

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS IN  
COLOMBIA, IN RESPONSE TO THE MIGRATION FLOWS FROM  
VENEZUELA: STRENGTHS, SHORTCOMINGS, AND NECESSARY  
ADJUSTMENTS

by

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Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the  
ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.  
We are all Treaty people.

## **Dedication Page**

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Miryam and Ovidio, who have always encouraged me to aim high and work hard to achieve my goals. Thanks to them, I am who I am and completed this academic project. It is also dedicated to my brother, Nico, Pao, and those who supported me and believed in me when I did not, including my amazing thesis supervisor.

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## **Abstract**

Since the 1980s, practitioners, theorists and donors of humanitarian and development aid have discussed what is the best way to address the gap between the two assistance modalities and help communities meet their short- and long-term needs. Since 2015, the United Nations has taken the lead in promoting the humanitarian-development nexus (HDN) as the best approach. Considering the massive influx of refugees and migrants into Colombia since 2015 as a result of the economic, political and social crisis in Venezuela, this research aimed to establish if the HDN is implemented in Colombia in response to the Venezuelan migration crisis and to what extent. Findings of 34 interviews with staff of NGOs, consultants, academics, and public officials shed light on the enablers and barriers for the HDN, the power dynamics between the actors involved in the response, and the necessary actions to promote the effective implementation of the nexus.

## List of Abbreviations and Symbols Used

CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DANE	National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia (by its initials in Spanish)
DNP	Colombian Department of National Planning (by its initials in Spanish)
ELC	Local Coordination Teams (by its initials in Spanish)
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
ETPV	Temporary Protection Statute for Venezuelan Migrants (by its initials in Spanish)
EU	European Union
IACHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICBF	Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (by its initials in Spanish)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FTS	Financial Tracking System
GBV	Gender-based violence
GIFMM	Inter-agency Group on Mixed Migratory Flows (by its initials in Spanish)
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HDN	Humanitarian-development nexus
HDPN	Humanitarian-development-peace nexus
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
HRW	Humanitarian Country Team
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LRRD	Linking Relief and Development
MPCA	Multipurpose Cash Assistance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs



OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OVV	Venezuelan Observatory of Violence (by its initials in Spanish)
PARD	Administrative Process for the Reestablishment of Rights (by its initials in Spanish)
PEP	Special Temporary Residence Permit (by its initials in Spanish)
PEPFF	Special Stay Permit for the Promotion of Formalization (by its initials in Spanish)
PIN	People in need
PPT	Temporary Protection Permit (by its initials in Spanish)
PYP	Special Entry and Residence Permit (by its initials in Spanish)
R4V	Inter-agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela
RAMV	Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants (by its initials in Spanish)
RMNA	Refugee and Migrant Needs Analysis
RMRP	Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan
SBDC	Small Business Development Centers (by its initials in Spanish)
SENA	National Training Service (by its initials in Spanish)
SISBEN	System for the Identification of Potential Beneficiaries of Social Programs
SPE	Public Employment Service of Colombia (by its initials in Spanish)
SRPA	System of Criminal Responsibility for Adolescents (by its initials in Spanish)
ToC	Theory of change
UARIV	Unit for the Attention and Integral Reparation of Victims (by its initials in Spanish)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGRD	National Unit for Disaster Risk Management
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1. A brief background of the mixed migration flows from Venezuela**

Since the election of Nicolas Maduro as President of Venezuela in April of 2013, which followed the death of former president Hugo Chavez, political tensions and demonstrations by the opposition often made headlines in the neighbouring country, Colombia. However, the economic, social, and political crisis that was unfolding in Venezuela became visible to the majority of the public opinion in Colombia in August 2015, when President Maduro ordered the closure of the border between the two countries and the Venezuelan Government deported over 1,000 Colombian nationals and ordered mass expulsions of people who were undocumented. The news showed Colombian families crossing the river that divides the Venezuelan state of Tachira and the Colombian department of Norte de Santander, carrying their furniture and other belongings after being expelled from the homes that they inhabited for years in Venezuela (Velásquez, 2015).

Although President Maduro argued that these decisions aimed to curb smuggling and paramilitary groups operating on the border, the opposition and the press asserted that the Venezuelan Government was creating a distraction from the crisis happening inside the country (Lares, 2015). As months passed, the main indicator of this crisis was the growing number of Venezuelans leaving their country, which amounted to 695,000 by the end of 2015 and to four million by mid-2019 (UNHCR, 2019).

While there has been consensus on the fact that the Venezuelan exodus is one of the worst migration and humanitarian crises in the history of Latin America and the Caribbean (Human Rights Watch, 2018; ILO & UNDP, 2021) and even in the history of the western hemisphere, it has also been one of the most underfunded (Bahar & Dooley, 2019). According to an article published by Bahar & Dooley in 2019, the international community had invested 7.4 billion USD in the first four years of the response to the Syrian refugee crisis, while the investment in the first four years of the Venezuelan crisis was 580 million USD: "On a per capita basis, this translates into \$1,500 per Syrian refugee and \$125 per Venezuelan refugee" (2019). Consequently, host countries, humanitarian and development organizations, have faced significant funding challenges to respond to the needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees, who have surpassed seven million people by 2024 (R4V, 2024c).

About the host countries for the Venezuelan population, it is relevant to note that Colombia has been the main recipient country since the beginning of the exodus in 2015.

According to the Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V, 2024b), there were approximately 2,875,743 Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Colombia by November 2023, Peru was in second place among the host countries with 1,542,004 people, and Brazil was in third place with 510,499. In Colombia, the response to the migration flows from Venezuela is led by the Interagency Group on Mixed Migratory Flows (GIFMM) – currently comprised of 82 NGOs and UN agencies – and it is materialized in the Refugee Migrant and Refugee Response Plan (RMRP).

## **1.2. What is the humanitarian-development nexus and why is it relevant?**

For people who are not familiar with the aid sector, the differences between humanitarian and development aid might not be clear. However, there are significant differences between these assistance modalities. For instance, humanitarian actors follow the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence to address human suffering, independently from “political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold” in their areas of intervention (OCHA, 2012), which implies that the organizations delivering assistance must take distance from governments. In contrast, development assistance requires working with governments to be effective and assure the sustainability of its outcomes (Stamnes, 2016).

Furthermore, humanitarian and development organizations are different in terms of their policies, mandates, funding sources and procedures (Macrae, 2012; Lie, 2020). While humanitarian aid allows to save lives, alleviate suffering and cover the basic needs of people affected by natural disasters, conflict, war, and forced migration, among other emergencies, development assistance aims to help individuals and communities affected by structural problems in developing countries (such as poverty) to reach self-sufficiency as well as economic, social and political development in a sustainable way (Humanitarian Coalition, n.d.). Both types of assistance are critically important, especially in response to crises of displacement within and across the borders of countries.

After the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and other prominent actors of the international cooperation system agreed that the “humanitarian-development-peace nexus” or HDPN is the best approach to bridge humanitarian and development work and

reduce the risks and vulnerability of communities affected by crises while contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (VOICE, 2019).

According to the (OECD, 2019), the HDPN is an approach that has “the aim of strengthening collaboration, coherence and complementarity” and “to capitalize on the comparative advantages of each pillar – to the extent of their relevance in the specific context – in order to reduce overall vulnerability (...), strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict” (p. 7). OCHA (2017) asserts that the implementation of this “New Way of Working” requires the collaborative and coordinated work of actors with different mandates (humanitarian action, development assistance, peacebuilding) and from different sectors (NGOs, UN agencies, governments, the private sector, etc.) to achieve collectively agreed outcomes.

In addition, as Weishaupt (2020) explains, the nexus must be implemented in the most context-specific manner, so it has differentiated configurations. The “humanitarian-development nexus” or HDN is one of these configurations and it is characterized by promoting complementarity between humanitarian and development organizations in a given region or location, in terms of analysis of the problem, planning and programming, leadership and coordination, as well as financing modalities (OCHA, 2017, pp. 10-11).

Considering the difficult situation of the refugee and migrant Venezuelans who have been living or passing through Colombia since 2015, it can be said that the response to these migration flows should implement the HDPN in order to preserve the lives of the affected people and facilitate their transition into Colombian society in conditions of dignity and security. However, there are separate platforms to respond to the internal armed conflict and to the migration flows in Colombia, also, the contents of the Refugee and Migrant Response Plans (RMRP) for 2021, 2022 and 2023<sup>1</sup> indicate that the configuration of the HDPN that is present in the response to the influx of Venezuelan refugees and migrants into Colombia has been the HDN or “double nexus”.

### **1.3. Research questions**

Considering the importance of the implementation of the humanitarian-development nexus in response to the situation of Venezuelan migrants and refugees, particularly in

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<sup>1</sup> In these response plans, the HDN is not mentioned literally, however, the documents reflect an emphasis on socioeconomic integration and also make references to coordination with public institutions and the inclusion of the Venezuelan refugee and migrant population in the Colombia social protection system.

Colombia, this thesis intends to answer the following question: To what extent is the humanitarian-development nexus implemented in the response to the Venezuelan migratory flows in Colombia?

In order to provide an answer to this central question, the research will delve into four sub-questions, as follows:

- i). What type of interventions are non-profit organizations and government institutions implementing in response to the mixed migration flows from Venezuela?
- ii). What are the enablers and barriers for the HDN in Colombia?
- iii). How do power dynamics between implementing organizations and the government influence the HDN?
- iv). What actions can be implemented to promote its effective operationalization?

It is worth mentioning that the third research sub-question emerged during the data collection process, specifically during the interviews, given that many participants referred to the power dynamics operating in the response to migration flows in the country. Therefore, it was considered relevant to inquire about this issue, in order to provide a more holistic answer to the central research question.

Additionally, it is relevant to assert that the thesis supports the argument that the humanitarian-development nexus is a pertinent approach to responding to displacement crises, but responses to these phenomena must have an emphasis on development-led strategies to have a relevant impact on the lives of the target populations (Zetter, 2014).

#### **1.4. Research methods and scope**

With the aim of answering the research questions, I conducted a document review and semi-structured interviews with 34 people between September 2021 and December 2023. Of these participants, 13 were program staff and six were field staff working at international and national NGOs; four were representatives of NGOs and a UN agency at coordination groups; three were consultants; three were academics, and five were public officials from government institutions.

Concerning the scope of the research, it is relevant to mention that the results refer to the period from 2021 to 2023. Also, the thesis has a qualitative approach, which enables a “holistic understanding of complex issues and processes”, but it is “still filtered by subjective external analysis” (Mayoux, 2006, p.120). In this sense, most of the data comes

from the interviews, and the results describe and assess the implementation of the HDN from the participants' experiences and points of view. The detailed explanation of the methods, data analysis techniques and limitations is provided in Chapter 4.

### **1.5. Motivation and significance of the research**

My motivation to carry out this research is related to my experience working at NGOs in Colombia and to the critical spirit I developed in my master's degree courses at Dalhousie University. Between 2021 and 2022, most of my work was related to processing information and writing reports on the humanitarian situation and access to rights of the Venezuelan population in Colombia, which sparked my interest in existing strategies to provide efficient responses to migratory crises. Around this time, while undertaking my degree courses, I encountered literature about the HDPN and started wondering about the implementation of this approach in response to migration flows from Venezuela.

Since 2019, I had the opportunity to attend regular inter-agency meetings where a variety of organizations and agencies would coordinate their strategies and activities targeted at Venezuelan refugees and migrants, on the one hand, and at Colombian communities affected by armed conflict on the other hand. During these work meetings, I perceived tensions between the two humanitarian architectures operating in the country – the clusters' system that responds to internal armed conflict and natural disasters, and the GIFMM that responds to mixed migration flows. Furthermore, I heard discussions about the nexus only once or twice, which motivated me to find out if the nexus was being implemented in response to the migration flows from Venezuela, and if so, which improvements were needed.

After carrying out the data collection and analysis for this thesis, I consider that its results and conclusions provide valuable reflections on the implementation of the HDN in Colombia, specifically regarding mixed migration flows. Taking into account that the research reflects the perspectives of a variety of actors involved in the response to migration flows from Venezuela, it has the potential to inform future programming by UN agencies, NGOs, CSOs, and other organizations, as well as to encourage reflexivity of the actors involved in the RMRP about the impact of their programming in the lives of their intended beneficiaries.

Moreover, the findings on the exertion of power within the humanitarian architecture (more specifically, the GIFMM) can be the starting point for a deeper analysis of this issue, with the purpose of promoting more equitable working dynamics at the inter-

agency coordination groups. Finally, the outcomes of this thesis can be the precedent of further research on the implementation and effectiveness of the HDN and the HDPN in the country.

## **1.6. Thesis outline**

The following chapters of the thesis are organized according to the process that the research entailed. Chapter 2 presents the analytical framework that provided the theoretical foundations for the data collection and analysis, meaning key concepts, arguments, and typologies to understand how humanitarian and development programming are organized in a given context and how organizations should implement livelihood interventions.

Then, Chapter 3 provides the context of the Venezuelan migration crisis, including its drivers, critical events, and consequences; it also describes the measures that have been implemented in Colombia since 2015 to respond to the needs of the Venezuelan refugees and migrants, both from the government's side and from the humanitarian architecture operating in the country.

Chapter 4 describes the data collection and analysis processes and how these evolved into writing the results, which are presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, arguing that the implementation of the humanitarian-development nexus in Colombia, specifically in response to the migratory flows coming from Venezuela, is a "work in progress" with strengths such as the GIFMM architecture, the implementation of the Temporary Protection Statute for Venezuelan Migrants (ETPV), and access of a significant part of the Venezuelan population to rights and services, namely healthcare. The challenges and barriers to the implementation of this approach include the insufficiency of funds for development interventions, the competition between organizations and humanitarian structures, the low capacity of State institutions to respond to the needs of the refugee and migrant population, and structural problems in the country, like armed conflict. Finally, the results chapters argue that the main adjustment needed for the implementation of the HDN is a greater emphasis on development integration in order to facilitate the economic and social integration of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Colombian society.

Lastly, Chapter 7 contains the conclusions of the thesis and provides recommendations for future research. The final section of the document consists of two appendices: the interview guide and illustrations of the steps followed in the thematic analysis.



## **Chapter 2: Analytical framework**

This chapter addresses key concepts to analyze the implementation of the humanitarian-development nexus (HDN) in the Colombian context, particularly in response to the influx of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. It explains why this approach (double nexus) is one of the most widely accepted configurations of the HDPN (triple nexus). Secondly, it argues why livelihoods programming is essential to provide relevant support to refugees and migrants, as well as to implement the HDN with positive outcomes. In line with this reasoning, the section outlines the “theories of change for self-reliance and livelihoods interventions” by Crawford, Cosgrave, Haysom, & Walicki (2015), and the nine principles of an effective livelihood response suggested by Barbelet & Wake (2017). These are valuable tools to assess the strategies that non-profit organizations and government institutions are implementing to support Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Colombia. Third, the analytical framework introduces concepts related to governance and power that serve to understand the relations between the organizations and institutions that participate in the national response platform, which are not discussed in depth in OCHA's approach to the HDN. Finally, alternative concepts and theoretical approaches are considered in order to justify the framework selected for the thesis.

### **2.1. Humanitarian-development nexus (HDN) as a configuration of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDPN)**

As Macrae (2019) describes it, the HDPN “(...) is the latest iteration of ‘linking thinking’”, a debate that has evolved over four decades on how to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development aid to save people’s lives while bringing about sustainable change in communities affected by natural disasters, poverty, armed conflict, and other crises. Donors, academics, non-governmental organizations and even diplomats continue to engage in this debate where consensus is still absent.

The “first generation” of debate took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s, calling for a better transition or a “continuum” between relief and development. The droughts and subsequent food security crises in countries of Sub-Saharan Africa –such as Botswana and Ethiopia– prompted discussions around how food aid could save lives but also lead to development (Stephens, 1986), the negative consequences of keeping relief and development aid separate (Singer, 1985), the trade-offs of linking the two approaches (Buchanan-Smith & Maxwell, 1994; Maxwell & Lirenso, 1994) and the areas of attention to increase the probability of success (Mugwara, 1994).

The goal of the “continuum”<sup>2</sup> was not only to cover the immediate needs of affected communities, but also to reduce their risks and vulnerabilities, and to build their capacity to face crises (Harmer & Macrae, 2004; Mosel & Levine, 2014). The idea gained momentum and was promoted under different names: in the US it was ‘development-relief’, while ‘LRRD’ (Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development) was the preferred term in the EU (Steets, 2011). In fact, with a statement on LRRD published by the European Commission (EC) in 1996, the term gained traction (IOB, 2013; Dūdaitė, 2018).

The view of linking relief and development as a linear path was widely criticized for not taking into account that disasters were “symptomatic of poverty and political crisis” (Macrae, 2012, p. 8), then, towards the end of the 1990s came the idea of a “contiguuum”, which suggested that it was pertinent and possible to implement relief, rehabilitation and development interventions at the same time (Smillie, 1998; Mosel & Levine, 2014). Besides, it became evident that the stark differences in the architecture, concepts, procedures and funding streams of humanitarian and development aid posed significant challenges to bridging the gaps (Macrae, 2012; Hinds, 2015).

In the early 2000s, the EC (2001) asserted that violent conflicts were the biggest threat to linking relief and development. Throughout the decade, aid actors like the World Bank, the OECD and USAID validated this view, encouraging the contribution of aid to counterterrorism, security, and stabilization, especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Harmer & Macrae, 2004; Nascimento, 2015). Many governments started implementing the “whole of government approach”: “(...) involving government departments responsible for security, political and economic affairs but also those responsible for development aid and humanitarian assistance” (IOB, 2013, p. 27) in programmes targeted at fragile states.

However, this call to integrate humanitarian aid in development and peacebuilding efforts led to the erosion of the humanitarian principles, especially impartiality, neutrality and independence (Nascimento, 2015). In “Humanitarianism Sacrificed: Integration’s False Promise”, de Torrenté (2004) uses the term “coherence agenda” to refer to the approach that rates peace, security and development as “higher goals” than saving lives only. According to the author (2004), this approach can lead to the “instrumentalization of humanitarian action in the service of political ends (p.4)” in at least three ways: i) conditionality, which means allocating aid according to the decisions or policies of the

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<sup>2</sup> The term meant that “(...) emergencies should be considered as no more than an interruption to the process of otherwise linear development” (UNDP, n.d., para. 8).

authorities in the receiving country [the country that receives the donations]; ii) “denial of immediate assistance in the interest of reaping future benefits”<sup>3</sup> (p.4), and iii) selectivity, where political interests of countries or organizations dictate who receives humanitarian aid. In the three cases, people living in areas affected by poverty, natural disasters and/or conflict can be forgotten if their needs are not in line with the political interests of donors, agencies and organizations, and these actors are not held accountable for the consequences of their failures and omissions (Atmar, 2001).

Throughout the 2000s, the international community continued to subscribe to LRRD, for instance, with the European Consensus of Humanitarian Aid, signed in 2007 by the Council, European Parliament, and European Commission. In the Consensus, the countries and institutions of the European Union vowed to link disaster risk reduction, emergency response, early recovery, and development assistance, avoiding the duplication of their efforts (European Commission, 2008).

Then, in a new chapter of the LRRD debate, a new trend broke through: the focus on resilience. Although resilience had been discussed in the 1960s, it started scaling in the agenda in 2008 (IOB, 2013). In September of 2011, as the Horn of Africa was facing a severe drought that affected more than 13 million people (Zewde, 2011), the UN carried out a summit in Nairobi to raise funds for the response to the crisis. The summit focused on the need to build resilience to future crises (UN News, 2011), which encouraged donors to develop further policies and guidelines on resilience as the key for communities to reduce their vulnerability (USAID, 2012) and “bounce back better” after disasters (DFID, 2011).

Some of the attributes of the resilience approach included that it was directed to people vulnerable to crises, not only to those who were already facing crises (Mosel & Levine, 2014), and also that it focused on “the ability of countries, communities, households and individuals to resist, to recover from, or to adapt to the effects of shocks or stresses” (IOB, 2013, p.29). Nevertheless, after decades of indiscriminate use of the

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<sup>3</sup> An example of this modality is the cost-recovery policy that the government of Burundi implemented in its health-care system in 2002, which was financially supported by the World Bank. According to a report by Médecins Sans Frontières (Cetinoglu, Delchevalerie, Parque, Philips, & Van Herp, 2004) one fifth of the population was excluded from health care under this model. See *more at:*

<https://newdemo.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/2384/295673/Fred%20Burundi%202004%20Eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

word “resilience” in many sectors, this approach started to receive substantial critiques, for instance, that “(...) it places the onus squarely on local actors and communities to further adapt to the logics and implications of global capitalism and climate change” (MacKinnon & Derickson, 2013).

Then, by 2015, the resilience approach became part of a bigger framework –called the humanitarian-development nexus– after the setting of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 and the installment of international frameworks like the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), the “New Way of Working” by OCHA, and the Grand Bargain (VOICE, 2017). This humanitarian-development nexus (HDN) is one of the configurations of the triple nexus, known as the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDPN). The Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (2019a) defines the HDPN as “(...) the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actions” (p. 6) which aim to:

capitalize on the comparative advantages of each pillar – to the extent of their relevance in the specific context – in order to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict (p. 6).

According to the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC, 2016), the HDPN can be interpreted in a few ways. One of them focuses on the interaction between its components, given that the three are necessary to face the consequences of violence; a second interpretation is related to the changes in policy that should take place considering the interaction of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding needs on the ground, and the third elucidation refers to the operational coordination and collaboration that actors with different mandates should carry out. Furthermore, the fourth and fifth interpretations of the HPDN underscore the challenge for the international community to formulate and implement interventions with humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding activities in efficient, effective and coherent ways (IASC, 2016).

To these possible interpretations –which do not exclude each other–, Perret (2019) added that:

the guiding principle for the HDPN should be to work from the needs of populations in protracted crises to find solutions that go beyond humanitarian responses by gradually bringing an end to the crisis and setting affected populations on a path to development (p. 1).

This principle is in line with the idea that there should not be a “nexus blueprint” for all types of crises, but instead, the nexus could manifest in different “configurations”

(Weishaupt, 2020), according to the context: the presence or absence of conflict, the policy and legal local frameworks, and the capacity of local actors (OCHA, 2017; Perret, 2019; Weishaupt, 2020).

The HDN configuration does not carry the same tensions and conflicts than the triple nexus regarding the 'security' element. This is due to the fact that the HDN does not have a focus on peacebuilding and rather emphasizes the complementarity between humanitarian and development organizations, in terms of analysis of the problem, planning and programming, coordination, as well as financing modalities (OCHA, 2017, pp. 10-11). However, some authors insist on the incompatibility of the work of humanitarian and development actors, the erosion of the humanitarian principles due to the political nature of development (Stamnes, 2016), and the difficulties to reconcile the differences in policies, mandates, funding and logics, considering that humanitarianism is – or aims to be – apolitical while development needs to engage with governments in order to be effective and cause long-lasting impacts (Macrae, 2012; Lie, 2020).

Now, specifically in contexts of protracted displacement, a major failure of the HDN has been related to the self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods of the displaced, who share problems like poverty and lack of opportunities with the host population (Feinstein International Center, 2012; Haysom, 2013; IFRC, 2012; Buscher, 2011, and Lindley, 2011, as cited in Crawford et al. (2015). Therefore, the relevance of the development emphasis in the implementation of the HDN is the second key aspect of this analytical framework.

## **2.2. Development-focused interventions in the HDN: strategies to promote livelihoods and self-reliance**

For Zetter (2014), even though the HDN is the right approach to face the negative outcomes of displacement, the emphasis must be on the development side. In his view, humanitarian relief for refugees and IDPs is well established, with organizations from different sectors coming together to protect their lives and dignity. However, development-led responses have the potential to: i) address the economic impacts of displacement, ii) promote synergies between humanitarian and development actors, iii) engage the private sector to open up more livelihoods opportunities for displaced and host communities, and iv) encourage governments and public institutions to include refugees and IDPs in their development plans (Zetter, 2014).

In the same vein, the OECD (2019b) emphasizes on the importance of supporting refugees and displaced people to become self-reliant, and asserts that humanitarian aid

alone falls short in the pursuance of that goal. UNHCR (2011) has also acknowledged that self-reliance and livelihood programming encourages displaced people to put their assets and skills to use, preventing them to fall into poverty and protecting their dignity and independence.

Furthermore, according to Jacobsen & Fratzke (2016), UNHCR and international NGOs have resorted to advocacy and livelihoods-oriented interventions in order to: i) promote self-reliance of refugee populations as humanitarian funding is decreasing, ii) connect self-reliance to durable solutions<sup>4</sup>, iii) contribute to the growth of the host-country economy, and iv) dissuade refugees from making decisions that put them at a high risk, such as traveling to a third country under dangerous conditions.

Notwithstanding the growing recognition of development-oriented interventions as a key aspect of the HDN, various researchers have found that most attempts by aid organizations to support the self-reliance of displaced populations showed great limitations in scale, context assessment and planning, funding, ties to the social systems, impact and sustainability (Crawford et. al., 2015; Jacobsen & Fratzke, 2016; Barbelet & Wake, 2017). Therefore, research on the effectiveness of this type of interventions and their improvement possibilities is of great relevance.

In 2015, Crawford et. al. conducted a study to “assess the evidence on self-reliance and livelihoods interventions” (p. 14) for refugees and IDPs, and analysed 157 documents including peer-reviewed articles and case studies on this topic<sup>5</sup>. In their analysis, they identified three general approaches and three specific theories of change implemented by aid agencies and organizations. The general approaches are:

- i) A focus on the **policy environment**, advocating for changes in legislation that allow the displaced to access more livelihood opportunities and contribute to the growth of the host countries.
- ii) A focus on the **perspectives of the displaced**, starting from the recognition that their priorities are not reflected in the programming of humanitarian and

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<sup>4</sup> The durable solutions for refugees promoted by UNHCR are: voluntary repatriation to the country of origin, local integration in the host country, and resettlement to a third country (UNHCR, 2003).

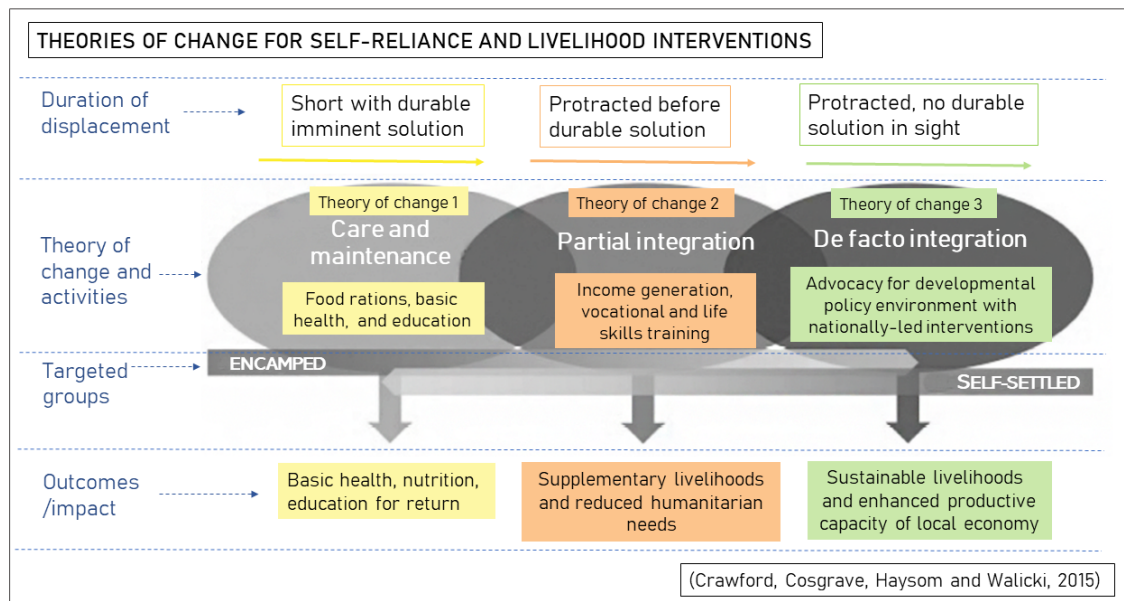
<sup>5</sup> The literature review covered two groups of countries: refugee contexts -Chad, Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Pakistan, and Uganda- and IDP contexts -Azerbaijan, Colombia, DRC, Iraq, Somalia, and Sudan (Crawford et. al. 2015).

development agencies, and that these people are left to struggle and find livelihood opportunities in any way they can.

- iii) A focus on **changing the architecture of the international system**, or in other words, on implementing the HDN. The authors do not delve into this general approach, but the theories of change shed light on the ways in which it can be implemented.

