



# III Annual Report of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework

MIRPS 2020

Implementing the Global  
Compact on Refugees in Central  
America and Mexico



Comprehensive Regional  
Protection and Solutions Framework

Addressing forced displacement in Central America and Mexico

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# ACRONYMS

## General

COVID-19: Virus SARS-CoV-2  
 CRRF: Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework  
 ECLAC: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean  
 GRF: Global Refugee Forum  
 IADB: Inter-American Development Bank  
 ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross  
 ICT: Information and communication  
 ILO: International Labor Organization  
 IOM: International Organization for Migration  
 LGBTI: Lesbians, Gays, Bisexual, Transsexual, Intersex  
 MIRPS: Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework  
 NGO: Non-Governmental Organization  
 NRC: Norwegian Refugee Council  
 NTT: National Technical Teams  
 OAS: Organization of American States  
 OCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
 PAHO/WHO: Pan American Health Organization/ World Health Organization  
 PTP: Pro-tempore Presidency  
 RCM: Regional Conference on Migration  
 UN: United Nations  
 UNDP: United Nations Development Programme  
 UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations  
 UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund  
 UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
 UNODC: United Nations Office on Drug and Crime  
 USAID: United States Agency for International Development

## Belize

ETPT: Education, technical and professional training  
 LTC: Labor Training Center  
 SOP: Standard Operating Procedures

## Costa Rica

CATEM: Temporary Attention Centres for Migrants  
 CCSS: Costa Rican Social Security Fund  
 DGME: General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs  
 FIS: Social Information Sheet  
 IMAS: Institute for Social Welfare  
 INEC: National Institute of Statistic 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  
 TAM: Administrative and Immigration Court

## El Salvador

DNAVMF: National Directorate for Victims attention and Forced Migration  
 ESCO: Salvadoran Agency for International Cooperation  
 GAMI: Management for Migrant Attention  
 OLAVS: Local Offices for the attentio of victims and forced migration  
 SIGES: Information System for Educational Management  
 SUI: Health Information System

## Guatemala

AMN: National Immigration Authority  
 ANAM: National Association of Municipalities of Guatemala  
 CONARE: National Commission for Refugees

DRER: Department for the Recognition of Refugee Status  
 IGM: Guatemalan Migration Institute  
 INGUAT: Guatemalan Tourism Institute  
 MINEDUC: Ministry of Education  
 ORMI: Office for International Relations on Migration  
 PRONACOM: National Competitiveness Program of the Ministry of Economy  
 RENAP: National Registry  
 SBS: Secretary of Social Welfare from the Presidency of the Republic  
 SOSEP: Secretary of Social Work from the President's Wife

## Honduras

CAMI: Center for the Attention of Irregular Migrants  
 CAMR: Center for the attention of Returned Migrants  
 CAT: Temporary Isolation Center  
 CENISS: National Social Information Center  
 DIPPDV: General Directorate for the attention and protection of internally displaced persons  
 INFOP: National Institute for Professional Training  
 INM: National Migration Institute  
 SEDH: Secretariat of Human Rights  
 SENPRENDE: Services for Entrepreneurs in Honduras  
 SINAGER: National Risk Management System  
 SRECI: Secretariat of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation  
 UMAR: Municipal Units for the attention of returnees

## México

CAS: Center for the attention of asylum seekers  
 CECATI: Training for Industrial Work  
 CNBV: National Banking and Stock Commission  
 CNDH: National Human Rights Commission  
 COMAR: Mexican Commission for Refugees  
 CURP: Unique Population Registry  
 DIF: National System for the Integral Development of the Family  
 IFDP: Federal Institute for Public Defense  
 INEA: National Institute for Adult Education  
 INM: National Migration Institute  
 INSABI: Health and Wellbeing Institute  
 PFPNNA: Federal Attorney for the Protection of Children and Adolescents  
 PPNA: Attorney for the Protection of Children and Adolescents  
 RENAPO: National Registry of Population  
 SEGOB: Interior Secretariat  
 SE-SIPINNA: Executive Secretary of the National System for the Protections of Children and Adolescents  
 SEP: Public Education Secretariat  
 SNE: National Employment Service  
 UPM: Migration Policy Unit  
 UPMRIP: Migration Policy Unit, registration and Identity

## Panamá

CAPADES: Panamian Chamber of Social Development  
 CONARE: National Commission for Refugees  
 MIDES: Ministry of Social Development  
 ONPAR: National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family



## A. PRESENTATION

Since January 2020, the Government of El Salvador has had the honour of representing the countries of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS, by its Spanish acronym) as the Pro Tempore Presidency. We knew we were accepting a big challenge, but we were committed to continue to build on the progress made by the preceding Presidency and to a series of commitments taken on as a region in the first Global Refugee Forum at the end of 2019.

We started the year with a promising outlook, guided by a regional work plan focused on strengthening partnerships with various actors, and with the recent establishment of the Voluntary Fund for the MIRPS by the OAS and the shaping of the Support Platform as concrete spaces for help in our region.

However, at the end of the first quarter, the challenges faced by MIRPS countries worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to PAHO/WHO, out of the ten countries with the highest number of COVID-19 cases, five were in the Americas in June. In this context, asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees with protection needs faced new risks to their health, security, access to rights and resilience.

MIRPS countries lead our national responses under the core premise that the response to the COVID-19 pandemic must reach all people, including refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and returnees with protection needs. In this regard, each technical team conducted an evaluation of their national commitments, establishing priorities for the use of their limited resources and to focus their efforts.

The Pro Tempore Presidency promoted the incorporation of new partners and promoted collaborations with donors interested in financially, technically and materially supporting the needs of MIRPS countries in compliance with their national and international commitments.

This III annual report compiles important progress in the implementation of national commitments in Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and El Salvador in 2020. It also presents the proactive measures taken by MIRPS countries to include people who were forced to flee and those at risk in COVID-19 response plans, as well as those in social support programmes to relieve the economic impact that the pandemic and lockdown measures have had.

In addition, it highlights the regional and global developments in which MIRPS has positioned itself as a pioneering initiative to coordinate responses to common challenges, to position and raise visibility of the displacement crises that the region faces, and to share experiences and lessons learned that are critical to mutual growth.

Also, this report is a confirmation that the countries that are part of the MIRPS will continue to favour the creation of comprehensive solutions and shared responsibility coordinated responses to forced displacement in Central America and Mexico. In 2021 we will continue working with the Government of Guatemala as the incoming Pro-tempore Presidency, to create security and prosperity conditions in which people do not feel threatened, can grow without fear and are not forced to flee their homes due to violence.

*MIRPS Pro-tempore Presidency, El Salvador*

## B. REGIONAL CONTEXT

At the beginning of the year, the region faced numerous challenges in the provision of protection, health, education and social protection services for persons displaced as a result of three principal crises: violence and persecution gangs or ‘maras’ in northern Central America, the socio-political crisis in Nicaragua, and mixed-movements, including those origination from outside of the continent in need of international protection.

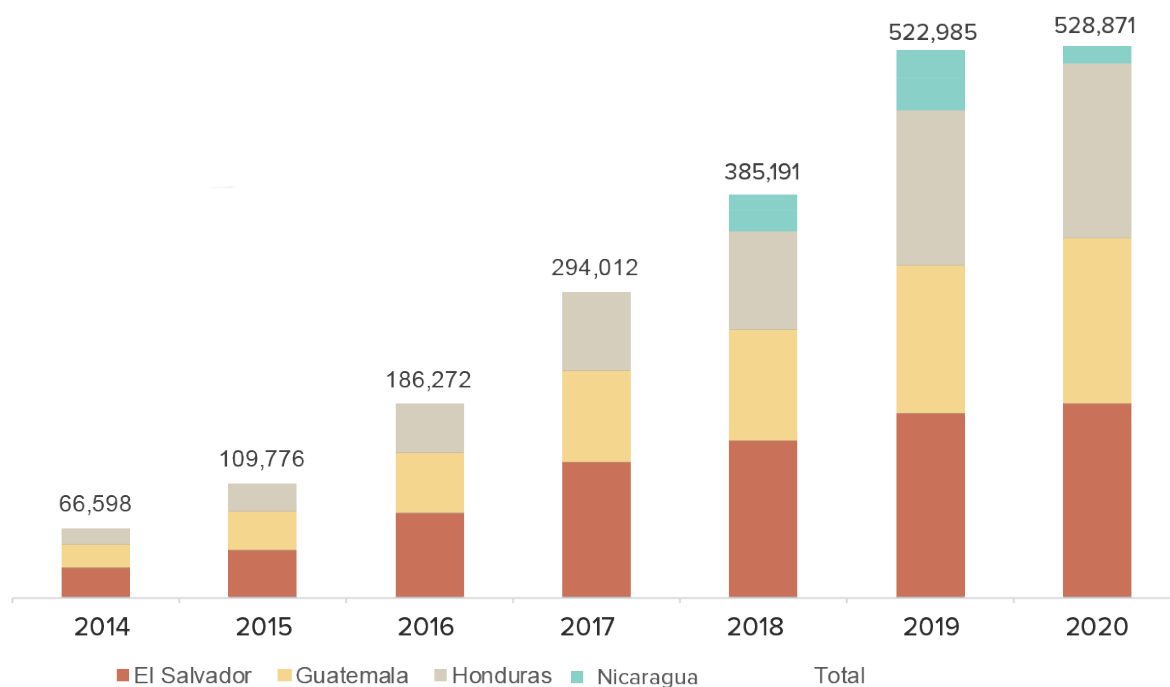
The perpetuation of violence and insecurity in northern Central America has resulted in ongoing forced displacement both within and across borders. Although countries reported progress in the decrease of registered homicides compared to 2019, other types of violence persisted. International human rights organizations, including IACHR and OHCHR have highlighted how the socio-political crisis in Nicaragua has resulted in the forced displacement of tens of thousands persons, who have been forced to flee and seek international protection due to the persecution and human rights violations.[1] According to the figures of host countries, at the end of 2019, there were more than 100,000 Nicaraguan refugees and asylum seekers in the world; including in Costa Rica, Panama and Mexico, where asylum systems remain under significant pressure[2].

In addition, the region has faced the regular transit flow of mixed movements of people from across the region and from other continents; including those with international

protection needs, registering an average of 24,000 people who enter irregularly through the Darién Gap this year. They move through Panama and other MIRPS countries, putting pressure on shelters and national registration systems. This principally includes people from Haiti, Cuba, Venezuela, and from African and Asian countries.

The complex displacement situation in the region was compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic with MIRPS countries registering high levels of transmission per capita, exacerbating protection needs. Governments took measures to contain transmission and protect the health of all the population, which included closing borders and limitations in mobility. Despite these restrictions, expulsion factors persisted in a number of countries, with violence and insecurity having intensified in certain communities at risk of displacement. Displaced persons and community leaders reported that criminal groups used the lockdown to strengthen their control of communities; intensifying extortion, drug trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence. In Nicaragua, new forms of persecution emerged[3], making access to asylum all the more important.

As Gillian Triggs, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, stated, preventing COVID-19 transmission is not contrary to ensuring access to asylum systems for those who flee to save their lives. As in other regions in the world, it has remained a challenge to ensure respect for the rights



of forcibly displaced persons, including right to be afforded safety and protection, and to request asylum.

Overall, there has been a significant decrease in asylum applications in the region. In Costa Rica, asylum applications from Nicaraguan nationals dropped from an average of 3,000 a month at the beginning of the year, to an average of 29 in April, while asylum requests in Mexico dropped from 3,400 in January to 380 in May. This has been exacerbated by the establishment of special measures and the hardening of migration and asylum policies in certain countries in the region, that have resulted in the deportation or expulsion of people with potential protection needs to other countries. This has been especially concerning during the pandemic, where transmission risk is high, and xenophobia and discrimination levels have increased.

Equally, in host countries, many displaced persons who had achieved a degree of social and economic inclusion suffered setbacks. Quarantine measures undermined their livelihoods, particularly in informal employment that a large proportion of people forced to flee are engaged, resulting in a rise in food insecurity. Millions of people, both from displaced populations and their host communities, not only lost their only sources of income, but faced the risk of eviction, together with challenges accessing healthcare, medication and education. In a number of instances, refugees and asylum seekers have considered returning to the countries of origin, due to a lack of resources and access to essential services, while the drivers of their initial displacement remain.

In addition, several countries have been subject to the effects of climate change, with natural disasters, including tropical storms Amanda and Cristobal have a devastating impact upon El Salvador, Guatemala and southern Mexico, together with hurricanes Eta and Iota severely affected Honduras and Nicaragua. These environmental factors have compounded the ongoing public health and economic crisis resulting from the pandemic; which together with unceasing violence, has worsened the humanitarian situation affecting thousands of people.

Amidst these many challenges, government institutions and civil society have sought to adapt, providing online or telephone support, while strengthening community-based approaches to ensure access to displaced persons who needed humanitarian assistance. This work has been facilitated by the MIRPS, which has expanded strategic partnerships with a diverse range of partners, to address

the challenges in the region, through protection and an emphasis on finding long-term solutions for forcibly displaced persons.

The scale of the forced displacement crisis—aggravated by the pandemic—and the projection of a likely increase in the number of displaced persons seeking safety and protection, once cross-border movements are regularized, requires the continuous strengthening of partnerships in 2021. As the OAS Secretary General, Luis Almagro stated, by understanding the challenges posed by the pandemic, solidarity and cooperation has acquired a new meaning, renewing the impulse to ensure collective action that brings together a wide range of actors and strengthens multilateral spaces, regional processes and collaboration, as the only effective way of ensuring a comprehensive response for all.

*Technical Secretariat UNHCR-OAS*

*Notes:*

[1] See, among others, IACHR, *Forced Migration of Nicaraguan Persons to Costa Rica*. September 8, 2019, paras. 1 and ss; OHCHR, *Situation of human rights in Nicaragua: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner (A / HRC / 42/18)*. September 3, 2019, para. 5; UNHCR, *Guidance Note on the Flow of Nicaraguans*. August 2018; OHCHR, *Human Rights Violations and Abuses in the Context of Protests in Nicaragua: April 18, 2018 - August 18, 2018*. August 2018, para. 108; IACHR, *Grave Human Rights Violations in the Framework of Social Protests in Nicaragua*. June 21, 2018, paras. 220-230.

[2] MIRPS, *Quarterly dashboard July-September 2020 [EN/SP]*, page 1; UNHCR, *More than 100,000 people forced to flee Nicaragua after two years of political and social crisis*. March 10, 2020.

[3] See UNHCR, *COVID-19 Leads Nicaraguan Refugees to Hunger and Despair*. August 28, 2020; IACHR, *Two years after the MESENI was installed, the IACHR recalls pending human rights obligations in Nicaragua*. June 23, 2020; and UNHCR, *More than 100,000 people forced to flee Nicaragua after two years of political and social crisis*. March 10, 2020.





**THE **MIRPS**  
IN THE  
COUNTRIES**

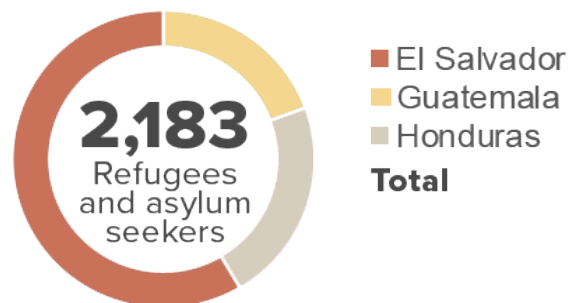
# 1. BELIZE

Prior to the onset of COVID-19, Belize was already experiencing fiscal and economic pressures, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. As a country largely dependent on tourism, an economic contraction of 13% is envisaged in the year ahead. In addition, the agriculture and fisheries sectors, continue to be negatively impacted by climate change, increasing vulnerability amongst a population of some 408,000 persons. These combined domestic pressures have limited progress in the implementation of a progressive national refugee policy.

Following the declaration of a state of emergency in March, all border - including the international airport, were closed to mitigate the spread of the virus. Despite the restrictive policies, initial registration data recorded some 100 persons seeking asylum in the country during the first quarter of the year, with an increase in claimants originating from Honduras. At the same time, institutional arrangements were made to ensure the continued legal stay of registered asylum-seekers whose documents expired during the national lockdown.

Throughout the year, the functions of the MIRPS National Technical Team have brought together line ministries (Immigration, Human Development, Education); national institutes (Statistical Institute of Belize; National Institute

for Culture and History); civil society (Help for Progress, Belize Red Cross, Humana People to People, Human Rights Commission of Belize, Belize Network of NGOs), UN agencies and the OAS. The government has reiterated its conviction that the protection and integration of refugees is both a national commitment and a shared responsibility of the international community, requiring robust and predictable technical and financial assistance. Such support is considered essential to enable the country to enhance best practices and offer solutions that benefit refugees, asylum seekers and their hosts communities.



## Relevant indicators

INDICATOR	REPORTED IN 2019	2020
Number/proportion of refugees and members of host communities, benefitting from livelihoods/skills training/job placement programmes	217	355
Number of persons with international protection needs with official documentation allowing them to access basic services and social programmes	3,370	2, 729*
Proportion of boys, girls and adolescents with protection needs and from local population who access primary/secondary/tertiary quality education through the national system**	Datos no disponibles para 2019	Primary education 97% Secondary Education 57% Tertiary Education < 10%

\* This reduction is a consequence of a verification exercise conducted in late 2019.

