



Country Sheet

Venezuela





HI Team and intervention areas

HI Venezuela program has 15 staff members and is part of the Regional Latin America Program.





General data of the country

a) General data

DATA	Venezuela	Colombia	Belgium
Population	28.3	51.8	11.7
IHDI	0.592	0.59	0.874
Gender-related Development Index	0.983	0.984	0.978
Maternal mortality	259	75	5
GINI Index	44.8	51.5	26
Population within UNHCR mandate	3.236.963	10.937.528	195.883
INFORM Index	5.1	5.4	1.7
Fragile State Index	90.5	78.1	31.4
Population covered by at least one social protection benefit (%)	54.2	49.7	100
Net official development assistance received	273.1	1914,8	0

b) Humanitarian law instruments ratified by the country

Humanitarian law instruments	Status
Mine Ban Treaty	Signed on 03/12/1998 and ratified on 14/04/1999 – Entering into force on the 01/10/1999
Convention on Cluster Munitions	Not signed
UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Signed on 24/09/2013
Convention on the rights of children and adolescents	Signed on the 16/01/1990 and ratified on the 13/09/1990

c) Geopolitical analysis

Recent history of Venezuela

Venezuela, officially the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is a country on the northern coast of South America, consisting of a continental landmass and many small islands and islets in



the Caribbean Sea. The sovereign state is a federal presidential republic consisting of 23 states, the Capital District (covering Caracas), and federal dependencies (covering Venezuela's offshore islands). Venezuela is among the most urbanized countries in Latin America; the vast majority of Venezuelans live in the cities of the north, especially in the capital (Caracas) which is also the largest city in Venezuela. Venezuela is a founding member of the UN, OAS, UNASUR, ALBA, Mercosur, LAIA and OEI.

Economic shocks in the 1980s and 1990s led to several political crises, including the deadly Caracazo riots of 1989, two attempted coups in 1992, and the impeachment of President Carlos Andrés Pérez for embezzlement of public funds in 1993. Oil was discovered in the early 20th century, and today, Venezuela has the world's largest known oil reserves and has been one of the world's leading exporters of oil. The recovery of oil prices in the early 2000s gave Venezuela oil funds not seen since the 1980s.

The Venezuelan government under Hugo Chávez, who came to power in 1998, established populist social welfare policies, funded by the oil bonanza, that initially boosted the Venezuelan economy and increased social spending, temporarily reducing economic inequality and poverty in the early years of the government.

After Chavez's death in 2013, shortly after being elected to a fourth term, then-Vice President Nicolás Maduro was subsequently elected and assumed the presidency by a narrow majority in a widely contested election. The new political policies, as same as falling oil prices, speculation and economic mismanagement led the country's economy to the collapse. The destabilized economy led to a crisis resulting in hyperinflation, economic depression, commodity shortages and a drastic increase in unemployment, poverty, disease, infant mortality, malnutrition, and crime. These factors precipitated the Venezuelan migrant crisis. The situation has been aggravated by the sanctions imposed by the United States administration, the prevention for the government from accessing U.S. financial system and the confiscation of state accounts.

In 2018, Maduro secured reelection in elections which were widely condemned as unfair and undemocratic. Later, in January 2019, after long political tensions in Venezuela, nearly sixty countries, including the United States, the Organisation of American States (OAS), and most of the governments of the countries that make up the Lima Group, subsequently recognized opposition figure Juan Guaidó, head of the National Assembly, as Venezuela's interim leader. In January 2021, Maduro took leadership of what was the last opposition-controlled power center in the government, the National Assembly, after claiming victory in legislative elections. Then in December 2022, after years of waning support, the opposition voted to remove Guaidó and dissolve his government, with plans to hold fresh presidential primaries in October 2023. Is to note that Guaido does not enjoy recognition within Venezuela because of his external alliances but he is a symbol of the political polarization that is a reality within the country.



Meanwhile, there are some signs of change. Venezuela's economy has shown slight recovery after Maduro relaxed price controls and began dollarizing the economy in 2019. The United States permitted U.S. oil giant Chevron to resume limited operations in the country at the end of 2022, in part to help offset rising global energy prices due to the war in Ukraine. In exchange, Maduro's government and the opposition agreed to continue dialogue following a yearlong stalemate, including the request of the United Nations for managing the release of 3,000 million dollars for the social protection of the Venezuelan population. The recent election victories of Gustavo Petro in Colombia and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil have provided recognition to Maduro's presidential role with Petro restoring diplomatic ties with Venezuela in August 2022 and Lula doing it after he took office in January 2023. Latin America's top four economies – Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico – all now have leftist leaders, who are more aligned to Maduro's regime.

