

GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO THE VENEZUELA/BRAZIL MIGRATION FLOW

Elaboration:



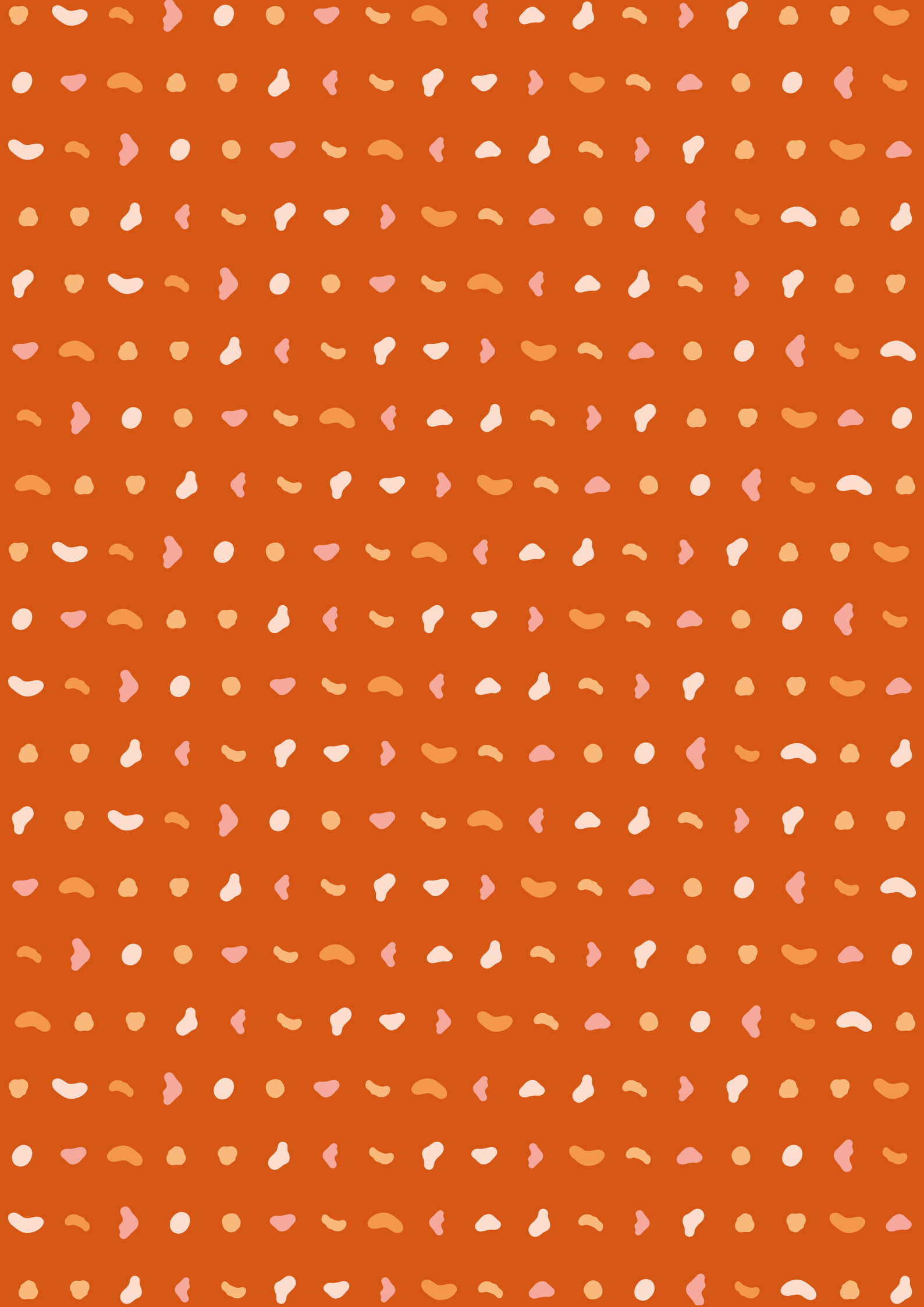
Partnership:



Support:

Joint Programme LEAP – Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection to migrant, asylum seeker and refugee women in Brazil





GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO THE VENEZUELA/BRAZIL MIGRATION FLOW

© 2021 UN Women. All rights reserved.

This material, Good Practices Report and Lessons Learned for Gender Equality in Humanitarian Response to the Venezuela/Brazil Migratory Flow, is part of the materials of LEAP | Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection for migrant, asylum seeker, refugee and host women and girls, a UNFPA, UNHCR and UN Women Joint Programme, funded by the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The opinions and analyses expressed in this publication are those of the individual and do not necessarily represent the official perspectives of UN Women, the United Nations or their related organizations.

Summary

List of Acronyms	5
1. Presentation	6
2. Introduction	8
3. Evaluation Participants	12
3.1 Tool Implementation Record	12
4. Leadership and Participation	15
Good practices	21
Lessons learned	21
Estefânia's Life Story	23
5. Safety and Protection	25
Good practices	32
Lessons learned	33
Isabela's Life Story	34
6. Economic Well-being	36
Good practices	43
Lessons learned	44
Karina's Life Story	45
7. Final Considerations	47
Ester's Life Story	49
Ivana's Life Story	51
Káthia's Life Story	53
Inesc and Numur Presentation	55

List of Acronyms

ADRA | Adventist Development and Relief Agency

ALV | *Associação de Luta Pela Vida* - Fight for Life Association

AVSI | *Associação Voluntários para o Serviço Internacional* - Volunteer Association for International Service Brazil

CBI | Cash Based Intervention

CEPPM | *Coordenação Estadual de Políticas para as Mulheres* - State Women's Machinery

CHAME | *Centro Humanitário de Apoio à Mulher* - Humanitarian Support Center for Women

CMB | *Casa da Mulher Brasileira* - Brazilian Women's House

COOFECs | *Cooperativa de Empreendimentos Solidários de Boa Vista* - Cooperative of Solidarity Enterprises of Boa Vista

CSO | Civil Society Organizations

CVA | Cash and Voucher Assistance

DEAM | *Delegacia Especializada no Atendimento à Mulher* - State Police Station for Women Assistance

DPE/RR | *Defensoria Pública do Estado de Roraima* - Public Defenders Office of the State of Roraima

ECLAC | Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

FFHI | Fraternity - International Humanitarian Federation

GBV | Gender-Based Violence

IBGE | *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* - Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics

INESC | Instituto de Estudos Socioeconômicos - Institute of Socioeconomic Studies

IOM | International Organization for Migration

LEAP | Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection for migrant, asylum seekers and refugee women in Brazil

LGBTQIA+ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transvestite, Queer, Intersex, Asexual+

NUMUR | Núcleo de Mulheres de Roraima - Women's Center of Roraima

PAHO | Pan American Health Organization

PEC | Constitutional Amendment Proposal

PEM/ALE-RR | Procuradoria Especial da Mulher da Assembleia Legislativa de Roraima - Special Attorney's Office for Women/Legislative Assembly of Roraima

PLPs | Promotoras Legais Populares - Popular Legal Prosecutors

RAT | UN Women Rapid Assessment Tool

SDG | Sustainable Development Goals

SENAC | Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Comercial National Service for Commercial Education

SJMR | Serviço Jesuíta a Migrantes e Refugiados - Jesuit Service to Migrants and Refugees

UN | United Nations

UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund

UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund

1. PRESENTATION

This report is the result of a process of evaluating the humanitarian response to the Venezuelan migration, mainly on the border between Brazil and Venezuela, regarding gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This process was built in partnership between the Instituto de Estudos Socioeconômicos, Institute of Socioeconomic Studies (Inesc) and the *Núcleo de Mulheres de Roraima*, Women's Center of Roraima (NUMUR), in a project supported by UN Women.

To this end, the Rapid Assessment Tool (RAT) was used as the main guideline, a UN Women global instrument of for rapid assessment of gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian contexts. This tool is guided by the UN Women global program Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP), for migrant, asylum seekers and refugee women, and implemented in Brazil by UN Women in partnership with UNFPA and UNHCR. This instrument is based on its three thematic axes: Leadership and Participation; Safety; and Economic Well-being. RAT recommends that the assessment of the humanitarian response be carried out using three main tools: analysis of documents from the organizations involved, conducting an interview following a standard questionnaire referring to the three axes, and conducting focus groups with migrant women assisted by the humanitarian response.

RAT evaluates indicators corresponding to the history of the programs and the guiding axes related to leadership and participation, security, and economic well-being based on the components that are part of LEAP's actions. Further, on in the historical item of the programs, the questions that guide each thematic axis are detailed.

To carry out the assessment in the Covid-19 pandemic context, the questions raised by the RAT were turned into a virtual questionnaire and answered by different stakeholders involved in the humanitarian response. Nine agencies of the United Nations (UN) and civil society organizations partnering in humanitarian action completed the form; four public bodies and three local civil society organizations, totaling sixteen social actors. However, two international organizations have stated that they do not have specific actions on gender, but they articulate and work with the other agencies to address gender inequality.

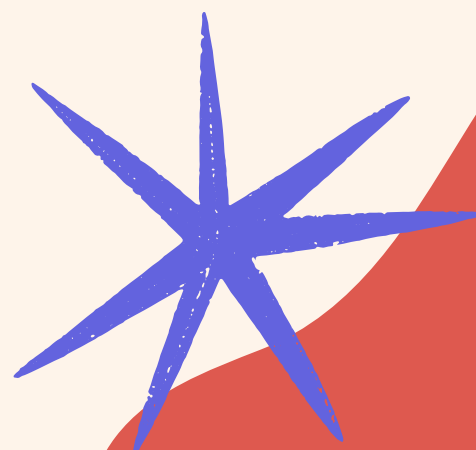
In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with these actors, also on a virtual basis, between January and March 2021. Among them, ten interviews with key informants from implementing agencies and partners: Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA); Salvation Army; Fraternity - International Humanitarian Federation (FFHI, in Por-

tuguese); *Associação Voluntários para o Serviço Internacional* (AVSI), Volunteer Association for International Service Brazil; *Serviço Jesuitas a Migrantes e Refugiados* (SJMR), Jesuit Service for Migrants and Refugees; and United Nations agencies: International Migration Organization (IOM); Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR); and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) between February and March 2021. Three interviews with the Government: *Casa da Mulher Brasileira* (CMB), Brazilian Women's House; Public Defenders Office of the State of Roraima (DPE/RR, in Portuguese) and *Centro Humanitário de Apoio à Mulher* (CHAME), the Humanitarian Support Center for Women; and three interviews with local civil society organizations (CSO), namely: *Núcleo de Mulheres de Roraima* (NUMUR), Women's Center of Roraima; *Cooperativa de Empreendimentos Solidários* (COOF ECS), Cooperative of Solidarity Enterprises; and *Associação Luta pela Vida* (ALV), Fight for Life Association - (current Sabá Group).

The protagonists of humanitarian action - migrant and refugee women - also contributed to this assessment through focus groups carried out virtually: two groups of women in different states of the country; two groups of women living in rented houses in the city of Boa Vista and a group of sheltered women, in addition to two individual interviews with indigenous people of Warao ethnicity - with the participation of forty-two women in total. Therefore, the voices of these women will be highlighted throughout the text. Stakeholders for data collection was made by the local UN Women team in Boa Vista and the conversation was conducted based on the three axes of LEAP Programme.

The survey also featured life stories of seven migrant and refugee women who illustrate situations experienced in the process of displacement and migration in general, constructed through in-depth semi-structured interviews. The names are fictitious to protect the women's privacy and the final text was approved by them. Of these seven stories, four are in the body of the report.

Finally, the methodology involved the use of secondary data from bibliographic and documentary research to complement the evaluation and systematization of the work, carried out within the scope of the humanitarian response to the Venezuelan migration flow in the state of Roraima, to analyze the extent to which the response works with women's empowerment and gender equality.



2. INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century is marked by major changes in the lives of women, with countless factors that contributed to their empowerment processes. Even so, gender inequalities persist in all fields of Brazilian society and the world, which requires consistent work to tackle them, especially in contexts of humanitarian emergencies, such as in response to the massive migration flow from Venezuela. Even with the achievements in the field of rights, women remain marginalized from the socioeconomic, political and cultural system, especially those with more than migration in their stories: black, indigenous, women with disabilities, trans, quilombolas, lesbians, peripheral communities, etc.

In the economic scope, even with greater access to formal work, women continue to act in more precarious professions, with lower income and low social recognition, such as domestic work. Thus, in addition to being the main responsible for the care of children, daughters and other family members¹, the alternatives that are presented, particularly for migrant women, are in this field (daily housework, cleaning, child care, elderly assistance, etc.), and in a precarious way, as many do not have work records and end up excluded from their labor rights. Others resort to sex work in order to raise money to survive, as it's their only alternative.