\*\* Source: Profiling of Persons of Concern in Belize: 2018 – 2019, UNHCR

## Achievements and challenges



### Protection

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been limitations in the implementation of several national commitments. As part of efforts to strengthen information campaigns on the right to seek asylum at border entry points, a focus was placed on content development and production, while mapping suitable display locations across the country. This has also involved consultations and joint planning with operational partners, including representatives from civil society, to inform a wider mass information strategy that will support the delivery of asylum-specific and regular migration-specific information activities and related products.

The development of Standard Operating Procedures defining a referral pathway from the point of entry, and throughout all steps in the asylum process was successfully concluded. In addition, the design and preparation of a second round of training for immigration and other law enforcement officials in the identification and referral of person of concern, related tools, techniques and practices was undertaken. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, in-person trainings were placed on hold, with the expectation to switch to a virtual platform to ensure successful implementation.

To inform the integration of persons of concern within national development planning processes, the mapping and consolidation of population data throughout the year has facilitated the verification of the active refugee and asylum seeker caseload in the country and informed the preparation of a Mapping and Profiling Report. The content is subsequently being used to inform inter-ministerial planning and programme design and has facilitated initial consultation with development partners.

In line with a commitment to explore opportunities for the provision of technical assistance, the government has requested support to strengthen its national asylum capacity, which includes techniques for refugee status determination, and the preparation of written evaluation reports for the review and consideration of applications. In addition, consultants have continued in the review and analysis of complex asylum cases, as part of a commitment to reduce the backlog of asylum claims.



### Jobs and livelihoods

While strengthening the asylum system remains a principal concern, strengthening access to livelihoods and education opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers remains a priority to enable greater self-sufficiency and local integration, while individuals await the outcome on their cases. Inter-ministerial consultations have continued concerning access to formal labour opportunities for persons of concern. The piloting of temporary work permits remains pending.

As a result, planning has focused on the delivery of livelihood initiatives in collaboration with international organizations and civil society. This has included as a standard, a cycle of English language training, followed by referral to formal technical vocational training and/or basic business training followed by access to small starter kits to support entry into the informal economy. Noting that opportunities for enrolment in such programmes is below overall demand, the scaling of such initiatives is planned, as part of the wider national education sector response.



## Social inclusion (education, health and 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 on an equal basis with nationals. At the same time, barriers remain for those with serious or chronic illnesses, to ensure consistent access to tertiary health care.

Primary education remains tuition free for all children, regardless of their migratory status. Access to secondary education remains inconsistent and requires further investment, with school enrolment levels among refugees and asylum seekers lower than among Belizeans within the same communities, particularly, for the 12 – 17 age group. Aggravating this situation has been restrictions on movements and the closure of schools, forcing many to convert to online education modalities, which requires major investments in ICT systems, hardware, and software. In the context of the pandemic, it remains a national priority to institute measures to keep those who are already

### Quantification

While Belize has demonstrated its efforts to respond to displacement through its National Action Plan, and is investing in these areas, additional resources are required to fully and sustainably scale to its intended impact to address forced displacement.

The State-led quantification exercise supports increased effectiveness of national planning through stakeholder coordination and consensus on resource required to operationalize the National Action Plans and national strategies to address forced displacement. The results are used to promote an evidence-based dialogue within relevant Belize government institution as well as with external stakeholders on financing national approaches to forced displacement and widening the basis for support.

Based on the initial phase of the quantification in 2019 which established a framework and methodology to quantify the financial resources necessary to implement the National Action Plan, in 2020 Belize continued to analyze the investment required support the inclusion of refugees and persons with protection needs within national development efforts. This process is led by the National Technical Team and local implementing partners with technical support from UNHCR.

enrolled in school and open avenues of learning for those who have dropped out or are at risk of doing so.


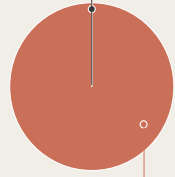
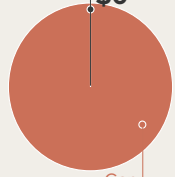

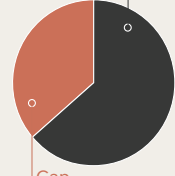

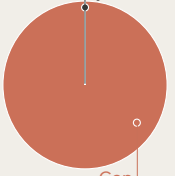
Access to technical-vocational education and training; the form of post-primary education most preferred by eligible asylum-seekers, is currently limited. Equally, further investment is needed in coordination with partners, to provide ongoing technical and operational strengthening of the national TVET system; while ensuring equitable access for refugees and asylums seekers, to ensure that services are responsive to labour market needs, and support the development of key sectors within the economy.

In addition to the quantification analysis of financial needs and gaps, a financing strategy is important to identify potential sources of financing and implementing partners for activities identified in the priority areas. In the continued development of the financing strategy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economic Development are key actors to engage international cooperation actors and promote the inclusion of the specific needs and potential contributions of persons of concern to the national development of Belize.

Included in this section is a summary of the national quantification exercise in selected focus areas, highlighting specific objectives and activities as well as the national investment and required additional financial support. Additional information on the Education focus area, specific activities and mechanisms for implementation can be found in the 2020 MIRPS Concept Notes document.



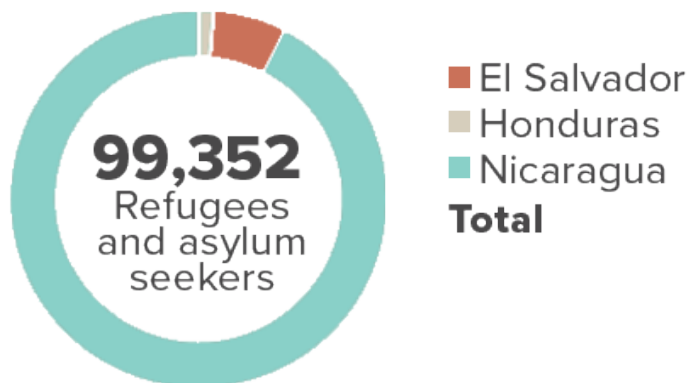
Read the [MIRPS concept notes](#) for more information

	OBJECTIVES	BENEFICIARIES	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	REQUIRED FUNDING*
	<b>Education</b>			Total <b>\$2,596,861</b>
	Develop a sustainable green economy through the growth of demand-driven technical and vocational training in key economic sectors associated with climate change, benefiting refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and Belizean youth	Phase 1 - 1,148 asylum seekers, refugees and migrant youth  Phase 2 – 1,406 refugees, asylum seekers, migrant youth and Belizean nationals	Ministry of Education, Youth, Sport and Culture; Cayo Centre for Employment Training (CET), Institutes for Technical Vocational Education and Training (ITVET) and the private sector	State investment <b>\$0</b>   Gap <b>\$2,596,861</b>
	<b>Social protection</b>			Total <b>\$1,587,846</b>
	Ensure humanitarian assistance and social protection for the most vulnerable populations.	1,081 refugees, asylum seekers and persons with international protection needs	Ministry Human Development- Women and Family Support Department; UNHCR; UNICEF	State investment <b>\$0</b>   Gap <b>\$1,587,846</b>
	<b>Protection</b>			Total <b>\$690,000</b>
	Strengthen the asylum system	2,299 refugees, asylum seekers per year	Ministry of Immigration/ Refugees Department; UNHCR; Belize Bar Association, Human Rights Commission of Belize Belize Network of NGOs	State investment <b>\$440,738</b>   Gap <b>\$249,269</b>
	<b>Jobs and livelihoods</b>			Total <b>\$1,000,573</b>
	Promote entrepreneurship	865 refugees, asylum seekers and persons with international protection needs per year	Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Development (BEST)	State investment <b>\$0</b>   Gap <b>\$1,000,573</b>

\* The amounts are required financing estimates for the implementation of the needs identified by the State. The national investment are estimates and do not represent budgetary obligations. Amounts in USD. Exchange rate: 2 BZE to 1 USD.



## 2. COSTA RICA



Forced displacement dynamics in the region have imposed new challenges on Costa Rica. The country has recorded a sustained increase in asylum applications per year since 2015, which has put pressure on a small asylum system. This situation has seen its highest peak since April 2018, when the country received a significant increase in asylum applications as a consequence of the socio-political crisis that has affected Nicaragua since then. At the moment, Costa Rica is a host country to 99,352 persons, of whom 90,614 are asylum seekers (82% are Nicaraguans) and 8,738 are refugees. This situation is framed within a complex economic context in which Costa Rica faces significant challenges in economic, fiscal, employment and security matters.

In addition to this difficult situation, the COVID-19 pandemic created new challenges and deepened existing ones. On March 16th, the Costa Rican Government declared a state of national emergency through executive decree number 42227-MP-S and called on state institutions to focus on addressing the current national sanitary situation. Regarding the management of human mobility, the decree stipulates the closing of all national borders. This, together with the measures to restrict people's mobility imposed in the Central American region, resulted in a decrease in the number of asylum applications received by Costa Rican authorities. According to data from the General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs (DGME, by its Spanish acronym), before the entry into force of the sanitary measures, the monthly average of asylum applications was 4,300. After these measures were established in April 2020 there were 29 applications.

Additionally, border closures had an impact on the transit of mixed movements through the national territory. Due to the impossibility of continuing their transit to their destination, the Costa Rican state assumed the temporary protection of approximately 402 people of various nationalities, who were transferred to Temporary Attention Centres for Migrants (CATEM, by its Spanish acronym) to address their basic needs and to mitigate the risk of virus transmission.

### *Changes and Developments in the Legal and Institutional Framework of Forced Displacement*

Despite the national emergency, the Costa Rican state continues to respond to asylum seekers and refugees. Although all services are working, it has been necessary to adapt the provision of these services to protect the life and health of all people. The Refugee Unit, for example, closed its public service offices and continued its procedures of formalization of refugee applications virtually and at borders. Although it is intended to facilitate asylum seekers and refugees' access to the Costa Rican asylum system, this measure has created additional barriers to procedures and information for people who do not have access to technology or Internet.

To ensure the protection of asylum seekers with expired documentation and to guarantee the principle of non-refoulement, DGME authorized the automatic extension of temporary asylum seeker cards, work permits and refugee cards, benefiting approximately 61,000 people<sup>1</sup>. Eligibility interview appointments were re-scheduled to avoid risk of transmission to the people of interest and the Refugee Unit staff. Likewise, and to protect the asylum seekers' right to work, the automatic renewal of expired work permits was authorized, and new permits can be applied for remotely by completing a form on the DGME's website.

### *Public Policy Initiatives to Confront Forced Displacement*

In order to address the flow of asylum seekers and migrants in the COVID-19 context expected after land borders are opened, the Costa Rican Government is working on the development of a mechanism known as the "Protocolo de

<sup>1</sup> According to data from the General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs Refugee Unit, this measure has benefited 61,000 people. This number includes people who requested their refugee application card and work permit for the first time in the period between March and November 2019, and who had to renew their documents after one year, i.e. from March to November, 2020. Similarly, it has been benefited approximately other 30,000 people who had to renew their documents from previous years.

Zonas (Zones Protocol)”. The objective of this initiative is to establish shelters for movement and healthcare to potential asylum seekers and migrants in conditions of vulnerability. The Zones Plan proposes the creation of three spaces to receive, triage and care for people who have just entered the territory and do not have an address in Costa Rica. The Costa Rican Government has established partnerships with different United Nations agencies in the country to have their technical and financial cooperation in the development of this initiative.

Conversely, the measures taken by the Government to prevent COVID-19 transmission have had a significant impact on the country’s economy. The unemployment rate reached a historical level of 24.4%, and the underemployment rate was 24.6% during the second quarter of 2020. To mitigate the economic impact, mainly on the most vulnerable, the Costa Rican Government has implemented a variety of measures to protect the jobs of wage workers, independent and informal workers, and micro and small businesses.

Among these measures, which are also available for asylum seekers and refugees, we can observe the following: suspending employment contracts; reducing workdays; teleworking for the private and public sector; the Plan Proteger (Protect Plan) for workers affected by COVID-19; readjusting loans; suspending contributions to social security; advance withdrawal from the Employment Savings Fund; expanding the workplace assessment risk policy for workers affected by COVID-19 and their families; funding to launch and reactivate businesses; and extending the payment of capital, interests and polices for small companies affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

2 National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC, by its Spanish acronym). Continuous Employment Survey (ECE, by its Spanish acronym). Moving Quarter. May-June-July 2020, Leading Indicators. Vol. 3, Year 1, September 2020 <https://www.inec.cr/sites/default/files/documentos-biblioteca-virtual/reece-mjj2020.pdf>

3 National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC). Continuous Employment Survey (ECE). Moving Quarter. May-June-July 2020, Leading Indicators. Vol. 3, Year 1, September 2020 <https://www.inec.cr/sites/default/files/documentos-biblioteca-virtual/reece-mjj2020.pdf>

4 *Plan Proteger* was introduced on April 9th of 2020 as a measure to mitigate the economic and employment impacts brought on by the national emergency due to COVID-19. The plan consists of temporarily delivering an economic amount according to the person’s vulnerability. The Costa Rican Government permitted asylum seekers with valid work permits and refugees to apply for this benefit.



## Relevant indicators

INDICATOR	REPORTED IN 2019	2020	COMMENTS
Average processing time for asylum seekers (from registration until final decision).	<b>3.5 years</b>	<b>4 years</b>	<p>The application process for refugee status includes the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Request an appointment for immediate formalization by email. Before COVID-19, it was processed by a call centre.</li> <li>- Period between the application and the appointment date to formalize: 6 months</li> <li>- Period between the moment the form is filled (registration) and the interview: 1 year.</li> <li>- Period between the interview and the case decision: from 6 months to 1 year.</li> <li>- Period between the repeal and the repeal decision: 1 year.</li> </ul> <p>Estimated period from the time the form is filled in until the file is sent to the Administrative Migration Tribunal (TAM, by its Spanish acronym)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Period that the TAM has to resolve appeals related to asylum, from the moment the file is received by the TAM: 6 months.</li> </ul> <p><i>According to the General Immigration and Foreign Affairs Law, the period for resolution of appeals is 3 months once they are received by the TAM; however, in 2020, the average period in which appeals were resolved was 6 months. Most appeals have been resolved within 3 months, but the unresolved ones arise from the fact that the files have been sent without enough documentation or the previous procedures have been incomplete, and in other cases because it was impossible to schedule necessary oral hearings due to security measures resulting from Covid-19**.</i></p>
Number of people in need of protection that have official documentation that allows them to access basic services and social programmes.	<b>26,835*</b>	<b>78,698</b> (Formalized applications)	<p>People in need of international protection that have formalized their asylum application:</p> <p>2018 (27,993)            2019 (39,404)            2020 (11,301) as of September 2020</p> <p>27,155 people that have expressed their need for protection but haven't yet achieved the formalization of their asylum application (as of August 13th, 2020). They are thus protected from refoulement and allows access to services, particularly those under the age of 18.</p> <p><i>*Most of the applications formalized since 2018 are still being processed and are pending resolution.</i></p>
Number/Proportion of people seeking asylum with respect to the population.	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<p>The General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs (DGME) reports 90,614 asylum seekers, which represents 1.8 % of the national population (5,111,238, according to the INEC).</p>

INDICATOR	REPORTED IN 2019	2020	COMMENTS
The proportion of refugees and asylum seekers that are registered in the social security system (Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS, by its Spanish acronym) as employees, employers or self-employed workers (formal employment).	<b>18,834*</b>	<b>11,717</b>	The reported data represents the total amount of authorizations and work permits issued for refugees or applicants for that condition****, and which give access to social security in any of the previous categories.
Number or proportion of refugees or asylum seekers that live in poverty or in extreme poverty according to national social registries.	<b>2,477</b> in extreme poverty <b>1,542</b> in poverty	<b>2,731</b>	The Joint Social Aid Institute (IMAS, by its Spanish acronym), through the Social Information Sheet (FIS, by its Spanish acronym), informs a total of 2,731 people seeking refugee status and refugees in their social records that live in poverty and in extreme poverty. ****.
Number of people in need of protection with educational opportunities through grant programmes for studying and that have social records.	<b>421</b>	<b>686</b>	IMAS's records*****, reported 686 asylum seekers or refugees living in poverty or in extreme poverty that were beneficiaries of money transfers so that children and adolescents could remain in the formal education system. The benefit of AVANCEMOS (Let's Go Forward) seeks to promote the permanency and reintegration in the education system so as to reduce poverty, avoid child labour and revert the processes of falling behind and dropping out of school in the secondary education system of Costa Rica. The benefit was granted to 327 people during the period of January to September 2020. The benefit of CRECEMOS (We Grow), which was created in 2019, aims to broaden opportunities for people living in poverty to access and remain in the education system, to help expand education coverage in early childhood and have an impact on reducing poverty and inequality. In the period from January to September 2020, it was reported that 359 people received the benefit.

\* Se reportan datos desde el 1 de enero al 11 de septiembre 2019

\*\* Datos sistematizados desde el 1 de enero a septiembre del 2020

\*\*\* Datos sistematizados desde el 1 de enero al 13 de agosto de 2020

\*\*\*\* Se reportan datos del periodo enero-octubre 2020

\*\*\*\*\* Estos datos corresponden al periodo enero-septiembre 2020.

\*\*\*\*\* Datos del IMAS corresponden al periodo de enero - septiembre 2020,

## Achievements and challenges



### Protection

The area of protection includes commitments related to accessing the Costa Rican asylum system, documentation and assistance provided to asylum seekers and refugees. During the national emergency due to COVID-19, commitments in this area have become more relevant, and they reflect greater progress in their implementation in relation to other areas.