As for the theories, explained in Figure 1, the first one is called “**care and maintenance**” and is based on the hope to reach a durable solution (especially for people living in camps, although it is applied in diverse situations). Given that it is a short-term intervention, it provides protection and covers the basic needs of displaced people, such as food, health and shelter. This type of support is the base of more specialized programs, given that it preserves “the fundamental human capital foundations necessary to build sustainable livelihoods in the future” (p. 20); however, it is difficult to sustain as displacement crises become protracted and the funds decline (Crawford et al., 2015).

**Figure 1.** Model of theories of change for self-reliance and livelihood interventions targeted at displaced people, by Crawford et al. (2015)



**Note:** Reprinted from Crawford, N., Cosgrave, J., Haysom, S., & Walicki, N. (2015, p. 19). Copyright Overseas Development Institute, 2015.

The second theory is “**partial integration**” and it is based on the recognition that the displacement is likely to be prolonged, so it aims to reduce the dependence on humanitarian assistance and open up livelihood opportunities for its target communities. The activities include vocational training, income generation activities at a small scale, and the promotion of skills that the participants can use once they resettle or return to their country. The common weaknesses of these interventions are the funding challenges and the lack of technical expertise to create real market opportunities (Crawford et al., 2015).

The third theory of change revolves around “**de facto integration**”, and it is applied when a durable solution is not in sight. It takes into serious consideration “(...) the complex connections between displaced people and local, national and international communities” (p. 22), and it recognizes that the actions of displaced people are what determines their chances of achieving self-reliance, while aid has a very limited direct impact in their livelihoods. Therefore, this intervention does not only focus on individual households, but it also invests in macroeconomic strategies to have a positive impact on the lives of the displaced people that do not receive direct assistance from aid agencies. This theory has two modalities: the first one is based on advocacy and aims to expand the scope of action of refugees and IDPs in the host society, and the second one involves direct interventions of self-reliance and livelihoods. The second modality goes further than other approaches in “analysing the market forces that shape livelihood opportunities and consider carefully the multidimensional challenges facing displaced people (psychosocial, gender, protection, etc.)” (Crawford et al., 2015, p. 23).

According to the authors, the theories of change are not necessarily implemented separately, and “ideal” programs on self-reliance and livelihoods would employ the three of them. Also, their success and sustainability are conditioned by aspects like the legal and policy frameworks, the access to markets and the private sector, the capacities and assets of the displaced, and the environment for external intervention (Crawford et al., 2015).

These theories of change by Crawford et al. (2015) allow to assess the strategies that the agencies, NGOs and other organizations are implementing to support Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Colombia, as well as to identify the enablers and barriers to implement those strategies, which is at the core of the research questions of this thesis. With these goals in mind, the nine principles of an effective livelihood response suggested by Barbelet & Wake (2017) are also a valuable set of criteria. The authors conducted four case studies on the livelihoods of Central African, Rohingya and Syrian refugees living out



of camps in Cameroon, Malaysia, Turkey and Jordan, and analyzed their strategies and aspirations, as well as the factors influencing their opportunities, such as the policy framework, relevant institutions and community networks. As part of the results, Barbelet & Wake (2017) suggested the following principles to support the livelihoods of refugees in displacement:

1. Develop and plan strategies to support the long-term livelihoods of refugees at the onset of a refugee movement.
2. Base livelihoods support on refugees' own perspectives and agency.
3. Incorporate social protection and the provision of safety nets into livelihoods support.
4. Go beyond supporting economic activities to consider wider refugee needs and rights.
5. Engage a coalition of actors in supporting refugee livelihoods.
6. Consider host community relations and social integration as a core part of livelihood strategies.
7. Support refugee livelihoods through interventions at multiple levels.
8. The livelihoods of refugees are not the same as the livelihoods of the nonrefugee population.
9. Supporting refugee livelihoods through advocacy, durable solutions and innovative approaches (pp. 27-29).

These principles contribute to the analysis of the effectiveness, the strengths and shortcomings of the interventions that are part of the RMRP in Colombia.

### **2.3. Global governance and types of power**

According to Dūdaitė (2018), concepts related to global governance help explain why the HDN is a relevant global issue and how it is addressed by interested actors (UN agencies, NGOs, international institutions, civil society organizations, etc.). In line with this idea, the analytical framework of this thesis draws on some concepts from the theoretical framework of the study in which Dūdaitė (2018) analyzed the barriers to bridge the gap between humanitarianism and development. These concepts are 'governance', 'global governance', 'and 'policy networks'.

Also, taking into account that the analysis of power is fundamental in governance processes, the thesis incorporates the typology of power in global governance proposed

by Moon (2019) to analyze the ways in which power is exerted in coordination platforms in Colombia.

### **2.3.1. Governance and global governance**

Torfining, Peters, Pierre, and Sorensen (2012) define governance as “(...) the process of steering society and the economy through collective action and in accordance with some common objectives” (p. 14). According to Ansell & Torfining (2016), the concept emerged around the 1970s, as a result of various disciplines and fields asking the same question: “how can we govern effectively and democratically in a world in which political authority, capacity and power are fragmented, distributed or constrained?” (p.5). With the end of the Cold War, there was a search for a new approach to organize international politics, and as globalization unfolded, “governance” was the liberal response to bring about desirable democratic change (Barnett & Duvall, 2005).

Governance meant a “problematization of the role of the State” (Torfining et al, 2012, p.10), and more broadly, of “unicentric forms of government” (p. 13). It implied that the State would not be the only actor making public policy and that other players such as international organizations, NGOs, civil society groups and businesses would also have a relevant role (Torfining, et al, 2012).

Different fields added different prefixes to the concept. For instance, the prefix “global” usually has a positive connotation when paired with “governance”. “Global governance” stems from acknowledging that there are complex issues of a global scale that cannot be managed nor solved by a single state or actor, for instance: climate change, food insecurity and forced migration (Torfining et al, 2012; Jang, McSparren, & Rashchupkina, 2016). Consequently, global governance is defined as “(...) the interaction of myriad collective or individual entities emanating from various societal and professional orientations, which form networks that engage to address issues that threaten local and global communities” (Jang et al., 2016).

#### **2.3.1.1. The global governance complex**

McGrew (2008) coined the term “global governance complex”, which refers to the vast array of coordination and interaction structures where private and public actors set common goals, rules, and courses of action to face issues with transnational implications (p. 26). The author clarifies that even though the sovereignty of states is not undermined in this complex, there is a “relocation of authority from states and multilateral bodies to

non-governmental organizations and private agencies” (2008, p. 27). Evidence of such relocation is the authority that UNHCR holds to mobilize the international community and to engage states in frameworks like the Global Compact on Refugees, which sets standards and expected contributions to refugee response.

As asserted by Dūdaitė (2018), the global aid system is immersed in the global governance complex, where governments, intergovernmental organizations, UN agencies, international and national NGOs, international funds, donor countries and other actors interact and discuss solutions to refugee outflows and mixed migration flows across countries, regions, and continents. The regional and national platforms -such as R4V and the GIFMM in Colombia- work in the local arena of the governance complex, and the relations between their actors are materialized in networks, alliances, partnerships, forums and other mechanisms aiming to influence or produce public policy (Stone, 2008).

#### **2.3.1.2. Policy networks**

Rhodes (2008) defines policy networks as “sets of formal institutional and informal linkages between governmental and other actors structured around shared if endlessly negotiated beliefs and interests in public policy making and implementation” (p. 426). With this definition in mind, the response to mixed migration flows in Colombia can be considered a policy network, where the local and national governments, the aid system, the implementing local and international organizations, and other interest groups (including Venezuelan advocacy groups) share the goal of providing humanitarian assistance to Venezuelan refugees and migrants, as well as promoting the socio-economic integration of this population in the country (R4V, 2021).

#### **2.3.2. Power and how it is exerted in governance structures**

As observed by McGrew (2008), there are significant disparities between the different actors taking part in the global governance complex, which allows those with more resources to have a greater influence on collective decisions (p. 27). Some actors position their interests at the expense of the goals of less powerful actors, while elite rules and relations of domination often subvert consensual relations (Barnett and Duvall, 2005; Stone, 2008). Therefore, it can be argued that “governance and power are inextricably linked” and that “governance involves the rules, structures, and institutions that guide, regulate, and control social life, features that are fundamental elements of power” (Barnett and Duvall, 2005, p.2).

In *The globalization of world politics* (2005), Barnett and Duvall define power as “the production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their own circumstances and fate” (p.3).<sup>6</sup> The authors also categorize power in four types: compulsory, institutional, structural or productive. This definition and typology have been pivotal in the analysis of power in global governance; however, this thesis subscribes to the definition and typology of power proposed by Moon (2019), which build on the categorizations and descriptions of power by Barnett and Duvall (2005) and other authors.

According to Moon (2019), power in global governance is “the ability to shape the thinking and/or actions of other actors in the global public domain” (p. 5), or in other words, “the ability to influence another actor” (p.5), considering that even a slight influence has an effect in a complex system. The typology suggested by Moon (2019) is comprised of eight categories, encompassing the different ways in which actors can exercise their influence. Although it was proposed as a tool of analysis for the field of global health, the author asserts that it is applicable to other fields. Table 1 describes how the different types of power work:

**Table 1.** Typology of power in global governance by Moon (2019)

<b>Type of power</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example (applicable to the aid sector)</b>
Physical	It is wielded “when an actor uses or threatens to use physical force to shape the thinking or actions of other actors” (p.5)	Governments block the entry of migrants and asylum applicants or detain them.
Economic	It is wielded “through the use of material resources (e.g. money, goods) to shape the thinking and actions of other actors” (p. 6)	Donor countries provide grants under certain conditions, such as implementing a specific approach in the response to migratory flows.
Structural	It is exerted “through the use of an actor’s position in the structures of society (...). The structures may be formal and legally recognized, such as the state, or traditional, such as castes or class” (p. 6)	Governments set conditions for international NGOs to operate in their territory (e.g. limiting humanitarian transport service).
Institutional	It is exercised “through an actor’s use of rules and decision-making procedures to shape thinking and action”. Depending on	NGOs that lead working groups in national response platforms organize field missions and

<sup>6</sup> Barnett and Duvall clarify that this definition amends the definition provided by John Scott (2001).

Type of power	Description	Example (applicable to the aid sector)
	the institution, certain actors will have more or less power. (p.6).	needs assessments according to their interests.
Moral	It is wielded “when an actor shapes the principles that others believe to be right or wrong, and the actions that may then follow”. It is usually attributed to religious, civil society, political or grassroots leaders (p. 6).	Pope Francis (highest catholic authority) calls on countries hosting migrants to facilitate family reunification.
Expert	It operates “when an actor shapes what others consider to be legitimate knowledge, and therefore what they understand to be factually true or correct” (Adler and Haas, 1992; Sending, 2015, as cited in Moon, 2019, p.6). Actors positioned as experts in a certain field, sector or topic can wield it (p.6).	The International Committee of the Red Cross sets up the international response to an earthquake, providing guidelines for all the organizations involved.
Discursive	It is exerted “when actors shape the language others use to conceptualize, frame, and thereby define and understand an issue” (p.6). The actors participating in a public debate can wield it, even if they lack other types of power (economic, institutional). (p.6)	OCHA positioning the terms “humanitarian-development nexus” and “collective outcomes” in the inter-agency responses to protracted crises.
Network	It operates “when individuals use their personal relationships with others to shape their thinking and/or action” (pp. 6-7). “(...) it is the breadth, structure, and content of the network that confers power on an individual or group” (Granovetter, 1977, as cited in Moon, 2019, pp. 6-7)	A representative of an NGO—who has a wide network—influences the representatives of other organizations to assign his/her organization as the leader of a consortium.

**Note:** Adapted from Moon (2019, pp. 5-7).

By considering the variety and abundance of actors taking part in global governance processes, this typology allows to elucidate how power is exerted in different sectors and geographical scales (Moon, 2019, p.5). Therefore, it is applicable to identify how power works in national platforms dealing with mixed migration flows.data

#### **2.4. Other theoretical approaches to analyze the HDN in Colombia**

In their “political-economy analysis” of the HDN, Zetter (2019) asserts that “despite, or perhaps because of, the rapidity with which the approach has been engaged with by donors and a wide range of humanitarian and development actors, there has been only limited theorization” of it (p. 1). This is one of the reasons why the analytical framework of the thesis is focused on a set of concepts instead of an overarching theory or dissertation related to the applicability of the HDN.

To fill the theory gap on the HDN, Zetter (2019) brings forward a political economy analysis of the approach and argues that it resembles the “core-periphery/metropole-dependency model of economic dualism” that scholars such as Amin (1976), Frank (1978) and Escobar (1995) described through their work between the 1970s and the 1990s. In the view of Zetter (2019), the rationale of the HDN approach is not only cushioning the impact of protracted displacement in the host communities and promoting sustainable livelihoods of displaced people, but also containing refugees and migrants in their regions, preventing their transit to countries in the Global North.

Moreover, the author (2019) argues that “the transition from humanitarian to development-led responses to protracted refugee crises promotes the creation and capture of rent articulated by the Global North through imposing new forms of dependency on the refugee-impacted Global South” (p. 14). This analysis asserts that donor countries –the core– instrumentalize the protracted displacement situations occurring in the Global South –the periphery– to protect their investments, advance their economic interests and take advantage of the cheap labour available in countries that host refugees and migrants (Zetter, 2019).

The theorizing work of Zetter provides valuable reflections on the development rationale of the double nexus approach and the power relations between donor and aid recipient countries. It is also in line with assertions by authors cited in this analytical framework, like Jacobsen & Fratzke (2016), who argue that self-interest is part of the motivation of donor countries to fund livelihood interventions for refugees in the Global South. However, the political economy analysis by Zetter (2019) is not considered appropriate to guide the present research for various reasons. The first reason is that the geopolitics behind the nexus exceed the scope of inquiry of the thesis, which seeks to find out if the approach is being implemented in the response to migratory flows in Colombia and if it is responding to the short and long-term needs of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. Secondly, while the author poses interesting arguments on how the power relations between the Global North and the Global South manifest in the HDN, the thesis is oriented to analyze the power relations between different types of organizations within the aid architecture in Colombia, which can be achieved referring to the typology of power mentioned in this framework.

Additionally, it is worth justifying the selection of the typology of power by Moon (2019) instead of the typology of power proposed by Barnett and Duval (2005), which is based on two analytical dimensions. The first dimension of analysis for these authors

focuses on the workings of power through relations of interaction, when certain actors influence or limit the actions of others using the power they possess, or social constitution, when actors and their capacities are constituted by the social relations in which they are immersed. The second dimension addresses the “specificity” of the relations between actors, which can be: i) causal and direct, or ii) mediated, or separated by a “physical, temporal, and social distance” (Barnett and Duvall, 2005, p. 12).

This typology is not appropriate for the thesis considering that its analytical dimensions involve a deeper level of analysis than the research aims to achieve in terms of the workings of power. While the thesis does inquire about the interactions between different actors and the types of power they exert, it does not look at the social constitution of those actors by their social position or the systems of signification at play. Also, even though the classification by Barnett and Duvall (2005) allows to distinguish between “power over” a situation or an actor and “power to” carry out an action, it can lead to confusion when explaining the work of a humanitarian and development response platform. In contrast, the eight types of power described by Moon (2019) provide a clear and concrete explanation of the ways in which power can be wielded, and it is applicable to the analysis of response platforms to migration phenomena.

## **2.5. Role of the analytical framework in the research design**

In summary, the concepts presented in this analytical framework facilitated understanding the context and the object of study. Furthermore, these oriented the questions for the interviews, the document review, the data analysis, and the discussion of the results.

In chapters 5 and 6, it becomes clear how the “theories of change for self-reliance and livelihood interventions” proposed by Crawford et al. (2015) made it possible to categorize the types of programming implemented by the organizations and public institutions involved in the response to migration flows in Colombia. Also, the “nine principles of an effective livelihood response”, suggested by Barbelet & Wake (2017), helped assess the strengths and weaknesses of the response to the migration flows in Colombia when it comes to supporting the economic integration of the refugee and migrant Venezuelan population.

Last but not least, the typology of power by Moon (2019), mentioned in this analytical framework, is a critical tool in analyzing how NGOs, UN agencies, donors, and government institutions exert power and are subject to the power of other actors within the response platform to migration flows in Colombia.

## Chapter 3: The Venezuelan migration crisis and the response in Colombia

To assess if the humanitarian-development nexus is being implemented in Colombia in response to the needs of the refugee and migrant population, it is necessary to understand how the Venezuelan migration crisis unfolded. Therefore, this section of the thesis describes the events that led millions of people to leave Venezuela and mentions key aspects of the response by the Colombian State to the influx of this population into its territory. Also, the chapter explains the setup of the responses provided by humanitarian and development organizations in the country, which is the starting point in finding out if the HDN is in operation and to what extent.

### 3.1. A multifaceted crisis

Due to the economic, political, and humanitarian crisis that erupted in Venezuela in 2015, there are more than 7,7 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants around the world (R4V, 2024c). Vera (2018) explains that one of the causes of the economic catastrophe was the drop in oil revenues. As a “Petrostate”<sup>7</sup>, Venezuela has been heavily dependent on the production and export of oil, subjecting the country's finances to the volatility of the negotiation of this resource (Vera, 2018; Cheatham, Roy, & Labrador, 2021). However, Vera (2018) argues, there are many other factors involved in the economic crisis, which can be classified in three dimensions:

- **External constraint management:** the inadequate management of resources and exchange rate policy by the governments of Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro<sup>8</sup> led to a shortage of foreign currency, and the depletion of the international reserves of the country by 2012. Furthermore, foreign debt quadrupled between 2006 and 2012, (Santos, 2017, as cited in Vera, 2018) and it continued to increase from 113,100 million US dollars in 2012 to 137,500 in 2017. Consequently, the

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<sup>7</sup> According to Cheatham et al. (2021), the term “Petrostate” is used to refer to a country with the following attributes: “(...) government income is deeply reliant on the export of oil and natural gas; economic and political power are highly concentrated in an elite minority, and political institutions are weak and unaccountable, [while] corruption is widespread” (p. 2).

<sup>8</sup> Hugo Chávez governed Venezuela from 1999 until his death in 2013. Nicolás Maduro, the successor of Chávez, has been in the presidency ever since.



annual inflation rate went from 26.1 % in 2011 to 121.7 % in 2015, and to 738 % in 2017 (p. 88)<sup>9</sup>.

- **Control of the productive economy:** from 2007, the State started to take control of crucial industries, such as the mining sector and the production of iron, steel and cement. There was a massive nationalization campaign of companies and production chains between 2007 and 2009, and the government of Maduro tightened the existing price regulation policy, resulting in company bankruptcies and a decline in productivity and foreign investment (pp. 91-92).
- **Fiscal and monetary institutionalism:** the government of Hugo Chávez managed to “redirect much of the oil revenue outside of the usual budgetary and fiscal controls of the State” (Rodríguez, Morales and Monaldi, 2012, cited in Vera, 2018, p. 94). Therefore, a considerable amount of the resources obtained through the state-owned oil company – PDVSA – were destined to social and public investment programs. As the inflation rate increased, the company accumulated debt in the late 2010s, and its financial situation reached a critical moment in 2014, when the prices of oil decreased internationally (pp. 94-95).

The economic crisis caused political and social turmoil, massive protests and a demand for change that was met with violence and repression by the government. The following timeline goes over some of the key events that caused the massive exodus of the country:

- **April 2013** – Upon the death of Hugo Chávez in March of 2013, the then vice president, Nicolás Maduro, took office (The Atlantic, 2013).
- **February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014** – A series of mass demonstrations against the government of President Maduro took place in various cities (including the capital, Caracas). Clashes between the protesters and the security forces left three people dead, dozens of people injured and hundreds of arrests (Human Rights Watch, 2014). The government accused the leader of the opposition, Leopoldo López, of arson and criminal incitement; López surrendered to authorities and was sent to jail (Associated Press, 2014).
- **August 2015** – Following an incident where smugglers wounded three Venezuelan soldiers, President Maduro ordered the closure of the border with Colombia. According to the president, the measure was a crackdown on smuggling

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<sup>9</sup> Figures by the Central Bank of Venezuela, Credit Suisse-Emerging Markets Quarterly, Torino Capital LLC-Venezuela Red Book, and Dollar Today, compiled by Vera (2018, p. 88).

and paramilitary groups. Also, throughout the last two weeks of the month, the government of Maduro deported over 1,000 Colombian nationals and prompted mass expulsions, leading to thousands of Colombians fleeing the country by crossing the river that divides the Venezuelan state of Tachira and the Colombian department of Norte de Santander (BBC News, 2015). These events sparked a crisis in the diplomatic relationship between the two countries, while critics of Nicolas Maduro argued that his goal was creating a smokescreen to distract attention from the problems within the country (Reuters, 2015).

- **May 2018** – A new presidential election was carried out without the participation of the opposition, and Nicolás Maduro was elected for a second term of six years. The opposition denounced fraud and several countries, including the US and the 14 members of the Lima Group,<sup>10</sup> did not recognize the legitimacy of the electoral process (The Guardian, 2018).
- **January 2019** – Maduro took office in early January and the National Assembly accused him of usurping power. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the president of the National Assembly, Juan Guaido, declared himself acting president based on articles 233, 333 and 350 of the Venezuelan Constitution, and announced his goal of calling free elections. The same day, the United States government announced its recognition of Guaido as president (DW, 2019).
- **February 2019** – Dozens of governments (including Australia, Canada, the UK, Spain, France, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, United States, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru) had recognized Juan Guaido as the legitimate president of Venezuela. Guaido invested efforts in raising humanitarian aid for Venezuela and announced a plan to deliver food and medical supplies on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>. The government of Maduro accused the US of attempting military aggression in Venezuela and blocked the delivery of aid by placing containers on the bridge that connects the municipalities of Cucuta (Colombia) and San Antonio

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<sup>10</sup> In August 8<sup>th</sup> of 2017, the foreign ministers of a group of Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru) and Canada gathered in Lima, the capital of Peru, to discuss the situation in Venezuela and explore their potential contributions to restore democracy in that country. This coalition was named the Lima Group. It was dissolved in 2021, largely due to changes in the governments of the member countries.

del Táchira (Venezuela) (Soares, Gallón, & Smith-Spark, (2019). After the incident, Venezuela broke diplomatic relations with Colombia.

- **April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019** – Juan Guaidó announced the launch of “Operation Freedom”, an attempt to oust Nicolás Maduro from power with the support of a group of military men who joined the opposition. The government of the United States played a key role in the plan, which supposedly involved persuading Maduro to abandon the country and head to Cuba. However, the plan failed, and the high command of the armed forces declared their loyalty to Maduro (Torres, Borger, & Parkin, 2019).
- **September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020** — The United Nations released the findings of a report by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela, providing evidence of extrajudicial executions, politically motivated detention and torture, protest-related violations, and enforced disappearances, among other crimes committed by State agents. The report indicated that the Government, military personnel, and allied groups committed violations “amounting to crimes against humanity” (OHCHR, 2020, para. 3).<sup>11</sup>

While the economic debacle and the defeat of democracy motivated immigration from Venezuela, the humanitarian crisis was one of its key drivers. According to the Organization of American States (OAS, 2021), the main reasons for Venezuelan nationals to leave their country, besides the economic aspect, have been: a humanitarian emergency, especially in terms of access to food and health care; human rights violations, such as extrajudicial killings; generalized violence, and the collapse of public utilities (water supply and electricity).

### **3.1.1. Humanitarian emergency**

The economic scarcity, inflation and shortages of food in Venezuela led to a humanitarian crisis, reflected in a number of studies by NGOs and UN agencies. For instance, Caritas Venezuela conducted a study from October to December 2016 in 12 municipalities, by collecting anthropometric measurements of 818 children under 5 years of age and applying 217 surveys to the caregivers of the children. The study concluded that “25% of the children assessed showed some form of acute malnutrition and 28% showed a risk of

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<sup>11</sup> Reports by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela are available on the following website: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/ffmv/index>

malnutrition” (Caritas Venezuela, 2017, p. 24); it also found that the families’ diet had poor quality and a lack of key nutrients. Additionally, a study by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) revealed that the number of undernourished people went from 2.8 million in 2004 - 2006 to 6.8 million in 2016 - 2018 (FAO, 2019, p. 143).

Food insecurity was manifested in hospitals too, as shown by the National Survey of Hospitals, led by a civil society organization called *Médicos por la Salud* (Doctors for Health): in 2016, 71 % of 196 public hospitals reported interruptions in their food provision and 63.6 % had run out of milk formulas in their pediatric services (2016). Two years later, 48.6 % of 40 hospitals surveyed provided fewer than three meals per day to their patients (Médicos por la Salud & Asamblea Nacional de Venezuela, 2018).

### **3.1.2. Human Rights violations**

According to the 2016 World Report by Human Rights Watch (HRW), at the beginning of 2015 the government of Venezuela deployed more than 80,000 members of the security forces to maintain public order and combat illegal activities. However, this deployment led to verbal and physical abuse against civilians, arbitrary detentions and illegal home searches.

Also, demonstrations against the government of Nicolas Maduro were usually met with repression and violence by the public security forces. In 2017, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) monitored the protests that occurred between April and July, and found that the Attorney General’s Office registered 124 deaths related to demonstrations, of which 46 were caused directly by the security forces and 27 were caused by pro-Government armed collectives (OHCHR, 2017)<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, the OHCHR (2017) collected evidence of violent house raids, destruction of property, arbitrary detention, and torture and ill-treatment of persons detained during protests by State authorities.

Specifically with regards to extrajudicial killings, a local NGO focused on the defence of Human Rights – called Provea – published a special investigative report in 2021, which shows a steady increase in this violation of human rights between 2010 and 2016, and an exponential rise between 2017 and 2020. The report indicates that there

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<sup>12</sup> Social organizations claimed the number of deaths was higher. The Venezuelan Observatory of Social Conflict (*Observatorio de Conflictividad Social*) reported 157 deaths during the same period (2017).

were 270 extrajudicial killings in 2015, 337 in 2016, 396 in 2017 and the number soared to 3034 in 2020 (Provea, 2021, p. 24).

### **3.1.3. Generalized violence**

The safety concerns for people living in Venezuela were not only related to participating in demonstrations. Violence was also becoming more common in the form of theft, threats, extortion and homicides. As estimated by a publication of the Venezuelan Observatory of Violence (OVV)<sup>13</sup>, the rate of violent deaths in 2016 was 91.8 per 100,000 inhabitants, which ranked Venezuela as the second country with the highest rate of lethal violence in the world after El Salvador (2016). In 2017, the same organization estimated a rate of 89 violent deaths per 100,000 inhabitants and reported an average of 6.4 homicides perpetrated by hitmen every week (OVV, 2017).

### **3.1.4. Collapse of public utilities**

Venezuela has one of the most potent hydroelectric plants in the world, which is powered by the Guri Dam and has the capacity to provide 60 % of the country with electricity. However, seasonal droughts and a lack of investment in key infrastructure have caused blackouts and electricity rationing in the country for approximately a decade. The problem peaked in 2016, when the government announced blocks of four hours per day without electricity and drastic reductions of the working hours in public institutions and schools (The Associated Press, 2016).

While the government claimed that it invested billions of dollars to guarantee the energy supply throughout the country and that the energy outages were the result of “sabotage” by its opponents, critics of Maduro pointed to mismanagement and corruption (Miroff, 2016). Amid this situation, the frequent blackouts threatened the livelihoods of millions of people, as well as the lives of patients interned in hospitals.

The dire situation in terms of livelihoods, food security, healthcare, education, and political participation in Venezuela forced almost 700,000 people to leave the country in 2015, of which more than 30,000 stayed in Colombia (Migración Colombia, 2023). These

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<sup>13</sup> The Venezuelan Observatory of Violence (*Observatorio Venezolano de Violencia*, in Spanish) is an NGO, created in 2005 by the Social Sciences Laboratory of Venezuela, with the goal of collecting, analyzing and sharing data on interpersonal violence in the country.

figures kept increasing year by year, as shown in Table 2, posing challenges for the host countries to provide a response.

**Table 2.** Venezuelan refugees and migrants 2015-2024 \*

Year	Number worldwide	Number in Colombia
2015	695,000 <sup>1</sup>	31,471 <sup>9</sup>
2016	**	53,747 <sup>10</sup>
2017	1,642,442 <sup>2</sup>	403,702 <sup>11</sup>
2018	3,000,000 <sup>3</sup>	1,174,743 <sup>12</sup>
2019	4,500,000 <sup>4</sup>	1,171,237 <sup>13</sup>
2020	5,400,000 <sup>5</sup>	1,729,537 <sup>14</sup>
2021	6,000,000 <sup>6</sup>	1,840,000 <sup>15</sup>
2022	6,800,000 <sup>7</sup>	2,477,000 <sup>16</sup>
2023 (By November)	7,722,579 <sup>8</sup>	2,858, 166 <sup>17</sup>

**Note.** Sources of the figures by box number: 1,3,6 – (UNHCR, 2023); 2 –(IOM, 2018); 4 –(R4V, 2019); 5 –(Organization of American States (OAS), 2020); 7– (Schmidtke, 2022); 9-16 – (Migración Colombia, 2023); 8,17 – (R4V, 2024b). \*The figures provided are estimates by host government and the United Nations. \*\*Estimates are not available for the end of 2016.

