



Delivering Charitable Relief to populations in need



Simón Bolívar
Foundation.

DIGITAL REPORT 2024



Simón Bolívar
Foundation.



Delivering Charita to populations in n





ole Relief need

***Mariela Poleo*, President of the Simón Bolívar Foundation, leads a new strategy serving Venezuelans and other vulnerable populations**

Let's talk about the situation in Venezuela for a moment. Unfortunately, this leads us to a conversation about economic decline, poverty and, as a result, poor health conditions of individuals forced to flee the country in search of a better life.

The humanitarian crisis in Venezuela has resulted in an overwhelming number of migrants exiting the country – entering dangerous and unfit environments – to make their way to more stable countries.

Recognising this situation, we see no one better positioned to speak on the subject and, more importantly, to lead the charitable organisation committed to helping vulnerable populations in this area than Mariela Poleo, President of the Simón Bolívar Foundation and a Venezuelan national who holds the crisis dear to her heart.

“When I started working back in the late eighties to early nineties, when the oil industry was opening up in Venezuela, it was the place to be,” says Poleo. “Many international companies were going to Venezuela, and it had the best-paid jobs. It was also known that all these projects were generating dividends for the community.”

While Poleo humbly oversees the Simón Bolívar Foundation's efforts, she also clearly understands the key drivers and incorporates them into its forward-looking strategy.





Mariela Poleo
President,
Simón Bolívar Foundation

THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN VENEZUELA

The humanitarian crisis dates back to 2015 and has only got worse. The country has become the most unequal in the Americas, a horrible distinction considering the continent has the highest levels of inequality worldwide.

As the prices of things have increased beyond the lifestyles of the Venezuelan people, they were rapidly plunged into extreme poverty, an estimated 53.3% of the population in 2022, as per Encuesta Nacional de Condiciones de Vida – National Survey of Living Conditions (ENCOVI). As of January 2024, year-on-year inflation in Venezuela was 193%, according to the Observatorio Venezolano de Finanzas.

To put this into perspective, the United Nations defines extreme poverty as surviving on less than US\$2 per person per day, with limited access to food, energy, water, healthcare and other essentials required to live a standard quality of life.

According to a study by researchers of Johns Hopkins Center for Humanitarian Health, “Venezuela Health Profile 2021”, approximately 50% of doctors and 25% of nurses in Venezuela have emigrated since 2012, seeking a better quality of life elsewhere. They represent a small portion of the 7.8 million people who have fled the country, based on latest figures from The Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants (R4V).

The people of Venezuela face challenging and dangerous situations from day one, with some of the most urgent needs related to their health and nutrition. The situation extends overseas as Venezuelans travel to other host countries where they don't always have the opportunity to work or have access to necessary healthcare.



**“Over the last
four years, the
Foundation has
achieved great
impact overall”**

MARIELA POLEO
PRESIDENT,
SIMÓN BOLÍVAR FOUNDATION



However, she makes no attempt to understate the work of its team, which delivered approximately US\$7.7m in high-impact humanitarian health grants to Venezuela in 2023, based on final numbers in its audited financial statement.

As a number of migrants move through Colombia and Panama, via the Darién Gap, they are faced with significant dangers, the severity of which can only be addressed with key partners that intervene at the earliest possible opportunities.

“They have to go through very dangerous routes that can potentially expose them

to risks of rape, human trafficking and other things,” Poleo explains about the migrants and their routes to safer, more secure grounds. “They are looking to reinvent themselves and to create a better life for their kids. Also, some mothers in Venezuela right now are struggling, they don’t have food for the table, they don’t have security, and yet you see they try to keep their kids healthy and out of any negative situation.”

Blessed with her drive to share small gestures that impact the lives of many, Poleo strives to support these people.



Simón Bolívar
Foundation™

WATCH NOW »

“I have a quote on my desk, which says ‘Life is too short to not do something that matters’. I think that each one of us can do a little bit to change the world or the people around,” Poleo explains.

It is this mindset that encourages the Simón Bolívar Foundation to assist those in need by providing healthcare and other support.

Humanitarian programmes for migrants and disaster relief

With a new approach in grant making, the Foundation is providing funds for humanitarian healthcare services that can reach a larger number of mothers and their children. This programme is centred

around those who require better access to medicine and nutritional food and is wholly focused on delivering these to vulnerable, low-income populations.

The grant funds for this programme are limited to qualified U.S. charities, which ensures funds are presented to charities with clear reputations that are already active in Venezuela and other Latin American countries. Working with these organisations that already have a foot in the door – so to speak – proves invaluable in delivering impact to the country – and many more across Latin America.

