

# UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL OF VENEZUELAN DISPLACED POPULATIONS

**An Initiative for Private – Public Collaboration**

**By The Trust for the Americas**

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## SUMMARY

During the past 6 months, at the request of OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro, The Trust for the Americas (The Trust) has been working closely with the OAS Working Group for Venezuelan migrants and refugees, to respond to the severe conditions faced by hundreds of thousands of displaced Venezuelans.

To this end, The Trust launched a task force to develop a program and raised the issue with its Board Members and other private firms. The Trust also contacted diplomatic representatives of Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, as well as scholars and staff of international development organizations. The results of this consultations led to the following document that lays out a proposal to address the situation of the most vulnerable displaced populations in the region and vulnerable communities in host countries.

The Trust's visits to multiple communities, demonstrated that many populations are unable to absorb large numbers of Venezuelans easily. Overcoming the difficulties of integration requires including underserved local communities in programs designed to help newly arrived Venezuelans.

That is why the Trust for the Americas has put together a comprehensive program that includes training for host communities as well as for displaced Venezuelans because in the words of one diplomat, "Educating two peoples together is the most positive and enriching circumstance for them both." The Trust has, therefore, included a social and economic inclusion component to integrate displaced Venezuelans into host communities more effectively.

For today's displaced, cellphones guide them in the grueling paths to their new homeland, and are lifelines to family and friends. Technology changes migration in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, even for the poorest.

Technology and innovation are at the center of our proposal. Because of the ubiquity of mobile devices, this proposal uses mobile technologies, innovative job readiness/preparedness programs and in-person and online support networks, with which The Trust has had considerable success, to increase the reach of our assistance.

Taking into account all relevant stakeholders, The Trust for the Americas proposes a three-component phased intervention to promote awareness and collaboration among displaced Venezuelans and receiving communities. This approach will facilitate integration of Venezuelans into host communities, build abilities of Venezuelans to achieve economic self-sufficiency, and craft a support network for Venezuelans to access local resources efficiently.

## **JOINING FORCES: WHY THE TRUST FOR THE AMERICAS**

The Trust's mission is to promote social and economic inclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Trust is a nonprofit 501(c) (3) organization established in 1997 and affiliated with the Organization of American States (OAS). Our initiatives, implemented through local partners, improve the quality and accessibility of education, create economic opportunities and foster innovation at government and community levels. With active support from the private sector, foundations, and government agencies, The Trust shapes a more equitable region by promoting socio-economic inclusion, good governance and transparency. In 21 years, we have benefited over 2 million at-risk youth, vulnerable women, people with disabilities and violence victims in 24 countries around the hemisphere.

The Trust will draw from its existing network of local partners in five target countries: Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Argentina, and Chile. By directly working with multiple key stakeholders, we will build the capacity of local partners, in turn rooting the initiatives in local communities:

- **Strong Government Relationships:** The Trust has strong relationships with all five host governments, reinforced by our OAS affiliation.
- **Multi-sector Alliances:** The Trust works with multiple partners in target countries. Strong partnerships with public and private sectors guarantee rapid program implementation, transparency and effective management.
- **Strong experience working with vulnerable communities:** In each of the five countries The Trust has more than 10 years of experience implementing projects focused on social and economic inclusion of under-served populations. We have strong alliances with reputable partners as well as full-time professional employees and consultants in each country.

### **Our Key Partners:**

- The Trust has private sector partners throughout the region;
- New partners and NGO's in the identified communities;
- Academia and universities; and
- Bilateral development agencies and international financial institutions.

The Trust, at the option of the donating partner, can publicly recognize private sector partners who join our initiative in support of displaced Venezuelans at events such as:

- On September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019, Chobani CEO and founder of the Tent Partnership for Refugees (Hamdi Ulukaya) and Luis Alberto Moreno, President of the Inter-American Development Bank, will host a high-level event in the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York to highlight the critical role of the business community in supporting Venezuelan refugees.
- On December 5<sup>th</sup> The Trust for the Americas will host its Annual Gala in Washington DC in partnership with The Trust's Board of Directors and the Organization of American States Secretary General. This will be a special occasion to highlight the commitments of the private sector to support Venezuelan refugees in the region.

### **OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM**

The UN projects a total of 5.4 million displaced Venezuelans by the end of 2019. Fleeing hunger, lack of medicine, failures of basic services, hyper-inflation and political persecution, every day roughly 5,000 Venezuelans leave everything behind in their hopes to satisfy basic needs in neighboring countries. According to the June 2019 report, *Working Group to Address the Regional Crisis Caused by Venezuela's Migrant and Refugee Flows Report*, by the Organization of American States (OAS), over two thirds of refugees are concentrated in five countries: 1.3 million in Colombia, 770,000 in Peru, 290,000 in Chile, 263,000 in Ecuador, and 130,000 in Argentina.

