



PANAMA JULY 2020 - MARCH 2022

PROMOTING PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE IN THE

COVID-19 RESPONSE FOR MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND

OTHER VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



Co-funded by
the European Union

Coordinated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and implemented jointly with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Project seeks to promote integration and peaceful coexistence access to health, community participation, and the protection environment for the affected communities.

Targeted beneficiaries include indigenous populations, migrant women, LGBTBI community, stranded migrants, returnees, refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, and vulnerable members of the host/transit communities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The interventions focus on providing greater access to health services and social protection, seeking to increase the resilience of vulnerable disproportionately populations affected by the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and support their recovery from the crisis.

ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES AND SOCIAL SAFETY NETS FOR MIGRANTS, REFUGEES, AND PERSONS OF CONCERN

Between August 2021 and March 2022, IOM and UNHCR delivered protective equipment and health supplies to seven health facilities, benefiting a total of 471 health workers. This allowed for the continuous provision of services, preventing the spread of COVID-19, and strengthening the response for persons within mixed movements. In addition, a total of 945 beneficiaries received PPE and cleaning materials, including migrants, returnees, internally displaced persons, refugees, asylum-seekers, host community leaders, and others of concern.

Moreover, UNCHR and partners provided in-kind assistance and multipurpose cash for basic needs to vulnerable individuals and delivered biosafety equipment and cleaning supplies to local and central authorities, reaching 5,830 beneficiaries. A total of 6,205 refugees and asylum-seekers, members of the host community, and persons in mixed movements received mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services through individual and group interventions, as well as other

activities designed to address mental health conditions, including anxiety and stress mainly related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1,015 migrants (557 women and 458 men) in highly vulnerable situations received orientation for referral services through IOM community promoters in La Chorrera (Barrio Colon and Herrera), San Miguelito (Omar Torrijos), and Panama (Las Mañanitas). Between July 2020 and June 2021, a total of 5,022 (2,340 women and girls; 2,682 men and boys) refugees and asylum seekers, host community members, and persons in mixed movements were provided MHPSS services through individual and group interventions, as well as other activities designed to tackle mental health conditions, including anxiety and stress mainly related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, capacity-building sessions on international protection were delivered to raise awareness about the vulnerabilities of refugees and asylum-seekers, brief on project activities for integration of refugees and migrants and host communities.



Families come to receive free nutritional care services for boys and girls IOM 2022

REACHED BENEFICIARIES

471

PROTECTIVE
EQUIPMENT AND
HEALTH SUPPLIES

975

PPE & CLEANING
MATERIALS

5,830

IN-KIND ASSISTANCE
AND MULTIPURPOSE
CASH

6,205

MENTAL HEALTH AND
PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT
SERVICES

1,015

ORIENTATION FOR
REFERRAL SERVICES
THROUGH IOM

IMPROVING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE CAPACITIES TO ADDRESS CONFLICT-SENSITIVE CHALLENGES CAUSED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A total of **112 persons (92 women and 20 men)** participated in training sessions on COVID-19 prevention and control, risk communication methods, screening and case definition, isolation, initial case management, and reporting mechanisms.

Moreover, IOM delivered four workshops on COVID-19 prevention and response for migrants for key stakeholders from the health and migration sectors. IOM developed communication materials on health facilities and good hygiene, which are currently displayed in prioritized the health facilities. The materials will be used by Ministry of Health on other health facilities as well.