Another factor in the persistence of inequalities in Brazil is violence against women. In the pandemic, at least 1005 women were murdered between March and December 2020, about three murders a day. Roraima² is among the most dangerous states in the country. In Brazil, the states with the highest murder rates are Mato Grosso with 3.56 and Roraima with 2.95 for every 100,000 women, both triple the average of the 24 states and the Fe-

1 In 2001, women dedicated 28.7 hours a week to household chores, in 2015, they were 24.4 hours a week, while men devote an average of 11.5 hours a week total. Men in single-person arrangements spent around 15 hours a week (CAVENAGHI and ALVES, 2018, p. 10 and 86). Women also continue to be primarily responsible for the care of children, family members, the elderly, people with disabilities, the sick, etc., in the so-called care economy. In 2007, according to the IBGE, in 89.1% of divorces the responsibility for children custody was granted to women. Therefore, it appears that women's time to expand their capacities is reduced, and the effectiveness of equal opportunities is a long way off.

2 According to *Atlas da Violência 2020*, "As for the variation in rates between 2017 and 2018, two states experienced an increase of less than 10%, with a substantial increase in homicides in the state of Roraima (above 51.0%) while 24 Federative Units (UFs) showed a decrease in this indicator. In addition, six UFs showed a reduction of more than 20% in relation to the previous year "(IPEA, 2020, p.15).

deral District³.

According to the report by the *Casa da Mulher Brasileira* (CMB), the Brazilian Women's House in Boa Vista, 6,441 registrations were carried out between 2019 and 2020, which represents almost nine visits per day, related to some type of violence against women: moral harassment; false imprisonment; psychological, patrimonial, physical and sexual violence. Of these consultations, 3,745 were Brazilian and 711 Venezuelan.

According to UN data (2020), the number of people in the world who live outside their countries of origin corresponds to 281 million people. By the end of 2020, it was estimated that more than 5.4 million Venezuelans had left their country of origin⁴. According to the border order report of the Operation Welcome⁵ of April 2021, more than 265,000 Venezuelan migrants and refugees requested regularization in the country and more than 890,000 care procedures were carried out at the border (Brazil and Venezuela). According to data from the Federal Police, the country received 82,552 requests for asylum applications in 2019. Of these, 53,713 were Venezuelans, 26,026 of whom were women, 27,678 were men and 9 were not informed, confirming the almost parity between men and women in the processes of displacement of Venezuelans (*Refúgio em números*, 5th ed. 2020).

The state of Roraima is the main gateway for Venezuelans to Brazil. It is estimated that the Venezuelan presence will increase, as many people continue to enter the country even in periods when the border was closed, as happened in 2019 for political reasons, and from March 2020 onwards due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

With the border closed, some document regulation services are restricted, which means that migrant and refugee women are unable to access their basic rights, such as formal work or education - a situation highlighted by the sheltered women who participated in one of the focus groups and that had mostly crossed the border recently using clandestine routes.

There is a percentage of undocumented people who end up not being able to study or work. In addition, they face the low absorption capacity by the local economy, which is centered on the public sector. In addition to the difficulties in finding jobs, job precariousness and the lack of job guarantees are also added, in addition to the lack of a support network for the care of children, and xenophobia from some employers and people in the host community.

3 <https://projetocolabora.com.br/ods5/na-pandemia-tres-mulheres-foram-vitimas-de-feminicidio-por-dia/>

4 <https://www.acnur.org/portugues/venezuela/>

5 Welcome Operation - In 2018, *Medida Provisória* nº 820/2018, a provisional measure later converted into Law No. 13,684, of June 21, 2018. This bill is about emergency assistance to welcome and host people in vulnerable conditions due to the migration influx caused by the humanitarian crisis, in this case especially Venezuelans in Brazil.

Xenophobia in relation to Venezuelans is experienced on a daily basis in the state of Roraima, including speeches that attribute local unemployment rates to the presence of migrants. It is, therefore, important to note that Venezuelan migration has significantly changed the economic landscape of Roraima. Between 2016 and 2017, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 2.3%, while the average for other states was only 1.4%. Due to growth in several areas of the economy, but with emphasis on trade and exports, which raised the collection of the Tax on the Circulation of Goods and Services (ICMS) to 25% between the end of 2018 and the first half of 2019, leaving a positive fiscal balance, a reality not observable in other states in Brazil (FGV, 2020). These data allow deconstructing of xenophobic narratives related to the presence of Venezuelans, even though unemployment rates in the state are worsening as a result of the economic crisis experienced in the country since 2018 and aggravated by the pandemic.

It is also known that the migrant population contributes directly and indirectly to the local economy. Jobs are created for professionals to work in humanitarian action (shelters, spontaneous occupations, assigned spaces, rental points, reception, attention and sorting posts) in various positions and levels, such as protection assistants, coordinators, administrators, accountants, medical teams and health professionals, suppliers of food and a whole network of products that are distributed daily in different parts of the city, among other possibilities. In addition, several organizations still provide Cash-Based Interventions (CBI) in different modalities for people with different profiles, which also contributes to a greater circulation of resources in the local economy.

In addition, to mitigate the effects of the massive migration flow in the state of Roraima, the Welcome Operation, with UN agencies support, government agencies and civil society, implemented the strategy of the voluntary relocation program to migrants and refugees in other states of the federation. Through this strategy, more than 50,000 Venezuelans have moved, from April 2018 to March 2021⁶, based on four modalities: a) relocation to shelters in other cities; b) family reunification; c) social reunion; and d) guaranteed job vacancy.

In order for gender inequalities in the humanitarian response to be effectively addressed, it is necessary to take this whole context into account, seeing them in their structural and multidimensional character, in addition to intersectionality with other asymmetries, such as race and ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation and gender identity. Based on these assumptions, the present evaluation considers that the situation of vulnerability of Venezuelan women worsens considerably when inserted in the already difficult context of gender inequality in Brazil.

6 <http://aplicacoes.mds.gov.br/snas/painel-interiorizacao/>



3. EVALUATION PARTICIPANTS

In order to carry out this evaluation, information was collected, according to the RAT methodology, from the following actors involved in the humanitarian response in Roraima: Local, national and international organizations - Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA); Salvation Army; Fraternity - International Humanitarian Federation (FFHI); *Associação Voluntários para o Serviço Internacional* (AVSI), Volunteer Association for International Service Brazil; *Serviço Jesuitas a Migrantes e Refugiados* (SJMR), Jesuit Service for Migrants and Refugees; and United Nations agencies: International Migration Organization (IOM); Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR); and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); Public Power - *Coordenação Estadual de Políticas para as Mulheres* (CEPPM), the State Coordination of Policies for Women, of Secretaria Estadual de Trabalho e Bemestar Social (SETRABES), the State Secretariat of Labor and Social Welfare, responsible for the Brazilian Women's House (CMB); Public Defenders Office of the State of Roraima (DPE/RR, in Portuguese); Special Attorney Office for Women, of the Legislative Assembly of Roraima (PEM/ALE-RR, in Portuguese) and responsible for the Centro Humanitário de Apoio à Mulher (CHAME), the Humanitarian Support Center for Women, for the Center for Prevention, Promotion and Assistance to Women Victims of Trafficking in Persons and for the *Núcleo Reflexivo Reconstruir*, the Rebuild Reflexive Center and, the *Delegacia Especializada no Atendimento à Mulher* (DEAM), the State Police Station for Women Assistance.

Civil Society Organizations (CSO) – *Núcleo de Mulheres de Roraima* (NUMUR), Women's Center of Roraima; *Cooperativa de Empreendimentos Solidários* (COOFECS), Cooperative of Solidarity Enterprises (COOFECS); *Associação Luta pela Vida* (ALV), the Fight for Life Association, now the Sabá Group.

UN Women was not one of the organizations that participated in the interviews with key informants, since its work is directly guided by the three axes of RAT: leadership and participation; security and protection; and economic well-being. At the same time, for having its activities directly guided by these axes, and for having a joint program with UNHCR and UNFPA, its performance appears in a transversal way throughout the report.

3.1 Tool Implementation Record

The analysis is based on the Rapid Assessment Tool for results on gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian contexts, by UN Women. In Brazil, the tool seeks to analyze not only a specific program, but the humanitarian response to the Venezuelan migration flow as a whole. The first requirement proposed in the tool is the verification of the program's records, to check if there is a transformative gender trend. The second section assesses the participation and leadership of migrant and refugee women in aspects related to consultations, monitoring, feedback mechanisms, confidentiality, raising awareness among community members, objectives, among others. The third section investigates safety and protection indicators, considering the guidelines and effectiveness in mitigating the risks of gender-based violence, staff training, referral pathways, psychosocial care, and security in care and access to the service network. The fourth and final section corresponds to economic well-being and examines the hiring of women in the programs, completion, and approval of training courses for income generation, whether girls and women access the market safely and whether they have the power to make money decisions on productive assets and expenses. As a result, the treatment given to the projects and documents of the organizations reveals, *initially*, that the issue of gender is in fact considered relevant in daily humanitarian action.

With regard to the actions of UN agencies and implementing partners of the humanitarian response, programs are considered to be gender transformative⁷ demonstrating consideration for disaggregation of data by gender and, in most cases, describing the obstacles to gender equality and the empowerment of women. It is worth mentioning that some of the organizations claim that their effort is still under development.

In general, there is a joint effort to achieve gender equality, by the actors implementing humanitarian action in the Brazil-Venezuela border, since they work with information dissociated from gender and age, considering the needs, capacities, and preferences of the community, training their teams and implementing actions for equality. At the same time, two organizations do not include information in their documents and protocols about the main obstacles to gender equality and women's empowerment, revealing a "breach" in the humanitarian response, a gap that needs to be addressed to move towards gender equality.

The need to enforce gender parity in the fieldwork teams is noteworthy, and this issue was negatively evaluated in the RAT. From the nine implementing agencies and organizations participating in the research, six said that there is no gender equality in the teams (if it is equally composed of women and men).

⁷ Assessing the extent to which program design and implementation processes and systems are gender-transformative is different from assessing whether a program is gender-transformative as a result of the intended effects. An assessment of the intended effects would require further analysis and would only be applicable to programs that aim to be gender transformatives. This would limit the range of programs to which the tool would be applicable (RAT).

However, it was not possible to identify which gender has the majority in the program. But, some hypotheses can be raised: if the majority are women, is "positive discrimination" present in this context? Or are we facing sexual division of labor still with its gaze turned to the care politic logic, of politics of care? In addition, it is necessary to verify whether women effectively occupy positions and functions of higher appreciation and recognition, or more power, in agencies and organizations. In any case, it was identified that there is no equality in the programs, which requires more detailed research.

Finally, it is necessary to highlight that two of the partner organizations were not willing to participate in the evaluation process because they did not recognize that their actions are specifically aimed at tackling gender inequalities, even though their work is carried out in direct contact with migrant women, men, boys, and girls.

However, it is worth noting that the work for gender equality and women's empowerment happens in a transversal and intersected way in humanitarian action, therefore, there is no need for a specific project in gender to recognize inequality. In addition, the actors listed are promoters of Agenda 2030: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), whose SDG-05 deals with gender equality.

Public authorities, in general, strive to make a transformative gender policy feasible, but they still face structural and cultural obstacles rooted in the formation of the State, such as clientelism, patrimonialism, bureaucratization of procedures, lack of *accountability*, budget cuts, among others.

Civil society also faces structural and cultural challenges (racism, sexism, etc.). However, it has invested in the development of decolonial thinking⁸ and knows that to advance gender equality in the region, the various perspectives of feminism must be considered: black, indigenous, popular, community. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the diversity of Latino and Caribbean women.

8 Thought, ideas conceived as predominant, superior according to Antonio Gramsci is the way in which power is exercised not only through a set of political institutions, but also through culture.

4. LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

Initiatives that aim to stimulate women's participation and leadership cannot be left aside and pose permanent challenges to achieve gender equality and the effective empowerment of women. At the national level, however, the spaces for participation and leadership of the population were emptied, especially when exercised by women, as in the case of councils. This context becomes more challenging for refugee and migrant women, who still encounter other barriers such as migratory regularization, access to documentation and language, in addition to those faced by the host community. Anyway, in the humanitarian scope, organizations that work in the emergency response try to offer spaces of participation to the population of interest, such as the committees⁹.

Even so, in general, stakeholders say there are difficulties in stimulating women's leadership and participation in the humanitarian response, especially because women are overworked with child and home care. They emphasize that in most single-parent migrant families¹⁰, the heads of the family are women, which implies little free time to carry out activities involving participation in the decisions, management, and organization of shelters (Box 1).

Box 1:



[Focus Groups] Participation, autonomy and guardianship

When asked about their participation in humanitarian response spaces, the majority of women who participated in the focus groups reported that they felt they were only partially included in the decision-making. The issue of language here appears as a first impediment, which is repeated, especially when they arrive in the country and try to get general access to basic rights and public facilities.

⁹ Committees are organized in the shelters as participation mechanisms. An example is the safety and coexistence, health, education, food/kitchen, logistics, livelihoods, people with special needs, women, sports and the elderly committees. However, as each shelter has its particularities and priorities, they create only those in which the community gets involved and organized.

¹⁰ Those led by women with sons and/or daughters and without partners, also called a single mother.