To reduce the period of processing asylum applications, the DGME has taken actions to increase the institutional capacity for processing files and to reduce delays that include the following: i) the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding with UNHCR to increase personnel that assists in processing applications in the Refugee Unit; ii) the application, pending joint definition of the Refugee Unit, the Restricted Visas and Refugee Commission, the Administrative Migration Tribunal and UNHCR, of well-founded case profiles, which are processed more quickly, creating not only a reduction in wait times but also a significant increase in the recognition rate and iii) the use of resolutions per family group.

The presence of the DGME at migration points has been strengthened when it comes to identifying people in need of international protection. With regard to commitments to decentralize, since 2019, the Refugee Unit regional office has worked in the northern zone to facilitate people's access to the Costa Rican asylum system, which helps people avoid paying extra costs to submit their asylum application in the central offices of San José. According to the administrative guidelines in relation to the health emergency, from March 16th, new asylum applications are processed at the northern and southern borders.

In relation to the commitment regarding the strengthening of the Temporary Attention Centres for Migrants (CATEM), the Costa Rican Government has strengthened the Centres' structures located in the northern and southern border to assist asylum seekers and migrants in vulnerable conditions. This investment allows the Costa Rican state to provide assistance to people that circulate in the country as part of mixed movements that have increased during the last years. Official data of the DGME indicate that, since September 2019, approximately 56,000 people of different

nationalities, including Cuban, Haitian and from African countries, have circulated through Costa Rica on their journey to the north. The closing of national and regional borders as part of the health measures implemented by Central American countries has hindered the transit of these people to their destination since March 2020, and they have remained in these centres. Since then, the Costa Rican state has responded to these people's basic needs in the context of the pandemic.

In relation to documentation and, specifically, to the agreement related to documentation costs, the Costa Rican state guarantees that these documents are free of charge for asylum seekers. However, the document for refugees costs USD\$68 per person, which is outlined in the DGME regulations, and its removal requires a legal reform that it is still pending. Nonetheless, the DMGE allows for the possibility to exempt the payment of this sector in exceptional cases and when the person specifically requests it.

The institutions that provide assistance to specific populations of asylum seekers and refugees have made progress in the creation of assistance or guidance procedures. In this way, and thanks to interinstitutional coordination, there is already a protocol for the protection of and assistance to refugee children and adolescents, including measures to protect those who have travelled alone or were separated from their families or who are at risk of statelessness. In the same way, measures have been taken to make progress in the commitments to assist and respond to asylum seekers or refugees with problematic use of psychoactive substances and to adapt procedures for determining refugee status of people with disabilities. This aims to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in the asylum system and to ensure that due process is respected.

Assisting people in need of international protection in the context of pandemics is still a priority for Costa Rica. However, the country's socioeconomic context presents significant challenges to sustain the response. Therefore, the Costa Rican state requested technical help from the MIRPS Support Platform to identify good practice in the

assistance of large movements of asylum seekers and to adjust processes in the circumstances of COVID-19 and post-COVID-19. In addition, the current administration is working to implement a plan to comprehensively address people in need of international protection at the border so as to guarantee access to the Costa Rican asylum system, to state programmes and healthcare.



## Jobs and livelihoods

In relation to integration and livelihoods, challenges have been identified in the formalization of an interinstitutional agreement with the DGME for using information and creating a digital platform for digital consultation about work permits of asylum seekers.

Concerning the agreement about the labour mediation programme for refugees, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MTSS) is working to create new alliances with the corporate sector and civil society organizations. One of

these initiatives is the “Intégrate al Empleo” (Get Employed) programme, which represents an interinstitutional effort to promote the inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees in the Costa Rican labour market. In September 2020, the MTSS together with UNHCR, the UN Agency for Refugees and the civil society organization Fundación Mujer launched the second edition of the programme. However, the context of generalized economic damage required the development of new opportunities in coordination with the private sector.



## Social Inclusion (Education, Health and Social Protection)

In relation to commitments to social inclusion, incorporating the variable of asylum seeker and refugees in the social information sheet (FIS) of the Joint Social Aid Institute (IMAS)<sup>5</sup> has ensured that people in need of international protection can access institutional offerings under conditions on par with national equivalents. This measure also permits gathering socioeconomic and demographic data of these populations and its registry as potential beneficiaries of social programmes.

To promote the integration of asylum seekers and refugees, greater involvement of public universities in these efforts was advocated. Universities present opportunities to promote the integration of these populations in Costa Rican society through access to formal education, the promotion of multiculturalism and the development of technical skills for entering the labour market. As a result of the administration of the Vice Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion, reconciliation was possible with the higher education public institutions to explore possible

areas of integration of forcibly displaced persons through direct assistance to these populations, their academic offering, research opportunities and social action schemes.

In relation to health, the Costa Rican Government formalized an agreement with UNHCR to provide temporary health insurance to 6,000 asylum seekers and refugees with chronic health conditions. To date, these programme beneficiaries have access to healthcare services in public health centres throughout the country. Concerning the national emergency due to COVID-19 and because of its tradition of protecting the human rights of all citizens in the country, no matter their migration status, Costa Rica has taken measures to secure the inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in the national response. In this way, the Costa Rican Government specifies that every person has access to measures of prevention, testing and treatment against COVID-19. The project is a contribution to the country's strategy to combat pandemics by guaranteeing vulnerable people's access to healthcare.

<sup>5</sup> Governing body in the creation and execution of the social and human promotion policy.

## Quantification

To ensure the sustainability of the MINARE<sup>6</sup> and secure the state resources necessary to integrate refugees and asylum seekers, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN by its Spanish acronym) pledged in the framework of MINARE to develop a method that quantifies the investment of Costa Rica in people in need of international protection. In addition, this practice makes it possible to identify the level of participation in each of the state institutions and to appeal to other areas of society, such as the private sector, civil society, the academy and faith-based groups, so that they support the response.

Based on the quantification exercise in 2019, in the second stage of the national quantification exercise, the MINARE National Technical Team has assessed the current context of displacement and the challenges to respond within the framework of the sanitary emergency due to COVID-19.

As a result of this analysis, ENT (National Technical Team) MINARE determined the appropriateness of continuing with the focus areas selected for the first stage of the exercise in 2019, which prioritize health, social protection, and protection. The Ministry of National Planning and Economic

Policy (MIDEPLAN) leads the exercise, in coordination with appropriate institutions, to define the activities that will be quantified within each of the focus sectors.

An important component of the 2020 financial year is the development of a financing strategy to determine potential partners and sources to finance the gaps identified in the quantification analysis. This strategy will be developed under the control of the institutions in charge of managing international cooperation in Costa Rica, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy.

Additional information on focus areas, specific activities, and implementation mechanisms can be found in the document Concept Notes MIRPS 2020 here: (UNHCR add QR code)



Read the [MIRPS concept notes](#) for more information

<sup>6</sup> The Protection and Solutions Response to Refugees in Costa Rica (MINARE, by its Spanish acronym) is the national chapter of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). Created through a process of national consultation with a wide range of sectors of Costa Rican society, MINARE frames the commitments acquired by the Costa Rican Government for the attention and the comprehensive response to people with international protection needs.

OBJECTIVES	BENEFICIARIES	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	REQUIRED FUNDING*
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### Health

Total  
**\$3,033,333**

<p>To ensure effective access to national health services for refugees and asylum seekers who are economically vulnerable and have specific health needs.</p>	<p>10,000 asylum seekers and refugees</p>	<p>Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS), UNHCR</p>	<p>State investment <b>\$0</b></p> <p>Gap <b>\$3,033,333</b></p>
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### Social protection

Total  
**\$1,478,052**

<p>To ensure effective access to IMAS programmes for asylum seekers and refugees in extreme poverty and poverty.</p>	<p>2,306 asylum seekers and refugees</p>	<p>Social Welfare Institute (IMAS)</p>	<p>State investment <b>\$836,397</b></p> <p>Gap <b>\$641,655</b></p>
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### Protection

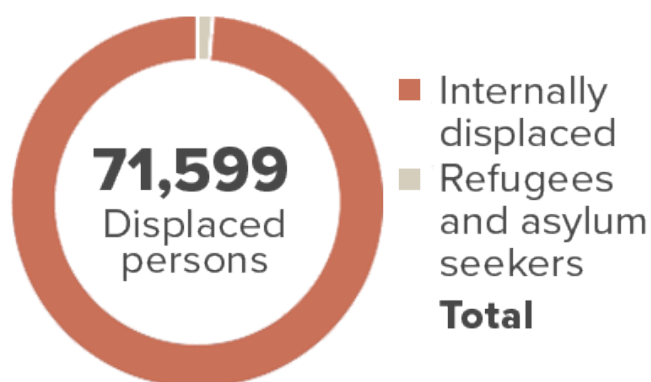
Total  
**\$3,454,840**

<p>To strengthen the institutional capacity of DGME to provide services to asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants through the construction of the northern area CATEM within the framework of the sanitary emergency due to COVID-19.</p>	<p>7,000 persons including asylum seekers, refugees and migrants</p>	<p>General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs (DGME)</p>	<p>State investment <b>\$2,149,613</b></p> <p>Gap <b>\$1,305,227</b></p>
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\* These amounts are estimates of the financing required for the implementation of the needs identified by the State. The stated amounts are estimates that may change due to institutional budgetary allocations. Amounts in USD.



# 3. EL SALVADOR



El Salvador was one of the first countries to adopt measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, promoting actions to preserve the life and health of the population, providing safety and detecting COVID-19, providing monetary and in-kind support to the population, especially the most vulnerable groups.

This situation has implied an unprecedented effort by public institutions dedicated to addressing the emergency, exceeding their capabilities in many cases, due to financial and technical limitations. The country has re-opened its economy, keeping biosecurity measures in place, and encouraging the population to keep in mind that efforts at this stage must be doubled to prevent the spreading of the virus.

In addition to this complex scenario, internal forced displacement has continued to take place during months of lockdown, and it has been a challenge to identify them. Refugees and internally displaced persons are part of the groups that are most vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19. Considering this reality, the country has continued its efforts to provide protection and assistance, prioritizing some actions included in the MIRPS National Plan and working on the establishment of an interinstitutional road map to

guide the process.

Likewise, and committed to addressing the forced internal displacement situation in the country, El Salvador approved the Special Act for the Comprehensive Attention to Forcibly Internally Displaced People in January 2020. This act's protection framework is a landmark in the region's approach to this phenomenon. The act specifies the creation of a National System for the Comprehensive Attention to and Protection of Forcibly Internally Displaced People, which is responsible through its bodies of issuing, implementing and evaluating the National Prevention and Protection Policy for forcibly internally displaced persons.

The country is advancing on the regulation of the law, despite the technical and economic challenges posed by the sanitary emergency, to ensure its prompt implementation. Its implementation will make it possible to provide comprehensive and efficient services so that victims of forced internal displacement can begin their lives again with dignity and security.

Additionally, with the belief that the approach to forced displacement in Central America will only be effective under the principles of international solidarity and shared responsibility, work is currently underway to define an Act to Provide International Protection in El Salvador. This will seek to regulate and provide more orientation in the recognition of the status of refugee and statelessness, and the granting of complementary protection.



## Relevant indicators

INDICATOR	2020
Number/proportion of people in need of international protection who have been identified, assisted, and referred in border/transit areas.	<b>4 applicants whose petition was presented at the border.</b>
Average processing time for asylum seekers (from registration to final decision).	<b>Approximately 1 year.</b>
Number/proportion of people in need of protection that have received official documentation that allows them access to basic services and social programmes.	<b>4 applicants whose provisional card is authorized by DGME.</b>
Family units at risk or displaced in priority intervention municipalities.	<b>317</b>
Number of returnees/deported in priority intervention municipalities with programmes to support security and dignity conditions.	<b>178 returnees with protection needs assisted by DNAVMF.</b>
Proportion of violence victims in the 12 months prior who notified their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms.	<b>6,210</b>
Cases at risk and displaced according to reported infringement modalities.	<b>317</b>

## Achievements and challenges



### Protection

During the first year of MIRPS implementation in El Salvador, it was decided to focus on the strengthening of protection mechanisms and frameworks for forcibly displaced persons. The result of this effort was compliance with protection commitments from the National Plan, including the approval of the Special Act for the Comprehensive Attention to Forcibly Internally Displaced Persons in January 2020. As a result, a regulation and execution protocol proposal were developed, as well as an outreach plan with the institutions and organizations involved in its enforcement.

Likewise, priority has been given to strengthen operational response capacities of national institutions, such as the

National Directorate for Victims and Forced Migration (DNAVMF, by its Spanish acronym) and its Local Offices for Victims and Forced Migration (OLAVs, by its Spanish acronym). Through hiring and specialized training of staff on forced displacement, it is expected to provide more effective services to victims. There is also a shelter to assist forcibly internally displaced persons. This facility will be established in the months ahead, and management protocols will be defined. It has also been planned to identify new host shelter locations.

Similarly, there has been progress on the establishment of a new specialized unit in DNAVMF for displaced persons

\* Data by IOM from January to June, 2020

or persons at risk of displacement, defining the necessary teams for its work, contributing to the effort by the current multi-disciplinary team on forced displacement within DNAVMF. The unit will be made up of two teams: 1) a protection team, mainly in charge of attending displaced population or people at risk of displacement in the emergency phase, and 2) a reintegration team, which will design long-term solutions, establish partnerships, and articulate and coordinate work with other public and private entities.

Conversely, different actions to help deported persons with protection needs are being undertaken, among others: trainings for the Migrant Attention Management (GAMI, by its Spanish acronym); adaptation of spaces and staff hiring to improve services to this population; preparation and distribution of informative material about available services; and development/updating of protocols for identification, documentation and reference of cases at the borders.

Given the emergency created by COVID-19 and the need for public institutions to address the situation, the implementation of MIRPS in the country has faced technical and financial challenges. These include the capacity building of asylum capabilities, for which there is already a work plan to implement and established procedures in place. Likewise, work is underway to improve coordination from the central and local level through the creation of protection routes for case references, attention protocols in accordance with different population profiles and identification of more shelter spaces. To achieve this, investments will continue to establish strategic partnerships with actors who can contribute to the National Plan, including international cooperation entities, municipalities and civil society organizations.



## Jobs and livelihoods

The multi-dimensional impact of COVID-19 imposes significant restrictions on access to employment and livelihood opportunities, given the damage it has caused on the productive and economic fabric of the country. COVID-19 presents a scenario of significant challenges to the economy and the expectations of impacts on forcibly displaced population, who were already in conditions of vulnerability in a constant struggle to search for protection networks, housing, getting a job or other income that allows them to be self-reliant again.

Through a strategic analysis of focus areas for the implementation of MIRPS in the COVID-19 context, generating employment and livelihood programmes dedicated to helping the displaced population find long-term solutions is considered a priority. This includes providing the necessary tools in life and work abilities, as well as access to employment rosters, and training, among

others, as a way of achieving self-reliance. Progress on this objective will be supported through the identification of the socio-economic and educational profile of the individual, providing orientation on livelihoods, creating a life plan together, connecting them to relevant programmes, and providing support and supervision throughout the process.

Of the challenges posed by the post-COVID-19 scenario, El Salvador will focus on searching for opportunities through the management of additional funds with strategic partners who help MIRPS commitments in this area. Similarly, priority will be given to strengthening and developing partnerships with the private sector to facilitate work opportunities for displaced persons, thus contributing to the implementation of the National Plan.



## Social Inclusion (Education, Health and Social Protection)

El Salvador, like the rest of the countries in the world affected by COVID-19, has faced significant challenges to guaranteeing children's and adolescents' access to the educational system, which depends on digital platforms as a primary tool to continue teaching. However, given the limited access to the Internet and computer equipment in families, particularly those who have suffered forced internal displacement, a multimodal system has also been developed to ensure access to these opportunities.

In addition, different actions have been taken in the MIRPS framework, such as training on forced internal displacement for 132 teachers in 7 workshops, the preparation of a guide and assistance protocols for displaced and deported children in need of protection, which will serve as an internal reference of cases, and connecting people to existing assistance services. Likewise, digital material is being developed for teacher awareness on rights, considering psycho-social problems, risks to the protection of children and adolescents (social violence approach), effective communication and gender-based violence. Similarly, there is material about rights and institutional programmes, such as the psycho-social care of the programme *Conserjería Escolar* (School Counseling), dedicated to working with cases online to meet demand in the 14 national departments with psychologists and legal counseling, as well as the execution of building works in Education Centers, rehabilitation of an Accelerated Education classroom and supplemental spaces, to improve said services and monitoring of cases in the territory.

Conversely, a plan for virtual training workshops on the use of the Salvadoran Educational Management Information System (SIGES, by its Spanish acronym) is being developed; it includes the variable of school dropout due to forced internal displacement, for approximately 50,000 users. Along these lines, a study is planned to highlight the impact of forced displacement on school dropout due to violence in El Salvador. The study will help raise awareness on the need to include children and adolescents displaced by violence in the national education system. It will also be helpful to generate statistical data to gauge the magnitude of the problem and to develop answers based on evidence to create positive change.

As regards health, coordinated work has been carried out with ICRC, PLAN El Salvador and EDUCO to provide humanitarian aid and ensure attention to victims of forced internal displacement, with the aim of ensuring access to health services and connecting them to existing protection mechanisms. Likewise, there have been efforts to train the staff at the Office for Victims at the central level, regional leaders, hospital care staff, and multi-disciplinary staff at the victims attention programme on forced internal displacement to improve the quality of care. The topic of humanitarian aid has also been included, considering the technical guidance of comprehensive healthcare for people affected by violence; its contents includes the profiles of forcibly internally displaced persons and an algorithm that supports intersectionality management. This reached approximately 125 health workers in the three levels of care at the national level.