### 3.2. Response by the Colombian State

#### 3.2.1. Response to the deportation and expulsion of Colombian nationals

The precedent of the Colombian State’s response to the first migration waves from Venezuela was the response to the closure of the border and the massive expulsion of Colombian nationals by the government of Venezuela in August 2015. The Colombian government set up shelters in two municipalities located on the border and provided cash and in-kind assistance to the deported and repatriated families. This assistance included kits of food and non-food items, rent subsidies, transportation, family reunification and medical services. Furthermore, in the course of a month the Government issued the Decree 1770, declaring the state of economic, social and economic emergency in 40 municipalities of seven border departments, as well as other decrees to facilitate access

to housing (Decree 1819), encourage economic activity in the border departments (Decree 1820), and encourage job creation (Decree 1821) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015).

### **3.2.2. Migratory regularization for Venezuelan nationals**

With the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in 2015, one of the measures taken by the Colombian Government was issuing Decree 1814 in September, which created a “Special Entry and Residence Permit” (PYP) and a “Special Temporary Residence Permit” (PEP) for the Venezuelan nationals who were spouses, permanent partners or children of Colombians who were expelled, deported, or returned from Venezuela<sup>14</sup>. These permits were free of charge and allowed the holders to stay and work in the country for up to six months.

The continuing influx of the Venezuelan population and the expiration of the PYP and PEP permits required further measures in terms of migratory regularization. Therefore, in August of 2016, *Migración Colombia*<sup>15</sup> issued a Resolution<sup>16</sup> establishing a series of permits for foreign nationals to enter the country on a regular basis for up to six months, and/or to stay for up to 90 days without a visa requirement. However, thousands of Venezuelan persons exceeded the time limit for their stay and lost their regular migratory status.

In 2017, the Colombian Government implemented two phases of a Special Residence Permit (PEP) that granted access to services such as healthcare and education for Venezuelan nationals who had entered the country through an authorized immigration checkpoint. The permit was valid for two years and intended to be an incentive for acquiring a visa to keep a regular migratory status. Nevertheless, there was a large proportion of Venezuelan migrants who had entered the country through unauthorized

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<sup>14</sup> Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (September, 2015) Decree 1814 of 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Among the responsibilities of the Special Administrative ‘*Migración Colombia*’ Unit is supporting the Ministry of Foreign Relations in formulating and implementing migration policy, as well as carrying out immigration control of nationals and foreigners in the country.

<sup>16</sup> Resolution 1220 of 2016 [repealed in 2019]. The ‘Authorization for Border Transit’ allowed people living in border areas of neighbouring countries to enter and transit certain Colombian municipalities. The ‘Entry and Stay Permits’ (*Permisos de Ingreso y Permanencia* – PIP) allowed nationals of designated countries to stay in Colombia for a limited period of time to access health services, attend brief academic programs, carry out activities related to international cooperation, among other activities.

border crossings and without a valid identification document, therefore, they could not apply for a PEP. According to *Migración Colombia* (2018), at the end of 2017 there were approximately 550,000 Venezuelan nationals in the country, of which only 69,000 (12.5 %) had obtained a PEP, and 57,000 (10.4 %) had a foreigner's identity card. Furthermore, the Government carried out a data collection process called Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants (RAMV) in 2018, in which more than 400,000 people indicated they had an irregular migratory status. Consequently, *Migración Colombia* started a new phase of PEP permits in February of 2018 to benefit this population.

Later, between August 2018 and January 2020, five more phases of the PEP were issued, but these required the applicants to have entered the country through an authorized border crossing or to have a rejected asylum application (Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, 2020). As Dejusticia (2020), a center for legal and social studies, explains, the PEP was a significant step forward in providing Venezuelan citizens with access to rights and services; however, it had a limited scope as it was not flexible in terms of application timeframes and requirements (only two phases allowed applications by people with an irregular migratory status). Although there were two phases of renewal of expired PEPs in 2019, it became evident that the Venezuelan nationals living in Colombia needed a permanent solution for migratory regularization.

During 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic and the measures taken by the Government, such as lockdowns and mobility restrictions, took a toll on the livelihoods of Venezuelans living in the country and prompted massive return flows. The loss of sources of income, evictions, the lack of support networks, uncertainty and the rise of xenophobia led approximately 115,000 Venezuelans to return to their country, at least temporarily (Osorio & Phélan, 2020; Reuters, 2020). However, as restrictions were lifted, the number of migrants reentering the country surged, and by the end of 2020, there were about 1,7 million Venezuelan nationals living in Colombia, of which more than 960,000 had an irregular migratory status (*Migración Colombia*, 2021).

Recognizing that the Venezuelan migratory crisis was far from ending and that affected people needed a permanent solution to hold regular status in Colombia, in February of 2021 the Government announced the issuance of the Temporary Protection Status for Venezuelans (ETPV), a legal mechanism that grants migratory regularity for a period of ten years. In the months that followed, the Ministry of Foreign Relations issued the Decree 216 of 2021 and *Migración Colombia* issued the Resolution 971 of 2021, laying out the implementation of the mechanism. In brief, the ETPV had three phases: the first



one consisted of filling out a digital form called “pre-registration” [*prerregistro*, in Spanish] and a survey, providing personal data and demographic information; the second one was an in-person appointment to provide biometrics, and the third one corresponded to the assessment of the application by *Migración Colombia*, which was supposed to take no more than 90 days. If the application was approved, the person received the Temporary Protection Permit (PPT), which allowed him/her to access services (healthcare, education, banking); to benefit from social programs, and to work legally and create companies.

As stated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2021), the PPT will be valid until 2031 because it is expected that the holders can meet the requirements to obtain a resident visa after this period.

The implementation of the ETPV started in May, 2021, with a series of deadlines to access the phase of pre-registration. From May 5, 2021 to May 28, 2022, people with the following profiles could apply: i) persons with a regular migratory status, holding permits such as the PEP; ii) persons who had applied for asylum and obtained a temporary permit SC-2<sup>17</sup>; and iii) migrants with an irregular status who entered Colombia before the 31<sup>st</sup> of January of 2021 and were able to prove it. Then, persons who entered Colombia through an authorized border crossing between May 2021 and May 2023 were allowed to apply until November 24, 2023. Children and adolescents linked to an Administrative Process for the Reestablishment of Rights (PARD<sup>18</sup>); adolescents and young people involved in the System of Criminal Responsibility for Adolescents (SRPA), and Venezuelan children and adolescents who are enrolled in an educational institution may apply until May of 2031.

Despite the fact that Colombia was the only country in Latin America that showed a steady reduction in the number of Venezuelan people with an irregular migratory status throughout 2022<sup>19</sup> (DRC in Colombia, 2023), barriers persist and prevent families from accessing migratory regularization. The profiles left out of the ETPV include people without

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<sup>17</sup> The permit or safe-conduct SC2 is a document of temporary validity, issued by *Migración Colombia* to foreigners who are in Colombian territory and in the process of obtaining a visa, including the M visa for refugees.

<sup>18</sup> The PARD is a process led by the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF) to respond to the violation of the rights of a child or adolescent. The outcome of the process may be an educational or judicial sanction, family relocation of the child or adolescent, or adoption, among other options (Alianza por la Niñez, 2012).

<sup>19</sup> By May 10, 2023, nearly 1.6 million Temporary Protection Permits had been issued by the Colombian Government to Venezuelan nationals (Migración Colombia, 2023).

documentation, people who lost their original identification documents, persons who were unable to register in the ETPV for logistical or financial reasons, and persons who entered irregularly after January 2021. Furthermore, civil society and NGOs reported significant delays in the approval and issuance of PPTs, which affected hundreds of applicants, especially those with health conditions who required urgent medical care (Universidad del Rosario & Fundación Konrad Adenauer, 2023).

### **3.2.3. International protection and access to nationality**

Colombia has ratified its commitment to numerous instruments to protect the rights of persons in need of international protection and asylum (including the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1984 Cartagena Declaration, and the 2014 Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action); however, the capacity of the asylum system in the country is very limited and has failed to respond effectively to the influx of Venezuelan nationals (CEM Universidad de los Andes, 2021). According to UNHCR's Refugee Data Finder (2024), by 2023 there were 23,449 Venezuelan asylum-seekers and only 1,134 Venezuelan people had acquired refugee status.

Shortcomings in the asylum system include barriers in the application process. For instance, there is no time limit for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to make decisions on applications for the recognition of refugee status, therefore, people can spend months or even years waiting for a definitive answer; also, while asylum requests are under assessment of the ministry, applicants receive a temporary document (SC-2) that allows enrollment in the public health system, but it does not allow access to formal employment, educational certificates, financial products and other services (CEM Universidad de los Andes, 2021)<sup>20</sup>.

On another front, the Colombian Government has been praised for granting access to nationality to children who were born in the country to Venezuelan parents. Two Resolutions (8470 of 2019 and 8617 of 2021) established that children with this profile who were born since August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021, could access registration as Colombian citizens, as long as their parents present the certificate of live birth and their identification

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<sup>20</sup> In December 2023, the Colombian Constitutional Court issued a ruling ordering the National Government to “design and implement a public policy to solve the structural problem of saturation in the processing of refugee applications” and to “set a maximum procedural term for resolving refugee applications” (Constitutional Court of Colombia, 2023), among other actions, in a period of six months. However, no measures by the Government have been announced in this regard.

documents. This measure will be in effect until August 2025, and even though it has had a significant impact in reducing the risk of statelessness, this risk persists for many children, for instance, those who were born in Venezuela and could not access civil registration there, or those who were born in remote areas of Colombia and could not get official birth certificates (E1, 2021).

#### **3.2.4. Social services and employment**

Considering the massive demand for services that came with the influx of Venezuelan migrants, the Colombian State has issued a series of decrees and resolutions to regulate access of this population to health care, education, housing, subsidies and employment opportunities. Although the reach of these services has improved progressively since 2015, gaps remain and are linked to lack of documentation and low availability of services in rural and remote areas (R4V, 2024).

In terms of health care, it is worth mentioning that the Ministry of Health and Social Protection issued the Decree 866 in 2017, laying out the process to cover the cost of emergency medical care to nationals of neighbouring countries, regardless of their immigration status. Through Judgement T403 of 2019, the Constitutional Court established that people holding an irregular status in Colombia can access medical care beyond the procedures that seek to preserve their vital signs; the Court said that this population is also entitled to access urgent surgeries and treatments for catastrophic illnesses. However, health care providers do not always comply with this judgement and Venezuelan people have to use judicial resources to demand the medical care they need, pay for private services, or endure the deterioration of their health (DRC in Colombia, 2022).

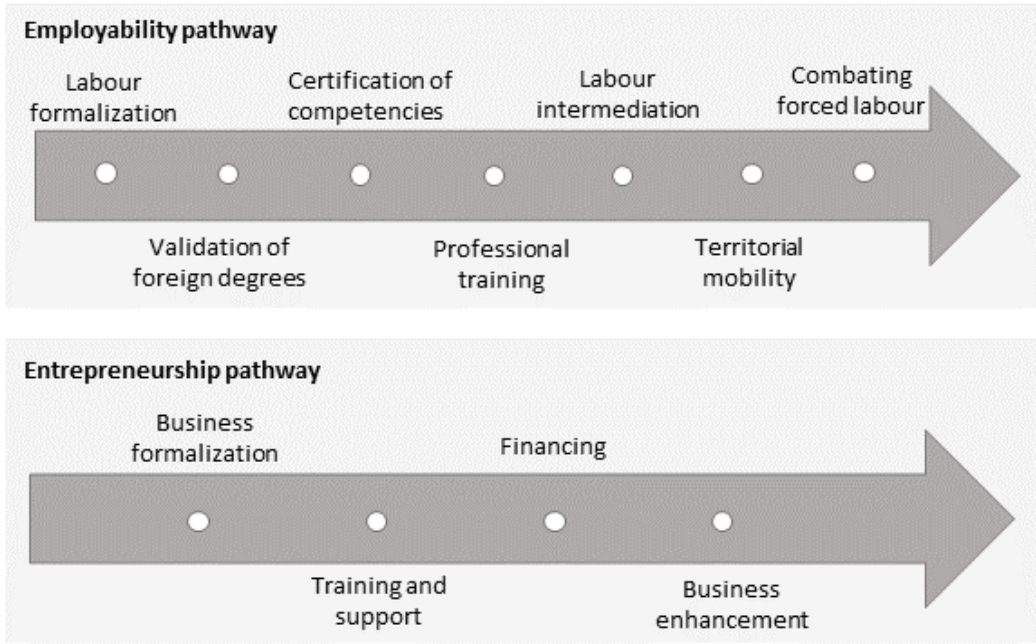
Regarding health insurance, Venezuelans holding a migratory permit have been able to enroll in the public health system since 2017, nevertheless, this population has encountered the same barriers as Colombians in accessing proper and timely medical assistance, and many others. Not only is the capacity of the system overstretched and the availability of medical services in remote areas is precarious, but many Venezuelans also face discrimination, xenophobia and negligence when looking for medical care (R4V, 2022; DRC in Colombia, 2022). As a result of these gaps in health care for people with regular and irregular migratory status, 1.10 million Venezuelans and Colombian returnees are in need of health assistance in Colombia (R4V, 2024).

On the other hand, the governmental response in terms of education has granted access of a significant percentage of the Venezuelan population to schools across the country. The National Planning Department (2023) reports that more than 490,000 Venezuelan children and adolescents were enrolled in school by December 2021, which implies an increase of approximately 462,000 Venezuelan students since 2018. Furthermore, as mentioned in section 3.2.2., Resolution 971 of 2021 by *Migración Colombia* established that children and adolescents enrolled in schools can access migratory regularization through the ETPV until 2031, which encourages access to education and school retention.

Nevertheless, the Colombian State has acknowledged that there are limitations related to education for Venezuelan nationals, including that students who do not have valid identification documents (visa, foreigner's identification card, or PPT) are not allowed to request certificates of their studies, take the test for admission to higher education, called Saber 11, nor graduate from school (CONPES, 2018). National and international organizations working in the response to the mixed migratory flows in Colombia have reported other problems, such as the limited capacity of schools to receive new students, the poor dissemination of relevant information to parents, illegal demands by educational institutions (e.g. having a regular migratory status or being enrolled in the health system), the lack of an ethnic approach to cater to the needs of indigenous Venezuelan children, and the lack of money to cover for school transportation expenses (Ruiz, Ramírez, & Rozo, 2020; DRC in Colombia, 2024).

Undoubtedly, access to health care, education and housing is closely related to the income-generating capacity of families; therefore, the Colombian government requested technical and financial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2019 to formulate an income generation strategy for the migrant population from Venezuela and host communities. The strategy began by conducting a diagnosis of the socioeconomic integration process of Venezuelan migrants, then laid out pathways for employability and entrepreneurship, and also made recommendations to various public institutions and the private sector to facilitate the process, as shown in Figure 2 (UNDP, 2019).

**Figure 2.** Income generation strategy for the migrant population from Venezuela and host communities in Colombia by UNDP (2019)



**Note:** Figure adapted from '*Estrategia de generación de ingresos para la población migrante proveniente de Venezuela y las comunidades de acogida*' [Income generation strategy for migrant population from Venezuela and host communities] (pp. 33,52), by UNDP (2019). Copyright 2020 UNDP.

With respect to labour formalization, which is the first step in the employability pathway, it is worth mentioning that the government created a special permit called PEPFF (Special Stay Permit for the Promotion of Formalization) in 2020, which allowed Venezuelan nationals to access migratory regularization through a job offer. The process indicated that once a Venezuelan person with irregular migratory status received a job offer, the employer was responsible for submitting the required documents through the website of the Ministry of Labour, and the potential employee had to schedule an appointment with the ministry. If approved, the permit granted the person with a regular migratory status, as well as access to the social protection system (health care, pension savings, and occupational risk insurance). These permits were issued between January 2020 and May 2021, when the ETPV started to be implemented and the issuance of other temporary permits was halted. As discussed in coordination meetings of national and international NGOs, one of the main limitations of the PEPFF was that the employer (natural or legal

person) had to take care of most of the process, and, as a result, it was easier for employers to hire Colombian applicants or Venezuelan nationals with a regular status. The limited impact of the strategy is also evident in the figures by the National Planning Department (2022), which indicate that fewer than 20,000 PEPFF permits were issued.

In relation to the validation of studies carried out in Venezuela, the Ministry of Education issued Resolution 014448 in July 2022, including the PEP and the PPT permits as valid documents for petitioners. Despite the fact that this measure was highly requested because the ministry only accepted applications by holders of a Colombian national ID (*cédula de ciudadanía*), a foreigner's identification card (*cédula de extranjería*), or a passport, it ignored other barriers in the process. One of these barriers has been the high cost, given that the validation of an undergraduate degree costs about 214 USD (66 % of the minimum wage in Colombia) and the validation of a postgraduate degree costs 243 USD (75 % of the minimum wage).

Other steps of the pathway such as the certification of competencies, professional training and labour intermediation are available for free through the National Training Service (SENA) and the Public Employment Service (SPE). Venezuelan nationals holding migratory permits can access the certification of the abilities, skills and knowledge they have to perform certain jobs, regardless of educational credentials and according to the requirements of each sector (e.g. construction, transportation, textile industry, etc.) (SENA, 2023). They can also enroll in technical, technological and complementary programs offered by SENNA in virtual or in-person modalities, as well as include their resumes in the SPE, which is consulted by agencies and institutions recruiting personnel. Nevertheless, these services have significant limitations, such as the low capacity of the institutions involved, insufficient adaptation to the particular needs of migrants, and the lack of efficiency (UNDP, 2019, pp. 40-46). According to DNP figures (2022), 185,870 Venezuelan nationals were registered in the SPE to 2022, however, only 18,800 of them had obtained a job (10.1 %).

Now, concerning the entrepreneurship pathway, it is worth mentioning that Venezuelan migrants can access services provided by Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) in various cities across the country. These centers are the result of alliances between the private sector, academia and the government, and provide advice and training to entrepreneurs and small businesses to improve competitiveness, generate employment and access new markets, among other objectives (Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, 2023).

Finally, it is important to mention access to subsidies through the System for the Identification of Potential Beneficiaries of Social Programs (*Sisben*, by its initials in Spanish). The *Sisben* makes a diagnosis of the socioeconomic conditions of the families living in the country (with a regular migratory status), and according to this characterization, it assigns them to a group that determines which State programs they can benefit from. The Venezuelan population has been able to register in the system since 2017, and by March 2024, more than one million people of Venezuelan nationality were registered in it (National Planning Department, 2024).

### **3.2.5. Diplomatic relations with Venezuela**

There have been three administrations in Colombia since 2015 and with these administrations have come significant changes in terms of foreign policy, including the management of relations with Venezuela. In August 2016, a year after Nicolás Maduro ordered the closure of the Venezuelan border with Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos (President of Colombia) and Nicolás Maduro agreed on a gradual opening of the border crossing points between the two countries. However, during his last two years in office (2017-2018), Santos hardened his stance towards the Maduro government, especially after the election of the National Assembly in August 2017, which Santos described as “the culmination of the destruction of democracy in Venezuela” (DW, 2017).

In June 2018, Iván Duque, the candidate of the biggest right-wing political party, was elected as the President of Colombia and announced that his administration would not send an ambassador to the neighbouring country. Then, in January 2019, his government recognized Juan Guaidó, the President of the National Assembly, as the President of Venezuela, and in response to this declaration, Maduro's government broke off political and diplomatic relations with Colombia (BBC News, 2019). From 2019 to July 2022, the borders between the two countries remained closed and there was no representation of the Colombian government in Venezuela nor representation of Maduro's government in Colombia. This significantly affected the families who made a living from cross-border trade, and thousands of Venezuelans who needed to obtain or validate official documentation in Colombia.

Moreover, the government of Iván Duque played an active role in a “democratic siege” against the government of Nicolás Maduro, promoting international sanctions. Part of this strategy was implemented through the Lima Group in August of 2017. The group had regular meetings every two or three months, it achieved recognition and diplomatic

influence in 2017 and 2018, and its merits included the increased visibility of the Venezuelan crisis at the global level (Chaves, 2020; Arellano, 2021), the exclusion of the government of Nicolas Maduro from multilateral forums such as Mercosur, and the Resolutions issued by the OAS in June 2018 and January 2019 on the illegitimacy of Maduro's reelection (Chaves, 2020, p. 188).

In June 2022, the election of Gustavo Petro as president not only meant a turn to the left in the Colombian government, but it also led to the reestablishment of relations with the government of Nicolas Maduro. Since then, Colombia and Venezuela have resumed diplomatic and commercial relations, the border has reopened, and the two countries have appointed ambassadors. While some actors, such as the International Crisis Group (2022) acknowledge the relevance of this move in terms of economy, security and trade issues, the Colombian opposition, especially the political party *Centro Democrático*, has publicly condemned the fact that the country has resumed relations with the government of Nicolas Maduro. Moreover, the current government has received a considerable amount of criticism for not publicly declaring that the last elections in Venezuela (July 2024) were fraudulent<sup>21</sup>.

Besides this discussion, analysts and academics have argued that the agenda of diplomatic relations between Colombia and Venezuela must not exclude migration issues and the well-being of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, as has been the case (Universidad del Rosario & Fundación Konrad Adenauer, 2022), given that the administration of Gustavo Petro has lowered the profile of the migration crisis and has not positioned this issue in its international diplomatic agenda.

### **3.3. Response by humanitarian and development organizations**

The response by humanitarian and development-oriented organizations in Colombia to the migratory flows from Venezuela has been exceptional, considering that this is the only country with two parallel humanitarian architectures operating at the same time. To understand this configuration, it is necessary to describe how the “cluster approach” (defined below) works and why it is not responsible for responding to migration flows in Colombia.

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<sup>21</sup> See: *U.N. experts say Venezuela election results lack basic transparency*. Article by Samantha Schmidt at The Washington Post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/08/13/venezuela-election-results-un-report/>



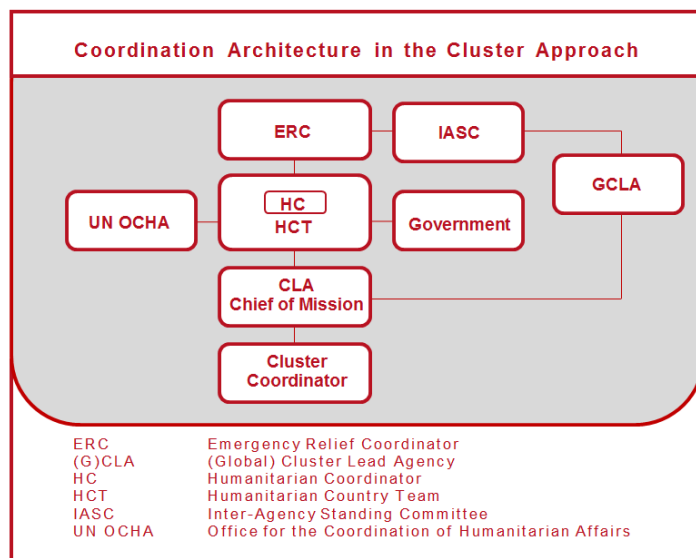
### **3.3.1. The Humanitarian Country Team and the clusters' system**

The UN General Assembly issued Resolution 46/182 on December 1991, providing guidelines to improve the effectiveness and quality of humanitarian assistance, and considering the lessons learned from the Gulf War, where the response showed lack of coordination and duplication of efforts (OCHA, 2012). The resolution established arrangements in terms of humanitarian architecture and coordination, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), a forum that “brings together the executive heads of 18 organizations and consortia to formulate policy, set strategic priorities and mobilize resources in response to humanitarian crises” (IASC, n.d.).

In 2005, the Humanitarian Reform Agenda introduced further coordination guidelines, such as the cluster approach. As explained by IASC (2020), clusters are groups formed at the global and country levels by UN agencies and humanitarian organizations with expertise in certain response areas (e.g., water and sanitation, shelter, food security, etc.). These groups have coordination responsibilities such as avoiding duplication of efforts, supporting needs assessments and promoting compliance with the humanitarian standards, to “enhance predictability, accountability and partnership” (IASC, 2020).

As observed in Figure 3 and explained by OCHA (2019), the cluster approach involves different roles, starting with the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), who reports to the Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and monitors the emergencies in countries that require assistance from the UN. In those countries, the ERC appoints a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), who must assess the need for an international response and lead the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in defining the characteristics of such response. The HCT is formed by representatives of United Nations; the International Organization for Migration (IOM); local, national and international NGOs, and the Red Cross, and it is responsible for coordinating humanitarian assistance in a manner that complements and does not replace the State's response to the crises, given that each affected State has “(...) the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory” (OCHA, 2019). Also, the procedure to activating the cluster approach involves a request by the affected country and consultations between the HCT, the HC and the ERC.

**Figure 3.** Coordination architecture in the cluster approach



**Note.** Reprinted from OCHA (2019). *About clusters. Who does what?*  
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/coordination/clusters/who-does-what>  
 CC BY 4.0

Due to the gravity of the internal armed conflict and the natural disasters affecting its population, Colombia was selected as one of the countries to implement the roll-out of the Humanitarian Reform in 2006. The recommendations of the IASC for this process included coordination with government authorities and State institutions, and the creation of thematic groups of Protection, Assistance and Basic Services, and Early Recovery (Moro, 2010). Since then, the structure of the humanitarian system and the involvement of OCHA has evolved in line with the context. In fact, as explained by a participant of this research (C4, 2023), the Peace Agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC armed group in 2016 had a significant impact in the humanitarian architecture, considering that the agreement led some donors to think that the humanitarian situation was improving and the country needed less funds. Therefore, OCHA was reducing its presence in the field in the years that followed, while the Venezuelan migration crisis was increasing and the Interagency Group on Mixed Migratory Flows (GIFMM) was emerging. The start of the GIFMM operations involved tensions with the clusters' system, which will be explained in section 3.3.3. "Tensions and coordination between the HCT and the GIFMM".

Currently, the HCT in Colombia is formed by 17 UN agencies and programs, 44 local and national NGOs, and 72 international NGOs. It is organized in seven clusters and six working groups at the national level, and it has local coordination teams in 16 of the 32 departments of the country. Both at the national and local level, these organizations and coordination groups conduct needs assessments, monitor the context, raise alerts, plan and implement joint activities, and, in general, provide assistance to the population affected by armed conflict and natural disasters, complementing the response provided by the responsible State entities: the Unit for the Attention and Integral Reparation of Victims (UARIV) and the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD) (Colombia Humanitarian Country Team, n.d.). Each year, the HCT publishes a Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and a Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) detailing the needs of its target populations, the planned response and its financial requirements.

It is relevant to mention that not all organizations assisting the population affected by armed conflict and natural disasters are members of the Local Coordination Teams or the clusters of the Humanitarian Country Team. Being part of this architecture requires enough funding from donors to implement activities within the framework of the HRP, as well as having logistical and coordination capacity to take part in meetings and joint initiatives; therefore, many local and national organizations implement their projects outside of this platform, missing valuable opportunities and advantages such as capacity building, technical assistance, training from expert organizations in a variety of topics, access to information, visibility of its activities and impact, among others.

### **3.3.2. Interagency Group on Mixed Migratory Flows (GIFMM)**

The GIFMM was set up by the end of 2016 to respond to the needs of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. This platform is currently formed by 85 local, national and international organizations (GIFMM & R4V, 2023). It is co-led by UNHCR and IOM, and it is organized in eight “sectors” that mirror the way clusters work, two thematic groups, and local divisions in eleven departments. As with the cluster system, many organizations do not have the financial, logistical and coordination capacity to be members of the GIFMM, so they carry out their interventions outside the platform.

The GIFMM is part of a broader system known as R4V (Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela), which emerged in April 2018 per request of the Secretary General of the United Nations, and is present in 17 countries: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Panama, Costa Rica, Mexico, Aruba, Curaçao,

Dominican Republic, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay (R4V, n.d.). Each year, the GIFMM organizations carry out joint needs assessments and build a Refugee Migrant and Response Plan (RMRP) detailing the population in need, the target population and the proposed activities per sector.

