



Basic Needs and Livelihoods Evaluation Costa Rica

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Conducted by: Erick Brenes

UNHCR Evaluation Office

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Acronyms

AED, Business Association for Development, for its acronym in Spanish
ANE, National Employment Agency, for its acronym in Spanish
ACAI, International Agency of Consultants and Advisors, for its acronym in Spanish
CAD, Development Assistance Committee, for its acronym in Spanish
CBI, Cash Based Interventions
CCSS, Costa Rican Social Security Fund, for its acronym in Spanish
COVID-19, disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus
CONARE, National Council of Rectors, for its acronym in Spanish
CONAPAM, National Council for Elderly, for its acronym in Spanish
DGME, National Directorate for Migration, for its acronym in Spanish
DNE, National Employment Directorate, for its acronym in Spanish
GAM, Great Metropolitan Area in San José, Costa Rica, for its acronym in Spanish
HFS, High Frequency Survey
HIAS, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
ILO, International Labour Organization
INA, National Learning Institute, for its acronym in Spanish
INAMU, National Women Institute, for its acronym in Spanish
IMAS, Mixed Institute of Social Aid, for its acronym in Spanish
IOM, International Organization for Migration
LGBTIQ, Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, transvestite, intersexual y queer
LIS, Livelihood Integrated Monitoring System
MIDEPLAN, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy, for its acronym in Spanish
MEIC, Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce, for its acronym in Spanish
MEP, Ministry of Public Education, for its acronym in Spanish
MRI, Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, for its acronym in Spanish
MIRPS, Regional Comprehensive Framework for Protection and Solutions, for its acronym in Spanish
MINARE, Comprehensive National Framework for Attention and Response to Refugee, for its acronyms in Spanish
MTSS, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, for its acronym in Spanish
MYMP, Multi-Year, Multi-Partner Protection and Solutions Plan
OECD, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PwS, Persons or population UNHCR serves
PDM, Post Distribution Monitoring
SINIRUBE, national information system and single registry of state beneficiaries, for its acronym in Spanish
SJM, Jesuit Service for Migrants, for its acronym in Spanish
SMdV, Fundación Mujer Information System
UNHCR, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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Executive Summary

This evaluation covers implementation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Basic Needs and Livelihoods programs in the period from 2019 to 2021 in Costa Rica. The target group includes asylum seekers, people recognized as refugees, stateless persons and statelessness applicants, in the national territory of Costa Rica, defined as Persons (or Population) UNHCR Serves (PwS).

The Basic Needs Satisfaction program provides monetary assistance to PwS in vulnerable economic conditions with the aim of reducing susceptibility to threats of exploitation and other high-risk activities. The Livelihoods program is intended to facilitate the economic inclusion of PwS in the country and works hand in hand with partner agency Fundación Mujer. The program focuses on strengthening preparedness for the labor market or small business development. UNHCR provides advocacy with public institutions and the business sector to assume responsibility for the economic and social integration of PwS.

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide inputs to refine the multi-year and multi-partner protection and solutions strategy of UNHCR in Costa Rica based on a critical review of the two programs. The main audience is the UNHCR Office in Costa Rica and the Office for the Americas, as well as implementing partners and allies of the country programs such as public institutions, social organizations and the business sector.

The conceptual framework of the evaluation is based on the "Development Evaluation Quality Standards" of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD, complemented by specific criteria for the evaluation of humanitarian aid actions oriented in the OECD criteria -DAC. The evaluation provides evidence in relation to the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, coherence, and efficiency, as well as connectivity and sustainability of the evaluated programs with the objective of providing UNHCR and allied actors with valuable information to strengthen inter-institutional coordination and concerted strategies. The evaluation has used a qualitative and quantitative mixed methods approach drawing on primary and secondary sources. The activities include: document review and secondary analysis of data collected by UNHCR and counterparts, field work with interviews and focus groups in person and online, workshops with key stakeholders from the public sector, field observation, survey of the business sector, a workshop on the initial findings of the evaluation with the UNHCR national and regional team, as well as a closing activity of socialization and validation of results with external key actors with a view to strengthening future coordination that contributes greater resilience and self-sufficiency.

The evaluation document is organized as follows: introduction and country context, followed by the methodology and description of the evaluation, followed by the main evaluation findings organized according to the evaluation criteria. The conclusions and recommendations are summarized and organized, the latter in strategic, institutional, and operational terms for ease of understanding and implementation.

In 2017, Costa Rica developed a Comprehensive National Framework for Attention and Response to Refugees called MINARE, which determines commitments and responsibilities of national public institutions in favor of the economic and social integration of PwS. In 2018, the political crisis in Nicaragua caused exponential growth of asylum seekers in Costa Rica: According to data from the National Directorate for Migration and the Foreign Relations Ministry, as of April 30, 2022, Costa Rica had 184,092 PwS, 94% are asylum seekers and 6% are recognized as refugees; 87% of them from Nicaragua. The abrupt growth of PwS caused an overload and accumulation of cases in the General Directorate of Migration (DGME), resulting in a significant extension of the waiting period and the possibility to access state social services from 3 months to 9 to 12 months. PwS also encounter a difficult economic situation, marked, since 2020, by the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the rise in unemployment rates to 17% and a fiscal deficit of 8.34%, the Costa Rican government was forced to make significant cuts to the national budget for 2021. Consequently, poverty grew from 5.2% to 26.2% of the population. The increased need for humanitarian assistance, combined with the declining response capacity of the government, has placed pressure on the humanitarian and development programs provided by UNHCR.

The interventions of the evaluated programs are carried out in a context of limited economic capacity of both the UNHCR and the national public agencies (MTSS, INA and IMAS-SINIRUBE.) Despite its own limitations, the UNHCR covers gaps in the attention of PwS. Responsibility to support this group, however, corresponds to State agencies within the framework of MINARE, and there is no clear path to transfer responsibilities and programs to them.

There are exceptional cases that confirm the link potential of the UNHCR programs: it is possible to link monetary assistance with other monitoring instruments of UNHCR and its allies, such as personal and professional development training or labor intermediation.

Main findings

The Basic Needs Satisfaction program expanded its focus on the most vulnerable sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the program did not manage to incorporate adaptations that respond to new conditions, nor did it have an impact on decision making institutions. UNHCR's monitoring data shows that less than two thirds of PwS were able to cover all or most of their basic needs and other needs of personal relevance. A significant number (between 28% and 39%) were possibly at risk in the medium- and long-term to submit to negative coping strategies for survival. In 14% of new asylum seeker applicants, the program has not enabled PwS to meet minimum subsistence objectives during the period of asylum application and processing.

Findings show a delay in UNHCR's capacity to adapt monetary assistance to increases in cost of living. They also show a lack of connectivity with other development interventions. The processes for delivering monetary contributions are precise and standardized and have presented few technical problems. The CBI unit does not have a field presence and difficulties in the use of cards

have been reduced by disseminating information materials and targeted messaging, but it does not include more far-reaching aspects to obtain information on the impact of the program.

To monitor the indicators, the program conducts Post-Delivery Monitoring studies every six months with representative samples of beneficiary PwS. Knowledge management is fragmented into semi-annual reports of quantitative data. There is an absence of qualitative information or consolidated information from longer periods with consistency of variables and segregation of data. This would allow for a more accurate view of the effectiveness of program strategies to be qualified with greater scope and precision, and to design a differentiated follow-up to population segments. Recommendations issued in the reports of the Post-Delivery Monitoring studies have not transcended into practice in most cases.

The Livelihoods Program had to adapt to an economic situation, marked by the consequences of COVID-19 and a growing number of PwS with diverse educational and occupational profiles. The program has achieved efficient, prompt and individualized attention to PwS for certified training opportunities, professional advice and labor intermediation in the fields of waged employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship through a single partner organization. It should be noted, however, that there may be an over-reliance on one partner. There is no defined system for documenting and registering information collected by the partner that is easily accessible by UNHCR and other interested actors.

The “Vivir la Integración” program has not proven to be the comprehensive initiative originally planned, nor has it incorporated a broad coalition of actors from the public and private sectors. There is a lack of inclusion or exclusion criteria regarding the care of PwS, combined with the lack of differentiated strategies for strengthening the capacities of PwS in relation to their educational and occupational profile and their professional experience. The farmworker profile is notably absent in the program, despite the need for many farmworkers to acquire technical and financial support to enter the agricultural or agro-industrial field. The inexistence of a direct connection between company demand and the training courses limits the effectiveness of the program.

In the period under evaluation, the MTSS and National Employment Program (PRONAE) has not played a leading role in the implementation of the program. Through the intermediation of Fundación Mujer, in 2021, 78 PwS participated in certified intensive courses and approximately 100 PwS were hired within the framework of the programs. There are deficiencies in the registration and exchange of data between UNHCR and Fundación Mujer that hinder systematic monitoring and follow-up of PwS participating in the programs. Also, the “Vivir la Integración” seal, promoted by UNHCR, enjoys a good reputation and is recognized in the private sector as a brand with the support of AED, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Chamber of Industries. Finally, there is a lack of information and awareness in the private sector regarding the legal situation of the asylum seeker and refugee population that limits the mechanisms for hiring PwS.

Recommendations

For practical reasons and focus for future implementation, the recommendations were summarized and systematized into two levels: strategic and institutional, and operational. In the first case, strategic and institutional, there must be a higher coordination with public institutions that can have a favorable impact on the well-being of PwS such as the DGME, IMAS, SINERUBE, MTSS and INA. UNHCR should seek agreements to streamline, incorporate and monitor PwS participation in public programs, and raise awareness about the importance of registration and attention in a differentiated way for refugees and asylum seekers so that they do not compete for services with the entire target population of the institutions. UNHCR should also promote a "qualitative leap" in working with private companies and civil society partners in three ways:

- Firstly, together with business partners and allies (AED, business chambers, etc.) and perhaps through a Public-Private Alliance, promote the "*Vivir la Integración*" Program as a permanent national-based Corporate Social Responsibility effort, establishing annual quantitative and qualitative goals regarding the labor inclusion of PwS.
- Secondly, diversify the partner agencies, particularly taking advantage of good experiences at the national level, especially in the northern region, and support their development and strengthening particularly in managing resources.
- Finally, it is recommended to elaborate a comprehensive strategy that connects the Basic Needs Satisfaction and Livelihood programs based on a theory of change that reflects the logic of intervention and determines objectives and indicators at the level of effects and impact that both programs cover. The strategy must differentiate population segments of PwS that should receive specific treatment. The strategy must also contemplate a sensitive approach to gender, seeking specific opportunities for women and LGBTIQ people. It would be advisable to set up a multifunctional team made up of different UNHCR units.

From the operational perspective UNHCR should advocate to expedite DGME procedures. It should also promote that IMAS assume responsibility for asylum seekers from the moment they enter the country. In cases that require permanent social assistance such as the elderly, PwS with chronic illnesses and severe levels of disability, UNHCR should coordinate with other public and private institutions such as CONAPAM, CONAPDIS and the Food Bank. Also, in addition to evaluating the way cash aid is calculated, UNHCR should consider extending it to 5 months.

UNHCR should develop an information system that reflects data from different periods, visualizing them in a consolidated manner in a single table or graph and published in semi-annual or annual reports. The reported data must have consistency of indicator variables from one report to another and include reference information from previous periods to facilitate comparison of information in the Post-Delivery Monitoring Reports of monetary assistance and differentiate by population segment. Data collection and analysis for monitoring must be done rigorously with differentiation by variables of sex/gender, nationality, and geographic location, as a minimum.

UNHCR should improve the seed capital instrument for micro, small and medium-sized businesses. This includes specific evaluations of the amount according to the investment needs

and establishing different ranges for this support. In addition, the economic assistance offered to small business can be soft loans that feed a revolving fund to further support other small business.

The UNHCR, in conjunction with partner organizations and specialized actors, can motivate the development of associative production initiatives (associations and cooperatives), perhaps most viably in the northern region. Furthermore, UNHCR should build a Comprehensive Livelihood Monitoring System that is based on the Multi-Year Strategy and Livelihoods Theory of Change. This should encompass the entire program with its various components, implemented by the UNHCR and partner agencies.

Finally, UNHCR should clarify terminology used for its Livelihoods and "*Vivir la Integración*" programs. It is recommended that all initiatives related to economic and labor insertion be implemented in a single program. Since "*Vivir la Integración*" functions as a brand, it is recommended that this term be used to name the program, in all communications with public and private actors.

1. Introduction and background.

This evaluation has been commissioned by the UNHCR representation in Costa Rica to find about the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the Basic Needs Satisfaction and Livelihood programs during the period from 2019 to 2021, to obtain recommendations for programme planning and improvement. This report presents the main findings, conclusions, and recommendations and is expected to provide inputs to refine the operation's multi-year strategy 2022-2024.

In addition, the report seeks to provide evidence in relation to the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and sustainability of the evaluated programs. In the initial phase key questions were defined in a matrix, available in annex 1. The period of the evaluation corresponds to adoption of the direct application of the Basic Needs Program in 2019 and to the influence of the emergency operational contexts (L1 and L2), as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. The target group of the programs are refugee applicants, persons recognized as refugees, stateless persons, and applicants for stateless status, in the national territory of Costa Rica, defined as Persons (or Population) UNHCR Serves (PwS).

1.1 Methodology and scope.

The theoretical framework of the evaluation is based on the “*Quality Standards for Development Evaluation*” of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD. This is complemented by specific criteria for the evaluation of humanitarian aid actions in the OECD-DAC¹ criteria. Specifically, the evaluation criteria were relevance, effectiveness, coherence, and efficiency, as well as connectivity and sustainability. The Evaluation Matrix (available in annex 1) synthesizes the essential elements for analysis of the criteria, formulating key questions, specific questions, indicators, and aspects to be analyzed.

The evaluation was carried out using a participatory approach, with the people involved as active subjects, who have influenced the implementation of the programs and will continue with a role in monitoring them. It was carried out with a view to the future, providing UNHCR and external actors with valuable information for the design and implementation of future interventions in Costa Rica.

A tailored set of qualitative and quantitative mixed methods was adopted with a gender-sensitive approach. The evaluation activities included: document review and secondary analysis of data collected from UNHCR, field work with interviews and focus groups, both face-to-face and virtual, a workshop with key stakeholders from the public sector, field observation, rapid survey of the business sector, as well as a reflection workshop on the evaluation findings with the UNHCR national and regional team. The selection of PwS for interviews prioritized inclusion of the most vulnerable sectors of the target population such as elderly, people with chronic diseases, and LGBTIQ people. Both the focus groups and interviews with PwS and the interviews with other

¹ Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria. An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies. London 2006.

sectors addressed the specific gender conditions of women and men refugees and asylum seekers. Segregation by gender was carried out in the primary data analysis, and where possible, in secondary data analysis as well.

The evaluation is supported by data collected and analyzed by UNHCR, such as the semi-annual and quarterly surveys of Post-Distribution Monitoring of CBI (Cash Based Intervention) and the High Frequency Survey implemented by UNHCR in Costa Rica starting in the second semester of 2021. The post-delivery monitoring surveys include random samples of PwS recipients of monetary assistance in the respective study period. The survey samples are representative for the beneficiary population with respect to the country of origin and geographic location of the PwS². Sampling is calculated with a 95% margin of confidence and 5% error margin. Surveys were conducted by phone in compliance with the COVID-19 sanitary measures, it was not possible to conduct face-to-face interviews. Data limitations are determined by the incomplete response rate of randomly selected PwS, which were substituted with additional respondents from the sample list. Similar to the Post-delivery Monitoring survey, for the High Frequency Survey, UNHCR has taken a random, representative sample from the sector of refugees and asylum seekers in Costa Rica with a confidence margin of 95% and 5% error margin. Due to the same limitations of incomplete response rate and the need to replace respondents, the High Frequency Survey sample was not representative for the countries of origin of the PwS and allows conclusions to be drawn only at a statistical level that refer to the total sample of people³.

Regarding information on the results of the Livelihoods Program, the data used is based on information from the Information System of Fundación Mujer (SMdV) as reflected in reporting. There is no information on the representativeness of data collected. The UNHCR HQ and CartONG impact project established a baseline survey at the beginning of the year, with a sample between 100 and 300 people enrolled in the program, and an end-line survey at the end of each year. The project measures changes related to internationally recognized livelihood indicators⁴. The results of this monitoring are reflected in the “*Livelihood Country Analysis Notes*” published annually by UNHCR. One limitation of the collected information is that only a minority of the PwS participating in the program achieve labor insertion through a job or small business. Also, the quantitative data that reports on changes with respect to the defined variables refers to a small number of people⁵.

Testimonial information was collected through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and workshops, with respective specific guides according to the area of knowledge of the individuals and groups. The focus groups were carried out in person with teams and units linked to the evaluated UNHCR programs, with Fundación Mujer (FM) and groups of PwS segregated by segments such as youth, women, elderly, rural and urban areas. The sectors included in the interviews were: team members of the evaluated programs, other national and regional officials

² See reference to the methodology used in the different PDM reports.

³ UNHCR: High Frequency Survey Ronda 1, Costa Rica Jul. – Sept. 2021, page. 3 sig.

⁴ The indicators are based on the 'Sustainable Livelihood Framework' prepared by the British Department for International Development (DFID)

⁵ See also discussions in effectiveness and coherence sections.

of UNHCR, staff from other United Nations (UN) agencies, officials of public institutions and representatives of social organizations, company managers and business chambers, as well as PwS sectors such as people with specific health requirements, elderly, and people from the LGBTIQ community. Participants were selected by staff of the evaluated programs and FM. Due to the complexity and costs to gather a randomly selected sample of PwS for each segment, a convenience sample based on accessibility was chosen for the interviews and focus groups. For the interviews that were conducted remotely, the availability of an electronic device for the interviewees was also important. The objective of the focus groups and interviews was not to collect representative data, but to derive specific qualitative experiences of the different segments of the target population. Most of these interviews were conducted virtually. The collection of testimonial information focused on the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM) and the municipality of Upala in the Northern region of the country.

