



HIAS

Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

2022-2023 Overview

HIAS **ARUBA**

HIAS Aruba

Overview 2022-2023



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Protect the refugee.**

HIAS ARUBA 2022

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Our History

From our beginnings in the 1880s in a storefront on the Lower East Side of Manhattan providing food and shelter to Jews fleeing antisemitism in Eastern Europe, to our work nearly 140 years later providing social, emotional, legal, and advocacy support to those in need around the world, HIAS has served as a pivotal force for displaced people for generations. Indeed, HIAS began its work even before the world had a legal concept of a “refugee.”

Having helped more than 4.5 million refugees and immigrants escape persecution, HIAS is uniquely qualified to address the modern refugee situation, which has become a global humanitarian crisis. After over 100 years of serving Jews fleeing persecution around the globe, HIAS, starting in the 2000s, expanded its work in the U.S. to include assistance to non-Jewish refugees devastated by the aftermath of conflicts in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Hungary, Iran, Morocco, Poland, Romania, Tunisia, Vietnam, and the successor states to the former Soviet Union.

HIAS began a new chapter in 2002 when it established operations in Kenya to provide protection to refugees from African countries plagued by conflict, to advocate on their behalf, and to resettle the most vulnerable. Soon after, we began work in Latin America, serving people displaced by conflict in several countries. Currently HIAS works in 16 countries including Aruba, Austria, Belgium, Chad, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Greece, Guyana, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, Panama, Peru, United States, and Venezuela. As the only global Jewish organization whose mission is to assist refugees wherever they are, HIAS continues to protect, empower, and resettle refugees of all faiths and ethnicities from around the world.



Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision

HIAS stands for a world in which refugees find welcome, safety, and opportunity.

Mission

Drawing on our Jewish values and history, HIAS provides vital services to refugees and asylum seekers around the world and advocates for their fundamental rights so they can rebuild their lives.

Values

Impassioned by our mission, we bring the lessons of HIAS' history and Jewish ethics and experience to our commitment to serve refugees and other displaced persons of concern around the world through the following values:

Welcome • Acogimiento • Hospitalité • הכנסת אורחים (Hachnasat Orchim)

We **Welcome** the Stranger

Justice • Justicia • Justice • צדק (Tzedek)

We Pursue **Justice**

Empathy • Empatía • Empathie • חסד (Chesed)

We Approach our Clients with **Empathy**

Partnership • Compañerismo • Coopération • חברותא (Chevruta)

We Believe in Changing the World through **Partnership**

Courage • Coraje • Courage • אומץ (Ometz)

We Act with **Courage** to Build a Better World

Resilience • Resiliencia • Résilience • רוח (Ruach)

We Adapt and Thrive, Continuously Demonstrating our **Resilience**



Photos: Glenna Gordon; Michael Datikash

Our Impact

Around the world, HIAS makes tangible changes in the lives of refugees and other forcibly displaced people, advancing their legal, social, and economic rights. Our experience and technical expertise, as well as our integration of international best practices, allows for our work to have real and sustained impact. We partner with government agencies and other humanitarian organizations to reach the greatest number of those in need. The core areas where we work include:

1. Legal Protection
2. Gender-Based Violence Response and Risk Reduction
3. Community-based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
4. Economic Inclusion

Legal Protection

Refugees and other people forcibly displaced from home are fleeing persecution and violence. They need to be able to safely cross borders into countries where their lives are not at risk. Once over the border, they need information and legal representation to secure legal status and access their rights. Without that status, refugees are forced to live on the margins of society, sometimes for generations, without access to healthcare, education, dignified work, or safe shelter. HIAS begins by educating refugees about their rights, then secures protection by engaging in advocacy, legal representation, and strategic litigation, and working with government authorities.

