

Participant project for the prevention of statelessness.

SUMMARY

GIFMM COLOMBIA:

JOINT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

COVID-19

DECEMBER 2020

Maicao, La Guajira. © UNICEF



HOUSEHOLDS INTERVIEWED

>3.100 VENEZUELAN REFUGEE AND MIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS

21 DEPARTMENTS

HOUSEHOLDS RANDOMLY SELECTED FROM DATABASES WITH OVER >173.000 HOUSEHOLDS



METHODOLOGY AND PARTNERS

PHONE INTERVIEWS, 35 MINUTES, 9 DAYS

36 ORGANIZATIONS

214 ENUMERATORS

PRIORITY NEEDS



85%

OF HOUSEHOLDS PRIORITISE FOOD



68%

SHELTER



44%

SOURCES OF INCOME

SUMMARY

As of 31 October 2020, more than 1.71 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants were residing in Colombia. (Colombia Migration, 2020)¹. Thousands more have transited through Colombia, towards other countries or Colombian cities. In addition, there were pendular movements of thousands of people, who crossed the border in search of basic needs and services. On 6 March the first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported in the country, and on 20 March President Iván Duque announced the start of the compulsory preventive isolation measures, implemented between 24 March and 31 August 2020. On 25 August President Duque announced the lifting of the obligatory preventive isolation measures, followed as of 1 September by a period of 'Selective Isolation', which entails the lifting of certain restrictions. This assessment is being carried out in the context of an ongoing health emergency (extended until 28 February 2021)² and further lifting of certain measures.

The objectives of the fourth round of the joint needs assessment are to monitor trends in the levels of access and availability of basic goods and services and the difficulties households face in accessing them, to analyze how living conditions have evolved, and the main priorities of the population as a way of forming a baseline for the 2021 response.

Between 3 and 13 November 2020, 214 surveyors from 36 GIFMM organizations conducted over 3,100 telephone surveys with refugee and migrant households from Venezuela. The sample design allows for an analysis at a national level, as well as for 11 departments in Colombia: Antioquia, Arauca, Atlántico, Bogotá D.C., Cesar, La Guajira, Magdalena, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Santander and Valle del Cauca.

PANEL ANALYSIS³

To enable a retrospective analysis, enumerators followed up on the households surveyed during the previous round of the evaluation in order to understand how their situation has evolved, in light of the lifting of certain COVID-19 measures. Participating organizations carried out surveys with 704 households that were already surveyed in July, to measure these changes.

¹ Colombia Migration (November 2020). Venezuelans in Colombia as of 30 September 2020. <https://bit.ly/2KhXypZ>

² Presidency (November 2020). Health Emergency extended until February 28, 2021, announces President Duque. <https://bit.ly/3ahIT8F>

³ 8 topics were selected to inform the analysis over time, and the related questions are the same in the questionnaire of the third and fourth round.

Priorities

The three main needs reported by households remain **food (85% of surveyed households)**, **housing, e.g. rental assistance (68%)** and **access to employment or sources of income (44%)**. In addition, 29% of households prioritize access to medical assistance.

To be noted that these three main needs, as reported by the households interviewed, have not changed between July and November.

76% of households that prioritize food, and 85% of those that prioritize housing as a need, **prefer cash transfers** (cash or vouchers) over other response modalities.

The assessment identified several groups with specific needs

- **Individuals without regular status:** 71% of respondents do not have a regular status in Colombia. Households with no adult household members with regular status are more likely to adopt emergency survival strategies and consume fewer meals on average a day. Households where none of its members have regular status are more likely to report an intention to return to Venezuela.
- **New arrivals:** Households that arrived more recently (since 2019) are more likely not to have regular status, and to adopt emergency survival strategies in order to access food and money to buy food.
- **Pregnant/lactating women:** in 28% of households, there is at least one pregnant and/or lactating woman. 65% of these households consume only two meals a day or less, and one in three of these households has resorted to begging on the street to be able to buy food.

- **Female-headed households** (69% of households) and households where **the head of household has a disability** (11%) are more likely to engage in emergency survival strategies and consume fewer meals, on average, than other households.

Residence and movement

The results show limited movement of the households interviewed: only 7% of households indicate that, a year ago, they lived in a different municipality in Colombia while 6% state they lived in a different country.

Access to employment is the main reason for moving between municipalities in Colombia. 10% percent of these households moved within Colombia due to concerns related to safety and security. The search for **food and work are the main reasons for leaving Venezuela, while 36% of households fled Venezuela due to reasons related to insecurity.**

88% of respondents indicate there is no one within their household that has the intention to return to Venezuela in the month after the data collection. However, **in 7% of the households surveyed, there is at least one member that has the intention to return.** For the first time during the fourth round, family reunification is mentioned most often as the main reason for return, followed by economic reasons, either due to lack of income (25%), lack of food (8%) or an increase in the price of goods and services (5%) in Colombia.

The panel analysis confirms this change in the motivations for return: 55% of households interviewed in November who are planning to return, state family reunification as the most common reason, compared to 28% during the third round, when the lack of income in Colombia was the main reason reported. This is likely to be related to the Christmas season immediately following the data collection.

Access to rights, services and goods



LIVELIHOODS

Remunerated work is the most common source of income among respondents. **18% of households mention they are dependent on assistance, from the Government or NGOs, while 5% report having no source of income at all.** The results confirm the difficult working conditions for refugees and migrants in Colombia, with 86% of the working population receiving less than a minimum wage, as well as with barriers in accessing formal employment. 96% of those working do not contribute to a pension fund.