In addition, through measures taken by the Office for Victims of All Types of Violence team, the Health Statistics and Information Unit at the central level, the allocation of assistance provided to forcibly displaced persons and their subsequent participation in the Unique Health Information System (SUIS) has been included in the daily registration of consultations, which means that, when it comes to accessing information and evidence-based decision-making, it is a great improvement.

Both education and health are priorities within MIRPS. Therefore, some actions are being taken to allow the mobilization of supplemental resources and support in order to implement the National Plan commitments.

# Quantification

El Salvador acknowledges the quantification process of MIRPS as a tool to improve planning and national budgeting, which allows for the demonstration of national investment in approaching forced displacement and existing financing gaps.

In this regard, El Salvador carried out a strategic orientation session about focus areas in the MIRPS, given the current context of COVID-19, identifying the commitments that require new ways of funding for their implementation. Employment and livelihoods, education and health areas have been identified as priorities, for which notes will be developed to assist in delivering a transparent dialog based on evidence with different players.

In addition to the development of the concept notes, El Salvador set out to quantify specific financial needs to fully implement the 49 commitments of the National Action Plan. In this line, an exhaustive process of planning and financial analysis was undertaken by the seven ministries


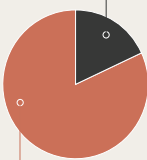

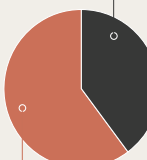
conforming the NTT, following a multidisciplinary approach including the participation of their respective planning, finance and cooperation units, among others.

An important component of the 2020 financial year is the preparation of a financing strategy to determine potential sources and donors to finance the gaps identified in the quantification analysis, which will be led by the National Technical Team, with the support and leadership of the El Salvador Agency for International Cooperation (ESCO, by its Spanish acronym).

For additional information about focus areas, specific measures and implementation mechanisms, consult the MIRPS Concept Notes 2020.



[Read the MIRPS concept notes for more information](#)

	OBJECTIVES	BENEFICIARIES	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	REQUIRED FUNDING
	<b>Education</b>			Total <b>\$8,368,451</b>
	Strengthening the technical and operational capacity of the education system	20,000 students (7 and 15 years old) 4,000 mothers, father, and/or care-takers 1,500 teachers in 475 education centers	MINEDUCYT, MJSP Plan Internacional, UNICEF.	State investment <b>\$1,513,561</b>  Gap <b>\$6,854,890</b>
	<b>Health</b>			Total <b>\$358,711</b>
	Strengthen the capacity of the National Health System to provide better health and psychosocial services to forcibly displaced people in El Salvador	Victims of forced displacement or in conditions of risk of, who require assistance from the national health system	MINSAL, MJSP, Global Appeal Initiative, PAHO/WHO, Red Cross.	State investment <b>\$143,211</b>  Gap <b>\$215,500</b>

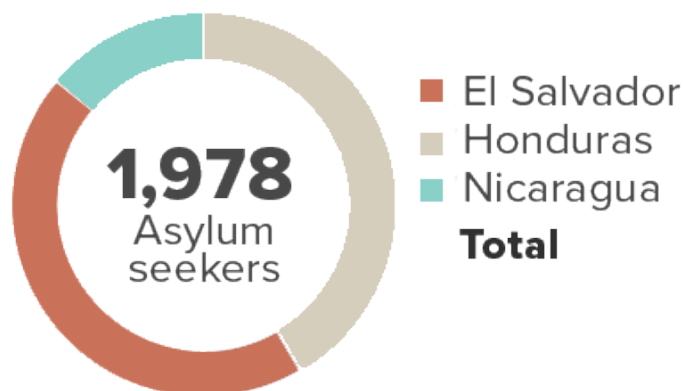


OBJECTIVES	BENEFICIARIES	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	REQUIRED FUNDING
<p><b>Jobs and livelihoods</b></p>			<p>Total  <b>\$3,266,520</b></p>
<p>Promoting initiatives that create jobs and livelihood opportunities</p>	<p>400 victims of forced displacement</p>	<p>MTPS, MJSP, MRREE, MINDEL, PBF, World Vision, Private Sector.</p>	

*\*These amounts are estimates of the financing required for the implementation of the needs identified by the State. The stated amounts are estimates that may change due to institutional budgetary allocations.*



# 4. GUATEMALA



The first COVID-19 case in Guatemala was reported on March 13th, 2020, and from that day on, the number of daily cases has increased steadily, with the majority of cases concentrated in the Department of Guatemala. Since March, the Government of Guatemala has issued measures to stop the spread of COVID-19, including restrictions on mobility, changes in the nature of activities in the public and private sectors, the closure of schools and borders, among others. As a consequence of the closure of borders, asylum applications in the country have decreased from, approximately, 62 monthly applications to an average of 11 during the closure period. However, access to the country and respect for non-refoulement have been maintained for those who are in need of international protection. Measures are being taken in coordination with civil society organizations and UNHCR to guarantee their assistance and protection, and people who enter the country have been required to follow health provisions for the COVID-19 pandemic, including compliance with mandatory quarantine.

The crisis brought on by COVID-19 has not only affect the healthcare context but also social and economic settings, especially the wellbeing of vulnerable populations, including asylum seekers, refugees and returned Guatemalan migrants. From January to October 2020, 420 refugees were registered in the country, 1,911 asylum seekers and

33,054 returned Guatemalan migrants. Despite restrictions issued for the COVID-19 pandemic, government institutions have made efforts to ensure continuity in the provision of services. The Department of Recognition of Refugee Status (formerly International Migration Relations Office (ORMI, by its Spanish acronym)) remained operational following up with cases, providing analysis and research, among other activities, with a limited number of personnel.

In relation to Guatemalan returnees from the United States of America and the United Mexican States, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintained a close relationship with the authorities of both countries to ensure health measures prior to transportation. In this way, the organization coordinates to identify protection needs, provide assistance and facilitate people's return to their communities of origin.

As a result of the pandemic, the Government of Guatemala ordered a State of Public Emergency in the entire country, which, among others, limited freedom of movement and enabled specific measures to be adopted for international border protection. During this period, many services were cancelled in order to protect the health measures of public servants and their users. Therefore, in relation to the State of Emergency ordered by the executive branch to guarantee legal certainty and the security of administrative labour proceedings, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, through Ministerial Agreement 136-2020, cancelled the expiration date of work permits for foreigners in the country. These permits remain in force through Ministerial Agreement 273-2020 of August 3rd.

## Relevant indicators

INDICATOR	REPORTED IN 2019	2020
Number of training courses offered to migration officials in the area of international protection	4 training courses	3 training courses
Number of work permits granted to refugees	23 work permits	9 work permits
Number of work permits granted to asylum seekers	225 work permits	84 work permits
Number of people served by Turi-integra (integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the labour market)	28 persons	-
Amount of training in international protection for immigration delegates, National Police, Army, Jurisdictional Bodies and border security personnel and airports.	3 training courses	10 training courses
Proportion of refugees with formal employment	96 persons	78 persons
Number/proportion of people in need of protection with education opportunities through scholarships	3,822 social scholarships in secondary education	3,822 social scholarships in secondary education

## Achievements and challenges



### Protection

Despite restrictions established for the COVID-19 pandemic, government institutions have made efforts to ensure continuity of services. The Department of Recognition of Refugee Status (DRER, formerly International Migration Relations Office (ORMI)), kept working behind the scenes, following up on cases and analysing and investigating records.

The capacities of the Guatemala Migration Institute (IGM, by its Spanish acronym) are being further strengthened, adjusting the areas of DRER to provide decent services. In order to guarantee that the process for determining refugee status is faster and more efficient, progress has been made to improve registration and applications

resolution procedures and the management of files from the Department, the National Commission for the Protection of Refugees (CONARE, by its Spanish acronym) and the National Migration Authority (AMN, by its Spanish acronym).

In terms of regulatory frameworks, to accelerate asylum procedures, an analysis and a reform proposal to the “Regulations of Procedures to Protect, Determine and Recognize the Refugee Status in Guatemala, AMN Agreement 02-2019” have been drawn up with the technical assistance of UNHCR.

In addition, the IGM, with the support of UNHCR, has created a questionnaire that contributed to the early identification of returnees in need of protection, and in coordination with



the Prosecutor's Office for the Protection of Human Rights and Asylum of Children, services have been delivered to people in need of protection in the different shelters for receiving returnees.

In September and October, the IGM, with the support of UNHCR, delivered 10 in-person and remote workshops about raising awareness and providing training in international protection for border immigration delegates, the CONARE and other government institutions, such as the National Police and the Cabinet of Social Development<sup>7</sup>.

The IGM has coordinated with the National Police on the exchange of information about procedures for asylum seekers with no criminal records. In addition, with the National Registry of Persons (RENAP, by its Spanish acronym), the IGM has taken measures to issue special identity documents for asylum seekers, in compliance with information established in the Migration Code. This will facilitate access to employment and education.

In relation to training, the IGM is working on a project to incorporate topics of International Protection into the immigration training curriculum, as established in the Migration Code. Progress has also been made in the creation of news bulletins about access to international protection, which will be distributed at border control points.

The displaced population in the country passing through border points has been at serious risk of being victims of multiple crimes. Therefore, one important commitment of the IGM has been to strengthen mechanisms for receiving complaints. As part of this effort, the dissemination of contact information of their website was extended, distributing informative material at every border checkpoint on land, by sea or in airspace. In addition, it will work to create a Monitoring Centre, available 24/7, which, among other services, will receive notices about human rights violations and provide transparency in the delivery of the institution's services.

Furthermore, the Secretariat of Social Welfare of the Presidency of the Republic leads the creation of the Care Model for unaccompanied children and adolescents who are in Guatemala, outside their country of nationality and in need of international protection within the Temporary Family Placement Programme. This Model is intended to recognize families of temporary placement in two phases: a) Guatemalan and foreign families with a permanent residency; and b) foreign families with a temporary residency.



## Jobs and livelihoods

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has pledged to provide high-quality services and assistance to people recognized as refugees or asylum seekers through the Department of Permits to Foreigners. The reception, analysis, decision and creation of work permits resolutions of people recognized as refugees or asylum seekers are a priority, guaranteeing the speed of the process.

During the pandemic, this assistance was still delivered at the offices (from Monday to Friday) and via the virtual platform, which simplified the work permit process for foreigners through the digital collection of documents, procedures and authorization. This is done with the support of the United States Agency for International Development

(USAID) in coordination with the National Competitiveness Programme of the Ministry of Economy (PRONACOM, by its Spanish acronym).

An institutional technical round table has also been created to analyse the reform proposal of the "Regulations of Work Permit Authorizations for Foreign People as Dependent Employees". This will facilitate the delivery of work permits to every person recognized as a refugee or an asylum seeker, with the authorization of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.

In addition, the General Directorate of Employment has strengthened alliances between the public and private

<sup>7</sup> Formed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Governance, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Social Development, the Public Health and Social Assistance Ministry, the Secretariat of Social Welfare of the Presidency of the Republic, the Secretariat of Social Works of the First Lady and the Presidential Secretariat for Planning and Programming

sectors of the country through awareness campaigns in digital content about the importance of formal employment when it comes to equality of opportunities for vulnerable groups.

In 2020, the Turi-Integra Programme, coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the INGUAT, Asylum for Children and UNHCR, has granted a work internship to eight asylum seekers and refugees in companies within the private sector of the Department of Petén. Furthermore, in September, the process of virtual training began, which aimed to develop the skills of asylum seekers, refugees and people from the local community.

The Turi-Integra Programme has also created an alliance with the Secretariat of Social Works of the First Lady (SOSEP, by its Spanish acronym) to integrate refugee women and female asylum seekers in productive women's organizations where they will receive training and support; in addition, new spaces with new private companies have been opened to create employment opportunities.

A challenge for the Turi-Integra Programme is creating awareness among private companies for generating capacities and incorporating people recognized as refugees and asylum seekers into formal jobs. In the context of COVID-19 and due to restrictions imposed to prevent the spreading of the pandemic, many companies that were allies of the project reduced or ended their operations. To continue providing access to livelihoods, engagement with new companies took place that were also part of an internship system for refugees and asylum seekers.

Finally, within the framework of the Ciudades Solidarias (Solidarity Cities) initiative, as part of the 2020 Work Plan of the Pro-Tempore Presidency, UNHCR identified the cities with the most mixed movements, including people in need of international protection, cities that shelter most asylum seekers and refugees. In September of this year, the Municipality of Esquipulas and the National Association of Guatemalan Municipalities (ANAM) signed agreements with UNHCR to ensure protection and seek long-term local solutions for asylum seekers, refugees and returnees in need of protection.



## Social Inclusion (Education and Health)

Given the lockdown situation due to the pandemic, one of the main challenges has been to ensure access to education through technology. Unfortunately, not all children and adolescents have access to technology, which makes their learning process difficult. Another limiting factor is that, despite the various efforts by MINEDUC (Ministry of Education, by its Spanish acronym) of teaching by radio and television, many communities do not have access to electricity, or do not have access to Guatemalan television channels, which again prevents education from having a broad national reach; however, other efforts have been made to facilitate access to education.

Through QUÉDATE Training Centres, of the Secretariat of Social Welfare of the Presidency of the Republic (SBS, by its Spanish acronym), there has been coordination with local governments, community leaders and international bodies to promote access to education with a technical-vocational approach at any time of the year. From September 2019

to September 2020, 1,206 children and adolescents have received services. Likewise, an interinstitutional campaign was launched that provides information on the rights and risks of displaced persons.

In the pandemic context, one of the main challenges that QUÉDATE Training Centres have faced has been adapting extra-curricular and technical education services to virtual platforms. Another challenge is the availability of information in different languages to ensure it is available to indigenous populations.

The Ministry of Education also conducted a process of socialization and implementation of the "Regulation of standardization and equivalencies of studies at the pre-school, elementary and middle school level and in curricular and extra-curricular education sub-systems". This was done through the Guide for Standardization and Equivalence of Studies in Departmental Directorates to facilitate education continuity and access to work.

Finally, in the pandemic context, one of the most relevant developments of the Directorate for the Attention to Migrants has been the creation and implementation of Epidemiological Guides for COVID-19 prevention in returnee populations. Currently the Comprehensive Health Care System (SIAS, by its Spanish acronym) oversees the provision of care to forcibly displaced persons, intersecting services within the Public Health and Social Assistance Ministry.

## Quantification


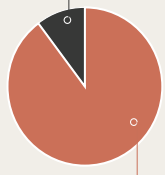

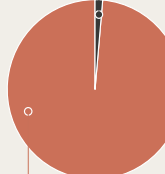
In 2019, Guatemala completed the quantification exercise identifying the necessary financial resources to implement 30 commitments in the National Action Plan. For 2020, there is a supplementary exercise for three priority objectives. In Social Protection: 1) development of a diagnostic evaluation to create open shelters with decent conditions, specialized for the population in need of international protection, with specialized and trained teams; and 2) strengthening of institutions controlling the protection of children and adolescents particularly in border areas, 3) Employment and Livelihoods: through public-private partnerships, facilitation of processes of labour reinsertion for refugees and refugee-status applicants, using tools such as the National Employment Service. This in coordination with the National Technical Team through a participative methodology that includes direct consultation with institutions.

An important component of the 2020 financial year is a financing strategy developed with international cooperation directorates in relevant ministries so that they can be considered in the mobilization strategies of different donors' resources.

Additional information on focus areas, specific activities, and implementation mechanisms can be found in Concept Notes MIRPS 2020.



[Read the MIRPS concept notes for more information](#)

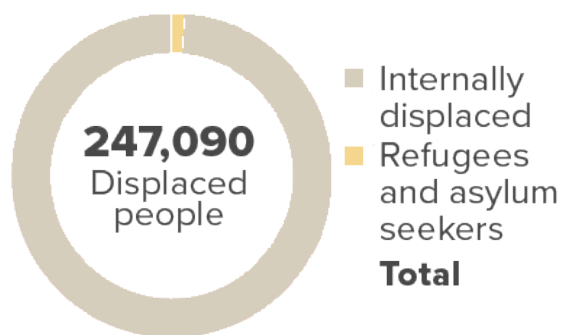
	OBJECTIVES	BENEFICIARIES	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	REQUIRED FUNDING
	<b>Protection</b>			<b>Total \$44,481</b>
	Creation of open shelters in decent conditions, specialized for the population in need of international protection.	Population in need of international protection, specifically refugees, refugee applicants and migrants	Guatemalan Institute of Migration	State investment <b>\$4,546</b>  Gap <b>\$39,935</b>
	<b>Child Protection</b>			<b>Total \$236,494</b>
	Strengthening institutions controlling the protection of children and adolescents particularly in border areas.	1,575 refugees, asylum seekers and with international protection needs children	Secretariat of Social Welfare of the Presidency of the Republic (SBS)	State investment <b>\$4,286</b>  Gap <b>\$232,208</b>

OBJECTIVES	BENEFICIARIES	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	REQUIRED FINANCING
 <h2>Jobs and livelihoods</h2>			<p>Total <b>\$65,195</b></p>
<p>Public-private sectors alliances for the inclusion of refugees and refuge applicants in Guatemala into the workforce using tools such as the National Employment Service</p>	<p>Population in need of international protection, specifically refugee and refugee applicants.</p>	<p>Ministry of Labour, National Employment Service</p>	 <p>State investment <b>\$3,896</b></p> <p>Gap <b>\$61,299</b></p>

\*These amounts are estimates of the financing required for the implementation of the needs identified by the State. The stated amounts are estimates that may change due to institutional budgetary allocations. Amounts in USD. Exchange rate: 7.7 GTQ to 1 USD.