Some examples of activities implemented by the GIFMM sectors, included in the RMRP 2023-24 are:

- **Education:** technical assistance to schools, training for teachers, and distribution of supplies such as academic guides and school meals.
- **Food security:** distribution of vouchers and cash for beneficiaries to purchase food, and workshops on agricultural production.
- **Health:** provision of supplies, such as medicines; telemedicine; medical consultations, and support for enrolment in the national health insurance system.
- **Humanitarian transportation:** transportation services with family reunification purposes, and also to facilitate access to services and work opportunities.
- **Integration:** trainings and technical assistance related to various occupations, seed capital for entrepreneurship initiatives, and cash for food, rent, transportation and other needs.
- **Nutrition:** guiding sessions on breastfeeding and practices of adequate nutrition, and capacity building for social workers on nutrition standards.
- **Protection:** case management and referral (assistance to ensure access to services for people in complex and vulnerable situations, either by providing these services directly or by referring them to other organizations/institutions with the necessary capacity to respond) (IOM, n.d.). Also, informative sessions, legal aid, and capacity building for local and national institutions that provide services to the refugee and migrant population.
- **Shelter:** reception at shelters, cash or vouchers to access temporary housing, provision of household items.
- **Wash (water, sanitation and hygiene):** technical assistance for communities and associations in charge of Wash-related services, hygiene campaigns, as well as “construction, repair, improvement and rehabilitation (...)” of water and sanitation infrastructure (R4V, 2023, p. 54).

### 3.3.3. Tensions and coordination between the HCT and the GIFMM

Given that Colombia is the only country in the R4V platform that had an active cluster system when the response for refugees and migrants started, it is also the only country with a two-fold humanitarian architecture (the HCT and the GIFMM). As explained by research participants from Group C (C3, 2022; C4, 2023), the setup of the GIFMM provoked tensions and conflict with the staff and organizations of the clusters' system. One of the reasons of this tension was related to funding, because, as mentioned before, organizations assisting the population affected by armed conflict were receiving less and less financial support while the GIFMM was channeling massive donations during its first years of operation, as observed in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Funds required and raised by the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) of the HCT and the Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) of the GIFMM (2021-2023)

Humanitarian Country Team					GIFMM				
Year	Total beneficiaries	Total activities	Funds required by HRP (USD)	Funds raised by HRP (USD)	Year	Total beneficiaries	Total activities	Funds required by RMRP (USD)	Funds raised by RMRP (USD)
2021	1.9 million <sup>1</sup> (Jan-Nov)	12,425 <sup>2</sup> (Jan-Nov)	174 million <sup>3</sup>	85.1 million <sup>4</sup> (48.9 %)	2021	1.8 million <sup>13</sup>	36,814 <sup>14</sup>	640 million <sup>15</sup>	321 million (50.1%) <sup>16</sup>
2022	1.17 million <sup>5</sup> (Jan-Nov)	14,000 <sup>6</sup>	282.8 million <sup>7</sup>	100.6 million <sup>8</sup> (35.3 %)	2022	1.6 million <sup>17</sup>	61,400 <sup>18</sup>	802.9 million <sup>19</sup>	366.2 million (45.6 %) <sup>20</sup>
2023	1.12 million <sup>9</sup> (Jan-Nov)	13,970 <sup>10</sup>	283.3 million <sup>11</sup>	130.4 million (46 %) <sup>12</sup>	2023	1.3 million <sup>21</sup>	Not available	664.87 million <sup>22</sup>	180.19 million (27.1 %) <sup>23</sup>

**Note.** Sources of the figures by cell number: 1,2 – (OCHA, 2022b); 3,4 (FTS, 2022) – ; 5 –(OCHA, 2022a); 6,7,8 – (OCHA, 2023a); 9 – (OCHA, 2023b); 10,11,12 – (OCHA, 2024); 13,14,15,16 – (GIFMM, 2022); 17,18,19,20 – (GIFMM, 2023); 21, 22,23 – (GIFMM, 2024).

Nevertheless, despite the competition for funds and the lack of communication between the staff of the two architectures (especially at the local level), the HCT and the GIFMM established a coordination strategy called “Back-to-back” in 2017, consisting of joint meetings between the clusters and the sectors. The purpose of this strategy has been

bridging the gaps in assistance for populations affected by armed conflict, natural disasters, and migration flows.

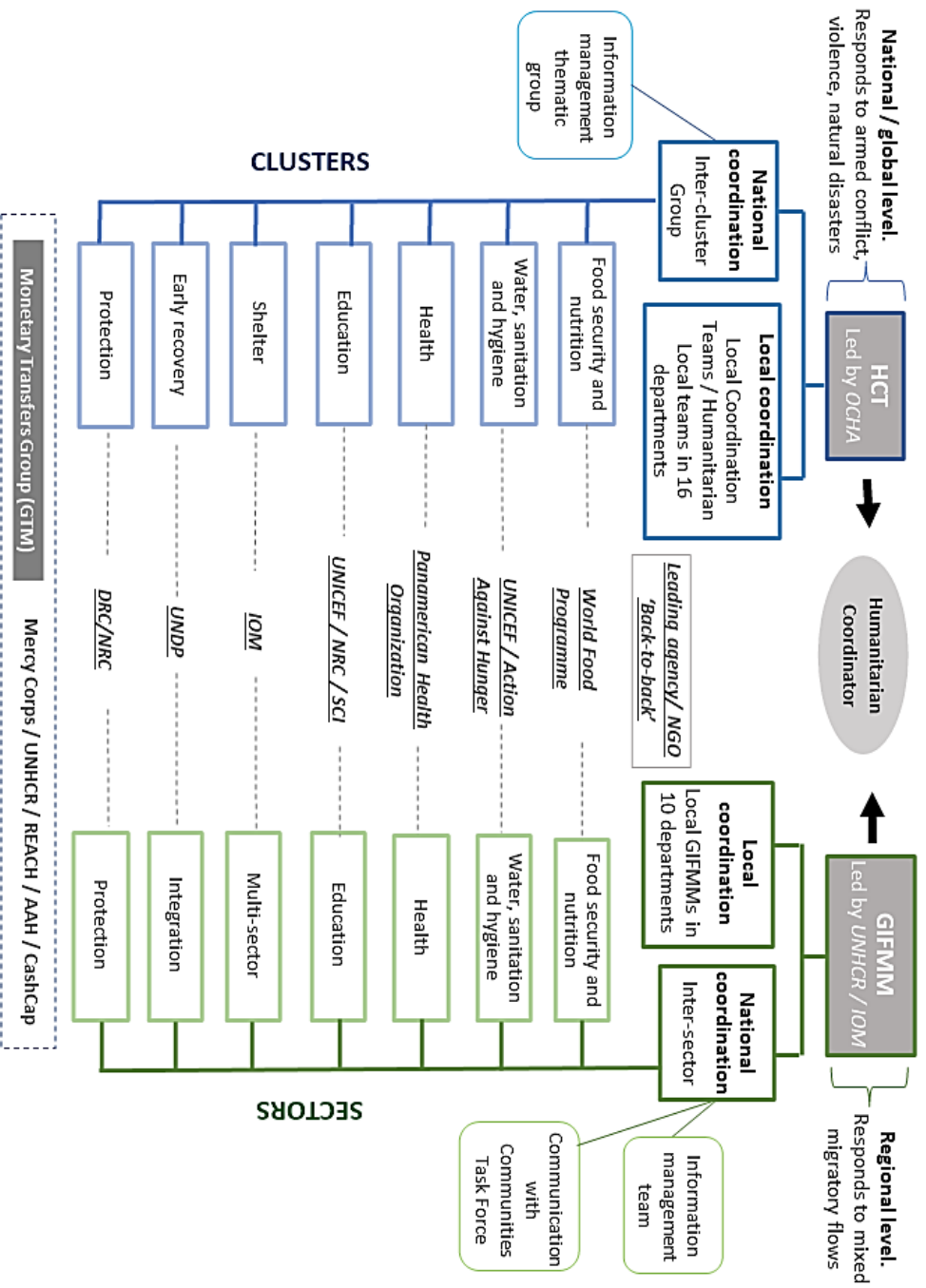
Furthermore, some coordination groups have implemented new strategies, such as the “Coordinating Protection Team”, comprised by the Protection cluster (HCT) and the Protection sector (GIFMM). By this logic, the two groups conduct their own meetings and initiatives separately, but these also have joint sessions and initiatives to present updates, propose and plan interventions, discuss changes in context, raise alerts, and train staff on relevant topics, among other actions. Figure 4 shows how the two platforms are structured, as well as the leading organizations of the “Back-to-back” strategies (C4, 2023).

#### **3.3.4. Summary of the local context**

In short, more than seven million people have left Venezuela since 2015 due to the economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in the country, and approximately 36 % of these Venezuelan nationals are currently in Colombia. The Colombian Government, UN agencies, local, national, and international NGOs, CSOs, and other organizations have responded to the needs of this population by facilitating access to regular migratory status and basic services and providing humanitarian and development assistance.

However, thousands of Venezuelans still struggle to cover their short and long-term needs. According to the descriptions of the humanitarian-development nexus by OCHA, the IASC, the OECD, the EU, and other actors involved in international cooperation, this approach is key to responding to this type of crisis. The thesis aims to establish if the HDN is being implemented in response to the migration flows from Venezuela, taking into account the concepts and arguments laid out in this chapter.

**Figure 5.** Humanitarian architecture in Colombia (by the end of 2023)



**Note.** Adapted from 'Arquitectura humanitaria 2024' [Humanitarian architecture 2024] by Coordinating Protection Team (2024).  
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## **Chapter 4: Data collection and analysis**

The present chapter describes the data collection and analysis processes undertaken for the research between September 2021 and February 2024, including the methods, as well as the rationale for coding the data and presenting the results, with the purpose of enhancing confirmability (Tobin & Begley, 2004, as cited in Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017).

In general, the thesis adopted a qualitative approach, considering that it allows to comprehend the perspectives that people have on a human or social issue (Creswell, 2009) and that it enables researchers to explore social phenomena, generate theory inductively and/or “gain new insights into an already well-known problem” (Stewart-Withers, Banks, Mcgregor, & Meo-Sewabu, 2014, p. 60). In this case, the well-known issue that the thesis revolves around is the humanitarian-development nexus, and the research aims to provide unique insights about its implementation in response to the situation of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, who are living in Colombia or crossing the country to reach another destination.

### **4.1. Data collection methods**

Before presenting the specific methods of the thesis, it is worth mentioning that I strived to implement the interactive approach proposed by Maxwell (2009) for the qualitative research design process. With this approach, the questions, goals, methods, conceptual framework and validity of a study must inform and influence each other; moreover, the conceptual framework sets the foundation for the goals and questions of the study, while the questions dictate which methods should be used, and the methods make it possible to find answers and rule out validity threats (Maxwell, 2009).

Nevertheless, this rationale is not the only factor steering the choice of research methods. In the book chapter “Designing a qualitative study”, Maxwell (2009) also mentions other relevant aspects, such as the researcher skills, “(...) the available resources, perceived problems, ethical standards, the research setting, and the data and preliminary conclusions of the study” (p.219). Taking all of these factors into account, I decided to use document review and semi-structured interviews as the thesis data collection methods.



#### 4.1.1. Document review

The document review took place before, during and after the interviews, given that it informed the preparation of the questionnaires, it allowed me to have a better understanding of some issues brought up by the research participants (such as the power relations within the GIFMM architecture), and it complemented the data collected through the interviews.

However, some documents had a more prominent role in the data analysis. These are: the Refugee and Migrant Response Plans (RMRP) for 2021, 2022, and 2023-2024; the RMRP end-of-year reports for 2021, 2022 and 2023, and the country reports by the Financial Tracking System (FTS) of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

The first type of document (RMRPs) provides an overview of how the R4V partner organizations plan to respond to the needs of the Venezuelan refugee and migrant population in Latin America and the Caribbean. These reports start by presenting key figures and describing the cross-cutting approaches of the response, and then present a chapter for each country or subregion (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, the Caribbean, Central America and Mexico, and the Southern Cone<sup>22</sup>), disaggregating the people in need (PIN), people targeted, financial requirements and response strategies for the different sectors (Wash, Protection, Education, Health, etc.).

Regarding the RMRPs for 2021, 2022 and 2023-2024, I only considered the Colombia chapters, assessing three aspects: direct and indirect mentions of the HDN, response priorities, and changes from one year to the next concerning the integration sector.

The second type of document (end-of-year reports) includes a summary of the response strategy for the corresponding period, an update on the country's situation, and key figures of the achievements in general and per sector. From these figures, I took into account the people and the funding reached per sector.

Finally, I consulted the 2021, 2022 and 2023 FTS reports for Colombia, to know the funding requirements and coverage for the three years, as well as the main recipient organizations. This information complemented the data collected through the interviews

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<sup>22</sup> According to the RMRP, the Caribbean comprises Dominican Republic, Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana, Curaçao, and Aruba; Central America comprises Panama and Costa Rica, while the Southern Cone encompasses Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.

and allowed me to have a better understanding of the types of interventions that the GIFMM organizations are implementing in Colombia, the role of funding in the implementation of the nexus, and the power relations that operate within the response architecture.

#### **4.1.2. Semi-structured interviews**

As described by Willis (2006), “interviews are an excellent way of gaining ‘factual’ information, such as details of NGO policies and government initiatives (...)” and are also “(...) an opportunity to examine processes, motivations and reasons for successes or failures” (p. 146), which means this method is appropriate to respond to the thesis research questions, especially those related to the interventions implemented by non-profit organizations and government institutions, and the enablers and barriers for the HDN in Colombia. Therefore, I employed interviews, more specifically, semi-structured interviews, considering that these enable researchers to address their topics of interest while leaving room for the interviewees to expand on their contributions and provide information that they consider relevant (Willis, 2006).

Now, relating to the sampling of the interviewees, I used a purposive strategy, more specifically, quota sampling, which establishes certain categories and a minimum of participants per category (Mason, 2002), assuring representation of relevant profiles or populations in the research (Robinson, 2014). Taking into account which profiles were important to interview in order to answer the research questions, I set up the following categories:

**Group A – programs staff:** people who work at the programs teams of NGOs and agencies that are part of the GIFMM.

**Group B – field staff:** people who work for NGOs and/or agencies in the field and have direct contact with the beneficiaries.

**Group C – representatives at inter-agency groups:** people hired by NGOs and/or agencies to represent them at inter-agency groups (e.g. the GIFMM sectors) and do coordination work.

**Group D – consultants:** persons with more than five years of work experience as consultants in program development for local or international NGOs or UN agencies.

**Group E – academics:** professors and/or researchers working at universities on projects or studies related to mixed migration flows in the country.

**Group F – public officials:** people working at government institutions involved in the response targeted at Venezuelan refugees and migrants at the local or national level.

For recruiting participants, I reached out to professionals whose profiles matched the categories' descriptions, and after the first few interviews I used the snowball sampling technique, reaching a total of 34 interviews, as explained in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Number and profiles of interviewees per group

<b>Group</b>	<b>Number of interviewees</b>	<b>Disaggregated profiles</b>
A – programs staff	13	- 12 professionals from international NGOs - A professional from a national NGO
B – field staff	6	- 5 professionals from international NGOs - A professional from a local NGO
C – representatives at inter-agency groups	4	- 3 representatives of international NGOs - A representative of a UN agency
D – consultants	3	- A consultant with experience working for UN agencies, international and national NGOs - A consultant with experience working for international and national NGOs - A consultant with experience working for international NGOs
E – academics	3	- 3 university professors and researchers who work on topics related to the situation of the Venezuelan refugee and migrant population in the country
F – public officials	5	- 3 officials from local government institutions - An official from a national government institution - An official from a national government institution
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	

The first step of the interviewing process was contacting the possible participants via e-mail or phone. Next, I sent them an information sheet and the informed consent form, and once they provided confirmation, we scheduled a virtual or in-person appointment to conduct the interview.

I prepared an interview guide for each group, considering that the experience and perspective of people in each group equipped them to provide richer information on certain topics. For instance, participants of groups A, B and D were better positioned than the rest to provide information on the programming of the GIFFM's implementing organizations, participants of Group C had the best knowledge on inter-agency coordination, and Group E was better positioned to point out achievements and shortcomings of the response to mixed migration flows and new courses of action.

However, some participants provided information on all the topics of interest for the thesis and even addressed high-relevance aspects not included in the interview guides. One of these aspects was related to the power relations between the different actors involved in the response. Therefore, I realized the importance of inquiring about this matter and included an additional research question.

In each interview, I recorded the audio with a hand-held device and took notes with consent from the participant to register relevant observations and issues to reflect on.

## **4.2. Data analysis**

Considering how the results are presented in chapters 5 and 6, and with the aim of facilitating the reading of the present chapter, this section is organized according to the research questions and the strategies I used to answer each of them.

As a starting point, it is relevant to mention that many interviewees provided their consent to be quoted with their real names, however, I decided to protect the identity of all the research participants by assigning them a code with their group and a number (e.g. A2, B4, C3) and also by removing the identifiable information from the interview transcripts. In addition, I used the codes to name the audio recordings and transcripts.

### **4.2.1. Secondary research question 1: what type of interventions are non-profit organizations and government institutions implementing in the response to the mixed migration flows from Venezuela?**

With the purpose of providing a general context of the interventions implemented by the GIFMM organizations, I checked which RMRP sectors had the highest proportion of people reached in 2021, 2022 and 2023. Then, I registered the information provided by the participants of groups A, B, E, and F (programs staff, field staff, academics and public officials) in an Excel sheet, specifically regarding the strategies and activities implemented by the 13 GIFMM organizations, the three universities and the five public institutions where

they worked, in response to mixed migration flows. In some cases, I complemented the interviews' data with information available on the organizations' and institutions' websites.

With this input, I categorized the programming of the GIFMM organizations and the public institutions into the theories of change for self-reliance and livelihood interventions proposed by Crawford et al. (2015), which are explained in Chapter 2 (theoretical framework). Concerning the universities, I described the role these and other academic institutions have played in the response to the mixed migration flows in Colombia.

**4.2.2. Secondary research questions 2, 3 and 4: what are the enablers and barriers for the HDN in Colombia?, how do power dynamics between implementing organizations and the government influence the HDN?, what actions can be implemented to promote its effective operationalization?**

Then, to analyze the data collected through the interviews, I employed thematic analysis, which Maguire & Delahunt (2017) describe as “(...) the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data” (p. 3353) and interpreting it to respond to research questions or to provide relevant information on a subject of qualitative study. To do so, I used the description-focused and interpretation-focused coding strategies, this is, reviewing the data and summarizing it in codes that capture what the interviewees said (description) and what I understood (interpretation) (Adu, 2019). When the research participants responded directly to a question, I used the description-focused strategy, and when they referred to an issue in a non-explicit way, I used the interpretive one. For instance, if I asked about the barriers to the humanitarian-development nexus in the country and the participant mentioned the lack of funding, I used a descriptive code, but if a participant brought up that the larger implementing organizations grabbed the leadership positions in the coordination groups, I used interpretation to create a code, for example, related to economic power.

I conducted this process using the NVivo 12 software, MS Excel and MS Word, following the steps suggested by Adu (2019, 2023a, 2023b):

1. Create overarching labels or containers for each research question in NVivo, to organize the themes and codes, according to which question these respond to.
2. Upload the transcripts to NVivo and label them with relevant information, such as the group to which the research participants belong.

3. Review each transcript, code the information using the descriptive and interpretive strategies, and put the codes into the research questions “containers” as appropriate.
4. Revise the codes and combine those referring to the same issue.
5. Export the code list to an Excel file and organize the codes according to the case count, this is, the number of interviewees that referred to each code. This way, the codes appear on the list from highest to lowest case count, as shown in Appendix B.
6. Open an MS Word file, write the research questions and create tables to organize clusters of codes under each question, as shown in Appendix B.
7. Group and sort the codes in clusters, according to how they relate to each other. Those referring to the same topic or describing the same issue go in the same group. Once all the codes are in a group, review and reorganize them as necessary, correcting possible mistakes.
8. Label the groups or clusters with short phrases that represent all of the codes these contain, or in other words, label the clusters with the themes the codes refer to, always addressing the research questions.
9. Back to NVivo, create containers named as the themes. Then, drag and drop the codes, according to the categorization made in MS Word.
10. Once all the codes are categorized in each theme and research question, export the code list to an Excel file, as observed in Appendix B, which is an output of the data analysis process and an input for results writing.

In total, I obtained 95 themes, which constituted the main input to answer three secondary research questions: “what are the enablers and barriers for the HDN in Colombia?”, “how do power dynamics between implementing organizations and the government influence the HDN?”, and “what actions can be implemented to promote its effective operationalization?”.

For each of these research questions, I selected the clusters with the highest case counts and analyzed them in light of the analytical framework and additional literature. The results writing phase reflected this process, including representative quotes of the research participants.

#### **4.2.3. Central research question: how and to what extent is the humanitarian-development nexus implemented in response to the Venezuelan migratory flows in Colombia?**

To assess the knowledge of the nexus among the interviewees and the alignment of the GIFMM organizations' programs with the nexus, I quantified the following:

- people who asserted having knowledge of the nexus;
- interviewees from Groups A and B who said that the programming of their organizations was aligned with the nexus;
- participants from Group A who considered that the RMRP was in line with the nexus.

Then, considering the answers to the secondary research questions, I analyzed if the response in Colombia to the migration flows from Venezuela was complying with the five steps suggested by the "New Way of Working" (OCHA, 2017) to reach collective outcomes, and with the nine principles of an effective livelihood response, suggested by Barbelet & Wake (2017) and mentioned in the analytical framework.

Finally, based on the literature consulted on the HDN and the data collected through document review, I proposed a traffic light assessment of the HDN implementation in Colombia. Taking into account the data collected through the interviews and the results of the thematic analysis, I concluded where the response stands.

#### **4.3. Limitations**

The main limitation of the thesis is related to its timeline, taking into account that most interviews were conducted between September 2021 and June of 2022 but the data analysis concluded in 2024. Due to reasons unrelated to the research, the data analysis phase was extended beyond the initial plan, therefore, I conducted additional interviews in mid-2023 (two corresponding to Group A, one to Group C, and one to Group E) as a way of addressing the validity threat posed by the time gaps between the data collection and the data analysis (Maxwell, 2009). In these conversations, I included questions that delved into issues and situations that had probably changed since the last round of interviews, for instance, the power relations between the different actors involved in the response to the Venezuelan population. The context variations I encountered in these conversations fed into the overall process of data analysis and results writing.

A second limitation is related to the proportion and representation of diverse profiles and types of organizations in the research. It is necessary to point out that Group

A (programs staff) had twice the size of Group B (field staff), which means that less data was collected on the views and opinions of people working directly with the Venezuelan and host populations. Also, most interviewees from Groups A and B worked at international organizations, so the primary information on the strategies and perspectives of local organizations is scarce. This limitation reflects a characteristic of the GIFMM itself, predominantly formed by international NGOs and agencies.

Furthermore, there was a low representation of UN agency personnel since all of the interviewees from Groups A and B worked at NGOs, while only one participant from Group C was working at a UN agency and one participant from Group D had recently worked as a consultant for the UN system. This issue is related to the fact that “all researchers are at least to some extent dependent on the enthusiasm and cooperation of respondents in conducting their research” (Mayoux, 2006, p. 138), and it was not possible to set up interviews with more people working for the UN. Even though I sent plenty of requests to people working at different UN agencies, many of them declined to participate and others did not respond.

A third limitation has to do with the focus of the research on the mixed migration flows from Venezuela and the exclusion of migration flows from other countries, such as Haiti and Ecuador, which have increased significantly since 2020. Colombia is currently a transit country for migrants who aim to reach Central and North America, which requires crossing the Darien Gap between Colombia and Panama or sailing from the island of San Andres (Colombia) to Nicaragua. Therefore, it is also necessary to inquire if and how the humanitarian-development nexus is being implemented in response to these migration flows.



## **Chapter 5: Findings and discussion on the secondary research questions**

Based on interviews and data from key documents published by the regional R4V platform, and additional relevant literature, this chapter explores: 1. what types of interventions non-profit organizations and government institutions are implementing in response to the mixed migration flows from Venezuela, 2. What are the enablers and barriers for the HDN in Colombia, 3. how power dynamics between implementing organizations and the government influence the HDN, and 4. what actions can be implemented to promote effective operationalization

Besides the data collected, the chapter draws on the concepts included in the analytical framework (Chapter 2). First, the “theories of change for self-reliance and livelihoods interventions” by Crawford et al. (2015) allow us to assess if the interventions carried out by the 13 organizations where participants from groups A and B work aim to cover just the basic needs of the Venezuelan refugees and migrants, or if their programming goes further and seeks to support the economic integration of the target population in Colombia.

Second, the “general programming approaches”, also described by Crawford et al. (2015), help understand the thinking behind the programs that the organizations are implementing and to identify if their goals include:

- promoting changes in legislation to facilitate the economic integration of the refugee and migrant population;
- supporting the livelihood initiatives and strategies that refugees and migrants develop on their own and according to their priorities;
- reforming or adjusting the architecture of the aid system, pushing for strategies such as the provision of cash and vouchers across all sectors, so that beneficiaries have more agency to decide what to purchase and which needs to cover first.

Then, the typology of power in global governance (Moon 2019) provides the theoretical basis to describe how the different organizations and institutions involved in the response for the Venezuelan population exert and are subject to power.

### **5.1. What type of interventions are non-profit organizations and government institutions implementing in response to the mixed migration flows from Venezuela?**

In answering this question, it is crucial to start with two considerations. First, as described in Chapter 2, Crawford et al. (2015) mention that the spectrum of the theories of change for self-reliance and livelihoods interventions applies to different situations: from encampment to settlement in urban or rural areas apart from camps. “Care and maintenance” assistance prioritizes refugees living in camps, while “partial integration” and “de facto integration” programming usually targets those living in host communities (pp. 19-21). This trend does not apply in the Colombian context, given that refugee camps are not common in the country. From 2018 to 2022, there was a place that could be considered a refugee camp, called *Centro de Atención Integral* (Integrated Assistance Center), located in the municipality of Maicao, in the department of La Guajira, on the northeast border with Venezuela<sup>23</sup>. However, most refugees and migrants live in different conditions.

A high proportion of this population are in informal settlements in the periphery of cities<sup>24</sup>, where housing conditions are precarious and access to utilities, water, and sanitation is a challenge or is not available (Inojosa, 2019). Also, in big cities such as Bogota, families who cannot afford a safe space to live are forced to pay for rooms in deteriorated facilities, facing overcrowding, lack of hygiene, and exposure to criminal activities (DRC in Colombia, 2022b). In this context, the spectrum of the theories of change does not go from living in refugee camps to self-settlement in host communities, it goes from situations of vulnerability where families do not have their basic needs covered to situations where families have access to food and basic services but struggle to find a stable income.

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<sup>23</sup> The camp was coordinated by UNHCR and managed by the Danish Refugee Council; it had capacity to host up to 1,200 people and it offered temporary shelter, along with food, Wash and protection services by different organizations. The target population was comprised of individuals and families who had recently arrived in the country and were in the most vulnerable situations (A10, 2022). This camp closed in September of 2022.

<sup>24</sup> DRC Colombia undertook a survey between January and March 2023 to 279 families in La Guajira department. It revealed that 82.8% of the families lived in informal settlements (DRC in Colombia, 2023, p. 23).

The second aspect to consider has to do with the durable solutions that the RMRP and the implementing organizations consider feasible and appropriate. Since the political, economic, and social situation in Venezuela continues to pose significant risks for the population<sup>25</sup>, UNHCR and the other organizations involved in the response have only favored the options of integration in the host country and resettlement to a third country. In this sense, as Crawford et al. (2015) argued, the three theories of change are desirable and a combination of the different approaches allows to assist populations in situations of stark vulnerability and who do not have support networks in the host country (p.3). In this case, the “care and maintenance” approach makes it possible to assist people with the intention of staying in Colombia, but also people who are trying to reach a third country and do not have their basic needs covered. Then, the “partial Integration” approach supports those who want to build their future in Colombia and are searching for livelihood opportunities.

### **5.1.1. Organizations**

There are a number of activities that the GIFMM organizations carry out in a coordinated manner to assess needs, propose short and medium-term interventions, and respond to emergencies. According to the interviewees from Group A (program staff of implementing organizations or agencies), these activities include individual and joint missions to the field, monthly meetings of each sector and subsector, as well as regional and national workshops to build the response plan (RMRP). In these workshops, a variety of actors – including representatives of organizations present in the different departments – provide their account of the changes in context and the needs, capabilities, and priorities of the population. After this process, the organizations agree on the plan’s objectives and strategic indicators. The result is the national chapter of the RMRP that presents the key figures and response modalities per sector.

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<sup>25</sup> In July 2023, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) issued a statement condemning the political bans imposed by the Government of Nicolás Maduro to opposition candidates, which entails “(...) restrictions on the right to political participation and freedom of association (...)” (2023) Also, in September 2023, Reuters reported that economic activity decreased 7% (Venezuelan Finance Observatory, 2023, as cited in Armas, 2023) and industrial production decreased 7.6% in Venezuela in the first semester of the year, in comparison to the first semester of 2022 (Conindustria, 2023, as cited in Armas (2023).

Once the RMRP implementation starts, the GIFMM organizations submit periodic reports to the R4V platform on the number and type of activities implemented in each location, the number of people reached, and the funds invested, among other indicators. However, R4V publishes only part of the data, which limits the possibility of understanding which activities or interventions have the greater scope and impact in the different departments. For instance, the dashboard of the response monitoring for 2024, available on the website of the R4V Colombia platform<sup>26</sup>, shows the total number of education-related activities, but it does not specify if these activities consist of early childhood education, remedial education sessions, distribution of educational supplies, etc.

