

Paraguay

March 2022

Hosting some **7,274 refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants, most of them from Venezuela**, UNHCR works with the Paraguayan government and its partner agency to **guarantee access to territory, asylum regularization and family reunification** while also providing **basic goods and services** in cash and in-kind assistance to persons of concern (PoC). Moreover, UNHCR

With its partners **facilitates the socio-economic integration of refugees and migrants, providing seed capital for small scale businesses** and providing orientation to access the labour market. Additionally, UNHCR through its partner's presence in border areas such as Encarnacion and Ciudad del Este, provides information, guidance, and assistance to those entering the country by land.

The National Refugee Commission (CONARE) of Paraguay has granted refugee status to Venezuelan nationals through group recognition. Due to the impact of COVID-19, the humanitarian response has been strengthened since 2020.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

7,274

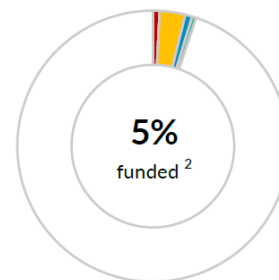
Refugees	4,489
Asylum-seekers	875
Venezuelans displaced abroad	1,910

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

FUNDING

USD 49.2 MILLION

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



- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

UNHCR PRESENCE

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

Staff in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Uruguay:

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



Photo: UNHCR/ Analía Kim. Venezuelan family starts a new life in Asunción.

Results in 2021

- In 2021, UNHCR through its partner agency provided support to **1,128** persons in vulnerable situations through **multi-purpose cash assistance** and some other **1,136** with **in-kind assistance** to cover their basic needs, while some **71** people received **livelihoods training or support**.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR works in close coordination with Government counterparts, namely with the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the multi-sectorial National Refugee Commission (CONARE)** to provide protection and seek durable solutions for refugees. UNHCR is a member of CONARE.
- “**Semillas para la Democracia**” is UNHCR’s partner implementing projects aimed at providing basic humanitarian assistance and supporting socio-economic inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers and Venezuelan nationals.
- UNHCR works together with other UN agencies, such as UNFPA, IOM and UNAIDS.
- UNHCR co-leads jointly with IOM the **National Response Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela where 8 partners –UN, CSOs, Refugee’s and Migrants’ organizations** implement the Response Plan 2022 for the **Southern Cone** complementing Governmental capacities in main urban and border areas of the region.

Main Activities

Protection & Durable Solutions

- Support the Government in the institutional **strengthening of the national asylum system**, in particular of the CONARE’s Secretariat through the implementation of activities in line with the 2014 Brazil Plan of Action. UNHCR and its partner in Paraguay have provided resources aimed at strengthening CONARE’s technical Secretariat and promoting efficient refugee status determination procedures (RSD). Capacity building activities aim to ensure due process in admission, registration, eligibility interviews, RSD assessments and right to appeal. UNHCR support has contributed to the exponential increase in the rate of recognition of refugee status in Paraguay, mainly of Venezuelan nationals.
- Promote the implementation of a **border protection strategy** by CONARE and civil society at the Paraguay-Brazilian and the Paraguayan-Bolivian borders to identify and refer persons of concern (PoCs) to UNHCR, prevent their *refoulement*, ensure access to the territory and to the refugee status determination procedure, and support them through counselling, shelter and humanitarian assistance among other services.
- Advocate for the implementation of the national law for the **protection of stateless persons** and the establishment of a statelessness determination procedure in line with the pledges made by the Government of Paraguay including those under the 2014 Brazil Plan of Action.
- Promote a greater engagement of relevant Government institutions in the development of a comprehensive strategy towards the **local integration of refugees**.
- Through cooperation with the **Entrepreneur Training Centre of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security**, refugees and asylum-seekers with an entrepreneurial profile receive **technical and training and guidance** to set up individual, family or collective businesses. *Semillas para la Democracia* complements this initiative by awarding **seed capital** to entrepreneurs and offering tailored orientation Labour rights and available employment opportunities.
- Pilot project with **Fundación Capital**, an international development organization specializing in social and economic inclusion, to **boost income generating activities and financial inclusion** of asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants, through the provision of a combination of different skills and tools to enhance and sustain entrepreneurial capabilities.
- Strengthen the engagement with the UN system to ensure the inclusion of PoCs in the national development plan and the **UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework**.
- Provide **capacity building and training** to relevant counterparts.

Towards effective participation

Participatory assessments 2021 involved **6 focus groups** where **59 refugees and migrants - mostly from Venezuela and Cuba**, living in Gran Asunción Area, Encarnacion and Ciudad del Este - shared their views on current protection risks and barriers to rights access, as well as proposals on how to face them. The main concerns addressed during the exercise were: access to territory, access to documentation and RSD procedure; access to accommodation, employment and socio-economic inclusion. In addition, the difficulties and challenges faced by the Pdl during the COVID-19 pandemic were discussed, as well as the possibilities for accessing vaccines.

Humanitarian Assistance & Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

- UNHCR's **Durable Solutions Strategy** aims to boost opportunities for self-reliance, integration and empowerment of PoCs and to facilitate the development of a state-owned comprehensive solutions policy. Structured in macro areas the strategy in Paraguay aims to: 1) advocate for the inclusion of strategic needs in public policies and social protection schemes; 2) create enabling conditions for decent work and wage earning; 3) enhance routes for access to financial services; and 4) promote a conducive environment for business creation.
- UNHCR, through its partner *Semillas para la Democracia*, supports refugees and migrants in their integration process **providing legal orientation, psychosocial support, generation of integration capacities, and economic support** to access documentation, basic goods and services, so they can achieve its progressive insertion into the local economy.
- "*Semillas para la Democracia*" has engaged four private sector partners, as well as financial service providers, specialized civil society organizations, line ministries and the UN, to **strengthen economic inclusion of persons of concern** through access to employment, self-employment and financial inclusion.
- Partnership with the **Association of Entrepreneurs of Paraguay**, a local organization dedicated to support community networks of entrepreneurs, and **Fundación Capital**, to promote the exchange of experiences between entrepreneurs at different stages of their businesses, with emphasis on peer-to-peer education.
- Despite the impact of COVID-19, the access to the territory and to the RSD procedure, the strengthening of the humanitarian response (access to shelter, food, water and hygiene kits) in border and urban areas and the implementation of socio-economic inclusion activities remain as operational priorities for UNHCR in Paraguay for 2022.

Special thanks to major donors who have provided funds for the Regional Office and at the regional and global level in 2022:

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