SUPPORTING THE MIGRATION CRISIS IN VENEZUELA AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF ARAUCA AND LA GUAJIRA
ABOUT THE COUNTRY

Colombia is a middle income country with approximately 47.7 million inhabitants in 2014. According to OECD reports, Colombia is one of the most decentralized unitary countries in South America and it is located in the 97 position of the human development index.

In 2016, a peace agreement between the Government of Colombia and the country’s main armed opposition group, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) put end to almost six decades of conflict. The agreement began its implementation on January 2017. Colombia continues to face large humanitarian needs as a result of the impact of the historical conflict, widespread violence, and natural disasters. The new dynamics of violence, reflected in the action, expansion and reconfiguration of the non-state armed groups, post-demobilization armed groups, dissidents and other armed groups in territories left by the FARC-EP cause the humanitarian impact to be reoccurring and increasing, particularly in rural zones in conditions of vulnerability.

In addition to this, Colombia has faced a challenging situation related to the dynamics along the border with Venezuela. In August 2015, the Government of Venezuela declared a state of emergency along its border with Colombia. To date, Colombia remains by far the country most affected by the exodus of people from Venezuela, hosting about one-third – or 1.2 million people – of the estimated 3.7 million Venezuelans who have already left their homes.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Project title:** Supporting the migration crisis in Venezuela and its impact on children in the departments of Arauca and La Guajira.
- **Country:** Colombia
- **Site(s) / Location(s):** Departments of Arauca and La Guajira.
- **Number of Beneficiaries:** Planned: 2,000 / Reached: 2,921
- **Implementation period:** 10/01/2019 - 30/04/2019

PROJECT OVERVIEW

I. CONTEXT

Since 2015, political and socio-economic developments in Venezuela have led to soaring inflation and food and medicine shortages, devolving into a humanitarian crisis and triggering an outflow of Venezuelans into neighbouring countries and beyond. As of late March 2019, an estimated 3.7 million people had Venezuela’s rapidly deteriorating economic and political situation due to extreme hyperinflation, unemployment, widespread food and medical shortages, and violence. According to the UN, this mass migration out of Venezuela is larger than the flow of migrants crossing the Mediterranean in Europe at its peak in 2015. This trend is only expected to worsen over the coming year; according to a preliminary report by the Organization of American States (OAS), the number of Venezuelan migrants living outside their country...
is likely to surpass 5 million people by the end of 2019, and – if the situation in Venezuela does not improve – this number could rise to between 7.5 and 8.2 million Venezuelans by late 2020.

To date, Colombia remains by far the country most affected by the exodus of people from Venezuela, hosting about one-third – or 1.2 million people – of the estimated 3.7 million Venezuelans who have already left their homes. The UN projects that this number could increase by about 1 million people by late 2019, with about 2.2 million people from Venezuela projected to be sheltering in Colombia by December. Colombia’s Arauca, La Guajira, and Norte de Santander departments, located along the border with Venezuela, remain among those most severely affected by the crisis, having received the highest population influx from Venezuela to date.

According to a recent report commissioned by Save the Children Colombia, there are at least 216,553 vulnerable Venezuelan children in Colombia, with the border areas of La Guajira and Arauca among the most affected. Children and families are fleeing Venezuela from scarcity of food, lack of basic medical services and insecurity. The majority of children and families cross the borders irregularly, due to fear of deportation and control, posing a considerable barrier in accessing relevant services, including medical care and protection, and increasing the risk of exploitation and trafficking.

Colombian authorities have found themselves to be unprepared to respond to the urgent needs of migrants and refugees, especially in the border areas with Venezuela, historically affected by poverty, lack of quality services, discrimination of indigenous communities and presence of armed rebel groups. Despite the effort of ICBF (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar) – the Colombian Child Protection Social System – to adapt their services and improve access to Venezuelan migrants and Colombian returnees, its capacity remains limited due to lack of resources, lengthy administrative processes and lack of experience of dealing with migrants and children on the move. The border areas of La Guajira and Arauca have been affected by grave violations of child rights, such as (risky) child labour, forced recruitment by non-state armed groups and (commercial) sexual exploitation. With the backlog of children at high risk in the host communities and deficiencies in the social system, the migrant flows have exacerbated the number of child protection risks.