A simple survey was carried out with the business sector with the objective of inquiring about their participation in actions for the economic integration of the PwS. A workshop with public actors focused on exploring forms of cooperation and coordination between them, the business sector and UNHCR. The evaluation findings workshop with the UNHCR team made it possible to socialize and discuss preliminary results, specifying guidelines for developing recommendations.

In total, there was a direct participation of 153 people in the primary information gathering activities, 92 women and 44 men⁶ (Annex 3). The greater representation of women in the sample is due in part to the fact that there is a greater participation of women in the implementation of the Livelihoods Program by FM, which had an impact on the selection of people for interviews and focus groups. Also, in public institutions, social organizations, UNHCR, and in the business sector there are more women in charge of positions related to work with the sector under review. Several people, above all from the UNHCR and FM teams, have participated in different evaluation activities.⁷ (Summary of participants available in annex 3.)

Quantitative data was statistically analyzed, and qualitative data was processed with interpretative methods from social sciences. Based on data from the different sources, documentary and testimonial, qualitative and quantitative, the information was triangulated and analyzed. A workshop was held with the UNHCR team to disseminate and discuss the evaluation findings to validate and analyze the information.

Finally, a preliminary report of the results of the evaluation was prepared for feedback by the UNHCR team. In addition, feedback observations were incorporated into a second version of the draft for final UNHCR feedback. A workshop was held to validate the results with a view to future coordination, with the participation of the UNHCR team and key actors from the sectors involved. Feedback and observations were also incorporated into the final version of the report.

⁶The difference between the total number of participants and the sum of women and men is due to the fact that of the 16 surveys delivered to the business sector, the sex of the people was not identified.

⁷People with participation in several activities have been counted only once.

1.2 Context.

Costa Rica is a destination and transit country for migrants. The national outlook has changed with the political crisis in Nicaragua in 2018, which caused an exponential growth in the asylum seeker population in the country. According to data from the General Directorate of Migration and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as of April 30th, 2022, Costa Rica had a population of 184,092 PwS for UNHCR, 94% are refugee applicants and 6% refugees. Approximately 87% of the people are from Nicaragua, the rest from Venezuela, Cuba, Colombia, Haiti, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Panama, and to a lesser extent from Caribbean countries like Dominican Republic and Jamaica. Some are from countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, South America and even the USA.

The rapid growth in the number of asylum seekers has caused an overload and accumulation of cases in the General Directorate of Migration (DGME for its acronyms in Spanish), resulting in a significant extension of the Refugee Determination Status process. While a period of three months had been stipulated for granting the first appointment at the DGME, the waiting process to obtain the refugee applicant card and work permit with the possibility of accessing other State social services now lasts between 9 and 12 months. During this time, asylum seekers require assistance to guarantee their installation and survival in the country.

The socioeconomic context is characterized by the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic with its social and economic impact worldwide. PwS have been disproportionately affected by the socio-economic effects of COVID-19; many have lost their income and are excluded from social safety nets. In Costa Rica, during the pandemic, the unemployment rate increased to 17.1%; GDP fell 4.5% and the fiscal deficit reached 8.34%. The government also made significant cuts to the national budget for 2021 and state policies had an impact on the poverty situation in the country. According to INEC⁸, poverty grew by 5.2% to reach 26.2% of the population, equivalent to an increase of 84 thousand households compared to 2019. Extreme poverty grew by 7% in the same period. The increased need for PwS humanitarian assistance, combined with the declining government response capacity, has placed high pressure on the humanitarian aid and development programs provided by UNHCR.

Costa Rica has a favorable legal and political framework for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers, it has signed important international conventions related to the protection of their rights⁹. Additionally, the government has national legislation that promotes job placement for the refugee population and, in 2020, defined a category of Complementary Protection for people from Nicaragua, Venezuela and Cuba. In 2017, Costa Rica developed its own national chapter of the Regional Comprehensive Framework for Protection and Solutions (MIRPS)¹⁰ called MINARE, National Comprehensive Framework for Attention and Response to Refugees. With Executive

⁸ <https://inec.cr/noticias/pobreza-ingresos-alcanzo-un-262>

⁹ Agreements signed by the government of Costa Rica: Convention related to the Status of Stateless Persons (1977), Convention for the Reduction of Statelessness (1977), Convention and Protocol related to the Status of Refugees (1978).

¹⁰ MIRPS was agreed by the governments of Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama, in the Pedro Sula Declaration of October 26, 2017.

Decree No. 43393 from March 3rd, 2022, the MINARE inter-institutional coordination structure was formalized with the integration of the Ministry of Interior and Police, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS), the Mixed Institute for Social Aid (IMAS) and the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN), and collaboration and technical support of UNHCR in Costa Rica.¹¹ MINARE determines the commitments and responsibilities of the national public institutions in favor of the economic and social integration of asylum seekers and refugee population (Annex 3 details the commitment of the public institutions within the MINARE framework).

Despite the political will, state institutions lack sufficient financial and technical capacities to assume their responsibilities with PwS in a timely manner and required quality.¹² Within this framework, UNHCR plays a fundamental role in filling the existing gaps in State services, both through the implementation of its own programs and through financial and technical support to respective institutions.

2. Background and description of the evaluated programs

2.1 Basic Needs Satisfaction Program review

The Basic Needs Satisfaction Program provides monetary assistance to refugees or refugee applicants in highly vulnerable economic conditions. The purpose of the Program is to reduce their susceptibility to threats of exploitation and other high-risk activities, thereby improving security for the community.¹³

Based on a socioeconomic survey, the Program selects those individuals and families of greatest risk and economic needs to provide them with humanitarian aid in the form of monetary assistance for a period of three months to meet their most essential needs. As of 2019, the delivery of monetary assistance is carried out by the UNHCR CBI team through a prepaid card from the National Bank of Costa Rica. Previously, the delivery was made by check delivered by a partner agency in charge of case management.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a specific subsidy called: “COVID-19 assistance” was included in the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program, delivered over a period of 18 months in 2020 and 2021. Added eligibility profiles for this included families with specific vulnerabilities, such as elderly and chronically ill family members, and large families. In this context, the Protection unit, in coordination with partner agencies, played a fundamental role in case identification and referral.

¹¹ See: <https://vlex.co.cr/vid/presidente-republica-ministra-planificacion-897412007>

¹² Interviews conducted with UNHCR officials and state public institutions.

¹³ See: UNHCR Costa Rica Basic Needs Cash Assistance Strategy. Basic Needs 2021-2022. Internal document.

UNHCR's institutional policy for interventions based on monetary assistance, recently updated for the 2022 to 2026 period, provides strategic and operational guidelines for the implementation of the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program.¹⁴

2.2 Livelihoods Program review

UNHCR's Livelihoods Program is intended to facilitate the economic and labor inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees in the host country. As expressed in the "*Global Strategy Concept Note 2019-23*", economic inclusion contributes to the self-sufficiency and resilience of asylum seekers and refugees, enables people to meet their needs in a safe, sustainable, and dignified manner, and avoids dependence on humanitarian aid and the use of negative surviving strategies.¹⁵

In the first stage, between 2014 and 2016, the Livelihoods Program was implemented through the partner organization ACAI with two parallel initiatives: a) The Graduation Model, aimed at comprehensive support to strengthen PwS to improve their opportunities for labor insertion, and b) the Vivir la Integración (Live the Integration) Program, aimed at fostering participation of the private sector from a Corporate Social Responsibility approach.

In 2017, the Vivir la Integración Program moved to a single implementing partner: Fundación Mujer (FM). Since then, a two-way approach has been applied: 1) FM is responsible for the operational part of the program, which consists of facilitating training for PwS and linking them with the job markets in the areas of waged employment and self-employment/entrepreneurship, and 2) UNHCR, through its Livelihoods unit, focuses on advocacy with public institutions, the private sector, and strategic and technical support to the program. In 2017, UNHCR also launched the "Vivir la Integración" (Live the Integration) seal, which adapted the ISO 26000 international standard and the 2030 Agenda and was declared of public interest by the executive power of the Costa Rican government.¹⁶

A strategic component of the program is the inclusion of PwS in state programs aimed at labor insertion for waged employment. There are two main programs coordinated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS): The National Employment Agency and the National Program for Labor Integration. Due to the limited access of the PwS to these state programs, in 2021, UNHCR, FM and MTSS signed a cooperation agreement intended to increase the number of PwS in intensive technical courses to increase their chances of accessing the labor market.

2.3 Insertion of programs in the UNHCR organizational structure

In the organizational structure of the UNHCR office in Costa Rica, the Satisfaction of Basic Needs and Livelihood programs are in the Operations area at the same hierarchical level (annex 4). However, the functions of both programs are quite different. The Livelihood unit is an operational

¹⁴ UNHCR: Policy on Cash-Based Interventions 2022-2026.

¹⁵ UNHCR Global Strategy Concept Note 1019-23.

¹⁶ Declaration of public interest through Decree MP-40645.

or line unit that directly contributes to the mission of the institution. The CBI unit is in charge of the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program, but also has support or auxiliary services to the operational units with the functions of the administration and operational management of monetary assistance. All forms of delivery of monetary assistance from UNHCR go via the CBI unit, for example: the delivery of seed capital and other cash support for employment to beneficiaries of the Livelihoods Program. The CBI unit is committed to functions that go beyond its competencies and institutional mission -as provided by the CBI policy¹⁷. The team has made some adjustments necessary to carry out complementary functions, for example: during 2021 and 2022 a French-speaking staff member was employed to facilitate assistance to Haitian asylum seekers; and there is advice and support from the person in charge of CBI at the regional level of UNHCR, who is based in Costa Rica.

3. Program findings

3.1 Relevance of the programs

3.1.1 Basic Needs Satisfaction Program for the persons of interest

3.1.1.1 Basic needs coverage

The amount of the subsidy, although it does not cover the complete expenses of the basic food basket and must be reassessed based on the country's inflation rate, makes it possible to cover the most pressing financial needs. The increase in the time of the Refugee Status Determination process between 9 and 12 months means that the program is out of context, since PwS must cover the remaining months in the informal sector, making them more vulnerable. The program has not been able to connect effectively with other programs or follow-up strategies of UNHCR as well as other public and/or private institutions.

3.1.1.2 Investment and coverage of the Basic Needs Satisfaction Programs

Although investment in the program has been increasing, the subsidy amount has been reduced over the last two years, as amounts were calculated based on the exact number of family members, with an average of 2.3.¹⁸

In 2019, there was a request of 39,404 new asylum seekers and 5,629 people were attended by the Program with a coverage of 14.3%.¹⁹ In 2020, given the travel restrictions under the Covid-19 pandemic, there were only 12,689 new asylum seeker applications. There was also an extension of monetary assistance with the COVID-19 fund, which allowed for the care of 10,377 people belonging to a broader group that was not limited to new asylum seekers, making accurate percentage calculation difficult. In 2021, the program served 8,857 people. Since in this same year there were 59,450 new asylum seekers applications, the coverage of the Program was 14.9%.

¹⁷ UNHCR: Policy on Cash Based Interventions 2022-2026, page. 8.

¹⁸ UNHCR CBI Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) Report Multi-purpose cash assistance, Costa Rica, December 2020, pag. 8.

¹⁹ Data source of refugee seekers by year: Refugee Statistics as of April 30, 2022. Presentation in PPPT. by Allan Rodriguez Vargas from the DGME Refuge Unit.

According to a program review in August 2021, the level of subsidies from the previous year was maintained due to the fact that annual inflation in 2020 was only 0.73%.²⁰ However, in the entire period from 2019 to 2021, the increase in the cost of living in Costa Rica has been 4.56%,²¹ which has not been offset by an equivalent adjustment to family group subsidies in the same period.

3.1.1.3 Preference of assistance modalities

According to the Post-Delivery Monitoring, in the period from 2019 to 2021, 68.22% of PwS preferred monetary assistance to receive humanitarian aid. For almost a third of them, there are other modalities of preference: more than a quarter of PwS (27.67%) would prefer a combination of monetary assistance and aid in kind.

3.1.2 Relevance of the Livelihoods Program for the persons of interest

3.1.2.1 Access and information

PwS face a series of obstacles to advance with their job training and acquire skills and certificates that facilitate access to the labor market. They lack knowledge about information mechanisms and channels in relation to training opportunities and have difficulties accessing them. The lack of availability of devices and virtual connection, to a greater extent in the rural area of the northern region, hinders them from using digital platforms to learn, receive virtual training and use information.²² In adult education, public institutions do not offer possibilities for certified non-professional training with minimum formal requirements.²³ Lack of awareness of the refugee card and rights on the part of public institutions that provide training services, also makes it difficult for PwS to access training and therefore the labor market.

3.1.2.2 Access to labor market

The strategy includes different complementary components implemented in cooperation with FM: training and labor intermediation in order to increase opportunities for economic insertion and access to the labor market; inclusion of the private sector in the job placement process; and links to public programs (MTSS, INA) with a focus on labor insertion. Some representatives of companies view the implementation of this strategy with a critical eye since it does not have sufficient agility or systematization of the profiles to link with their demand.

²⁰ Annual evolution of the inflation rate in Costa Rica from 2015 to 2027: <https://es.statista.com/estadisticas/1190003/tasa-de-inflacion-costa-rica/#:~:text=Por%20lo%20general%2C%20la%20tasa,pa%C3%ADs%20centroamericano%20ser%C3%A1%20de%203%25.>

²¹ Ídem.

²² UNHCR: High Frequency Survey Rond 1, Costa Rica Jul. – Sept 2021 and UNHCR personal information.

²³ Interview with focus groups with PwS in San José and interview with an INA official

3.1.2.3 Incorporation of the business sector

The program responds to the lack of knowledge and awareness in the business sector about the legal status of PwS by promoting information and awareness activities. A favorable factor for the participation of the private sector is their interest, especially large companies, to improve their public image within the framework of Corporate Social Responsibility.

Specific labor supply and demand conditions are identified in the agricultural and agro-industrial sector, which has the potential to hire people with little or no training. However, according to the UNHCR Due Diligence policy, companies in this sector represent a high reputational risk, due to precarious working conditions and non-compliance with environmental standards. Therefore, this sector has been left aside in the efforts of labor insertion of PwS. Neither UNHCR nor FM has found an answer on how to deal with this situation, leaving an important group of companies and PwS in the agricultural sector neglected.

3.2 Effectiveness of programs

3.2.1 Effectiveness of the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program

3.2.1.1 Scope of the basic needs satisfaction for PwS

The second objective of the program is to cover most of the basic needs (rent, food and hygiene items) of the PwS.²⁴ Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) studies show the level of compliance with this objective during the period 2019 to 2021²⁵, however, it should be considered that the information is not collected during the receipt of financial assistance, but generally after it has finished. As shown in Table 1, an average of 29% of PwS surveyed between 2019 and 2021 stated that they had all their basic needs met, a similar number reports having more than half of their basic needs met; 27% consider half of their needs satisfied, 16% less than half, and 3% feel that none of their basic needs were satisfied. In the second half of 2020, the figures for people with all their basic needs satisfied, both in the population with multi-purpose assistance and COVID-19 assistance, are the lowest with only 15%, showing the great impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on PwS. This impact begins in the first semester of 2020, when only little more than half of the population with multi-purpose assistance -51%- considered having all or more than half of their basic needs satisfied.

²⁴ See: UNHCR Costa Rica Basic Needs Cash Assistance Strategy. Basic Needs 2021-2022. Internal document.

²⁵ Complete data found in Annex 6: Post-Distribution Monitoring Data for monetary aid.

Table 1: Level of satisfaction of basic needs of PwS benefited by the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program in the period 2019 to 2021.

Period	Satisfaction of all basic needs	Satisfaction of more than half of all basic needs	Satisfaction of half of basic needs	Satisfaction of less than half of basic needs	Satisfaction of none of their basic needs
2nd sem. 2019 multi-purpose	60.00%	19.00%		13.00%	1.40%
1st sem. 2020 multi-purpose	23.62%	27.61%	14.72%	22.09%	8.90%
2nd sem. 2020 multi-purpose	15.00%	37.90%	28.10%	16.00%	2.20%
1st sem. 2021 multi-purpose	32.00%	30.00%	26.00%	9.00%	3.00%
2nd sem.2021 multi-purpose	33.00%	31.00%	27.00%	9.00%	0.00%
1st sem. 2020 COVID grant	15.10%	30.21%	17.19%	31.77%	4.69%
2nd sem. 2020 COVID grant	27.30%	27.80%	21.50%	17.37%	4.21%
1st sem. 2021 COVID grant	28.00%	27.00%	31.00%	12.00%	2.00%
2019 to 2021 average	29.25%	28.82%	26.72%	16.28%	3.17%

A greater satisfaction of basic needs is shown in PwS with multi-purpose assistance in 2019, with 60% reporting complete satisfaction of basic needs and 19% with more than half of the needs satisfied, and in the same group in 2021 with 62% in the first semester and 64% in the second semester with all or more than half of the basic needs satisfied. It should be noted that the satisfaction of basic needs does not completely depend on the monetary assistance of the program. Due to the urgency of obtaining some income for their survival, a large part of PwS work in the informal labor market. In the Post-Delivery Monitoring of Multi-purpose Assistance in the first semester of 2021, 76% claimed to have income from informal work, in the second semester of 2021 in this same population this figure rose to 88%. In the population of PwS with COVID-19 Assistance, in the second semester of 2020, 45.8% of the beneficiary population stated that they had income from informal work, and in the first semester of 2021 in the same population this figure increased to 71%.

3.2.1.2 Use of assistance funds

In the three years evaluated, 98.42% of the PwS surveyed for post-delivery monitoring have used the subsidy for the purchase of food, 86.38% for rent, 81.38% for hygiene items, 70.59% for the payment of basic supplies and bills such as water and electricity, 70.20% for transportation,

63.86% for health expenses, and 8.5% managed to set aside some savings.²⁶ In all periods of data collection of Post-delivery Monitoring, the use of money for food reached almost 100%, followed by expenses for rent between 79% and 96%. The rate is similar for hygiene items, between 71% and 95%.

