

SYSTEMATIZATION OF BEST PRACTICES

PROVIDING MIGRANTS WITH LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



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ABBREVIATIONS

IOM	International Organization for Migration
WHO	World Health Organization
CBI	Cash Based Interventions
RMP	Regional Migration Program

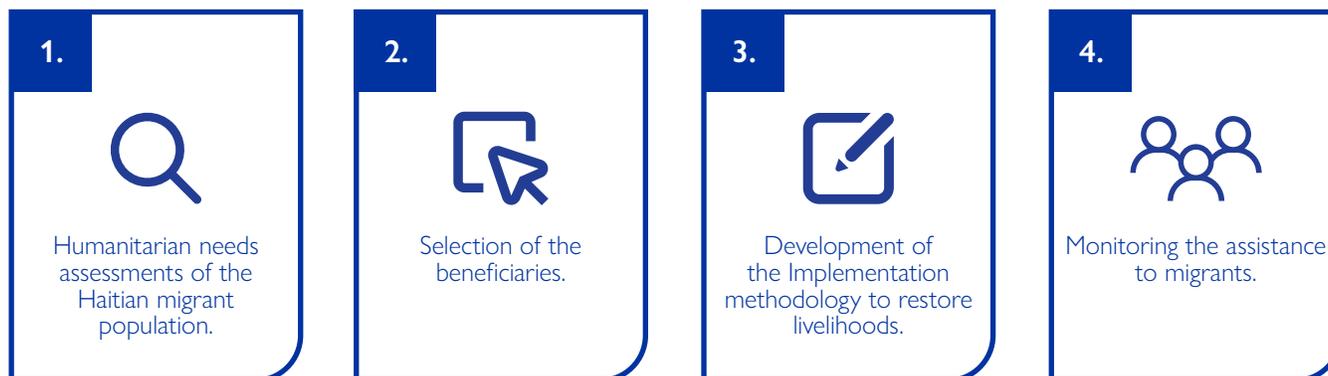
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BEST PRACTICE SUMMARY

Best Practice	Support Migrants' Livelihoods during the COVID-19 Pandemic
Description	The response to the urgent need regarding livelihoods of migrants was given through Cash-Based Interventions (CBIs) as well as the selection of beneficiaries. The assistance was conducted on a vulnerability basis and priority was given to students and migrants intending to return to their home countries – as a mechanism to address their economic needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Objective	Provide a mechanism to address the livelihoods of Haitian migrant students affected by the COVID 19 pandemic.
Location	Dominican Republic
Beneficiaries	Haitian migrants and Haitian students in the Dominican Republic

MAIN ACTIONS



INTRODUCTION

The livelihood restoration initiative for Haitian migrants affected by COVID-19 was developed by the Dominican Republic office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) during the third quarter of 2020. The activity is founded on elements of the 10th implementation phase of the Regional Migration Program, which aims to “Strengthen Capacities for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.” This was made possible by reprogramming funds from a small part of the Program to respond to the COVID-19-based needs.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic have suffered a decline in their livelihoods. IOM’s intervention focused on migrants who found themselves in a situation of deep vulnerability. The interventions sought to mitigate the socio-economic impact caused by the measures imposed to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. To address this crisis the intervention proposed by OIM in the Dominican Republic, was to provide access to funds for migrants living in vulnerable conditions through the Cash-Based Interventions (CBIs)¹ program.

The documentation of this experience was made possible thanks to the support of Santo Miguel Román from the IOM Dominican Republic Office.

CONTEXT

On December 31st, 2019, it became known worldwide that, in Wuhan, province of the People’s Republic of China, there was a group of people infected with pneumonia of an unknown etiology. The Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization (WHO) announced, in January 2020, that the cases identified belonged to a coronavirus-type² infection and since that moment it started to be treated as a possible pandemic³.

In the Dominican Republic (DR) the first case of coronavirus was detected on March 1st, 2020, and since then the number of infected people has kept increasing. Due to the public health emergency⁴, the DR government introduced preventive measures, such as social distancing⁵, curfews and non-essential business or services temporary shutdowns. Regarding the migratory restrictions, on March 16th, there was a total closure of land, sea, and air borders, in order to contain the pandemic’s spread.

About half a million Haitian migrants reside in the Dominican Republic, and they adversely economically affected by the lockdown⁶. This led to movements of voluntary returns⁷ into Haitian territory. Nevertheless, many Haitian migrants remained in the Dominican Republic in need of humanitarian aid due to the demise of their livelihoods. Naturally, the economic, social, and psychosocial effects of the health crisis affected the most vulnerable groups of migrants and refugees, as they went from minimal financial resources to losing most of their financial wherewithal. All of this was exacerbated by the overall health situation. Per IOM calculations, more than 150,000 Haitian migrants were left without jobs because of the shutdowns in tourism, construction, services, and trade sectors.

¹ Find the Glossary of Terminology for CBI Programs in the following [link](#).

² Coronavirus is part of a family of viruses that cause diseases ranging from a common cold to more severe diseases such as the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS-CoV) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV). The newly discovered coronavirus that causes the disease known as COVID-19 is called SARS-CoV-2. International Organization for Migration. (2020). Internal Glossary. Public Health and Mobility in the Context of the COVID- 19. IOM. p. 2

³ WHO defines the term pandemic as “the global spread of a new disease”, the statement that a pandemic is “global” or that it “affects the whole world” could be perceived as redundant. The description refers to how and how quickly a disease spreads, not to the severity caused by the illnesses. WHO has not established a defined set of criteria to determine whether an epidemic can be considered a pandemic or not. On 11 March, COVID-19 has declared a pandemic. International Organization for Migration. (2020). Internal Glossary. Public Health and Mobility in the Context of the COVID- 19. IOM. p. 5.

⁴ WHO defines the term public health emergency of international importance as an “extraordinary event” that constitutes a “risk to the public health of other States due to the international spread of a disease” and “could require a coordinated international response”. International Organization for Migration. (2020). Internal Glossary. Public Health and Mobility in the Context of the COVID- 19. IOM. Page 3.

⁵ Social distancing is a term that was initially used to refer to physical distancing in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak but has been progressively abandoned. It refers to the public health recommendation to maintain sufficient physical distance between people to reduce the transmission risk. In the case of COVID-19, the WHO recommendations guide that individuals should maintain a minimum distance of one meter to avoid inhalation of droplets of saliva and mucous membranes that may contain the virus. The term physical distancing is preferred, as it clarifies that social interaction is safe and recommended from a mental health perspective whenever a sufficient physical distance is kept. International Organization for Migration. (2020). Internal Glossary. Public Health and Mobility in the Context of the COVID- 19. IOM. p. 3.

⁶ Confinement: In its broadest understanding, refers to mandatory stay in a place. It means a suspension on the freedom of movement, but it is not a particular concept of public health. This preventive measure should not be confused with quarantine, which applies only to situations where people have been exposed to a health risk; nor with isolation, which is a public health measure applied to probable cases, suspected, or confirmed; or with detection, a legal term with a punitive component that adds to the deprivation of freedom of movement. International Organization for Migration. (2020). Internal Glossary. Public Health and Mobility in the Context of the COVID- 19. IOM. p. 2.

⁷ Assisted voluntary return to the country of origin or transit, or another country, based on a voluntary decision of the returning person. Source (adaptation): International Organization for Migration (IOM), Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Handbook (internal unpublished document, 2010), p. 10.

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