Gender-Based Violence Response and Risk Reduction

Compounded by rampant gender inequality, forced migration and displacement quickly erode the limited protections women, girls, and LGBTQ populations have, even in times of stability. HIAS is driven by their voices and needs, working to empower them and engage the whole community to reduce the risk of gender-based violence. We raise awareness so survivors know where and how to get help after experiencing violence. We train advocates and support existing services so that no survivor—regardless of age, sexual orientation, or gender identity—suffers alone. We help communities begin the kind of transformative work

that leads to longer-term change. We stay connected to and raise our collective voice alongside those of displaced women, girls, and LGBTQ populations globally.

Community-Based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

Violence, conflict, and displacement disrupt relationships and daily life, break down existing support systems, and have a devastating impact on mental health, overall wellbeing, and recovery. A supportive environment is essential to healing and recovery for refugees and other people forcibly displaced from their homes. One of the best ways to build a supportive environment is to strengthen existing relationships, networks, and practices which promote mental health and well-being and allow communities to cope and heal. We facilitate community support groups and psychological support from both lay and professional providers and ensure access to services for more intensive mental health support. Crucially, we sustain our efforts by building the psychosocial competence of HIAS personnel and stakeholders to respond to the acute distress of forcibly displaced persons.

Economic Inclusion

When refugees and forcibly displaced people arrive in countries of asylum, they often need to adapt their skills to earn sustainable and safe livelihoods. HIAS supports refugees on their road to self-reliance, helping them to find programs focused on poverty eradication, employment, entrepreneurship, and financial services. We advocate for the rights of both refugees and local host communities to access dignified, sustainable, and safe work, alongside economic development.

Emergency Response

In 2021, with the support of a transformational grant from MacKenzie Scott, HIAS embarked on an exciting new initiative to strengthen our global capacity to respond quickly to new humanitarian emergencies. HIAS' Emergency Department will work closely with country offices to create emergency preparedness plans and provide guidance to adapt core programs to emergency contexts. HIAS will also train a cadre of staff with specialized skills able to deploy quickly during emergencies for assessments, response activities, donor engagement, external communication, and advocacy. Through this multiyear initiative, HIAS will build the skills, systems, and organizational culture needed for effective coordination and response to emergencies.

Accountability to Affected Populations

HIAS' Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Framework ensures the inclusion of refugees, other forcibly displaced people, and vulnerable host communities throughout the program cycle. Informed by the Core Humanitarian Standards and the principle of "Do No Harm," the framework pillars are: communication and transparency; feedback and response; participation and inclusion; and learning and adaptation.

HIAS ensures that program design is based on evidence from needs assessments, including the annual UNHCR participatory needs assessment, and consultation with affected communities. HIAS shares information about its accountability commitments and available

services in all country offices. HIAS proactively invites affected people to provide feedback on planned and ongoing activities through context-appropriate, accessible channels, ensuring that all affected people can voice feedback, recommendations, and concerns safely and equitably. HIAS uses feedback received to adapt ongoing programs and shape the design and implementation of future programming.

Governance, Structure, and Policies

Globally, HIAS employs more than 1,300 staff in 16 countries, with headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland (U.S.).

HIAS' Board of Directors is made up of 22 members, including 10 women. It meets at least four times a year. The Board has three officers and operates with six active committees that meet regularly. Board members bring a wide range of professional and business experience to their service, including law, finance, education, and non-profit and refugee advocacy leadership.

HIAS staff are subject to a robust Code of Conduct and set of internal policies, including PSEA, Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment, Conflict of Interest, Privacy, Whistleblowing, Security and Emergency Preparedness, Information Security, Data Breach, Finance and Accounting, as well as others relating to procurement, travel, and reimbursements.

Context for Vulnerable Refugees and Migrants in Aruba



The Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Region continues to face intersecting forced displacement crises, including ongoing instability in Venezuela, Colombia, Northern Central America, and Nicaragua. The COVID-19 pandemic has only worsened the economic and social hardships faced by both displaced populations and those hosting them. The more than 18 million people displaced in the region have fled violence, insecurity, persecution, and human rights violations. This number accounts for 20% of all global displacement. HIAS' comprehensive regional response meets the urgent

needs of refugees, asylum seekers, and other forcibly displaced people in Aruba, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela.