The number of PwS who confirmed in the Post-Delivery Monitoring surveys that they had saved money from cash aid generally ranged between 2% and 5% in the different periods, but in the Post-Delivery Monitoring of Multi-purpose Assistance for the first half of 2021, this number rose to 23% of the benefited population.²⁷ As there is no evidence to support this sudden change, some data collection, processing or reporting error cannot be ruled out.

3.2.1.3 Effects of the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program

Although the scope of the program is limited and only a part of the beneficiaries managed to cover all or most of their basic needs, it has repercussions on the families and beneficiaries that go beyond the satisfaction of their basic needs. An average of 65.38% of the PwS surveyed by the post-delivery monitoring of monetary assistance from 2019 to 2021 affirm that the assistance contributed to improvements in their living conditions; 59.77% felt the reduction of stress and for 61.55% the financial burden was reduced.²⁸ In measurements of Multi-purpose Assistance and COVID-19 Assistance, the data on the positive effects of three variables: improvement of living conditions, reduction of stress and reduction of the financial burden are between 50% and 76%.

3.2.1.4 Protection of the beneficiary population

One of the main purposes of the program is to influence negative survival strategies of individuals and families. Data from Post-Delivery Monitoring shows that high-risk activities are kept at a low level.²⁹ An average of 2.05% of the surveyed population of PwS who have received monetary assistance between 2019 and 2021, affirm their participation in negative survival strategies in exchange for money or items. However, the data also shows a reduction in participation in this type of activity in the multi-purpose assistance populations interviewed at the start of the program in 2019 from 4% to 0.34% in the second semester of 2021. The same reduction trend is shown by the data for surveyed recipients of the COVID-19 program, from 2.6% in the second half of 2020 to 1.2% in the first half of 2021. The number of beneficiary PwS that have exposed themselves to the risk of asking strangers for money is slightly higher, 4.95% of the PwS surveyed, but also with a significant reduction in the population of Multi-purpose Assistance from 10.43% in the first semester of 2020 to 2.36% in the second semester of 2021. There was still a reduction, but lighter in the population with COVID-19 Assistance from 4.69% in the first semester of 2020 to 3.61% in the first semester of 2021. Only 1.02% of the families benefiting from monetary assistance resorted to sending minors under 16 years of age to work; but 6.64% exposed a family member to work far away. There are 4.29% of families that do not send their children to school or do not manage to solve impediments for them to attend formal education.

²⁶ Complete data is added in Annex 6: Post-Distribution Monitoring Data for Cash Aid, Table 14.

²⁷ See Annex 6: Post-Distribution Monitoring Data for cash aid.

²⁸ Complete data is added in Annex 6: Post-Distribution Monitoring Data for Cash Aid, Table 15.

²⁹ Complete data is added in Annex 6: Post-Distribution Monitoring Data for Cash Aid, Table 16.

3.2.2 Effectiveness of the Livelihoods Program

3.2.2.1 Effects of the strengthening capacities of PwS through the training process

3.2.2.1.1 Specialized advising and training of the PwS

Fundación Mujer, as UNHCR's implementing partner, focuses its activities on the operational part of the Livelihoods Program: capacity building and labor integration of asylum seekers and refugees, applying comprehensive, individualized follow up based on the needs of PwS and the labor market. The program has established a logic of procedural intervention, which begins with a diagnosis aimed at the integration of PwS in the labor market in two alternative ways: waged employment and self-employment and/or entrepreneurship.

Based on the analysis, FM in conjunction with each PwS, prepares an individual work plan, and training courses are assigned based on their professional profile, opportunities, and labor market demands. The courses are taught by FM, private institutes or, to a lesser extent, public institutions (such as INA). In addition to the training courses, FM provides individualized advice, adapted to the specific needs of PwS in the areas of waged employment and self-employment and/or entrepreneurship.

3.2.2.1.2 Quantitative scope of the training processes

The FM attends all asylum seekers and refugees, without exclusion, with the livelihoods diagnosis in a short period of approximately one week; to date FM has not turned people away.³⁰ In this way, it achieves the accompaniment of a high number of people. In the period 2019 to 2021, it carried out the Livelihood Diagnosis of 8,020 PwS. Of these people, 5,945 PwS participated in the basic training; 7,088 (88.4%) attended short courses (3,403 people only in 2021); a significantly lower number, a total of 860 PwS, enrolled and graduated from certified technical courses, most of them in private institutions (690 PwS). Fifty-seven families benefited from an additional digital literacy course, conducted by UNHCR in 2021 for the first time.

Table 2: Quantitative scope of training processes for the 2019/ 2021 period

Total Livelihood Diagnosis	8,020 PwS	100%
Basic training	5,945 PwS	72.1%
Short courses	7,088 PwS	88.4%
Certified technical course	860 PwS	10.7%

The data indicates that 10.7% of PwS served by the FM achieves certification in a technical professional specialization course in the three-year period. Considering that training PwS is the main focus of the work of FM and noting the need to improve their professional profile, the number can be assessed as low. The fact that a part of the PwS do not have technical or professional certifications from their country shows the importance of alternative mechanisms for verifying competencies through official agencies.

³⁰ Interview with an official of Fundación Mujer.

3.2.2.1.3 Qualitative scope of the training processes

A good part of the PwS interviewed in the framework of the evaluation place a high value on training and career advice. In the focus groups carried out by FM as part of their regular monitoring, PwS express the importance of basic training, among others, to know the national legislation, institutions, administrative procedures, and cultural aspects of Costa Rica. Regarding needs, PwS expressed an interest in strengthening their knowledge of languages.³¹ A different situation occurs in the Northern region for PwS with an agricultural profile. This group of people does not express the same satisfaction with the training processes. Most people in rural areas have specific needs, including paying rent for land, buying inputs for their crops, and learning about agricultural techniques; needs to which the program responds to a much lesser extent.

In relation to the effectiveness of training to improve employment opportunities, monitoring carried out by the FM does not provide in-depth information. However, data collected by the partner in relation to people hired in companies according to the training received reveals the training topics in which the PwS have participated most frequently: basic training (17.4% of the PwS), Customer Service (16.4%), Principles of Food Hygiene (10.1%) and Food Handling (9.4%).³² In the field of independent work, PwS that managed to establish a small business give evidence about the application of new knowledge. They highlight the usefulness of business formalization processes, among them: brand creation, use of social networks and registration of the company in the Ministry of Finance for the issuance of electronic invoices.³³ As additional positive effects of the PwS training processes, the formation of networks between people and the exchange of information regarding contacts with organizations and institutions stand out.

3.2.3 Effects on the scope of employability

3.2.3.1 Effects on the employment situation of asylum seekers and refugees

Within the framework of the Integrated Livelihoods Information System for Refugees and Forcibly Displaced Persons (LIS), UNHCR monitors progress against indicators related to the effects of the Livelihoods program. For the period between 2018 and 2020, UNHCR has collected information on relevant variables in the field of livelihoods in the framework of annual monitoring. In this monitoring, baseline data is collected at the beginning of the year and output line data at the end of each year, which shows the effects of the program in relation to relevant variables in the employment sector.³⁴ Regarding this analysis, it is important to consider the relative significance of the data, due to small numbers in the baselines and final lines in terms of people employed in the respective years.

³¹ Focus groups with PwS in San José and individual interview with PwS employed in a company

³² Fundación Mujer: Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Report. May 2022; Consultation with 477 PwS that have received job follow-up from FM.

³³ Focus group with women entrepreneurs in San José

³⁴ Livelihood Country Analysis Note, Costa Rica 2019 and 2020; Impact monitoring carried out by CartONG.

The data collected shows an improvement in the employment situation of PwS in the three years observed (2018, 2019, 2020): during the year 2018 the number of PwS with employment grew by 13%, during 2019 by 35%, and during 2020 by 23%. In 2018 and 2019 the percentage of people working in a formal job rose, while in 2020 the percentage fell. Observing the duration of employment contracts, in 2019 there was an increase in people working with contracts of more than 6 months, while in 2018 and 2020 the percentage of contracts for more than 6 months has decreased.

Identified effects based on the Fundación Mujer monitoring

The labor intermediation has had positive effects that are reflected in the number of PwS hired. FM records information on people hired by year, the number and names of the companies that hired them. It is important to point out that the data obtained does not differentiate between a contract carried out through labor intermediation by FM or through a direct application by PwS without the intervention of the FM. In this way, it is not possible to attribute the recorded contracts directly to the intermediation work carried out by FM. Comparing the years of the evaluation, the numbers provided by FM show that in 2021 there were 5 times more PwS referred to job opportunities than in 2020, which, according to information from the organization, is due to the constant growth of demand and number of people served. However, this is not reflected in a greater number of contracts; rather, in 2021 a significantly lower number was hired than in previous years. Comparing the years 2021 and 2020, in 2021 companies hired approximately only half of employees than previous year; less than half of companies employed PwS this year. These trends are possibly related to (post)pandemic effects.

Regarding the differentiation by sex and gender, there is data only in relation to people hired in the companies. In 2019 women represented a majority (60%), in 2020 56% were women, while in 2021 the numbers were equal. The distribution of nationalities of hired PwS shows that there is a high representation of people of Venezuelan nationality, this group represents approximately a quarter of the people hired, while in the asylum seekers this nationality represents only 4%. In relation to the percentage of Venezuelan people attended by FM, there is no systematic data for the three years under evaluation. Based on the existing data for 2019, it can be verified that Venezuelans represent approximately 15% of the total number of people assisted in the livelihoods diagnosis.

3.2.3.2 Barriers for labour integration of PwS

In the private sector, a first obstacle to hiring asylum seekers is the lack of up-to-date knowledge on the legal situation and work permit of this population; companies still require residency status.³⁵ Companies are also concerned about the lack of definition and possible temporary nature of the legal permanence of PwS. High rates of unemployment, which has worsened because of the COVID-19 pandemic, causes companies to prefer hiring nationals. There is also a

³⁵ Interviews with PwS in San José and Upala; UNHCR: Participatory Diagnosis (2021).

negative stigmatization of asylum seekers coming out of contexts of violence, crime or drug trafficking.

Asylum seekers experience discriminatory attitudes, due to their nationality and for those that belong to the LGBTIQ group.³⁶ Elderly also face additional difficulties in accessing the labor market. Faced with these challenges, UNHCR makes significant efforts to provide awareness and sensitization workshops to companies to eliminate negative prejudices and seeks the contribution of pioneering companies in the inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees. Several interviewees mention the lack of coherence between the supply and demand of the labor force: transnational companies, with an interest in hiring PwS, have a demand for qualified people with specialized technical profiles, while most PwS have no or low qualifications.³⁷ On the other hand, there are asylum seekers who practiced a profession in their country and yet do not get a job in Costa Rica for which they are overqualified, which causes greater turnover in some jobs. These seemingly contradictory phenomena confirm the perception of the private sector of the need for an agile and effective mechanism that links the supply with the demand of labor.

Another obstacle to achieve greater labor insertion in the evaluation periods, there were no initiatives for mass dissemination of the *Vivir la Integración* initiative of the Livelihoods Program. One important aspect to consider is the agile and fast dynamic of the private sector.

3.2.4 Effects in independent work and entrepreneurship

3.2.4.1 Effects on the entrepreneurship formation

Identified effects through the Integrated Monitoring System of UNHCR

Monitoring carried out by UNHCR from the years 2018 to 2020, with a sample drawn from PwS of the independent work program, shows effects regarding labor insertion through entrepreneurship. As shown in Table 3, in 2018 the numbers of PwS in independent work through entrepreneurship or self-employment rose slightly; in 2019, however, these numbers fell by 10%, and in 2020 rose again. The numbers show a different trend compared to the employability figures. In the field of independent work, negative effects were observed in the year of the pandemic, while the field of entrepreneurship grew in the same year.

³⁶ Interview with PwS of the LGTBI group.

³⁷ Information provided by the representative of the UNHCR Livelihoods program and representative of a transnational company.

Table 3: Effects of the program in the field of entrepreneurship in relation to Livelihood Program variables (2018-20).

	2018	2019	2020
PwS with independent work (Average)	2%	-10%	45%
Independent work (Absolute numbers)	Baseline 11, Final number 8	Baseline 20, Final number 6	Baseline 10, Final number 16
Formal enterprise (register and local/national level)	25%	7%	9%
Formal Enterprise (Absolute numbers)	Baseline 0, Final number 2	Baseline 2, Final number 1	Baseline 1, Final number 3
Employing other people	-11%	18%	9%
	<i>Total beneficiaries: 840; baseline 40, Final number 27</i>	<i>Total beneficiaries: 300; Baseline: 31, Final number: 11</i>	<i>Total beneficiaries : 540, Baseline: 59, Final number: 26</i>

Source: UNHCR Livelihood Country Analysis Note, 2018, 2019, 2020

On the other hand, numbers on the formal registration of entrepreneurship in relation to the provision of employment for other people show different trends: in 2018 there was a 25% significant increase in the registration of entrepreneurship, however, a decrease in the number of businesses in which other people were employed. In the years 2019 and 2020 there was a smaller increase in the registration of formal entrepreneurship (7% and 9% respectively), but, in both years, there was an increase in the number of businesses that employed other people. In summary, based on the data available for the three years, it is not possible to draw clear conclusions about growth or contraction regarding the processes of formalization and hiring additional people.

Identified effects through the monitoring performed by Fundación Mujer

According to FM data, in the period from 2019 to 2021 a total of 450 people received seed capital. In this same period, 379 PwS managed to establish a business: 176 in 2019, 102 in 2020 and 101 in 2021. Differences stand out in the number of entrepreneurship according to the variables of gender and nationality.

Women entrepreneurs are overrepresented: of the total number of businesses formed, 73% belong to women (67% in 2019, 87% in 2020 and 79% in 2021). Comparing these figures with the percentages of women served by FM, both have growing trends: in 2019, 50% of the people served were women; in 2020 women represented 70% of the people served. This data reflects priority attention to women, which coincides with the organization's strategic approach to promote gender equality. Considering the existing disadvantages of women in the labor market, and specifically for asylum seekers and refugees, and their greater responsibilities in reproductive tasks and caring for people, it is a prioritization that can be justified. However, there are no

established quantitative goals regarding the attention of PwS according to sex, neither for waged employment, self-employment or entrepreneurship.

Regarding nationality, an imbalance can be identified; there is a large number of entrepreneurial people of Venezuelan nationality, who own more than half of the established businesses. The Nicaraguan population represents a little less than a quarter of entrepreneurs. This does not coincide with the distribution of the people attended by nationality (for example, in 2019, the percentage of Venezuelans attended was only 15%). The divergence according to nationality is higher in entrepreneurship than in that of waged employment. Given that there is no differentiated data on the distribution of nationalities in relation to other variables, such as attendance at trainings, career advice, and seed capital, it is difficult to conclude if the Venezuelan population has been served more intensively or if Venezuelans have been more successful. However, experiences provided through the focus groups lead to the interpretation that there is greater attention to the Venezuelan population, located in San José, since on average they have more experience and better conditions than Nicaraguans.

3.2.4.2 Effects in relation with income generation, marketing, and product sales.

Within the framework of the evaluation, it is not possible to make specific observations on income generated through product marketing and sales because the FM monitoring system, which is based on project indicators, does not include indicators referring to income. The organization does not collect systematic data in relation to this variable.

The information referring to the formalization of small businesses can provide guidelines in relation to the possibilities for income generation. However, there is not a specific indicator formulated in the project, which provides information on the degree of formalization of small business. In its monitoring, FM collects some data related to the formalization process, in a separate report from the annual report.³⁸ In the opinion of the evaluation team, this is highly relevant information that must be included in the annual reports and must be represented through official indicators. Based on the data provided by FM in the framework of the evaluation, progress can be identified in some areas, in others, progress is still modest. The greatest successes can be detected in the registration of businesses with the Ministry of Finance (219 businesses in the three years under evaluation). Electronic invoicing has been obtained for 120 businesses during this period. There are few start-ups (6 to be precise) for which a trademark has been registered and are certified as small and middle size enterprises (SMEs) in MEIC.

3.2.4.3 Small business catalytic factors

There is no systematic record of monitoring based on defined variables that show the success of businesses established under the program. In the evaluation process, it has been possible to identify good practices for the promotion of small businesses, marketing, and income generation. A summary of known initiatives is illustrated in Annex 5.

³⁸ Fundación Mujer (March 2022): Livelihoods and economic inclusion report

3.2.4.4 Factors hindering the development and growth of small business

One of the main difficulties to starting a small business is the instability of income, especially at the beginning. The income generated by small business is not enough to cover needs, but only represents a contribution to it.³⁹ Additionally, some small businesses need more investment. Seed capital is an important support to partially solve the dilemma of the lack of investment. PwS who do not receive seed capital often lack the possibility to acquire other basic investment.

PwS face different external restrictions regarding access to public and private services. Many services require them to have recognized refugee status. The lack of access to credit is considered an important limitation by PwS who have an active business. According to a study on the labor market carried out by HIAS in 2020, the primary need for business growth is access to credit, followed by access to training.⁴⁰ They consider that, in some institutions, there are discriminatory attitudes against asylum seekers and refugees and give preference to nationals.⁴¹

There are also obstacles to PwS on a personal level that prevent business formalization and growth. Among them is the expiration of the current identity document that prevents registration with MEIC. Another problem, which is manifested to a greater degree in the Northern region, is the lack and discontinuity of connectivity to manage platforms and social networks, which restricts marketing opportunities, and with a greater negative effect due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2.5 Effects in relation to self-sufficiency and resilience of PwS

Data collected within the framework of UNHCR's Integrated Livelihoods Monitoring System (LIS) carried out for the period 2018-2020 shown in Table 4, provides information that allows verification regarding the self-sufficiency of the people served in the program. In the field of self-employment, there were increases in income in the three years monitored: 22% in 2018, 33% in 2019, and 6% in 2020.

Table 4: Changes in income variables and saving capacity experienced by waged employed PwS.