# 5. HONDURAS



The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously affected the full validity of the population’s human rights with immediate, short, medium, and long-term impacts on society in general, and especially on vulnerable persons and groups. The country has managed this situation using their resources and orders to prevent transmission, and additional measures have been taken to address the demands and risks that such a crisis brings with it, in virtue of the serious risks to life, health and personal integrity.

The situation created by the pandemic has forced people who move internally to do so anonymously. The lack of information on possible changes in the control dynamics of gangs in some communities hinder the prediction of contingency actions or preparation plans in the face of additional risks. Spaces usually used for protection actions are now part of the infrastructure in response to the impact of the pandemic on people’s health.

One development since the creation of regulations for the prevention of internal displacement is that the new Penal Code, in force since June this year, characterizes it as a crime in Art. 248 and establishes a prison sentence of 6 to 9 years to anyone who causes it through violence or intimidation.

Honduras also faces the return of citizens and people in transit in the country, with 31,321 returnees in January-September and 5,498 irregular migrants in transit. With regard to returnee migrants in need of protection, work has been done to adapt processes and care centres to provide services in accordance with COVID-19 transmission prevention standards. Likewise, there has been coordination

with the Sistema Nacional de Gestión de Riesgo (National System for Risk Management, SINAGER, by its Spanish acronym) as the institution in charge of addressing emergency situations of any kind, with the support of the Secretariat of Health.

Temporary isolation centres have been set up in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula to receive returnees and to ensure they complied with the fourteen-day (14) quarantine. Transportation has been provided so they can return to their communities once their protection situation is analysed and quarantine is over. In the Centro de Atención al Migrante Irregular (Centre for the Attention of Irregular Migrants, CAMI), located at Toncontin International Airport, another temporary returnee care centre has been set up, where healthcare, food, biometric registration and service is given for those in need of protection. There are also informative flyers provided about vulnerability situations and relevant information, like telephone numbers for managing cases, among others.

The pandemic has also had a significant impact on people requesting refugee status, of which there are approximately 110 in Honduras. Some people who had started small businesses have had to close them, and their income level has significantly decreased. Work is underway to ensure humanitarian assistance reaches these people in need of protection while the current situation improves.

2020 Annual Operational Plans, as well as international cooperation projects, have been modified to be executed in accordance with the current context. Institutions’ budgets have also been impacted because resources have been re-directed to the COVID-19 response.

Other COVID-19 impacts include:

1. Resilience; it is more difficult for people to recover from the various situations that affect them.
2. It is more difficult for people to seek protection and flee their communities because criminal groups have strengthened their control of the territory.

\* Data from January to September 2020.

3. There is a negative reaction to populations of interest because they suffer rejection and xenophobia in host in communities.
4. Mixed movements have remained present in Honduras, and the State's effort has been to improve the level of access to services and improve capabilities to identify persons in need of protection.

With this goal in mind, capacity building needs of teams has been identified.

5. Maintaining contact with populations and communities in need, as well as accessing high-risk areas, has been difficult in the current circumstances.

## Relevant indicators

INDICATOR	REPORTED IN 2019	2020
Number/proportion of people in need of international protection who have been identified, assisted, and referred in border/transit areas.	<b>0.33%</b> of asylum seekers population.	<b>0.96%</b> of asylum seekers population <sup>8</sup>
Number of returnees/deportees in priority intervention municipalities with programmes to support security and dignity.	<b>18%</b> of returnee population	<b>3.89%</b> of returnee population
Percentage of individual or family cases at risk or displaced in priority intervention municipalities.	<b>4%</b> of the national population has considered fleeing. <b>3%</b> of the national population has been displaced	No updated information for 2020
Percentage of people at risk or displaced with land, housing, or property ownership documentation.	<b>69%</b> of displaced population with registration documents.	No updated information for 2020
Percentage of displaced people with land, housing or property ownership (% of population who left properties in their communities of origin).	<b>69%</b> of displaced population with registration documents.	No updated information for 2020

## Achievements and challenges



### Protection

The protection of forcibly displaced persons is still a priority in the implementation of MIRPS in Honduras, especially in the context of COVID-19, and there have been responses adapted to their specific needs.

For internally displaced persons, the Human Rights Secretariat (SEDH, by its Spanish acronym) continues to implement an assistance and protection route to facilitate the reception of, attention to, and referral of cases. A pilot project of humanitarian assistance is being executed,

<sup>8</sup> In 2020, the figure would be:  $53 \times 100 / 5,498 = 0.96\%$ . Of the total registered percentage, it was found that 64% are males and 26% are females. The change in percentage between both years is explained by the ratio of people who requested international protection in a high number of irregular migrations registered in 2019 in comparison with the decrease in irregular migration in 2020 due to COVID-19. Even so, there are variables that impact this information, such as the desire of people to apply for protection or not, the possibility of identifying risk profiles, and the interrelationship between both factors.

financed entirely with public funds and complemented with the support of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Through this programme, seed capital is granted for productive initiatives, as well as mental and physical healthcare, and the technical capabilities of the DIPPDV staff is strengthened. As of September, 22 cases had been addressed, and the intention is to start a second part of the pilot in the last quarter of the year with financial and technical support from UNHCR.

SEDH has also made progress in the development of consulting processes for the establishment of a national response system that includes a single registry of internally displaced persons. Likewise, socialization days of the II Study of Characterization of Internal Displacement due to Violence in Honduras 2004-2018 have taken place with more than 200 people from the National Commission on Human Rights, the Jóvenes contra la Violencia (Youth Against Violence) organization and the inter-agency Protection Group.

Conversely, SEDH and the Doctors of the World organization have carried out induction workshops for health staff and the staff from Comisión Interinstitucional para la Protección de las Personas Desplazadas Internamente por la Violencia en Honduras (Interinstitutional Commission for the Protection of Persons Displaced by Violence in Honduras, CIPPDV, by its Spanish acronym) about the use and implementation of the Practical Guide for the Application of Differentiated Attention Criteria with a Psycho-Social Approach to Internally Displaced Persons in Honduras. A dialog has begun with the Secretariat of Health (SESAL, by its Spanish acronym) so that said Guide can be incorporated into SESAL's norms and guidelines.

With regards to the importance of developing a system to protect abandoned property, in 2020, work has been completed on the development of a real estate protection sub-module overseen by the Property Institute (IP, by its Spanish acronym). The process of land and housing protection has been developed in two ways: i) institutional, in which there is training for state officials, and information gathering and abandoned property registration tools have been created; and ii) community based, in which the displaced population and community leaders from priority areas have been involved in the adaptation of the process according to the needs identified directly with the population of interest. There are currently 327 abandoned properties identified through church groups and community leaders, of which 50 have been registered in the registration module of the Property Institute.

Conversely, with the intention of strengthening capacities to identify persons in need of international protection, areas have been prepared and equipped in border zone offices to provide services to asylum seekers and people in transit who are in need of international protection. Likewise, brigades tasked with registration, documentation, interviewing applicants, and mobilizing people in need of international protection have been deployed to attention centres. A protocol to determine refugee status is being developed, which includes expedited procedures, commissioned members handbooks, and manuals for border staff.

Meetings with the Internal Commission for the Review, Analysis and Judgment of Asylum Applications, presented to the National Institute of Immigration (INM, by its Spanish acronym), have been held to assess the presented cases, establishing work methodologies. This has made it possible to promptly identify persons in need of international protection and ensure due process.

As part of the training processes for public migration officials at border points, in order to strengthen international protection identification capacities and improve reception conditions, personnel of the INM (National Institute of Migration) attended training workshops at prioritized migration checkpoints and the Asylum Commission. In addition, guidance materials on refugee status in Honduras have been created for Care Centres for Irregular Migrants (CAMI) and border points.

To strengthen institutional responses, through case coordination and reports, the response to asylum seekers has been prioritized, developing care and case analysis strategies with the Roundtable of Human Rights and following up on asylum applications with the Honduran Asylum Commission. The measures implemented to comply with commitments made in relation to returnees in need of protection have been carried out in coordination with government institutions, local people, international bodies, civil society, and the private sector to provide support to returnees.

Concerning the training of municipal officers for returnee care and personnel for serving migrants and their families, a virtual training was developed for 71 officers from the Centres of Attention for Returned Migrants (CAMR, by its Spanish acronym) and the Municipal Units for the Attention of the Returned Migrant (UMAR, for its Spanish acronym). This training was based on human rights, internal displacement, dissemination of results of the II Displacement Characterization Report in Honduras, international protection and humanitarian assistance.



The Protocol for returnees in need of protection has been updated through a follow-up meeting with UNHCR, the CICR (International Committee of the Red Cross), the Norwegian Council for Refugees (NRC, by its Spanish acronym), the SEDH (Secretary of State in Human Rights Offices), and the Secretary of State and International Cooperation (SRECI, by its Spanish acronym). In addition, the CAMRs have been monitored by a virtual monitoring system to assess returnee care procedures and establish better procedures during the pandemic.

In relation to elaborating a reference protocol for the follow-up of cases for returnees in need of protection, a care route proposal has been introduced together with the Municipal Units for the Attention of the Returned Migrant.

In order to strengthen and update the existing capacities of consular officials for the identification and referral of cases of persons in need of protection abroad, 55 foreign service officers were trained in international protection and internal displacement.

Returnees in need of protection were also assisted in order to meet their needs regarding short- and medium-term accommodation, food and healthcare, assisting 47 homes that received humanitarian assistance in cash or in kind. In addition, 117 deportees in need of protection have received assistance through direct payment to provider and cash-based interventions.



## Jobs and livelihoods

Progress has been made towards implementing the Strategy for Violence Prevention, Protection, Reduction and Control in Honduran Education Centres. With the support of UNHCR and Save the Children, many activities for the dissemination of the Report of Violence Impact have been performed in 220 Education Centres, where approximately 100 teachers of the northern area of the country participated, and the development of a transportation route for teachers due to violence is being promoted.

Moreover, as part of the dialog with the Secretariat of Labour and Social Security and the Secretariat of Education, a Roundtable of interinstitutional labour has been established to overcome obstacles in accessing employment and education for refugees and asylum seekers.



## Social Inclusion (Education, Health and Social Protection)

Progress has been made towards implementing the Strategy for Violence Prevention, Protection, Reduction and Control in Honduran Education Centres. Many activities for the dissemination of the Report on the Impact of Violence have been performed in 220 Education Centres, where approximately 100 teachers of the northern area of the country participated, and the development of a transportation route for teachers who have experienced violence is being promoted.

Moreover, as part of the dialog with the Secretariat of Labour and Social Security and the Secretariat of Education, a Roundtable of interinstitutional labour has been established to overcome obstacles in accessing employment and education for refugees and asylum seekers.

## Quantification

To support national planning and to broaden the dialog concerning shared responsibility for financing efforts in order to tackle forced displacement, a strategic priority of Honduras is quantifying the resources that are necessary to implement national plans and to support MIRPS commitment executing agencies.

In 2019, institutions that make up the National Technical Team, with the support of UNHCR, carried out their corresponding quantification exercise aimed at estimating the implementation costs of the commitments of the MIRPS national chapter, for which three project proposals have been structured for a total amount of USD 61,935,701, from which it is estimated that 54% comes from internal resources; therefore, an amount of USD 28,523,490 (equal to 46%) has been requested from external sources.

As part of this process, a problem tree was created that included the underlying or key causes of forced displacement. The problem tree was turned into a solution tree, and the most appropriate solution pathways were selected according to feasibility criteria and necessary resources. A solution pathway on which the three projects will be based (through one programme) was created. It included objectives, expected results, products, activities

and required inputs, as well as a cost estimation for each. And, finally, a series of indicators, timelines and total budget were outlined for each project.


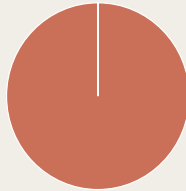
After the quantification exercise in 2020, the National Technical Team selected the focus area of Social Protection to delve into the analysis.

An important component of the 2020 financial year is the development of a financing strategy to determine potential partners and sources to finance the gaps identified in the quantification analysis.

For additional information about employment and livelihoods, specific measures and implementation mechanisms, see document Concept Notes MIRPS 2020 here:



[Read the MIRPS concept notes for more information](#)

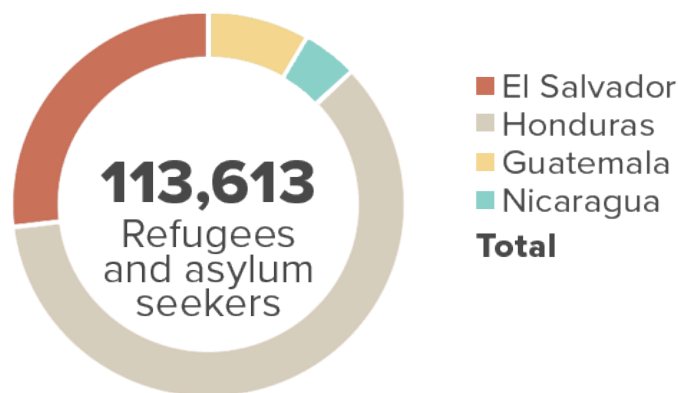
OBJECTIVES	BENEFICIARIES	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	REQUIRED FUNDING
 <p><b>Social Protection</b></p> <p>Guaranteeing a harmonizing approach for providing humanitarian assistance and long-term solutions, promoting access to employment and social protection through the inclusion of people in initiatives, programmes and projects, which are implemented by different players belonging to the Government, international cooperation, the private sector and NGOs</p>	<p>Approx 63,484 asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons, Honduras returnees in vulnerable conditions and irregular migrants in transit across the territory</p>	<p>Human Rights Secretariat Secretary of State and International Cooperation National Institute of Immigration</p>	<p>Total required <b>\$3,999,725</b></p> 

\* The actions and products defined in the quantification and investment amounts refer to the main needs identified by the State of Honduras, as well as the costs required for their implementation. In no way can they be understood as activities executed or being executed, nor as public resources already available for use and investment. Amounts in USD. Due to the health and humanitarian crisis, neither the national financing nor the financing gap can be established at this time.



JOVENES  
CONTRA LA  
VIOLENCIA

# 6. MEXICO



In recent years, a significant increase in the number of people applying for refugee status was reported in Mexico. In 2019, 70,600 people applied for this status with the Mexican Refugee Commission (COMAR, by its Spanish acronym), compared to 29,630 applicants in 2018. As of July 2020, two trends in the displacement to Mexico of people in need of international protection have been identified; the first being during the first quarter of the year, where asylum applications increased 34% in relation to the first quarter of last year. The second from April, when there was a drastic decrease from 86% to 82% reported in relation to the first quarter monthly average. However, since August 2020,

a clear upturn has been observed and, as of September 2020, a total of 27,666 applications were registered.

During the contingency, registration of applications for refugee status continued, and institutional assistance to applicants has been prioritized. Even though procedure periods have been suspended, COMAR continued to work on registration, institutional assistance and urgent cases. The applicants' obligation to go to COMAR offices weekly to reaffirm that they are still completing the process has been suspended. Finally, there is a protection work plan that includes remote interviews.

It is worth noting that, in response to internal displacement, on September 29th, 2020, the Chamber of Deputies sanctioned the General Law for the Prevention, Care and Comprehensive Reparation of Forced Internal Displacement, for which many international organizations and agencies were consulted. The new law is being revised in the Senate of the Republic for its approval.

## Relevant indicators\*

INDICATOR	REPORTED IN 2019	2020
Number of identified, aided and referred people (at borders or transit areas)	<b>8,277</b> asylum seekers left the migratory station	<b>2,936</b> applicants for refugee status were granted the benefit of leaving migratory stations.
Number of people with official documentation granting access to basic services	<b>24,970</b> CURP	<b>27,666</b> CURP
Proportion of unaccompanied asylum seeker NNAs (Children and Adolescents, by its Spanish acronym) redirected to child protection authorities	<b>95.45%</b> of unaccompanied children were referred from COMAR to lawyers' offices Approval of protection road map	In order to comply with the information established through the Migrant Child and Asylum Seeker Child Protection Roadmap, <b>100%</b> of applications for recognition of refugee status has been sent, whose holders are unaccompanied Children and Adolescents.

\* Reported data for January-September 2020.

INDICATOR	REPORTED IN 2019	2020
Number of people with access to public health services	<b>17,633</b> informative materials distributed <b>604</b> talks Attention to <b>3,222</b> persons	Due to the health situation, the procedures for guaranteeing access to health services decreased, reporting <b>1,273 procedures</b> .
Number of people of interest who benefited from self-reliance measures, training and employment	<b>3,833</b> relocated persons**	<b>1,800</b> relocated persons
Number of people who have access to public education	<b>491</b> personas atendidas a través de Educación sin Fronteras <b>177</b> personas asistidas a gestionar ingreso	Attention to <b>822</b> persons through Education without Borders <b>650</b> participants received accreditations

## Achievements and challenges



### Protection

In order to improve the efficiency of case registration and processing, COMAR implements the use of new forms, developed with the support of the QAI (Quality Assurance Initiative, by its Spanish acronym), which collects data that enables a better case “triage” for their allocation. In addition to the above, changes in the SIRE registration system are being developed, which will help to improve case processing. At the same time, and as a result of the COVID-19 contingency, authorization of asylum application registration and online documentation through the SIRE system is underway.