The Caribbean context is characterized by mixed migration flows which include migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers from a range of countries. Since 2014, Aruba has become a destination for Venezuelan refugees and migrants. With a population of just over 110,000, Aruba hosts an estimated 19,000 Venezuelans. Neighboring Curacao also hosts around 19,000 Venezuelans. With small tourism-based economies heavily impacted by COVID-19,

Aruba and Curacao now have some of the highest proportions of refugees relative to their local population in the world and are struggling to support their integration. Aruba is a signatory to the UN Refugee Convention but lacks a clear legal framework on asylum or international protection for refugees, migrants, or survivors of trafficking. There is no registration of irregular migrants on the island. In 2021, Aruba's government received more than 900 requests for asylum, yet most were rejected, leaving the majority of Venezuelans on the island without protection, access to basic health services, or legal employment. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly reduced the already limited economic opportunities for Venezuelans in Aruba. Asylum seekers and irregular migrants do not have access to basic services except for the universal right to education. They are not entitled to access legal employment, and upon rejection of their asylum petition, they are subjected to a policy of detention and deportation. In addition to Venezuelans, large groups of Colombian, Dominican, and Haitian migrants are also present in Aruba. Aruba's border with Venezuela closed in February 2019. As a result, Venezuelans are now taking the dangerous sea route from Venezuela's Falcon State to Aruba, relying on criminal trafficking networks to enter the country and facing risks of sexual exploitation and other abuses on the way. Curacao is not bound by the UN Refugee Convention and there is currently no easily accessible path for Venezuelans to regularize their status. Meanwhile, the Northern Caribbean (including the Bahamas, Haiti, Sint Maarten, and Turks and Caicos) has around 100,000 persons of concern according to UNHCR, including migrants and asylum seekers from Africa and Asia, as well as those leaving Haiti due to its deteriorating security and economic situation.

HIAS Programs in Aruba

In Aruba, HIAS assesses and responds to the needs of vulnerable Venezuelans, helping to strengthen their ability to mitigate risks and live in dignity and safety. HIAS Aruba promotes local integration through the provision of information and services including language courses, livelihood skills, and improved access to education and healthcare. HIAS Aruba focuses on vulnerable groups, including single women, women-headed households, survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), survivors of torture, older people, people with disabilities and serious medical conditions, and LGBTQ refugees. In addition, HIAS Aruba identifies the most vulnerable cases for protection. Regionally, HIAS Aruba serves as a humanitarian hub in the Caribbean, providing training and remote services to refugees and migrants in Curacao and the Northern Caribbean, including the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, Sint Maarten, Haiti, Barbados, and Saint Lucia. HIAS Aruba has served over 5,000 displaced people since the country office opened in 2019. HIAS realizes people carry a diversity of experiences and intersecting identities requiring unique support and solutions. As such, HIAS takes a holistic approach to its interventions and offers integrated programming in GBV prevention and response, community-based mental health and psychosocial support, economic inclusion, and protection.

HIAS Aruba's comprehensive **GBV prevention and response** program provides case management services, cash and voucher assistance, language and livelihoods courses, emergency shelter, and mental health support groups to survivors and those at risk of GBV. HIAS Aruba's GBV programs focus on marginalized or at-risk groups including women engaged in survival sex work, LGBTQ refugees, and people living with HIV. HIAS Aruba builds the capacity of frontline organizations in Aruba and also in Curacao—including service providers and police forces—as well as communities and families to identify, prevent, and respond to GBV. HIAS Aruba also supports advocacy by local actors on GBV and gender equity, and HIAS Aruba participates in Aruba's Human Trafficking Taskforce. HIAS Aruba also provides support for women and girls with reproductive health care needs and covers the monthly medication costs for program participants living with HIV.