	2018	2019	2020
PwS with waged employment	13%	35%	23%
Increase in income	22%	33%	6%
Increase in savings	4%	18%	1%

³⁹In the HIAS study, 90% of people with entrepreneurship indicate that their business generates income to survive, 5% report losses and 5% indicate that they generate savings to invest.

⁴⁰In the Study on the labor market for refugees and asylum seekers (HIAS 2020) 23% of people mention access to credit and 13% access to training.

⁴¹ UNHCR: Participatory Diagnosis 2021.

	<i>Total beneficiaries: 1200, Baseline 89, final number 24.</i>	<i>Total beneficiaries: 2600; Baseline 150, final number 79.</i>	<i>Total beneficiaries: 1960; Baseline: 252, final number: 168.</i>
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Source: UNHCR Livelihood Country Analysis Note, 2018, 2019, 2020.

To know if people's self-sufficiency has improved, it is important to observe the trends in relation to the saving capacity of PwS: in 2018, despite a significant increase in income, the savings capacity only increased by 4%. In 2019, there was a significant improvement in savings with an 18% rate, from which it can be concluded that the self-sufficiency and quality of life of beneficiaries improved that year. In 2020, there were practically no increases in savings (1%), which is most likely a consequence of the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, marked by the drastic increase in unemployment and underemployment rates in the country.

Table 5: Changes in the variables of income and saving capacity experienced by self-employed PwS.

	2018	2019	2020
PwS self-employ	2%	-10%	45%
Increase in income	17%	5%	11%
Increase in savings	17%	9%	3%
	<i>Total beneficiaries: 840; Baseline: 40, Final number: 27</i>	<i>Total beneficiaries: 300; baseline: 31, Final number: 11</i>	<i>Total beneficiaries: 540, Baseline: 59, Final number: 26</i>

Source: UNHCR Livelihood Country Analysis Note, 2018, 2019, 2020.

Regarding income through independent work, it can be verified that in 2018, income increased 17% for PwS with a business, in 2019 income increased by 5% and in 2020 increased again 11% for a large part of PwS. Regarding savings, a significant increase in savings is observed in 2018 by 17%. In the following year, in 2019, there was an increase of 9% and in 2020 there was a slight increase of 3%, despite the negative consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on the country's economy. These figures are consistent with the increase in the number of small businesses that were formally registered that year. The data leads to the conclusion that entrepreneurship causes positive effects regarding the self-sufficiency of PwS and, additionally, that entrepreneurship is a mechanism to compensate to a certain extent the negative effects of the pandemic.

Apart from the financial situation, participation in the livelihoods program contributes to better well-being of the PwS. This is a relevant aspect, given that many asylum seekers forcibly leaving their country and having to start a new life in the host country face psychological problems.⁴² It has been identified that there is a significant demand for psychological support, individually and

⁴² Focus groups with women entrepreneurs.

collectively, by asylum seekers and refugees. There is little offer of free or low-cost psychological support.⁴³

3.2.6 Integration of PwS in State programs

For labor insertion, the target is on the inclusion of PwS in the National Employment Program coordinated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS). UNHCR, FM and the National Employment Directorate have collaborated to implement the *Integrate al Empleo* project, between 2018 and 2021. The project provided a financial subsidy for companies for a period of three months. According to the private sector, the subsidy granted to companies is not an effective stimulus and is not valued as an adequate mechanism for companies to hire PwS.⁴⁴ In the second edition of *Integrate al Empleo* in 2021, UNHCR, FM and MTSS signed an agreement in the *Empléate* program, with additional funds provided by UNHCR, in order to "train unemployed people and learn different skills to be able to be placed in the labor market of Costa Rica".⁴⁵ Through this agreement, the inclusion of PwS in the *Empléate* program and intensive technical courses was achieved, with co-financing from the State. For the first time⁴⁶ the *Empléate* program was successful in placing 55% of the PwS trained,⁴⁷ but there is no data that segregates how many of these people were refugees or asylum seekers. Through the intermediation work of FM, the placement of 38 PwS was achieved, as well as the payment of 114 economic stimuli to 10 employers and 340 people with financial subsidies for their training. In *Empléate*, 78 people were placed in technical courses and three specific courses aimed at PwS were carried out. In this last area, 8 PwS were called by the company and 3 were hired. Despite the institutional agreement, in 2022 it was not possible to include asylum seekers or refugees in the *Empléate* program, since the PwS could not obtain the economic valuation carried out by IMAS, which is a requirement to access the program.

3.2.7 Coordinations with private sector

3.2.7.1 Private sector contributions to the 'Vivir la Integración' program

An important element of the program for the business sector is the "*Vivir la Integración*" seal. The initiative was declared of public interest by the Costa Rican government through Decree MP-40645. Representatives of different sectors appreciate the seal as very positive and relevant; it has great potential to promote the inclusion of the asylum seeker and refugee population. An important factor is that the seal is the result of a process of close inter-institutional cooperation between UNHCR and the private sector, with the participation of the AED, chamber of commerce and chamber of industry. The seal is granted to public and private companies, social organizations, and academic sectors, which carry out affirmative actions in favor of the refugee

⁴³ Interview with the RET representative in Costa Rica.

⁴⁴ Opinion expressed at the inter-institutional workshop (4-28-22) by a representative of the Chamber of Commerce.

⁴⁵ <https://empleoscostarica.info/programa-emplete-costa-rica/>

⁴⁶ According to information from the representative of the Ministry of Labor, the duration of the courses is 6 months, with 15 hours per week.

⁴⁷ Information from Gindra Brenes, head of PRONAE of the MTSS.

population. UNHCR provides technical advice to the institutions in the process before and after the distribution of the seal, in 2018 the seal was granted to 20 institutions, in 2019 to 27 institutions and in 2021 to 31 institutions.

The evaluation team considers that the '*Vivir la Integración*' seal is a highly relevant component in the *Vivir la Integración* Program, given that (a) the seal is a successful institutional collaboration between the public and private sectors, (b) it represents recognition and at the same time commitment and encouragement to strengthen efforts towards a greater inclusion of the refugee and asylum seeker population, through concrete actions and strategies, and (c) it allows close monitoring of UNHCR and FM as implementing partner with the companies. Even though there is close follow up with companies from UNHCR in relation to the seal, it is considered that it has potential to be further strengthened in the future.

The evaluation team considers that the AED continues to be a relevant strategic ally in the program to mobilize a greater number of companies towards the inclusion of PwS, as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives⁴⁸.

3.2.7.2 Program effects on the private sector

Use of the training processes from the business sector perspective

From the perspective of the business sector, training is an important component of the follow up in the program; certified technical courses from formal institutions make up to some degree for a lack of professional certificates from PwS, as a representative from FM states. For companies it means institutional support and reference from UNHCR and FM. Companies highlight the importance of strengthening soft skills (e.g. customer service, communication) as central elements for access to the labor market. They value as essential the individual advice to PwS implemented by FM, for example, for the preparation of CVs, training for a personal interview and organization of a job interview on a virtual platform.⁴⁹

Benefits to companies hiring PwS

For companies, hiring asylum seekers and refugees has positive effects. In the survey carried out with companies, more than two thirds confirm that hiring PwS has brought benefits to their company. Regarding the types of benefits, there were high evaluations regarding the following expressions: the person hired demonstrates a good performance (69%), the person promotes the generation of new institutional strategies in the company (62%) and the person contributes to a positive work environment (54%). Some difficulties are also diagnosed, for example, four companies (44%) indicate difficulties in the labor integration and performance of PwS.

⁴⁸Examples are: Accenture with a digital learning platform, Boston Scientific and Western Union.

⁴⁹Results of interviews with representatives of two transnational companies in San José.

3.2.7.3 Coordination between public and private sector

In conversations held in the evaluation workshops, it is identified that there is little coordination between the private and public sectors. Some representatives of the private sector outline the little direct and efficient interaction with the public sector for labor intermediation. Additionally, the dynamics of both sectors are different: while the private sector seeks immediate answers, the public sector must follow administrative procedures that require more time. Even though the role of municipalities is considered important, they do not have adequate mechanisms to facilitate labor intermediation.

3.3 Coherence and efficiency of the programs

3.3.1 Coherence and efficiency of the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program

3.3.1.1 Recruitment and selection process

People identified as potential candidates for the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program must complete a socioeconomic assessment survey.⁵⁰ The application of surveys and assessment of PwS give access to the CCSS insurance and is overseen by the Registration Unit of the UNHCR office in San José. Surveys are conducted over the phone or in person. If it is in person, it can be at the UNHCR office, somewhere on the ground or at entry point into the country. The Protection Unit has offered support with field interviews. In 2021, due to the pandemic, no personal socioeconomic assessment was taken in the field, only by telephone by the Registration Unit. This modality continued in 2022. Based on responses to the survey, the CBI software calculates a score, which determines whether the person or household qualifies to enter the program.

The regulations of the Registration Unit stipulate that three calls must be made. If the person does not answer any, the case is dismissed. However, difficulties in locating PwS, above all in their initial period in the country, are common because PwS often have not yet firmly established themselves in a certain address or change their contact telephone numbers. Even though the UNHCR teams recognizes this context, no feedback mechanism or request for support has been established from the Registration Unit to the UNHCR Protection Unit, which has a greater presence on the ground, above all in the Northern region, and may perform address verification when the person or family selected for the survey has not been located. This type of verification is not necessary when cases are referred by external entities.

The Registration Unit tool processes the information from the socioeconomic assessment surveys and forwards it to the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program team. The decision on the selection of individuals or families is separated from the information gathering and processing, guaranteeing the highest degree of objectivity in the selection and scoring of each survey carried out by the team of the Basic Need Satisfaction Program. According to the availability of the Program's annual and monthly budget, the score cut-off defined who enters the Program, others remain on a waiting list or do not qualify.

⁵⁰ <https://kobo.unhcr.org/#/forms/acjiUpZ8aqFJwJvCLMx2mQ/landing> (UNHCR internal access document).

In the period from 2019 to 2021, approximately 200 families per month have been included in the Multi-purpose Assistance Program. In the 18 months of the COVID-19 Assistance Program, it served a similar number of PwS per month.

3.3.1.2 Prepaid card delivery

Monetary assistance is delivered with a prepaid card from the National Bank of Costa Rica, the only entity that offers this service and has a wide network of ATM coverage throughout the country. UNHCR has a 3-year contract with the bank, which establishes conditions and procedures for issuing and using the cards, which will expire in August 2022. The cards are issued in the name of UNHCR, which means that any management required with the bank must be made by UNHCR. In these cases, the PwS must inform UNHCR of difficulties, they cannot carry out procedures related to the cards in the bank themselves. UNHCR keeps track of PwS with a card, reloads approved funds, and provides monthly monitoring of usage.

The delivery of cards in the evaluated period was carried out in three ways: by mail, personal pick-up at the UNHCR offices in San José and Upala, and in the Northern region also by face-to-face delivery by a member of the UNHCR team (Protection team, CBI focal point). In pandemic times, mailing was prioritized to avoid health risks. When a card has been mailed, a designated person from the CBI team provides follow-up to ensure that the recipient received the card. In the case of picking up the card personally at the UNHCR office, the CBI unit attends to the recipients on two stipulated days during the month. If the delivery is at the Upala office, the designated CBI support persons carry out this same procedure. If the card was delivered in person and at home, the UNHCR person who delivered the card fills out a delivery sheet and sends it to the CBI unit.

If the recipients of mailed cards cannot be found, the card is returned to UNHCR. With face-to-face home delivery, as it was done for a while in the North region, it was easier to solve this type of situation. However, in 2021, because of the pandemic, the face-to-face delivery modality did not continue. With this cut, the practice of providing feedback to the Protection Unit on those cases did not continue. This practice facilitated the Protection Unit's work to follow up on the cases attended. As pandemic restrictions eased in the middle of 2022, the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program was able to resume on-site delivery.

The Post-Delivery Monitoring survey, reporting on information regarding the delivery of the cards (PDM Multi-purpose Assistance and PDM COVID-19 Assistance for the first half of 2020), confirms that the vast majority of PwS (97% and 95% respectively) felt safe receiving the cards, appreciating that both UNHCR and the postal service took the necessary preventive measures during the activity.

Use of the prepaid card is limited to accessing funds granted for monetary assistance from the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program. The UNHCR's assumption that this modality would make it easier for PwS to be included in the country's financial services cannot be verified. Possession of

the card has not enabled PwS to participate more widely in the financial system; it does not facilitate access to other bank services such as opening an account or applying for credit.

3.3.1.3 Money transfer process

Once the card is delivered, beneficiaries receive financial education training from the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program team, where the use of the card is explained to them and provides basic information on the family budget and expense control. UNHCR has produced printed and electronic materials and a video in Spanish to explain how the card is used. In response to the increased flow of PwS from Haiti, UNHCR also translated some of the information materials into French. In addition, the CBI team currently has a person fluent in French who is assigned to monitor people coming from Haiti. The information materials on the use of the card are included in the card order by mail and are reinforced by calls, SMS, and WhatsApp. In addition, there is a free telephone line (800 REFUGIO) beneficiaries can use if they have any questions about the use of the card. In cases where people cannot read or write, the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program team includes family members so that they can explain use of the card or help the beneficiaries.

UNHCR recharges the card monthly with the respective amount of each case for the three-month period of assistance approval. When the money is available in the account, information is sent to the beneficiary so that they can withdraw the funds. According to the results of the PDMs, the availability of funds for PwS has been correct and punctual. At the end of the month, the person in charge of monitoring the case checks if the beneficiary has withdrawn the money, if the money is still in the account, they contact the beneficiary to explore what difficulties they may have had. If beneficiaries do not use the funds at the end of the three-month period, the remainder is returned to the budget of the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program.

3.3.1.4 PwS capacities for the reception of monetary assistance

Some Post-delivery Monitoring reports provide information on assistance required to use the card; other reports do not include this information. Where included, reports note that some PwS require assistance, others have problems with withdrawing and using assistance.

As shown in Table 6, there is a wide range in the capacities of PwS to use the card according to measurements of Post-Delivery Monitoring, both in the group of PwS with Multi-purpose Assistance and in the group with COVID-19 Assistance. In the group of PwS with Multi-purpose Assistance, data shows that the percentage of PwS that required assistance to use the card varies between 61.45% in the second half of 2019 as the highest value and 17% in the second half of 2021 as the lowest value. In the group of beneficiaries of COVID-19 Assistance, the number of PwS that required assistance ranges from 56% in the second quarter of 2020 to 17.4% in the third quarter of the same year. Lack of knowledge about the use of ATMs or card handling ranges between 40% in the COVID-19 Assistance population in the 1st semester of 2020 and 11.1% in the same population in the 2nd semester of 2020, but not all the reports include this data. Common errors by card users are entering the wrong PIN number or withdrawal amount, often requiring UNHCR and the bank to unlock the card.

Table 6: PwS capacity to use the prepaid card

Period	PwS requiring assistance for the use of the prepaid card	Illiteracy on the use of the card or teller machine
2nd semester 2019 (preliminary analysis)	61.45%	
1st semester 2020 (Multi-purpose assistance)	25.00%	18.00%
2nd semester 2020 (Multi-purpose assistance)	19.00%	14.05%
1st semester 2021 (Multi-purpose assistance)	19.00%	15.60%
2nd semester 2021 (Multi-purpose assistance)	17.00%	12.00%
1st semester 2020 (COVID-19 assistance) ⁵¹	56.00%	40.00%
2nd semester 2020 (COVID-19 assistance)	17.40%	11.10%
1st semester 2021 (COVID-19 assistance)	20.00%	14.50%

Source: UNHCR monitoring data.

Despite the variability of the data, a trend of better capacities in the use of the card can be seen both in the PwS with Multi-purpose Assistance and COVID-19 Assistance. The public information measures implemented by the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program are generating the expected result of better use and greater independence of PwS in the use of the card. Where PwS have not been able to directly solve problems, the difficulties were overcome with the support of family members, friends, bank personnel or the intervention of the CBI team.

In Post-Delivery Monitoring studies, less than 10% of PwS report feeling at risk when withdrawing money from the ATM, keeping cash at home, or making purchases. The interviewed PWS and focus group participants did not report any difficulties with the use of the card or incidents when withdrawing, saving or spending the money.

3.3.1.5 Basic Needs Satisfaction program follow up and monitoring

Each beneficiary of the monetary assistance is assigned a specific person from the CBI unit team that provides follow-up on the case, beginning with the control of the receipt of the prepaid card until review of the use of transferred funds and following up with the beneficiary, if necessary. Specific difficulties with the reception and withdrawal of monetary assistance are addressed in meetings of the CBI team, seeking to solve the case. The team also reflects on cases of greater vulnerability, such as victims of violence, and information is shared in this regard with other

⁵¹ Datos del Informe de PDM del primer semestre 2020 de la Asistencia COVID-19, pág. 4. De acuerdo a información testimonial de la persona responsable de registro de datos de CBI, en esta medición el 17.37% de PDI necesitó ayuda para el uso de la tarjeta y de ellas, el 11.05% fue porque desconocía como usar la tarjeta.

UNHCR units. Specific case-relevant information is recorded in the database of all cash aid recipients.

This program has a comprehensive system of key performance indicators (KPIs), organized into eight key questions, each with between 1 and 5 specific indicators aimed at measuring efficiency and effectiveness of the Program.⁵² The system is fed semi-annually or quarterly with data from a Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) survey with a representative sample of PwS who have received monetary assistance in the respective period. The sample includes both people whose support had ended at the time of the survey and people who are still in the final period of receiving assistance. This composition of the sample creates difficulties when interpreting the data.

In the 18 months of distribution of COVID-19 Assistance, parallel surveys have been carried out for the population benefiting from multi-purpose assistance and COVID-19 assistance. The surveys are applied by the CBI team, the information is processed and analyzed by the team and reports are prepared with data from program indicators, using similar formats, but not identical in Spanish and English. The data reported does not uniformly provide information on the same variables of each indicator, but rather presents variations that makes it difficult to compare the information from one report to another.