Humanitarian consequences of the crisis

The socioeconomic crisis in Venezuela continued to deteriorate since 2019 and until the present leading to one of the biggest mass displacements in South America's history. According to UNHCR, at least 7.71 million Venezuelans have left the country since 2014. The fallouts of the crisis across the region have increased proportionally: more than 6.5 million migrants/refugees are registered in neighbouring countries, as well as in the US and in Europe.

Between 2020 and 2021, inflation kept spiralling, leading to increased poverty, deterioration of living conditions, increased food and medicine shortages, more deaths caused by the failure of the health system. Since 2019, the country has experienced rapid growth of transactional dollarization, with studies indicating that, on average, more than 80 per cent of transactions in the country are in foreign currency.

The deep humanitarian situation of Venezuela has been exacerbated along 2020 by the COVID-19 related restrictions, which includes quarantine, suspension of all non-essential work and educational activities, suspension of commercial and private flights, restrictions on refuelling with the exception of health personnel, police, militaries and persons engaged in activities deemed essential. The measures were partially lifted in the second part of 2020, with the announcement of alternated weeks of radical restrictions followed by weeks of opening.

The improvement in some macroeconomic indicators between 2022-2023 has not translated into improved living conditions for the population; people in Venezuela maintain high levels of vulnerability, with more people falling below the poverty line. The economy is 75 percent smaller in terms of GDP compared to the last year of growth in 2013. Thus, it would take at least 15 years of growth at a rate of 5 per cent per year for the economy to return to half its previous size. Even if some sign of economic recovery is foreseen, Venezuela's humanitarian crisis does not show significant recovery. Tens of thousands are still fleeing abroad, with record numbers arriving at the US border this year after crossing the perilous jungle trek through the Darién Gap between South and Central America.



2023 is a year in which around 13 million Venezuelans are requiring emergency aid within and outside the country. 2022 saw the numbers heading for the US southern border soar, many on treacherous routes. A recent change in US immigration policy looks likely to reverse this trend in 2023, leaving thousands stranded in Mexico, and many more struggling to build new lives in host countries closer to home, where harsh economic realities are making it harder to find work and driving xenophobic rhetoric.



Summary of HI presence in the country

HI has been supporting vulnerable persons over Latin America region since the 90's with a specific focus to improve the living conditions of people with disabilities. HI is currently active in Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Cuba and Venezuela.

In the last 20 years, HI developed extensive knowledge of Latin American context and actors and has implemented interventions in various sectors, through several modalities, to respond to various crisis. Through the regional dynamics, HI has established operational and strategic partnerships with stakeholders of the disability sector in Venezuela, notably with Consorven, whose President holds the position of Vice-President of the Latin American DPO Network (RIADIS).

In 2019, as part of HI's Regional response to mitigate the impact of the migration crises, HI started its operations in Venezuela with an ECHO funded project focusing on improving access to essential services (such as health, protection and food assistance) for the most marginalized groups, with a special focus on persons with disabilities and/or mental health and psychosocial distress. These operations were later extended thanks to the financial support from CDCS.

In 2022, HI redefined its strategy in Venezuela, by identifying gaps in the humanitarian response for which HI's added value as last-mile responder could offer a solution. Thus, three new states were pre-identified after taking into consideration factors as intersectionality of vulnerability, degree of humanitarian response and context/access deterioration levels.

We continue working towards the consolidation of our current projects in Apure, Amazonas and Monagas, while looking for opportunities that allowed us to respond to the humanitarian needs - including logistical gaps - identified in these and other states of the country.