What the R4V public reports do show are the sectoral results in terms of people reached, providing an overview of the most successful interventions in terms of targets met. Table 5 presents the three sectors with the highest percentage of people reached in 2021, 2022 and 2023, and indicates that activities related to humanitarian transportation, food security, health, and protection met or exceeded the RMRP targets.

**Table 5.** RMRP sectors with the highest proportion of people reached in 2021, 2022 and 2023

Year	Sector or subsector	People targeted	People reached	Percentage of people reached
2021	Humanitarian transportation	25,400	78,800	310%
	Food security	1,130,000	1,140,000	101%
	Health	1,120,000	1,030,000	92%
2022	Humanitarian transportation	89,900	99,700	110,9%
	Protection	502,900	476,500	94,8%
	Food security	1,580,000	1,240,000	78,1%
2023	Food security	975.800	1,030,000	105 %
	Human Trafficking & Smuggling (subsector)	29,000	26,800	92 %
	Protection	542,000	449,500	83 %

<sup>26</sup> Colombia. Monitoreo de la Respuesta a Refugiados y Migrantes RMRP 2023 [Refugee and Migrant Response Monitoring RMRP 2023] <https://www.r4v.info/es/colombia>

**Note.** Data from RMRP End of year reports (R4V 2021, 2022, 2023). The figures of people reached are estimates, since R4V uses a different nomenclature to present the results.

However, these data do not provide enough detail on the interventions carried out by the different GIFMM organizations and are insufficient to identify the theories of change taking place. The information provided by the first two groups of interviewees (programs staff and field staff), as well as the information available on the websites of the thirteen organizations where they work, enabled a more specific understanding of the types of activities that have been implemented since 2021 and the theories of change that those activities reflect, in relation to the concepts and descriptions on theories of change for self-reliance and livelihood interventions proposed by Crawford et al. (2015).

The conversations with the interviewees reflected a common understanding that the return of Venezuelan refugees and migrants to their country is not a solution in sight for the near future and that it is necessary to scale up and improve self-reliance and livelihood interventions to facilitate integration. As a programs staff of a development-oriented international organization said:

(...) the humanitarian crisis phase has passed, the issues of *caminantes* [walkers] and that kind of situations... it is not that they no longer exist, but they have decreased and what we now have is 2.8 million people in Colombia demanding services from the State, for the enjoyment and guarantee of their rights, but on the other hand with difficulties to generate wealth because the vast majority of these people are in the informal sector and the truth is that these people produce incomes lower than the minimum wage, so let's say that the connection between the humanitarian phase and the development phase is now more than evident (A13, 2023).

This realization is reflected in the interventions that the GIFMM organizations have implemented since 2021, although the emphasis on integration is still insufficient, as it will be argued under research question 2 (page 69).

Considering the types of interventions implemented by each of the thirteen organizations, shown in Table 6, it was concluded that six of them were applying a “Care and maintenance” theory of change (ToC), since their activities focused on covering the basic needs of the target population, such as access to water, food and shelter, and did not aim at improving nor promoting income generation and livelihoods. Other activities

carried out by this group of organizations encompassed education, protection, health and humanitarian transportation assistance, which aim to “(...) ensure that displaced people (especially children) preserve the fundamental human capital foundations necessary to build sustainable livelihoods in the future” (Crawford et al., 2015, p. 20).

The remaining seven organizations reflected both the “care and maintenance” and the “partial integration” theories of change, given that their programmes included at least one activity to cover basic needs and protect assets but also multiple activities to promote livelihoods, entrepreneurship and employability. In comparison to the first group of organizations, this group did provide the projects participants with tools to generate and manage an income, such as financial literacy sessions, entrepreneurship training and mentoring, seed capital, orientation to build and strengthen employability skills, among others mentioned in Table 6.

As per the descriptions provided by the interviewees and the websites of the organizations, none of the thirteen NGOs put a “de facto integration” theory into practice. Even though some of them implement entrepreneurship and employability-related activities, there is not enough emphasis nor proven success on linking people’s initiatives to real market opportunities and prioritizing big-scale advocacy actions for socio-economic integration.

**Table 6.** Organizations' activities and theories of change according to the classification of self-reliance and livelihood interventions by Crawford et. al. (2015)<sup>27</sup>.

<b>Theory of change:</b>	Care and maintenance	<b>N° of organizations:</b>	6
<b>Types of activities:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Health</b> Health education sessions, promotion of healthy behaviors at the community level, medical consultations, medical tests, provision of medicines and treatments, provision of birth control methods, support for access to voluntary termination of pregnancy, and case referral.</li> <li>• <b>Education</b> Renovations of schools; delivery of school kits; socioemotional education; workshops for teachers, parents and students, and case referral.</li> <li>• <b>Protection</b> Informative sessions on available services; child protection sessions; training sessions on risk management; legal aid to obtain documentation, to access health care or education services; training sessions on sexual and reproductive rights; gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and case management; psychosocial support, case referral, trainings and awareness-raising sessions for public officials and community members.</li> <li>• <b>Wash</b> Reconstruction of water wells, delivery of hygiene kits and/or water filters, and informative sessions.</li> <li>• <b>Humanitarian transportation</b> Transportation between cities and municipalities, and local transportation assistance.</li> <li>• <b>Shelter</b> Temporary shelter</li> <li>• <b>Cross-cutting activities</b> -Multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) -Advocacy: reports on needs and access to rights; events and campaigns targeted at donors, public officials and State institutions.</li> </ul>			

<sup>27</sup> The sources of this information are the interviewees of groups A and B (programs staff and field staff of 13 GIFMM organizations), and the official websites of these organizations. According to the activities carried out by the organizations, each one was classified in the theories of change proposed by Crawford et al. (2015).

<b>Theory of change:</b>	Care and maintenance and partial integration	<b>N° of organizations:</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Types of activities:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Food security</b> Served meals at shelters or community centers, and delivery of food kits.</li> <li>• <b>Health</b> Sexually transmitted diseases (STD) diagnostic tests, birth control methods and other sexual and reproductive health services, medical consultations, and mental health services.</li> <li>• <b>Education</b> Workshops for children, adolescents and youth, and socio-emotional education for children and adolescents.</li> <li>• <b>Protection</b> Informative sessions on access to rights and services; safe spaces for children and adolescents; child protection trainings; restoring family links; MPCA or in-kind assistance to reduce or mitigate protection risks; legal aid to obtain documentation, to access health care or education services; human rights trainings for communities; psychosocial support; awareness-raising on GBV risks; GBV case management; awareness-raising and training in gender justice; Mine Risk Education; capacity building of local organizations in risk management; sessions on peaceful resolution of conflicts, and informative sessions for public officials on current legislation, prevention of xenophobia and good practice in service provision.</li> <li>• <b>Integration</b> Entrepreneurship training, mentoring sessions, support for labor market insertion, working sessions for strengthening productive enterprises and initiatives, seed capital, promotion of sustainable agroecological production models, financial education workshops, orientation and training in employability skills, support for job search and placement, capacity building workshops for companies to foster inclusive work environments, case referral.</li> <li>• <b>Wash</b> Delivery of Wash and hygiene kits, and small-scale community-centered Wash infrastructure projects.</li> <li>• <b>Shelter</b> Temporary shelter</li> <li>• <b>Cross-cutting activities</b> -MPCA -Capacity building of local and/or grassroots organizations in various sectors -Advocacy: reports on needs and access to rights; events and campaigns targeted at donors, public officials and State institutions; support for grassroots and local organizations to position topics that are important for the target population; advocacy at the local, national and international level.</li> </ul>			



<b>Theory of change:</b>	De facto integration		0
<b>Types of activities:</b>			
<i>In line with the description by Cosgrave et al. (2015), interventions would include big scale advocacy strategies targeted at State institutions to achieve meaningful policy reforms, and long-term entrepreneurship projects with community ownership and a holistic approach (pp. 22-23).</i>			

Now, concerning the “general programming approaches”, described by the same authors and shown in Table 7, five organizations had a particular focus on the policy environment, although not specifically concerning economic integration. These organizations carried out reports, advocacy events, and discussions with public officials and State institutions to push reforms and improvements in access to rights for the Venezuelan refugee and migrant population in Colombia, according to the mandate of each organization (education, health, participation, etc.).

Of the thirteen organizations, only three had a focus on the perspectives of the Venezuelan population (second approach, described in the analytical framework), but this did not apply specifically to their livelihood and self-reliance. According to the staff of these three organizations (one local, two international), the participant communities, as well as local and grassroots organizations were involved throughout the project cycle, and their needs, priorities, opinions and practices were reflected in the formulation and implementation of the activities. The remaining interviews indicate that the rest of the organizations incorporated a conventional participation model, in which project participants only provide input for the needs analyses at the formulation phase and then provide feedback for the accountability assessments.

One organization had a particular focus on changing the architecture of the international system to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development assistance. A program staff member referred to this approach: “(...) at the global level, [*the organization*] has changed its structure to orient part of its programmatic components towards integration, development and the nexus (...) (A10, 2022)”. However, this is not to say that only that particular organization has its programme aligned with the humanitarian-development nexus, because there are many other ways to do it, such as promoting synergies between different actors and prioritizing the vulnerability reduction of communities to possible emergencies in the future (IASC, 2016). More detail on the

organizations' programs and their relation to the nexus will be discussed in the next chapter.

**Table 7.** General approaches implemented by the organizations according to the description by Crawford et. al. (2015)<sup>28</sup>.

Organization(s) number(s)	General approaches			
	Focus on the policy environment	Focus on the perspectives of the displaced	Focus on changing the architecture of the international system	None
1,8	X			
4,9	X	X		
5		X		
10	X		X	
2,3,6,7,11,12,13				X

### 5.1.2 Public institutions

Based on an analysis of interviews with public officials and the information available on the official websites of the five institutions where they worked, three government institutions (two local, one national) implement a “care and maintenance” theory of change, providing support or direct services to cover basic needs such as food, shelter and health care, along with information, legal aid, and cash transfers. Two of these institutions also put into practice a “partial integration” theory, with activities related to entrepreneurship, employability, life skills, and cultural integration, as presented in Table 8. However, the proportion of activities destined to cover the basic needs of the target population is greater than the activities oriented towards livelihoods and integration, and the capacity of the institutions in both dimensions is very limited in comparison to the existing needs, which will be illustrated below.

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<sup>28</sup> The sources of this information are the interviewees of the groups A and B (programs staff and field staff of 13 GIFMM organizations), and the official websites of these organizations. According to the information collected, it was identified if the organizations programs reflected one or more general approaches described by Crawford et al. (2015).

The actions of the two remaining institutions cannot be classified in the theories of change described by Cosgrave et al. (2015), given that their role in the response has been more related to strategies and coordination with actors of international cooperation than to the direct provision of services.

**Table 8.** Actions and activities implemented by government institutions in response to the mixed migration flows from Venezuela, and associated theories of change according to the classification by Crawford et. al. (2015)<sup>29</sup>.

Institution	Actions and activities implemented between 2021 and 2023	Theory of change
Institution N°1 (district level in La Guajira)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Services provided directly to the Venezuelan population:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Information on available services by public institutions and NGOs (food assistance, shelter, etc.)</li> <li>-Information and support to access emergency medical care through the public health system</li> <li>-Support for transportation to access specialized medical care in other departments</li> <li>-Referrals to other institutions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>Services provided with support from NGOs and UN agencies:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Legal aid and orientation to access rights and services</li> <li>- Support to access funeral services</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Care and maintenance
Institution N°2 (district level in Bogota)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Services provided directly to the Venezuelan population:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Information and orientation on available services by public institutions and NGOs</li> <li>-Food kits, hygiene kits, temporary shelter</li> <li>-Psychosocial support, legal aid, daycare for children</li> <li>-Cultural activities to promote integration</li> <li>-Support for the validation of degrees and knowledge certification processes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Care and maintenance and partial integration

<sup>29</sup> The sources of this information are the interviewees of the Group F (public officials), as well as the official websites of the institutions.

Institution	Actions and activities implemented between 2021 and 2023	Theory of change
Institution N°2 (district level in Bogota)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Services provided with support from/in partnership with NGOs and UN agencies:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Registration in the TPS (Temporary Protection Statute for Venezuelan Migrants), support for enrollment in the SISBEN (System for the Identification of Potential Beneficiaries of Social Programs)</li> <li>-Support to access health care, including sexual and reproductive health and mental health services</li> <li>-Sessions to build employability skills</li> <li>-Entrepreneurship training</li> <li>-Cash transfers</li> <li>-Referrals to other institutions and GIFMM organizations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Care and maintenance and partial integration
Institution N°3 (departmental level – Norte de Santander)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>No services provided directly to the Venezuelan population</u></li> <li>• <u>Actions related to the response for Venezuelan refugees and migrants:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Exchange of information with implementing organizations of the GIFMM</li> <li>-Characterization of the Venezuelan refugee and migrant population in the department</li> <li>-Support the design and operation of healthcare centers for refugees and migrants in Norte de Santander</li> </ul> </li> <li>• -Promotion of public-private partnerships for job placement of refugees and migrants in the department</li> </ul>	Not applicable
Institution N°4 (national level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Services provided directly to the Venezuelan population:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Food assistance</li> <li>-Safe spaces for families</li> <li>-Cash transfers</li> <li>-Financial education sessions, life skills sessions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>Actions related to the response for Venezuelan refugees and migrants:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Identification of the most vulnerable population</li> <li>-Finding sources of funding for projects aimed at refugee and migrant populations</li> <li>-Establishing alliances and partnerships with INGOs, NGOs and UN agencies to provide assistance to refugee and migrant populations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Care and maintenance and partial integration

Institution	Actions and activities implemented between 2021 and 2023	Theory of change
Institution N° 5 (currently non-existent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>No services provided directly to the Venezuelan population</u></li> <li>• <u>Actions related to the response for Venezuelan refugees and migrants:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Public-private partnerships for job placement of refugees and migrants</li> <li>-Campaigns and events for the prevention and reduction of xenophobia</li> <li>-Dialogue and coordination to implement the activities that the Government institutions identify as relevant/urgent/uncovered, support to institutions involved in the response</li> <li>-Creation of strategies to facilitate the economic integration of Venezuelan refugees and migrants</li> <li>-Coordination with the GIFMM organizations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Not applicable

At this point, it is important to note that the approach of the public institutions to respond to the needs of the refugee and migrant population changed significantly with the installation of a new national government in August 2023. The administration of Gustavo Petro lowered the profile of the Venezuelan migration phenomenon<sup>30</sup> and reduced public references regarding the situation, raising questions about the new government's response strategy and generating concern about the decrease in funding from international donors to face the issue. When asked about this situation, one of the interviewees, who works at a national level State institution, explained that one of the major shifts in the response for the Venezuelan population in Colombia consists of not implementing entirely separate programs for them. Instead, the Government is aiming to include the most vulnerable Venezuelan population in the Social Protection System and to provide assistance to all of the prioritized families, regardless of their nationality:

When we stop having a priority focus on the migrant, he/she is seen as a normal citizen within society who must be assisted through the Social Protection System.

The priority is no longer the migrant, but it is a Social Protection System that is

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<sup>30</sup> For instance, President Petro did not refer to the migration flows from Venezuela in his first speech at the United Nations in September of 2022 (Universidad del Rosario & Fundación Konrad Adenauer, 2023, p. 3).

more universal and includes everyone... that is the vision of the new Government. Migrants are not left aside, but they are positioned as citizens (...) who are already integrating and require similar assistance to that needed by nationals (F5, 2023).

In this sense, the strategy of the current Colombian government would consist of extending the coverage of the existing and future State-funded social programs, allowing Venezuelan families and individuals in vulnerable situations to access cash transfers and subsidies for housing, food security, health care, and other needs. This strategy is consistent with the “horizontal expansion” explained by O’Brien et al. (2018) regarding the types of social protection adaptation, given that some of the social programs that used to be available only to the vulnerable Colombian population are now available for the Venezuelan population that meets certain criteria, during the period that the Temporary Protection Permit is valid (until May, 2031).

However, even though Venezuelan nationals that have entered levels 1 and 2 of the System for the Identification of Potential Beneficiaries of Social Programs (Sisben) can access benefits such as free or subsidized health care services (as explained in Chapter 3), many social programs are still exclusive for Colombian citizens, for example, subsidies for homeownership. Also, Venezuelans who are covered by the Social Protection System face delays and other obstacles in service provision, just as Colombians do, because of the low capacity of the system to respond to the needs of the vulnerable population in the country (DRC in Colombia, 2022a). This low capacity will be discussed below.

### **5.1.3. Academia**

The interviews to academics provided an understanding to the role that universities and other academic institutions have played in the response to the mixed migration flows in Colombia. The three participants from Group E provided concrete examples to support their arguments. According to them, academia has carried out research to understand the situation of Venezuelan refugees and migrants regarding the security risks and incidents during their migration journey, the barriers they encounter to accessing rights and services, as well as the impact of regulations and public policy on their daily lives (E1, August 2021; E2, 2022; E3, 2022). This research has taken the form of op-eds, articles, reports, essays, and publications shared through the websites of universities, media outlets, social media, and scientific and legal journals.

Furthermore, academia has documented cases of human rights violations and provided legal aid to the affected population, for instance, when healthcare providers have

denied services to refugees or migrants with catastrophic illnesses, or when the State has expelled Venezuelan nationals without granting them the right to legal counsel.

A third action that academia has implemented in the response is monitoring the public conversations and messages around the mixed migration flows and the affected populations. For instance, a university has conducted research involving “web scraping” techniques to know different opinions and experiences related to health, education, work, and security, and if and how these feed into xenophobia.

Finally, the interviewees mentioned the work that academia has done in terms of advocacy, public debate, and contributions to the development of public policy, such as the “21 recommendations for the migration agenda of the new government” that a group of CSOs and academia submitted to the minister of foreign affairs in 2022<sup>31</sup>. Various universities and academic institutions have played a pivotal role in the public debate regarding the ETPV, the Comprehensive Immigration Policy approved by Congress in 2021, and other rulings and decisions by legislative entities. Their actions have included analyzing and warning about the negative effects of these decisions on the lives of refugees and migrants, and suggesting improvements and changes in legislation and public policy that could lead to the guarantee of their rights.

## **5.2. What are the enablers and barriers for the HDN in Colombia?**

### **5.2.1. Enablers**

Most references to the aspects that allow the HDN to become a reality in Colombia were related to *the architecture and functioning of the GIFMM*. Of the 34 participants, 16 (47 %) mentioned it, highlighting that the different coordination groups allow to avoid duplication, guarantee referrals and case management for people who need it, fill gaps in the response, and exchange information at the national and regional level.

The participants praised the role of the Cash Working Group, which seeks to coordinate and organize the sectoral and multisectoral interventions that involve cash transfers (R4V, 2023). In the words of a programs staff at an international organization:

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<sup>31</sup> The 21 recommendations include strengthening the Colombian asylum and refugee system, and extending the deadline for more people of all nationalities to have access to the Temporary Protection Status (ETPV). The letter is available (in Spanish) on: [https://www.dejusticia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Propuestas-migracion-para-el-nuevo-gobierno\\_Personas-migrantes-refugiadasretornadas-OSC-y-academia.pdf](https://www.dejusticia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Propuestas-migracion-para-el-nuevo-gobierno_Personas-migrantes-refugiadasretornadas-OSC-y-academia.pdf)

The Cash Working Group now has a closer relationship with the Protection sector, and I have also seen that happen with the Health sector, so let's say that steps are being taken, not very big steps, not very fast, but something is happening concerning how to better coordinate the response so that there is a real nexus to development (A12, 2023).

Also, the interviewees who referred to this theme described the planning of the response as an enabler of the HDN, arguing that being part of the R4V regional platform facilitates international visibility and donor reach, which in turn brings funding.

The second theme that the interviewees mentioned the most as an enabler of the HDN was *the implementation of the ETPV*. Seven (7) people (20,6 %) referred to this measure as a significant advance in terms of access to migration regularization, which has led to a durable solution (local integration) and has allowed the migration authorities to collect information on Venezuelan migrants, where they are and how they are living.

The third enabler was the *access to rights and services through regulations different than the ETPV*. Four (4) interviewees (11,7 %) highlighted the administrative measures that have granted access to emergency medical care for all people regardless of their migratory status, access to education for Venezuelan children, and access to Colombian nationality for children born in the country to Venezuelan parents.

However, despite these positive references to the ETPV and other regulations, academics and staff of national and international NGOs criticized their scope and called attention to their limitations. A professor at a university that leads the provision of legal aid to Venezuelan nationals described the Government response as “uncoordinated, fragmented and reactive”, and asserted that the Comprehensive Migration Policy (Law 2136 of 2021) is a law that took up the resolutions and decrees that already existed but did not propose any advances or improvements in access to rights (E1,2021) Furthermore, the three interviewees from academia mentioned that the Government received comments and suggestions from academic groups and CSOs, but these were not incorporated into the Comprehensive Migration Policy.

For instance, in 2020 a group of CSOs and NGOs built a suit of ten recommendations for the Policy, such as the inclusion of all refugees and stateless persons in the international protection system, and the establishment of permanent paths for migratory regularization (Dejusticia, 2020a). Even though these recommendations were a strong advocacy tool and the organizations involved took part in public hearings and other participation spaces, the recommendations were not reflected in the Policy.



Regarding this situation, one of the professors interviewed expressed that “(...) there is no point in the participation of academia or organizations in the construction of these instruments if in the end all these observations and suggestions are left out” (E3, 2022).

### 5.2.2. Challenges

For the sake of clarity during the data collection and analysis, it was necessary to differentiate between two categories of situations that have a negative influence on the implementation of the HDN: challenges and barriers. The “challenges” have a negative impact on the implementation of the nexus or make it more difficult to achieve, while the “barriers” are difficulties that impede its implementation.

In terms of challenges, the most prominent theme was *funding*, with mentions by 14 people (41.2 %). Of these participants, 10 referred to the lack of funding, especially for development-oriented interventions. This challenge is reflected in the figures provided by the OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS), according to which the RMRP has met less than 51 % of its funding goal from 2021 to 2023. The interviewees mentioned that the lack of funding is the result of multiple factors, including the onset of humanitarian emergencies in other regions, and the donors' perception that the response to migration flows in Colombia is not urgent anymore.

As observed in Table 9, it would seem as if the implementing organizations of the RMRP have managed to reach their targets despite the low funding levels. Unfortunately, this is not the case and the sectors related to integration (such as Health and Education) have fallen short in their response.

**Table 9.** People reached per sector of the RMRP in 2021, 2022 and 2023

Year	Sector	People targeted*	% of people reached
2021	Humanitarian transportation	25,400	310 %
	Food security	1,130,000	101 %
	Health	1,120,000	92 %
	Protection	472,000	89 %
	Multipurpose cash assistance	407,000	81 %
	Wash	632,000	68 %
	Shelter	224,000	56%
	Subsector – Gender- based violence	117,000	50 %

<b>Year</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>People targeted*</b>	<b>% of people reached</b>
	Education	381,000	48 %
	Integration	151,000	46 %
	Subsector – Child protection	248,000	40 %
	Nutrition	170,000	29 %
2022	Humanitarian transportation	89,900	110.9 %
	Protection	502,900	94.8 %
	Food security	1,580,000	78.1 %
	Subsector – Child protection	147,900	56.5 %
	Wash	545,000	43.2 %
	Health	2,020,000	41.2 %
	Shelter	303,300	39.4 %
	Multipurpose cash assistance	605,500	35.2 %
	Education	449,000	33.3 %
	Nutrition	124,700	29.1 %
	Integration	152,000	16.6 %
	Subsector – Gender-based violence	303,500	8.8 %
Subsector – Human Trafficking and Smuggling	34,300	7.9 %	
2023	Food security	975,800	105.5 %
	Subsector – Human Trafficking and Smuggling	29,000	92.3 %
	Protection	542,000	82.9 %
	Shelter	232,500	64.2 %
	Wash	288,700	63.5 %
	Humanitarian transportation	119,400	61.6 %
	Multipurpose cash assistance	272,400	51.9 %
	Subsector – Gender-based violence	177,700	42.5 %
	Subsector – Child protection	119,600	41.1 %
	Health	1,430,000	40.3 %
	Integration	239,100	30.5 %
	Nutrition	114,800	30.8 %
Education	449,400	22.4 %	

**Note.** The sources of this information are the R4V ‘End-of-year reports’ for 2021, 2022, and 2023. \*The figures in the column of “people targeted” are estimates, since R4V uses a different nomenclature (e.g. 24 K instead of 24,000, and 2 M instead of 2,000,000).

Furthermore, Table 10 shows that in 2021, 2022, and 2023 the Integration sector was in the last five (5) places in the ranking of funding goals met, consequently, it was also in the last three (3) places in terms of people reached versus people targeted. Something similar occurred with the Nutrition and Education sectors in 2022 and 2023.

**Table 10.** Funding reached per sector of the RMRP in 2021, 2022 and 2023

Year	Sector	Funding requirements (USD)*	% funded
2021	Protection	36,300,000	95.32 %
	Food security	111,000,000	85.68 %
	Humanitarian transportation	967,000	82.21 %
	Shelter	21,600,000	40.60 %
	Subsector – Child protection	23,400,000	31.41 %
	Multipurpose cash assistance	120,000,000	20.08 %
	Education	45,400,000	17.75 %
	Nutrition	7,970,000	16.06 %
	Integration	72,600,000	13.91 %
	Health	145,000,000	12.55 %
	Wash	17,900,000	8.72 %
	Subsector – Human Trafficking and Smuggling	8,290,000	6.71 %
Subsector Gender- based violence	16,300,000	0.34%	
2022	Multipurpose cash assistance	84,120,000	80.5 %
	Humanitarian transportation	326,000,000	72.3 %
	Food security	173,090,000	66.7 %
	Subsector Child protection	24,360,000	59 %
	Shelter	33,650,000	50.4 %
	Subsector – Gender-based violence	15,690,000	36.3 %
	Subsector – Human Trafficking & Smuggling	4,380,000	32.8 %

Year	Sector	Funding requirements (USD)*	% funded
	Health	154,100,000	27.9 %
	Protection	78,640,000	23.1 %
	Nutrition	133,610,000	18.9 %
	Integration	4,320,000	14.4 %
	Education	50,190,000	8.9 %
	Wash	29,130,000	8.7 %
2023	Protection	32,410,000	50.5 %
	Food security	50,060,000	39.9 %
	Shelter	10,140,000	28.2 %
	Humanitarian transportation	1,250,000	26.9 %
	Subsector – Child protection	7,160,000	25.5 %
	Nutrition	1,020,000	23.5 %
	Multipurpose cash assistance	13,880,000	23.4 %
	Wash	5,050,000	22.3 %
	Subsector – Human Trafficking and Smuggling	1,400,000	20.8 %
	Health	18,710,000	19.2 %
	Integration	21,260,000	16.8 %
	Education	8,470,000	15.1 %
	Subsector – Gender-based violence	715,000	3.5 %

**Note.** The sources of this information are the ‘End-of-year reports’ for 2021, 2022 and 2023 by R4V. \*The figures in the column of “Funding requirements (USD)” are estimates, since R4V uses a different nomenclature (e.g. 750 K instead of 750,000 USD).

In 2023, the sectors in the last five (5) positions regarding people reach were: Child protection (subsector), Health, Integration, Nutrition, and Education. In the case of the Health, Integration and Education sector, the difficulties in reaching the population targets are most likely connected to a funding deficit, as observed in Table 11. This is reflected in the observations of five (5) interviewees who asserted that livelihoods and development interventions require more time and funds. These participants also noted that donors

prefer to finance humanitarian-oriented interventions. One of them, who represents a large humanitarian agency at an interagency group said:

(...) integration projects have an issue of time and number of beneficiaries that can make them less competitive for the donor. [It is safer] to give an organization one million [USD] and get a report six months later saying that the organization has already spent all the money and reached one million people (C1, 2021).

According to Otto & Weingärtner (2013), this issue can be named the “quick fix challenge”, referring to pressure from donors, governments or other actors to reach high numbers of beneficiaries in a short window of time, and/or the “funding challenge”, referring to “(...) donor fatigue in case of long-lasting crises and limited funding” (p. 34).

The second main challenge for the HDN reported in the interviews was the *competition between organizations and humanitarian structures*. Ten people (29.4 %) mentioned it, describing two scenarios: one in which the GIFMM and the clusters system compete for funds and visibility, and another one where many GIFMM organizations are reluctant to build synergies and consortia with each other, because they want to secure the maximum amount of funds.