In any case, most of them reported that their participation in reception spaces - especially shelters - was linked to collective activities, such as food preparation and maintenance of spaces for common use. In the same context, however, some women reported that they felt that their autonomy was hampered by the tutelage exercised by humanitarian aid institutions. They stated that they felt constrained to stay for long periods in the shelter and participate fully in maintenance and cleaning activities. Such constraint was presented to women who left the shelters for long periods to find work or participate in training courses. Using records for entrance and exit times of women in the shelter, their participation in meals, and other daily activities, the management teams of such spaces suggested that the absence of women would indicate that they did not actually need help.

In the case of the LGBTQIA+ population, especially trans women, other vulnerabilities stand out, such as the confrontation of discrimination and homophobia of local population and within the migrant community itself (Box 2), as well as how they face greater difficulties in accessing formal and non-precarious jobs. Another obstacle highlighted, concerns the dynamics of the voluntary relocation program: how to maintain ties, local connections and social networks built between women in the course of the migration flow. In the first year of relocation, between 2018 and 2019, there was a greater inclusion of men¹¹, while wives/partners, sons and daughters were left behind. In this process of distancing¹², many men formed other families in the new place of destination, and women found themselves unattended by their partners and alone to provide for themselves and their children.



11 The only type of the voluntary relocation program that had more women than men is family reunification, which shows a dependence of women on men, since they are only relocated by family reunification when the partner or husband (in case of heterosexual couples) can prove he is financially stable. Information available at: <http://blog.mds.gov.br/redesuas/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Informe-de-Interioriza%C3%A7%C3%A3o--Dezembro-de-2019.pdf>

12 In an informal way, this process is called the feminization of shelters. Even when the man does not create another family, he is often relocated alone, leaving the woman with their children in Roraima for a while, until he achieves financial stability.

Box 2:**[Focus Groups] LGBTQIA+ population: Discrimination and active participation**

Women who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community, or have family members in this community, reported situations of discrimination and violence against this group during the focus groups. Whether in the streets of Boa Vista or in the shelters, the manifestations of prejudice came both from other Venezuelan migrants, as well as from Brazilians in general and agents directly involved in humanitarian reception. However, training on Human Rights and, in particular, on the rights of women and girls and LGBTQIA+, was reported as essential to promote greater articulation of this community. This articulation proved to be particularly useful within the shelters, ensuring more direct participation in the management and daily life of these spaces.

However, despite the difficulties, people involved have emphasized that the leadership of women (trans and cis) is an important part of life in shelters and fundamental to the building of communities and resilience among women and migrants. Female leaders were highlighted as preponderant in the continuity of the projects and in the construction of solidarity networks inside and outside the shelters (Box 3). It is also important to mention that women are active and lead self-organizing processes in spontaneous occupations. Currently, there are eleven micro occupations in the city of Boa Vista and all of them are led by women.

Box 3:**[Focus Groups] Spontaneous occupations, indigenous leadership and participation**

In addition to the shelters, there are a number of spontaneous occupations in Boa Vista where the self-organization of migrants and the role of women in community leadership roles are observed in different degrees of intensity.

The Ka'Ubanoko occupation, vacated by court order between October 2020 and January 2021, was mentioned in several speeches during the focus groups and complementary interviews. For some women, the end of the occupation represents a moment of rupture of social ties, some of which are directly responsible for guaranteeing subsistence through groups of collective production of handicrafts. Women who were transferred from Ka'Ubanoko to shelters also reported a loss of autonomy, as in the occupation they were able to participate more actively and directly in collective decisions, taking their demands in an organized manner to the humanitarian host institutions. In the case of indigenous women, this speech is even more present, since the transfer to the shelters meant the loss of the traditional organizational structures of their ethnic groups.

Despite the challenges pointed out in this section, it was observed that, in general, the actions implemented by the agencies in the humanitarian response are gender transformative, with the participation of women in the planning, elaboration and monitoring of the developed actions. Of the nine implementing agencies and partners, eight report that women and girls were consulted during the planning and action elaboration process. Of the nine participants, seven responded that women and girls are regularly consulted as part of ongoing monitoring measures, in a safe and dignified manner. This is a very positive point for the constitution of female leaders.

And that access to safe and cohesive spaces (Box 4) for women and girls is partly guaranteed, such as committees, and meeting activities to discuss gender issues, gender-based violence, and health. There is also a partial concern with awareness activities with the community in general, aiming to stimulate the participation and leadership of women.



Box 4:


[Focus Groups] Spaces for speaking and listening

Some of the focus group participants highlighted the importance of collective spaces for speaking and listening, such as conversation circles and the focus group itself. They reported that sharing experiences with other migrant women, who share a similar trajectory to their own, generates a feeling of individual and collective empowerment.

Organizations consider feedback from migrants when evaluating and redesigning their programs, and there is a sense that women feel they are part of the decisions of their communities. However, it is important to implement databases taking into account markers of gender, age, ethnicity/race and sexual orientation in organizations that do not yet have this instrument.

Of the four government sectors participating in the research, three offer services through universal public policies and one sector has projects linked to the Legislative Assembly of the State of Roraima. In the interviews, it was noticed that these mechanisms still do not see the migrant as a subject of rights, but more like an assisted person and beneficiary of a service. Participation is often taken for granted, even though women's experiences are being marginalized, undervalued or ignored, as participation effectively implies social control, transparency and shared decision-making power. Only *Casa da Mulher Brasileira* (CMB), the Brazilian Women's House, has institutional spaces for participation, like the *Fórum Estadual de Enfrentamento à Violência Contra as Mulheres do Campo, da Floresta e das Águas*, held in 2019, and the *Câmara Técnica Estadual de Gestão e Monitoramento do Pacto Nacional pelo Enfrentamento da Violência Contra Mulheres*. The other two do not have an external ombudsman or mechanisms that make participation possible.

With regard to civil society organizations, there is a lack of structure to carry out activities with women - migrant or local. Despite all the limitations faced, the participating institutions carried out their activities with migrants with a reasonable degree of success (Box 5), such as the *Núcleo de Mulheres de Roraima* (NUMUR), the Women's Center of Roraima, with the training of 34 *Promotoras Legais Populares* (PLPs)¹³, Popular Legal Prosecutors,

¹³ Promotoras Legais Populares (PLPs), the Popular Legal Prosecutors course was organized by NUMUR, UNFPA and INESC, aiming at stimulating and creating conditions for women to know their rights, laws and legal access mechanisms; to know public policies for confronting and addressing violence against women; enabling skills to deal with situations of violence against women, referring or accompanying them.

among Brazilian and Venezuelan women; The course "sewing dreams" promoted by the cooperative of solidarity enterprises of Boa Vista (COOF ECS); and the solidarity actions of the Sabá group, which we will see below.

Box 5:



[Focus Groups] Some concrete obstacles to active participation

In the focus groups, many women reported some difficulties that prevent their effective participation not only in training activities but also in qualification courses and access to other services and rights. Urban transport appears as one of these obstacles. For example, some women reported lack of access to public transportation in Boa Vista, due to the bus fare, as an obstacle to job search and participation in training courses. The use of bicycles and long walks were mentioned as alternatives, but they especially exclude women with young children or those with limited mobility. Families composed exclusively of women and their children also reported greater difficulties in participation. The lack of daycare centers and/or other reception spaces for children proved to be a serious obstacle for these mothers to look for work and have access to employment. This problem was also mentioned in relation to training and education courses, which do not always accept the presence of children or offer any type of alternative for these mothers.

It is worth noting that the local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) act in political incidence in the scarce spaces of participation, as was the "State Forum for Confronting Violence Against Women from the Countryside, the Forest and the Waters", and the "State Technical Chamber of Management and Monitoring of the National Pact to Combat Violence against Women". However, the participants do not have a seat in the organizational spaces of Operation Welcome, which is responsible for humanitarian action in Boa Vista and Paracaima/RR.

However, some gaps still need to be addressed, in order to provide greater participation of migrants in the decision-making of programs and strategies. Those, in turn, should adapt based on feedback from the migrants, designing the program based on the assessment of specific needs of women and the mitigation of risks associated with the migration context, and in the regular monitoring of the effectiveness of these mitigation measures. This way, the intended objectives can actually promote inclusion, autonomy and freedom, enabling migrants to act as protagonists in their own stories.



Good practices

- Women's participation in shelter committees¹⁴, especially on health, distribution and cleaning was recognized by women in focus groups and representatives of agencies and partners as relevant. They seek to respond to the demands of beneficiaries in their daily lives and rely on the active presence of women in decision-making processes. They are spaces legitimized by refugees and migrants and have the capacity to expand, for example, in the form of budget committees.
- The experience with the training of Popular Legal Prosecutors (PLPs) proved to be relevant as it stimulated contact and articulation between the migrant community and local civil society organizations, highlighting the construction of lasting personal and community bonds, having an effect on the fight against xenophobia among Boa Vista's population. Initiatives that focus on building networks among women have resulted in a more solid construction of leadership and female participation towards autonomy. Articulation between the migrants implies both strengthening of individuals and the migrant community in general.



Lessons learned

- When considering the relevance of the protagonism of women, the actions developed in the humanitarian context show that gender obstacles can also be faced by Venezuelan migrants. However, for this to happen, it is necessary to implement systematic practices of awareness raising, sharing positive gender narratives, sisterhood and solidarity among women so that the solution of countless problems can be found collectively, thus stimulating the exercise of autonomy, so important to women in general - especially in migratory experiences.
- The greater participation of women is not, in itself, a guarantee of greater attention to gender issues or that their needs will be met. In addition, the structure of the public sector remains centralized with few and fragile mechanisms of social control, transparency and shared decision-making power. Therefore, women's participation could become merely symbolic.

¹⁴ Committees are organized in the shelters as participation mechanisms. An example is the safety and coexistence, health, education, food/kitchen, logistics, livelihoods, people with special needs, women, sports and the elderly committees. However, as each shelter has its particularities and priorities, they create only those in which the community gets involved and organized.

- Actions in the humanitarian context need to be carried out in a coordinated and inter-sectoral manner (humanitarian organizations, public authorities, civil society, and the migrant population). Although emergencies require quick attitudes, which do not always allow coordination, migratory contexts must be conducted in a coordinated manner. It is also essential to provide and foster community spaces, not only to provide shelter and food, but to continue strengthening and improving networks of leaders and micro-groups. Peaceful coexistence between migrants, refugees and the local population is possible.
- Working with indigenous populations requires time, closeness, and an approach built in advance, and that is culturally sensitive, relying on specialized knowledge about the communities involved, so that the gender inequalities of these populations are not faced with racism and ethnocentrism.
- Another lesson learned has to do with the participation of civil society organizations in the spaces for deliberations and referrals of the Operation Welcome. Working groups (WG) and biweekly meetings allowed for active speech and listening, untangling centralized and hierarchical practices still present in the Army, but which were reframed throughout this experience with more leveled actions among organizations that work directly in the humanitarian context.



ESTEFÂNIA'S LIFE STORY

San Fernando de Apure is a small municipality in Venezuela known as “the city of hope”. It is there that, in the early 80s, Estefânia was born. Laughing, while doing her toenails so that they get the same vibrant colors as the ones she shows in her hands, she says that the people of San Fernando are very beautiful and have a good heart. When telling about her experiences in Brazil, she consults the manicure and friend, also a Venezuelan, who helps her to recall in memory the details of each date and place.

When Estefânia arrived in Roraima four years ago, she felt strange and confused. Fortunately, a friend - who is already gone and whom she remembers very fondly - helped her in the first months, hosting her at her home. Estefânia says that she had to be patient to adapt to the new life in Brazil, as the conditions of survival in Venezuela had deteriorated a lot. There, she had to work on the street, but the money she earned was no longer enough to pay for her food. In addition, Estefânia sadly reports the increase in episodes of violence against women and the LGBTQIA+ population in her country.

Estefânia lived for a year and a half in a shelter administered by the Brazilian Army, sharing the space with more than 400 other Venezuelan migrants. She believes it was a positive experience, as she had the opportunity to take many courses and take an active leadership role with her community. However, in the shelter, she also experienced many situations of rejection and prejudice against trans people, both by the other shelters and by the military personnel responsible for managing the place. Estefânia says that things started to change for her after, in 2019, she participated in the Popular Legal Promoters (PLP) Project, an initiative promoted by UNFPA, INESC and NUMUR. It was in this project that she and other women had access to information about their rights and what to do if they were violated.

Estefânia currently lives in another shelter. She says she feels empowered and says that experience has taught her that collective organization is essential to guarantee dignity and respect within institutional host spaces. She recalls, for example, military personnel who were replaced when denounced for their discriminatory stance within shelters. The right to return to shelters at flexible hours was also accomplished by the collective articulation of women who needed to work at night. She tells of a recent episode that made her particularly emotional. A military man who works in the management of the shelter where she lives tried to prevent the LGBTQIA+ community from actively participating in the shelter's activities. She stood up in the cafeteria to face the man's speech and, in a gesture of unity and solidarity, all the other members of the LGBTQIA+ community in the shelter also stood in support. The action was successful. For Estefânia, the simple right to participate

in the daily activities of maintaining the shelter is extremely important to reaffirm the capacity that gays, lesbians and transsexuals have to occupy different roles in collective life.

