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VENEZUELAN RESPONSE AND INTEGRATION OFFICE (VRIO)

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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.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Enhance GOC capacity to create and utilize data management systems to track migrants;
- Develop national public policies needed for migrant public service access and integration into Colombian society;
- Improve government actors' planning and budgeting capacities to improve and expand public services for migrants and returnees;
- Improve migrant awareness of relevant service-related policies and processes;
- Increase GOC institutions and civil society organizations' capacities to assess, document and respond to human rights violations and the drivers of insecurity;
- Increase migrant enrollment in Colombian healthcare and education systems;
- Strengthen the GOC's capacity to respond to public health emergencies through service delivery and surveillance;
- Enhance social cohesion in receptor communities and increase trust between migrants and receptor communities; and
- Increase human rights victims' access to quality justice services including public defense and legal representation.