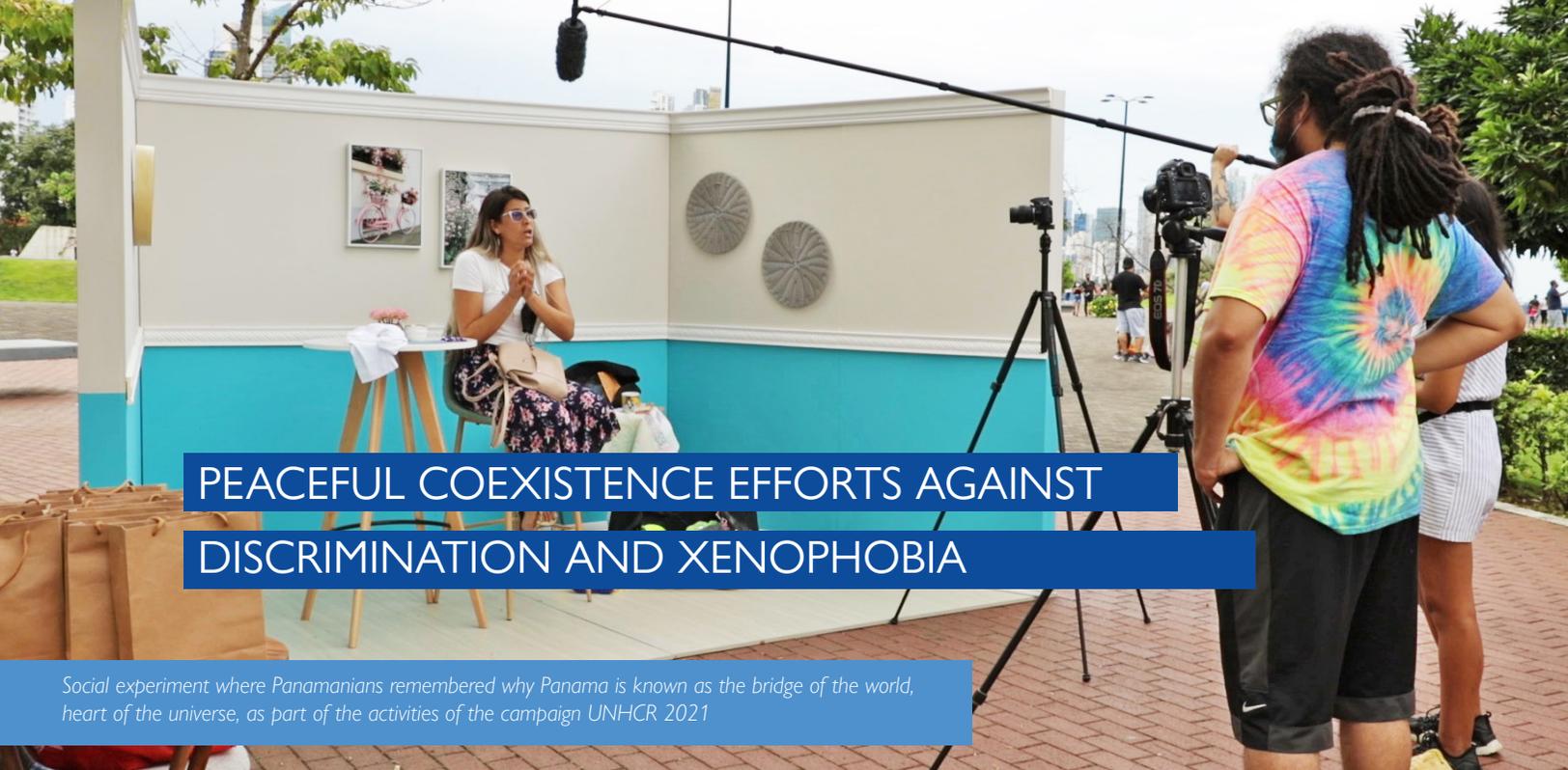
UNHCR and partners have conducted several capacity building sessions on international

protection, access to the territory, and RSD procedure, reaching government officials from various institutions, including SENAFRONT, SNM, INAMU, Jueces de Paz, and community authorities.

UNHCR advocated with the authorities for the registration of all the boys and girls from mixed movements born in Panamanian territory to mitigate risks of statelessness. Birth registrations were achieved for 98 children during 2020, and eight in 2021.

At the end of 2021, the Ombudsman joined the Gender-Based Violence Working Group as a member, strengthening the response and actions aimed at the refugee and migrant populations, as well as the host communities





PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE EFFORTS AGAINST
DISCRIMINATION AND XENOPHOBIA

Social experiment where Panamanians remembered why Panama is known as the bridge of the world, heart of the universe, as part of the activities of the campaign UNHCR 2021

somos lo mismo

UNA CAMPAÑA COLIDERADA POR
 **UNHCR**
ACNUR
La Agencia de la ONU
para los Refugiados
 **OIM**
ONU MIGRACIÓN

CON EL APOYO DE

UNIÓN EUROPEA

SOMOS LO MISMO CAMPAIGN

Somos lo Mismo is a UNHCR and IOM led, seeking to promote solidarity and integration among nationals, refugees, and migrants who live in Panama.