Many people in the LGBTQIA+ community leave Venezuela because of violence, economic issues and access to health. Being a trans and migrant woman is difficult, especially in the work context. Estefânia has already taken courses in the areas of Human Resources, Sales, Finance and Marketing. She has participated in many selection processes, but has not yet found a formal job. She says it is important for people to understand that many trans women are qualified and can work in the most different areas, not just on the streets or beauty salons. In addition, she recalls that many LGBTQIA+ come to Brazil to seek continuity in their treatment of HIV and syphilis and that they need special attention to guarantee a source of income.

Estefânia recently received documentation that recognizes her as a refugee. Unlike the other Brazilian documents she owns, this one did not have her preferred name. She has already requested a change, and she will appeal to a Public Defender's Office if her right is denied. For the future, Estefânia dreams of achieving enough financial autonomy to bring her sisters and mother to Brazil, who call her every day and who she misses the most. Despite the great longing she feels for her family, she does not think of returning to Venezuela anytime soon. For her, Boa Vista is now the city of hope.



5. SAFETY AND PROTECTION

To speak of the safety and protection of women in the humanitarian and migratory context is to bring the phenomenon of gender-based violence (GBV) to the center of the discussion, considering its various manifestations (physical, psychological, moral, sexual, patrimonial, etc.) and its dimensions, in particular, the structural and institutional violence rooted in Brazilian society.

Brazil ranks as the 5th most violent country against women, according to the 2015 violence map¹⁵. To face this reality, it is necessary to reinforce the discussion of this theme in public spaces, understanding that GBV is a major problem, not only for women but for the whole society.

The contribution of feminist movements was fundamental to “denaturalize” violence against women and expand the discussions regarding autonomy over the body, sexuality and female reproduction, as the feeling of insecurity, fear and distress of women is directly related to these themes. In the case of refugee and migrant women, in addition to many of them suffering domestic and family violence (intimate partner), they also suffer the violence that is part of the xenophobia present in society, and more strongly structural and institutional violence due to their condition of vulnerability and multiple discrimination (Box 6).

Box 6:



[Focus Groups] Living and witnessing gender-based violence

When asked about their sense of security, many women who participated in the focus groups said they feel more secure in Brazil compared to Venezuela. Still, some pointed to xenophobia and sexism as major factors that make women unsafe. Many memories came to the surface when women were mobilized by the question of having witnessed or experienced any situation of gender-based violence in Brazil.

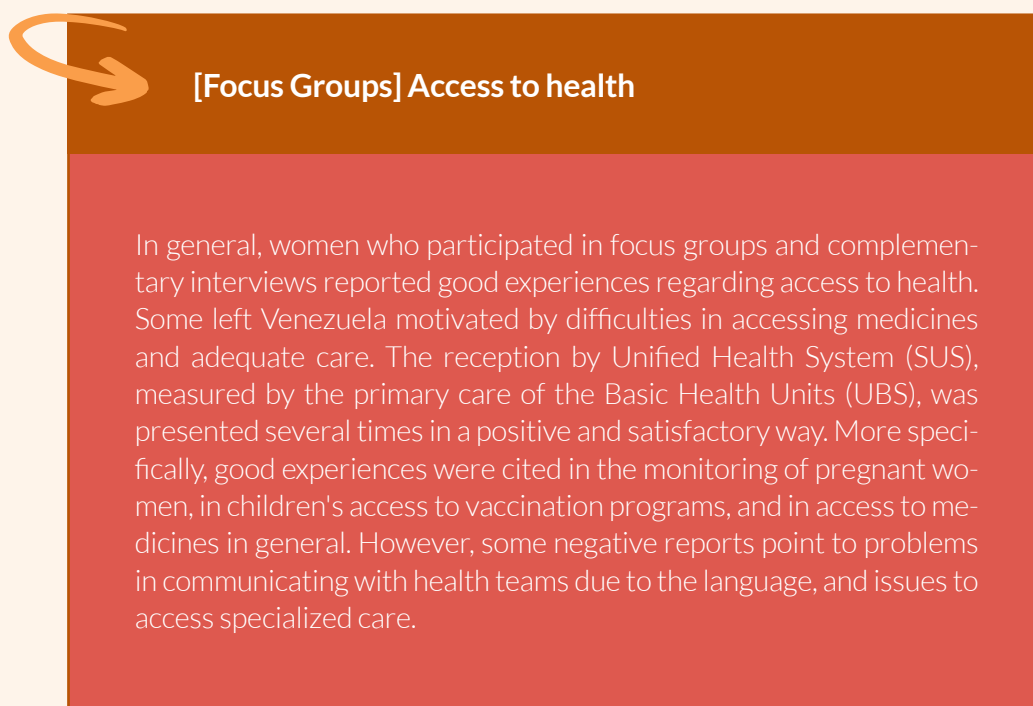
15 <https://www.ipea.gov.br/atlasviolencia/download/24/atlas-da-violencia-2020>

We heard reports of attempted rape on the streets of Boa Vista and within spontaneous occupations. Cases of domestic violence by the partner, sexual harassment in the workplace, verbal aggression of a xenophobic character, violence against LGBTQIA+ people and intimidation by Army agents working in the humanitarian service have also been reported. Seeking work as a cleaner in the homes of Boa Vista, one of the participants suffered an attempted homicide motivated by xenophobia.

Using international instruments¹⁶ UN system agencies are prioritizing the gender perspective in humanitarian action, such as the Refugees and Migrants Response Plan (RMRP) 2021 for Venezuelans in Brazil and the Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) for migrant, asylum seekers and refugee women, a Joint Programme between UNFPA, UNHCR and UN Women. They consider the gender perspective to be essential to overcome inequalities between men and women, and, consequently, build transformative gender steps in the context of migration.

UNFPA also works directly on the sexual and reproductive rights of migrant, refugee and host community women and with the theme of gender-based violence (GBV). Within the scope of the local Working Group, co-led by UNFPA and UNHCR and the national GBV sub-sector, co-led by UNFPA and UN Women, the referrals pathways for cases of violence against women was built together with women and other actors during the Covid-19 pandemic, and it indicates the steps to be followed when assisting someone in the event of violence. In any case, the first concern must be with the health, and then the safety of the survivor. Despite the obstacles in accessing health services, women report, in general, that they were well cared for (Box 7).

16 World Conference on Women (Beijing), International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo), World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 2030/OSD-05 Agenda, Montevideo Strategy

Box 7:

[Focus Groups] Access to health

In general, women who participated in focus groups and complementary interviews reported good experiences regarding access to health. Some left Venezuela motivated by difficulties in accessing medicines and adequate care. The reception by Unified Health System (SUS), measured by the primary care of the Basic Health Units (UBS), was presented several times in a positive and satisfactory way. More specifically, good experiences were cited in the monitoring of pregnant women, in children's access to vaccination programs, and in access to medicines in general. However, some negative reports point to problems in communicating with health teams due to the language, and issues to access specialized care.

The “safe spaces” were part of a strategy that promoted the creation of spaces for conversation “between” and “with” women and organizations implementing actions in the shelters. The methodology facilitated the exchange of experiences, the collective and participative construction of knowledge, in addition to allowing them to confront the challenges of everyday life, claiming the exercise of their citizenship in public and private life, which also involves equal opportunities between men and women. In addition, the strategy seeks to promote increased knowledge about social, legal and institutional rights and facilities in Brazil, as well as the improvement of women's skills and capacities for leadership and participation in the humanitarian response.

Thus, humanitarian organizations strive to mitigate the risks of suffering gender-based violence and address situations of violence, with case monitoring and management. Proactive monitoring allows greater security for women to access care, reporting mechanisms and protection services in the public network. The professionals in charge of these follow-ups have training and awareness raising while working to preserve the dignity of the survivor on the part of humanitarian organizations. The women declared they received information about the service network and how to deal with violence (Box 8).

Box 8:**[Focus Groups] Access to reporting mechanisms**

Most women who participated in the focus groups reported that they were informed about how to access the reporting mechanisms in cases of gender-based violence. The sources of information are diverse, including the means of communication and, mainly, the training activities promoted by agents and institutions that work in the humanitarian reception. UN Women and Casa da Mulher Brasileira, the Brazilian Women's House, for example, were cited as entities that made access to this information feasible. However, some women reported concrete difficulties in accessing these mechanisms. In addition to the feeling of insecurity while making a complaint, the issue of language and a lack of sensitivity/awareness of law enforcement agents were cited as obstacles. However, some women also expressed a positive perception about Brazilian legislation in relation to the protection of vulnerable groups, such as women, children and LGBTQIA+.

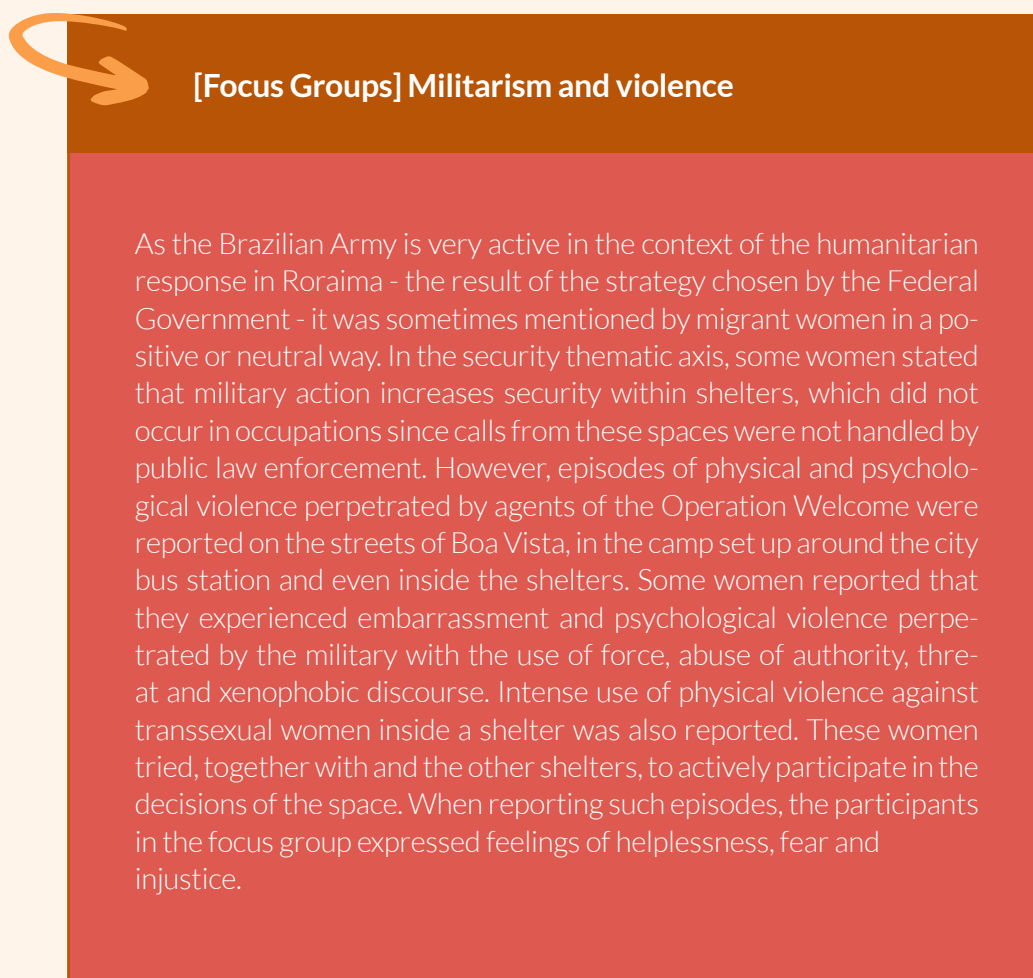
Regarding the Public Power, the experiences of the project *Facilitadoras de Diálogo*, Facilitators of Dialogue, and *O Valente não é Violento*, The Brave is not Violent, were shared, carried out in a partnership by the Public Defender's Office of the State of Roraima (DPE/RR) and UN Women. *Facilitadoras de Diálogo* was born after a mapping process carried out by UN Women, which demonstrated conflicts and difficulties in relationships within the shelters. The training aims to work on conflict and people mediation. After the training, it was realized working only with women would not be enough, since gender-based violence was also present in the shelters.

Thus, the partnership also started to offer *O Valente não é Violento*¹⁷, a UN Women's methodology that works with the theme of positive masculinity, active fatherhood and violence prevention. Initially, the training was offered to the partners and/or children of the participants in the *Facilitadoras de Diálogos*, but later it was extended to humanitarian actors, military personnel from the Operation Welcome and even to civil servants of the local government. That happened because situations of sexism and violence on the part of Wel-

¹⁷ The brave is not violent is an initiative that seeks to stimulate reflection on new masculinities, emphasizing the responsibility of men in eliminating violence against girls and women. The experience organized by UN Women included exclusive spaces for men, to share their views and reflect gender roles, positive masculinities and active parenting. The initiative was carried out both with Venezuelan men and the armed forces from Operation Welcome, humanitarian agents and even men from public power linked to the Women's Protection Network

come Operation reported (Box 9).