Furthermore, according to the UN Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Colombia (2019), school dropout rates are consistently high due to negative coping mechanisms such as recruitment of children by armed groups, seeking to support the family and other labour work in rural areas. In the case of children without legal documentation, school dropout would also be related to the lack of motivation to continue attending school, conscious that no formal certificate will be granted. This is compounded by insufficient infrastructure (including WASH facilities and classrooms and play areas), furniture (chairs, tables, textbooks etc.) and lack of feeding programmes. In rural areas, children are deterred from attending school due to the unsafe distances they need to travel. Students can walk for up to one hour on remote and isolated trails to attend school; girls reported fear of sexual violence and both girls and boys indicated concerns about the physical safety of the roads. There are not enough flexible education models to support access to education for adolescents. Many students are accessing education in high risk areas but many schools lack risk management plans.

II. JUSTIFICATION:

Children on the move in Colombia face a high risk of violence and abuse, including sexual exploitation and recruitment by armed rebel groups and criminal gangs. Many migrant families have been separated, resulting in an increased of the numbers of female-headed households and unaccompanied and separated children. Family separation and the disruption of traditional community structures poses high protection risks.
risks for children and affects their psychosocial well-being and can have long-lasting effects on their healthy development. Within the temporary settlements or on the streets, migrant women and girls have been exposed to various forms of violence and abuse, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. Accommodation sites for migrants, where available, are often overcrowded, heightening insecurity and protection risks.

A recent report commissioned by SCC has identified as the main protection risks for children on both sides of the border the following: 1) increasing number of children out of the education system, lacking the protective environment and being exposed to child labour, forced recruitment or engaging in commercial sexual exploitation as a means to contribute to the survival of households; 2) new arrivals who underwent traumatic events in the course of border crossings, including sexual violence, and arriving in increasingly precarious conditions, including chronically sick and disabled children, as well as those children who care for sick and elderly household members; 3) children of households ‘trapped’ at border regions with limited livelihood options, living on one meal a day and with a lack of basic water, sanitation and hygiene need; 4) children in single-headed households (female or male), with many young children and without means to secure livelihoods; 5) children exposed to grave child rights violations for the purpose of generating income for household survival, including forced recruitment, trafficking, (commercial) sexual exploitation and transactional sex and child labour.

Considering the above information, Save the Children argue that the proposed intervention in La Guajira and Arauca was relevant and necessary to ensure that Venezuelan children affected by the Venezuelan migration crisis had access to adequate education and learning opportunities and that they reduced their protection risks.

There are still gaps in these sectors, and the generosity support of donors will be key to ensure an effective response to the needs of children and their families on the border.

III. BENEFICIARIES:

The project supported by the EIB addressed the protection and education needs of the most vulnerable children in the target areas. The project initially planned to reach a total of 2,000 beneficiaries, including children, host-communities and parents. However, due to the increase in the influx of migrants, SC reaches a total of 2,921 beneficiaries. The following chart shows the detailed information of reached beneficiaries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arauca</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Guajira</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>1433</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2921</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. MAJOR CHALLENGES FOR BENEFICIARIES

- Children facing or at risk of abuse and exploitation, UASC and survivors of SGBV and other abusive behaviours.
- Children has specific needs, such as children with disabilities and children with chronic diseases.
- Lack of access to food and safe water
- Limited access to health and education services and challenges with accessing these services
- Lack of employment opportunities
I. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

Improve access to humanitarian assistance for vulnerable Venezuelan migrant and host communities, especially children in the departments of Arauca and La Guajira. Through the multi-Sector Response Team present in the region, SC deliver actions to mitigate the impact of the crisis among migrants and host-communities, focusing on humanitarian needs.

II. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Children and families can access timely and quality response to child protection concerns appropriate to the best interest of the child that meet the minimum standards for child protection in a humanitarian response.
- Ensure that vulnerable boys and girls have access to learning opportunities to prevent further disruption of the education process.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

I. ACTIVITIES

SC implemented the following activities for each sector:

PROTECTION ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protection beneficiaries</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arauca Community mobilization activities</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community mobilization activities</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Friendly Spaces - CFS</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child protection committees</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with case management plan</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>866</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Child Protection Case Management:** Through this project, SC have procured emergency food kits for 55 children with urgent protection needs. Following Child Protection Case Management protocol, SC Case Workers conducted an assessment to evaluate the health, nutrition, protection, legal status and psychosocial support conditions of the target beneficiaries. For these 55 children, SC identified that they did not have adequate nutrition status and their health was at risk due to the malnutrition conditions and the lack of access to food. To this extent, SC supported the most affected children and families with food kits until they started to receive assistance from the municipality or other humanitarian stakeholders, such as WFP, following a referral made by SC Case Workers. SC spent less resources here because it was a low demand.
• **Designed game tool for socializing the protection route for children in risks:** SC has developed with the participation of children, parents, communities and partner organization, a board game to raise awareness on child rights and child protection risks with children and community members. Throughout the game, participants get to know: a) main risks and dangers for children during an emergency; b) psychosocial impact of emergencies on children; c) child rights; d) good practices in identification and referral of children at risk; e) available service. This tool was shared with local authorities, such as the ICBF, Ombudsman Office, among others.

• **Child Friendly Spaces:** This project has contributed to run three (3) Mobile Child Friendly Spaces in 3 remote informal settlements in Maicao, where opportunity for children to receive psychosocial support and take part in recreational activities was nearly absent. A total of 421 children in Maicao took part in the activities (217 girls, 208 boys). Children’s engagement in safe spaces through structured recreational activities tailored to their needs has proved to be crucial to minimize the negative long-lasting impact that disruption of community structures, education and opportunity to play can have on their psychosocial well-being and healthy development. Through a structured weekly schedule and age-appropriate activities for each stage of development and learning, Child Friendly Spaces provided children with the opportunity to continue to play and learn as well as access other relevant services. Child Friendly Spaces acted as an information hub for child protection related topics and events, and provided a community led space where children, parents, caregivers and community members socialized and worked together to protect children from identified threats while improving their well-being.

Each CFS were provided with three (3) tutors and three (3) community mobilizer. The curriculum of recreational activities includes arts and crafts, sport and outdoor group games, music and dance, board-games and puzzles, storytelling and oral stories. The structured psychosocial support activities instead focus on emotional learning, communication, trust, friendships, participation and leadership, and skills to cope with difficult situations. Sessions on protective behaviour are also conducted with children and adolescents to make sure children understand the risks of violence and abuse in the informal settlements, the limit of their bodies and are able to seek help in case they experience or observe abusive behavior.

• **Child Protection Community Based Mechanism:** The CFS Staff conducted awareness raising sessions using the Child Protection messages package developed for the response. The messages include child rights, fair-play, risk of trafficking, body boundaries, hygiene promotion, risk of family separation, impact of migration on the psychosocial well-being, road safety and disaster risk reduction messages. To ensure that community members increased their knowledge in child protection understanding and knowledge, SC carried out focus groups and visits to 160 homes, providing information on child protection mechanism, alarms signals, psychosocial support among others. In addition, the case management principles, reporting mechanism and the activation of institutional routes was socialized and explained. Through awareness raising sessions, SC has reached 361 children and members of community (breakdown available in the table above).