The Post-Delivery Monitoring survey instrument is continuously reviewed by the CBI team, and critical points for improvement have been identified and adjustments have been made. However, there are still items in the survey that generate ambiguous information. One example is a question that focuses on problems with withdrawal and spending at the same time. The question does not allow for accurate identification of the problem, in the withdrawal or in the cash aid spending.

The language that has been widely used in reports, both in the executive summary and in the interpretation of survey data, focuses on appreciating the Program's achievements, without explicitly focusing more critical views on what might be needed. According to data from the report, only 64% of the people surveyed confirm that they can cover all or more than half of their basic needs, and 60% record a significant improvement in their living conditions.

Each Post-delivery Monitoring report includes a section of Conclusions and Recommendations, but consolidated tables are not developed with information from various subsequent monitoring periods that demonstrate change over time. There is also no segregation of data by gender, age, geographic areas, and country of origin or specific vulnerabilities of PwS, which would allow greater precision in assessing the specific impact of the Program in a certain population. Derived from the Post-Delivery Monitoring reports, there is no envisioned action plan that seeks to implement the recommendations in the next period, with a monitoring mechanism that makes it possible to identify progress achieved. In this way, knowledge management remains fragmented

⁵² See UNHCR CBI Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) Report. Multi-purpose Assistance Costa Rica, October 2020.

in individual reports without developing consolidated information for periods longer than a year or several years and with segregation of the data, which would allow the effectiveness of the program's strategies to be qualified with greater scope and precision.

3.3.2 Livelihoods program efficiency

3.3.2.1 Budget availability

Budget analysis available in the period between 2018 and 2021 reveals that it grew by 66%; 2020 was the year with the greatest availability of resources. However, this increase does not correspond to the growth in the number of PwS in the program, which increased almost eight times (from 12,000 in 2018 to 93,708 in 2020), between 2018 and 2020. Comparing the years 2018 and 2021, the number of people served in the program has increased, but with a growth of 22% less than the budget. This lower increase is due to a 62% rise in the costs of the program per person served (from USD 248 to USD 401) between 2018 and 2020. The cost per person in 2020 and 2021 decreased by 15.4% (from 402 USD to approx. 336 USD).

It is not possible to compare the years under evaluation, given that the economic situation in the country changed drastically with the exponential growth of the asylum-seeking population and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

3.2.2.2 Efficiency of Fundación Mujer care strategy and instruments

Fundación Mujer access to services

FM offers different options and communication channels to receive support requests from PwS, used also as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All people who come to FM to carry out the Livelihood Diagnosis receive this service. The program has not established criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of PwS. Decisions about the need to participate in short or long courses depend on the assessment made by the FM specialists. There are no clear criteria to guide decisions on the regularity of advice and training. As it could be verified, participation in a maximum of two or three courses has been informally defined. Based on conversations with PwS, it can be concluded that people with greater opportunities in the labor market receive more intensive support.

Support efficiency

According to analysis of the quantitative data, the work of FM is efficient in relation to the dimension and speed of attention to the requests by PwS as shown in Table 7. FM attends to a high number of PwS: According to data from the reports of the UNHCR Program Unit in 2019 there were 3,143 people, in 2020 almost 2,900 people and in 2021 there were 1,980 people.⁵³ With these figures, the program exceeds the target quotas, established at 2,500 people, in two of the three years.

⁵³ UNHCR Performance Monitoring Report, Years 2019, 2020, 2021 (see table 23 in annex 6)

Table 7: Number of PwS served by FM.

2019	2020	2021
3,143	2,900	1,980

Source: Elaborated from UNHCR Program Unit data

Also, participation of PwS in short technical courses is very high. Attendance in short courses, in relation to the total number of people attended, amounts to 61.2% in 2019, 60.8% in 2020 and 172% in 2021. Regarding the numbers of people graduated from certified technical courses with a longer duration, the percentage ranges between approximately 8% (in 2019), 7% (in 2020) and 21% (2021) in relation to the total number of people served by FM in the respective years.⁵⁴ Regarding the numbers of people referred to job opportunities and hired, based on the available figures, it can be verified that these were low in the first two years of the evaluation period: In 2019, 4% of the people served in the program were referred to a job opportunity, in 2020 5% were reached; in 2021 the figure rose dramatically to reach 39%. According to information from FM, the high number of people participating in courses and people referred to a job opportunity is due to the continuous increase in the number of asylum seekers in recent years, the knowledge of FM as a UNHCR Livelihoods agency and adjustment to virtual assistance caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding hiring, it can be verified that, of the people served, 5.1% were hired in 2019, 5% in 2020 and 5.5% in 2021. In summary, in the three years under evaluation, there has been a positive relation between PwS served and participants in short courses, a growing trend between PwS served and certified in a technical course, and a low efficiency relationship between PwS served and hired by companies.

Other instruments used by FM are the employment exchange service and the Labor Market Observatory which, according to FM's findings, have an essential function for labor intermediation.⁵⁵ The Labor Market Observatory produces a database with different categories including economic scope, geographical area and source of information, but it does not seem to be used outside of FM.

3.2.2.3 Livelihoods program monitoring

Fundación Mujer monitoring system

FM performs regular monitoring for the Livelihoods Program implemented with UNHCR and systematizes the data in an Integrated Livelihoods System (SIMdV). Based on this, FM prepares its annual reports, called 'Project Performance Reports', which report on progress in established performance indicators. In the framework of the evaluation, the evaluation team has not been provided with direct access to SIMdV, which is being updated.⁵⁶ The analysis carried out in the

⁵⁴ No conclusions can be made in relation to the effects of the courses, since there is no data available that crosses variables, such as the professional entry profile, the number of trainings and advice, and the achievement in labor insertion in the fields of employability and entrepreneurship.

⁵⁵ Interview with the coordinator of the Fundación Mujer program.

⁵⁶ Information provided in an interview with the Coordinator of the Livelihoods Program.

framework of the evaluation is based on project performance reports and other information.⁵⁷ After the analysis, the evaluation team identified some weak and/or in need of improvement points in the program reports⁵⁸:

- a. The information on the established performance indicators is not complete: there is no information on all the indicators for the three consecutive years
- b. There is no consistent disaggregation of data in terms of differentiation by sex, nationality and geographic location (Northern area and GAM)
- c. In the information provided by Fundación Mujer there are differences regarding numbers between reports, for example, between the annual reports of the Foundation, the report on the Livelihoods Program (of May 2022) and reports from the UNHCR Programs Unit, consequently there is no certainty about the correct numbers.

UNHCR monitoring system

UNHCR monitors progress on the program by the partner, FM, which includes review of reports, field visits and regular meetings with FM. Based on this, it prepares a 'Performance Monitoring Report', which provides information on programmatic and financial tracking under performance indicators, comparing what is planned with what is executed. The limitation of the reports at the level of activities and products, as indicated by those responsible for the UNHCR Programs Unit, is due to administrative reasons, since the projects are limited to a one-year duration.⁵⁹

Additionally, UNHCR has an integrated Livelihood System (LIS), in which FM collects information on the effects and impacts of the program, which is analyzed by an external organization (CartONG).⁶⁰ This monitoring has been carried out for the period from 2018 to 2020; there is no data for the third year (2021) under evaluation.

3.2.2.4 Livelihoods program coherence with other programs

3.2.2.4.1 Coherence with state programs

Regarding technical training and job placement, there is coordination with the state programs implemented under the responsibility of the MTSS. FM refers people to the MTSS and INA or, in the PRONAE '*Empléate*' initiative, people with the profile required by a company, to enable their insertion in intensive technical courses. However, there are different factors that limit real access to the programs, specifically the lack of knowledge of the program on the part of PwS, lack of prioritization of asylum seekers and refugees as the target group of the program, administrative barriers such as the need for certification of high school or secondary completion, lack of harmonization of criteria between the UNHCR program and state programs and a low educational

⁵⁷ Fundación Mujer provided data on other variables, for example: Names of companies that hire Persons of Interest, Number of small business formalized and registered with the Ministry of Finance.

⁵⁸ See tables with quantitative data extracted from Fundación Mujer reports in Annex 6, Tables 19 and 20

⁵⁹ Information provided by staff from the Programs Unit

⁶⁰Based on the information generated in the LIS, UNHCR generates annual reports, called 'Country Analysis Reports'.

level of a large part of the asylum seekers. Consequently, most of the training processes in the Livelihoods program implemented by FM are done outside the state programs and in coordination with private training institutes. The goal of including PwS in state certified technical training programs, mainly by INA, to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the program, is only partially achieved under current conditions. Another aspect of great relevance to improve the possibilities of labor insertion is the validation of technical and university degrees, the recognition of study programs and grade records by the Costa Rican State, which implies a long and expensive process. According to information from UNHCR representatives, no progress has been made with the institution in charge, CONARE, regarding the development of mechanisms for the equalization and validation of titles and certificates.⁶¹

Public institutions do not differentiate between population categories, including migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless people. Consequently, UNHCR does not receive the relevant information that allows it to provide evidence of the inclusion of PwS in the programs. Therefore, the goal of coordinating and including PwS in State technical training and job placement programs is only partially achieved at the operational level; however, there is a deficiency in the registration, monitoring, and exchange of data that allow the verification of compliance with the agreements defined by MINARE.

3.2.2.4.2 Coherence with private sector interventions

The private sector is interested in job placement of the asylum seeker and refugee population from a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) perspective. Within the framework of the program, coordination has been carried out with the Chamber of Commerce, AED, and some companies. However, during the period under evaluation, individual actions have been carried out such as the creation of a coalition of actors that promotes job placement in the private sector under the CSR initiative.

3.2.2.4.3 Coordination with other United Nations agencies

There are shared interests among United Nations agencies in working with the migrant, asylum seeker, and refugee population. Synergies and expertise of the agencies should be sought, as has been done previously, for example, with the ILO.

In the Northern region, the project "*Integrated support for socioeconomic recovery and health focused on women from host communities, migrants and vulnerable asylum seekers*" has been carried out with the participation of ILO, PAHO/WHO, UNHCR and IOM, supported by the United Nations Multi-Donor Fund (MPTF). This project, which was directed at 120 agro-industrial productive women, had a comprehensive approach working with a target population of 50% asylum seeker, refugee, and migrant women, and 50% host community women. The project included training of trainers by the women of the target group. It also included the strengthening of the associativity of the women to improve the possibilities of collective sales in local markets.⁶²

⁶¹Verification of a UNHCR representative in the focus group on Livelihoods.

⁶² Focus group with the UNHCR team in Upala.

The evaluation team considers the experience valuable due to its comprehensive approach that is based on joint work between the national and refugee population and the organizational strengthening of a group of women.

3.2.2.4.4 Public and private sector inter-institutional coordination

In the Northern region, UNHCR is betting on a comprehensive and coordinated approach to face development challenges, with the participation of different sectors, such as public, private, and academic institutions at the regional level. There is an explicit interest in strengthening municipalities. An important challenge is the creation of a specialized economic area in the municipalities and the construction of a livelihood strategy at the municipal level.⁶³

UNHCR's work in the Northern region also seeks comprehensiveness in relation to the participation of assisted people to strengthen their protection. UNHCR has identified the importance of integrating the national population and working from a do-no-harm approach. It is therefore essential to have close internal coordination between the Satisfaction of Basic Needs, Livelihoods Programs and Protection Unit.

Regarding inter-institutional coordination, good results have been shown in cooperation with Human Rights and refugee organizations, such as CENDEROS, which has work experience with a community protection approach and provides comprehensive and inclusive assistance; in the Northern region, the work includes the field of agricultural production to strengthen income generation. As an obstacle to collective work, UNHCR identifies the fact that asylum seekers are generally not organized, that they are geographically disperse and must move in relation to existing work options – factors that make a collective approach to the program difficult. However, in terms of efficiency and sustainability, it is valuable to consider the approach of working with groups of people and families in the design of future inter-agency cooperation projects, since these strengthen organizational structures. Also, knowledge-sharing is promoted, vulnerable groups such as women, girls, and boys are included, and close monitoring of the group of beneficiary people is guaranteed.

In addition to the good experiences in cooperation, refugee organizations claim a lack of connection between the instruments applied by the UNHCR. For example, in the Women's Shelter in Upala, UNHCR partially supports women with the monetary transfer instrument, but does not implement training or advisory processes during their stay to prepare their economic integration. From the perspective of CENDEROS, there must be comprehensiveness in the application of the instruments to achieve positive effects regarding people's self-sufficiency.⁶⁴

⁶³Focus group with UNHCR staff in Upala. The following actors are mentioned, among others: Cantonal Institutional Coordination Councils (CCCI), Chambers of Commerce and Industry and their federations, Upala Technical College, INDER, MAG, Institute of Tourism, Public Universities.

⁶⁴ Interview with the representative of Cenderos in Upala.

3.4 Programs connectivity and sustainability

3.4.1 Evaluated programs internal connectivity

Conditions for the sustainability of humanitarian assistance, which is generally provided for a limited period of emergency situations, are constituted by its connectivity with development and longer-range interventions. UNHCR refers a list of PwS to the Livelihoods Program in order to generate economic support for them. In addition, the PwS upon leaving the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program sign a letter of understanding in which they recognize their need and responsibility to rely on the Livelihoods Program and the services provided by FM as a strategy for exiting humanitarian assistance. However, in the interviews with PwS only a part confirmed having received communication from FM, and they tend to be those people with job profiles with better opportunities in the labor market, while those segments of PwS with greater vulnerability such as people with chronic illnesses or elderly are left without follow-up coverage.

One of the weaknesses in the two programs is that between the program teams, including the FM team, as part of the Livelihoods Program, there are no regular meetings or regular coordination to exchange, evaluate, plan, or also address specific cases. Lack of connectivity between the Basic Needs Satisfaction and Livelihood programs limits the opportunities for economic sustainability of the PwS.

Another difficulty of the connectivity between both programs is that not all the population assisted by the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program has the conditions to enter the Livelihoods program. For older adults, people with chronic illnesses or disabilities, there is practically no formal job opportunity and very few entrepreneurial options, so the programs make no attempt to link them with livelihoods, as was evident in the interviews with PwS from these population segments. What these population segments of PwS require is inclusion in national public care programs that provide support according to their specific conditions (CONAPDIS and CONAPAM for instance).

With the UNHCR Protection Unit, the Basic Needs Program has established more links than with the Livelihoods Program. Due to its presence on the ground, the Protection Unit identifies the most vulnerable cases of PwS and sends them for inclusion into the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program, allowing a response to the cases from the perspective of protection. The Protection Unit also played a fundamental role in the identification and referral of cases for their insertion into the COVID-19 assistance program. Since 2019 there have been protection sessions in the field led by the Protection Unit that brought UNHCR closer to its target population, but in 2021 the assessment of cases in the field was suspended, interrupting feedback on the cases, and once again disassociating the Protection Unit from the Program of Satisfaction of Basic Needs. The Protection Unit responds to emergencies and urgent needs and will always require connectivity with other internal initiatives such as the Livelihoods Program, public institutions or external agencies with a development focus.

3.4.2 Evaluated programs external connectivity

The Basic Needs Satisfaction Program has developed few links with public sector institutions. There is coordination with the DGME shelter unit for identification of PwS to be included in the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program. Direct contact is established with seven local offices of IMAS, but there is no coordination or feedback on PwS recipients of monetary assistance. Apart from access to CCSS health insurance, which UNHCR has agreed with the government for people with serious health conditions and extreme socioeconomic vulnerability, there is no follow-up connectivity to PwS benefiting from monetary assistance with public social care programs.

With social organizations, there is a link at the time of recruitment of PwS for their incorporation into the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program, but the Program does not link beneficiary PwS again with the organizations for follow-up when the humanitarian aid has ended.

With the business sector, the only cooperation carried out by the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program is with the financial sector, particularly with the BNCR as provider of prepaid cards. A contract has been signed with the bank on the card service, and follow-up is provided jointly, resolving technical problems.

At the end of the monetary assistance, in accordance with their personal conditions and state of health, PwS require a link with development programs or social assistance in case they do not have the physical conditions to generate their own income. However, the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program has not assumed the challenge of linking its beneficiary population with the respective programs of public institutions, social organizations, or the business sector to build connectivity and achieve the sustainability of the living conditions of its target population.

Regarding the labor insertion of PwS, there is connectivity of the Livelihood program with state programs carried out under the responsibility of the MTSS such as the "*Intégrate al Empleo*" Program, which has provided financial incentives to companies before 2021 for recruitment of unemployed people and the "*Empléate*" Program, which offers training to unemployed people for labor insertion. Prior to 2021, FM sent PRONAE, as the unit responsible for the MTSS, proposals for PwS with profiles compatible with the demand of the companies to participate in the training. There is no segregation of asylum seekers within the MTSS programs with specific treatment that considers their conditions, which puts them at a disadvantage compared to unemployed nationals. In the field of technical training, INA, as manager of the National Employment Agency (ANE) and partner institution in the *Empléate* program, uses the same requirements for PwS that apply to nationals, for example, High School Degree/Diploma, which a large part of asylum seekers and refugees do not have. Another obstacle to access the *Empléate* program is the requirement of the socioeconomic assessment of the IMAS, which is a slow process with difficult access for PwS. Only in 2021, when UNHCR collaborated directly for the training processes of the *Empléate* program, this assessment was eliminated as a requirement for the participation of refugees in the training offered by the INA. Thus, although the programs offered through public institutions are formally open to PwS, in practice, they are excluded because PwS

cannot comply with the same requirements as the national population, affecting the sustainability of economic inclusion. UNHCR programs have not yet succeeded in ensuring that public actors such as MTSS, INA or IMAS take ownership of the needs of asylum seekers and refugees, creating conditions that facilitate their full participation in national social care programs.

Another obstacle for sustaining PwS in the public programs of labor insertion, is that the connection of PwS with the programs works with the intermediation of FM, and direct linkage of the population with state programs has not been promoted. Thus, PwS have not appropriated these opportunities and do not know how to search for them by themselves.

