



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

DECENTRALIZED
ES/2021/09

Evaluation of the Somos Panas Colombia Communication Campaign

FINAL REPORT
JANUARY 2022

Prepared by:
Carlos Durán
Paola Mameli
Juan David Niño
Patricia Freire
Angélica Vera
Juan Mario Jaramillo

ISEGORÍA

Executive summary

Context

Since the political and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela began, Colombia has hosted the largest number of Venezuelan refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers in the world, reaching 1.7 million people at the beginning of 2021.

These people have faced multiple challenges since arriving in Colombia. Challenges include a lack of knowledge regarding governmental procedures, barriers to accessing employment and social services, experiences of xenophobia, and a lack of solidarity shown by the host population. Initially, the host population seemed favourable towards those arriving and broadly expressed their support. As numbers increased, however, so did xenophobic attitudes.

The Somos Panas Campaign

Within this context, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in its mandate to protect refugees and those displaced by persecution or conflict and to promote long-term solutions developed the Somos Panas (“We Are Buddies”) Campaign in coordination with the Colombian government. The campaign had the following objectives: 1) to discourage expressions of xenophobia; 2) to promote empathy and solidarity towards Venezuelans to the benefit of society; and 3) to deliver useful, up-to-date and adequate information for those most vulnerable among the Venezuelan population.

The Somos Panas Campaign launched on 20 December 2017 through different strategies that included social media and media campaigns to promote solidarity and reduce xenophobia; training for influencers and journalists; community or specialized events; and “below the line” (BTL) actions. The campaign also promoted actions implemented in partnership with civil society organizations, private companies and other UN agencies.

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

After conducting internal reviews and evaluations as part of each campaign cycle, UNHCR decided to conduct an external evaluation of the entire campaign. The main goal of the external evaluation was to produce recommendations to improve actions during the next campaign cycle. The goal of the campaign will remain to influence public opinion in favour of receiving and integrating the population of Venezuelan refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers in Colombia. UNHCR is the primary user of this evaluation and will coordinate additional applicability of findings and recommendations with campaign partners.

The evaluation reviews the activities implemented by UNHCR for the Somos Panas Colombia Campaign from 20 December 2017 to 1 December 2020.

The evaluation was carried out based on guiding questions provided in the Terms of Reference (see Annex 1). During the preparation phase, these questions were refined and structured around four evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

The objectives of the evaluation were as follows:

1. Evaluate the actions of the campaign, including those carried out in partnership, within the framework of the six strategic approaches.
2. Analyse the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of Somos Panas Colombia, emphasizing the impact on public opinion and the objectives of the campaign.
3. Analyse the results of the cooperation effort offered by UNHCR to partners in developing strategies to discourage xenophobia and promote solidarity towards the Venezuelan population.
4. Analyse the reach of the campaign in raising awareness of the humanitarian response and its depiction as a source of protection and support to the Venezuelan population.
5. Draw lessons learned, achievements, good practices and limitations of the implementation, and formulate concrete conclusions and recommendations to inform the planning of the next campaign cycle or other strategic communication actions.

Methodology

The evaluation used a mixed-methods design, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The evaluation process consisted of three main stages or strategies: preparation, document review and analysis; application of instruments to gather information, including a pilot study; and systematization and analysis of the information. The information was collected in the cities of Bogotá, Pasto, Cúcuta, Maicao, Riohacha, Barranquilla and Medellín from 18 February to 8 March 2021. Evaluators conducted a total of 1,042 surveys, 25 semi-structured interviews and 12 focus groups.

Evaluators created four indices to interpret the information collected, one for each evaluation criterion. Each index is composed of indicators or the aggregate of responses to different survey questions. The questions were formulated for use on numerical, nominal or ordinal scales. From these responses, evaluators calculated indicators and averaged results to provide the value. This generated a value between 0 per cent and 100 per cent for each index or indicator, ranging from “strongly disapprove” to “strongly approve” for indicators, and from very low to very high for indices.

Very low	Low	High	Very high
0% <X ≤25%	25% <X ≤ 50%	50% <X ≤ 75%	75% <X ≤ 100%

Main findings

Relevance

Relevance index: 87.5% (very high)

- The campaign promptly modified its content and strategies to adapt to the changing situation of the mixed population flow and reorient each of the annual cycles.
- Work in partnerships enabled the main changes in objectives, strategies and content making it possible to reach different population groups in more relevant ways. More diverse messages, on national and local levels, facilitated the reach of the campaign. In-person activities generated more

recall and appropriation of the content.