The project has also contributed to form and run two Child Protection Community Based Committees (CBCPC). SC trained each Committee in Child Protection and in identification of vulnerable children. CBCPCs conducted a risk mapping exercise in each location, to identify main dangers and protection risks for children within the informal settlement and migrant centres, and develop a community action plan to mitigate those risks, including developing key messages and material to be disseminated with the broader community and within the CFSs.
Key activities of CBCPCs included: a) follow up on children not attending CFSs, Temporary Learning Centres (TLCs) and schools; b) organizing community events on topic related to child rights and child protection; c) raising awareness within the broader community on the importance of recreational activities and education for children; d) ensuring the route from CFSs to children’s shelter is safe; e) represent the community in front at Save the Children; f) identifying children and families with specific needs and refer them to SC child protection team ensuring confidentiality, children best interests and do no harm principles are respected.

A total of 29 people integrated the CBCPCs in Maicao, 13 in Majayura and 16 in Villa Madre Laura (breakdown available in the table above).

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES ACTIVITIES

- **Education kits:** A total of 1,248 children (605 boys and 643 girls) identified by education and case management teams are participants of Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) and Temporary Learning Centres (TLC) received an educational kit 657 in Arauca and 591 in La Guajira.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational kits</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arauca</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Guajira</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>605</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>1248</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Arauca, SC delivered 559 education kits in the schools of Costa Hermosa, Miramar and Gustavo Villa; and improved the infrastructure of two of them, school Costa Hermosa and Miramar. A total of 270 girls and 289 boys received the education kits in these schools. Through the Case Management Team, 98 additional children were identified in other areas of the city, with crucial protection and education needs. These children received education kits and motivational talks by SC to encourage their attendance to school.

In La Guajira, SC delivered a total of 591 education kits to boys and girls in two TLCs in Torres de Majayura and Villa Madre Laura as well as in three Schools; in Maria Colombia Meneses, Norberto Iguarán and San Jose. In addition, SC delivered 30 kits, with the support of the Secretariats of Education, in Ovidio Mejia neighbourhood.

- **Rehabilitation in Schools:** 807 individuals (377 boys, 436 girls, 6 men teachers and 28 female teachers) benefited from improved infrastructure in the educational centers in La Guajira and Arauca. The calculation of beneficiaries corresponds to the official records of the Registration System (SIMAT) provided by the Departmental Secretariats of Education and coordination of the schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total beneficiaries</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arauca</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Guajira</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>337</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>807</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Arauca, SC carried out different meetings with teachers and students to identify the main rehabilitation needs of each school. SC also conducted a rapid needs assessment where
parents, students, teachers and school principles participated. This tool assessed all the components of the Quality Learning Framework. Based on the results of this assessment, SC established and implemented a school rehabilitation plan.

In La Guajira, SC worked closely with the Secretary of Education to identify the schools with the most rehabilitation needs. After revising the number of migrants received and the infrastructure conditions of the schools, San Jose School, which is one of the oldest schools in Maicao and with the most deteriorated infrastructure, was selected. SC improved two classrooms, where the roofs were changed entirely, walls painted, and windows, electrical installation and entrance doors were rehabilitated. This ensured safe access to quality education.

II. KEY RESULTS

- SC ensured that vulnerable boys and girls in Arauca and La Guajira have access to learning opportunities to prevent further disruptions of the education process. Three schools were rehabilitated, where more than 200 migrant children and 600 Colombian children benefitted. Children have noticed the changes in the schools, and now they are even more motivated to attend their classes. Furthermore, 1,248 education kits were delivered, and now 605 boys and 643 girls have access to educational materials, which positively impact not only their attendance but their learning outcomes.
- SC provided support to teachers with information and training sessions on the rights of the child and on means for protecting children and preventing all forms of violence against them.
- The team developed a pedagogical game tool for the socialization of Child Protection Routes adapted to the context of the municipality of Arauca and suitable to be used with all community members. The tool allows strengthening children protection, capacities for the identification, reporting and attention to risks of violation of children’s rights.
- Installation and operating of two CBCPCs in La Guajira. These committees are in charge of the activation of child protection routes, to create protective environments, and to work as hub for exchange information within the community.
- SC provided psychosocial support to children in 55 children and carried out protection, stress-relieving activities such as game and art in three CFS.
- Children and young people have strengthened their protection capacities. Community member, teachers and parents know in-depth the child protection case management and other relevant aspect regarding the Child Protection.