There is a strengthened link between the Livelihoods Program and the business sector. There is a considerable number of companies that incorporate PwS in their human resources sheets. There are business chambers promoting the information and awareness of their member companies regarding the hiring of PwS. There is a growing number of companies that value the *Vivir la Integración* seal and meet the criteria to obtain it. However, the actions of the business sector in the period evaluated from 2019 to 2021 have experienced articulation difficulties and loss of strength due to the consequences of the pandemic and a national context of growing unemployment and economic deterioration.

3.4.3 Harmonization of information systems

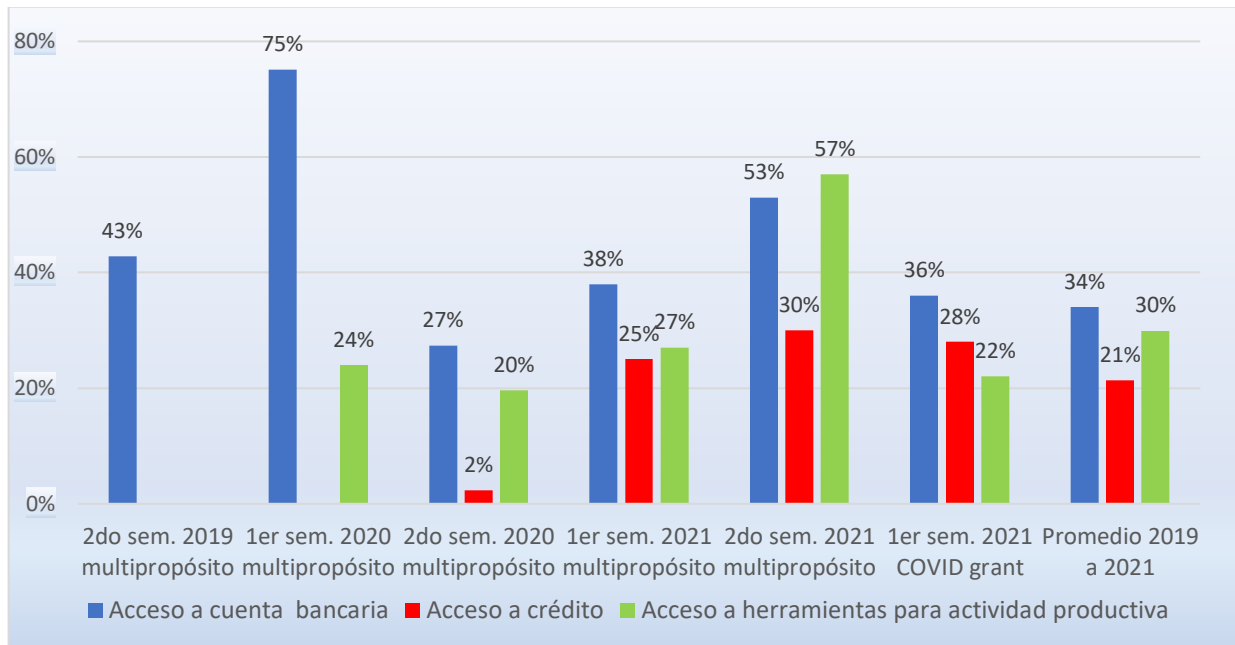
An important issue in the context of political sustainability is the management of data and information of PwS; a specific goal in this context is the differentiation of data in relation to the categories of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. At the State level, SINIRUBE, an institution attached to IMAS, is making efforts to use a single registry with unified categories in public social protection programs. Although the incorporation of the categories of asylum seeker and refugee in the SINIRUBE (national information system and single registry of state beneficiaries) has been achieved, to date it cannot be confirmed that important institutions related to the evaluated programs, such as INA, adopt this practice. According to the information of a SINIRUBE official interviewed, in the past there was an understanding between SINIRUBE and the UNHCR, to assess the possibilities of integrating the information systems and data exchange from both entities, however, a formal agreement has not yet been achieved.⁶⁵

3.4.4 PwS financial inclusion

Post-Delivery Monitoring includes information related to the conditions for the financial inclusion of PwS, particularly regarding access to a bank account, credit and tools for productive activity as shown in Graph 1. Taking as a reference the different post-delivery monitoring surveys in the period from 2019 to 2021, it is verified that 34% of the benefited PwS have some type of bank account, but only 21% also have access to credit, and 30% have tools for productive activity, which can facilitate the development of small businesses.

⁶⁵Interview with the representative of SINIRUBE in San José.

Graph 1: Conditions for the financial inclusion of PwS



Participation in the Livelihoods Program, as shared by entrepreneurs accompanied by FM, has not improved their situation in relation to access to credit. In the focus group of entrepreneurs participating in the Livelihoods Program, several people identify this limitation as one of the most important obstacles to the development of a business, since they do not have additional resources to invest in the necessary inputs that allow the business to run.⁶⁶

3.4.5 Demand responses of professional profiles

In general, there is a positive assessment of the companies that have participated in the Livelihoods Program regarding the importance of FM training and accompaniment processes, which meet the demands of the companies. However, there are specific professional profiles that are not sufficiently covered. Private sector managers mention the need to create specialized technical capacities related to computing and information technology.

Due to its characteristics as a rural area, in the Northern region the demand for professional profiles is different. The need for profiles of the agricultural sector predominates, for example, in Guanacaste profiles in the fields of tourism and environment are also identified as important. Due to the high risk of non-compliance with minimum working conditions, the agricultural sector is excluded from training by the Livelihoods Program and in this sense will not be able to contribute to the economic sustainability of PwS. In the fields of tourism and environment, FM offers training to PwS that live in the North, which has improved their opportunities for job placement.

⁶⁶ Focus group with entrepreneurial Pdl, San José.

The Livelihoods Program has not yet carried out an assessment of prospective niche areas and emerging markets that would enable them to define a flexible training package that adjusts quickly and in a short time to the needs of the market. It would be useful to have a mechanism to develop or periodically update labor assessments focused on identifying the existing labor niches in a concise and differentiated manner by thematic and geographical areas. The Labor Market Study prepared in 2020 by HIAS with the support of UNHCR, which provides a differentiated analysis of the labor market in the Central Valley and the northern region (Upala and Los Chiles), can serve as a foundation and starting point.

3.4.6 Empowerment and appropriation of PwS

As it was conceived by the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program, PwS make use of the contributions to satisfy their basic needs for food, hygiene, income, payment of basic services and transportation expenses. A small part of the benefited PwS develops a broader perspective of monetary assistance, setting aside savings or investing in the small businesses they develop for their survival. This group appropriates a longer-term perspective of monetary support by transforming part of humanitarian aid into development assistance with the perspective of sustainability.

Participants of the Livelihoods Program, and explicitly those who have managed to create their own business, express that this has helped them improve their self-esteem. Participants recognize the improvement in their mental health through learning new skills and new social contacts, evidencing the empowerment that participation in the activities of the Livelihoods Program has provided.

There are participating people with a high level of appropriation of the objectives of the Livelihoods Program, expressed in their interest in multiplying the knowledge and skills acquired. Women from the entrepreneurs focus group express their willingness to give back what they have received by helping and teaching other PwS; an attitude that has also been shown in the participatory diagnosis carried out by UNHCR in 2021.⁶⁷ By proposing an additional component to the Livelihoods Program, women entrepreneurs show their appropriation and identification with the Program as an important factor of its social sustainability.

3.4.7 Knowledge management

A large amount of information is collected in the programs evaluated. While the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program implements its own information system through biannual Post-Delivery Monitoring surveys, in the Livelihoods Program most of the information is obtained through regular FM monitoring. Most of the information falls under the project indicators, however, FM collects additional information, partially in relation to the effects of its interventions, which is not systematized or analyzed in a way that makes it easily accessible. A part of the information obtained remains exclusively in the hands of FM. For example, there is no systematization of the

⁶⁷ UNHCR: Participatory Diagnosis 2021.

outcomes resulting from market analysis that UNHCR, as manager of the Livelihoods Program, can access to make necessary adjustments to the program. The employment exchange service is also not accessible by other actors.

There are other monitoring instruments, quantitative and qualitative, that FM applies and that produce valuable information, including data on the formalization processes of enterprises or results of the focus groups that are carried out regularly. There is valuable information that has not been possible to access for this evaluation, such as the PwS information registration system currently under restructuring managed by FM. The lack of fluid communication about the available information and its management constitutes a risk for the sustainability of the Livelihoods Program because it affects the possibility of successful management. This is aggravated by the fact that FM is the only implementing partner of the program, with the consequence that there is a concentration of information in a single organization.

4. Conclusions

The following is a summary of the main conclusions that derive from the findings previously presented. In addition, the summary of these findings is organized by program from general to specific based on the main recommendations.

4.1 General conclusions

4.1.1 Programs coherence in the national and global contexts

The interventions of the evaluated programs are carried out in a context of limited economic capacity of both the UNHCR and the national public institutions (MTSS, INA and IMAS-SINIRUBE.) Despite these limitations, the UNHCR covers gaps in the attention to PwS. While State agencies within the framework of MINARE have clear responsibility to respond to the needs of PwS, there is no clear vision that would lead to transfer of care.

There are exceptional cases that confirm the potential to link programs: it is possible to link monetary assistance with other monitoring instruments of UNHCR and its allies, such as personal and professional development training or labor intermediation that would strengthen opportunities for sustainable conditions.

4.1.2 Basic needs satisfaction program conclusions

The PwS reached by this program avoid negative coping strategies to solve economic deprivations; there are few families or individuals (less than 5%) that resort to activities that directly expose them to high risk. However, a significant number (between 28% and 39%) submit to situations in the medium and long term that may commit them to high-risk situations. The Program must consider reviewing the calculation of monetary assistance due to the increase in living costs. The program should also do more to achieve connectivity with development interventions from within UNHCR or externally with institutions of the public or private sector.

There is a broad system of indicators of the Program, which points to the efficiency and effectiveness of monetary assistance but does not include long-range aspects. Knowledge management is focused on the Post-Delivery Monitoring study and remains fragmented in semi-annual reports of quantitative data. Qualitative information is not included, nor is consolidated information from longer periods with consistency of variables and segregation of data (by gender, age, geographical area, country of origin.) Adding these aspects would make it possible to qualify the effectiveness of strategies with greater scope and precision, and to design a differentiated follow-up.

The Livelihoods Unit is an operational or line unit that contributes directly to the mission of the institution. CBI was initially a support unit or auxiliary service to the line units. When it became part of the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program, the CBI unit was assigned to functions that go beyond its competencies and institutional mission. The CBI unit continued to focus on what it does best, implement highly efficient processes. It has not developed a long-range strategic vision for the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program under the leadership of a multifunctional team that would enable connectivity with development initiatives within UNHCR and in coordination with external actors. Under the updated policy of CBI 2022-2026, the unit now has an institutional instrument that will help to correct difficulties and gaps for a holistic implementation of the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program. Also, the indistinct use of the term CBI in speeches and documents to refer to the Basic Needs Satisfaction Program makes the operational functions assumed by the unit invisible.

4.1.3 Livelihoods satisfaction program analysis conclusions

In the program implemented in cooperation with FM, there is a lack of clarity regarding the use of the terms “*Medios de Vida*” and “*Vivir la Integración*” to name the program. The latter has not been used consistently in the evaluation period. There were no publicity and awareness-raising activities with a massive effect, or an organizational structure of an inter-institutional nature. The activities implemented in collaboration with the public and private sectors were carried out individually and in isolated circumstances. In addition, implementation through a single partner represents a sustainability risk.

Due to the lack of measurement of the effects of trainings, there is no evidence on the dimension to which the training and advice have contributed to labor insertion either through employment or independent work. According to representatives of the private sector, the accompaniment and specialized technical courses compensate, to a certain extent, for the lack of official professional certification. Topics with high demand in the private sector are addressed; there are other areas of interest (advanced computing, information technology) that can be addressed in depth. The technical training needs of people from the agricultural sector, especially in the Northern region, which represent the majority of PwS, are not considered.

Due to the lack of quantitative data, there is no clear evidence on self-sufficiency of PwS who were hired or have formed their own business. It is noted, however, that entrepreneurship creates positive effects on the self-sufficiency of the refugee population and has constituted a mechanism to partially offset the negative effects of employability caused by the pandemic. In addition, entrepreneurial activities represent an option for older people with fewer opportunities in the labor market. Seed capital is an essential support to a successful business, and in the absence of access to credit, it is particularly important to grow a business.

UNHCR has signed cooperation agreements with the MTSS and INA, with the aim of improving access to the labor market for the asylum seeker and refugee population. However, there is a deficiency in the registration, monitoring and exchange of data that would allow for verification of compliance with the agreements defined with MINARE. There are also no conditions for PwS to access the programs autonomously, but rather through financing from UNHCR and the mediation work of FM. Barriers to accessing the programs include the lack of recognition of special conditions and lack of knowledge of the programs. There are also administrative barriers, such as the need to have a bank account and the requirement of high school or completed secondary certification to access a large part of the courses offered by INA. The need for a socioeconomic assessment carried out by IMAS as a requirement for participation in the *Empléate* program has limited the participation of PwS. The economic stimulus granted to companies through the State has not led to participation in the degree expected.

Coordination with the MEP regarding the recognition of training and school titles has made good progress. Recognition of higher education certificates for foreigners remains a challenge. The Costa Rican State has not established adequate mechanisms for equivalency and validation of university and technical degrees and study programs through CONARE, which would improve opportunities for access to the labor market for PwS with tertiary education.

The program has had few results in relation to the consolidation, formalization, and professionalization of small businesses by PwS. Only a very small number of entrepreneurs were registered as PYME and brand registration. MEIC has not taken an active role in the "*Vivir la Integración*" program to make asylum seekers, refugees and migrants visible as target populations and include them in its actions and programs to strengthen enterprises.

Within the framework of the Livelihoods Program there are specific coordination actions with municipalities, however, these do not follow an explicit strategy. In the GAM, coordination with municipalities is carried out mainly through FM, there is no direct coordination with municipalities from UNHCR.

Both stigma and the general ignorance of the private sector about the legal condition of asylum seekers and refugees is high and represents an important limitation for their labor insertion. Many companies continue to require residence status. There are actors from the private sector, specifically the Business Association for Development (AED), the Chamber of Commerce and

Chamber of Industry, that played a relevant and active role in the development of the "*Vivir la Integración*" program and seal, which has been largely lost.

Finally, there were occasional interactions with other UN agencies in the field of job placement. Inter-institutional work has been carried out with a greater focus on the Northern region with local organizations, such as CENDEROS, which can provide good practices and interesting elements for future initiatives.

5. Recommendations

For practical reasons and in the interest of focusing input for future implementation, the recommendations were summarized and systematized in two levels: strategic and institutional, and operational.

5.1 Strategic and institutional

- 5.1.1 Improve coordination with public institutions in their field of work that can have a favorable impact on the well-being of PwS such as the DGME, IMAS, SINERUBE, MTSS and INA. UNHCR should seek agreements to include and monitor PwS participation in public programs, and raise awareness about the importance of registration and attention in a differentiated way for refugees and asylum seekers so that they do not compete for services in a group with the entire target population of the institutions. Other supporting public institutions can be involved in the UNHCR programs, like INDER, DINADECO and Banco Popular y Desarrollo Comunal. In addition, UNHCR should resume the Area-based Approach with the government for the Northern region to access potential new allies and financing in the fields of agribusiness, tourism, and rural services.
- 5.1.2 Promote a "qualitative leap" in work both with private companies and civil society partners. Firstly, together with business partners and allies (AED, business chambers, etc.) and perhaps through a Public-Private Alliance, promote the "*Vivir la Integración*" Program as a permanent national-based Corporate Social Responsibility effort, establishing annual quantitative and qualitative goals regarding the labor inclusion of PwS. Secondly, diversify the partner agencies, particularly taking advantage of good experiences at the national level, especially in the northern region. UNHCR should support their development and strengthening, particularly in managing resources.
- 5.1.3 Elaborate a comprehensive strategy that connects the Basic Needs Satisfaction and Livelihood programs based on a theory of change that reflects the logic of intervention and determines objectives and indicators at the level of effects and impact. The strategy must differentiate population segments of PwS that should receive specific treatment. The strategy must contemplate a sensitive approach to gender, seeking specific opportunities for women and LGBTIQ people. It would be advisable to set up a multifunctional team made up of different UNHCR units.

5.2 Operational

- 5.2.1 UNHCR should advocate to expedite DGME procedures. It should also promote that IMAS assume the responsibility for asylum seekers from the moment they enter the country. In cases that require permanent social assistance such as elderly, PwS with chronic illnesses and severe levels of disability, UNHCR should coordinate with other public and private institutions such as CONAPAM, CONAPDIS and the Food Bank. Also, in addition to evaluating the way cash aid is calculated, UNHCR should consider extending assistance to 5 months. With more restrictive economic vulnerability criteria, the number of qualifying PwS can be reduced, and work can be done within the same budget limit.
- 5.2.2 UNHCR should develop an information system that reflects data from different periods, visualizing them in a consolidated manner in a single table or graph and limited to semi-annual or annual reports as documents of reference. The reported data must show consistency of indicator variables and include reference information from previous periods to facilitate comparison of information in the Post-Delivery Monitoring Reports of monetary assistance, differentiated by population segment. For more complete and meaningful monitoring, the quantitative data should be complemented with qualitative information from sources such as focus groups or interviews. The qualitative information will facilitate a better understanding of data obtained with the quantitative instrument.
- 5.2.3 UNHCR should improve the seed capital instrument to facilitate development and strengthening of livelihoods, micro, small and medium-sized business. This includes specific evaluations of the amount according to investment needs, even establishing different ranges for this support. In addition, the economic assistance offered to small business can be soft loans that feed a revolving fund to further support other small business. UNHCR, in conjunction with partner organizations and specialized actors, can motivate creation of associative production initiatives (associations and cooperatives) of PwS, perhaps most feasibly in the northern region. Considering the above and seeking to transcend a welfare approach, the comprehensive strategy proposal mentioned in point 2 must consider development strategies that promote training on savings, and investment for small business, particularly with PwS that seek their own subsistence.
- 5.2.4 UNHCR should build a Comprehensive Livelihood Monitoring System that is based on the Multi-Year Strategy and Livelihoods Theory of Change. This should encompass the entire program with its various components, implemented by the UNHCR and partner agencies. The collection and analysis of data for monitoring must be done rigorously with differentiation by variables of sex/gender, nationality, and geographic location, as a minimum. Program monitoring should have at least the following components:
- Project performance monitoring reports that include qualitative analysis.