- The campaign reflected the diversity and intersectionality of the target population, and the complexity around xenophobia and solidarity. It therefore could communicate messages that appeal to different people according to their life situation.
- The content of the campaign represents the ethnic and cultural diversity of the migration context and the host population but it does not address the multiple forms of discrimination and vulnerability faced by ethnic migrant groups.
- Besides providing useful content for refugee and migrant women to access their rights, the Valientes (“The Courageous”) strategy builds ties of solidarity and support networks between Colombian and Venezuelan women. These are essential for Venezuelan women, especially mothers.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness index: 54.9% (High)

- The campaign has been successful in mitigating xenophobia. People who are aware of Somos Panas Colombia demonstrate lower levels of xenophobia than those who are unaware of this or similar campaigns.
- The campaigns promoting solidarity and non-discrimination towards Venezuelans have contributed to reducing prejudices and fears about refugees and migrants among most of the host population, and within the public and private sectors.
- The objective to provide refugees and migrants with access to useful information has yielded the most success, as refugees and migrants seek information about access to routes, rights and services, and especially, employment.
- The campaign to promote the socioeconomic integration of the refugee and migrant population through job placement has shown positive results, although on a small scale.
- The campaign has managed to position itself as a central reference point in the fight against xenophobia, but individual parts of the campaign are remembered more than the campaign as a whole.
- The population of concern has participated mainly through the validation and dissemination of content and messages, but very little in their design and creation.
- The life stories of Venezuelans disseminated through social media are the most viewed campaign initiative.
- UNHCR has successfully created an environment that enables collaboration with other agencies and organizations, but partnerships with the public sector have had limited effectiveness.

Efficiency

Efficiency index: 87.5% (very high)

- The campaign investment was maximized by generating communication pieces that were easily disseminated by the media and organizations allied to the campaign.
- The campaign's emphasis on using social media enabled more audiences to be reached at a lower cost, with high organic growth generation, especially in 2020.
- Partner agencies funding specific sub-campaigns within the Somos Panas Campaign and the involvement of the private sector and local governments both expanded the reach of the campaign.
- Leaders of organizations in the territory were fundamental to the appropriation and dissemination of the content of the campaign through social media and word of mouth.

Sustainability

Sustainability index: 87.5% (very high)

- The leadership of UNHCR allowed partnerships to be set up with joint strategies and resource management to promote the campaign.
- Partners perceive that the campaign was conceptually consistent, clear and included an important social responsibility component, strengthening sustainable commitment.
- Internal and external monitoring of the campaign's alignment with the objectives and effectiveness targets enabled campaign leaders to adapt the approach each year. This guaranteed high levels of response for the future.
- New campaigns aimed at integration and combating xenophobia build on the existing capacity and legacy of Somos Panas Colombia but these may dilute the efforts and the message.
- The campaign's coordinated content and knowledge transfer enabled capacity-building in both national and territorial government entities for handling mixed movements.
- Despite success with some companies, cooperation with the private sector presented difficulties, so alternatives must be sought to make the campaign more attractive to this sector.
- The communication materials for orienting the refugee population have generated capacity in the campaign partners, local authorities and partner organizations.

Recommendations

To mitigate xenophobia:

- Anticipate the impact of the electoral process on the issue of migration and the communication strategy.
- Instill perspectives among more public officials against xenophobia by providing information on rights and access routes to services for the Venezuelan refugee and migrant population.
- Continue the strategy of generating partnerships and co-productions with national and territorial

government entities to expand coverage, innovate in content and create installed capacity.

- Continue to train journalists and follow up on their subsequent work.
- Implement a strategy to mitigate xenophobia from an intersectional perspective for ethnic groups.
- Develop unique content to transform negative depictions of Venezuelan refugees and migrant youth, particularly adolescents and young men.

To promote solidarity:

- Promote local integration and dialogue activities between the migrant and refugee population and the host population.
- Continue to make progress on integrating the Venezuelan population into broader society.
- Encourage the participation of the refugee and migrant population in the creation of content and messages that would enable the campaign to become a communication platform for integration.
- Share stories of solidarity and reciprocity as part of the integration process to demonstrate the abilities and professionalism of Venezuelan people and their potential to contribute to the development of the country.

To provide information to the migrant and refugee population:

- Urgently develop a campaign to guide the registration process for the Temporary Protection Statute and the use of derived services.
- Provide more accurate and practical information for accessing rights and services.
- Strengthen the work with civil society organizations, through which it is possible to achieve greater dissemination and acceptance of messages and information at the territorial level and provide services.
- Take the Valientes strategy to more cities and promote it to become a platform for advocacy and integration for women.
- Offer the population of Venezuelan youth and adolescents tailored messages on accessing information on assistance routes and services.

To strengthen partnerships:

- Do not subordinate the campaign objectives and strategies to the interests of large partners such as the media.
- Involve communication and journalism schools within Colombia in building and disseminating the content of the campaign.
- Strengthen the relationship with primary schools and high schools to disseminate and apply the educational material developed from the campaign.
- Involve the private sector more, taking into account the dynamics of small, medium and large

companies in order to reach them in a timely and relevant manner.

- Continue strengthening partnerships between the campaign and the public sector and establish relationship protocols to address different cooperation scenarios.

To enhance the reach and impact of the campaign:

- Continue to strengthen the cooperation between the campaign and the territories to better adapt communication to local contexts and languages.
- Document the uses of the communication pieces by the population of concern.
- Disseminate and transfer good practices and lessons learned from the campaign.
- Seek different channels of communication and give priority to in-person activities within the territory.
- Use channels such as TikTok to reach out to the child and youth population to encourage integration.
- Strengthen UNHCR's territorial team through the local presence of communication agencies.
- Align campaign content on preventive measures, the vaccination process and the negative impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.