The PANEL analysis shows that work as a main source of income has increased (from 68% of households in July to 80% in November), in line with the reactivation of the economy between July and November.



WATER AND SANITATION

Only 68% of the population has access to drinking water, meaning that **32% of the population surveyed does not have a regular source of drinking water for consumption.** 10% of the population does not have access to adequate sanitation. 5% of households with girls and women do not have access to menstrual hygiene products.

In panel households, a slight decrease in access to drinking water was reported, with only 62% of households indicated they have access to drinking water, compared to 67% in July.



FOOD SECURITY

Most households are unable to meet their food needs. A calculation of the Food Consumption Score, which measures the quantity and quality of the diet, indicates 25% of households have “poor” or “borderline” food consumption. 64% of households consume only two meals a day or less, indicating that they are not able to access the recommended minimum daily consumption of three meals.

Despite the increase in access to work as a source of income, there was only a 4 percentage point increase in households having three meals a day. 71% of the households surveyed continued to be deprived of at least one meal per day.



DOCUMENTATION

The Government of Colombia has implemented various policies to ensure access to a regular status for refugees and migrants from Venezuela. However, **70.8% of people in Venezuelan refugee and migrant households interviewed, do not have a regular status.** In 15% of households, none of the members has one or more of these documents. People who have been in Colombia for a longer period of time are more likely to have one or more documents providing regular status.



NUTRITION

Only 51% of children under 6 months of age are exclusively breastfed. In 46% of households, children under 6 months received some type of bottle feeding or additional food. Exclusive breastfeeding reduces as the child grows older: at month 0, nine out of ten children are exclusively breastfed, while at month 5, only four out of ten children continue to be exclusively breastfed.



HOUSING

80% of households surveyed are renting the place where they are residing. **Half (49%) of the households indicate they are not sure if they have a place to stay during the month after the data collection**, mainly due the inability to pay rent. 38% of those interviewed are living in overcrowded conditions (more than three people per room).



COMMUNICATION

33% of households interviewed do not have access to the Internet. This proportion increases to 60% for households belonging to a particular ethnic group. For households that do have access, the most common means of access is by mobile phone. When asked about the preferred medium for receiving information about the assessment, the social messaging network 'WhatsApp' was mentioned by 78% of respondents.



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

Only 1% of 2,289 children under age 5 included in the survey are attending a community home, kindergarten, child development center or school. This reflects the suspension of initial education services due to the COVID-19 preventative measures. 7% of children are cared for by their parents at their workplace, 2% are cared for by a relative or person under 18, and 0.31% are left at home alone during the day.

15% of children aged 5 to 11 and 23% of children aged 12 to 17 did not have access to education before COVID-19. **Access to education has decreased during the COVID-19 restrictions: at the time of the assessment, 46% of children aged 5 to 11 and 48% of children aged 12 to 17 reported not having access to virtual sessions.**



HEALTH

43% of households report that at least one member of their household has needed some medical treatment in the 30 days before data collection. Of these households, **49% reported that they have had difficulty accessing medical treatment**, mainly due to not being affiliated with the health system (reported by 56% of households), the high cost of services and medicines (51%) and the lack of documentation. **80% of the household members are not affiliated to the health system.**

16% of children aged 0 to 6 have never been vaccinated.

24% of the people interviewed indicated that, during the 30 days prior to the survey, a member of the household was in need of sexual and reproductive health services. There are large gaps between the need for sexual and reproductive health and the availability of these services. For instance, of the 7% of the households in need of contraceptive services, 35% were unable to access these services.

41% of those interviewed mentioned that one or more members of their household had experienced symptoms of anxiety, reduced sleep or crying episodes in the seven days prior to data collection.

In the households surveyed between July and November, there was a 12-percentage point increase in households that reported at least one symptom such as anxiety, crying episodes or reduced sleep, which could point to a deteriorating mental health situation.

Protection Risks

11% of the 1,037 children born in Colombia since 1 January 2015 do not have a Civil Registry of Birth, the document required to obtain Colombian nationality. Of these, 26% mention as the main reason the temporary closure of the Registry offices (from 17 March to 31 May 2020), 22% do not have the resources to do so, and 16% out of fear of contracting COVID-19.

20% of people surveyed **do not feel safe in the neighborhood where they live**, an issue more often reported among female compared to male respondents (21% vs. 16%).

Almost half (44%) of the people surveyed reported having experienced some episode or situation of **discrimination** in 2020. The panel analysis shows that this perception has not changed, with 45% of households in both July and in November reporting these types of incidents.

7% of women and transgender interviewed know a woman who experienced violence from a partner, ex-partner or family member during the preventative measures.

11% of the population responded that they have had to carry out some kind of work or activity without being able to withdraw voluntarily when they have wanted to, which may indicate **a risk of trafficking and smuggling**.

Coping mechanisms

82% of households engage in coping mechanisms to be able to access food or money to buy food. **This includes 44% of households engaging in 'emergency' strategies such as begging (32%) or taking jobs that pose a risk to their integrity, health, safety or life (15%).**

65% percent of households were in debt at the time of data collection, while 52% were in debt to pay their rent.

Between July and November there was a slight reduction in the number of households that adopt emergency coping strategies such as asking for food or money on the street (from 39% of households in round 3 to 37% in round 4) and engaging in activities that put them at risk of which they prefer not to talk about (17% in round 3 vs. 16% in round 4).



GIFMM in cooperation with:



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