The COMAR implements simplified procedures by applying the definition of the Cartagena Declaration for Nationals of Honduras, El Salvador and Venezuela, with the intention of obtaining a more streamlined, efficient and high-quality procedure. In addition, on March 2nd, 2020, a pilot project was introduced to implement joint procedures, combining registration and eligibility stages for certain profiles of applicants of indicated nationalities.

Moreover, the Migratory Station exit programme is still being implemented for applicants of refugee status. The intention is to formalize this programme, and this objective was stipulated in the COMAR-UNHCR joint work plan. Currently, COMAR is a constant presence at Migratory Stations in the

cities of Monterrey, Tijuana, Acayucan, and Palenque. Exits are being implemented in the following cities:

- High flow: Acayucan, CDMX, Palenque, Tapachula, Tenosique.
- Medium flow: Tuxtla Gutierrez, Comitán, Villahermosa, Huatulco, La Ventosa, Salina Cruz, San Cristóbal de las Casas, San Pedro Tapanatepec, San Luis Potosí, and Saltillo.
- Low flow: Janos, Mazatlán, Nuevo Laredo, Oaxaca, Pachuca, Puebla, Reynosa, and Piedras Negras.

From January 1st to September 30th, 2020, 2,936 people benefited, with a total of 18,434 people to date since it began implementation in July 2016.

At the end of 2019, COMAR has offered training sessions to INM personnel at the Mexico City, Cancun and El Bajío Airports. The main topics were: access to procedures of refugee status recognition, transport, resumptions, abandonment and withdrawal, processing of refugee status recognition procedures and supervisory appeals with COMAR. COMAR has also delivered training to public officials from other departments in international protection. In August, 126 service officers completed the training course “The Best Interests of the Child” offered by the

\*\*Reported data for January to October 15th, 2019.

General Inspection Team of the National Human Rights Commission (CNHD, by its Spanish acronym).

As a result of the health emergency, non-face to-face training (online and remote) has taken off. In relation to the Permanent Seminar on Social Assistance with a Rights-based Approach, the session “A Human Rights-based Approach to Alternatives to Migration Attention for NNAs” at the end of November. On May 13th, the online session “Protection of Migrant Children in the Context of COVID-19” was offered together with UNICEF and addressed to personnel of the PPNNA (Strengthen the Office of Children Protection), the DIF (Comprehensive Development of the Family) and the CAS (Centre for Applicant Attention), with 300 participants.

In December and January, the Federal Procurator’s Office for the Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents (PFPNNA, by its Spanish acronym) offered the training session “Decent Treatment” aimed at INM federal agents and Children Protection officials in Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Campeche, Chiapas, Puebla, Colima, Hidalgo. In addition, they offered various workshops and training sessions from January to June<sup>9</sup>.

Mass communication materials on the human rights of migrant and procedures to request refugee status have been prepared. These are shared on the Facebook page “Confía en el Jaguar” and on institutional web pages, in COMAR offices and inside migratory stations.

The Interinstitutional Roundtable on Refugee and Complementary Protection remains a focus, holding its last session on June 20th, 2020 where guidelines were approved, and four working tables were established<sup>10</sup>. These will create mechanisms to expose available programmes and services to the requesting population, refugees and people who receive complementary protection, and the steps to access them. With regard to health, departments have been able to commit to facilitating the insertion of refugees who are health professionals in national calls in response to COVID-19.

As a result, on October 21st, 2020, the Work Inclusion worktable was established, led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, in which nine federal departments, as well as civil society organizations, and international bodies participated.

In relation to the protection of children and adolescents who are refugees or requesting asylum, the implementation of the Comprehensive Care Route to Migrant Children has continued at the local level. From this coordination mechanism among authorities that serve children and adolescents who are migrants or in need of international protection<sup>11</sup>, various conversations with state authorities have taken place<sup>12</sup>.

To achieve harmonization of the General Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents with the Law on Refugees, Complementary Protection and the Political Asylum and the Migration Law, the Registration and Identity of Persons (Migration Policy Unit, UPMRIP, by its Spanish acronym) of the Secretariat of Government (SEGOB, by its Spanish acronym) has created the necessary mechanisms for pertinent legislation changes, through the working tables COMAR that participates in and with the support of INM and the National Comprehensive Protection Framework for Children and Adolescents Executive Secretariat (SE-SIPPINA, by its Spanish acronym). In March 2020, both UPMRIP and COMAR debated the topic in an open parliament forum with legislators. The amendments to various articles of the Migration Law and on the Law on Refugees, Complementary Protection and Political Asylum regarding migrant children were approved by both legislative chambers, published in the Official Federal Gazette on November 11th, 2020 and valid 60 days later. These amendments guarantee the rights and principles established in the General Law of the Rights of the Child and its Regulations.

The National System for Comprehensive Family Development (SN DIF, by its Spanish acronym), through PFPNNA, has signed a general collaboration agreement with the Secretariat of Government, the Public Security National System Executive Secretariat, the National Women

9 Crisis intervention for children and adolescents in traumatic situations (319 public servants of the SEDIFs state system and PPNNA); General Act on Children’s and Adolescents’ Rights (302); Violence towards Children and Adolescents and their Human Rights (702); Attributions of Attorney General’s Offices for the Protection of the Rights of Children (656).

10 Access to Public Health, Educational Inclusion, Work Inclusion, and Identity and Documentation.

11 (Among these, COMAR, INM, Federal Procurator’s Office for the Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents, and the Children and Adolescents National Protection System Executive Secretariat).

12 Baja California, June, 4th; Chiapas, June, 11th; Coahuila, June 18th; Tlaxcala, June, 23rd; Jalisco, June, 25th; Zacatecas, July, 2nd; Federal Public Defender’s Office, July, 9th; Tamaulipas, July, 16th; Sonora, July, 23rd; Nuevo León, July, 30th; and Chihuahua, August, 6th.

Institute, the National Institute of Social Development. This will enable coordination with equivalent institutions of the Federal Entities regarding the use of the telephone helpline with the unique 9-1-1 number for the provision of emergency services, which will receive reports on cases of violence against children and adolescents, including refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

On February, 28th, 2020, COMAR and the Federal Public Defender's Office (IFDP, by its Spanish acronym) signed an agreement so that people applying for refugee status, refugees and people granted complementary protection, who wish to do so, can have access to legal consulting and necessary support by the IFDP when carrying out procedures before COMAR.

As a result, the Federal Public Defender's Office (IFDP) has hired 10 more lawyers to serve migrants and refugees, with a total of 34. These specialized lawyers serve migrants and refugees in migratory stations for free, conducting weekly or monthly visits, depending on the needs and occupation of each place.

In relation to forced internal displacement, institutional work coordinated by the Sub-Secretariat of Human Rights, Population and Migration started in May 2019 to write up a bill for the General Law on Forced Internal Displacement. A first bill was developed to discuss it with the Commissions on Migratory Affairs and Government and Population Commissions of the Chamber of Deputies. On March, 18th, 2020, an Open Parliament session on Human Mobility took place, which received comments from different UN agencies: UNHCR, UN Human Rights, OCHA, UNICEF, UN Women, UNDP, IOM, UN Habitat, and UNODC, as well as from civil society organizations and Federal and State Government Institutions. On September 29th 2020, the Plenary of the Chamber of Deputies unanimously approved the bill and passed it for the review of the Senate.

Additionally, the MIRPS Working Group on Internal Displacement was established, of which Honduras, El Salvador and Mexico are part. Its objective is to share good practices between these MIRPS countries and other countries with vast experience in the prevention of, response to and resolution of internal displacement, such as Colombia, benefiting from the support of four experts, as well as UNHCR and IACHR.



## Jobs and livelihoods

Facilitating access to work has been another priority this year. Information is provided to applicants, refugees, and persons with complementary protection regarding job opportunities available in the employment rosters from the National Employment Service, and the national job fair calendar is publicized through notices in COMAR offices.

There have been roundtables with UPMRIP, the National Bank and Stock Exchange Commission (CNBV, by its Spanish Acronym), the National Population Registry (RENAPO, by its Spanish acronym) and INM, among others, so documents issued by COMAR are considered sufficient for identification purposes to be able to access financial services. In accordance with commitments presented in relation to the first Global Refugee Forum (GRF), BanCoppel updated their computer systems and trained their staff to facilitate the financial inclusion of refugees and those applying for refugee status.

COMAR collaborates with the labour integration and relocation programme managed by UNHCR, providing

people with stable and formal employment, access to decent housing and health services. COMAR authorizes transferring the applicants' paperwork to the receiving federative entity; they are received in temporary housing for approximately 15 days, during which, through UNHCR, they are directed to job fairs and receive support to become self-reliant in the shortest amount of time possible.

In Coahuila State, on January 29th, the 2020 Labour Pact was signed to boost formal employment with a focus on social inclusion, non-discrimination, and labour rights equality. Within that context, the 2020 Coahuila Pact was established, which additionally considers the inclusion of vulnerable groups, women, and refugees in the entity's productive life, apart from people with disabilities and seniors. The pact was signed by the three levels of Government, worker representatives, employer representatives, the 38 mayors from the Entity and UNHCR Mexico.

The inclusion of those applying for refugee status and of refugees in technical and vocational training programmes continued to be promoted through collaboration agreements with the Industrial Work Training Centres (CECATI, by its Spanish acronym) of the Public Education Secretariat. Apart from the agreement with CECATI 86 in Tapachula and the 32 CECATIs in Mexico City, and with the Work Training and Education Institute (ICET, by its Spanish acronym) in Nuevo León, and the Work Training Intuition

(IFORTAB, by its Spanish acronym) in Tabasco, agreements with 8 CECATIs in Baja California (Tijuana y Mexicali) and with the CECATI 18 in Puebla were signed in 2020.

Within the COVID-19 contingency plan, applicants' and refugees' participation in online training courses offered by the National Employment Service and other Ministry of Labour and Social Security's platforms was promoted.



## Social Inclusion (Education, Health, and Social Protection)

In both interinstitutional forums, the Interinstitutional Roundtable on Refugee and Complementary Protection and the Integration Group of the Inter-secretary Commission on Comprehensive Services in Migration Matters, mechanisms are developed to allow formal inclusion of children and adolescents who are applicants, refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection in compulsory school education, with the National Institute for Adult Education (INEA, by its Spanish acronym) and the Public Education Secretariat (SEP, by its Spanish acronym).

Within the COVID-19 contingency framework, ongoing support has been provided to applicants and refugees for their insertion in school within the distance education programme organized by the Public Education Secretariat "Aprende en casa I y II" (Learn at Home I and II) at the end of the school year 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.

Conversely, despite suspending their activities due to COVID-19, the General Directorate of Accreditation, Incorporation and Revalidation, and the General Directorate of Professions of the Public Education Secretariat facilitated the resolution of revalidation procedures and the issuance of professional cards to those applying for refugee status and to refugees who are health professionals so they can participate in national calls by the Ministry of Health, the Mexican Institute of Social Security and the Health Wellbeing National Institute to face the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was agreed to establish a thematic table on education with the participation of the Public Education Secretariat and other relevant departments.

Through reforms in November 2019, the National Institute for Health and Wellbeing (INSABI, by its Spanish acronym) was created. This will ensure free access to health services

and medication for the entire population that lacks social security. The General Health Law now includes "all people in the territory" regardless of their nationality or migratory status. The health thematic table of the Interinstitutional Roundtable on Refugee and Complementary Protection, of which the Ministry of Health and the ISABI are part, will work to include COMAR and INM documents in the guidelines.

The Migration Policy Unit, Registration and Identity of Persons with RENAPO, SEP and other departments have organized working tables so that documents issued by COMAR are considered forms of identification to be able to access services. The intention is to ensure the same for the migratory documents and CURPs of applicants and refugees.

At the moment, senior applicants, refugees, and beneficiaries of complementary protection can access the services provided by the National Institute for Seniors (INAPAM, by its Spanish acronym). An agreement will be signed to institutionalize this practice.

Two inter-agency consulting processes on health and education began in Chiapas and Tabasco, states located at the southern border of Mexico, to assess needs in these two areas and to identify opportunities for strategic interventions that facilitate the inclusion of refugees and individuals applying for refugee status, at the same time benefiting host communities in these two states. Consulting activities are carried out in close cooperation with federal authorities (COMAR, SEP, Ministry of Health) and with state authorities.



## Quantification

National quantification supports coordination and planning in identifying needs for implementing commitments in the National Action Plan, as well as an evidence-based analysis to support dialog with relevant actors on the expansion of resources to complement state efforts.

In 2019, Mexico conducted a quantification exercise to estimate the general scale of financial needs to strengthen the asylum system and expand protection for children and adolescents. In 2020, Mexico continues to follow a needs-based methodology to support the asylum system through COMAR. The quantification process, in addition to encouraging the sharing of experiences and good practices implemented by MIRPS member States, is also an opportunity to analyse the operation capacity of national institutions, not only in terms of their financing needs, but also with regard to their organization and functioning. This analysis is based on three priorities: strengthening the asylum system; actions targeted at protecting the rights of children and adolescents, whether they are with adults or not, who request asylum or have refugee status; and complying with their rights to access public education.


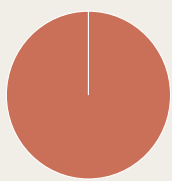

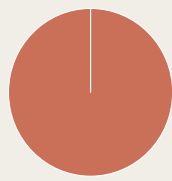
Other areas of quantification analysis in 2020 are health and education. The quantification process has been conducted in coordination with the Migration Policy Unit, Registration and Identity of Persons (UPM, by its Spanish acronym) of the Secretariat of Government, the Procurator's Offices for the Protection of the Rights of Children (PPFNNA), the Public Education Secretariat, the Ministry of Health, the National Institute for Health and Wellbeing (INSABI), the National Population Registry (RENAPO), COMAR and UNHCR.

An important component of the 2020 financial year is the development of a financing strategy to determine potential partners and sources to finance the gaps identified in the quantification analysis.

Additional information on Health and Education, specific activities, and implementation mechanisms can be found in the document Concept Notes MIRPS 2020 here:

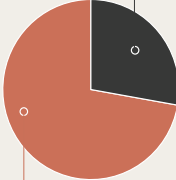


[Read the MIRPS concept notes for more information](#)

	OBJECTIVES	BENEFICIARIES	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	REQUIRED FUNDING
 <h3>Health</h3>				Total requirements <b>\$1,246,358</b>
	Strengthening healthcare services in Chiapas for refugees, asylum seekers and the local population.	Refugees, asylum seekers and host communities in Chiapas	Secretariat of Health, Mexican Refugee Commission at the federal and state level, respectively, civil society, UN Agencies such as UNHCR, PAHO/WHO and UNDP	
 <h3>Education</h3>				Total requirements <b>\$7,042,800</b>
	Improving access to high-quality education services for migrant and refugee children and adolescents from host communities in Chiapas and Tabasco, in the midst of the health emergency due to COVID-19.	Directors, teachers, children in the municipalities of Tabasco and Chiapas	Secretariat of Federal Public Education Secretariats of Education from Chiapas and Tabasco Mexican Refugee Commission UN Agencies UNHCR, UNESCO, UNICEF, and UNDP Civil society	



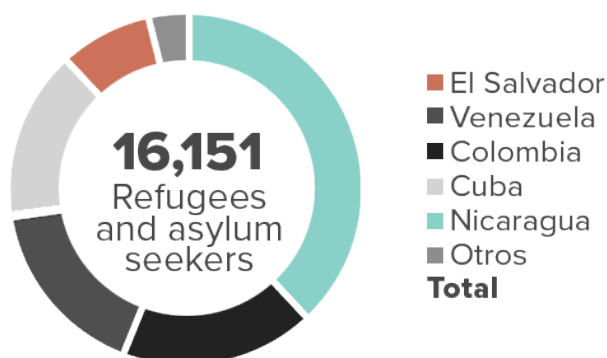
## Protection

OBJECTIVES	BENEFICIARIES	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	REQUIRED FUNDING
<p>Strengthening the asylum system to improve assistance to people in need of protection</p>	<p>93,050 refugees, asylum seekers and people with complementary needs</p>	<p>The Mexican Refugee Commission (COMAR) UNHCR</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Total <b>\$7,542,857</b></p> <hr/> <div style="text-align: right;"> <p>State investment <b>\$2,110,836</b></p>  <p>Gap <b>\$5,432,021</b></p> </div>

*\*The actions and products defined in the quantification and investment amounts refer to the main needs identified by the State, as well as the costs required for their implementation. In no way can they be understood as activities executed or being executed, nor as public resources already available for use and investment. Amounts in USD. Average exchange rate 21 MXN to 1 USD.*



# 7. PANAMA



About 17,000 refugees and applicants for refugee status live in Panama. The recognized refugee population is mainly made up by people from Colombia, El Salvador, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. In the last couple of years, applications for refugee status from Venezuela and, particularly, from Nicaragua, have rapidly increased, which has widened the gap between services and the population's needs.

At the same time, Panama is still registering mixed movement transit entering through Darién (border with Colombia), with an increase in 2019 (more than 23,000 people). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and border closure, it has been reported that 2,531 of these people could not continue their journey, and they remain in reception centres. Of this group, 24 people have submitted an application for refugee status in Panama.