Box 9:



[Focus Groups] Militarism and violence

As the Brazilian Army is very active in the context of the humanitarian response in Roraima - the result of the strategy chosen by the Federal Government - it was sometimes mentioned by migrant women in a positive or neutral way. In the security thematic axis, some women stated that military action increases security within shelters, which did not occur in occupations since calls from these spaces were not handled by public law enforcement. However, episodes of physical and psychological violence perpetrated by agents of the Operation Welcome were reported on the streets of Boa Vista, in the camp set up around the city bus station and even inside the shelters. Some women reported that they experienced embarrassment and psychological violence perpetrated by the military with the use of force, abuse of authority, threat and xenophobic discourse. Intense use of physical violence against transsexual women inside a shelter was also reported. These women tried, together with and the other shelters, to actively participate in the decisions of the space. When reporting such episodes, the participants in the focus group expressed feelings of helplessness, fear and injustice.

A positive example of *O Valente não é Violento* is that young Venezuelans participating in the workshops started to realize that in Brazil they should not behave in the same way they had in their country with regard to women, including learning about Brazilian laws, such as of the Maria da Penha Law. The project covered men of various age groups and enabled discussions on active parenting, gender inequalities, power relations, sharing of domestic responsibilities - in addition to presenting non-violent communication and ways to resolve disputes and conflicts in relationships and social relations in general.

Civil society presented the challenges they are facing in relation to the violence suffered by Venezuelan and non-Venezuelan transsexual populations. The Sabá group stated that violence against transsexual women is common because it is a highly stigmatized group. And, if Venezuelan migrants suffer aggression, due to their extreme vulnerability, perpetrators remain unpunished, which contributes to the fact that many victims do not look for help in a government service network.

Thus, in this thematic axis, it is assessed that organizations working in the humanitarian context of the city of Boa Vista/RR work to overcome the trivialization of gender-based violence and mitigate its risks. They understand the phenomenon of violence as something complex and rooted in culture, and make efforts to “deconstruct” stereotyped gender roles and norms.

They reflect on the impacts of toxic masculinity within groups of men participating in training programs, financial assistance groups, or in families where women are directly responsible for income or resources, addressing the disadvantages of sexism for men, such as neglect of sexual and reproductive health and the lack of greater health care in general. They also address the challenges in overcoming gender inequalities in parental relationships (shared custody, care for daughters and sons) by saying that masculinity, like femininity, is socially constructed, historical and relational, and that gender organizes all society.


The survey demonstrated an effort by both segments to achieve gender equality. Still, it is urgent and necessary to work with gender issues as a public policy measure, with a view to correct the structural flaws in our social fabric. Such flaws stop the country from a healthy and fair growth process, as well as a way of development that effectively recognizes women as citizens and right-holders¹⁸, as Brazil remains among the most unequal countries in terms of gender and race¹⁹.

With regard to Roraima (Box 10), there is an urgent need to prioritize the work of deconstructing gender inequalities, as it is still a very conservative and violent state with women, which requires an effective and lasting state commitment to cultural changes.



18 The term “political subjects” comes to be used in various articles and research, as a way to “escape” from a male and sexist language, opening up the flank for incorporating new grammatical interpretations to the Portuguese language.

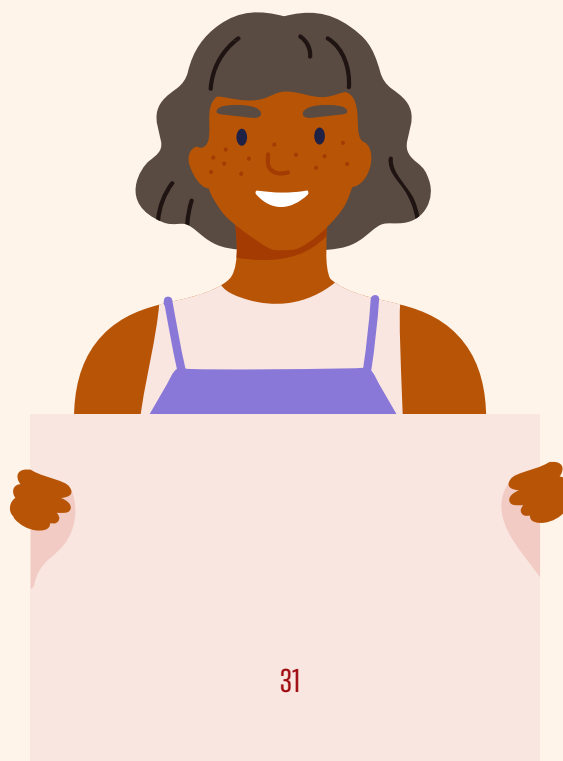
19 <https://www.ipea.gov.br/retrato/pdf/revista.pdf>

Box 10:

[Focus Groups] Homeless women in Roraima

Many participants reported that, in Roraima, they lived on the streets for long periods. Memories about such periods are permeated by the feeling of extreme vulnerability and insecurity. Episodes of embarrassment by security agents, prejudice, harassment and sexual violence were reported. Another critical point cited by these women concerns the lack of access to spaces for personal hygiene. The search for safe places to shower, wash clothes and meet basic needs appears in the statements as a situation that puts them in a position of risk, embarrassment and vulnerability, harming their rights to privacy and dignity.

When talking about gender-based violence (GBV), it is worth adding that ethnic-racial, sexual orientation, generational, and people with disabilities need to be incorporated into future assessments and into the Rapid Assessment Tool, given that Venezuelan migration is formed by black and indigenous peoples, thus allowing intersectionality with other forms of oppression not mentioned in the tool.





Good practices

- The Safe Spaces methodology, led by UNFPA, or the Women's Empowerment Hubs, led by UN Women, invested in building bonds, sharing knowledge about the condition of this public, gender relations, and understanding Brazilian legislation in many areas (labor, social protection, prevention and response to GBV, health, among others). Such spaces constitute places of reference for women who are in the city of arrival, and also allow the exercise of citizenship in the municipalities of interiorization. The experience is based on a shared construction with refugee and migrant women and had the collaboration of different social actors. Still, the contribution of humanitarian workers in public agencies made it possible to strengthen local public capacities in the provision of services and rights to refugees and migrants. The experience was identified as a good practice for encouraging the autonomy of refugee and migrant women in its physical, economic and political aspects.
- Therefore, organizations that work in humanitarian action strive to bring mechanisms to empower²⁰ women and girls in “Safe Spaces” or in the Women's Empowerment Hubs, which includes knowing their rights, as well as accessing them, in addition to providing spaces for women themselves to seek to influence others around gender equality.
- The GBV referral pathways, developed in Boa Vista/RR initially, and later repeated in Manaus/AM, is an instrument that incorporates the principles of the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC), in consonance with international landmarks, providing articulation of the local network with the humanitarian response and even with other networks in the country.
- The *Transformando Vidas*, Transforming Lives, project of the *Serviço Jesuíta a Migrantes e Refugiados* (SJMR), in partnership with UN agencies, is a positive experience in the empowerment, security and protection of trans women in particular, because they work with women who become sex-workers to survive. At first, the project seeks to meet basic subsistence needs, with the provision of basic food baskets. Then, training meetings are held, as well as document regularization. Between September and December 2019, on average, the documentation of 100 women was provided.

²⁰ The term “agency” can be practically synonymous with the forms of power that people have at their disposal, their ability to act on their own behalf, to influence other people and events and to maintain some kind of control over their own lives. The Agency, in this sense, is relevant both in case of domination and case of resistance (ORTNER, 2007, p. 64).



Lessons learned

- Violence against women is a political problem and a public health issue. In this sense, programs, research, monitoring and evaluation are necessary from the perspective of the intersectionality between gender, class and race present in social relations.
- It is known that when men (family members, partners, intimate partners, etc.) have practices associated with hegemonic and misogynistic masculinity, they limit the exercise of women's autonomy and their ability to engage in activities not associated with domestic work. In these circumstances, they have numerous difficulties in completing the processes, one example being the abandonment of training courses.
- It is essential to guide the State (public power) from the international agreements²¹ signed by Brazil on gender inequalities. In addition, it is essential to have an integrated and coordinated action that involves several public departments, from the education of children/adolescents, security, social assistance, health, to the Judiciary, together with the actors of the humanitarian response.



21 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW 1979); Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women, called the Convention of Belém do Pará (ratified in 1994); World Conference on Human Rights (1993), among others.

ISABELA'S LIFE STORY

Isabela is the mother of a boy of one year and six months, moved several times, lived on the streets for a long time, and now works at a clinic in São Paulo. She has overcome many difficult situations in life, so it is surprising to know how young she is. She left her parents' house when she was 15 years old. She tells that she experienced situations of mistreatment there and, then, decided to live in a tent with her partner. When the situation in Venezuela became critical, the partner migrated to Brazil. Isabela finished her studies and went to meet him in 2017.

When she was already in Boa Vista, working in a greengrocer and living in a property they managed to rent after some time living in shelters, Isabela received a call from her mother. She had to return to her hometown, Maturín, to resolve a setback: they were threatening to invade a home that belonged to her family. In Maturín, she found out that she was in the first weeks of pregnancy and that her partner, in Boa Vista, had found a new partner. However, the crisis in Venezuela had worsened and Isabela decided to cross the border into Brazil once again.

Back in Roraima, she managed to find a house, but had to leave after a month because she couldn't afford rent. She says that this was the most difficult period of her life. Isabela practically spent her entire pregnancy living on the streets. Boa Vista bus stops served as her dormitory for many nights, but the early hours were rarely quiet. Isabela says that she suffered threats and that police approaches were frequent. Along with other migrants, including her sister and nephew who had also left Venezuela, Isabela sought shelter in an abandoned school. One night, when she was already in her sixth month of pregnancy, she says that a man entered the building and tried to take off her clothes while she slept. Even though she was pregnant and exposed to so much violence, Isabela could not get a place in the shelters in the city.

The most basic needs such as taking a shower or doing laundry are inaccessible to someone living on the streets. Weekly, Isabela cleaned a gentleman's office in exchange for R\$ 10 (Reais), just enough to pay for a shower in a local inn. She reports that next to the school where she slept, a Venezuelan man tried to offer women access to bathrooms in exchange for sexual services. Isabela sadly remembers that during these months living on the streets, she cried every day. She was thinking of returning to Venezuela, but she knew that things were still very difficult there and that, perhaps, her son would not have the necessary assistance to come into the world.

She gave birth to Gabriel through a c-section procedure, two days after she left the streets and moved to the Ka'Ubanoko occupation. She did not have diapers or clothes for the baby, but she says that she was well attended at the maternity hospital. She then returned to the occupation with her baby, and soon took to the streets, still with the stitches from the c-section, in search of work. At the age of 20 days, Gabriel developed acute pneumonia and had to stay in the ICU for two months. It was during this period that Isabela resumed her relationship with her former partner and father of her son, with whom she is today. When the newborn healed and left the ICU, the family rented a house, but struggled to pay the rent and ended up returning to Ka'Ubanoko. A year later, faced with the prospect of eviction from the occupation, they decided to look for a friend who worked at the Screening Centre (Pitrig, in Portuguese) to try the voluntary relocation program.

Isabela has been living in Parque São Domingos, west of São Paulo, for three months, together with the partner and son, and the family of her brother-in-law who welcomed them. With her work, which is in a remote neighborhood, Isabela manages to guarantee the family's food, while her partner is responsible for paying the rent. The brother-in-law is unemployed, but contributes with the income he obtains by collecting recyclable material on the streets. Now 21, Isabela thinks about returning to Venezuela one day. Her priority at the moment is to equip the house in which she lives, but dreams of, in the future, opening her own business in her homeland and ensuring that her son never goes through the same situations that she had to.

6. ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

To address the economic well-being of migrant women is to have a look at the care economy, especially when in the last few decades it has been observed that the central countries are experiencing a deficit in domestic work - the care crisis. For, it is known that this work is mostly occupied by migrant women, forming the so-called global care chain, where women move to various parts of the world, especially from developing to developed countries.

In general, domestic workers are in poverty and face terrible working conditions, characterized by subordination, exploitation and discrimination. The social devaluation of this activity means that their rights are not recognized. In Brazil, one example is the approval process for the *Proposta de Emenda Constitucional* (PEC), Constitutional Amendment Proposal, about domestic workers, which after approved, became Constitutional Amendment No. 73/2013. Several social classes saw the PEC as a threat and were against the equalization of these women's rights - which would give domestic workers the same rights as all other workers belatedly supported by the labor legislation. In the 21st century, a category of work was "legally" discriminated against and was marginalized and excluded from labor legislation.

An exclusion factor is that many migrant and refugee women, even with university degrees in Venezuela, are sometimes unable to exercise their professions in Brazil, since the recognition of the diploma is a costly and long process. Thus, many of them end up in the informal market, working as entrepreneurs or domestic workers, without any stability or social protection.

In this regard, it is worth noting here that housework, according to the reports of women in the focus groups, remains one of their main occupations (Box 11).