HIAS Senior GBV Officer, Cinthia Quant, participating in an advocacy campaign to demonstrate solidarity with the values of HIAS, centered around refugee rights. **Photo:** HIAS Aruba

HIAS Aruba provides **community-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)** programs through community psychosocial activities and individual, family, and group focused interventions, including peer support groups. HIAS Aruba also supports clients with access to appropriate specialized mental health care through referral mechanisms with partners. To promote sustainability HIAS Aruba trains front-line providers, including community leaders, on psychological first aid and other basic psychosocial competencies for individuals in distress. HIAS Aruba also facilitates remote psychosocial support groups to refugees and migrants across the Northern Caribbean.



HIAS Aruba's social and **economic inclusion** programs help at-risk families alleviate poverty and integrate into local communities. Through analysis and case management, HIAS Aruba disburses cash support, food vouchers, hygiene kits, medical packages, and "back-to-school" vouchers for children. In addition, through its Socio-Economic Support Program (SESP) HIAS Aruba offers psychosocial support, home visits, and training on financial education and

HIAS partnered with UNHCR to distribute hygiene kits in November 2021 at Centro di Playa Pabou (Community Center of Oranjestad, Aruba) during the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV. **Photo:** HIAS Aruba

entrepreneurship, including provision of seed money and ongoing progress checks. HIAS Aruba also offers English and Papiamentu language courses, support groups, and academic and vocational courses for displaced people to develop or improve skills supporting their economic integration. On the neighboring island of Curacao, where an estimated 19,000 refugees and migrants are located, HIAS Aruba works with UNHCR to support vulnerable Venezuelans with cash-based assistance. In the Northern Caribbean, HIAS Aruba is providing remote training on financial literacy, access to academic platforms such as Coursera, and cash-based initiatives to promote sustainable livelihoods and facilitate economic integration.

In 2021, the government of Aruba called on HIAS to **help facilitate safe access to the COVID-19 vaccine** to people with irregular status—mainly asylum seekers from Venezuela—who were afraid to get vaccinated for fear of being deported. HIAS Aruba assisted hundreds of people at the HIAS premises and major vaccination sites, ensuring undocumented people's safe access to the vaccine.

In collaboration with the headquarters emergency team, HIAS Aruba will develop a preparedness strategy to respond appropriately to future **emergencies** in the region, whether natural disasters or major new displacement crises. HIAS Aruba is monitoring the potential for increased migration outflows from Haiti to the Bahamas and Turks and Caicos as well as the increasing number of Venezuelans arriving in Sint Maarten.



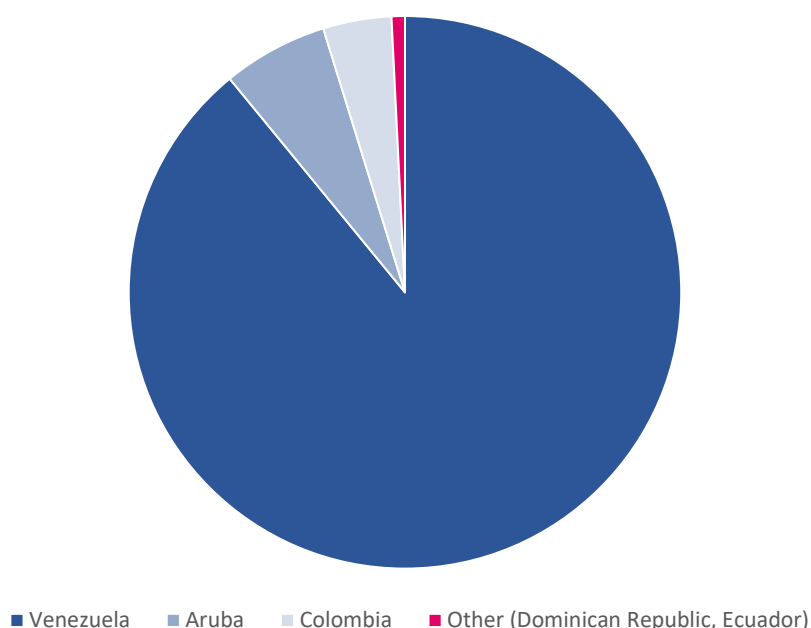
Vulnerable migrants and asylum seekers visit HIAS' office in Aruba to receive COVID-19 vaccinations in July, 2021.
Photo: HIAS Aruba