In October 2020, 622 new applications have been received, which represents a more than 90% decrease compared to the same period in 2019. This is a result of border and airport closures due to the sanitary crisis.

In addition, COVID-19 has caused an increase in vulnerabilities and needs in the country, having a great impact on the socioeconomic situation of refugees and applicants for refugee status, who were already in a precarious situation. The number of requests for assistance has drastically increased (between 40% to 50%), including a population that, in one way or another, already had financial independence and stability before the pandemic. Similarly, an increase in people who have not been able to cover their rent or who have suffered eviction threats has been observed.

The pandemic has created an additional source of anxiety among this population. In addition to concerns about health risks, the stress of being away from their relatives in their respective countries of origin, food insecurity, the feeling of confinement, and uncertainty about the future, are also present, which affects their mental health.

## Relevant indicators

INDICATOR	REPORTED IN 2019	2020	COMMENTS
Average processing time (registration-decision)	<b>12 to 18 months</b>	<b>6 to 12 months</b>	The institutional capacity to identify, refer and assist people in need of international protection was improved. Mechanisms for receiving and processing refugee status applications have also been improved. Restructuring internal procedures and increasing human resources to assist the population, as well as support from technical tools and training procedures.

INDICATOR	REPORTED IN 2019	2020	COMMENTS
Number of people with official documentation granting access to basic services	<b>8,152</b> procedure certifications <b>40</b> refugee documents <b>57</b> procedure admission cards <b>27</b> passports	<b>595</b> procedure certifications <b>103</b> permanent residence cards and foreigner IDs <b>168</b> temporal resident cards <b>97</b> procedure admission cards <b>27</b> passports	Information and follow-up services for the refugee population.  Development of Interinstitutional Registration and Documentation Tours together with the Electoral Tribunal, the National Migration Service and the support of the National Border Service, as well as assistance from UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council.
Number of people allowed to start the procedure who have a work permit	<b>7</b> notes for admitted applicants	<b>28</b> certifications for work permit as applicants allowed to start the procedure; <b>140</b> certifications for indefinite work permit <b>58</b> certifications for temporal work permit	Information and follow-up services for the refugee population.

## Achievements and challenges



### Protection

Since the beginning of 2020, the ONPAR (National Office for the Attention to Refugees, by its Spanish acronym) strengthened its presence in the Darién province (area of the Panamanian and Colombian border) designating two focal points for providing services to people residing in the area and for those people that, within mixed movements, express their desire to apply for refugee status. Thanks to this assignment of personnel, the receiving of applications in migratory stations has become more streamlined. Likewise, transportation to the city has been provided to vulnerable applicants.

At the beginning of the year, three meetings for registration and document verification took place in the region of Guna Yala (Puerto Obaldía and La Miel) and in the province of Darién (Yaviza, Metetí, La Palma, Piña, and Jaqué) for those with limited access to registration or renewal procedures in the City of Panama. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the

rest of the scheduled tours have been cancelled, and the issuance of updated documents is pending.

103 people with refugee status accessed permanent residency and 140 accessed indefinite work permits after reaching the required three years, representing an 80% increase in 2020. Similarly, the number of applicants allowed to start the procedure increased by 240%.

In addition, in order to reduce delays and response wait times, new cases submitted in 2020 have been reviewed at the same time as those pending review (submitted between 2014 and 2019). This has resulted in a 93% rate of review for applications received in the current year, and a 25% advance in submitted cases under Executive Decree No. 23 of February 10th, 1998, and which, to date, is repealed after the passing of the Executive Decree No. 5 of January 16th, 2018.

It is also worth noting that CONARE issued a Resolution that allowed for technical meetings to be held in order to accelerate application assessment and decision, and to increase the number of reviewed files per session.

In addition, several initiatives for virtual training of local authorities and safety department members were created, which are especially focused on international protection.

As a result of the pandemic, many of the National Action Plan measures were affected. The ONPAR, like many government offices, had to suspend its services in April and May. However, they provided ID validity extensions through an official resolution. At the same time, special communication channels with persons of interest and partners were designated to guarantee humanitarian aid, legal advice and psychosocial care.

As part of measures to assist the most vulnerable population, and according to previously defined criteria, the national government set up a social relief assistance plan for people affected by COVID-19 called “Panama Solidario” (Panama United). Through a roundtable with civil society and UN agencies, advocacy efforts have been made for the inclusion of the most vulnerable refugee population. Part of the refugee or applicant population has been included in the delivery of food and food stamps. However, due to the lack of personal identity cards granted only to nationals and permanent residents, they did not receive the benefit of economic aid.

Despite border closure, the ONPAR has taken necessary action so that everyone who expresses the need for international protection could access both the territory and the procedure that allows their application to be duly examined and assessed according to current laws.

Likewise, those who have decided to abandon the procedure to voluntarily return to their country of origin due to humanitarian reasons have received assistance, including relevant psychosocial support so that they can make an informed decision.

In response to mixed movements that remain confined at four migratory stations, the national government, with the support of the UN System, civil society, religious organizations and the private sector, has economically and technically contributed to meeting the health, food, water, sanitation and shelter needs. In addition, the ONPAR has handled and reviewed all applications submitted by those individuals (24) who were in need of international protection.

Moreover, the pandemic has caused income loss for the refugee and applicant population, increasing evictions and food insecurity. In relation to eviction risks, with the help of partners, legal support, arbitration through the Justice of Peace, payment agreements or financial support to cover rent have been provided. Also, the national government has adopted special actions, such as the suspension of evictions without distinction of lease fee, while the State of National Emergency is currently in force until two (2) subsequent months after the cancellation of these measures.

In this regard, the support of partners enabled the guarantee of access to humanitarian aid, psychosocial support and the development of peaceful coexistence mechanisms. For these purposes, civil society rearranged their aid mechanisms, strengthening communication tools and consolidated means of delivering aid remotely.



## Jobs and livelihoods

Due to the characteristics of mobility restrictions, the implementation of employment and enterprise programmes has been affected. Most of the refugee and applicant population allowed to begin the procedure have now cancelled employment contracts, while others have been fired. In addition, companies that were generating income must now restructure or reinvent themselves as they adapt to the new normal.

With a commitment to seeking solutions and promoting the economic integration of the population, efforts have been made to reduce the impact on learning, ensuring that classes are provided virtually. To date, 77 people have been referred to the Programa Canal de Empresarias (Female Entrepreneurs Channel Programme) through an alliance with the Fundación Ciudad del Saber (City of Knowledge

Foundation). This procedure will help the population to adapt their business to new circumstances. Within this programme and considering the steady economy recovery during the second half of the year, the proposals submitted by new participants in this programme may receive, according to feasibility parameters, the support of seed capital to develop their business.

Moreover, the employment programme Talento sin Fronteras (Talent without Borders) is now virtual. It is expected that 150 people could obtain labour training certificates. In addition, they will receive support to complete courses that strengthen their professional profile, and an online job fair with different companies will be held to promote employment access.



## Social inclusion (education, health and social protection)

After declaring the state of emergency, the government made the difficult decision to cancel in-person school attendance across the entire country. It was agreed to continue with the curriculum in 2020 in an online manner through the ESTER platform ([ester.meduca.edu.pa](http://ester.meduca.edu.pa)), as well as radio and television.

In order to provide connectivity among students, the Executive branch signed an agreement entitled “Plan Educativo Solidario” (Solidarity Education Plan) with four telephone companies, which allows students from official schools to use the mobile phone network for free. In this context, the support of civil society to the population of refugees and refugee applicants has been essential to avoid school drop-out among the population concerned and to provide them with access to virtual teaching modalities provided by the government. In this regard, UNHCR and several partners have provided financial support for acquiring school supplies and books, technical support, mobile data, and delivery of tablets for the most vulnerable families and students.

Moreover, among the commitments included in the national plan, the promotion and establishment of an assistance and protocol route had been considered by the Ministry of Government and the Ministry of Health for the assistance,

reference and counter-reference of the refugee and refugee applicant population that deserves it due to their health condition. However, discussions between both ministries have been suspended due to the pandemic, and compliance with this commitment is pending. The national government provided access to free healthcare for every person who was COVID-19 positive, taking into consideration constitutional dispositions and universal principles regarding the right to receive health protection, maintenance and recovery that every human being in our country has. In this regard, all necessary assistance has been provided until their due recovery, according to the required assistance protocol.

In addition, the pandemic has greatly impacted the mental health of the population concerned, which has been seriously affected by uncertainty about the future, the impossibility of being self-reliant, losses endured, and, above all, by the separation from loved ones that are still in their country of origin. On this point, it is important to note that lines for emotional support have been implemented by humanitarian partners, and through them there has been an effort to provide emotional relief to asylum seekers and refugees.

## Quantification

Panama is still supporting refugees and applicants for refugee status through its National Action Plan, and it is investing in these efforts; nonetheless, additional resources are required to enhance their expected impact in a comprehensive and sustainable manner in order to address forced displacement.

In 2019, Panama carried out a quantification exercise in order to improve national planning and to analyse necessary resources for implementing the national action plan in asylum system areas, protection services and education. Based on the initial phase of 2019 quantification, which established a framework and methodology for quantifying necessary financial resources and financing gaps, in 2020 Panama is still analysing the investment required to support the inclusion of refugees and people in need of protection within the area of social protection. In order to achieve this, coordinated measures with the Ministry of Social Development are necessary, and for this first stage, the focus will be on the Panama United Plan, which was approved by Executive Decree No. 400 of March 27th, 2020, as the Nation’s response to the growing needs of the entire population because of the national emergency due to COVID-19.

Apart from the quantification analysis of financial needs and gaps, a strategy to identify possible financing needs and implementing partners in activities from priority areas is being developed.

To develop the financing strategy for its continuity in 2021, strategic engagement will be carried out between the Ministry of Government and the Ministry of Social Development, both as controlling bodies at the institutional level to guarantee rights and safeguard populations in need of international protection and social assistance to people in situations of extreme vulnerability. Additionally, it shall be incorporated into the Ministry of the Presidency and the Ministry of Finance and Economy to identify financial resources and the sustainability of the assistance programme.

Additional information on focus areas, specific activities, and implementation mechanisms can be found in the document Concept Notes MIRPS 2020.



[Read the MIRPS concept notes for more information](#)

OBJECTIVES	BENEFICIARIES	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	REQUIRED FUNDING
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### Social protection

Total  
**\$27,960,340**

<p>To expand social coverage to respond to the needs of refugee populations and persons requesting refugee status in vulnerable conditions, as part of the integration planned by the State as part of the <i>Panamá Solidario</i> Plan.</p>	<p>13,719 refugees and asylum seekers - average per year</p>	<p>Ministry of Social Development (MIDES, by its Spanish acronym) Ministry of Government through the National Office for the Attention of Refugees (ONPAR, by its Spanish acronym) Ministry of the Presidency Panamanian Chamber of Social Development (CAPADESO, by its Spanish acronym)</p>	<p>State investment <b>\$4,017,229</b></p> <p>Gap <b>\$23,943,111</b></p>
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\*The actions and products defined in the quantification and investment amounts refer to the main needs identified by the State, as well as the costs required for their implementation. In no way can they be understood as activities executed or being executed, nor as public resources already available for use and investment. Amounts in USD.







# THE MIRPS IN THE REGION

After joining MIRPS in July 2019, El Salvador took on the Pro Tempore Presidency of MIRPS in January 2020 with a work plan that continued the strategic processes that the Presidency began in 2019.

Results of the Pro Tempore Presidency’s work plan are presented below. These were governed by the principles of solidarity and shared responsibility among countries of origin, transit, destination and return of forced displacement, in the following priority areas:

## 1. PROTECTION

### Asylum systems

Create alliances with cooperating countries that provide technical assistance

### Internal Displacement

Guide actions related to internal displacement

## 2. SOLUTIONS

### Local Governments

Partnerships to increase the number of “Cities of Solidarity”

### Private Sector

Partnerships to create job opportunities and facilitate integration.

## 3. PARTNERSHIPS

### Civil society

### United Nations

Regional Conference on Migration

## 4. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Quantification of MIRPS commitments

# 1. PROTECTION

## i. Capacity Building of Asylum Systems

To advance in the implementation of commitments related to protection and the strengthening of asylum systems, MIRPS States have identified specific areas in which they would like to establish bilateral cooperation with other

States (see map below). Through the Support Platform (see below) several introductory sessions are being organised to Exchange experiences with MIRPS countries in 2020 and 2021.



### Good practice on shared responsibility: technical cooperation between the Support Platform and MIRPS countries

In the framework of the Spanish presidency of the MIRPS Support Platform, the Government of Spain facilitated a virtual course for key authorities on the management of asylum claims and the integration of refugees.

The content of the course was designed based on the requests made by MIRPS countries to strengthen their asylum systems and advance towards the implementation of commitments related to international protection.

This course allowed for the Exchange of knowledge and experience on applicable legislation, the use of technology in refugee status determination and registration procedures, the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in host countries, with a special focus on the role of the private sector. Other issues addressed included the protection of vulnerable profiles like unaccompanied children and the prevention of human trafficking.

The seven MIRPS countries were present with over 100 participants during the virtual sessions offered by Spain. This exchange of best practices is one of the first concrete results in terms of technical support and cooperation among MIRPS countries and the Support Platform.

The course was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation of Spain, and was carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, the General Attorney, the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, UNHCR and IOM, with the support from the Spanish International Cooperation for Development Agency (AECID for its acronym in Spanish).

## ii. Working Group on Internal Displacement

Bringing together El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico, and benefiting from the support of an Expert Panel, the Working Group provides a platform to exchange experiences and knowledge in preventing and addressing internal displacement in line with international standards. The Group held four work sessions and prepared recommendations to implement and execute emerging policies and protection systems nationally in their respective countries.

Recommendations resulting from the Group's working included: i) the need to develop standardized criteria and procedures to ensure quality of and compliance with continuous and permanent records; ii) the inclusion of the needs of displaced persons in social development plans,

establishing goals and providing resources to victims; and iii) the importance of participation that recognizes of displaced persons' citizenship and autonomy.

In addition, to realize long-term solutions, the following are highlighted as key factors for successful implementation: i) a comprehensive analysis based in communities' context; ii) leadership, coordination, and local and national ownership; iii) planning based on collective achievement; iv) ensuring participation, and inclusive processes; v) financial flexibility.

### Good practice on shared responsibility: improving responses to internal displacement

Created as part of the Pro-tempore Presidency's priorities for 2020, the Working Group on Internal Displacement elaborated a joint document on recommendations for the protection and solutions for internally displaced persons in El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico. This document aims at informing the design or improvement of public policies, national planning and operational responses to the issue.

The work carried out by this groups aims at bringing the vision of MIRPS countries to the global dialogue on information systems, resource allocation, interinstitutional coordination, participation, accountability and durable solutions to address internal displacement.

Se espera que el trabajo de este grupo incorpore la visión de los países MIRPS en el diálogo global sobre sistemas de información, asignación de recursos, coordinación interinstitucional, participación, rendición de cuentas y soluciones duraderas en el abordaje del desplazamiento interno.

The dialogue sessions conducted by the group have enabled a valuable exchange of experiences and knowledge for States that have developing protection systems on internal displacement currently at initial stages of implementation. Each session was preceded by individual national analyses based on guiding questions. These analyses were then socialised in plenary to address specific queries on how other countries within or outside the region have been tackling challenges.

At the same time, national representatives had the opportunity to undertake bilateral discussions with the experts to clarify additional questions adapted to their particular contexts.

The results of this best practice will be incorporated within global processes like the GP20 and the High Level Panel on Internal Displacement launched in 2020 to make recommendations for the improvement of the response to internal displacement.

The full report can be found here.

## 2. SOLUTIONS

### i. Local governments

Local governments and authorities are often on the front line in responding to people fleeing violence and persecution. In this regard, MIRPS States have been building the capacity of local authorities as a cross-cutting regional priority.

In line with the “Ciudades Solidarias” (Cities in Solidarity) initiative, consideration has been given to the role of cities in establishing inclusive public policies, that further the integration of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, stateless persons, returnees with protection needs, and beneficiaries of other forms of humanitarian protection.

In this regard, work in this area seeks to support cities to: i) strengthen their protection and integration efforts; ii) share their experiences with other cities; iii) facilitate the development of public-private best practice; and iv) support the creation of a network to share lessons learned and identify means to overcome shared challenges.



The “Ciudades Solidarias” initiative is based upon self-assessment against ten criteria, that include: institutional capacity, commitment and coordination; economic, socio-cultural, civic-political, and legal inclusion; reception, referral systems for people with specific needs and network promotion.

The initiative is open to local authorities in MIRPS countries, including cities, towns, municipalities, districts, cantons, or any other entity that meets the criteria of having a recognized local governmental authority, officially responsible for the provision of services and public facilities in a specific area.



## Good practice at the local level: Relocation and Work Inclusion Programme in Saltillo

The Mexican City of Saltillo is home to one of the most successful stories concerning the integration of refugees. In partnership with the private sector, the Mexican Refugee Commission, and the state and federal Ministries of Labour, has ensured the successful integration of more than five thousand refugees and asylum seekers.

Since 2016, some seven thousand people identified in the south of the country have been linked to job offers and to psycho-social support in cities including Saltillo, Guadalajara and Monterrey. At total of 86% of those relocated under the programme reside in Saltillo.