- Focus on effects and impacts covering a period of several years, including economic variables and psychosocial ones carried out preferably by an external specialist entity.
- Carry out a separate monitoring study related to the effects of the training processes that provides useful elements for a future capacity building strategy.
- Partner organizations must build a monitoring plan that defines data collection, information sources, procedures and mechanisms for data recording and analysis and identifies a responsible person within the organization; as well as a regular critical assessment regarding training and advice to PwS.
- Monitoring carried out by the implementing organization should expand by selected variables related to the achievements of the program in the areas of waged employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship. The partner organization must build a Monitoring Plan that defines the periods for data collection, information sources, procedures and mechanisms for data recording and analysis, and responsible staff within the organization. The system must include mechanisms that allow a regular critical assessment regarding the training and advice by the PwS, the results of which are reflected in partner reports.

5.2.5 UNHCR should clarify terminology used for its Livelihoods and “*Vivir la Integración*” programs. It is recommended that all initiatives related to economic and labor insertion be implemented in a single program. Since “*Vivir la Integración*” functions as a brand, it is recommended that this term be used to name the program in all communications with public and private actors.

5 Annexes

Annex 1: Key question matrix

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
AI 1: Relevance of UNHCR programs	How relevant have UNHCR cash interventions and livelihoods programs been in promoting an improved enabling environment for economic inclusion and facilitating resilience and self-reliance of People of Concern (PoC)?	1. Does UNHCR's cash assistance program (in terms of targeting process, frequency, duration, transfer value and digital payment) respond to the basic needs of food, health, housing/ shelter of PoC?	Satisfaction level of PoC with frequency, duration, modality and transfer value Unsatisfied needs of PoC	Program documents Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) document Program Monitoring surveys PoC UNHCR programs staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs staff (HQ and local office)
		2. Has UNHCR's Basic Needs program opened opportunities of inclusion in national social protection systems (Social and Medical Security) and safety net national programs (e.g., poverty programs, promotion programs for women, children, LGTBI, elderly people, handicapped persons, persons with chronic disease, others)?	PoC included in national social protection systems and programs that respond to their protection needs	Program documents Program Monitoring survey UNHCR programs staff Public institutions management (Caja, IMAS, others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs staff (HQ and local office) • Interviews with national public institutions management
		3. In what ways does the cash transfer affect the behavior of recipients and their interactions with their	Positive and negative consequences of cash	PoC UNHCR programs staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Focus groups with UNHCR program participants (to

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
		community and support network?	transfer for PoC behavior and interactions with their community and support network Motivation and capacity for self-help of PoC	National and local public institutions management	<p>deepen, complement and triangle surveys information)⁶⁸</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews with Basic Needs program most vulnerable sectors (handicapped persons, people with chronic disease, LGTBI) • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs HQ staff • Interviews with national and local public institutions management
		4. How have PoC experienced the transition from Basic Needs cash assistance to self-reliance-oriented livelihoods programs? What are the main difficulties that PoC have experienced	Experiences and difficulties in transition from Basic Needs to livelihoods	PoC UNHCR programs staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Focus groups with UNHCR program participants • In-depth interviews with Basic Needs

⁶⁸ Focus groups with program participants at any moment won't simply aim to confirm the survey results, but will focus on qualitative explanations and complementary information that has not been captured by the surveys.

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
		after finishing support from the Basic needs program?	Program identified # of PoC moving from Basic Needs cash assistance to the livelihoods program		program most vulnerable sectors • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs HQ staff
		5. How has UNHCR approached the transition from Basic Needs cash assistance to self-reliance-oriented Livelihoods Programs? How has UNHCR managed difficulties in the transition process?	Elements which connect Basic Needs and Livelihoods Programs identified Management strategies of transition process identified	Program documents UNHCR programs staff	• Desk review • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs staff (HQ and local office)
		6. Is the Livelihoods Program strategy appropriate to foster economic inclusion of PoC?	Number of PoC Livelihoods program participants included in the labor market Number of PoC	Program documents Program Monitoring surveys PoC UNHCR programs staff	• Desk review • Focus groups with UNHCR Livelihoods program participants • In-depth interviews with Livelihoods

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
			Livelihoods program participants with access to financial services		<p>program most vulnerable sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs HQ staff • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs staff (HQ and local office)
		7. Do the Basic Needs and Livelihoods programs contribute to UNHCR's national and regional priorities over the period 2019-2021?	Link between UNHCR programs and national and regional priorities	UNHCR programs HQ and regional office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs staff (HQ and regional office)
AI 2: Effectiveness of UNHCR programs	What are the results and effects of the implementation of the two UNHCR programs?	1. Can PoC satisfy their basic needs by the humanitarian aid of the cash assistance program during the assistance period?	Basic needs satisfaction level of PoC	<p>Program documents</p> <p>Program Monitoring surveys</p> <p>PoC</p> <p>CBI program staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Focus groups with Basic Needs program participants • In-depth interviews with Basic Needs program most vulnerable sectors • CBI program staff (HQ and local office)

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
		<p>2. Do PoC use high to severe negative coping strategies in spite of receiving cash assistance or participation in livelihoods program? -> <i>Outcome</i></p> <p>3. How does the cash assistance, how does the livelihoods program, how do other contextual factors influence in negative coping strategies? -> <i>Contribution</i></p>	<p>High or severe negative strategies of PoC</p> <p>Programs gaps identified</p> <p>Time period without financial support</p>	<p>Program documents</p> <p>Program Monitoring surveys</p> <p>PoC</p> <p>UNHCR programs staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Focus groups with UNHCR program participants • In-depth interviews with UNHCR program participants most vulnerable sectors • UNHCR program staff (HQ and local office)
		<p>4. Which capacities of PoC have been built by the Livelihoods program? In which level do they relate to the market demands? -> <i>Outcome</i></p> <p>5. How precise has the placement of PoC in training programs been and how useful has the trainings been? -> <i>Contribution</i></p>	<p>Capacity development of PoC</p> <p>Capacities demanded by the market</p>	<p>Program documents</p> <p>Program Monitoring surveys</p> <p>PoC</p> <p>UNHCR programs staff</p> <p>Fundación Mujer</p> <p>Business sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Focus groups with Livelihoods program participants • In-depth interviews with Livelihoods program most vulnerable sectors • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs staff (HQ and local office)

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with business sector management
		<p>6. What did the 'Vivir la Integración' initiative achieve regarding wage employment placement or self-employment consolidation of PoC? -> <i>Outcome</i></p> <p>7. Which of the UNHCR's programs strategies have been the most effective? Which cooperation have been most successful? Which assistance gaps can be identified? -> <i>Contribution</i></p>	<p>PoC livelihoods program participants with formal employment or own enterprise</p> <p>Number and role of stakeholders included to link PoC to the labor market</p>	<p>Program documents</p> <p>Program Monitoring surveys</p> <p>Fundación Mujer</p> <p>PoC</p> <p>UNHCR programs staff</p> <p>Business sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Focus groups with UNHCR programs participants In-depth interviews with Livelihoods program most vulnerable sectors In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs staff (HQ and local office) Interviews with business sector management Interviews with public sector management Interviews with social sector management

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
		<p>8. Has the Vivir la integración initiative improved the financial inclusion of PoC (access to digital payments, bank services, credits) in a differentiated manner (considering age, sex, geographical location, education level etc.) -> <i>Outcome</i></p> <p>10. How effective was UNHCR cooperation with the financial sector? -> <i>Contribution</i></p>	<p>Access of PoC to financial services</p> <p>Knowledge and initiative of PoC to use financial services</p>	<p>Program documents</p> <p>Program Monitoring surveys</p> <p>PoC</p> <p>UNHCR programs staff</p> <p>Financial sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Focus groups with Livelihoods program participants • In-depth interviews with Livelihoods program most vulnerable sectors • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs staff (HQ and local office) • Interviews with financial sector management
		<p>11. Is there a better access for PoC to protection mechanisms of governmental institutions, considering necessities of the most vulnerable persons? -> <i>Outcome</i></p> <p>12. Do UNHCRs programs contribute effectively to providing protection mechanisms to PoC?</p>	<p>Mortality and morbidity rate of PoC</p> <p>Delinquency rate of PoC</p> <p>Rate of violence against PoC</p> <p>Response level of authorities</p>	<p>Program documents</p> <p>Program Monitoring surveys</p> <p>PoC</p> <p>UNHCR programs staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Focus groups with UNHCR programs participants • In-depth interviews with UNHCR program participants most vulnerable sectors

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
		-> <i>Contribution</i>	for protection of PoC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs staff (HQ and local office)
		<p>13. What other, positive and negative, changes beyond the established program objectives, results and indicators can be identified, referring to attitudes, behaviors, changes in institutional practices, structures, and policies? -> <i>Impact</i></p> <p>14. What changes can be attributed to UNHCR programs strategies? -> <i>Contribution</i></p>	<p>PoC attitudes and behavior changes</p> <p>Changes in institutional practices</p> <p>Attribution of UNHCR strategies to impact changes identified</p>	<p>PoC</p> <p>UNHCR programs staff</p> <p>Fundación Mujer</p> <p>Implementation partners from public, business and social sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-depth interviews with UNHCR program participants for outcome harvesting Interviews with UNHCR programs staff (HQ and local office) for outcome harvesting Interviews with implementation partners from public, business and social sector for outcome harvesting
AI 3: Coherence and efficiency of UNHCR programs	Is there a clear connection between UNHCR programs and national humanitarian and development services?	1. What links exist between the UNHCR programs and national Costa Rican programs of asylum seekers and refugees' integration? Are there complementary or parallel efforts?	Links between the UNHCR programs and national Costa Rican	<p>Program documents</p> <p>UNHCR programs staff</p> <p>National public institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs HQ staff

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
			integration programs Complementarity of programs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with national public institutions management
		2. Does Basic Needs program complement and generate synergies with the local humanitarian system?	Number of beneficiaries of Basic Needs and local humanitarian programs Number of beneficiaries independent from humanitarian programs Coordination of Basic Needs program with other humanitarian programs in Costa Rica	Program documents UNHCR programs staff National public institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs HQ staff • Interviews with national public institutions management
		3. Does UNHCR implement efficient coordination and synergies of the Vivir la Integración initiative with other development programs	Number of beneficiaries of livelihoods and other development	Program documents UNHCR programs staff Public sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs HQ staff

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
		for PoC in Costa Rica implemented by the public or private sector or international cooperation?	<p>programs for PoC in Costa Rica</p> <p>Number of PoC without requirements of specific programs</p> <p>Coordination of livelihoods program with other development programs in Costa Rica</p>	International cooperation's management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with national public sector management • Interviews with International cooperation's management
		4. How does the lack of connection between the UNHCR programs and national humanitarian and development services affect the efficiency of UNHCR's programs?	Insufficient connections and their consequences identified	<p>Program documents</p> <p>Agreement documents</p> <p>UNHCR programs staff</p> <p>Public sector</p> <p>Social sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs staff (HQ and local office) • Interviews with public sector management • Interviews with social sector management
		5. How do the UNHCR programs take advantage of connections and synergies	Number and type of cooperation	UNHCR program's staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews with

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
		with other UN agencies programs?	between UNHCR programs with other UN agencies programs	UN agencies programs' staff	UNHCR programs HQ staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with UN agencies programs' staff
		6. To which degree does the work of Fundación Mujer contribute to the goals of the Vivir la Integración initiative and complement UNHCR's advocacy work?	Results of Fundación Mujer's work	Program documents UNHCR program's staff Fundación Mujer staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk Review • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs staff (HQ and local office) • In-depth interviews with Fundación Mujer staff
		7. Is there a counter effect of cash intervention with public or civil society development programs in Costa Rica?	Dependency level of PoC Desertion level in development programs for PoC	UNHCR programs staff Public sector management Social sector management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs HQ staff • Interviews with public sector management • Interviews with social sector management
		8. Have public and/or private institutions assumed leadership in implementation of the UNHCR programs?	Role of public and private institutions in implementation	Program documents UNHCR programs staff Business sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
			of the UNHCR programs	Public sector Social sector	<p>staff (HQ and local office)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with business sector management • Interviews with public sector management • Interviews with social sector management
		9. What efforts exist to cross-reference data of PoC participation in UNHCR and public programs?	PoC with participation in different programs	Program documents UNHCR programs staff Public sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs staff (HQ and local office) • Interviews with public sector management
AI 4: Sustainability	Does the chain of cash assistance and Vivir la Integración initiative contribute to inclusion of PoC in national services and an improved enabling environment for economic inclusion,	1. Does PoC participation in the UNHCR programs empower them to take own initiative to find durable solutions and improve their living conditions?	<p>PoC capacities for improving their living conditions</p> <p>PoC initiatives for durable solutions</p> <p>PoC empowerment</p>	<p>Program documents</p> <p>PoC</p> <p>UNHCR programs staff</p> <p>Fundación Mujer staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Focus groups with UNHCR program participants • In-depth interviews with UNHCR program participants most vulnerable sectors

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
	resilience and self-reliance of PoC?		and self esteem		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs HQ staff • Interviews with Fundación Mujer staff
		2. Do the capacities being built by the livelihoods program correlate with the market demands and contribute to economic integration of PoC in a sustainable manner?	Usefulness of capacities being built by the Vivir la integración initiative	Program documents PoC UNHCR programs staff Fundación Mujer staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Focus groups with UNHCR program participants • In-depth interviews with UNHCR program participants most vulnerable sectors • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs HQ staff • Interviews with Fundación Mujer staff
		3. What are the main obstacles that PoC experience after receiving support from the Livelihoods program to consolidate their status of economic inclusion?	Difficulties after receiving support from the Livelihoods	Program documents PoC UNHCR programs staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Focus groups with UNHCR program participants

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
			program identified	Fundación Mujer staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews with UNHCR program participants most vulnerable sectors • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs HQ staff • Interviews with Fundación Mujer staff
		4. Could PoC improve direct access to national government institutions and NGO services without intermediaries?	Government and NGO services available for PoC Use of services by PoC and response level	Program documents UNHCR programs staff Fundación Mujer staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs HQ staff • Interviews with Fundación Mujer staff
		5. To what extent has UNHCR been successful in transferring PoC services to national public and private entities? Did they take leadership in the UNHCR programs?	Transfer of PoC services	UNHCR programs staff Public sector Business sector Social sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs staff (HQ and local office) • Interviews with public sector management

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with business sector management • Interviews with social sector management
		6. Did Costa Rica improve its access to international funds for attending refugees and asylum seekers?	Amount of international funds for Costa Rican attention of refugees and asylum seekers	UNHCR programs staff Public sector management International organizations sector management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs HQ staff • Interviews with public sector management • Interviews with international organizations sector management
		7. Did the Vivir la Integración initiative take good advantage of the existing opportunities in the business and labor market? Which are not being used?	New stakeholders and alliance opportunities identified	UNHCR programs staff Business sector Public sector Social sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs HQ staff • Interviews with business sector management • Interviews with public sector management • Interviews with social sector management

Area of interest/ Evaluation criteria	Key Question	Specific questions	Indicators	Information sources	Data collection tools
		8. How can the cash assistance and the livelihoods program be aligned and streamlined to facilitate work placement and, ultimately, self-reliance?	Integrative strategy of Basic needs and Livelihoods program for development of self-reliance	UNHCR programs staff Public sector management Business sector management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews with UNHCR programs HQ staff • Interviews with public sector management • Interviews with business sector management

Annex 2: List of participants in the evaluation

1. Lista de personas entrevistadas

Institución y Área	Nombre
ACNUR	
Director Oficina País	Milton Moreno
Oficial Operación	Elena Cibeira
Medios de Vida	Rebecca Li
Medios de Vida	Sofía Abarca
Medios de Vida	Esteban Sánchez
Necesidades básicas	María José Salazar
Necesidades básicas	Elizabeth Bernhardt
Necesidades básicas	Luis Vargas
Necesidades básicas	Alejandra Rivera
Unidad de Programas	Roger Sánchez
Unidad de Protección	Kelleen Korrigan/Wanjoo Lim
Unidad de Protección	Kai Odio
Directora Oficina Upala	Vivian Nieme
Fundación Mujer	
Directora	Zobeida Moya
Coordinadora Programa	María Jesús Blanco
Programa Emprendedurismo	Christhofer Infante
Programa Emprendedurismo	Gabriela Cascante
Programa Empleabilidad	Ruth Porras
Unidad de Registro	Jorlenny Talavera
Instituciones públicas	
CONARE	María de los Ángeles Hernandez
DGME	Esther Núñez Callén
MTSS	Gindra Brenes
Ministerio de Educación Pública	Victor Pineda
IMAS	Raquel Quesada
INA San José	Amanda Calvo
INA Upala	Darío Cruz
Sinirube	Erickson Álvarez
INAMU	Adina Castro García
INDER	Manrique Jiménez
Municipalidad Upala	Alejandro Ubau
Sector empresarial	
Accenture	Alejandra Moreira

AED	Erika Linares
AR Holding	Cindy Reyes
Banco Nacional de Costa Rica	María Jiménez
Boston Scientific	Alfonso Araya
Cámara de Comercio San José	Karol Fallas
Cámara de Comercio Upala	Pablo Calero
Grupo Nitidos	Patricia Jara
Mujer Linde	Gabriela Agüero
Western Union	David Salazar
Organizaciones sociales y de refugiados	
RET	Christiane Eppelin
CENDEROS	Marisol Amador
Servicio Jesuita para Migrantes	Karina Fonseca
HIAS	Gabriela Núñez
Pan para el Mundo	Christiane Schulz
Agencias de NNUU	
OIM	Sergio Jiménez
OIT	Mariana
PNUD	Randall Brenes