HIAS Aruba implements HIAS' global **Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Framework** and staff are trained on AAP principles and standard operating procedures. HIAS Aruba displays the Code of Conduct the Oranjestad office location and shares information

about its accountability commitments and available services with clients. HIAS Aruba uses feedback and response mechanisms that are accessible and context appropriate, including anonymous suggestion boxes, a dedicated email address, and an online reporting platform for submission of feedback, concerns, and suggestions. HIAS invites community leaders in Aruba to serve as contact points during activity implementation, creating a link to the community and ensuring that all affected people can access services. HIAS Aruba engages with 25 community mobilizers to identify protection trends and service gaps affecting migrants and refugees. HIAS also conducts field visits to the Northern Caribbean to hear feedback from refugees and migrants and get updated on the latest trends affecting their protection.

Looking ahead at programs, HIAS Aruba will build on its critical role and reputation in the humanitarian field to evaluate and strengthen current programming and expand operations to new locations in Aruba, Curacao, and the Northern Caribbean, offering remote and in-person services including economic inclusion, protection, and MHPSS. HIAS Aruba will move from emergency humanitarian assistance approaches to focus on longer term, sustainable community-based protection and development initiatives. HIAS Aruba is also developing an integrated program planning approach in 2022 that will ensure community-based protection approaches are foundational to all programming. Localization and support for development of local civil society will be another key focus. In December 2021, HIAS opened a new Community Center for migrants and refugees, which will serve as a safe space for gathering and self-organizing and facilitating activities, courses, and workshops. The Community Center also offers spaces for community-based organizations to support and amplify their work. HIAS Aruba also plans to invest in more outreach, including through social media to identify the needs and protection concerns of refugees and migrants engaged in commercial sex work. In 2022, HIAS Aruba will strengthen its whole-of-community approach to GBV prevention and response by beginning to integrate new work with men and boys to prevent and respond to GBV, including through programming focused on positive masculinity, alongside its activities to empower women and adolescent girls. Finally, HIAS will develop stronger referral pathways on issues related to durable solutions, especially on resettlement.

Graph 1: Populations Served in 2021



Coordination: Partners and Peer Networks

HIAS Aruba works closely with UNCHR and other humanitarian actors as well as national and regional actors. HIAS Aruba will continue to collaborate with local professional organizations, the private sector, and NGO partners. Currently, HIAS Aruba participates in the R4V (RMRP) platform for the coordination of the Venezuela response, as well as the bi-weekly humanitarian coordination platform with the government of Aruba and international humanitarian actors including UNHCR and IOM. HIAS Aruba is also a member of the education and health working groups and is part of the Dutch Caribbean humanitarian platform for human rights organizations in the Netherlands and Dutch Caribbean.

Going forward, HIAS Aruba will support Aruba and Curacao-based organizations working on women's rights and children and youth issues and will establish a formal GBV working group in Aruba. HIAS Aruba would also like to join the Aliansa Curacao GBV Network and the Curacao RMRP platform, and will build partnerships with local civil society and international humanitarian actors in the Bahamas, Barbados, Haiti, Saint Lucia, Sint Maarten, and Turks and Caicos. Across all programs, HIAS Aruba will continue to ensure refugees and displaced communities take an active role in the planning, design, implementation, and monitoring of projects and services.

