

PROTECTING AND PREVENTING GBV AGAINST VENEZUELAN MIGRANTS

BETTERTOGETHER CHALLENGE (BTC)

JULY 2023

POLICY BRIEF | GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

THE EVALUATION

NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) undertook a portfolio performance evaluation for the United States Agency for International Development’s Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Hub (USAID/GenDev). One group of activities or “cluster” NORC evaluated was the [BetterTogether Challenge \(BTC\)](#) or *Reto Juntos es Mejor*, in Spanish, implemented by Resonance (The Catalyst Project) to find innovative ideas and solutions to empower Venezuelans affected by the regional migration crisis. The evaluated activities, data sources for the evaluation, and evaluation questions NORC answered are listed below:

Activities	Data Sources		
	1. Building the Gap for Venezuelan Migrants (BTG4VM), in Guyana	2. Shifting Power Dynamics: Engaging Men in Gender-Based Violence Reduction (SPD), in Panama	3. Women Exercising Leadership for Cohesion and Meaningful Empowerment (WELCOME), in Trinidad and Tobago
	Desk review of 66 program documents	16 key informant interviews (KIs) with grantees and 34 with program users and gender-based violence (GBV) survivors	3 focus group discussions (FGDs) with staff and female partners of program users
			Web survey with 20 service providers
Questions	Evaluation Questions		
	1. Is the activity cluster based on context-specific and international evidence?	2. To what extent is the activity cluster achieving the targeted GBV results?	3. To what extent is the activity cluster sustainable?

LESSONS LEARNED

What worked?

Initial needs assessments stages proved beneficial to guide activity targets, improve design, and make implementation more effective.

Activities achieved their outputs and short-term outcomes within their timelines.

Activity advocates and other support approaches tailored their case management to meet individual client’s needs.

Activities that engaged migrants and members of the host communities fostered mutual understanding and appreciation, and thus, promoted migrant integration.

What did not work?

Financial concerns are often a priority that can hinder participation in psychosocial activities, especially among male migrants. Looking for sources of income is more relevant to male migrant than GBV activities.

Local implementation capacity in the Caribbean is low and reliable partners are scarce, making it difficult to scale up efforts to meet the needs of large and growing numbers of Venezuelan migrants.

Performance monitoring strategies seemed to provide limited benefits of program adaptation and learning; they were used primarily for reporting purposes.

▲ Coordination between organizations and revitalized local networks of service providers helped foster better access to services for GBV survivors. Coordination and networking also promoted collaboration between partners to maintain an active network of services and enable efforts for sustainability in the host communities.

▼ The timeframe and scope of the BTC funding made it difficult for smaller groups to root their activities as sustainable practices.

▼ Older male participants' traditional attitudes and behaviors towards gender roles resulted in long-term attitudes to GBV that promote its perpetuation.

RECOMMENDATIONS



IMPROVE PROGRAM CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINABILITY.

Donors need to consider the implications of short-term funding for sustainability, especially for small organizations. During design and implementation, grantees should consider approaches that will foster greater sustainability for the program, such as integrating a network of partners into the project, building fund-raising skills, preparing joint funding proposals with other organizations, or securing project coordination with larger agencies. For instance, while BTC included sustainability indicators, the evaluation found limited organizational capacity to procure funds and enable activities to continue after USAID funding ended. An exception was BTG4VM, which received IDB funds for a second year of implementation. One Resonance staff member reflected on the efforts that were made to improve program capacity and sustainability:

“The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, I'm not sure, you know, they have [other] ongoing programming in Panama and I know the MEL engagement that they piloted with Venezuelan migrants was an outreach, or like an expansion, of some of the work they've done with post country communities there. So I'm not sure how that has been sustained or not.” (Resonance Staff, KII)



INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT SESSIONS AND USE THIS SERVICE TO REFINE CASE MANAGEMENT.

For interventions that provide psychosocial support and counseling, future activity design should include additional sessions with a specialist in these areas. GBV survivors expressed that opening these channels of communication about trauma takes time, and each case is different. Further, trauma from migration and violence impacts the decision-making process GBV survivors follow in their health, legal, and housing choices. Program advocates and referral staff should receive training on confidentiality, data security, and no harm against users to use the monitoring data tracked as a tool to ensure the service provider network can adjust their approach to each user's needs. For instance, codependency from trauma can affect the decisions GBV survivors make about their physical safety and housing, delaying the survivors' decisions in a legal case. A comment captures this idea:

“They would have been able to help me more because they did not understand what I was going through; they thought I just did not want to leave that house, and they closed my case. But it was not like that, the psychological damage I have was deep and nobody has helped me overcome it. Even if I want to get out of there, I can't.” (WELCOME GBV survivor KII)



FUND TEMPORARY REFUGE FOR GBV SURVIVORS WHO USE LEGAL SERVICES.