Two representatives of humanitarian organizations at an interagency group explained that the creation of the GIFMM caused conflicts with the clusters’ system due to differences in the funds and staff available for each structure (C3, 2022; C4, 2023). These participants also mentioned a significant lack of communication and coordination between the two structures during the first years of the response to mixed migration flows (2016-2019), which was also mentioned in Chapter 3. The problems were evident when it was necessary to assist Venezuelan refugees and migrants in areas affected by armed conflict, where the organizations present only had funding to assist Colombian nationals. The opposite also happened, with humanitarian organizations facing limitations in assisting vulnerable Colombian families in areas with high concentrations of Venezuelan population. Furthermore, the members of the local coordination groups of the GIFMM and the clusters system did not exchange information and did not have formal communication or meetings.

However, the two representatives, as well as interviewees from other groups, agreed that the situation has improved, with increased flexibility for organizations to assist both Venezuelan and Colombian nationals, and coordination strategies such as joint working groups and meetings to bridge the gaps between the two structures.

On the other hand, the competition between the GIFMM implementing organizations does not seem to have changed. Two of the three consultants in Group D highlighted that it is not easy to achieve formal collaboration and synergies when the organizations are constantly competing for the same resources from donors. One of them pointed out: "(...) the fight for funding makes people not see the big picture and forget the real sense of their actions, which should be to improve their impact and have greater results both at a quantitative and qualitative level" (D2, 2022).

Also, two staff members of an NGO working in the department of La Guajira (on the northeastern border with Venezuela) reported that they repeatedly tried to establish alliances with other organizations operating in the same areas to provide a more holistic response for Venezuelan, Colombian and dual nationality populations living in informal settlements, but only one organization agreed to join efforts. In their experience, big organizations tend to present proposals to donors covering all of the sectors required to get the entire funding of a given grant, even if they do not have the necessary expertise, losing a valuable opportunity to work with other organizations that complement their portfolio (A6, 2022; B3, 2021).

These contributions indicate the persistence of many of the problems mentioned by the Secretary General of the United Nations in his report for the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. According to Ban Ki Moon, who was the secretary at the time, the humanitarian funding model revolves around brief projects that encourage competition among the organizations applying for the grants, which does not allow to properly respond to the priorities of people in need (Moon, 2016, p. 41).

The third theme revolves around *the difficulties that organizations have in reaching remote areas*, as mentioned by seven (7) people (20.6 %). Two interviewees who worked in La Guajira (B3, 2021; B6, 2022) reported an oversupply of services provided by humanitarian organizations in the municipalities of Maicao and Riohacha, which might respond to the fact that these areas host more than 70 % of the Venezuelan population in the department (approximately 118,000 people) (Migración Colombia, 2023, p.17). However, other municipalities such as Uribia also host high numbers of people of Venezuelan and dual nationality, and the presence of humanitarian and development organizations there is extremely limited. One of the interviewees working in La Guajira asserted that the preference for Riohacha and Maicao is related to the donors' guidelines and that most organizations prioritize their presence and operations in these municipalities because it is a strategic advantage in the eyes of the donors, considering the constant

flows of refugees and migrants through these cities. This person also said that many organizations implement activities in other municipalities only when they have trouble meeting their beneficiary targets (A6, 2022).

Another interviewee from the programs team at an INGO reported the limited coverage of humanitarian services in rural and remote areas, which in many cases is due to the extraordinary resources and logistics required to access them (A3, 2021). This person provided the example of Guainia, the fifth largest department in Colombia, which is located in the southwest of the country and shares borders with Venezuela and Brazil. Around 75 % of Guainia's population is indigenous<sup>32</sup>, most of its territory is composed of tropical rainforest (El Tiempo, 2022), and its villages and indigenous reservations are accessible only by river or air. The participant explained that these conditions mean that the few organizations that operate in the department focus their activities in the capital (municipality of Inirida), and the implementation of activities in remote communities is possible only if multiple organizations carry out joint missions to share the costs.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the concentration of activities and services in certain areas also occurs in cities and urban environments. A programs' staff who coordinates the livelihood activities of an INGO in many cities, including Medellin (the second biggest city in the country), said that many people living in the peripheral areas of this city cannot access livelihood programs due to the cost of transportation and the distance to the offices and locations where these take place (D3, 2022). According to the interviewee, development-oriented organizations usually open their offices in the central areas of cities and municipalities, close to public institutions and authorities, while their workshops and activities usually do not reach remote neighbourhoods.

### **5.2.3. Barriers**

#### **5.2.3.1. Structural problems in the host country**

Concerning the aspects that impede the effective implementation of the HDN, 18 participants (52.9 %) referred to the *structural problems in the host country*, of which the most prominent are the armed conflict and the security situation. A programs staff of an

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<sup>32</sup> Many of the indigenous peoples in Guainia consider themselves binational (Colombians and Venezuelans) and transboundary. However, they do not have legal recognition of this status due to the lack of formal agreements between Venezuela and Colombia on the matter (Dejusticia, 2020b).

international humanitarian organization explained that the conflict's dynamics changed substantially after the Government and the FARC armed group signed a Peace Agreement in 2016, making it even more difficult for organizations to understand which areas were controlled by which armed groups, what kind of security restrictions were in place, among other relevant aspects:

Right now, the conflict has a changing dynamic that we cannot understand completely, so you find not only one or two but 15 or 16 armed groups in the same territory... the criminal gangs, the FARC dissidents that have eight branches, the ELN (...). The conflict that we have in this country greatly affects that nexus (A3, 2021).

In general, the armed conflict implies multiple security risks and threats, such as access restrictions and bans for humanitarian and development organizations in certain areas, extortion, kidnappings, staff retention, car theft, etc. The lack of employment opportunities (especially in the formal sector), poverty, the low capacity of the public health care system, and corruption are also among the structural problems. Participants of groups A, B and F highlighted that the employment situation is already difficult for Colombian nationals<sup>33</sup>, so Venezuelans face many obstacles when looking for a job and harsh conditions when working.

Furthermore, the participants said that the poverty in which many Venezuelans live aggravates this problem. Colombians in conditions of economic vulnerability live in the peripheral areas of cities and towns, forming informal settlements where there is limited or no access to utilities and services (water, electricity, sewerage, disaster risk management, etc), and many Venezuelan families have arrived at these settlements. In this context as well as in rural areas, economic hardship turns into a risk of involvement into criminal activities. Also, the GIFMM organizations cannot build infrastructure in the settlements because the terrains are not legally owned by the people that inhabit them, and local administrations are reluctant to facilitate the legal acquisition of the terrains with the argument of not feeding a cycle of poverty.

Additionally, the low capacity of the public health care system leads to several issues: people have to wait for months to see a specialist, the services related to "high

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<sup>33</sup> According to recent figures by the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), 11.7 % of the population is unemployed (DANE, 2024a), and 55.7 % of the population who works has an informal job (DANE, 2024b).



cost” diseases and health problems are often denied, and many patients have to resort to legal aid to demand access to the services and medicines they need. Both Colombian and Venezuelan nationals face these problems, even when they have health insurance.

With regards to corruption, three participants of groups A and D asserted that it impedes the sustainability of projects, and it makes it harder to coordinate actions with the institutions and public officials in areas affected by corruption and political patronage (A1, 2021; A3, 2021; D2, 2022).

### **5.2.3.2. Low capacity and insufficient resources of the State**

The second biggest barrier was addressed by 17 people from groups A, B, D, and E (50 % of the total), who referred to the *low capacity and insufficient resources of the State*. For instance, a public official working at a local institution in one municipality of La Guajira reported that the institution did not receive help from the departmental or national levels to provide services for the Venezuelan population (F1, 2022). This person said that his office relied on support from UN agencies and NGOs in terms of financial and technical support, computer equipment, and staff, to offer legal aid, information, and cash for emergencies (such as funerals), among other forms of assistance. In the same vein, a programs staff of an international NGO asserted that even though many public officials have the intention of assisting Venezuelan nationals in their municipalities, the institutions where they work rarely have the resources to do so.

Moreover, the interviewees explained that the low capacity of public institutions means a lower chance of sustainability for the interventions carried out by the NGOs and UN agencies in the country. Often, the aim of implementing organizations is that the State takes on the responsibility of managing or running the services and activities set up by their projects, but this outcome is the exception. In the words of a researcher and professor who works on migration issues: “the State has no way of providing most of the goods and services provided by the [humanitarian and development] organizations; it is not feasible from a budgetary and fiscal point of view” (E3, 2022). To illustrate this point further, it is worth mentioning an example given by a programs staff at an NGO. This person argued that even though humanitarian organizations provide schools in rural areas with equipment and technical support, these actions have a limited impact when the State does not guarantee permanent teaching staff for those schools:

Yes, we have a good strategy to strengthen the teachers' capacity, to work with the children, but if there are no teachers, then what? The State does not appoint

them, the teachers do not want to return, they arrive in communities that are so complex that they do not have guarantees to be able to do their work... there are many shortcomings. (...) we have very good strategies but if there is no one to develop them with, it will not work, this is typical, I have seen this happen in [the departments of] Cauca, Guajira, Putumayo (...) (A3, 2021).

In other cases, implementing organizations make efforts to strengthen and build the capacity of public institutions, so that when the projects end, these institutions are equipped to provide a better response to the communities. However, even in this scenario, sustainability is a challenge. A programs staff of an international health-focused NGO shared that the organization hired public health institutions to provide services and medicines to its beneficiaries, but the quality and availability of the services were so low that the NGO had to hire private providers instead (A2, 2021).

Other problem that shows the low capacity of public institutions is related to their absence in rural and remote areas, an issue that was also reported in relation to NGOs and UN agencies. This affects access from the population to rights and services, including migratory regularization. Two interviewees argued that the Government tends to offload the responsibility of assisting Venezuelan refugees and migrants to the GIFMM organizations, especially in the peripheral areas of the cities, as well as in rural and remote places (A10, 2022; E2, 2022).

As stated by Mosel & Levine (2014), a central issue in the debate of linking relief and development (one of the predecessor terms of the HDN) has always been how much and for how long should organizations engage with states, especially in countries affected by protracted crises, where the State does not have the capacity or intention to assist all of its citizens (p. 12). Taking into account the low-capacity problem described in the previous paragraphs, the organizations and agencies that are part of the response to the mixed migration flows should not bet all their sustainability intentions on the State, but should make a greater emphasis on capacity building for civil society organizations. In the words of Mosel & Levine (2014):

In each context thorough political and institutional analysis is needed to decide whether this can be achieved best by supporting the state or by supporting people, civil society actors or other formal or informal structures, either directly or by helping them to put pressure on the state (p. 12).

### **5.2.3.3. Shortcomings of local institutions and public officials**

The third cluster groups the codes related to the *shortcomings of local institutions and public officials*, besides the budget limitations and low capacity discussed in point 4.2.3.2. Twelve participants (35.3 %) made 24 references to this aspect, of which five mentioned staff turnover, considering that every time a new local or national administration takes office, a good part of the staff changes. Sometimes these changes occur even more frequently, making it necessary to restart coordination processes and threatening the sustainability of alliances and projects.

Inefficiency and the lack of information among public officials were also mentioned, providing examples in which Venezuelan people received incorrect or no information about health insurance and similar procedures to access rights. According to the participants, this is largely due to the lack of training for public officials on the changes in legislation.

### **5.2.3.4. Xenophobia and discrimination**

The fourth barrier that was mentioned the most was *xenophobia and discrimination* against Venezuelan persons and families. Ten interviewees (29.4 % of the total) asserted that this problem occurs in various contexts and places (public institutions, hospitals, health centers, schools, and the streets), leading to situations that violate the rights of these people, such as accessing health care and education, getting a job or renting a place to live.

Regarding this problem, the participants highlighted that there is a harmful narrative about Venezuelan refugees and migrants, portraying them as criminals, lazy, reluctant to pay for services, or as people who are taking job, education, and charity opportunities away from the Colombian population. Such a narrative has been fueled by negative portrayals of Venezuelan people in some news outlets, social media, and speeches of politicians. These remarks by the thesis participants are supported by multiple studies and articles published by academic institutions, NGOs, agencies and media outlets, particularly since 2019 (Cabrera, González, Lawrence, Daly, & Daly, 2021; OXFAM, 2019, 2023).

### **5.2.3.5. Shortcomings in the organization's programs**

The fifth barrier with the most mentions revolves around *shortcomings in the programs of the organizations that are part of the GIFMM*. Ten participants (29.4 %) talked about

projects that are based on the organizations' portfolio and not on the communities' needs, the lack of context specificity in certain programs, and programming gaps related to economic integration.

On this matter, a consultant who has worked for more than 10 national and international NGOs said: "(...) I feel that the response plan is along the lines of: 'what do we have to offer?' and then 'let's look for Venezuelans', but in my opinion, it should not be like that" (D2, 2022). This participant emphasized on the importance on responding to the needs and priorities of the target populations instead of prioritizing the ambitions of the implementing organizations. Furthermore, a livelihoods coordinator at an international NGO said that "(...) many organizations developed their own methodology and they want to monetize it in some way" (D3, 2022). A third interviewee confirmed that this dynamic was present in her organization, which implemented the same methodologies in most projects, although the target communities had pressing needs that were not related to those methodologies (A6, 2022).

These practices go against the literature recommendations on the nexus and against the guidelines provided by OCHA and other actors that promote the implementation of the HDN, which greatly emphasize the need for context specificity (Mosel & Levine, 2014; OCHA, 2017; Weishaupt, 2020; OECD, 2019a).

Specifically regarding entrepreneurship programs, three participants expressed concern because some projects fail to go beyond the provision of seed capital, encourage informal initiatives (e.g. fruit or coffee carts) with low chances of sustainability, and do not take into account key variables such as competition and security conditions in the areas of implementation (e.g. risk of extortion). This shortcoming might be related to the "lack of experience and skills among implementing partners", mentioned as a pitfall of livelihood programs for refugees in a literature revision by Jacobsen & Fratzke (2016). The study says that livelihoods interventions for refugees are often delivered by humanitarian organizations that also deliver services to cover basic needs, and their suitability to implement successful livelihoods interventions has been questioned by some meta-studies (US Department of State, 2015, as cited in Jacobsen & Fratzke, 2016, p. 23).

In Colombia, both humanitarian and development-oriented organizations implement livelihoods programs, but it is true that big humanitarian agencies and NGOs are doing it, and some of the interviewees mentioned deficiencies in their work, such as the lack of a stabilization strategy (after the provision of food and before the entrepreneurship training) (E2,2022), the lack of support and follow-up to

entrepreneurship initiatives (D2, 2022), and the inability to link entrepreneurship projects with real market opportunities and the private sector (D1, 2022). These shortcomings might be caused by the lack of expertise, as suggested by Jacobsen & Fratzke (2016), but other limitations, for example, the reluctance to get involved in advocacy actions to promote economic opportunities for the target population (A13, 2023), might be related to the fear of transgressing the humanitarian principles (neutrality, impartiality, etc.).

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### **5.3. How do power dynamics between implementing organizations and the government influence the HDN?**

As mentioned in Chapter 2, migration is among the complex issues on a global scale that require collaboration and interaction between different actors to be managed (Torfing et al, 2012; Jang, McSparren, & Rashchupkina, 2016). In Colombia, specifically regarding the migration flows to and from Venezuela, a policy community was formed to provide a response and promote policy-making that facilitates access of refugee and migrant Venezuelans to rights, services, and economic and social integration. This policy community involves the GIFMM and different government institutions at the local, departmental, and national levels. Other actors such as academia, CSOs, and other organizations that are not part of the GIFMM play a role in the response and contribute to the effort to guarantee the rights of people coming from Venezuela.

Nevertheless, according to most interviewees, the relations between the different actors are not horizontal, and their possession and exertion of different types of power influence how the HDN is implemented. When discussing this topic, the interviewees referred to the different ways in which organizations and government institutions exert power, and these were classified into eight categories during the data analysis process, as explained below.

#### **5.3.1. Institutional power**

The power type with the most references was institutional power (8 people, 23.5 % of the interviewees), which is exerted when an actor that is part of an institution or organization uses the existing procedures and norms to advance the interests of that organization, gaining advantages and benefits (Moon, 2019). As suggested by the participants and explained below, this type of power is used by the Government, as well as by multilateral organizations and INGOs.

### **5.3.1.1. The Government: disregarding recommendations from academia and civil society organizations (CSOs)**

Three interviewees made five references to the use of institutional power by the State, manifested in disregarding recommendations from academia and CSOs in policy-making processes. A participant of Group E said that the Government incorporated barely 2% of the comments it received for the formulation of the ETPV (Temporary Protection Status for Venezuelans, established through Decree 216 of 2021) (E2, 2022). Another participant of the same group emphasized how the Government ignored the recommendations and observations submitted for the formulation of the Comprehensive Migration Policy (Law 2136 of 2021). According to this interviewee, the Law was written by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other institutions, and it had governmental support from its inception. Furthermore, the Government showed openness and provided some opportunities for participation, but in actuality these were insufficient and the recommendations were not taken into account in the final text of the law:

[...] the public hearing gave the feeling that [the State was saying]: "I am calling you because it is important that academia is here, and that [organizations X and Y] are here, but I am giving you three minutes to intervene", and it's like... what deep and complex reflection can I make in three minutes? None. (E1, 2021).

As a result of this approach, the realization of the humanitarian-development nexus is affected because key recommendations that aim to achieve full integration of the Venezuelan migrants and refugees have not been implemented by the Government; for instance, the "Ten recommendations for an immigration law in Colombia" proposed by a group of academic institutions and civil society organizations in 2020<sup>34</sup>. This set of suggestions included establishing permanent migration regularization pathways and radically improving the functioning of the international protection system for refugees (Dejusticia, 2020a). The Comprehensive Migration Policy was enacted in August of 2021 and it did not incorporate the decalogue's suggestions, which is why a group of 70 refugees, migrants and returnees, along with CSOs and academic institutions developed a new set of 21 recommendations for a truly comprehensive migratory policy in 2022. The documents recommend strengthening the asylum and refugee system, guaranteeing the

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<sup>34</sup> Recommendations available on: <https://www.dejusticia.org/colombia-necesita-una-politica-migratoria-con-enfoque-en-derechos-humanos/>

principle of family unity for people who have a Temporary Protection Permit, among other vital issues (Dejusticia, 2022)<sup>35</sup>.

### **5.3.1.2. Dominant position of the UN agencies**

Regarding the exertion of institutional power, four participants pointed to the GIFMM architecture. As explained in Chapter 3, the GIFMM is comprised of local, national, and international non-governmental organizations that implement activities targeted at the Venezuelan population in Colombia. At the national level, it is co-led by UNHCR and IOM, and it is organized in sectors and working groups below these sectors, which are led by one to three of the member organizations.

As of late 2023, four of the seven sectors were led by a UN agency, two were co-led by UN agencies and international NGOs, and one was co-led by two international NGOs. According to a participant from Group C, this dominance of the UN agencies in the humanitarian architecture means these have a greater influence on decision-making and advantages in access to information, in comparison to smaller organizations:

(...) Since the system is so United Nations [dominated], there was a need to count on a counterweight to represent the international NGOs. That is why the co-leaderships in the territories are very important so that national NGOs can join in and feel represented and heard, because sometimes when the spaces [working groups] are so blue – ‘in blue vests’ - they do not feel confident enough to speak out (C4, 2023)

An interviewee from Group A explained that before the creation of the GIFMM, OCHA led coordination for humanitarian activities in the different departments, but it did not implement interventions directly. Now, UN agencies lead the coordination of the GIFMM and are implementing projects in the field, which means that their decisions are not only guided by the shared goals of the GIFMM but also by their interest to keep expanding their operations (A5, 2021).

### **5.3.1.3. Power of HQ of INGOs over country offices**

A participant from Group D mentioned that the implementation of the HDN is also affected by the institutional power exerted within INGOs, given that the headquarters of some of

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<sup>35</sup> Recommendations available on: <https://www.dejusticia.org/21-recomendaciones-para-que-la-nueva-politica-migratoria-de-colombia-sea-integral/>

these organizations provide instructions on how to carry out certain interventions without practicing enough context sensitivity (D1, 2022). According to this person, country offices need to build a strong understanding of the local context, including the differences in the various departments, to improve their negotiation, persuasion, and argumentation skills when dealing with their HQ offices.

### **5.3.2. Economic power**

The second category with the highest number of references was economic power, with 11 mentions by six participants (17.6 % of the interviewees). This type of power “is wielded through the use of material resources (e.g. money, goods) to shape the thinking and actions of other actors” (Moon, 2019, p. 6), and it was mentioned during the study concerning the relation between the GIFMM and the clusters’ system, the relation between donors and implementing organizations, and the relation between international/national and local organizations.

#### **5.3.2.1. Requirement to align with the donors' policies and interests**

Three participants from groups A and C, mentioned that one way in which donors exert economic power over implementing organizations is by conditioning funds to the alignment of programming with their policies and interests. This does not only occur in the context of the response to the mixed migration flows in Colombia, but it does affect the implementation of the HDN in the country, for instance, when donors prioritize the delivery of emergency kits over other types of assistance because this method allows them to reach larger numbers of beneficiaries (C4, 2023).

One participant from Group A mentioned that the Helms Amendment, which prohibits the use of US foreign aid funding for abortion, is an example of this exertion of power and it is a significant limitation in assisting refugee and migrant women who are in need of this type of interventions (A8, 2022).

#### **5.3.2.2. Economic inequality between the GIFMM and the clusters system**

Two interviewees from Group C mentioned significant tensions between the GIFMM and the clusters’ system, especially during the first couple of years after the GIFMM started working, given the power and influence it had in the country, while the clusters’ system was struggling financially and logistically. According to the participants, many people working in the clusters’ system felt that their experience was not valued because the



GIFMM staff, often coming from other countries, had a better salary and better working conditions, even though they did not have the same knowledge of the local context.

There was also the perception among some working groups that the donors and the GIFMM organizations were not giving importance to the armed conflict and were focusing all of their attention and financial capacity on the migration flows. This situation seriously affected the implementation of the HDN, given that the staff of the two architectures barely talked to each other or worked together between 2018 and 2020, even when they were responsible for the same response sectors in the same geographical areas. Nevertheless, the coordination between the two platforms has improved gradually with the implementation of the “back-to-back” strategy, in which the clusters and the GIFMM sectors carry out joint working spaces (C3, 2022).

It is worth noting that the funding gap between the two architectures has decreased in the last couple of years. For instance, in 2021 the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) received 85.1 million in U.S. dollars (48.9 % of the requested funds) (OCHA, 2022b), while the Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) received 321 million USD (50.1 % of the requested funds) (GIFMM, 2022). In 2023, the HRP received 130.4 million USD (46 % of the requested funds) (OCHA, 2024), and the RMRP received 180.19 million USD (27.1 % of the requested funds) (GIFMM, 2024). According to interviewees from groups A (programs staff), D (consultants,) and F (public officials), the decrease in funding for the GIFMM activities is related to the eruption and aggravation of other humanitarian emergencies in the world, such as the war between Russia and Ukraine, and also to the donors’ perception that the migration crisis has “stabilized”. This situation affects the Venezuelan population and also the Colombian host communities that the GIFMM cannot reach due to budget cuts.

### **5.3.2.3. Difficulties for small organizations to enter the GIFMM and the lack of funds for coordination**

The remaining observations on economic power revolved around the capacity to assume coordination leadership. A participant from Group A mentioned that small local organizations faced multiple barriers to becoming members of the GIFMM (A5, 2021), so their knowledge of the context and their expertise were not informing this structure.

Additionally, a participant from Group C explained that even though the UN agencies and international NGOs at the GIFMM have shown interest in sharing coordination leadership with smaller organizations, the reality is that these organizations

rarely have funds for coordination staff and activities (C3, 2022). Therefore, large agencies and NGOs continue to have more power to influence decision-making and to lead the response.

### 5.3.3. Structural power

Three people made six references to the exertion of structural power in the response to migration flows from Venezuela. The three of them said that this type of power, which takes advantage of "(...) an actor's position in the structures of society (...)" (Moon, 2019, pp. 5-7), is used by the Colombian Government, for instance, by imposing caps on the cash provided to Venezuelan families. In 2019, the State issued mandatory guidelines on cash transfers for the Venezuelan population, taking into account the ceilings on the transfers that the government provided to Colombian nationals through its social programs, with the purpose of reducing the risk of conflict between Colombians and Venezuelans for receiving dissimilar amounts.<sup>36</sup>

However, many people working in humanitarian and development organizations thought that the caps imposed by the Government on cash transfers meant that the assistance provided by the GIFMM fell short: "(...) this is a generalized complaint. The amounts are very low and this does not solve... it partially solves a need but does not guarantee any transit to development with the use of resources" (C2, 2021). For her part, a member of the programs team at a humanitarian INGO expressed that these sorts of guidelines also limit the independence of humanitarian organizations:

(...) So we have to align ourselves to what the government says, and if you find that this is of no use to a family and that it only goes up 30,000 pesos if there are 2 or 3 people: do you have to do it because the government says so? Where is your independence? (A3, 2021).

It should be noted that, since then, the amounts of transfers allowed by the Government have increased, and the State has even begun to provide cash transfers to Venezuelan nationals. However, this assistance continues to fall short of the needs of this population.

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<sup>36</sup> The caps on monthly monetary transfers for the Venezuelan population that the Government established were: 190,000 COP/ 39 USD for one-person households, with slight increases until 370,000 COP/ 75 USD for households of four people or more (GIFMM & REACH, 2022)

In 2022, the Cash Transfer Group (GTM) and the REACH initiative<sup>37</sup> led an analysis of the needs of Venezuelan families, taking into account various sectors (Nutrition, Wash, Health, Livelihoods, Education, and Protection), and calculated that a household of four people required COP 1,844,580 (approximately 384 USD at the time) to subsist (GIFMM Colombia & REACH, 2022).

#### **5.3.4. Expert power**

In line with Adler & Hass (1992), and Sending (2015), as cited in Moon (2019), an actor acquires and exerts expert power when others recognize it as an authority in terms of knowledge or expertise on a given matter. During the data collection process, three interviewees made three references to this.

Two people from groups A and D pointed out that the expert status that big organizations have on migration translates into economic power. This happens because donors – especially governments – prefer to grant their funds to agencies and organizations internationally recognized as experts:

(...) governments undoubtedly give resources to international organizations that are already migration experts: the Norwegian Refugee Council, the IOM... let's say they are the largest, so there is greater confidence from governments to give [funds] to these organizations that are experts (D1, 2022).

On the other hand, a participant from Group C asserted that national and international NGOs have become a counterweight to UN agencies in the coordination structures in Colombia because their presence in multiple areas of the country has granted them technical expertise and an understanding of the local contexts that the UN agencies value and need for coordination purposes (C4, 2023). Therefore, the expert power of NGOs makes it possible to confront the structural power that UN agencies have in the humanitarian structures, which works in favor of the context-specificity that the HDN requires to be successful (Weishaupt, 2020).

#### **5.3.5. Network power**

Two participants mentioned this type of power that consists of gaining or increasing influence over other actors through the use of personal relationships (Moon, 2019, p. 6-

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<sup>37</sup> REACH is an international initiative that focuses on collecting and analyzing data in contexts of crisis to improve humanitarian response. More information on: [www.reach-initiative.org](http://www.reach-initiative.org)

7). One of them, who is part of the consultants group (Group D), said that during the administration of Ivan Duque (2018-2022) it was evident that the Government had an affinity for one particular university and ignored input from other academic institutions when it came to public policy (E2, 2022). This affinity meant that the events implemented by the Government to discuss migratory policy highlighted the work of the university in question<sup>38</sup>, while the work of other institutions did not receive the same recognition.

However, this situation has changed radically since Gustavo Petro took office in 2022. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the new government has lowered the profile of the migration crisis and the public debate on the matter does not seem to privilege the role of one academic institution over the others. Nevertheless, a situation that has not changed is that the organizations that have built relations with donors and other organizations in the humanitarian architecture and the development sector have a network power that increases their chances to secure grants and consortiums (A12, 2023).

#### **5.3.6. Discursive power**

In terms of discursive power, which “is wielded when actors shape the language others use to conceptualize, frame, and thereby define and understand an issue” (Moon, 2019, p. 6), there was one mention by a programs staff of an international NGO. This participant argued that donors often impose certain language to define who can benefit from the interventions they fund, which has serious implications for people who do not fit the established definitions (A1, 2021), for example: people from the host communities could not be reported as “migrant” or “refugee” beneficiaries, and therefore, were left out of certain projects.

At the beginning of the response to the migration flows from Venezuela, the language included in the monitoring systems of the projects meant significant limitations to assist communities with both foreign and national populations. Consequently, organizations were forced to “accommodate” the terms in order to assure inclusion of people in need in their projects:

It is up to us, as a colleague of [a certain organization] told me: “We have to play to that. If those are the terms, let's see how we can use the same terms to achieve what we need”. But in the end, it does make a difference how [donors] are comprehending the population (A1, 2021).

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<sup>38</sup> The interviewee did not specify which university she was referring to.

Even though migration-oriented projects still prioritize refugee and migrant populations, the discourse of projects has evolved and become more inclusive, and the coordination groups of the clusters' system and the GIFMM have increased their sense of responsibility to assist populations in need, independently of their nationality (C4, 2023).