Box 11:

[Focus Groups] Work, informality, and domestic work

During the focus groups, the vast majority of women reported that their experiences in the Brazilian labor market are limited to informality. There have been many reports of women who currently work and/or have worked in the past as domestic workers or cleaners. Domestic services represent one of the main strategies for entering the labor market and obtaining income for Venezuelan women. However, such insertion usually occurs through unregulated and precarious ways. Many women reported situations in which they were extremely poorly paid or did not even receive remuneration, working in exchange for food or housing. Cases of sexual harassment and xenophobia suffered by these women in the homes where they worked have also been reported. For many, getting a formal job in Brazil in any sector appears to be a central goal.

According to the *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios Contínua (PNAD)*, the National Household Sample Survey from 2019, the number of women in Brazil is higher than that of men. The Brazilian population is made up of 48.2% men and 51.8% women. So half of the population contributes in an indispensable way to the reproductive life, through the “care economy”, still pays taxes just like the other half, or proportionally more taxes, since the Brazilian tax burden is regressive and indirect, with a higher impact on consumption such as food, which is most of low-income families expenses. And still this half is daily demeaned in their human rights and not able to have a say in political decisions.

In addition to the precariousness of care work, it is known that women's time in participation and leadership is reduced, as part of that time is committed to the care economy. According to the *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios Contínua Annual (PNADCA)*, the National Continuous Annual Household Survey of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), in 2019, women declared to dedicate practically twice (on average 21.4 hours of work per week) as much domestic work as men (with 11 hours a week). This difference is maintained even when the interviewees are not employed. In this case, women commit 24 hours a week while men spend 12.1 hours a week (IBGE, 2020).

From 2001 to 2015, female-headed households more than doubled in absolute terms (105%), from 14.1 million in 2001 to 28.9 million in 2015. Over the course of 15 years, the number of female heads increased from 1 million to 6.8 million, among couples with children, an increase of 551%. Among childless couples, the percentage of growth was even

higher: from 339 thousand families to 3.1 million, an expansion of 822% (CAVENEGHI, 2018).

The above information helps to understand the numerous obstacles that women, especially migrants and refugees, face in exercising their political, physical and economic autonomy to effectively achieve their citizenship. In this way, UN agencies and implementing partners work together to enable the economic well-being of women on several fronts: in promoting participation and leadership, in mitigating the risks of gender-based violence, in raising awareness of companies for hiring refugees and migrants and in building access mechanisms for capacity building and training to perform income-generating activities. However, they still face difficulties and barriers. In addition, they provide information and knowledge so that women can have a voice in making decisions about productive assets and family expenses.

There is also a collaborative effort to include women in economic well-being projects, as the programs present equal opportunities in hiring processes, enrollment, and access to distribution and support posts, which women claim to feel safe accessing. However, they do not feel protected and confident in accessing the local labor market, mainly due to xenophobia, a finding that also comes from focus groups (Box 12).

Box 12:



[Focus Groups] Work, xenophobia and migratory documentation

Some women reported the explicit use of xenophobic speech by their employers to justify submitting to unregulated and precarious forms of work, with low pay and abusive hours. In other cases, it has been reported that some employers, including large companies, have refused to sign the employment card alleging ignorance of the legal possibilities of establishing an employment relationship with international migrants. It is also worth mentioning the peculiar situation of women who entered Brazil during the pandemic, when the borders were closed. These women, who constituted a majority in the shelter's focus group, are prevented from accessing many rights, including formal work.

Initiatives aimed at entrepreneurship in the programs, such as those in the UNHCR livelihoods unit, stand as a concrete instrument for transforming lives, as they seek to mitigate socioeconomic impacts, especially on the refugee population, and operate in the areas of employability, education, financial inclusion, peaceful coexistence and content production.

The *Vamos Juntas* project, implemented by UN Women in shelters in the city of Boa Vista, operated in two directions: On the one hand, they received the demands and needs of migrants and enabled mentoring in the areas demanded, at the same time as providing training on small business management, financial and brand management, marketing, sales, conflict mediation, among others. On the other hand, it stimulated cooperativism (the solidary economy), since the initiative aims to strengthen women's exclusive groups and collectives in production. From this experience, spaces for children emerged, which function in a self-managed and horizontally organized manner, in a turnover dynamic among women in children's care.

Hilos Migrantes, a visual identity, pricing and social networks training project, developed by AVSI and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), was a positive initiative, as it raised concern in the participating group with the business presentation and products to customers and on the internet.

With the completion of the qualification courses of *Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Comercial* (SENAC), the National Service for Commercial Learning, such as Portuguese with a focus on Service, Quality of Customer Service, Personal Marketing and Small Business Entrepreneurship, it was possible to bring innovation to the strategy, as the UN Women, in dialogue with the coordination and instructors, made the mainstreaming of the gender perspective possible in the syllabus taught to the migrant audience. At the same time, workshops on gender equality and women's human rights were held with SENAC instructors. In this way, UN Women, instructors and migrants, “all” taught and learned in this sharing of knowledge and know-how.

Therefore, this set of actions and professional training were assertive to improve the skills and capacities of women, since they instrumentalize migrants in search for financial autonomy, as ways to meet their needs and desires.

Thus, the evaluation of initiatives related to the economic well-being axis can be considered satisfactory, as the implementing agencies and partners have in their programs systematic and transversal actions for gender equality. Furthermore, by making available the Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), a cash transfer program or vouchers for goods and services directly to women, as a strategy for the economic empowerment of the beneficiaries, they are allowed to build paths for their citizenship.

Agencies and organizations, such as UNHCR and UN Women, also provide Cash Based Intervention (CBI), financial assistance that has been transferred since June 2019 in different configurations. Among them, there is support for women entrepreneurs, who also receive mentoring for opening and formalizing their own business in Brazil; women living

in small cities without job vacancies, to offer some type of protection during the relocation process; women moving to small cities with job vacancies, so that they have resources in the destination municipality in the first month, until they start being paid; and for women impacted by COVID-19, both for health and economic issues.

As far as the public authorities are concerned, only the *Casa da Mulher Brasileira* (CMB) works with economic well-being. There is a sector in the institution called economic autonomy, which held in March 2019 the first fair for products made by women, as well as craft and entrepreneurship workshops with refugee, migrant and women from the hosting community who were in a violence situation.

Regarding civil society, only one organization, COOFECs, works directly with initiatives aimed at women economic well-being. The seamstress cooperative located on the outskirts of the city of Boa Vista, held, with the support of UNHCR and UN Women, courses for refugee, migrant and Brazilian women, aiming insertion in the textile labor market and the organization of small businesses in the sewing area.

They report the challenges of one of these initiatives, which trained eleven women, nine Venezuelans and two Brazilians in 2019. Although all participants completed the course, the continuity of work with the graduating students was compromised with the arrival of the pandemic, due to social isolation and the decrease in the number of orders and customers.

Box 13:



[Focus Groups] Qualification courses, income and pandemic impacts

Many women evaluated positively their participation in training and professional qualification courses, exemplified by the courses in Portuguese, handicrafts, dressmaking and entrepreneurship. Some even reported that such courses contributed directly to getting their current jobs. Others perceive the need to expand the offer of these training opportunities. The decrease in the supply of such opportunities, as well as the cooling of humanitarian action as a whole, is perceived as one of the negative impacts caused by the pandemic context. The loss of income, the difficulty in finding work, the suspension of public services (education and social assistance) and the overload of health services are also cited as major impacts.


The most vulnerable cases, however, are concentrated among women who left Venezuela during the pandemic. The closure of the border resulted in migration by clandestine routes, known as trochas, in Spanish. Women who arrived in Brazil through the trochas reported situations of physical and emotional exhaustion, fear, insecurity and exposure to extortion and violence. They fail to achieve migratory regularization, encountering greater challenges for issuing documents, and as a consequence, barriers in accessing services and opportunities for socio-economic reintegration.

However, women still face structural barriers to access the formal job market (Box 14). In addition, they feel insecure because of xenophobia and prejudices from being migrants. In the informal sector, they remain exploited and many need to resort to sex for survival.

Box 14:**[Focus Groups] Informality and non-recognition of professional training**

The feeling of loss related to the lack of recognition of the professional training received in Venezuela was present in some reports. The difficulties of foreign degrees and diplomas recognition, that would allow entering the formal job market, based on the skills, training and professional experiences abroad were pointed out. Despite qualifications, they find themselves relegated to precarious positions and informality, which is an impediment to improving economic well-being and also a source of emotional distress linked to the loss of professional identity and recognition.

A positive point is that most of the focus group participants report having autonomy over the resources received, stating that they have decision-making power in the management of resources in their homes (Box 15). This was also confirmed by the humanitarian organizations, who share the same perception.

Box 15:

[Focus Groups] Autonomy, economic well-being and cash transfer programs

Among women who have their own source of income, reports were mostly positive regarding access to the banking system, which contributed to a greater perception of autonomy. In particular, public income transfer policies, based on programs such as Bolsa Família and Covid-19 Emergency Aid, are presented in the reports as an important strategy for the pursuit of economic well-being. Access to such resources was mentioned as essential in ensuring the provision of basic items for subsistence. However, some women also reported difficulties in accessing such benefits, as well as the banking system, due to the lack of accurate information and the language barrier

The information analyzed based on the rapid assessment tool confirms that the actions implemented were satisfactory, however, many obstacles need to be overcome for economic autonomy and gender equality.





Good practices

The professional qualification carried out by SENAC was positive, as it incorporated the gender perspective in a transversal way in its courses. Their ability to take gender dimension into account, in courses aimed at refugee and migrant women, was strengthened through the Gender equality in the classroom training, offered by UN Women to instructors, an unprecedented experience in the northern region of Brazil, and successful in the empowerment of migrant women in the classroom. The examples brought women as a reference and models of business success, deconstructing narratives in which only men appear as successful in the job market.

- Thus, the syllabus of the courses (curriculum) and language of teaching material were adapted to refugees and migrants reality, in order to answer their demands and needs, such as weekly working hours, working papers, vacations, 13th salary and other labor rights.
- Another positive strategy was the individual and collective support in the training process, where women supported each other. The migrants who mastered Portuguese stayed close to those who were still learning, forming pairs that helped themselves in the collective. This way, women created bonds during and after training, when the proposal to create a production cooperative emerges.
- The *Vamos Juntas* project also proved to be successful. From the beginning, it was evident that it was a collective action and not an individual economic empowerment of migrant women. The initiative was based on the analysis of the collective capacities, strengths and deficiencies and, using this prior diagnosis, UN Women and partners sought mentoring to improve their expertise, while providing training and capacity building in the areas of small business management, financial management, marketing, use of brands in products, sales strategies, conflict mediation, information technology, cooperatives.
- Regarding the solidary economy, it was a matter of incorporating a more altruistic thinking, working on terms such as leftovers and division. In parallel, UN Women also held workshops and conversation rounds with themes focused on group autonomy (gender relations, violence against women, Women's Human Rights, etc.).
- During *Vamos Juntas*, women created care and activity spaces for children in a self-managed horizontal way (self-organized daycare centers), in the form of rotations, while producing, training or even commercializing their products, strengthening bonds and expanding the real possibilities of income generation.
- Another example is the Empowering Refugees project, implemented by UNHCR in partnership with UN Women and the Pacto Global, to promote women's economic autonomy, offering them the possibility to get out of situations of vulnerability, by enabling partnerships with local and out of state companies. There is no doubt that employability is one of the main ways to promote a dignified life for women. The project “sewing dreams” developed by the Cooperativa de Empreendimentos Solidários (COOF ECS), better known as the seamstresses' cooperative, had the support of UN Women and

trained eleven women, nine Venezuelan and two Brazilian. The experience was positive as the migrants felt encouraged and welcomed while learning a new trade. The members reported their need and wish to do more, however, they cannot take online sewing courses.



Lessons learned

- Reproductive work, which remains mostly female and undervalued, is a page that needs to be turned in our history. Only then can the distance between productive and reproductive work be reduced. It continues as part of the intricate social system that maintains gender inequalities.
- Psychosocial care is also essential in this area, given that women face numerous barriers to their insertion in the labor market. Many have no one to leave their children with, do not master the language and cultural codes of the territory, others cannot validate their diplomas, some are undocumented, in addition to indifference to migrants by some Brazilians. Therefore, these adverse conditions affect their mental health, who are faced with countless difficulties.
- Many women have left their daughters and sons in Venezuela, hoping to bring them and / or visit them, but want to move inward either way, despite having no idea of the size of Brazil, since Roraima has limited incorporation in the job market. These are their most difficult decisions. If you have work in more distant states, you are faced with a dilemma: how to return and join your children later. Today, the way found to mitigate this situation is the family reunification through the interiorization program.
- The actions with a humanitarian context need to “root” themselves in the city: host community, public power, organized civil society, companies in partnership with agencies and organizations that implement actions “must” build exchanges “between” and “with” migrants and refugees beyond shelters, thus allowing them to live, experience and meet converging realities.
- The Serviço Jesuita a Migrantes e Refugiados (SJMR), the Jesuit Service for Migrants and Refugees, presented a very promising initiative with trans women. It is understood that patience is needed, since it is a process to establish bonds and trust, when first making contact. Since many distance themselves due to multiple oppressions suffered by the group. Work involving them directly in the decisions needs to be done. Thus, leaders were identified and started to involve other women, as they have their own communication network and codes. A relationship of trust is then established, but commitments must be carried out: “I give my word, if I say something, I have to fulfill it”, otherwise these relationships deteriorate.