Forcibly displaced, Venezuelan migrants and refugees tend to be easy targets of violence, human trafficking, discrimination and human rights violations, making them one of the most vulnerable groups in the Americas. Women and girls are particularly at-risk since they often face harassment and sexual assault because of unsafe conditions they face en route. Displaced Venezuelans, however, tend to have substantial education (almost 63% finished secondary school). Nonetheless, many are forced to work illegally or in the informal sector to have food and shelter in unfamiliar territory with limited resources. Their highest priority is finding formal sector economic opportunities so families can be safe, have secure shelter, food and economic independence.

## **THE OPPORTUNITY**

### **Our Vision of Success**

After three years of implementation, displaced Venezuelan beneficiaries will be integrated into host communities as economically independent families contributing to economic prosperity. Many migrants and underserved peoples will have upgraded their own skills.

### **The Program**

The Trust for the Americas proposes a three-component intervention to:

1. Promote mutual awareness and collaboration among Venezuelan migrants, refugees and receiving communities;
2. Empower local vulnerable communities together with migrants and refugees, with digital, technical and entrepreneurial skills to access employment or start businesses; and
3. Create a support network for migrants and refugees to access local resources to improve their integration with receiving communities.

### **Priority Communities**

Based on the local needs of the five countries where two thirds of Venezuelan migrants and refugees are, The Trust proposes the following priority communities:

<b>Priority Communities</b>
<p><b><i>First-tier:</i></b> Countries receiving high numbers of displaced Venezuelans compared to existing population; limited ability to cope; limited international support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecuador: Guayaquil, Loja and/or Quito</li> <li>• Peru: Lima, Tumbes and/or Chiclayo</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Second-tier:</i></b> Countries receiving the highest number of displaced Venezuelans; taxing social services near breaking point.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colombia: Bogota, Cucuta, Medellin and/or Monteria</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Third-tier:</i></b> Higher income countries receiving high numbers of displaced Venezuelans; low levels of support from international community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Argentina: Buenos Aires</li> <li>• Chile: Santiago</li> </ul>

## COMPONENTS

***Component 1: Local vulnerable communities and displaced communities share a common space to find solutions to their needs.***

**Goal: Community Building Initiatives – Mutual awareness, understanding and collaboration between displaced Venezuelans and receiving communities.**

**Challenge:** Newly arrived Venezuelans and host communities often perceive each other as competitors for scarce resources. The host community, often struggling with low income themselves, tends to have limited understanding of, and less sympathy for, the complexities of forced displacement in a foreign country. With minimal resources initially and emotional trauma of departure from Venezuela and the stressful journey, most displaced Venezuelans have few choices. They then arrive to face intolerance, discrimination and outright abuse.

### **Key Elements:**

- **Mapping Stakeholders:**

Connect with key representatives of displaced Venezuelans, local government, private sector, civil society through site visits.

- **Inclusive spaces and *Ideathons*:**

Will generate understanding and collaboration between displaced Venezuelans and receiving communities.

The Trust/OAS will work with stakeholders representing Venezuelans, local government, private sector, academia and civil society to create spaces for brainstorming creative ideas and innovative solutions (*Ideathons*). The process of arriving at solutions jointly and implementing the solutions will increase integration.

One of the results of this collaborative approach will be a catalogue of solutions and ideas produced by the community to be shared with all stakeholders, including local governments and advocacy groups, as well as UN agencies, NGOs, interested bi-lateral foreign assistance agencies and the OAS.

- **Topics:**

- **Human Rights**

In partnership with the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity (SARE) and the OAS Working Group, we will provide displaced Venezuelans with information on their rights, and strategies to defend and promote their rights.

While this workshop will be targeted primarily at displaced Venezuelans, it will include host communities.

- **Xenophobia & Discrimination**

We will equip displaced Venezuelans and receiving communities with key tools and strategies to identify, mitigate and prevent xenophobic and racist scenarios the displaced may face. To foster empathy, we will illuminate displaced plight and promote the basic values of respect, tolerance, empathy and collaboration.

- **Gender Violence in a Migration context**

We will raise awareness around the different types of violence, ways to prevent and mitigate such violence, as well as resources available to support victims of violence in a migration context, focused particularly on gender issues.

***Component 2: The most vulnerable displaced and local vulnerable populations are given opportunities to provide for themselves and their families.***

**Goal: Enable displaced Venezuelans to access employment and entrepreneurship opportunities**

**Challenge:** Upon arrival in their new country, displaced Venezuelans find themselves urgently needing to identify income sources. Desperation forces many to work informally or illegally, deepening their vulnerability.

**Objective:** Enhance the technical and entrepreneurial skills of displaced Venezuelans and local vulnerable populations so they can find meaningful ways to provide for themselves and their families, by gaining job readiness and entrepreneurial skills.