NEXT STEPS

- Save the Children will continue strengthening the resilience and coping mechanisms of boys and girls through engagement in psychosocial support activities. SC will continue working with parents, caregiver and communities’ member to identify threats while improving children wellbeing.
- Save the Children will keep identifying and referring crucial cases to SC case management teams or specialized external services according to needs.
- Save the Children will continue articulating its work with local authorities, INGOs, NGO and other humanitarian stakeholders to ensure an adequate and effective response.
- Save the Children will continue strengthening capacities of teachers and students in risk management and socio-emotional competences.
● There are still gaps in education in emergencies and child protection in La Guajira and Arauca, Save the Children need to scale up its intervention and cover other municipalities. The support of donors, as EIB has done, will be key to continue assisting the needs of the most affected children by this migration crisis.

FINANCIAL REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Costs</th>
<th>Approved Budget In EUROS</th>
<th>Budget versus Actual (Executed) €</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Cutting Staff</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>504</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Costs</td>
<td>9,087</td>
<td>8,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Child Protection team</td>
<td>19,120</td>
<td>18,420</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education activities</td>
<td>24,525</td>
<td>26,585</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support costs</td>
<td>5,205</td>
<td>4,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICR</td>
<td>4,089</td>
<td>4,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>62,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>62,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PROJECT

Delivery of education kits
School Rehabilitations

Child Friendly Spaces
II. COMMUNITY TESTIMONIES

“The experience with Save the Children has been fundamental in locating Venezuelan children who came to the educational institution, facilitating their entry to it, and filling the gaps left by the State in the border area. As for the teachers and the students, Save the Children has contributed to us through socioemotional activities that help to build capacity and resilience.”

- Judith, teacher, La Guajira

"As for children, there have been many benefits. Bullying has decreased thanks to [Save the Children’s] activities and key messages that result in an emotional transformation. The children are also impacted by the mural that they have made, since the students read it every day and relate those messages to their lives. For me personally, I’ve experienced a change because I did not know many difficulties that I was facing, and thanks to the training that I have done, my teaching work has been enriched.”

- Emma, teacher, La Guajira

"They have received benefits in material contributions by reconstructing classrooms, to ensure good lighting and create a proper environment for the teaching-learning process."  

- Isis, teacher, La Guajira
"The arrival of Save the Children at the institution has been very beneficial for us as teachers, and for students. It is essential for the educational community to know that we have an organization that can support us in issues such as discrimination, xenophobia, and in all the socioemotional components. We formed a community-based education committee, and together with Save the Children we have transformed moments, spaces and – why not say it – people. Thanks to the delivery of 240 school kits, we were able to give those boys and girls the opportunity to have a better quality of education. They were much more motivated to come to school, to be more committed to their classes and homework. With the received training, we can transmit new messages to the students, positive messages. We hope to continue with your help because we know that we can reach more children."

- Rocío, teacher, La Guajira

"The entire community has benefitted because the children are being taught many things they did not know, and the Temporary Learning Spaces have been very good because the children who were not studying already know how to write. It has been excellent support for learning."

- Geraldine, Community Leader, Villa Madre Laura informal settlement, La Guajira

My name is Yennier, I’m 13 years old, and I live in Arauca with my mom, stepdad, and two siblings. We are from Venezuela. There, I lived well, but then the situation got very difficult and we came here to Arauca. Food got too expensive, we didn’t have enough money to buy it, and so my mom sold our house and we came here, eventually to Brisas del Puente [informal settlement]. Here it’s been going well, the people are nice. I am content here, but I miss my home in Venezuela, and my dad and grandma who are still there. I really like going to the [Save the Children] tent, they teach us things and they never treat us badly. We play games and we share, and the teachers teach us what we should and shouldn’t do. In this moment, I’m not enrolled in school, but I really like to study because they teach me things. And then when one learns, you can be a professional when you grow up, and you can make a nice life.

- Yennier (13), Villa Madre Laura informal settlement, La Guajira