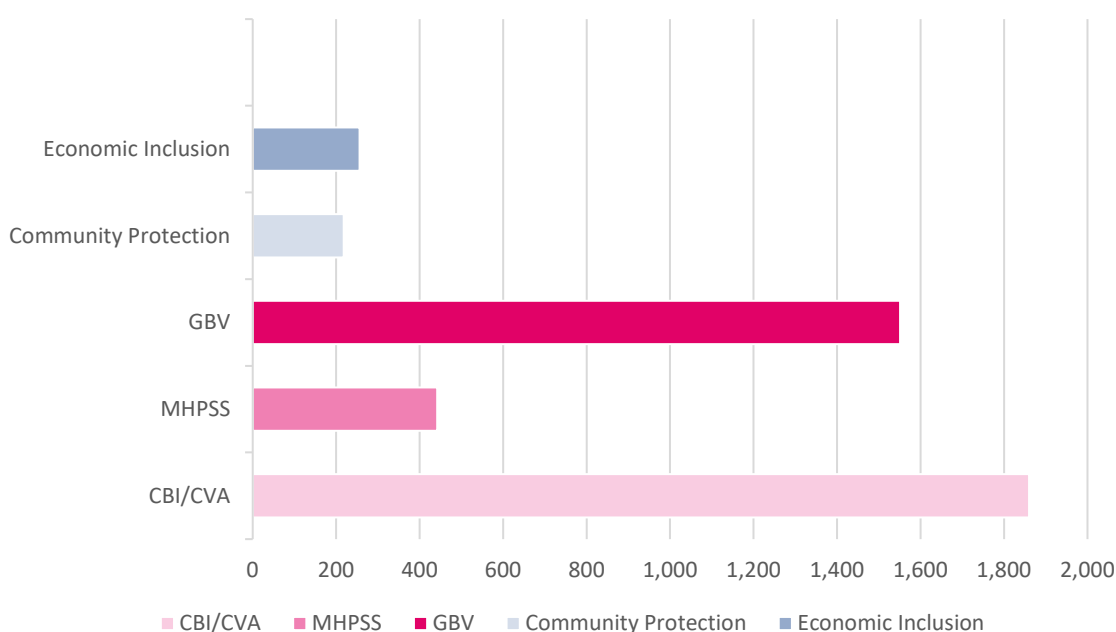
Operational Support for Programs

As HIAS' programs expand to meet new global needs, HIAS remains committed to delivering the highest quality of services to those it seeks to support and empower. To enable country teams to succeed and thrive, HIAS will invest new operational resources in our programs, processes, and people.

Operational since 2019, HIAS Aruba currently employs 21 staff and will recruit additional team members in 2022. Staff are based in Oranjestad, Aruba. The Senior Management Team is comprised of the Country Director, Program Coordinator, and Finance and Administration Manager.

Each HIAS Aruba staff member abides by HIAS' Code of Conduct and other HIAS policies and procedures in line with global best practices. All staff members have completed UNHCR trainings on **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**. These trainings are updated and repeated regularly to ensure both prevention and response to any reported incidents of SEA. HIAS applies a gender lens when analyzing, planning, and making decisions across all its operations, in order to ensure the safety, security, and wellbeing of the entire organization's staff.

Graph 2: People Reached by Program Area in 2021





In September 2021, HIAS staff visited Radio Aruba to raise awareness and provide information about GBV.
Photo: HIAS Aruba

HIAS invests in the skills and capacity of staff worldwide, supporting a wide range of local, national, regional, and international trainings for staff. HIAS ensures that international staff have diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) training. Going forward, HIAS Aruba will be mapping its staff training and capacity building needs against programmatic objectives. HIAS Aruba has already identified the need for leadership and management training to support the continued professional development of team members. HIAS Aruba's growth in programming in the region will require changes to the staffing structure to meet new programmatic needs, provide opportunities for professional development, and position the team for further growth. HIAS Aruba will continue to review and adjust its overall human resources strategy and staffing plan, creating new positions as necessary and adjusting job descriptions to align staff skills, interest, and workload.

To support **staff wellbeing**, HIAS has a global contract with the Konterra Group, which provides support both for work-related issues and for personal reasons. In addition, HIAS Aruba engages a professional counselor to provide bi-weekly team building support and trainings to mitigate burn out and secondary traumatization. The goal of these efforts is to enhance program outcomes as well as improve staff satisfaction, retention, and wellbeing across the country team.



HIAS Aruba Country Director Yiftach Milo, together with staff from IOM, UNHCR Caribbean, and Evelyn Wever Croes, the Prime Minister of Aruba, to discuss the situation of irregular migrants and asylum seekers in Aruba to find solutions that ensure vulnerable migrants can have access to rights and integration on the island. **Photo:** HIAS Aruba

HIAS is committed to developing an effective, sustainable **safety and security risk** management system that is in line with its values and mission and our organizational duty of care. HIAS Aruba will leverage these systems and tools as it expands into new locations. HIAS Aruba has a local security focal point supported by HIAS' regional and headquarters safety and security team. HIAS Aruba will need to adapt its security programs and training according to the security set-ups and contexts in Aruba.

Globally, HIAS is rolling out a **Digital Transformation Strategy** to ensure that participants' personal information is digitally secured and protected. The strategy will also create one

universal source of information and collaboration; ensure all organizational knowledge is standardized, digitized, organized, and discoverable; ensure data around inputs, outcomes, and impact is readily accessible; help employees collaborate on gathering and building resources on this information platform; and easily share and leverage data from partners and affiliates. HIAS will be providing annual refresher training to all country offices on IT tools and procedures. HIAS Aruba will also invest in developing a dedicated monitoring and evaluation program. This strategic investment is necessary to measure the long-term impact of HIAS programs across the Caribbean.

With support from headquarters, HIAS Aruba will also continue to review and strengthen procedures and tools related to **data** and reporting as well as **finance and compliance**, in line with donor requirements and international standards. HIAS Aruba will work with headquarters to establish an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. The ERP system will improve alignment of operations, finance, programs, and human resources, allowing for more efficient and cost-effective country operations.

Donors and Development

HIAS is committed to growing and diversifying its donor base in each country of operation. With support from the LAC Regional office and headquarters, HIAS Aruba is developing a resource mobilization strategy to sustain, increase, and diversify funding sources, building on its reputation for creative and responsive programming to meet the needs of the region's refugees. HIAS Aruba is grateful for the generous support of the U.S. Department of State/PRM and UNHCR. As Aruba is considered part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, many donors do not include Aruba and Curacao as territories eligible for funding. With competing humanitarian emergencies worldwide, international funding levels in Aruba are likely to decrease. However, HIAS Aruba will work to identify possible funding opportunities from private and civil society donors from the Netherlands targeted for Dutch territories. HIAS Aruba will also explore other EU and European partnerships. HIAS Aruba will also continue to build its capacity to respond to likely future migration outflows from Haiti and will seek additional resources to support the increasing number of Venezuelans arriving in Sint Maarten.

Communications, Policy, and Advocacy

HIAS Aruba advocates with key stakeholders at all levels to address protection gaps and implement long-term change through shifts in policy, funding, and services. Current **advocacy priorities** for HIAS Aruba in both Aruba and Curacao include alternative pathways for regularization of Venezuelan migrants, promotion of economic inclusion, access to HIV treatment and care and non-discrimination, strengthened GBV protocols and standards and promotion of positive masculinities, access to preventive health care and sexual and reproductive health care, protection mechanisms for survivors of trafficking, and combatting xenophobia. At the regional level, HIAS Aruba will advocate for access to asylum across the Caribbean. Given the number of issues that affect both host communities and migrants, HIAS Aruba works closely with local stakeholders and prioritizes

collaboration for successful advocacy at the country and regional level. HIAS Aruba's new Community Center opened in December 2021 and serves as a safe and welcoming space for community organizing and advocacy designed and led by and for refugees and migrants themselves.

HIAS Aruba currently uses **traditional and social media** to share critical information and messages with beneficiaries and national, regional, and global audiences. Key audiences include Venezuelan asylum seekers and migrants, migrants from other countries, local host communities, and government and NGO partners. Going forward, HIAS Aruba will leverage new resources to support strategic communication around programmatic and advocacy objectives. Across the Latin America and Caribbean region, HIAS will work to ensure that people traveling across Latin America are aware of HIAS services and locations and other available resources across different countries through digital and other information tools.

Cover Photo: HIAS Aruba
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