#### **5.3.7. Physical and moral power**

None of the participants referred to the use of physical force or the influence over others based on moral authority, in the context of the response to the migration flows from Venezuela.

#### **5.4. What actions can be implemented to promote the effective operationalization of the HDN?**

Besides knowing the opinions of the interviewees regarding the barriers and challenges for the implementation of the HDN, as well as their perceptions on the power relations between the different actors involved in the response to the mixed migration flows from Venezuela, a key purpose of this research was to know the interviewees' perspectives on how to improve the nexus operationalization in Colombia. During the interviews, there were 148 mentions of this topic from 31 people (91.2 % of the total), referring to how different actors could improve their response.

##### **5.4.1. Implementing organizations**

A total of 30 participants (88.2 %) made 122 references to the actions that implementing organizations could carry out to improve or increase their contribution to the HDN. Of these people, 10 (29.4 % of the total) suggested *including and strengthening livelihoods-oriented activities in their programming*, with specific actions such as including a livelihoods component in most projects, emphasizing more on employability, carrying out livelihood-oriented interventions with a community-based approach, integrating livelihoods activities with MPCA, and promoting and enhancing collective entrepreneurship initiatives. A study carried out to identify if the triple nexus is appropriate in the response to the migration flows from Venezuela (Rey, Abellán & Gómez, 2022) also provided this suggestion, based on 22 interviews and 47 surveys to organizations and agencies working in South America. The participant organizations agreed that the response needs a stronger emphasis on development, and scored "social integration" and "productive economic projects" as the higher priorities.

The second cluster of themes with the most references (7 people = 20.6 % of the total) was *increasing reflexivity and improving analysis in project formulation*, which could take the form of: dedicating more time and resources to reflecting on the lessons learned from previous interventions; putting more effort into documenting and socializing the long term needs and priorities of the target population; identifying and prioritizing the needs that the host and migrant populations have in common; having deeper conversations with the target population, and orienting activities and interventions towards the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

In particular, the participation of the target population in the formulation of projects and programs and the inclusion of their priorities and perspectives is considered of the utmost importance and it is mentioned in critical documents related to the HDN from the New Way of Working (OCHA, 2017) to studies and analyses on livelihoods programming for displaced populations in diverse contexts (Cohen, 2008; Crawford et al., 2015; Jacobsen & Fratzke, 2016; Barbelet & Wake, 2017).

The third theme or cluster, with mentions by 7 people (20.6 %), refers to ways of *improving the coordination between the implementing organizations*. The participants' suggestions included a stronger coordination focus on the HDN. A programs staff at an international organization that provides health-related services stated:

(...) the issue is to find out how the GIFMM type coordination spaces can stop speaking of the responses separately, and see the bigger picture instead: “these are organizations that provide an immediate response, these are development organizations, this organization can complement what is happening here, or these organizations that are strong in [development] can complement the response of those that are strong in immediate response” (A2, 2021).

A broader discussion of the coordination groups' achievements, the creation of more consortia, decreasing competition, and mapping the impact of organizations beyond their presence in the territories were other recommendations related to improving coordination. This is also among the main conclusions of the study by Rey et al. (2022) mentioned before. Specifically in regard to Colombia, the study highlights the relevance of improving coordination between the GIFMM and the Humanitarian Country Team, and having a clearer definition of what are the collective targets and achievements in terms of the nexus implementation (pp. 31-32).

Four other themes or clusters mentioned by six participants each were: enhancing localization<sup>39</sup>; implementing a differentiated approach, which involves the consideration of the needs of different populations according to their gender, age, ethnicity, and other characteristics (Congress of Colombia, 2011); promoting and strengthening cooperation with public institutions and officials, and prioritizing the nexus in their programming.

#### **5.4.2. The State and the Government**

Seven participants (20.6 % of the total) made 16 suggestions regarding the Colombian State and Government. The first cluster of suggestions referred to *strengthening inter-institutional work*, that is “improving the coordination and joint work of public institutions” at the local, departmental, and national levels. This suggestion, mentioned by three people, is consistent with the barriers to the nexus that the participants reported about public institutions, such as inefficiency, lack of information, difficulties in implementing laws and protocols, and lack of coordination.

The second cluster revolved around *opening dialogue spaces with other actors, including the private sector*, with the aim of reaching agreements to increase access from the migrant population to formal jobs. A participant from Group F, who was an advisor to a national government entity at the time of the interview, said that one of the greatest lessons learned from the response to the mixed migration flows in the country is that “it is necessary to create spaces for discussion involving these three sectors: the public, the private and the international cooperation” (F5,2023), which would allow overcoming one of the main barriers to the HDN: the lack of employment opportunities.

The third measure suggested by participants was *adjusting and improving the international protection system*, to solve problems such as: the violation of the right to due process when migrants are expelled from the country<sup>40</sup>, the annulment of more than 26,000 Colombian IDs that belonged to persons born in Venezuela to Colombian

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<sup>39</sup> Concerning humanitarian aid, localization means “increasing international investment and respect for the role of local actors, with the goal of increasing the reach, effectiveness and accountability (...)” (IFRC, n.d.). In regard to development, it refers to “funding ‘local’ organizations, engaging community stakeholders in program design, and allowing affected communities to help set and manage their own priorities” (Symington & VanDerWoude, 2021).

<sup>40</sup> More information on: <https://www.dejusticia.org/corte-constitucional-protector-a-siete-migrantes-expulsados-de-forma-arbitraria-en-el-paro-nacional/> [Constitutional Court protected seven migrants arbitrarily expelled during the National Strike. Dejusticia, 2021]

parents<sup>41</sup>, the lack of recognition of statelessness status, and the restrictions for refugees to access jobs.

### **5.4.3. Donors**

Three participants mentioned courses of action specifically for donors, in the sense of directing more funds to development-oriented interventions and incorporating a mandatory advocacy component in their calls for proposals. The first suggestion is key, considering that, according to the research participants, the biggest barrier for the HDN is the lack or insufficiency of funding, particularly for development interventions. Regarding this aspect, a participant from Group A said:

(...) there is still the perception, not only locally but worldwide, that this is a crisis, so what is necessary or most urgent is to attend to the humanitarian crisis, but within this attention to the crisis, very few [donors] dare to take the step towards integration, from the point of view of financing ((A9, 2021).

The advocacy component refers to the importance of promoting legislation that allows the target population to improve their access to rights and services, as well as of persuading the local and national governments to assign part of their budget to assure the sustainability of the NGOs and UN agencies interventions.

### **5.4.4. Academia**

The suggestions of the research participants directed at academia have to do with strengthening the work it already does. Multiple universities and academic groups (such as the Center for Migration Studies at Universidad de Los Andes and the Migration Observatory at Universidad Externado de Colombia) have exposed the violations of the rights of the Venezuelan population in Colombia, informed advocacy and legal efforts, and catalyzed the access of this population to crucial services (e.g. education and health care). According to the academics interviewed, it is necessary to scale-up this work throughout

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<sup>41</sup> More information on: <https://www.dejusticia.org/litigation/anulacion-de-documentos-a-personas-colombo-venezolanas/#:~:text=El%2030%20de%20julio%20de,ciudadan%C3%ADa%20por%20supuesta%20falsa%20identidad> [*Annulment of documents for Colombian-Venezuelan persons*. Dejusticia, 2023]



the country, to facilitate the integration of the refugee and migrant population in conditions of dignity, and therefore, to contribute to the implementation of the HDN.

More specifically, two of the academics interviewed said that academia should continue to make visible the issues that are affecting the refugee and migrant population, especially when these issues are not on the public agenda, contribute to the prevention of xenophobia and discrimination by debunking fake news and social imaginaries that are detrimental to this population, and conduct further research on the impact of the ETPV.

#### **5.4.5. The private sector**

A public official from the local administration of Bogota (the capital city of the country) stated that greater engagement from the private sector in the response to mixed migration flows is necessary:

(...) finding a response not only from [international] cooperation but also from the private sector in Bogota would be important because the [international] cooperation is not going to be able to respond to the number of people who are arriving in Bogota (F3, 2022)

According to this interviewee, the response from the private sector should be related to employability, granting good working conditions, and not taking advantage of the vulnerabilities of the migrant population. However, according to a programs staff at an international development organization, the private sector needs help to make such a contribution:

If companies do not hire refugee, migrant, host community or population of difficult employability in general, it is not because they are bad people, excluding, xenophobic, or racist, it is not about that. It is because companies do not have the capabilities to do it either, because being an inclusive company implies developing some capabilities (...) (A13, 2023).

In this sense, organizations involved in the response to mixed migration flows would have to build the capacity of companies to become inclusive and improve their numbers of migrant staff hiring and retention. Additionally, the interviewee explained, providing relevant data to potential employers on the benefits and profitability of hiring migrant population is key:

(...) we cannot talk to the private sector from the point of view of "come on, please, look, this is good, development agenda, blah blah blah, objectives". That is not their job, we have to go to them with concrete information (A13, 2023).

To summarize, the answers to the secondary research questions of the thesis established key aspects that contribute to solving the central research question. These aspects are:

- Six of the 13 assessed organizations implement programs mainly focused on covering the short-term needs of the Venezuelan population. The other seven organizations include humanitarian assistance and livelihood-oriented activities in their projects; however, none of them has a strong focus on economic integration that goes beyond entrepreneurship and employability programs. Consequently, the response to the migration flows in Colombia does not have a sufficient emphasis on development, which should happen to successfully implement the HDN, according to Zetter (2014).
- Some of the characteristics of the response to the mixed migration flows in the country enable the implementation of the HDN. These include the architecture and functioning of the GIFMM, and the implementation of the ETPV and other regulations that facilitate access of the refugee and migrant population to rights and services. Nevertheless, there are also several challenges and barriers in place for the HDN, such as the lack of funding, the competition between organizations, armed conflict, low capacity of the State for the provision of services, and xenophobia and discrimination.
- The exertion of different types of power within the response to mixed migration flows in the country leads to: the creation and implementation of migratory laws without incorporating the suggestions and demands of academia and civil society, a dominant position of the UN agencies over NGOs and local organizations, and difficulties for small organizations to enter the GIFMM, among other inequality dynamics, which can significantly affect the sustainability of the, interventions targeted at the Venezuelan population.
- In order to ensure the implementation of the HDN in the response to mixed migration flows in Colombia, it is necessary to: increase and strengthen livelihoods-oriented activities in the programming of the GIFMM organizations; strengthen inter-institutional work and the services provided by the national and local government institutions to the Venezuelan population; secure more funding for development-oriented interventions, and achieve greater engagement of the private sector to improve the economic integration of refugees and migrants in the country.

## Chapter 6: Implementation of the humanitarian-development nexus in Colombia, in response to the migration flows from Venezuela.

Considering that the humanitarian-development nexus aims to “reduce [the] overall vulnerability” of communities affected by protracted crises and strengthen their ability to face further hardship (OECD, 2019a), the starting point of this thesis was the argument that the implementation of the HDN is necessary to respond to the short, medium, and long term needs of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Colombia. Then, the central question that the research sought to answer was “how and to what extent is the humanitarian-development nexus implemented in response to the Venezuelan migratory flows in Colombia?”

The present chapter addresses this query by assessing the knowledge of the nexus among the interviewees, as well as the alignment of the organizations where they work with the HDN. Then, it provides an analysis about the compliance of the response to mixed migration flows in Colombia with the five steps suggested by OCHA (2017) to reach collective outcomes, and with the nine principles of an effective livelihood response, suggested by Barbelet & Wake (2017). Finally, the chapter presents a “traffic light assessment” of the HDN implementation in Colombia.

### 6.1. Knowledge of the nexus

Before answering if and to what extent is the HDN implemented, it is important to consider the knowledge of the nexus among the research participants. When asked if the humanitarian-development nexus was familiar to them and how they understood it, most participants reported knowing what the nexus is about and agreed on the importance of its effective implementation in the country.

**Table 11.** Responses of the interviewees to the question: “Are you familiar with the concept of ‘humanitarian-development nexus?’”

Group	N° of people who answered the question	N° of people who answered ‘Yes’	N° of people who answered ‘No’
A	12	9	3
B	6	3	3
C	4	4	0
D	3	3	0

<b>Group</b>	<b>N° of people who answered the question</b>	<b>N° of people who answered 'Yes'</b>	<b>N° of people who answered 'No'</b>
<b>E</b>	3	3	0
<b>F</b>	5	3	2
<b>All of the groups</b>	33	25	8

Group B (field staff) showed the lowest percentage of knowledge on this concept, with 50 % (three people) who were not familiar with it. This finding might indicate the need to equip the field staff of NGOs and UN agencies with more information and opportunities to contribute to the debates taking place in the humanitarian and development sectors, including the HDN.

## **6.2. Alignment with the nexus**

In response to the question: "Do you consider that the work of the organization/institution you work for is in line with the HDN?"<sup>42</sup>, the majority of participants from groups A, B and F answered "Yes" but referred significant limitations, which is consistent with the analysis of the types of activities implemented by the GIFMM organizations.

In Group A, 10 people answered the question and eight said "Yes" (80 %). One of them, who works at a nation-wide humanitarian organization asserted: "(...) we have understood that humanitarian assistance cannot be permanent, that turning to terms of development implies stabilization in another phase, and that it is absolutely necessary in order not to generate a dependency of the communities" (A11, 2022).

In contrast, one person answered "No", and one person answered "Partially", adding the following:

(...) I don't think [the nexus] is a driver of our planning exercise (...) if you put me through the annual strategic planning exercise, it is not like the nexus [is a priority], it is not evident, especially because [this employability program] did not come from us saying "we have this idea", but it was rather the donor telling us: "this is the

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<sup>42</sup> Participants who said they were not familiar with the HDN concept received a brief explanation of the concept and what it entails, before moving on to other questions.

situation, we would like you to present us with an initiative on this topic" (A13, 2023).

In Group B, four people (66.6 % of the group participants) said their organizations' program was in line with the nexus, one said it was a "work in progress", and one answered "No". Similarly, in Group F, the four people who answered the question said the work of their institution showed alignment with the nexus. However, the information contained in Table 6 (page 61) suggests that these answers are more related to the intention of the institutions than to their work: two of the five institutions represented implemented a "care and maintenance" and a "partial integration" approach, while other two did not reflect any of the three approaches described by Crawford et al. (2015).

It is important to look at the alignment of the RMRP with the HDN, given its central role in the planning, reporting and monitoring of the response to the mixed migration flows in Colombia. For this reason, the participants from Group A were asked if the RMRP was in line with the HDN, and 10 of the 13 interviewees answered the question. Five of them (50 %) said "No", and two (20 %) said "Partially", arguing a strong bias of this plan towards humanitarian aid and an insufficient emphasis on socioeconomic integration. For instance, a programs staff at an international humanitarian organization said:

For me, this is much more focused on the humanitarian side, look for example at the wording of the RMRP, which tries to do a nexus, but in the end if you read it in depth (...) it has a super strong component of [humanitarian] assistance, and it tries to connect [with development]... it kind of tries but there is no logical link, there is no coherent synthetic link (A10, 2022).

### **6.3. Implementation of the nexus**

The analysis provided in response to the research question "what strategies are non-profit organizations and government institutions employing to implement the HDN?" suggests that a significant part of the GIFMM organizations is implementing development-oriented activities, but these are not sufficient to support and/or enable the target populations' livelihoods as needed. In order to answer the central research question, it is also useful to consider the document "New Way of Working" by OCHA (2017), which lays out the basic guidelines on how humanitarian and development organizations should work towards the HDN. The document establishes that a variety of actors, including UN agencies and other types of organizations, should work together over a period of 3 to 5 years to reach "collective outcomes", which are "(...) a commonly agreed quantifiable and measurable

result or impact in reducing people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities and increasing their resilience (...)" (OCHA, 2017, p.7). These outcomes should mention the sustainable development goal to which they contribute, as well as the role of the different actors and sectors involved in the response. For instance, the document includes an example of a proposal to reduce cholera in Haiti, with the participation of humanitarian, development, government, banking, and civil society actors.

In the case of the Refugee and Migrant Response Plan in Colombia, it covered a one-year timeframe until 2022, which was not in line with the nexus guidelines, but in 2023, it adopted a two-year span to reach the targets of the different sectors. Now, concerning the attribution of roles for the different actors, the RMRP only includes binding commitments for the GIFMM partner organizations, not for the government, banking, private sector and civil society actors. This logic responds to the way R4V and the GIFMM work, which is independent from the aforementioned actors. Nevertheless, the RMRPs for 2021, 2022 and 2023-2024 make explicit mentions of complementarity and coordination with government institutions, such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Housing, and the Department for Social Prosperity. For instance, the Health section of the latest RMRP (2023-2024) states that the partners will promote enrollment of the beneficiaries in the General Health Social Security System (SGSSS) (R4V, 2022, p. 143); and the Integration sector commits to "strengthening the public offer of socio-economic and cultural integration services, by assisting the implementation of the TPS [Temporary Protection Statute for Venezuelans]" (R4V, 2022, p. 145) and other Government action plans.

A more detailed analysis is possible when considering the five steps presented by the "New Way of Working" (OCHA, 2017) to set and meet collective outcomes. In summary, these are:

1. Conducting a Common Country Analysis, based on existing assessments of the local needs, risks, and capacities, such as the Humanitarian Needs Overview.
2. Establishing priority areas to reduce vulnerabilities, according to a specific strategic framework (e.g. the United Nations Development Assistance Framework) and in line with one or more SDG targets.
3. Identifying feasible and measurable indicators to guide the work of humanitarian and development actors in terms of need, risk, and vulnerability reduction (collective outcomes).

4. Aligning the projects and work plans of humanitarian and development actors through specific processes to achieve collective outcomes.
5. Assuring consistent funding for short, medium, and long-term initiatives that lead to the collective outcomes, using a variety of financial instruments spanning a 3-to-5-year timeframe (p.12).

Concerning the first step, it can be said that the response to the mixed migration flows in Colombia meets the recommendations by OCHA, since the GIFMM conducts a yearly Refugee and Migrant Needs Analysis (RMNA), considering primary and secondary information available from various sources. In regard to the second step, the response plans from 2021 to 2024 do mention the SDGs but do not provide a detailed explanation of how the sectoral responses align with these. However, as mentioned by an interviewee from Group C, the response planning process does contemplate how the sectoral indicators respond to the SDGs, even though these are not written in the public documents (C4, 2023).

The response plans from 2021 to 2024 do not follow the model lined out in the third step, since the wording of the indicators is more oriented towards the provision of services than in terms of needs or risks reduction. The response plans include one or two pages per sector mentioning the targets, the financial requirements, as well as the response priorities and approaches; however, these do not go as far as stating a measurable indicator of progress towards a given SDG or the reduction of a need. In fact, the “Monitoring and Reporting Guide for the 2024 RMRP” (R4V, 2024a) instructs the GIFMM partners to report what activities they implemented, including where, how, and who are the beneficiaries (disaggregating their age, gender, nationality and ethnicity). Even though this information might fall short to understand the impact of the activities, especially if compared to the standards set by OCHA, it can be said that the feasibility of measuring the reduction of needs and vulnerabilities varies according to the sectors and the permanence of the target population in a given area.

Next, analysis of the compliance of the RMRP in Colombia with the fourth step reveals that most of the efforts are from humanitarian organizations. Despite the participation of organizations and agencies that carry out development-oriented work, many development actors implement activities that are not connected with nor reported to the RMRP. In this vein, humanitarian and development actors could find a way to better reflect how all of their activities, including those outside the RMRP, are contributing to the HDN.

Additionally, the interviewees' contributions and the GIFMM reporting guidelines show that there are no indicators or working groups specifically focused on the nexus. The GIFMM announced the creation of a working group on the nexus during some meetings in 2022, but the initiative did not come to fruition. As part of this thesis, three people from OCHA and other UN agencies who had been in charge of the initiative were contacted to find out why it did not work, but no response was provided.

Finally, in terms of the fifth step, the contributions of the research participants indicate that the different organizations that respond or aim to respond to the mixed migration flows in Colombia make efforts to secure funding for humanitarian and development interventions, however, this is one of the main challenges for the implementation of the HDN in the country. Of the 34 participants, 14 referred to financial resources as a challenge; 10 said there is a lack of funding, especially for development interventions; five referred to the fact that development interventions require a large amount of funds and time, which is not appealing to many donors; and four said the funding streams for humanitarian and development interventions are fragmented.

#### **6.4. Emphasis on development and livelihood-oriented activities**

As mentioned in the response to the fourth research question: "what actions can be implemented to promote its effective operationalization?", the main suggestion by the research participants (29.4 %) for the GIFMM organizations was "including and strengthening livelihoods-oriented activities in their programming". This recommendation is coherent with the premise exposed in the analytical framework of the thesis, in that the implementation of the HDN in response to displacement must emphasize development-oriented work (Zetter, 2014) in order to support refugee and displaced communities to achieve self-reliance while protecting their independence (OECD, 2019b; UNHCR, 2011).

Besides considering the funding limitations and the lack of experience of the implementing organizations on livelihoods-programming it is necessary to analyze if the response in Colombia to migration flows from Venezuela complies with the nine principles proposed by Barbelet & Wake (2017) to support the livelihoods of refugees in displacement. Contemplating all of the findings related to the four research questions in the previous chapter, the responses reflect efforts to put into practice four of the nine principles, as explained in Table 12. These principles are related to the execution of strategies to support the economic integration of the displaced populations; the connection between the existing social protection system and the livelihoods interventions



implemented by the NGOs and UN agencies; the assessment of the target population's needs, and the acknowledgment of the need to support the livelihoods of the Venezuelan population to achieve their economic integration.

However, attending to the interviewees' suggestions (groups A, B, E, and F), the livelihoods programming in the country ought to: i). address the risks linked to informal labour when promoting small-scale entrepreneurship initiatives (e.g. street-food carts); ii). improve and extend the support for people developing entrepreneurship initiatives; iii). implement methodologies adapted to the recipient population and the local context; iv). build on the existing programs implemented by the State; v). strengthen employability interventions, promoting a greater involvement of the private sector, and iv). improve monitoring and evaluation to adjust actions as needed and build more effective projects.

**Table 12.** Compliance of the response to the migration flows in Colombia with the nine principles of an effective livelihood response, suggested by Barbelet & Wake (2017).

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Compliance or compliance efforts</b>	<b>Justification</b>
1. Develop and plan strategies to support the long-term livelihoods of refugees at the onset of a refugee movement.	Yes	<p>Despite the fact that it took years for the response to adapt to the integration needs of the Venezuelan migrant and refugee population, many organizations have included livelihoods-oriented activities in their programming, and the lessons learned so far might aid in the formulation of a response for refugees from other nationalities who want to stay in Colombia.</p> <p>However, as mentioned before, the livelihoods programming is still insufficient in the face of the integration needs.</p>
2. Base livelihoods support on refugees' own perspectives and agency.	No	<p>According to the analysis under the first research question, only three of the 13 organizations represented by the interviewees reflect a focus on the perspectives of the displaced population in their programming.</p>

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Compliance or compliance efforts</b>	<b>Justification</b>
3. Incorporate social protection and the provision of safety nets into livelihoods support.	Yes	The response plans for 2021, 2022 and 2023-24, as well as the contributions by the interviewees of groups A, C and F emphasize on the efforts by the implementing organizations to link their assistance to the social protection scheme of the country, so that Venezuelan migrants and refugees can access health services, education, and other benefits. Nevertheless, the participants also mentioned that accessing the social protection system is not a guarantee for the migrant and refugee population to cover their needs, considering the low capacity of the State and Government institutions.
4. Go beyond supporting economic activities to consider wider refugee needs and rights.	Yes	The activities implemented by the 13 organizations where the staff from groups A and B work include legal aid, orientation, information sessions, medical services, socioemotional education, psychosocial support, temporary shelter, child protection training, referrals, and multipurpose cash assistance, among others, taking into account the recipients' profiles (pendular migrants, refugees, migrants in destination, migrants in transit, etc.).
5. Engage a coalition of actors in supporting refugee livelihoods.	No	Interviewees from groups A and D pointed out to the insufficient involvement of the private sector in the integration of the Venezuelan population. The RMRP and the activities implemented by the organizations considered in this research do not reflect a coalition to support the livelihoods of the migrant and refugee population.
6. Consider host community relations and social integration as a core part of livelihood strategies.	Yes	Even though this was not the case when the GIFMM started working, both the Government and the implementing organizations take measures to decrease the risk of conflicts between the host and migrant communities. According to the interviewees, the project formulation processes take into account the relations between these populations, although more efforts are needed to tackle xenophobia and discrimination.

Principle	Compliance or compliance efforts	Justification
7. Support refugee livelihoods through interventions at multiple levels.	No	This principle suggests “(...) linking [livelihoods] interventions to market assessments and value chain analysis” (Barbelet & Wake, 2017, p. 28). As observed by participants of groups A, B, C, and D, this is not evident in the current livelihoods programming, which does not show the necessary technical expertise and effectiveness.
8. The livelihoods of refugees are not the same as the livelihoods of the nonrefugee population.	Insufficient information to assess compliance	According to the authors, the particular experiences, preferences, expectations, hopes, capabilities and circumstances of refugee populations should feed into the livelihoods strategies targeted at them (Barbelet & Wake, 2017). However, the information collected from the interviews and the GIFMM documents does not allow to conclude if this specific principle is put into practice.
9. Supporting refugee livelihoods through advocacy, durable solutions and innovative approaches (pp. 27-29).	No	As per the interviewees’ contributions, seven (7) of the 13 organizations carried out advocacy actions, but these are oriented towards access to rights such as health, education, and migratory regularization, not specifically towards economic integration. Furthermore, the research participants from groups A, B, and D pointed out that it is necessary to improve the quality of the livelihoods interventions, as well as to go beyond the seed capital and entrepreneurship training activities that are currently being implemented.

**Note.** The table shows the analysis of compliance of the response in Colombia to the migration flows from Venezuela with the principles of an effective livelihood response that authors Barbelet & Wake propose in the report “Livelihoods in displacement: From refugee perspectives to aid agency response” (2017).

### 6.5. Extent of the HDN implementation

Despite the fact that a variety of actors have published documents with recommendations to operationalize the HDN (IASC, 2016; European Commission, 2017; OCHA, 2017), there is not a fixed scale or measurement system to assess the extent to which the HDN is being implemented in a given region or country. This is reflected in the results section of two

studies that looked at the implementation of the nexus in various countries, including Colombia. The first one was commissioned by IOM in 2018 and inquired about the enablers and barriers to operationalize the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in Colombia, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and Turkey<sup>43</sup>(Perret, 2019). The second one, commissioned by WeWorld and the Institute of Studies on Conflict and Humanitarian Action (IECAH), aimed to identify the challenges in the implementation of the HDPN regarding the migration flows from Venezuela (Rey et al., 2022).

Both studies presented their conclusions in thematic blocks, addressing aspects such as legal frameworks, information management, coordination mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluation. However, these do not provide a measurement or overall indicator on the progress of the HDPN in the country. In contrast, the central research question of this thesis aimed to get a sense of how successful is the implementation of the HDN in Colombia, so taking into account the concepts included in the analytical framework as well as the results on the four secondary research questions, the following traffic lights scale is proposed:

**Figure 6.** Traffic light assessment of the HDN implementation in Colombia, in the response to migration flows from Venezuela

Color	Description – extent of the HDN implementation
<p style="text-align: center;">Green</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The HDN is implemented successfully”</p>	<p>The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is context-specific, has a multi-year timeframe and follows the five steps suggested by OCHA in The New Way of Working (2017) to reach collective outcomes;</li> <li>• has finance modalities available, including “(...) a broader range of flexible and predictable multi-year programming and diversified funding tools that are aligned to enable layering of short-, medium- and long-term programs” (OCHA, 2017);</li> <li>• emphasizes development, integration and livelihoods-oriented work, and shows evidence of complementarity with the Government and the social protection system in the country;</li> <li>• reflects the implementation of the three theories of change proposed by Crawford et al. (2015), and counts with at least a 30 % of implementing organizations that carry out a “de facto integration” ToC;</li> </ul>

<sup>43</sup> This study by IOM (2018) focused on the response to the internal conflict and natural disasters, not on the response targeted at refugees and migrants from Venezuela.