2. Grupos focales con ACNUR y Fundación Mujer

Grupo focal ACNUR Necesidades Básicas	15 personas del equipo de ACNUR en San José	10-02-22
Grupo focal ACNUR Medios de Vida	12 personas del equipo de ACNUR en San José	15-03-22
Grupo focal ACNUR Upala	6 personas del equipo de ACNUR en Upala	1-4-22
Grupo focal Fundación Mujer San José (virtual)	9 personas del equipo de Fundación Mujer en San José	5-4-22
Grupo focal Fundación Mujer Upala	4 personas del equipo de Fundación Mujer en Upala	31-3-22

3. Grupos focales y entrevistas con Personas de Interés Pdl

Grupo focal San José	Hombres y mujeres jóvenes (3 hombres, 6 mujeres; 9 Pdl 20 -25 años, Origen: 7 Nicaragua, 1 Venezuela, 1 Colombia)	1-4-22
	Hombres y mujeres adultos mayores (6 hombres, 3 mujeres; 9 Pdl 50-70 años; Origen: 4 Venezuela, 4 Nicaragua, 1 Colombia)	1-4-22
	Hombres y mujeres zona urbana (3 hombres, 5 mujeres; Origen: 3 Nicaragua, 4 Venezuela, 1 Honduras)	4-4-22
	Mujeres emprendedoras (9 mujeres; 3 Pdl > 50 años. Origen: 8 Venezuela, 1 Nicaragua)	4-4-22
Grupo focal Upala	Grupo mujeres (4 mujeres; 1 Pdl > 50 años, Origen: Nicaragua)	31-3-22
	Grupo mixto (4 hombres, 2 mujeres; 4 Pdl > 50 años, Origen: Nicaragua)	31-3-22
Entrevista individual Upala	Pdl emprendedor (hombre) (presencial)	30-3-22
	Pdl emprendedora (mujer) (presencial)	30-3-22
Entrevista individual San José	Pdl hombre empleado (whatsapp)	7-5-22
	Pdl hombre empleado (whatsapp)	8-5-22
	Pdl mujer empleada (whatsapp)	12-5-22
	Pdl hombre empleado (whatsapp)	12-5-22
Entrevista colectiva San José	2 Pdl grupo LGTBIQ (whatsapp)	1-4-22
	2 Pdl grupo con enfermedad crónica, mujeres (whatsapp)	1-4-22
	2 Pdl adultos mayores, hombres (whatsapp)	1-4-22

4. Taller Interinstitucional

Participación: 12 personas de 6 instituciones públicas y 2 organizaciones del sector privado

Instituciones participantes:

- Dirección General Migración
 - Unidad de Refugio: Allan Rodríguez,
 - Oficina de Integración: Millaray Villalobos, Yenory López
- MTSS Gindra Brenes
- CCSS: Karla Corrales Ulate
- IMAS: Sirlenny Pérez Picado
- MEP: Victor Pineda, Anger Smith
- INA: Amanda Calvo Santana
- Cámara de Comercio: Lisette Campos
- Cámara de Industria: Roseling Farias
- ACNUR: Esteban Sánchez, Sofía Abarca, María José Salazar, Rebecca Li

5. Taller interno de reflexión de hallazgos de la evaluación

Participación:

13 personas del ACNUR (3 hombres, 10 mujeres)

3 integrantes del equipo evaluador.

6. Resumen de participantes por género

Sector	Mujeres	Hombres	Total
PdI grupos focales	33	18	51
PdI entrevistas	3	4	7
Equipo ACNUR grupos focales	21	8	29
Equipo ACNUR entrevistas	10	4	14
Equipo ACNUR taller hallazgos	10	3	13
Fundación Mujer grupo focal	8	1	9
Fundación Mujer entrevistas	5	1	6
Instituciones públicas taller	8	3	11
Instituciones públicas entrevistas	6	5	12
Sector empresarial entrevistas	7	3	10
Sector empresarial encuestas			16
Organizaciones sociales entrevistas	5	0	5
Sistema NNUU entrevistas	1	2	3
TOTAL	92	44	153⁶⁹

Annex 3: MINARE

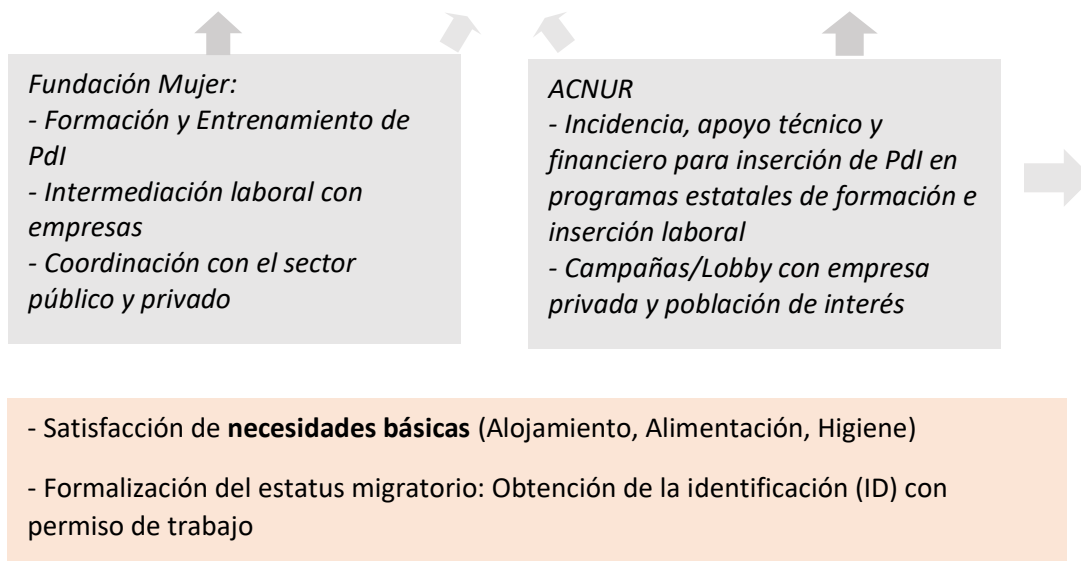
Institución	Compromiso
Satisfacción de Necesidades básicas	
Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano e Inclusión Social /SINIRUBE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusión de categoría de Refugiada/o y Solicitante de Refugio en todas las fichas de información de las instituciones del sector social y Sistema Nacional de Registro Único de Beneficiarios (SINIRUBE)
Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano e Inclusión Social/IMAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusión de personas solicitantes de refugio y refugiadas en los programas de reducción de pobreza del Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social (IMAS)
PANI, DGME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actualización del Protocolo de protección, atención y referencia de menores de edad
DGME, CONAPDIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protocolo de asistencia, atención y apoyo para personas con discapacidades
CCSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convenio colectivo de salud bajo la modalidad “seguro voluntario temporal”

⁶⁹ Participantes de varias actividades como grupos focales, entrevistas y talleres fueron contabilizados solamente una vez.

Medios de Vida	
Inspección Nacional del Trabajo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vigilancia para el cumplimiento de derechos laborales y obligaciones patronales en iguales condiciones que la población nacional Acciones informativas sobre legislación y para combatir la xenofobia
Ministerio de DH/ Sistema Nacional de Empleo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programa de capacitación e inserción laboral de población LGTBIQ+ a través del Sistema Nacional de Empleo
INA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atención prioritaria a Pdl a formación, certificación, capacitación siempre que las personas cumplan con los requisitos de ingreso establecidos por la institución y el marco legal
CONARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporación de la Sección Consular del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto al acuerdo de entendimiento con el ACNUR Aportación de pruebas o evidencias alternativas en la formalización de la solicitud de reconocimiento y equiparación de grados académicos y títulos profesionales
MEIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusión de emprendimientos liderados por personas refugiadas en el Registro de Emprendedores Fomento de la participación de Pdl en encuentros empresariales y otras actividades
MIVAH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garantía para personas refugiadas para acceder a todos los programas de vivienda de interés social del gobierno de Costa Rica.
(N/I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elaboración de un protocolo de atención a personas con discapacidad. Incluir capacitaciones para el 2022 sobre derechos y deberes
MEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atención e integración de la población refugiada y solicitante de refugio en el sistema educativo costarricense desde el enfoque de educación intercultural.

Annex 4: Intervention logic for UNHCR Basic Needs and Livelihoods Programs in Costa Rica (outline)





Fuente: Elaboración propia con base en el marco de la Evaluación (2022).

Annex 5: Small business support initiatives

Buenas prácticas que favorecen la comercialización de productos

- Plataforma virtual “Villa Talento” (www.fundacionmujer.org/directorio-villa-talento) con 149 negocios en total registrados. 80 negocios ya son registrados en la página web (49 en el sector gastronómico, 18 en el sector de manufactura y 3 en el sector de servicios), con información de contacto, logo y descripción de su servicio; las empresas pueden contactar a las proveedoras de forma directa; adicionalmente Fundación Mujer funge como intermediadora para aquellas personas o empresas que busquen algún servicio específico.
- Municipios de Upala, Los Chiles, Guatuso en la Zona Norte han establecido “Mercaditos” a través de alianzas ACNUR/Fundación Mujer, Municipalidades, Asociación de Desarrollo.
- Formación de una Asociación de Productoras con el acompañamiento organizativo de Fundación Mujer en 2020 que ya logró un primer nivel de auto-gestión.

Annex 6: Datos de Monitoreo de ACNUR

Tabla 1: Nivel de satisfacción de necesidades básicas de Pdl beneficiadas por el Programa de Satisfacción de Necesidades básicas en el período 2019 a 2021

Período	Satisfacción de todas necesidades básicas	Satisfacción de más de la mitad de necesidades básicas	Satisfacción de la mitad de necesidades básicas	Satisfacción de menos de la mitad de necesidades básicas	Satisfacción de ninguna de necesidades básicas
2do sem. 2019 multipropósito	60.00%	19.00%		13.00%	1.40%
1er sem. 2020 multipropósito	23.62%	27.61%	14.72%	22.09%	8.90%
2do sem. 2020 multipropósito	15.00%	37.90%	28.10%	16.00%	2.20%
1er sem. 2021 multipropósito	32.00%	30.00%	26.00%	9.00%	3.00%
2do sem. 2021 multipropósito	33.00%	31.00%	27.00%	9.00%	0.00%
1r sem. 2020 COVID grant	15.10%	30.21%	17.19%	31.77%	4.69%
2do.sem. 2020 COVID grant	27.30%	27.80%	21.50%	17.37%	4.21%
1er sem. 2021 COVID grant	28.00%	27.00%	31.00%	12.00%	2.00%
Promedio 2019 a 2021	29.25%	28.82%	26.72%	16.28%	3.17%

Tabla 2: Uso de los fondos de la asistencia monetaria

Período	Comida	Artículos de higiene	Renta	Útiles y facturas (servicios básicos)	Salud	Transporte	Ahorro
2do sem. 2019 multipropósito	100.00%	95.00%				89.00%	
1er sem. 2020 multipropósito	97.24%		86.81%	76.07%			2.00%
2do sem. 2020 multipropósito	98.30%	69.60%	86.60%	67.32%		58.50%	
1er sem. 2021 multipropósito	99.56%	87.56%	88.89%	72.44%		80.89%	23.00%
2do sem. 2021 multipropósito	99.66%		95.95%			77.36%	4.00%
2do trim. 2020 COVID grant	98.96%	83.85%	80.73%				
3er trim. 2020 COVID grant	94.21%	70.53%	78.95%	64.21%		45.26%	
1er sem. 2021 COVID grant	99.40%	81.33%	86.75%	72.89%	63.86%		5.00%
Promedio 2019 a 2021	98.42%	81.31%	86.38%	70.59%	63.86%	70.20%	8.50%

Tabla 3: Efectos de la asistencia monetaria

Período	Mejora en condiciones de vida	Reducción de estrés	Reducción de carga financiera
2do sem. 2019 multipropósito	61.00%	49.50%	
1er sem. 2020 multipropósito	69.63%	65.58%	64.00%
2do sem. 2020 multipropósito	75.80%	66.00%	70.90%
1er sem. 2021 multipropósito	64.00%	64.00%	60.00%
2do sem. 2021 multipropósito	64.00%	63.85%	60.14%
2do trim. 2020 COVID grant	58.33%	51.56%	50.00%

Período	Mejora en condiciones de vida	Reducción de estrés	Reducción de carga financiera
3er trim. 2020 COVID grant	70.00%	64.70%	66.80%
1er sem. 2021 COVID grant	60.24%	53.00%	59.00%
Promedio 2019 a 2021	57.75%	53.59%	61.55%

Tabla 4: Estrategias de adaptación de las Pdl

Período	Mando al trabajo a menores de 16 años	Participación en actividades de riesgo a cambio de dinero o artículos	Impedimento de asistencia a escuela	Pedir dinero a desconocidos	Mando al trabajo lejos	Mudanza a un lugar de menor calidad	Venta de bienes productivos o de subsistencia	Nuevos préstamos de dinero	Reducción de gastos de higiene o para bebés, salud o educación	Incumplimiento con pago del alquiler o deudas
2do sem. 2019 multipropósito	3.00%	4.00%	9.00%		15.70%	12.00%	12.80%	18.50%	24.00%	15.00%
1er sem. 2020 multipropósito	0.61%	3.37%	6.13%	10.43%	3.68%	12%	33.13%	30.06%	51.53%	45.40%
2do sem. 2020 multipropósito	1%	2.20%	5.20%	4.20%	8.50%	22.50%	31.70%	40.80%	62.40%	49.60%
1er sem. 2021 multipropósito	1.33%	2.67%	4.44%	5.78%	7.56%	17.33%	16.00%	22.67%	45.33%	46.67%
2do sem. 2021 multipropósito	0.00%	0.34%	2.36%	2.36%	3.04%	10.47%	18.58%	16.55%	11.49%	23.99%
2do trim. 2020 COVID grant	0.00%	0.00%	1.56%	4.69%	3.65%	10.42%	17.19%	25.52%	35.42%	43.23%
3er trim. 2020 COVID grant	1.00%	2.60%	2.60%	3.60%	6.80%	18.90%	22.60%	34.70%	40.00%	41.50%
1er sem. 2021 COVID grant	1.20%	1.20%	3.01%	3.61%	4.22%	8.43%	9.04%	40.96%	39.76%	49.40%
Promedio 2019 a 2021	1.02%	2.05%	4.29%	4.95%	6.64%	14.01%	20.13%	28.72%	38.74%	39.35%

Tabla 5: Condiciones para inclusión financiera de Pdl

Período	Acceso a cuenta bancaria	Acceso a crédito	Acceso a herramientas para actividad productiva
2do sem. 2019 multipropósito	42.80%		
1er sem. 2020 multipropósito	75.15%		24.00%
2do sem. 2020 multipropósito	27.40%	2.30%	19.60%
1er sem. 2021 multipropósito	38.00%	25.00%	27.00%
2do sem. 2021 multipropósito	53.00%	30.00%	57.00%
1er sem. 2021 COVID grant	36.00%	28.00%	22.00%
Promedio 2019 a 2021	34.04%	21.33%	29.92%

Tabla 6: Informaciones extraídas de los 'Informes de Desempeño' de Fundación Mujer; 2019-21

	2019		2020		2021	
	GAM	Zona Norte	GAM	Zona Norte	GAM	Zona Norte
Personas ingresadas a bolsa de empleo y asesorados	3467	241	1935	445	1277	462
Ferías de empleo realizadas	4	0	1	1	17	
Empresas sensibilizadas	33	0	20		144	
Personas referidas a oportunidad laboral	52		537		773	
Personas contratadas mediante "Intégrate al empleo"			7			
Empresas que contratan mediante "Intégrate al empleo"			3		2	
Empresas que participaron en lanzamiento "Intégrate al empleo"			108			
Empresas sensibilizadas in "Intégrate al empleo"			7			
Incentivos para empresas (*Subsidio en 'Empléate')			4		93*	
Subsidios a Pdl para formación técnica vocacional en "Empléate"					340	
Personas que mantienen su contrato por más de 3 meses	208		180			
Pdl referidas al "Empléate"	37	0	0			
Personas que reciben capacitación modelo de negocio	193	38	172	15	180	28
Personas que reciben capacitación en formalización de negocios					305	
Ferías de emprendimiento realizadas	3		7		2	

Personas que finalizan capacitación básica (3)	1754	139			1375	401
Subsidios capital semilla otorgados a Pdl	120	66	83	17	164*	
Estudio Observatorio Mercado	4		12		12	
Diagnostico Medios de vida realizado	2837	306	2897		1980	
Personas identificadas para el programa de "emprendimiento"	253	48	207	28		
Personas identificadas para empleabilidad	2584	258				
Pdl matriculado en cursos públicos (INA)	0	16	74?		60??	
Pdl matriculado en cursos privados	210	31				
Personas graduadas en cursos técnicos			297	97	300	112
Pdl que participan en cursos cortos					2792	611

Tabla 7: Informaciones extraídas de los 'Informes de Monitoreo de Desempeño' del ACNUR 2019-21

	2019	2020	2021
PdI que reciben capacitación empresarial/ (modelo de negocio)	231	187	208
PdI que reciben asesoría en "formalización negocios"			305
Ferías de emprendedurismo	3		2
PdI que reciben capacitación base	1398		1776
PdI inscrito a bolsa de empleo	3708	2380	1739
PdI registrado en servicio de colocación laboral	128	145	773
Ferías de empleo	4		17
Empresas sensibilizadas	33	105	
Subsidios para empresas (Intégrate al Empleo)			93
Subsidios para PdI inscritas en formación técnica vocacional (Empléate)			340
PdI con diagnóstico medios de vida	3143	2897	1980
Observatorio del mercado	4		12
Matriculados en instituciones formales	16	25	60
PdI graduados (con certificación)	241	207	412
PdI referidos a empléate	37	235	
PdI con seguimiento laboral	240	225	
PdI matriculados en cursos cortos	1925	1760	3403
Capital semilla	186	100	
PdI que reciben apoyo económico para continuación de estudios			105

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