



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

MULTI-COUNTRY INTEGRATION STRATEGY FOR THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF HEALTH OBSERVATORIES FOR INTERNATIONAL HUMAN MOBILITY

Local Health System Sustainability Project

Task Order I, USAID Integrated Health Systems IDIQ

August 2022

This document was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by the Local Health System Sustainability Project under the USAID Integrated Health Systems IDIQ.

Local Health System Sustainability Project

The Local Health System Sustainability Project (LHSS) under the USAID Integrated Health Systems IDIQ helps low- and middle-income countries transition to sustainable, self-financed health systems as a means to support access to universal health coverage. The project works with partner countries and local stakeholders to reduce financial barriers to care and treatment, ensure equitable access to essential health services for all people, and improve the quality of health services. Led by Abt Associates, the five-year project will build local capacity to sustain strong health system performance, supporting countries on their journey to self-reliance and prosperity.

Submitted to: Scott Stewart, COR
Office of Health Systems
Bureau for Global Health

USAID Contract No: 7200AA18D00023 / 7200AA19F00014

Recommended Citation: The Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the Local Health System Sustainability Project (LHSS) under the USAID Integrated Health Systems IDIQ. August 2022. "*Multi-Country Integration Strategy for the Design and Implementation of Health Observatories for International Human Mobility*". Rockville, MD: Abt Associates.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DESCRIPTION

Objective

Co-create with Colombia's Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MSPS, by its Spanish acronym), a proposed methodology for providing technical support to countries interested in launching health observatories focused on international human mobility and forming a multi-country network of observatories. This proposal will generate knowledge about migratory flows and their relationship with health and influence the development of regional public policies on migration and health.

Description of the problem

The exodus of more than five million migrants and refugees from Venezuela to other South American countries has demonstrated the need to improve laws and regulations that guarantee migrants' rights, through an integrated response. For this reason, governments, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations have made an effort to measure migration, mainly from Venezuela, and to analyze migrants' profiles and trajectories, the risks they face, and their needs for legal and social protection.

In this context, strategies for knowledge management, such as health observatories, can help policymakers to better understand the relationship between migration and health and inform the development of public policies that address the needs of migrant, returnee, and host populations.

In 2020, the MSPS implemented the National Observatory for Migration and Health. Based on this experience, and with the support of LHSS Colombia, MSPS developed a strategy for developing health observatories focused on international human mobility. These observatories would be launched with technical support given to the countries interested in forming a multi-country network of observatories. The network would serve as a mechanism for coordination and exchanging experiences, strengthening public policy for protecting the migrant population and guaranteeing the right to migrate with dignity.

Methodology

During the first half of 2022, LHSS Colombia worked with the MSPS's Epidemiology and Demography Directorate and Office of Cooperation and International Relations to define the steps, both technical and diplomatic, required to create a multi-country network of health observatories for international human mobility. The first step was to map observatories for migration and health issues implemented in South America. This exercise showed that as of December 2021, no country had a government observatory dealing with these issues except Colombia. Given these findings, developing a network of health observatories would require proposing a strategy that helps interested countries to design new government observatories or bring together existing academic, private, or civil society-sponsored observatories.

The MSPS had already advanced in developing a strategy, with the Department of Epidemiology and Demography producing an "*Operational and technical guideline for the construction, management and evaluation of health observatories,*" and a "*Proposal for the creation of a regional network of migration observatories - PROSUR*". Building on these existing documents, LHSS Colombia and the Department of Epidemiology and Demography co-created this proposal for a *Multi-Country Integration Strategy for the Design and Implementation of Health Observatories for International Human Mobility*. This document proposes the technical assistance activities that should be conducted in each country to implement the observatories.

Initially, the proposal was to be presented at the Forum for Progress and Integration of South America (PROSUR) event: "*multi-country political dialogue for a health response to migratory processes*" scheduled for May 10, 2022. However, the event was canceled for reasons beyond MSPS and LHSS Colombia's control. Instead, the MSPS will socialize the proposal with specific countries in the region that may be interested in implementing it.

Limitations

This strategy was originally developed to be implemented by PROSUR member countries. However, changes in the politics of each country influence their participation in PROSUR, putting at risk the implementation of the strategy and its sustainability. Implementing the network through PROSUR would limit the countries eligible to participate. In addition, since PROSUR is a government forum, the network would only be made up of government-run observatories, limiting the participation of academic or private observatories.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

This strategy aims to support interested countries in designing and implementing health observatories for international human mobility and forming a multi-country network of these observatories. The observatories will facilitate knowledge generation by increasing access to information, conducting analysis, and exchanging knowledge and experiences that support the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of regional public policies that respond to the priorities of the migrant population.

The strategy defines six activities that each participating country should implement as part of this initiative: 1) define focal points, 2) agree on a work plan, 3) define financial, technological, and technical viability, 4) design the observatory, 5) implement the observatory and 6) form the multi-country network of health observatories for international human mobility.

The implementation of these observatories and the creation of a multi-country network should be a priority not only for the governments of each country, but also for international cooperation agencies.

As a recommendation, this strategy should include countries along the migration route to North America and elsewhere, in addition to countries that host migrants.

The multi-country network of observatories should include those implemented by governments, the private sector, academia, civil society organizations, and international organizations. Including non-

governmental and private sector observatories will facilitate the expansion of the network and increase the likelihood that it achieves its objectives.

Finally, LHSS recommends creating a network of observatories on migration in Colombia, since the country has three separate government initiatives tasked with collecting and analyzing information about migration (National Observatory for Migration and Health, Colombian Observatory of Migration from Venezuela, and the Migratory Statistical System). Lessons learned from the creation of this network within Colombia can inform the development of a multi-country network.

3. SUSTAINABILITY / USE OF THE DELIVERABLE

The Multi-Country Integration Strategy for the Design and Implementation of Health Observatories for International Human Mobility was structured, developed, and reviewed together with a team from the MSPS's National Observatory for Migration and Health and the final review was carried out by the Knowledge Management and Information Sources Group of the Epidemiology and Demography Directorate.

In Fiscal Year 2022, LHSS Colombia supported the National Observatory for Migration and Health in strengthening its collection, management, and analysis of health information related to the Venezuelan migrant population, which has been used to inform public policy making. The Observatory's experience informed the development of this strategy for implementation in other countries.

In Fiscal Year 2023, LHSS Colombia will support the MSPS in identifying the appropriate mechanism to link the Observatory with similar initiatives in other interested countries, contributing to creating an international knowledge management network on migration and health.

4. ANNEXES

Technical document "Multi-Country Integration Strategy for the Design and Implementation of Health Observatories for International Human Mobility".