KARINA'S LIFE STORY

In Ceará, there are days when Karina's family members feel like they are celebrities. When they say they are from Venezuela, some people get excited, hug the family and are curious to know more about their story, their paths. If they knew in advance of the difficulties that Karina faced until the interiorization in the metropolitan area of Fortaleza, where she now lives with her family, perhaps they would have embraced them even tighter.

Karina is from Azoátegui and her entire family worked in sectors linked to Venezuela's large oil industry. There she worked as a rescuer and says that helping people is her destiny and great legacy. She arrived with her husband in Roraima at the end of 2019. At the beginning of the pandemic, she joined a group of women to craft over 6,000 protective masks for other migrants like her by hand. Coming to Brazil, however, was a difficult decision. She says that before the crisis, she lived a very good life in Venezuela, with her own home and access to everything. However, the situation in the country began to deteriorate and, seeing her four children go hungry, Karina, who is now 48, felt the need to leave increased.

Her first address in Brazil was in Boa Vista, at the home of a lady known for hosting Venezuelans. In exchange for food and a place to sleep, Karina did household chores. Eventually, every two weeks, the lady would pay her R\$ 5 (Reais). Feeling exploited, she sought help and found a place for herself and her family in a shelter where more than 300 Venezuelans lived. She had good things there, but also reports a traumatic episode that caused her nervous breakdowns. One day, along other residents from the shelter, she went to the military who worked there to talk about food, which was making the residents sick. Facing the demand, the military acted aggressively. The military said Venezuelans were causing a riot and that they should be silent and thank the help given to them. The military reaction was particularly aggressive towards the transsexual residents of the shelter. Outraged, Karina details that the military beat trans women, used pepper spray and expelled them from the shelter. She mentions that a commander turned off the shelter's power and water at random times and blocked migrants' access to the local toilets. Initially, the administration supported the military, but a complaint was made, and the commander was removed. However, the assaulted women never returned.

Still in Roraima, Karina joined her two brothers and her youngest daughter, who also had to leave Venezuela. The family managed to move to Ceará in the fall of 2020. As soon as they arrived, Karina's husband sought out Sistema Nacional de Emprego (SINE), the National Employment System (SINE), and got an interview in the construction sector. When presenting his documents to the company, he heard that Venezuelans could not have the

same benefits as Brazilians and, therefore, his employment record book would not be signed. He did not accept the terms as he was aware of his rights, and today he has a regulated job at a cleaning products factory. Karina also had bad work experiences in Ceará. Working as a maid, she says that some employers did not want to pay for her service and demanded she stayed in their homes every day, from Monday to Sunday. Karina continues to work in this occupation, but says that she is about to have her employment record book signed.

Despite setbacks, what Karina likes most in Ceará is the people. She has many Brazilian friends and the habit of greeting each other on the streets catches her attention. Her neighbors always stop by their house to ask if the family need anything, if something is missing. Laughing, she says that her husband get excited by the enthusiasm and curiosity of the city people about migrants, as if being Venezuelan was something very extraordinary. Her plans for the future include helping the rest of the family move to Brazil and save money to buy a house here. Preferably with a very large yard to receive new friends.

7. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The evaluation process of results in gender equality and women's empowerment in the humanitarian response demonstrated an effort by the actors and actresses, with satisfactory initiatives in this regard.

It is necessary, however, to improve and expand gender equality in society as a whole through public policy measures, in order to correct structural flaws in our social fabric. In Roraima, an urgent prioritization is needed to deconstruct gender inequality, since the state's population is very conservative and violent towards women - which requires an effective and lasting state commitment to build cultural change.

Public services, in cases of violence, are not sought by migrants, especially trans women, due to fear of revictimization or retaliation. Mechanisms and strategies need to be created by the government, in order to reach out and promote closer ties between organizations and the migrant population.

Conducting an active search so that they feel safe and confident to seek state support. Thus, qualification becomes fundamental, prioritizing awareness campaigns with public agents, so they can understand that gender violence against women is still reproduced in their daily service, especially against migrants, black women, LGBTI and / or indigenous people.

There was a gap in the research regarding ethnic-racial and sexual orientation and gender identity markers. This is essential, since the region has a history of colonization, enslavement of the black and indigenous populations, with different experiences and cultures. Since Brazilian data shows that violence is still much higher among black women, European research models are not able to answer part of this reality. This parameter need to be rethought in order to include the reality of blacks and indigenous people.

Another evidence is the inequalities arising from the current situation of political and economic crises that have intensified with the pandemic, making the Latin American region even poorer²², according to the report of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). In Roraima, according to the testimonies, Venezuelan non-sheltered families were considerably unassisted by the State, especially during the period of suspension of Covid-19 emergency aid and the absence of local incentives for this population.

Organized civil society plays a fundamental role in working with refugees and migrants, but there are still numerous gaps, especially in infrastructure. To reduce the negative impacts in migratory context and make these works viable, it is necessary, to expand actions and programs on gender equality for local civil society organizations, since humanitarian organizations might withdraw from Roraima at some point, leaving only local organizations. Organizations need to be aware of such inequality and the challenges and specificities experienced by migrant and refugee women, in order to not reproduce them, persisting in a culture of privilege in Roraima society.

The study showed that to achieve gender equality, both society and the government need to commit to it, which should not be seen as a higher quota in favor of women, but as a paradigm of inclusion and equal participation in all dimensions of life, ranging from spaces of power to decisions in family life. A model that permeates equality in the sexual division of labor, as democratization of power relations requires that loads of productive and reproductive work be shared, so that the use of time is equitable and creates opportunity for both men and women.

Ester's life story stood out as an illustration of the challenges encountered by Venezuelan women in their crossings and reception, which is a piece of the harsh reality faced by each one in search of a dignified life.



22 According to ECLAC report, Social Panorama of Latin America 2020, “poverty and extreme poverty increased by 0.7 and 0.9 percentage points, respectively, and there was an increase in gaps between men and women. However, both trends and levels of poverty and extreme poverty vary widely from country to country. In terms of income inequality, the rate at which the Gini index was reduced significantly between 2014 and 2019, at 0.5% per annum” pag. 51.

ESTER'S LIFE STORY

The three wise men and their gifts, the animals and the guiding star: every year, when Christmas approaches, the cribs are set up to represent the story told by Christians about the birth of Jesus and the harsh saga of a migrant family. Esther is a very religious woman and says Christmas 2020 will be forever in her memory. On December 21, she left the city of Barcelona, in the Venezuelan Caribbean, to take the path full of mishaps that would take her to Boa Vista, where she arrived in time to celebrate the new year with her husband. The Covid-19 pandemic closed the borders between Brazil and Venezuela, forcing thousands of migrants to venture along clandestine routes known as trochas. Accompanied by her sons Miguel and Maria, aged 6 and 8, Ester joined a group of migrants to cross the trochas on a 10-day journey. She remembers spending Christmas walking alongside a hard road, and how she was afraid, but that the hope of reaching the destination safely with the children moved her.

Ester is 26 years old and was removed from military service due to confrontation with a superior, in Venezuela. She then started working as an assistant in a restaurant. When the pandemic came, the restaurant closed its doors and Ester was without a job again. Her husband had migrated to Brazil a year earlier and Ester, feeling immobilized by unemployment and the crisis, decided it was time to meet him, even with closed borders. She managed to get some rides along the way, but most of it was done on foot, facing storms and strong sun. The first trocha she faced was the one connecting the city of Santa Helena, in Venezuela, to the Pacaraima border, in Roraima. Ester says that she was assisted by an indigenous woman, who accompanied the group on crossing their lands. The second trocha, which links Pacaraima to Boa Vista, was tougher. Maria has a deficiency in one of her legs and suffered some falls during the journey.

Trochas are marked by crossings through the jungle, mountainous stretches and walks along winding roadsides. People known as *trecheiros* charge a fee of approximately R\$ 300 (Reais) per person to accompany the group on these clandestine crossings. Ester says that extortion, assault, sexual violence and attack by wild animals are recurrent among men, women and children who take chances on these paths. Despite the fear and exhaustion that marked her journey, Ester says that she felt blessed upon reaching Boa Vista safely. In the shelter, she heard terrible reports from women who were raped in front of their children and pregnant women who gave birth in the middle of trochas. In her case, food and water during the journey were provided by people they met along the way and who sympathized with the travelers. To sleep, the group took turns in vigils in the open. Already on Brazilian soil, Ester says that a church opened their doors for her group to have a night of

rest accommodated by mattresses and protected by a roof. She and her children bathed in the rivers and puddles that presented themselves on the way, and in its absence, the rain.

Ester, Maria and Gabriel arrived in Boa Vista on 30 December 2020. Esther remembers the meeting with her husband and father was very emotional, and she was grateful for each step taken. On 2 January 2021, the family, now reunited, got a place in a shelter where they await the opportunity to formalize their migratory documentation. Venezuelan migrants and refugees who arrived in Brazil after the pandemic have struggled to obtain their documents, which impose severe barriers in accessing basic rights. Esther reports that she is looking to adapt to life in the shelter. The tents provided are warm and on the more sultry nights in Roraima she prefers to sleep outside. Her daughter Maria faces some neurological problems, and today she is waiting for an appointment to have access to the medication needed. Esther says she is sometimes agitated and spends the day covering every square meter of the shelter.

Faced with the question about her plans for the future, Ester replies that what she wants most is to get a job to guarantee a better future for her children, be it in Boa Vista or through the voluntary relocation program. She thinks about learning Portuguese and continuing her studies. She finished high school in Venezuela and would like to start a career in early childhood education in Brazil. She recently volunteered to participate in the educational work UNICEF and the *Instituto Pirilampas* promote with the children in the shelter. Ester says she misses the family back in Venezuela, the love and unconditional support that her parents always gave her and the affection with which they treated Maria and Gabriel. Despite so many challenges, she says she has God's faith in achieving her goals. When we talked, it was the eve of Maria's 9th birthday. The next day, Esther sent us a picture of her family around a table with the cake she made at the shelter. At the bottom of the photo, instead of a guiding star, the tent where they sleep was decorated with colorful balloons.



IVANA'S LIFE STORY

Lunches with the family and trips to the Caribbean beaches - these are the best memories that Ivana keeps from her life before. At the age of 33, she arrived in Brazil. In the city of Valencia, in central Venezuela, she worked for some years as an educator. She tells that she worked at an institution for vulnerable boys and girls, where she learned a lot. She was thinking about pursuing a career and entering university, but with the birth of Abril, who is now 11 years old, she had to change plans to raise her daughter alone.

In 2018, mom and daughter traveled to Boa Vista to visit Ivana's brother, who had lived in Brazil for a while. The crisis in Venezuela ended up getting worse and they decided to stay. The decision was based on the prospect of a better future for Abril. However, the first few months were very difficult. Ivana had difficulties communicating in Portuguese, she felt insecure and desolate. For her, migrating is a huge challenge when you are a mother. It is always necessary to remain firm and strong in order to give material and emotional support to her children. Ivana suffered from depression that worsened after the birth of Loren, who was born in Brazilian lands. How could a single mother in a new country give her two daughters a dignified life?

The alternative she found was to walk the streets of Boa Vista knocking from door to door to offer domestic services. When talking about this journey, she remembers an episode that still makes her hands shake. In one of the houses where she went to look for work, a man asked her if she was Venezuelan. When she answered positively, he uttered xenophobic curses, drew a gun and started shooting. Ivana ran immediately and could not see whether the shots were aimed at the sky or directly at herself. Despite the shock, she persisted. She would like to have a fixed job, with a formal contract, but her income still comes from daily housework. She says she prefers to work in the houses alone or in the presence of a female resident. To be in a private environment in the exclusive company of men is to risk harassment. In her view, many Brazilians think that Venezuelans migrate to act exclusively as sex workers.

From everything she has lived in Brazil so far, she draws an important lesson: we are not limited to our bad experiences. We are not made of the worst that has happened to us. Ivana also found solidarity and empathy in Brazil. She tells of her friendship with a neighbor, who offered food to her family in a difficult time. When she still had a bicycle, she went with Abril to the Federal University of Roraima to attend Portuguese classes. Abril, by the way, has a special taste for writing. At Consolata she participated in an art and literature workshop given by a poet. As she loves to write, Abril was enchanted by the writer and felt

encouraged to send her poetry to a literary contest. She won the contest and now she's using her prize: a French language course. The mother says that this experience, which filled her with pride, was very important for her daughter.

Ivana recognizes the fundamental importance of humanitarian aid actions. In times of crisis, she received financial assistance from UN Women, which helped her a lot in the purchase of food, diapers and other basic items. For her, it is very important that migrant women have access to professional training courses, which allow them to achieve financial autonomy. However, she emphasizes that there should also be more free projects aimed at children.

Migrant mothers are always on the hunt for survival and cannot always offer their children playful moments. Ivana would love that Abril and Loren could have access to literature, sports, cinema and theater activities. She feels that, for children, these are important spaces for stimulating creativity, discovering new interests and relieving a little the pressure of the difficulties that daily life imposes. Fathers and mothers also learn from the little ones. Ivana remembers that when Abril wanted to do ballet, she found the dance somewhat boring. Gradually, she accompanied her daughter and became interested not only in ballet, but also in classical music.