Overview on ongoing projects

Sectors where HI conducts projects and focus on beneficiaries and operational partnerships

Project title & main sector(s) of intervention	Main activities	Beneficiaries	Partner(s)	Location	Project start and end dates	Donors who finance the project
<p>Preventing and protecting against threats of armed violence through community resilience building in Alto Apure</p> <p>Protection against violence and abuse, Economic Inclusion, Mental Health & Psychosocial Support, Conflict Transformation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing violence by strengthening community protection mechanisms • Implementation of inclusive community and associative initiatives • Education for informed sexuality choices, and prevention of gender-based violence and trafficking in persons • Setting up protective inclusive spaces within the community 	<p>Vulnerable populations that live in rural areas affected by the extension of the Colombian armed conflict into Venezuela.</p>	<p>REPAS (Implementer)</p> <p>TINTA VIOLETA (Implementer)</p>	<p>Apure State – Paez Municipality</p>	<p>11.2022 - 09.2023</p>	<p>CDCS (Centre de crise et de soutien)</p>
<p>Strengthening the resilience of vulnerable women and girls in Amazonia in the face of violence and health risks - Binational (COL/VZL) Project</p> <p>Mental Health & Psychosocial Support, Protection against violence and abuse, Non-communicable diseases, Sexual and reproductive health and rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening access to protection and health services, including sexual and reproductive health • Strengthening prevention and organizational capacities in the face of armed violence • Strengthening of health promotion and epidemic prevention mechanisms 	<p>Indigenous women and girls in highly vulnerable situations in prioritized communities</p>	<p>ORPIA (Ally)</p>	<p>Amazonas State – Municipalities of Autana, Atabapo and Manapiare</p>	<p>05.2023 - 04.2024</p>	<p>CDCS (Centre de crise et de soutien)</p>



Project title & main sector(s) of intervention	Main activities	Beneficiaries	Partner(s)	Location	Project start and end dates	Donors who finance the project
<p>Promoting opportunities for young people in Apure</p> <p>Protection against violence and abuse, Inclusive Governance, Economic Inclusion, Conflict Transformation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase youth capacities for dialogue and effective participation in their community • Ensure access to sexual and reproductive rights • Increase youth prevention initiatives to facilitate local conflict resolution and increase social cohesion. • Reducing different types of violence and conflict transformation • Productive initiatives 	<p>Young people in vulnerable situations in four parishes in the municipality of Paez.</p>	<p>REPAS (Implementer)</p> <p>TINTA VIOLETA (Implementer)</p>	<p>Apure State – Paez Municipality</p>	<p>02.2023 - 01.2025</p>	<p>DG INTPA (International partnership services of the European Commission)</p>
<p>Integrated response to address the protection, water, sanitation and hygiene, food security and health needs of the most vulnerable migrants and their host communities, with a special focus on indigenous populations in the department of Vichada in Colombia and the states of Amazonas and Delta Amacuro in Venezuela</p> <p>Water Sanitation & Hygiene, Mental Health & Psychosocial Support, Prevention diseases transmitted by vectors, Food</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction or improvement of inclusive-friendly community hygiene/sanitation facilities • Provision of gender-oriented water, sanitation and hygiene kits • Education on diseases prevention (malaria, covid-19, dengue, cholera, zika) • Analysis of access barriers and support for access to health services • Provision of assistive products (lens, canes, wheelchairs, and walking frames) • Provision of professional psychosocial support • Provision of food and non-food items kits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host communities • Indigenous population • Migrants in route • Elderly • People with disabilities 	<p>ORPIA (Ally)</p>	<p>Amazonas State – Municipalities of Atures, Autana and Atabapo (Venezuela)</p>	<p>06.2023 - 06.2025</p>	<p>GFFO (German Federal Foreign Office)</p> <p>(Sub of HelpAge Germany)</p>



Project title & main sector(s) of intervention	Main activities	Beneficiaries	Partner(s)	Location	Project start and end dates	Donors who finance the project
Assistance, Inclusive Humanitarian Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of comprehensive disaster risk management plans 					
<p>Implementing Partner of World Food Programme for the School-Based Program in Monagas State</p> <p>Food Assistance, Supply chain & access capacity building of humanitarian and market actors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recurrent delivery of school meals, served in schools and/or take-home meals • Delivery of family baskets to take home • Provision of minimum maintenance actions in school kitchens, to ensure the continuity of the dish served. • Nutrition-sensitive actions that support learning and protect children's nutrition within the prioritized state and schools • Strengthening of local capacities in actions linked to the development of the school-based programme. 	Pre-schools, primary schools, co-educational schools (schools with both pre-school and primary stages) and special education schools		Monagas State	10.2023 - 09.2024	WFP (World Food Programme)



Donors

<p>DG INTPA</p>  <p>Funded by the European Union</p>	<p>CDCS</p> <p>Avec la participation de</p> 
<p>GFFO</p> 	<p>WFP</p> 