Color	Description – extent of the HDN implementation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• counts with at least 50 % of implementing organizations that put into practice one or more of the general approaches suggested by Crawford et al. (2015) (focus on the policy environment, focus on the perspectives of the displaced, focus on changing the architecture of the international system);</li> <li>• complies with at least six of the nine principles of an effective livelihood response suggested by Barbelet &amp; Wake (2017).</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">Yellow</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The implementation of the HDN is a work in progress”</p>	<p>The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is context-specific, has a multi-year timeframe and follows at least three of the five steps suggested by OCHA in The New Way of Working (2017) to reach collective outcomes;</li> <li>• has finance modalities available for short, medium and long-term programming, although greater flexibility is needed and/or the funding targets do not surpass 60%;</li> <li>• implements development, integration and livelihoods-oriented work, although the emphasis is on the humanitarian side;</li> <li>• strives to connect its strategies and activities with the Government programming and the social protection system in the country;</li> <li>• reflects the implementation of at least two of the three theories of change proposed by Crawford et al. (2015), also, if there are organizations implementing a “de facto integration” ToC, these represent less than 30 % of the total;</li> <li>• counts with at least 30 % of implementing organizations that put into practice one or more of the general approaches suggested by Crawford et al. (2015) (focus on the policy environment, focus on the perspectives of the displaced, focus on changing the architecture of the international system);</li> <li>• complies with four or five of the nine principles of an effective livelihood response suggested by Barbelet &amp; Wake (2017).</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">Red</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The efforts to implement the HDN fall too short”</p>	<p>The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is not context-specific enough, does not have a multi-year timeframe and follows less than three of the five steps suggested by OCHA in The New Way of Working (2017) to reach collective outcomes;</li> <li>• does not count on flexible finance modalities for short, medium and long-term programming, and the funding targets do not surpass 30%;</li> <li>• is heavily inclined towards humanitarian interventions and the development, integration and livelihoods-oriented work is scarce;</li> <li>• is not connected to the government programming nor the social protection system in the country;</li> </ul>

Color	Description – extent of the HDN implementation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not reflect the implementation of two theories of change proposed by Crawford et al. (2015), and if it does, less than 30 % of implementing organizations carry out two of them;</li> <li>• counts with less than 30 % of implementing organizations that put into practice one or more of the general approaches suggested by Crawford et al. (2015) (focus on the policy environment, focus on the perspectives of the displaced, focus on changing the architecture of the international system);</li> <li>• complies with three of less of the nine principles of an effective livelihood response suggested by Barbelet &amp; Wake (2017).</li> </ul>

According to this tool, the thesis argues that the implementation of the HDN in Colombia, specifically in response to the migration flows from Venezuela, is located on the yellow light and is a “work in progress”. In other words, the contributions by the different groups of interviewees suggest that the Government, NGOs, UN agencies, CSOs, and academia recognize the importance of a thorough implementation of the HDN in the country, and there are some enablers in place, such as the GIFMM architecture, the implementation of the ETPV, and access of the Venezuelan population to some services through other regulations.

However, more emphasis on development is needed and there are several challenges and barriers in place, including the lack or insufficiency of funds, the competition between organizations and humanitarian structures, the difficulties in reaching remote areas, the low capacity of State institutions to respond to the needs of the refugee and migrant population, and structural problems in the country, especially the armed conflict, and the lack of employment opportunities for the host and migrant communities.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

The present research emerged from the concern about the effectiveness of the medium and long-term response that the State and the international organizations have been providing to Venezuelan refugees and migrants who have arrived in Colombia since 2015, searching for a better future for their families. Considering the insistence of the United Nations and other key international actors (European Commission, OECD, etc.) to apply the humanitarian-development nexus in response to crises around the world, this thesis sought to answer the following question: how and to what extent is the humanitarian-development nexus implemented in response to the Venezuelan migratory flows in Colombia?

As explained in the analytical framework, the thesis supports the argument that the humanitarian-development nexus approach is suitable to providing an appropriate response to displacement crises, but responses to these phenomena must have an emphasis on development-led strategies to have a relevant impact on the lives of the target populations (Zetter, 2014), as opposed to simply promoting coordination and complementarity between humanitarian and development-oriented organizations. Several authors and organizations highlight the importance of promoting the livelihoods and economic inclusion of refugee and migrant communities in order to help them reach self-reliance (UNHCR, 2011; Jacobsen & Fratzke, 2016; OECD, 2019), and this is supported by the thesis results, considering that the main recommendation provided by the interviewees to improve the response for the Venezuelan population in Colombia was that implementing organizations “include and strengthen livelihoods-oriented interventions” in their programming.

The methods used for this research consisted of document review and analysis, as well as semi-structured interviews to 34 people from six groups: i) programs staff at NGOs implementing programs for the Venezuelan population, ii) field staff at NGOs, iii) representatives from implementing organizations at inter-agency working groups, iv) consultants for NGOs and UN agencies, v) academics, and vi) public officials working at local or national-level institutions. The data analysis shows that participants from the five groups recognize the importance of implementing the HDN in response to migration flows in Colombia, and also acknowledge the progress in this regard with the measures taken by the Colombian Government and the organizations that implement programs for the Venezuelan population in the country. Nevertheless, the results also suggest that major

improvements are needed from donors, implementing organizations, the State and the private sector to operationalize the nexus and help Venezuelan refugees and migrants cover their short, medium and long-term needs, in line with this population's priorities.

### **7.1. Significant research findings**

Implementing the double and triple nexus is a relevant matter for the Colombian State, the cooperating international actors with presence in the country, and the implementing organizations that assist national, migrant and refugee populations. This is reflected in the publication of periodic reports on situations of double and triple vulnerability<sup>44</sup> by the humanitarian architectures (the Country Humanitarian Team and the GIFMM), as well as in the project that these structures tried to implement in 2022, which consisted of an HDN inter-agency working group<sup>45</sup>. However, there are not many studies covering this issue.

Even though there are recent studies on the HDPN in the country (Perret, 2019; Rey, et al., 2022; Porrás Cantons, 2023), this thesis allows a more detailed understanding of the strategies that the organizations carry out in response to the needs of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. Furthermore, it looks at an issue of critical importance in the planning and execution of the response to migration flows, which other studies have not addressed in depth: the power relations operating within the GIFMM and between implementing organizations and external actors like donors and the national Government. Also, it includes the perspectives of academics and public officials working in local and national level institutions, thus recognizing the importance of actors other than NGOs, UN agencies and other implementing organizations.

By proposing a traffic light scale, the thesis concludes that the implementation of the HDN in Colombia is in the yellow zone, meaning it is a work in progress. On the one hand, the response to the migratory flows from Venezuela has a multi-year timeframe and involves country-wide needs assessments that inform the planning process; it has strong

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<sup>44</sup> The terms “double vulnerability” and “triple vulnerability” refer to individuals or communities facing a heightened risk or hardship due to the combined effects of two or three variables. In the case of Colombia, “triple vulnerability” refers to communities being affected by natural disasters, armed conflict, and forced migration, while “double vulnerability” refers to the combination of two of these variables (Victim's Unit - Colombia, 2018).

<sup>45</sup> In 2022, The GIFMM announced the creation of a working group on the nexus at coordination meetings. However, the initiative stalled, and there is no available information on why the initiative did not succeed.



coordination mechanisms in place; it includes integration and livelihood-oriented programs, and it strives to connect the assistance of NGOs and agencies to the social protection system of the State. On the other hand, as reported by the research participants, the GIFMM organizations do not sufficiently involve the target populations in the formulation and implementation of projects; the response plan is significantly tilted towards humanitarian assistance, and the emphasis on development and livelihood-oriented activities is insufficient, in large part due to the lack of funds.

The main enablers for the implementation of the HDN in response to the migration flows from Venezuela are: the architecture and functioning of the GIFMM, and the implementation of the Temporary Protection Status for Venezuelans (ETPV) and other regulations by the Colombian State, which allow that a good part of the Venezuelan refugees and migrants have access to rights and services. In contrast, the challenges that have a negative impact on the implementation of the nexus or make it harder to achieve are: the lack of funds, particularly for development-oriented interventions; the difficulties that the implementing organizations have to reach remote areas; and the competition between these organizations to secure grants, funds and geographic reach. Furthermore, the research participants pointed out certain barriers that block or slow down the implementation of the HDN, including structural problems in the country, such as the armed conflict and security threats, poverty, the low capacity of the public health care system, and corruption. These barriers also encompass the budget limitations of public institutions at the local level, xenophobia and discrimination, as well as shortcomings in the programs of GIFMM partner organizations, for instance, prioritizing the interests of the organizations over the preferences of the target communities, and lacking the technical expertise and effectiveness in the implementation of livelihood-oriented projects.

The contributions of the interviewees also assisted in identifying the types of power within the humanitarian and development response, revealing the following dynamics:

- A dominant position of the UN agencies over the NGOs and local organizations within the humanitarian architecture;
- The Government's failure to take into account and implement the inputs and recommendations of academia and civil society regarding public policy on migration flows in the country;
- The donors' requirement for implementing organizations to align with their policies and interests.

Notwithstanding these power dynamics, it is worth mentioning that the thesis challenged and refuted a specific assumption of the researcher about the dominant position of UN agencies and large NGOs in the humanitarian architecture in Colombia. Some participants reported that most leadership positions in the GIFMM sectors and working groups are in the hands of UN agencies and international NGOs, but their influence is not the only reason. In fact, the situation is more nuanced, and there have been cases of small organizations refusing to take leadership positions because they do not have the capacity or the intention to hire staff dedicated exclusively to coordination tasks.

Finally, in light of the achievements, shortcomings and power dynamics identified with regard to the implementation of the HDN in Colombia, the thesis highlights some recommendations made by the interviewees to promote its effective operationalization. Implementing organizations should include or strengthen livelihoods-oriented activities in their programming, increase reflexivity throughout the project cycle (needs assessment, formulation, implementation and evaluation), and improve coordination. The State needs to strengthen inter-institutional work and opening dialogue spaces with other actors, including the private sector, which should increase its engagement in the response to the mixed migration flows in the country. Donors must provide more funds for development-oriented interventions targeted at Venezuelan refugees and migrants and host populations in Colombia, as well as provide incentives for organizations to carry out advocacy actions that support the sustainability of projects. Lastly, it is recommended that academia continues to make visible issues that are not on the public agenda, contributing to the prevention of xenophobia, and conducting research on the impact of the ETPV.

## **7.2. Recommendations for future research**

Considering the limitations as well as the reflections that came up throughout the planning and execution of the thesis, the following recommendations could be useful to conduct further research on a similar topic:

- making efforts to achieve direct involvement of implementing organizations in the research; this is, obtaining quantitative and qualitative data directly from the organizations, and not only from individuals. This may require an alliance with a research group or an observatory of a university in Colombia to have credibility with the organizations, as well as contacting several organizations to ensure the participation of a significant sample. A survey of this nature would enable a more

accurate assessment of the types of activities and strategies carried out by the different organizations;

- assuring the participation of people from all of the sectors involved in the response: the Government, civil society, UN agencies; international, national and local NGOs; faith-based organizations, academia, and the private sector. One way to do this could be focusing the research on a reduced geographical area, such as a department, to delve into the work that each of these sectors carry out and how they coordinate and complement their actions;
- striving to keep the balance between the number of participants who work at the programs level and the number of participants who work in the field;
- including interviewees from all of the GIFMM sectors (Health, Wash, Nutrition, Shelter, Protection, Integration, etc.) as well as organizations and agencies with a development mandate that are not part of the GIFMM;
- emphasizing on the coordination and joint work of different organizations and sectors, which would provide valuable information on the setting, pursuance and achievement of collective outcomes.

Finally, a progression of the present thesis could be inquiring about the implementation of the triple nexus (humanitarian aid, development and peace), shedding light on how the humanitarian and development architectures in the country support communities exposed to triple vulnerability (natural disasters, migration, and armed conflict). As mentioned before, there are recent studies on the implementation of the HDPN in Colombia but these have a different focus, so it would be valuable to keep building knowledge on how the HDPN operates in response to the migratory flows from Haiti, Ecuador, and Venezuela.

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## Appendix A: interview guide

Interviewee pseudonym (or name if applicable):		
Job title and organization:		
Date:		
Communication method:	Videoconferencing platform/ phone call/ in person	
Interview Time:	Start:	Finish:

- **Observations and questions before the start of the interview:**

- Revision of the consent form
- Do you have any questions or concerns about the research that you want to discuss before we start?
- As explained in the Information Sheet, you may decline to answer any question, share information 'off the record', and pause or end the interview at any time, for any reason and without repercussions.

Section - topic	Target group(s)	Questions
Background questions	A, B and C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could you tell me about yourself? – Where are you from, what did you study?</li> <li>• How many years of experience do you have in the aid sector?</li> <li>• What is your current position in the organization? What other positions have you held in this organization?</li> <li>• Is this organization national or international? Does it have a single mandate or is it multi-mandated?</li> <li>• Please describe the day-to-day tasks you perform in your position, including those related to programming targeted at Venezuelan migrants and refugees, and interagency coordination</li> </ul>
Background questions	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could you tell me about yourself? – Where are you from, what did you study?</li> <li>• How many years of experience do you have in the aid sector? In which countries have you worked?</li> <li>• Could you tell me about your current work?</li> <li>• How is your work related to the response to the migration flows coming from Venezuela?</li> </ul>

Section - topic	Target group(s)	Questions
Background questions	E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could you tell me about yourself? – Where are you from, what did you study?</li> <li>• How many years of experience do you have in the academic sector?</li> <li>• Could you tell me about your current work?</li> <li>• How is your work related to the response to the migration flows coming from Venezuela?</li> </ul>
Background questions	F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could you tell me about yourself? – Where are you from, what did you study?</li> <li>• How long have you worked at governmental institutions? How long in this institution specifically?</li> <li>• Could you tell me about your position with the (government institution) and the duties that it entails?</li> </ul>
Questions on the response to the mixed migration flows from Venezuela	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long has the organization been working in response to the influx of Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> <li>• In which departments of the country does the organization have presence? In which departments does it implement programs for Venezuelan migrants and refugees? Note: Colombia's administrative divisions are called 'departments' (departamentos, in Spanish).</li> <li>• What programs and/or projects of the organization are targeted at Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> <li>• Can you tell me about each project/program (or about the most important ones)? – Its goals, activities and outcomes achieved so far.</li> <li>• Do these projects/programs address humanitarian needs, development needs, or both? How?</li> <li>• Are these projects/programs implemented with other organizations? Which organizations and what is the role of each partner?</li> <li>• Could you briefly describe how the project(s)/program(s) was/were formulated? Was the target population involved? To what extent and in what ways? Who from the target population?</li> <li>• Are government institutions involved in the implementation or the sustainability plan of any of these projects/programs? Which government agencies/institutions? How?</li> </ul>

Section - topic	Target group(s)	Questions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the organization advocating (directly or indirectly) for changes in legislation that affects Venezuelan migrants and refugees?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) If yes, could you expand on this?</li> <li>b) If yes, is this advocacy part of a specific project/program?</li> <li>a) If not, why?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Questions on the response to the mixed migration flows from Venezuela</p>	<p>B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on your experience with this and other organizations, what do you think are the priority needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Colombia?</li> <li>• Please describe the goals, activities and outcomes of the project(s)/program(s) you are involved in.</li> <li>• Considering the needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees that you described before, do you think this/these project(s)/program(s) respond to those needs?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a). If yes, how?</li> <li>b). If not, what should be done differently to respond effectively to those needs?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Is/are the project(s)/program(s) focused on urgent needs, longer term needs, or both?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a). If the project/program is humanitarian-oriented: is there an exit strategy linking to a development intervention? If yes: please expand on this. If not: how is the project expected to be sustainable?</li> <li>b). If the project/program is development-oriented: does this project/program build on a previous intervention? If yes: please expand on this.</li> <li>c). If the project/program focuses on both assistance modalities: how does it connect humanitarian and development-oriented activities/strategies?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Are these projects/programs implemented with other organizations? Which organizations? What is the role of each partner?</li> <li>• Could you briefly describe how the project(s)/program(s) was/were formulated? Was the target population involved? To what extent and in what ways? Who from the target population?</li> <li>• Are government institutions involved in the implementation or the sustainability plan of these projects/programs? How?</li> </ul>



Section - topic	Target group(s)	Questions
Questions on the response to the mixed migration flows from Venezuela	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the (inter-agency group) do and what organizations are part of it?</li> <li>• What are the biggest challenges for the (inter-agency group)?</li> </ul>
Questions on the response to the mixed migration flows from Venezuela	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In your view, has this response been effective? Why or why not?</li> <li>• Are the partner organizations of the RMRP listening to Venezuelan migrants and refugees? Are the priorities of this population reflected in the programming of humanitarian and development organizations in Colombia? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a). <i>If yes</i>, how?</li> <li>b). <i>If not</i>, why? What should organizations do to reflect the priorities of this population in their programming?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In your view, are local actors and organizations integrated and supported in the response?</li> <li>• From the actors involved in the response to the influx of Venezuelan migrants and refugees (national and local governments, implementing organizations, private sector, academia, etc.), who has done a good job and who needs to improve or change the strategy?</li> <li>• In your experience, to what extent are long-term plans set up right from the start of interventions targeted at Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> </ul>
Questions on the response to the mixed migration flows from Venezuela	E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In your view, has this response been effective? Why or why not?</li> <li>• Please mention three merits and three mistakes of the response so far</li> <li>• From the actors involved in the response to the influx of Venezuelan migrants and refugees (national and local governments, implementing organizations, private sector, academia, etc.), who has done a good job and who needs to improve or change the strategy?</li> <li>• What has been the role of academia in the response? What are the goals that the academic sector wants to achieve at this juncture?</li> </ul>

Section - topic	Target group(s)	Questions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In your opinion, what should the role of academia be with regards to the influx of Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> </ul>
Questions on the response to the mixed migration flows from Venezuela	F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please describe how the (government institution) is involved in the Refugee Migrant and Response Plan, and the response to the influx of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in general.</li> <li>• Does the institution work alongside humanitarian and development organizations to provide assistance to Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> <li>• What are the priorities of the institution to respond to the influx of the Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> <li>• How were those priorities established?</li> <li>• Has the institution conducted assessments directly with Venezuelan migrants and refugees? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a). If yes, could you tell me about these assessments, their outcomes, and how those have been integrated into the institution's work plan?</li> <li>b). If not, how does the institution get input from Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
HDN and RMRP-related questions	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you familiar with the humanitarian-development nexus? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) If yes, could you explain what you know about it and its goals?</li> <li>b) If not, I provided a brief definition of the HDN and its goals.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do you consider that the HDN is relevant to respond effectively to the needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Colombia?</li> <li>• Are the projects/programs of your organization in line with the HDN? Why or why not?</li> <li>• Do you consider that the RMRP is in line with the HDN? Why or why not?</li> <li>• What are the enablers for the HDN in Colombia?</li> <li>• What are the barriers for its implementation?</li> <li>• What are the strengths and weaknesses of the RMRP? Do you think it is addressing both the urgent needs and the longer-term integration needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> </ul>

Section - topic	Target group(s)	Questions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent do funding mechanisms support connections and synergies between humanitarian and development assistance?</li> <li>• Can you mention some of the best practices you know of to address both the humanitarian and development needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees? (Practices that you feel should be replicated)</li> <li>• Have you identified power relations between the actors involved in the response to mixed migration flows? (e.g. GIFMM partner organizations, government institutions, academia, etc.) Could you elaborate on this?</li> <li>• In your opinion, what could be done differently by implementing organizations of the RMRP and other actors involved, like government institutions, to effectively address and respond to the humanitarian and development needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> </ul>
HDN and RMRP-related questions	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you familiar with the humanitarian-development nexus? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <i>If yes</i>, could you explain what you know about it and how you gained that knowledge?</li> <li>b) <i>If not</i>, I provided a brief definition of the HDN and its goals. Considering that the HDN aims to cover both the urgent needs and longer-term needs –such as livelihoods– of displaced people, would you say this is a priority for your organization?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What resources do field staff –like you– require to provide effective support to Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> <li>• Do you have these resources? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a). <i>If not</i>, have you discussed this with senior staff of the organization? What has been their response?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How receptive is your organization to suggestions from field staff to improve the programming for Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> <li>• If you knew that your suggestions would be taken into account by senior staff in the organization, what would you suggest to effectively respond to the urgent and longer-term needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> </ul>

Section - topic	Target group(s)	Questions
HDN and RMRP-related questions	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you familiar with the humanitarian-development nexus? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <i>If yes</i>, could you explain what you know and think about it?</li> <li>b) If not, I provided a brief definition of the HDN and its goals.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do you consider that the HDN is relevant to respond to the needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Colombia?</li> <li>• Is the RMRP in line with the HDN? Why or why not?</li> <li>• What are its strengths and weaknesses? Do you think it is addressing both the urgent needs and the longer-term needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> <li>• What are the implementing partners' capacities for ensuring good linkages between humanitarian and development programming?</li> <li>• What structures and working procedures are in place in Colombia to support good linkages between humanitarian and development assistance?</li> <li>• What should the RMRP improve or correct in the future to better support Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> <li>• What are the enablers for the HDN in Colombia?</li> <li>• What are the barriers for its implementation?</li> <li>• Where are the biggest challenges?</li> <li>• To what extent do funding mechanisms support connections and synergies between humanitarian and development assistance?</li> <li>• Do you think there is enough flexibility granted by donors for organizations to adjust their programs to better respond to the needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> <li>• How do you rate the government's actions to respond to the urgent and long-term needs of this population?</li> <li>• Have you identified power relations between the actors involved in the response to mixed migration flows? (e.g. GIFMM partner organizations, government institutions, academia, etc.) Could you elaborate on this?</li> <li>• From the actors involved in the response to the influx of Venezuelan migrants and refugees (national and local governments, implementing organizations, academia, etc.), who has done a better job to effectively support</li> </ul>

Section - topic	Target group(s)	Questions
		this population? Who needs to improve or change the strategy?
HDN and RMRP-related questions	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you familiar with the humanitarian-development nexus? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) If yes, could you explain what you know and think about it?</li> <li>b) If not, I provided a brief definition of the HDN and its goals.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Based on your experience working with humanitarian and development organizations, is their programming in line with the HDN? Why do you think this is?</li> <li>• Do you think the HDN is discussed only at the headquarters level of the organizations? Or is it also dealt with at the field level?</li> <li>• Does decision-making take place at country level? How often?</li> <li>• Is the HDN part of the assessment at all stages of the project cycle by humanitarian and development organizations (program proposals, reporting, monitoring and evaluation)?</li> <li>• Are there synergies between organizations to better respond to the urgent and longer-term needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a). If yes, can you provide an example of this?</li> <li>b). If not, why? What are the consequences?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What are the enablers for the HDN in Colombia?</li> <li>• What are the barriers for its implementation?</li> <li>• Where are the biggest challenges to respond both to the humanitarian needs and to more long-term needs of this population, such as livelihoods and economic integration?</li> <li>• Are implementing partners working with integrated and/or multi-sector approaches?</li> <li>• What should be the role of donors to effectively implement the HDN?</li> <li>• To what extent do funding mechanisms support connections and synergies between humanitarian and development assistance?</li> <li>• How do you rate the government's actions to respond to the urgent and long-term needs of this population?</li> </ul>

Section - topic	Target group(s)	Questions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you identified power relations between the actors involved in the response to mixed migration flows? (e.g. GIFMM partner organizations, government institutions, academia, etc.) Could you elaborate on this?</li> <li>• Can you mention some of the best practices you know of to address both the humanitarian and development needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees? (Practices that you feel should be replicated).</li> <li>• If the government and the organizations involved in the response to the influx of Venezuelan migrants and refugees asked your concept on what needs to be done differently, which would be your top three suggestions to cover the urgent needs of this population and also support their economic integration?</li> </ul>
HDN and RMRP-related questions	E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you familiar with the humanitarian-development nexus? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) If yes, could you explain what you know and think about it?</li> <li>b) If not, I provided a brief definition of the HDN and its goals.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do you consider that the HDN is relevant to respond to the needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Colombia?</li> <li>• Is the response to the influx of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in line with the HDN? Is this positive or negative?</li> <li>• What are the enablers for the HDN in Colombia?</li> <li>• What are the barriers for its implementation?</li> <li>• What should be the role of donors in the implementation of the HDN?</li> <li>• Where are the biggest challenges to respond both to the humanitarian needs and to more long-term needs of this population, such as livelihoods and economic integration?</li> <li>• How do you rate the government's actions to respond to the urgent and long-term needs of this population?</li> <li>• Have you identified power relations between the actors involved in the response to mixed migration flows? (e.g. GIFMM partner organizations, government institutions, academia, etc.) Could you elaborate on this?</li> </ul>

Section - topic	Target group(s)	Questions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the government and the organizations involved in the response to the influx of Venezuelan migrants and refugees asked your concept on what needs to be done differently, which would be your top three suggestions to cover the urgent needs of this population and also support their economic integration?</li> </ul>
HDN and RMRP-related questions	F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you familiar with the humanitarian-development nexus? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) If yes, could you explain what you know about it and what are its goals?</li> <li>b) If not, I provided a brief definition of the HDN and its goals.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do you think the HDN goals are feasible in Colombia, with the response to the Venezuelan migratory crisis?</li> <li>• Is the work of the (government institution) in line with the HDN? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If yes, how?</li> <li>• If not, why not?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What are the enablers for the HDN in Colombia?</li> <li>• What are the barriers to implement the HDN in Colombia?</li> <li>• What are humanitarian and development organizations in Colombia doing right in the response to the influx of Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> <li>• What could they do better? Or what should they do differently?</li> <li>• What is the (government institution) doing right to respond to the humanitarian and development needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> <li>• What could the (government institution) do better? Or what should it do differently?</li> <li>• What is the (government institution) doing to support good linkages or an adequate transition between humanitarian and development assistance?</li> <li>• What other actors should be involved to provide relevant support to Venezuelan migrants and refugees?</li> <li>• Which actions are taking place to support economic integration of this population? What is lacking to promote that integration?</li> <li>• Can you mention some of the best practices you know of to address both the humanitarian and development</li> </ul>

Section - topic	Target group(s)	Questions
		needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees? (Practices that you feel should be replicated)
Concluding remarks	A, B, C, D, E and F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there something you would like to comment on further?</li> <li>• Do you have any questions for me regarding this study or the discussion we just had?</li> </ul>



## Appendix B: illustrations of the steps followed in the thematic analysis

- **Step 5 of thematic analysis:** export the code list from NVivo to an Excel file and organize the codes according to the case count. This is the preliminary code list before categorization.

Name	Files (case count)
<b>Enablers and barriers</b>	33
<b>Barriers and challenges</b>	33
Lack of capacity of public institutions	12
Xenophobia and discrimination	10
Funding challenge	10
Structural problems in host country	9
Focus of the int cooperation in certain areas and absence in remote areas	7
Lack of capacity of orgs to operate in rural or remote areas	1
Armed conflict and violence	6
Staff turnover in public institutions	5
Inefficiency of public institutions	5
Competition between organizations	5
Some people could not access the ETPV	4
Fragmented funding streams	4

- **Step 6 of thematic analysis:** open an MS Word file, write the research questions and create tables to organize clusters of codes under each question.

<b>Challenges – situations or aspects that make it harder to implement the HDN</b>		
<b>Cluster 1 – Funding challenge</b>	<b>Cluster 2 – Difficulties to reach remote areas</b>	<b>Cluster 3 – Competition between organizations and humanitarian architectures</b>
Lack of funding, especially for development interventions (10)	Focus of the int cooperation in certain areas and absence in remote areas (6)	Competition between organizations (5)
Fragmented funding streams (4)	Oversupply in border areas (1)	Fragmented humanitarian structures (2)
High cost of livelihoods interventions (3)	Assistance gaps in the territories (1)	Lack of communication and coordination between structures or groups (1)
Development-oriented interventions require more time and funds (2)		Competition between humanitarian structures (1)

- **Step 9 of thematic analysis:** back to NVivo, create containers named as the themes. Then, drag and drop the codes, according to the categorization made in MS Word.

Name	Files	Refer
Research question 2 - Enablers and barriers	34	357
Barriers and challenges	34	290
Enablers of the HDN	25	67
GIFMM architecture and functioning (cluster)	16	28
Implementation of the ETPV (cluster)	7	9
Access to rights and services through other regulations (cluster)	4	6
Public officials' involvement (cluster)	3	3
Willingness of the national gov to support integration (cluster)	3	3
Coordination and collaboration between orgs and the State (clust	3	3
Geographical coverage of the intl cooperation projects (cluster)	2	2
Donors' support (cluster)	2	2

- **Step 10 of thematic analysis:** once all the codes are categorized in each theme and research question, export the final code list from NVivo to an Excel file.

Name	Files (case count)	References
<b>Research question 2: Enablers and barriers for the HDN</b>	34	357
<b>Barriers and challenges</b>	34	290
<b>Enablers of the HDN</b>	25	67
GIFMM architecture and functioning (cluster)	16	28
Coordination structures (GIFMM etc.)	8	11
Organized response (RMRP and coordination groups)	6	6
Complementarity between organizations and sectors	4	4
Good risk mitigation in cash transfers	1	1
Acknowledgement of the importance of joint work between structures	1	1
Specificity or the RMRP in recent years	1	1
RMRP indicators related to public institutions	1	1
Exchange of information at regional level	1	1
Exchange of - sharing information at the national level	1	1
Response with a regional perspective	1	1
Implementation of the ETPV (cluster)	7	9
ETPV	6	6
Access to the social protection system	2	2
Information collected through the ETPV	1	1