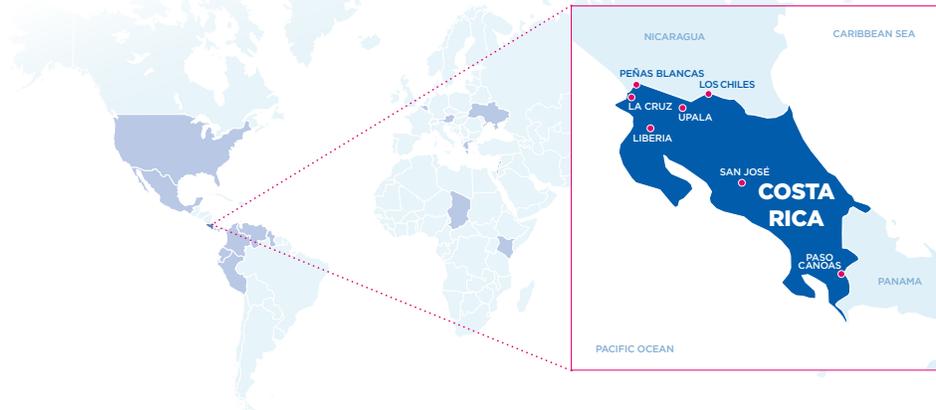




Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

FACT SHEET: COSTA RICA



HIAS IN COSTA RICA

Founded: 2017

Staff Size: 41

Country Director: Gabriela Nuñez

Office Locations: Liberia, San Jose, with staff in La Cruz, Los Chiles, Paso Canoas, Peñas Blancas, and Upala

Costa Rica is unique in the region for its political stability, high health and education indicators, and the country attracts hundreds of thousands of migrants seeking a better life, and refugees seeking protection. Costa Rica hosts more than 100,000 refugees and asylum seekers, 80 percent of whom are Nicaraguan. Others have fled from El Salvador, Colombia, Honduras, and Venezuela.

COVID-19 has destabilized the lives of refugees and migrants across Latin America and the Caribbean, cutting off access to income and increasing vulnerability to violence. To respond to their heightened needs, HIAS Costa Rica has modified its service by implementing remote support and developing other innovative solutions. HIAS Costa Rica helps the most vulnerable including single women, women-headed households, survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), survivors of torture, older people, people with disabilities and serious health conditions, and LGBTQ refugees.

HIAS PROGRAMS AND FOCUS

HIAS protects and supports refugees to build new lives and reunite with family members in safety and freedom. HIAS Costa Rica’s protection program includes individual legal representation, access to legal information, border monitoring activities, and training for local authorities. HIAS’ economic inclusion program helps refugees, asylum seekers, and vulnerable migrants access dignified and sustainable livelihoods, leading to self-reliance and inclusion in their new communities.

Legal Protection

Without legal status, refugees are forced to live on the margins of society, sometimes for generations, without access to healthcare, education, dignified work, or safe shelter. HIAS Costa Rica provides legal protection support to refugees and asylum seekers through legal orientation sessions, individual counseling on legal procedures, direct legal representation in national Refugee Status Determination procedures, and referrals to legal services. With individuals facing challenges in accessing fundamental rights related to health, education, and work, HIAS Costa Rica engages in strategic litigation to advance refugee rights and refugee protection before local administrative bodies, and ultimately before the Constitutional Court.

To identify persons in need of international protection and to prevent forcible returning of refugees or asylum seekers to a country where they are liable to be subjected to persecution, HIAS conducts protection monitoring activities at an



Photograph taken prior to March, 2020

international airport and the Northern and Southern borders. HIAS' protective services include monitoring border crossings, legal information, and interpretation support. On the border, HIAS provides know-your-rights information and trains border authorities on refugee rights and protection. As a first responder on the Northern border, HIAS provides humanitarian assistance, cash-based interventions, health and hygiene items, and food.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Response

Women, girls, and LGBTQ individuals are disproportionately affected by forced displacement and by being on the move.

GBV services and support are driven by the needs and voices of

survivors, and our GBV programming helps forcibly displaced women, girls, and LGBTQ individuals access human rights to pursue their potential, free from violence and gender-based oppression. HIAS established a protocol for government authorities to respond to refugee survivors of GBV, serving as a streamlined reference tool for government officials when identifying and responding to refugee GBV survivors in Costa Rica. HIAS lawyers also represent asylum seekers with claims for refugee status based on gender-based violence, supporting survivors as they secure health and shelter services while their cases are evaluated.

Economic Inclusion

Access to dignified, sustainable, and safe livelihoods are at the core of HIAS' economic inclusion interventions. Our methodology enables refugees, vulnerable migrants, and host communities to find opportunities that will increase resilience, regain dignity, and provide opportunities to build independent and meaningful futures. In late 2019, HIAS commissioned a labor market study in Costa Rica to help design interventions that promote safe and sustainable livelihoods and help vulnerable people become self-reliant. The study helped HIAS identify employment opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers, while identifying the main challenges and gaps that refugees, the private sector, and relevant government ministries face when promoting the economic inclusion of refugees. HIAS Costa Rica is now implementing socio economic support programs, including the Entrepreneurship School with a Gender Lens and the Poverty Alleviation Coalition with UNHCR.

HIAS in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

HIAS advocates for the protection of refugees, other forcibly displaced populations, and local host communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. As part of a comprehensive regional response to meet the urgent needs of these populations, including the millions of displaced Venezuelans, HIAS participates in several regional coordination platforms and partnerships which focus on protection, food security, GBV, and Cash and Voucher Assistance, including:

REDLAC (IASC Regional Work Group Risk, Emergencies and Disasters)

UNHCR/IOM Regional Platform for the Venezuela Situation Response (R4V)

Interagency Group on Mixed Migration Flows (GIFMM) in Colombia

Working Group for Refugees and Migrants (GTRM) in Ecuador and Peru

HIAS currently has programs in nine countries in LAC (Aruba, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela) and partners with a wide range of government agencies, UN entities (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA, UNVFT), the private sector (Airbnb, TATA Consultancy Services, and Manpower), and other NGOs and consortia, including Jesuit Refugee Service, Save the Children, Norwegian Refugee Council, Plan International, and Girls not Brides.

CONTACT

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