On average, more than 500,000 people were reached monthly through the social media accounts of the “Somos lo Mismo” campaign between June 2020 and December 2021. In addition, the campaign newsletter reaches more than 800 subscribers monthly.

UNHCR desarrolla la actividad de los Jueces de Paz. Between June 2020 and July 2021, a total of 1,525 local authorities, Jueces de Paz and municipalities staff, community leaders, and implementing partners participated in activities designed to promote peaceful coexistence in communities, support the dissemination of key messages, and ensure access to services for PoC.

ACCESS TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY EFFORTS FOR MIGRANTS, REFUGEES, AND PERSONS OF CONCERN

Construction of a dock to facilitate the safe arrival and departure of canoes – (the most used means of transportation in the rainy season to arrive or leave the community). A staircase will allow the use of the structure regardless of the river level, and a roof will offer protection from daily downpours during the rainy season.

UNHCR Panama reached a total of 999 beneficiary families out of a target of 40. Between July 2020 and June 2021, through its partners, UNHCR assisted 999 households (550 woman-led and 449 man-led), representing 2,622 individuals, with multipurpose cash for food, medicine, and housing.



Construction of the dock in Bajo Chiquito, Darién



Between July 2020 and June 2021.

2,622

PEOPLE SERVED BY UNHCR

Multipurpose cash for food, medicine, housing, and access to other basic needs.

COORDINATION FOR A COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC AND ITS CONSEQUENCES BY NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

Inter-institutional workshops aiming of attaining inputs for the design of the “National Plan against Smuggling of Migrants” and advancing in the priorities defined by Law 36 of May 24, 2013, related to Trafficking, and smuggling of Migrants and Related Activities. Relevant presence of the technical level of 15 institutions took place, which will contribute consecutively to the coordination of the implementation of the National Plan and in parallel, to the strategy of strengthening the Unit for Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants

(UATIM) of the National Immigration Service. Binational Forum for the Exchange of Experiences and Best Practices was coordinated. A total of **36 immigration management and protection services officers** had participated from the border of Darién and Chiriquí respectively. Approval of the Board of Directors of the Permanent Commission for the Protection and Assistance to Migrants in Vulnerable Conditions (COPAMI), where migratory institutions of Costa Rica: General Directorate of Migration

and Foreigner (DGME) and Panama: National Migration Service of Panama, took the direction of the Commission. Through the technical assistance provided, a strengthening process of the UN Human Mobility Group is progress and had allowed to consolidate the group mechanism in Darien.

In compliance with the work plan of the Human Mobility Group, joint training actions have been developed for 273 officials from SENAFRONT, SNM, SINAPROC, among others. Likewise, actions have been coordinated on the ground to provide information and legal assistance to people from mixed movements on access to the RSD procedure and referral mechanisms to ONPAR.

Inter-institutional workshops were delivered, seeking to develop inputs for the design of the “National Plan against Smuggling of Migrants” and advance in the priorities defined by Law 36 of 14 May 2013, related to Trafficking, and Smuggling of Migrants and Related Activities. Technical staff from 15 relevant institutions participated. The action will contribute to the coordinated implementation of the National Plan, as well as well as the strengthening the Unit for Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants (UATIM) of the National Migration Service.

The Binational Forum for the Exchange of Experiences and Best Practices was coordinated.

A total of 36 migration management and protection services border officers participated in Darién (bordering Colombia) and Chiriquí (bordering Costa Rica).

The Permanent Commission for the Protection and Assistance to Migrants in Vulnerable Conditions (COPAMI) approved its Board of Directors. General Directorate of Migration and Foreigner (DGME) of Costa Rica and the National Migration Service of Panama are currently co-directing the coordinating mechanism.

The UN Human Mobility Group has been strengthened through technical assistance, achieving enhanced levels of coordination in Darien.

In compliance with the work plan of the Human Mobility Group, joint training sessions were delivered for 273 officials from National Border Service (SENAFRONT), National Migration Service (SNM), and National Protection Service (SINAPROC), among others. Likewise, actions for the response to mixed movements have been coordinated in the field, providing legal assistance and information on access to the RSD procedure and referral mechanisms to ONPAR. As a result of information, counselling and legal assistance services provided by UNHCR and partners, 197 people (80 men and 117 women) take appropriate actions to obtain refugee status or access basic rights.





UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



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