Today, Ivana does not think about returning to Venezuela. If before she didn't want to stay, now she believes that her daughters will be able to study and, later on, even go to university in Brazil. When the pandemic is over, she plans to save money and move to another state in the country. She dreams of her future home closer to the sea, like the good times that populate her memory.

KÁTHIA'S LIFE STORY

Soon Káthia will complete 2 years in Brazil. She was only 18 years old and had just finished high school when she left Caracas, where she lived with her grandparents and cousins. With the crisis worsening and the increase in the living costs, Káthia decided to abandon her plans of studying medicine at the university. In her decision to leave Venezuela, the desire to help her grandparents, who were already elderly but still responsible for the family's support, weighed heavily.

Together with her partner Raquel, Káthia started to work. The objective was to gather resources for purchasing tickets to a region close to the border. However, as the prices increased weekly, her plans became increasingly difficult. Káthia's mother got a loan and decided to accompany her daughter crossing. So Káthia and her mother, Raquel and her 9-year-old daughter left. The road to reach Roraima was difficult, they were very afraid when crossing the border. Between overpriced taxi rides, unsafe rides and long walks, they finally reached Pacaraima.

The first address was a temporary shelter, which provided food and a roof until they could arrange their migratory documentation and leave for Boa Vista. The period Káthia spent in Pacaraima was the most difficult, due to conflicts experienced in the shelter and the feeling of insecurity in the face of an uncertain future in the new country. Upon arriving in Boa Vista, they settled in the bus station vicinity, in camp tents organized by the Army. The four Venezuelans were pressured to change tents on a daily basis. The precarious conditions of hygiene, the conflicts generated by the agglomeration, the lack of privacy and the prohibition of using their own tent led the small family to leave the camp.

The four months of living on the streets of Boa Vista were tough. Káthia felt unsafe. The place where she slept has a lot of traffic and there was a drug sales point nearby. At the bus station, she was able to bathe, but for other needs, Káthia says that she and her companions needed to sneak into the stores, always avoiding the eyes of security guards. Being on the street also meant facing prejudice, even in places that should have provided assistance. When seeking a Portuguese course for migrants at a humanitarian institution, Káthia was initially barred. The argument was that priority should have been given to migrants living in shelters or rented houses. She insisted and managed to enroll. Today she is fluent in the language. She took a jewelry course in Caritas Brasileira that helped her to earn a small income, essential during the period she was on the street.

Káthia, Raquel and their daughter got a place in a shelter through the Salvation Army's social assistance service. Káthia's mother moved to another state through an interiorization program, but there were no vacancies for mothers with young children, such as Raquel. For Káthia, this is the group with the least integration opportunities. Many courses are offered to migrants in Boa Vista, but children are not allowed in places where trainings are offered. Many women - including those who suffer with violence by their partners - are excluded and exposed to situations of high vulnerability.

The shelter that welcomed Káthia and Raquel was far from the city center, where most work and training opportunities are concentrated. Káthia says that, without money to pay for transportation, waking up early and walking a lot was necessary. Attending several courses during the day, Káthia only returned to the shelter at dusk. She was often harassed by the local staff, who implied that her absence indicated that she would not really need the shelter. However, it was also in this shelter that Káthia met UN Women and participated in many conversations and training spaces. One of the courses Káthia took was of protection agent. Today she lives in a rented house with Raquel, works as a social educator and is happy to be able to help other Venezuelan migrants who are in a situation she already experienced. She says she learned a lot in Brazil and feels that, even though the country has a lot to improve, there are good laws that protect women and the LGBTQIA+ community. It is these little big things that make her feel like staying.

INESC AND NUMUR PRESENTATION

Instituto de Estudos Socioeconômicos - INESC

The *Instituto de Estudos Socioeconômicos* (INESC), the Institute for Socioeconomic Studies, is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-partisan organization based in Brasília (DF-Brazil). Inesc works politically for 40 years along civil society organizations and social movements, so they have a voice in national and international spaces for discussing public policies and human rights, always with a focus on the public budget, as it is based on the assumption that it is essential to understand and interpret this budget to promote and strengthen citizenship, guaranteeing rights of all citizens.

Thus, INESC acts as a facilitator to simplify the understanding of the public budget by the population, whether preparing young people and adults or social movements to understand the relevant role of this public budget distribution instrument to, from then on, have elements to inspect and demand fundamental rights from the Public Power.

INESC also produces and disseminates information and analysis that can enrich the public debate, promoting awareness and engagement campaigns. It works with the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary branches in the defense of democracy and human rights. Its mission is “to contribute to the improvement of democratic processes aimed at guaranteeing human rights, through dialogue with citizens, articulation and strengthening of civil society to influence the spaces of national and international governance and social awareness through the production of content in various thematic areas: children/adolescents, human rights, budgets, migrants, sustainability, among others.

Finally, INESC developed actions aimed at the migrant population in the city of Boa Vista/RR in 2019, when courses were offered for *Promotoras Legais Populares* (PLPs), Popular Legal Prosecutors and workshops on budget cycle and rights, in partnership with UNFPA and NUMUR. In order to bring information about public policies for migrants, which made it possible to understand part of the reality of migratory processes and that despite different life histories, trajectories and origins, many elements their experiences are shared: inequalities, search for a dignified life, dreams and desires revealing the need for collective spaces for political influence.

Núcleo de Mulheres de Roraima - NUMUR

The *Núcleo de Mulheres de Roraima* (NUMUR), Women's Center of Roraima, is a feminist, autonomous, non-partisan collective, composed of women who work in the defense of the human rights of women in the state of Roraima and has a political commitment to an anti-racist, anti-capitalist and anti-patriarchal action. The group was founded at the state meeting of women in Roraima, on March 8, 1998, with the participation of black women, indigenous people, union members, academics, young people, urban and rural workers, political parties and missionaries. It is linked to the *Articulação de Mulheres Brasileiras* (AMB), the Articulation of Brazilian Women, a national organization that fights for the end of inequality between men and women.

It aims to organize all women in the state, by enabling the construction of popular feminism, so that all are free and exercise their physical, economic and political autonomy.

Objectives:

- Promote links with groups of rural, indigenous, migrant and refugee women and workers in the city;
- Develop activities on women's rights and political participation;
- Defend the affective and sexual freedom of all people;
- Carry out actions to combat violence against women;
- Fight to overcome the sexual division of labor;
- Fight for the social protection of all women;
- Conduct research on the situation of women in Roraima in their diversity (indigenous, black, migrants and refugees);
- Organize thematic study groups;
- Political and feminist training.

NUMUR has built its own feminist mode of political organization, based on feminist principles of horizontality, of decision-making through strong consensus, drawing on internal debate and democratic reflection. It is a self-organized collective that acts as a collective political subject against the domination, oppression and exploitation of women with a view to the social transformation of the world. And, it acts as an individual political subject towards the transformation of ourselves. Thus, we strengthen women and our various feminisms, based on the experiences brought up in the history of women's struggles. It is based on the political support of feminist principles of unity in diversity, drawing on theoretical perspectives that guide its political practice; the permanent exercise of dialogue and free adhesion, so that all NUMUR action is oriented towards strengthening the women's and feminist movement in Roraima, in Brazil and in the world.

In addition to the permanent actions, the collective acted in 2019 with migrant and refugee women in the PLPs project with UNFPA and INESC and in the Budget and Rights workshops with INESC. The feminist solidarity campaign Emanas was carried out in 2020, which brought food, personal hygiene, and cleaning products to Venezuelan and Brazilian women in vulnerable situations during the coronavirus pandemic.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Ballestrin, L. 2013. “América Latina e o Giro Decolonial.” Revista Brasileira de Ciência Política 11, 2018, pp. 89-117

Cavenhaghi, S. e ALVES, J. E. D.. 2018. Mulheres chefes de família no Brasil: avanços e desafios. Estudos sobre seguros. Rio de Janeiro: ENS-CPES.

Cerqueira, D. e Samira B.. 2020. Atlas da violência 2020. Visited on May 2021. <https://www.ipea.gov.br/atlasviolencia/download/24/atlas-da-violencia-2020>

ECLC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). 2021. Panorama Social da América Latina 2020. Santiago: LC/PUB.

FGV (Fundação Getúlio Vargas). 2020. A economia de Roraima e o fluxo venezuelano. 2020: evidências e subsídios para políticas públicas. Rio de Janeiro: FGV DAPP.

IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística). 2020. Em média, mulheres dedicam 10,4 horas por semana a mais que os homens aos afazeres domésticos ou ao cuidado de pessoas. Agência de notícias do IBGE, 04 de junho de 2020. Visited on 04 April 2021. [https://agenciadenoticias.ibge.gov.br/agencia-sala-de-imprensa/2013-agencia-de-noticias/releases/27877-em-media-mulheres-dedicam-10-4-horas-por-semana-a-mais-que-os-homens-aos-afazeres-domesticos-ou-ao-cuidado-de-pessoas#:~:text=Em%202019%2C%20146%2C7%20milh%C3%B5es,homens%20\(78%2C6%25\)](https://agenciadenoticias.ibge.gov.br/agencia-sala-de-imprensa/2013-agencia-de-noticias/releases/27877-em-media-mulheres-dedicam-10-4-horas-por-semana-a-mais-que-os-homens-aos-afazeres-domesticos-ou-ao-cuidado-de-pessoas#:~:text=Em%202019%2C%20146%2C7%20milh%C3%B5es,homens%20(78%2C6%25))

IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística), 2021. Estatísticas de gênero: indicadores sociais das mulheres no Brasil. Informações Demográficas e Socioeconômicas 38. Acessado em maio de 2021. https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv101784_informativo.pdf

IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística). 2020. Notas Técnicas: Outras formas de trabalho 2019. Visited on 04 April 2021. <https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/index.php/biblioteca-catalogo?view=detalhes&id=2101722>

IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística). 2020. Pesquisa Nacional por Amostragem de Domicílios Contínua Anual 2019 – PNADCA. Visited on 04 April 2021. www.ibge.gov.br

IPEA (Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada). 2020. Os desafios do passado no trabalho doméstico do século XXI: reflexões para o caso brasileiro a partir dos dados da PNAD contínua. TD 2528. Brasília.

Ministério da Cidadania. 2021. Painel Interiorização. Visited on May 2021. <http://aplicacoes.mds.gov.br/snas/painel-interiorizacao/>

Projeto Colabora. 2020. Na pandemia, três mulheres foram vítimas de feminicídio por dia. Visited on may de 2021. <https://projetocolabora.com.br/ods5/na-pandemia-tres-mulheres-foram-vitimas-de-femicidio-por-dia/>

Silva, G. J; Cavalcanti, L, Oliveira, T. e Macedo, M. 2020. “Refúgio em Números.”, 5ª Ed. Observatório das Migrações Internacionais. Brasília: MJSP - Comitê Nacional para os Refugiados.

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). 2021. Venezuela. Visited on May 2021. <https://www.acnur.org/portugues/venezuela/>

United Nations New York, 2020. International Migration 2020 Highlights. Visited on 07 April 2021. https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undes_a_pd_2020_international_migration_highlights.pdf

Waiselfisz, J. J. 2015. Mapa da Violência 2015: Homicídio de mulheres no Brasil. Visited on 02 April 2021. https://www.onumulheres.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/MapaViolencia_2015_mulheres.pdf





GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO THE VENEZUELA/BRAZIL MIGRATION FLOW

Credits

Development and systematization:

Andrea Vasconcelos
Local Coordinator

Camila Souza Bettoni
Consultant in Migration and Gender

Research:

Andrea Vasconcelos
Local Coordinator

Elisa Rosas Mendes
Popular Education Consultant

Cleo Manhas
Political Advisor - Inesc

Leila Saraiva
Political Advisor - Inesc

Camila Souza Bettoni
Consultant in Migration and Gender

Final Review:

Andrea Vasconcelos
Local Coordinator

Cleo Manhas
Political Advisor - Inesc

Erika Hurtado Gonzalez
National Consultant on Mobilization for Refugee and Migrant
Women Empowerment - UN Women

Flávia Moura Rocha Parente Muniz
Project Manager in Humanitarian Action - UN Women

Leila Saraiva
Political Advisor - Inesc

Tamara Jurberg
Project Manager in Humanitarian Action - UN Women



Political Review:

Civil Society representants:

Maria Aparecida Silva de Sousa
Numur

Nelita Frank
Numur

Graphic design:

Sofia Ruiz Zapata

Layout:

Arthur Menezes

Elaboration:

Instituto de Estudos Sócioeconômicos
Inesc

Support:

Joint Programme LEAP – Leadership,
Empowerment, Access and Protection
to migrant, asylum seeker and refugee
women in Brazil

Government of Grand Duchy of
Luxembourg

UNFPA

UNHCR

UN Women

Elaboration:



Partnership:



Support:

Joint Programme LEAP – Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection to migrant, asylum seeker and refugee women in Brazil