Due to frequent intimate partner violence Venezuelan migrants experience, some GBV survivors shared that interventions should provide refuge or temporary housing and legal services for users that need legal protection from their partners. Providing a temporary housing option to GBV survivors would decrease the danger of living in the same place with a violent intimate partner, especially when a legal process to protect the survivors or obtain legally custody of children is in process. As one survivor who used legal services described:

"Because we are the women who are going through this abuse, who are going through this mistreatment, we are in a very vulnerable situation, and nobody listens to us." (WELCOME GBV Survivor KII)



ADDRESS MIGRANTS' TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICAL NEEDS.

Migrants' financial and logistical difficulties related to commuting can be a burden for them to participate in GenDev-funded initiatives and their incorporation to the host community in general. Thus, grantees should consider ways to reach them by covering the migrants' opportunity costs and not generating further hardships. For instance, scheduling activities for groups of women living in the same community either onsite or offering them transportation to the site and back. Moreover, traveling together will make their journey safer. Some male program users said that male workshop attendees living in "red zone" areas of crime would also benefit from having a means of transportation to travel to the workshop site and back. As one WELCOME participant said:

"There are many women that don't have [a way] to get here to Arima because Diego Martin is far away and not everyone has the time, or they have to work... I have recommended this program to other women as well, but the problem is the distance in my community. You could set up a meeting with several women on the same day and you tell them the transportation will pick them up at this location and after it's over they'll all leave." (WELCOME GBV Survivor KII)



PROVIDE REFERRALS TO PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES. (SPECIFIC TO SHIFTING THE POWER DYNAMICS IN PANAMA)

For male migrants, the workshop on masculinities opens the channel to new questions and psychosocial needs, particularly the youngest ones (under 25 years old). Therefore, an ideal path for psychosocial support should include referrals to support groups to improve self-esteem, work on trauma healing, provide therapy for couples, and to prevent and heal sexual child abuse. One partner of an SPD participant described how the workshop changed her partner's perspective and encouraged him to get involved in further support:

"My husband didn't cook, didn't clean, didn't wash, only when things got late. Now he has started cleaning, cooking, scrubbing.... The masculinities workshops refreshed his memory... and he understood gender equality... and even started to be a couple's counselor." (Female partner of SPD participant, FGD)



STRENGTHEN FUTURE GBV PROGRAMMING.

NORC recommends that in future programs, USAID and implementing partners encourage grantees to integrate strategies that strengthen local alliances between service providers and promote a network of services for GBV survivors, including:

- ▶ **Housing assistance.** Include options for medium- to long-term housing to support migrants to become homeowners rather than tenants. A large proportion of migrants' income is allocated to rent, which prevents them from settling at a property they own for long periods of time or for the rest of their lives in the host country.
- ▶ **Provide occupational training, entrepreneurship skills, and livelihoods assistance.** Program users indicated that GBV prevention activities were useful but also incomplete. Most user respondents and some implementation staff suggested that future GBV activities should include job-training, entrepreneurship, and livelihood components. Support to promote income-generating activities is not only a priority for most migrants, but a protective strategy against GBV in the host communities. Users mentioned the following relevant training in the local labor markets: barbering and beauty shop skills, business planning to open and operate nurseries, cooking to prepare and sell meals, and sales strategies at a small and medium scale.

The table below provides an overview of the resources, services, or programs that migrant communities need most to prevent or combat GBV as mentioned in the web survey. Shaded in blue are the resources, services or programs that service providers identified as a priority for migrants in their communities.

RESOURCE OR SERVICE MIGRANTS NEED	
BTG4VM, GUYANA	Count
Economic empowerment services (including professional skills training and entrepreneurial opportunities)	6
Housing shelters and safe spaces	6
Legal assistance for protection orders	3
WELCOME, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	Count
Psychosocial services	6
Economic empowerment services (including professional skills training and entrepreneurial opportunities)	4
Legal assistance for protection orders	4

N = 10 service providers in Guyana and 10 service providers in Trinidad and Tobago. Respondents may have chosen more than one option. No responses for SPD because the activity did not have a network of service providers.