“We have agreements with organisations in 12 countries, including Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Honduras, Costa Rica,

Pediatría





“We estimate that through the grant agreements that we have signed, we have benefited or will benefit more than 680,000 individuals in 12 countries in total”

MARIELA POLEO
PRESIDENT,
SIMÓN BOLÍVAR FOUNDATION

MARIELA POLEO



TITLE: **PRESIDENT**

COMPANY: **SIMÓN BOLÍVAR
FOUNDATION**

Poleo was named president of the Simón Bolívar Foundation, CITGO Petroleum Corporation’s private foundation, in 2020. At the helm, she implemented a new mission that creates a larger impact supporting vulnerable populations affected by disaster, poverty and conflict.

Poleo previously served at a major international oil company in multiple roles for 21 years, including leading Finance and Control for Exploration North America and Development and Production Gulf of Mexico and contributing to develop capital projects in Latin America and Africa.

Poleo was recognised as a Global Leader of Influence by the World Affairs Council of Houston in 2023. She holds a Masters in Engineering Management and an Advanced Management Program certificate from IESA Business School. She is a board member of multiple nonprofit boards.

Mexico and the U.S. In the past four years, we have built a network of qualified charitable organisations that receive grants from us and implement programmes on the ground,” says Poleo.

In order to qualify charities for its grants, the Simón Bolívar Foundation invites organisations to share their proposals, which are reviewed by the Foundation and an independent volunteer community advisory team to determine whether these proposals align with the Foundation’s programme objectives, budgets and time-frame, with the Foundation solely determining all grant awards. Equally important to the Foundation is project sustainability as it looks to build strategic relationships in order to provide continued value to beneficiaries.

In doing so, the Foundation has delivered aid not only in Venezuela but also in other Latin American countries, including Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, and supported migrants but also those caught up in natural disasters.

Having launched a relief fund during the pandemic, Poleo and the team facilitated much-needed support in Venezuela to deliver sanitation and personal protective equipment and continuing education.



CELEBRATE WITH CITGO

A decade of impact with Caring for Our Coast

Since 2014, CITGO has been committed to preserving and restoring the coast, awarding more than \$7 million in environmental grants.

This year we are celebrating with \$1 million in additional grants and special events. Caring for our communities helps empower future stewards for a brighter future.

[LEARN MORE](#)





“One of our objectives in 2020 was to support capacity building by launching a series of webinars to connect doctors from Venezuela with doctors in Europe and the United States to learn firsthand how they were implementing measures to mitigate COVID,” says Poleo.

The Simón Bolívar Foundation also extends its support to increase the capacity of medical competency in Venezuela’s healthcare system through its educational programmes.

From doctors and nurses to regular caregivers, Knowledge Transfer and Capacity Building grants shape the prospects for the country’s future – creating support mechanisms that will encourage self-sufficiency.

Moreover, these grants support organisations dedicated to educating the public and enhancing awareness regarding the intricate humanitarian

HOY INVITA SIMÓN: SMALL GRANT FOOD PROGRAMME

Working with a group of grantees, the Simón Bolívar Foundation operates the Small Grant Food Programme as part of its roster of grant offerings in the U.S.

Much like its entire grant portfolio, Hoy Invita Simón accepts support from U.S.-charitable organisations. Qualifying organisations are also scored based on suitability in the core objectives and needs of the Foundation.

Through the Hoy Invita Simón Program, the Foundation has been able to support migrants with meals in different states, including Florida, New York and Texas.

The Simón Bolívar Foundation shares the full guidelines on its website.



“We launched a series of webinars to connect doctors from Venezuela with doctors in Europe and the United States”

MARIELA POLEO
PRESIDENT,
SIMÓN BOLÍVAR FOUNDATION

situation in Venezuela. They also aim to build capacity in the country through training programmes for medical professionals.

Facilitating social aid with transparency

“Over the last four years, the Foundation has achieved great impact overall,” says Poleo. “We estimate that through the grant agreements that we have signed, we have benefited or will benefit more than 680,000 individuals in 12 countries in total.”

In order to achieve this feat, good governance played a major role, ensuring



that the Foundation worked towards the same goal in a collaborative way. From Poleo's perspective, processes and governance are crucial components which are combined with much-needed transparency to achieve measurable impact on the population in need.

"Transparency is so important for us, it is critical that we choose to report and share the investment in the Foundation's grant programmes and the impact we have," says Poleo. "The Foundation publishes an annual

report with information about its charitable programmes and impact. In addition, the Foundation's annual tax return is published on the IRS website."

This transparent approach not only showcases the amazing achievements of the Simón Bolívar Foundation but also provides the grant programme objectives and requirements to potential organisations that wish to apply for funding. ○





Simón Bolívar Foundation.

Simón Bolívar Foundation

1293 Eldridge Parkway
Houston
Texas
USA
77077

T 1-800-495-0010 | sbf@citgo.com

POWERED BY:

