



@USAID\_Colombia



facebook.com/USAIDColombia

## VENEZUELAN RESPONSE AND INTEGRATION OFFICE (VRIO)

PHOTO BY USAID/COLOMBIA

Helping local actors address the needs of Venezuelan migrants, returning Colombians, and receptor communities.

### OVERVIEW

The Venezuelan Response and Integration Office (VRIO) assists the Government of Colombia (GOC) in its response to the current migration crisis. It coordinates with civil society organizations, government agencies, and other international agencies to respond to the needs, like education and health service access, of Venezuelan migrants, returning Colombians, and receptor communities. VRIO also works with GOC agencies to develop a comprehensive policy response to this migration.

Since 2015, over 4 million Venezuelans have migrated to Colombia in search of medical care, employment and essential services. This migration is the largest cross-border mass exodus in the Western Hemisphere's history and it poses extraordinary challenges to Colombian society. Due to Colombia's limited experience with immigration, the increase in migrants has overwhelmed the GOC's capacity to respond and has resulted in increased xenophobia, human trafficking, labor exploitation, recruitment by illegal armed actors, and spread of disease. The increase in migration has also complicated Colombia's transition to peace following 50 years of internal conflict by putting an additional strain on government resources and conflict-affected communities.

## COMPONENTS

### SUPPORTING POLICY DEVELOPMENT

VRIO helps register migrants in GOC systems and assists the GOC to formulate evidence-based public policy through the analysis of this registration data. VRIO also uses migratory data related to social, security, economic, and reconciliation-related indicators in migration-affected municipalities to inform GOC responses to migratory flows.

### IMPROVING HEALTH AND EDUCATION SERVICE ACCESS

VRIO works with the GOC to provide sustainably financed, high-quality health and education services to Venezuelan migrants, Colombian returnees, and receptor communities. VRIO also increases the Colombian health and education systems' capacity to respond to current and future shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

### FOSTERING ECONOMIC INCLUSION

VRIO increases migrants and receptor communities' access to income generating opportunities through partnerships with public and private sector actors and training initiatives. VRIO also fosters peaceful coexistence between Venezuelans and local communities.

### PROMOTING GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

VRIO helps the GOC and civil society organizations provide basic services to, and protect the human rights, of migrants and receptor communities. It does this through national public policy development and by building local actors' capacities to meet receptor community needs and counter xenophobia.

## RESULTS

- Aided 9,492 migrant students in 63 schools;
- Served an average of 186,960 school meals monthly;
- Enabled 5,641 individuals to receive basic healthcare services through extra-mural health days;
- Trained 1,270 migrants in psychosocial support, entrepreneurship planning, and investment projects;
- Helped over 15,000 migrants, Colombian returnees, and host community members access healthcare;
- Developed campaigns, school events and community-level activities to promote awareness and community integration;
- Provided essential physical and emotional care services to over 35,000 Venezuelan migrants and host community members; and
- Supported *Migracion Colombia's* hiring of 187 public officials to implement the Temporary Protection Status for Venezuelans (EPTV) registration process.