COMAR, SE-SIPINNA and UNHCR will seek for alternatives for shelters to lower the use of the Migration Stations, particularly for family groups with children.
- Improve coordination mechanisms between the authorities that assist children (COMAR, INM, PFPNNA, SIPINNA) to facilitate the identification of international protection needs and access to Refugee Status Determination.
- The INM and the Procurator's Office for the Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents (federal, state and municipal) will apply the specialized protocol for the care of children developed by COMAR, UNICEF and UNHCR; also for interview techniques to identify needs of international protection and for the referral of cases to the COMAR or to the competent authority.
- Increase the operational capacity of the federal, state and municipal Child Protection Offices, principally in the states with the largest migrant and asylum-seeker population, (Chiapas, Tabasco and Veracruz).
- The PFPNNA, through SIPINNA, will generate coordination mechanisms with state and municipal protection offices to standardize criteria that regulate the determination, coordination, monitoring and restitution plans for child protection.
- The SIPINNA, from the Protection Commission for migrant children and asylum-seekers, will promote the harmonization

of the General Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents with the Law on Refugees, the Migration Law and the Complementary Protection and Political Asylum regulations.

- The SIPINNA, from the Protection Commission for migrant children and asylum-seekers, will promote the harmonization of the General Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents with the Law on Refugees, the Migration Law and the Complementary Protection and Political Asylum regulations.
- CONAVIM will promote access to services for female asylum-seekers or refugees in the Justice Centres for Women (CJM), by coordinating with the 3 governmental levels. CONAVIM and COMAR will carry out actions aimed at preventing and eradicating gender-based violence against girls and women.
- COMAR, UNHCR and UNICEF will review and standardize the interview format for children seeking asylum for quality assurance during the interviews; a guide for the use of appropriate language with children will be developed and used in all interviews and questionnaires.
- COMAR, UNHCR and UNICEF will develop and share support materials with appropriate language for children, to be used during eligibility interviews and other questionnaires addressed to this population of interest.
- Disseminate a handbook of available shelters (public and private) by federation, for asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection.
- Review and accelerate current procedures for the issuance of documents for asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection.
- Guarantee the right to the identity to asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection, through the issuance of the temporary and/or permanent CURP, and establish coordination mechanisms between RENAPO, INM and COMAR to strengthen management, implementation and training; also, review and make regulatory changes, for the assignation of CURPs in a more efficient and simple way.
- INM, COMAR and UNHCR will promote measures to accelerate the signing process at the COMAR and INM offices, in accordance with the obligations of people requesting refugee status.

• EDUCATION

- SEP, INEA and COMAR will promote actions that allow the formal inclusion of children seeking asylum, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection to mandatory school education (preschool, primary, secondary and preparatory), as well as access to educational programs nationwide through the INEA.

HEALTH

- The Ministry of Health and COMAR will carry out actions aimed at risk prevention and access to health services for asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection; the CNPSS will promote strategies for Primary Health Care, Childbirth, puerperium and new born care, prevention of gender-based violence and addiction, by training public officers on the specific needs of this population.
- Perform actions aimed at ensuring access to mental health services for asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection.
- Promote the inclusion of asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection, in all reforms to the General Health Law, secondary laws and administrative provisions, in terms of access to health services and medicines, and consideration of the documentation issued by the COMAR and the INM, instead of social security, for the populations of interest.
- UNDP, UNHCR and PAHO will conduct studies of the capacities of public health services in the host communities in southern Mexico (mainly Chiapas and Tabasco), identifying

opportunities to strengthen them and meet the needs of the host communities and populations of interest.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

- Together with COMAR and UNHCR, the participating institutions of the Interinstitutional Roundtable on Refugee and Complementary Protection will develop materials that describe and explain how to access the programs and services available to the populations of interest.
- COMAR, together with the participating agencies in the Interinstitutional Roundtable on Refugee and Complementary Protection, will promote access to public services and programs at the federal and state levels, through the revision of guidelines and the creation of integration modules
- Development and dissemination of awareness mass campaigns, through television, radio and social networks to counteract xenophobic manifestations against migrants and refugees, including information on the mechanisms to file complaints with CONAPRED for discriminatory acts committed by public or private servants.
- CONAPRED will provide courses and workshops to public officers and media to avoid prejudiced
- and stigmatizing news coverage and communication for asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection.
- INDESOL will promote asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection, in the activities organized by civil society organizations, and will review social joint venture programs for the inclusion of this population.
- Promote actions for the inclusion and issuance of credentials for elder asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection, to assure their access to services offered by INAPAM at the national and state levels.
- COMAR, in coordination with UPM, will generate and publish statistical information including data disaggregated by sex, age, place of origin, and other variables, with the objective of analysing the characteristics of the populations of interest for its inclusion to programs and services.
- UPM, in coordination with COMAR, will promote collaboration and joint efforts between governmental institutions, academia and civil society organizations for the generation of studies and information linked to the design and evaluation of public policy related to populations of interest.
- The Welfare Secretariat will promote actions for the inclusion of asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection in all social programs, especially in “Sembrando Vida” and “Emergencia Social”.

JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

- Within the scope of their competencies, the agencies will promote the incorporation of asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection, to public and private institutions for job training and certification processes.
- UNHCR will carry out projects aimed at peaceful coexistence in the main host communities, and will foster spaces for cultural and learning exchange, which will favour the integration of the population of interest.
- Promote the recruitment of asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection for job vacancies available in the National Employment Service; disseminate the calendar of job fairs organized nationwide.
- Promote actions to include asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection to housing programs.
- CNBV will promote access to financial services for asylum-seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection with the Association of Banks of Mexico.

PANAMA

PROTECTION

- Strengthen training processes for public servants at the national and local levels on international protection, in order to enhance their capacity to identify and refer people with protection needs. Special focus will be provided to SENAFRONT, SNM, SENAN, ONPAR, INAMU, SENNIAF, Ombudspersons Office and local authorities in priority areas.
- Promote an agreement between the Ministry of Safety and Ministry of Government (ONPAR) to formalize and set in motion referral protocols and guidelines between SNM – ONPAR, and SENAFRONT – ONPAR. In order to provide a timely response to the identification and referral of people with international protection needs in border areas and airports, and in line with what is established in Executive Decree N.5 of 2018
- Improve the registration system (TRE) to facilitate a cross-cutting revision of asylum claims among authorized public institutions, ensuring confidentiality.
- Reduce the backlog of claims submitted to ONPAR under the jurisdiction of Decree N. 23 of 1998, which gave way to the development of Law N. 5 of 1977, that approves the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol.
- Facilitate the management of larger human and financial resources of ONPAR in order to ensure the capacity to provide a response to an increasing number of asylum seekers, which includes, inter alia, personnel for project management, data management, lawyers, social workers, psychologists and other relevant professions.
- Undertake meetings with technical teams of CONARE to analyze cases to be presented during ordinary meetings of the National Commission for the Protection of Refugees, with the aim of ensuring a swifter response for cases admitted by ONPAR.
- Undertake brigades to issue documents in areas of difficult access, to renew refugee identity documents.
- Promote the elaboration of a legal instrument so that people recognized as stateless can opt for a permanent residence and Panamanian nationality.
- Promote an attention and referral roadmap and a protocol between the Ministry of Government (ONPAR) and the National Institute for Women (INAMU) and other partners for refugee and asylum-seeking women, survivors of SGBV.
- Engage legal clinics of Law faculties in private and public universities in providing free orientation accompaniment and legal assistance to asylum seekers.
- Promote the university social service and or internships within ONPAR for University of Panama students undertaking careers in law, psychology, social work, archives, public administration, among others.

EDUCATION

- Share information with asylum seekers on workshops, courses and trainings provided by the National Institute for Professional Training (INADEH), as follow-up to the agreements reached in the beginning of 2019.
- Match tuition costs for refugee students who are undertaking a bachelor's degree or technical careers at University of Panama with the cost for a national, recognizing the special protection condition of this population and their recognition by the Panamanian state.
- Promote the creation of an instruction manual 'Procedure and placement tests' for the operation of Decree 1225 of 2015

HEALTH

- Promote and establish an attention roadmap and protocol between the Ministry of Government (ONPAR) and Ministry of Health (Department of mental health and other services) for the attention and referral of refugees and asylum seeker for whom it is required as a result of their mental health.

• SOCIAL PROTECTION

- Launch the incorporation of actions within existing social policies for highly vulnerable refugees.
- Promote existing programmes to cover basic needs with key actors (including food and temporary shelter) for extremely vulnerable people.
- Promote the participation and consultation of communities in the design of activities and public policies and enhance joint work with identified facilitators within communities.
- Promote anti-xenophobia campaigns for different entities for the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Panama.
- Promote community-based integration initiatives for refugees and host communities.

JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

- Manage the certification of extension of work permits in cases where people recognized as refugees present a request before the Ministry of Labour and Labour Development (department of migration), with 30 days or more prior to the expiration of their permit, and that the extension request is in progress.
- Promote the issuance of work permits for asylum seekers admitted to procedure by ONPAR
- Promote the issuance of drivers licenses for asylum seekers who have possession of their claim certification issued by ONPAR
- Search for income generation alternatives for refugees. Focus will be given to institutions, the private sector and the civil society to explore alternatives and put in motion concrete strategies for the economic inclusion of refugees.
- Raise awareness within the private sector on refugees seeking employment.
- Incorporate asylum seekers admitted to procedure and refugees within the database of the Ministry of Labour, for their participation in job fairs and job exchange.
- Manage the viability of opening bank accounts for refugees



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