**Key Elements:**

**Part 1 – Understanding the economic environment:**

Mindful of the context, we will provide hands-on training for people who are seeking employment or starting a small entrepreneurship. The component includes a training module on the use of digital tools to advertise products or services online as well as to boost sales or find a job.

The Trust has had extensive experience with vulnerable communities with near 100% unemployment. Success rates have run between 25% and 50% of graduates accessing formal jobs or starting a business.

- **Entrepreneurial Skills - Technical and digital skills:** This module emphasizes essential skills needed for sales and customer service.
- **Digital and vocational skills for work:** This module emphasizes learning essential digital skills to access careers, as well as key skills to search and compete for job opportunities. The module includes:
  - **Training in digital skills for work:** Learn how to safely navigate the internet, use a variety of Microsoft Office tools (Word, Excel, Power Point) and Office 365 tools (Outlook, Teams, OneDrive, OneDrive, SharePoint) to collaborate remotely.
  - **Training in essential skills for work:** Preparing CVs, creating a LinkedIn profile, preparing for an interview, searching the web for job opportunities and creating connections with potential employers, professional networks and people in your sector of interest through LinkedIn and Facebook.

**Part 2 – Entrepreneurship Channel: Entrepreneurship skills to start or strengthen a start-up**

- **Quick Start-Up:** This module provides hands-on training in essential technical skills to develop a business idea, identify routes to access funding, and learn how to pitch a business idea to potential partners or investors. The Trust’s experience has been to create hundreds of thousands of economic opportunities, in the form of employment or start-up businesses.



- **Compete in an Entrepreneurship Pitch Tank:** A select number of entrepreneurs will present business plans to a private sector expert panel to receive capital for their start-up.

### **Part 3 – Collaboration and Mentorship Platforms:**

- **Quick Start for start-ups through self-paced cellphone based curriculum:** Mindful of the context of displaced persons, we offer learning alternatives via cellphone. Participants will access remotely using their phones –via WhatsApp and Facebook Live– to learn how to start businesses or s opportunities.
- **Access to a collaborative learning community:** Access to a 4 week/4 module seminar via WhatsApp will be facilitated by an entrepreneurship specialist. Topics will be presented through a mix of short video-capsules, podcast and interviews with entrepreneurs with similar profiles in Latin America, and webinars via Facebook live.

<p><b><i>Component 3: Support Network – Informing and connecting newly arrived Venezuelans to local resources</i></b></p>
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**Challenge:** Displaced Venezuelans often lack knowledge of local resources. The Trust working with local partners, will identify assistance for legal, employment, educational or health matters. Host countries have set resources in place to promote inclusion of migrants/refugees, but without a customer-friendly tool to describe or facilitate access to the resources. Refugees/migrants often alternate between institutions to try to access the resources with a detrimental effect on the already challenging re-settlement process refugees undergo.

**Objective:** Facilitate provision of local assistance and services for Venezuelan migrants and refugees to ease their adaptation processes and foster their socioeconomic inclusion.

**Key Elements:**

- **Online platform of local resources and service providers:**

In partnership with the OAS Working Group and our local partners, we will identify the resources and service providers, local communities and governments offer. We will connect with various entities providing useful services for migrants and refugees. From legal assistance and psychological counseling to health and childcare providers, we will collect and systematize providers' information, which we will make accessible to migrants and refugees via computer and cellphone (App). This online platform will provide migrants and refugees with a user-friendly system of support. This might also include a physical location, staffed largely by Venezuelan diaspora volunteers to provide these services. (The OAS already has a commitment of approximately \$100,000 to initiate this component of the proposal.)

- **In-person Mentorship & Guidance:**

Our local partners will provide in-person mentorship and guidance to migrants and refugees. Through a local team which is familiar with the local context and resources as well as skilled at establishing relationships with service providers, we will provide in-person aid to facilitate access to assistance in, among others legal, employment, educational and health matters.

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Estimated Investment

		Colombia	Peru	Ecuador	Chile	Argentina	TOTAL / Component per Year
	Component 1	\$63,468	\$63,196	\$63,381	\$59,492	\$59,628	\$309,165
	Component 2	\$229,862	\$174,078	\$173,492	\$61,492	\$61,628	\$700,552
	Component 3	\$87,000	\$87,000	\$87,000	\$87,000	\$87,000	\$435,000
	Support Staff	\$55,624	\$55,624	\$55,624	\$55,624	\$55,624	\$278,120
	<b>Sub-total/ Country</b>	<b>\$435,954</b>	<b>\$379,898</b>	<b>\$379,497</b>	<b>\$263,608</b>	<b>\$263,880</b>	<b>\$1,722,837</b>
17%	Indirect Cost	\$74,112	\$64,582	\$64,515	\$44,813	\$44,860	\$292,882
	<b>Total/ Country</b>	<b>\$510,066</b>	<b>\$444,480</b>	<b>\$444,012</b>	<b>\$308,421</b>	<b>\$308,740</b>	<b>\$2,015,719</b>



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