After one year of implementation, 60% of those relocated have been lifted out of poverty. Prior to their inclusion in the programme, 73% of beneficiaries were unemployed, with 17% only able to find employment occasionally, with 10% in employment. The average weekly wage stood at 898 MXN (43 USD), with 82% of children not in school. As a result of the programme, 92% of relocated persons have secured employment, with an average weekly wage of 1,465 MXN (70 USD), which 100% of children enrolled in school.

A study carried out with ECLAC on the fiscal impact that refugees participating in the programme have had on the economy revealed that as of August 2019, nearly 26.7 million pesos (1.2m USD) had been contributed in taxes. It is estimated that if the programme was to be extended through the relocation of all people requesting refugee status with the ability to enter the formal economy, the impact would be significantly higher, with revenues of 119.74 million pesos (5.9m USD).

This programme's impact not only provides a basis for replication in other cities, but also that it has the potential to inform wider public policy in in the country.

## ii. Collaboration with the private sector

The involvement and support of the private sector can contribute positively to countries' responses both in addressing the structural causes of forced displacement and in protecting and including displaced persons in their host communities.

From their position as business and market leaders, as referents and influencers, the private sector and the business community have the opportunity to contribute to the generation of solutions for the local integration of internally displaced persons, asylum seekers, refugees, returnees and deportees with protection needs and to the development of a culture of hospitality and integration.

In particular, various experiences in the region and internationally have shown how the private sector can contribute through different actions to the generation of solutions for people who have been forcibly displaced and to their host communities by:

- a) Sharing capacities such as technology or technical expertise to provide access to humanitarian assistance, education or financial services.
- b) Expanding services by adapting current business models

to the needs of refugees and other displaced persons.

- c) Facilitating employment by providing job training and business support to refugees and other displaced persons.
- d) Integrate refugees and other displaced persons into value chains by directly hiring them or by working with smaller companies that hire them.
- e) Creating businesses focused on selling goods and services to refugees and other displaced persons.

The business community, especially in key sectors such as tourism, agriculture, coffee, the environment, exports, banking and telecommunications, to name a few, has mobilized networks, resources and innovation and promoted entrepreneurship in the MIRPS countries through the implementation of programs that demonstrate the positive impact for both displaced persons and their host communities and countries.

Based on this context, at the end of the Pro-tempore El Salvador Presidency, spaces have been established for high-level dialogue with key representatives of the private and public sectors of the MIRPS countries to share experiences and discuss opportunities for collaboration

in addressing and responding to the needs of the forced displaced population in Central America and Mexico. During 2020, with the support of the Department of External and Institutional Relations of the OAS, 8 working meetings have been held with business associations and business leaders in the region, as well as with Rotary International and Tent Partnership for Refugees.

As a result of this exchange, a strategic participatory sphere has been mapped out of about 15 private sector organizations representing a range of businesses and organizations that have prioritized an organizational interest in contributing to the regional response to the crisis of forced displacement, including the Central American Integration Network for Corporate Social Responsibility (INTEGRARSE), the Foundation for the Development of Guatemala (FUNDESA), the Federation of Chambers and Associations of Exporters of Central America and the Caribbean (FECAEXCA), the Federation of Chambers of Central American Industrial Associations (FECAICA), the Rotary International group and the Latin American Business Council (CEAL), among others.

From the dialogue held with multiple business organizations at the regional and national level, it has been possible to identify initiatives that contribute positively to the response to the crisis of forced displacement in Central America and Mexico. Among them is the Regional Transformation Initiative for Coffee Growing ITRECAFE, which is an initiative financed by the Central American Bank for Economic Integration that seeks to transform the coffee sector into a decisive actor for economic and social development in the countryside, generating social stability and quality of life for rural families in order to offer alternative livelihoods to retain this population in their communities, becoming a factor of convergence and integration with local and international actors.

For its part, the Integrarse Network manages multiple initiatives that promote Corporate Social Responsibility in Central America. Among them are initiatives for the certification of skills of returnees, employability of young people and women refugees, technical training for job searches for refugees, among others. Similarly, the Foundation for the Development of Guatemala (FUNDESA) has been working on an initiative to strengthen intermediate cities, by attracting investment towards these employment poles to help address the underlying causes of forced displacement, generating solutions at the local level.

This approach has also highlighted the need to develop instruments and tools that allow, on the one hand, to

recognize and give visibility to the efforts of businesses and associations that respond to the needs of the forced displaced population in the region, and on the other hand, to connect and bring together in a more permanent and continuous way the various actors of the private sector with the MIRPS, to facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices with the purpose of articulating a much more integrated response.

After mapping and identifying relevant business organizations and concrete initiatives in the region, the aim is to continue developing this work of bringing the private sector closer to the MIRPS under four areas of work.

On first hand, to continue developing a framework of opportunities for partnerships of the MIRPS with the private sector, expanding the radius of participating companies and associations. This would include reaching out to foundations and other relevant organizations in the region with an interest in responding to the crisis of forced displacement in Central America and Mexico in order to build a database of organizations that support the MIRPS.

Secondly, to propose that the Technical Secretariat of MIRPS awards a recognition to private sector organizations that make significant contributions to the forced displacement agenda in Central America and Mexico. This would be an incentive in which the UNHCR and the OAS could encourage other private-sector actors to contribute to this effort, given their reputation and international scope.

Thirdly, to design and develop a toolbox to bring together the initiatives and good practices that private sector actors in the region are carrying out from two specific angles: on the one hand, business initiatives and on the other hand, social initiatives.

It is also intended to consolidate cooperation agreements with private sector actors on specific initiatives that respond to forced displacement within the framework of the work of the MIRPS.

Building on the work advanced for 2021, efforts will be made to consolidate the signing and launch of a strategic alliance with a broader coalition of companies and associations that can position itself as a private sector support platform for the MIRPS and contribute to lasting solutions in the MIRPS countries. Moreover, this work seeks to explore synergies and links with the MIRPS support platform led by Spain, with the results of the quantification and prioritization carried out by the MIRPS countries and with the resource raising efforts through the MIRPS Fund.

## Good practice with the private sector: access to financial services

Financial inclusion is a facilitator and accelerator of economic growth, job creation and development. Access to, and the accessible use, of financial resources can support families in generating income, administrating irregular cash flows, investing in opportunities, strengthening the ability to recover from shocks, and a stepping stone out of poverty. The financial sectors' engagement can reduce protection risks, and stimulate economic activity at the community level.

In Panama, Banesco financial institution issued 800 cards that provided access to cash assistance to refugees and asylum seekers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Faced with mobility restrictions due to the coronavirus and the loss of livelihoods, refugees and asylum seekers continued to receive humanitarian assistance without having to go to the offices of humanitarian organizations. With these cards, families have been able to shop in supermarkets and pharmacies to access essential items, while be able to withdraw money from ATMs when necessary to meet their needs.

The distribution of cards is an important step towards the digital inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers. The financial sector is an essential component for the development of societies that are inclusive of refugees, providing tools to facilitate their local integration.





# 3. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The complexity of forced displacement in MIRPS countries—exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic—has required a comprehensive response to critical needs of food, water and shelter, as well as basic services such as health, education, housing and livelihoods. Close expansion and consolidation of strategic partnerships with continues

## i. Civil society

Since the adoption of the MIRPS in 2017, civil society organizations have worked collaboratively in a number of areas with States, often at the forefront of the humanitarian operational response. Considering the concrete steps that civil society has taken to contribute to MIRPS implementation, they include, amongst others, maintaining an operational presence in border areas and identifying humanitarian needs, rendering material assistance, most noticeably during the course of the year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, civil society organizations have played a critical role ensuring the participation of populations of interest in different relevant spaces.

to be of critical importance to ensure the fullest possible expansion of rights and services.

To facilitate MIRPS commitments in each country, the Presidency furthered the collaboration with various strategic partners to respond comprehensively to a wide range of needs.

Following the adoption of the Mexico City Declaration in 2019, and as a response to the position of civil society during the II MIRPS Annual Meeting, the Pro Tempore Presidency included as a priority, the establishment of permanent dialog mechanisms at the national and regional levels, to facilitate the exchange of information, leverage civil society's role in the implementation of MIRPS commitments, together with operational coordination.

Each country has progressed in creating such fora for dialog, although it should be noted that the operational challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic have limited the scope of engagement, necessitating further investment in the year ahead.

## Good practice of the civil society: Safe Spaces network

The Protection Network and Safe Spaces initiatives has been implemented by civil society, religious organizations, and human rights networks, with the support of United Nations' agencies, public institutions, and development partners.

The protection network operates through safe spaces (including temporary shelters, mobile information centres and safe houses) through the main migratory routes, which provide immediate assistance to people in transit, including those in need of international protection. Provided services include identification and referral of people in need of protection; legal information and support concerning the

asylum process; physical protection and humanitarian assistance; referrals in response to child protection, sexual and gender violence and psycho-social support services, together with first aid.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of organizations adapted the way they operate to ensure continuity of service provision to displaced populations, while others were obliged to suspend their activities in response to mobility restriction measures.

## ii. United Nations System

Another priority of the Pro-Tempore Presidency for 2020 was the strengthening of collaboration with the United Nations System. In this regard, National Technical Teams have identified the UN Agencies at the national level

that have a complementary and strategic role in the implementation of a number of MIRPS commitments, based on the sectoral focus and operational presence. In some countries, dialogue with UN Agencies has taken place,

as part of national consultations during the quantification process. In this regard, in Guatemala, UNICEF contributes to the commitment on child protection routes; in Honduras, consultations were held with UNDP on work in employment and livelihoods, while in Mexico, they worked with PAHO / WHO for commitments on health. At the same time, a structured engagement with the United Nations system,

country by country, is still necessary to ensure that national MIRPS commitments are gradually integrated into the United Nations Cooperation Frameworks for Sustainable Development in each of the States.

## Good practice for the United Nations System: A Regional Framework of Local Government UNDP-UNHCR

In support of the commitments made at the Global Refugee Forum, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Agency for Refugees (UNHCR) adopted a Joint Plan of Action to strengthen local governments, which is providing orientation to a new partnership in support of the MIRPS. Both agencies provide complementarity based on their distinct humanitarian and development approaches, and, in support of local authorities, plan to support an integrated response to protection and assistance needs of both displaced populations and their host communities.

Both organizations work closely in a number of complimentary areas, including socioeconomic (re)integration, livelihoods, rule of law and local government, and, more recently, legal identity. This inter-agency alliance seeks to reinforce cooperation at the regional and local level. A tool-kit will be

created for generating cross-sector commitments among local authorities, UN Country Teams and civil society. The topics addressed are envisaged to include: (i) incorporating forced displacement in local development planning; (ii) protection of and accessing essential services; (iii) rule of law and electronic government; and (iv) socioeconomic integration and social cohesion.

The regional toolkit is being developed in 2020, and will be adapted to individual country contexts in 2021, to allow municipalities affected by forced displacement to identify their priority capacity support needs to ensure the incorporation of the displaced within their local development planning processes.

### iii. Regional Conference on Migration (RCM)

The Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), as a multilateral forum, works to promote regional efforts to strengthen effective migration management and protect the human rights of migrants, especially concerning vulnerable groups, and based on cooperation with other regional procedures. In order to define possible areas of convergence and joint work opportunities with the MIRPS, the Pro-tempore Presidency took part in a consultation between both platforms to provide a space for debate about the current context of mixed migration flows, and to consider improved coordination.

In line with MIRPS and RCM annual work-plans, the joint workshop served as a space to review the strategic priorities of both platforms, to avoid any duplication in efforts, and to consider opportunities for collaboration at the regional and national level, based on the humanitarian operational context, related to forced displacement and irregular migration.

As a guideline for responding to the humanitarian context in the region, UNHCR's 10 Point Plan of Action concerning

protection needs in mixed migration flows was shared. Amongst the ten points, special attention was paid to data collection and analysis, admission systems for protection, methods of reception, mechanisms for identification and referral, and mass communication.

The RCM and the MIRPS agreed to: develop a matrix to facilitate the identification of activities at the national level, analyse synergies between both initiatives, to cooperate in the development of Annual Work Plans of both presidencies, to define areas of mutual cooperation. Areas that were initially identified as areas of collaboration concerned: the implementation of joint communication campaigns regarding dangerous migration routes in countries of origin and transit, the prevention of xenophobia in destination or transit countries, and training programmes to ensure border officials are able to identify the specific protection needs of individuals within mixed movements.

The recommendations included in the RCM-MIRPS report will be incorporated into the work plans of Pro-tempore Presidencies of both platforms in 2021.

# 4. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

In light of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the PPT supported a strategic orientation process with each MIRPS State mid-year. The aim was to identify priority investment areas amongst the respective national MIRPS commitments, in light of the new public health context, to and support engagement with strategic partners and the mobilization of additional resources. The outcome of these sessions informed the second phase of the quantification exercise, an initiative led by each MIRPS country to strengthen national planning.

With the support of the Technical Secretariat, the quantification exercise made it possible to define precise activities and exact financial resources required for implementing identified priority focus areas, which provided a basis for an evidence-based national dialog within each MIRPS country, and externally with other relevant national partners.

In this regard, MIRPS States are developing national funding strategies to align identified gaps to potential financing sources through international cooperation. Spaces such as the MIRPS Support Platform and MIRPS Voluntary Fund of the OEA are key mechanisms for the coordination of support required by individual States.

To provide a basis for dialog among MIRPS countries and their Support Platform members, each MIRPS country elaborated concept notes in selected focus areas that explain in detail the following: context, objectives, specific measures, implementing partners, and budget estimates, in order to provide funding and specific assistance in the implementation of commitments.

The concept notes are related to the following interventions, aligned with national commitments and pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum.

A document containing all concept notes by country can be found here.



# Prioritized focus areas





# MIRPS SUPPORT PLATFORM

The MIRPS Support Platform is a mechanism for shared responsibility led by countries and multilateral bodies, which aims to support MIRPS countries' efforts to ensure protection and solutions for people in situations of forced displacement in Central America and Mexico.

This is one of the three support platforms that were created during the first Global Refugee Forum in December 2019, aimed at mobilizing multilateral support in a context of specific displacement in line with commitments established in the Global Compact on Refugees. The Support Platform has its roots in "MIRPS Friends Group", a network of countries that participated in the meeting in San Pedro Sula in 2017, when the MIRPS was created, with the objective of strengthening regional responses to forced displacement. Currently, the MIRPS Support Platform includes Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, France, Uruguay, Switzerland, the US, and the EU. Recently, the Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean (CEPAL, by its Spanish acronym) has joined the Support Platform in order to strengthen relationships between humanitarian and development approaches to address structural causes of displacement in countries of origin and promote integration, inclusion and solutions in destination countries.

In June 2020, the Government of Spain assume the leadership of MIRPS Support Platform as Pro-tempore Presidency for a one-year period. Under the Spanish presidency, a governance structure for the Platform was adopted, and a work plan with four main axis was developed, which seeks to: i) focus the attention of the international community on forced displacement in Central America and Mexico, to ensure a comprehensive and international response that fosters protection and solutions; ii) support the MIRPS by providing greater visibility of forced displacement, strengthening shared responsibility; iii) to

implement a dialog for coordination and exchange of good practices; and iv) to document lessons learned and good practice of the Platform.

In line with the established work plan, Spain convened a meeting in September during the 75th Ministerial Week of the UN General Assembly. During this high-level event on forced displacement in Central America, that focused on the impact of COVID-19 on the region, the MIRPS was highlighted as part of the solution, with specific commitments made by platform members and other international bodies. Among the assumed commitments, Spain promised to provide assistance in the strengthening of asylum capacities, Canada offered support in resettlement programmes and the EU promised additional support for development. The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) confirmed its focus on supporting transit countries and countries where displacement occurs, while the United States reaffirmed its commitment to provide financial support to address the crisis. Canada also expressed interest in assuming the next presidency of the MIRPS Support Platform when the Spanish mandate ends next year.

In addition, prior to finishing its term as Pro-tempore Presidency, Spain has agreed to hold a solidarity event in 2021 to raise awareness, funds, and technical support for the implementation of the MIRPS in Central America and Mexico.

# IV

# MIRPS VOLUNTARY FUND

The Permanent Council of the OAS (Organization of American States) unanimously adopted the creation of the MIRPS specific fund of voluntary contributions, called the MIRPS Fund, on May 27th, 2020. This approval implements a mandate given to the OAS General Secretariat during the OAS General Assembly in 2019 and resumes the Political Declaration of the City of Mexico that MIRPS countries adopted in their Second Annual Meeting, held on November 8th, 2019. For this commitment, the MIRPS Technical Secretariat, through the Social Inclusion Department, mentored work led by El Salvador to complete this procedure.

The MIRPS Fund is open to contributions from OAS member states, OAS permanent observing states, UN member states, international organizations, public or private bodies, national or international bodies, and from individuals that wish to contribute to the MIRPS Fund.

Considering the challenges MIRPS countries face when seeking to respond to the needs of deportees, asylum seekers, internal displaced people, and deportees, the MIRPS Fund represents an important and relevant mechanism for resource mobilization. This particularly relevant in the implementation of related projects and the adoption of specific measures to respond to the specific challenges and vulnerability that asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced people and returnees with protection face in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The MIRPS Fund is also one of the specific tools that serves MIRPS countries and that goes hand in hand with the quantification exercise and project development in priority areas that were carried out by MIRPS countries in 2020. In 2021, having a robust portfolio of specific projects and the MIRPS Fund as a fund-raising mechanism, MIRPS countries will be better prepared for raising awareness about solidarity among international community in order to draw attention to displacement in the region and the needs of asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced people, and returnees that require international protection.

