Socioeconomic Integration of Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees

The Cases of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru

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Executive Summary

Venezuelan migrants and refugees have moved in large numbers across Latin America since 2015. As of June 2021, the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), co-led by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), estimated that 5.6 million Venezuelans were living abroad, at least 4.6 million of whom were in other Latin American and Caribbean countries. The arrival of so many migrants and refugees within a few years has created both challenges and opportunities for countries in the region, and the COVID-19 pandemic has added another layer of complexity to the situation.

As it has become clear that many displaced Venezuelans will remain abroad for an extended period, if not permanently, focus has begun to shift from the provision of humanitarian aid for new arrivals to include facilitating their integration into receiving-country labor markets, healthcare and education systems, and local communities. Such measures hold the potential to benefit both migrants and refugees and the communities in which they live by strengthening economic development, public health, and social equity and by reinforcing social cohesion.

To examine the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in the region, this report analyzes nonrepresentative, nonprobabilistic data from IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) studies, as well as a variety of data from other surveys, reports, and additional research resources. The report explores five key dimensions of socioeconomic integration (sociodemographic profile, levels of economic inclusion, education, access to health care, and social cohesion) across five South American countries that together host more than 70 percent of the total Venezuelan migrant and refugee population worldwide. These are: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.

This study also examines the progression of integration experiences over time, considering three periods: (1) 2017 to June 2018, when Venezuelan emigration began to accelerate; (2) July 2018 to 2019, when an increasingly coordinated and responsive regional approach to Venezuelan displacement emerged; and (3) 2020 to 2021, marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and changing migration dynamics, including travel restrictions. While the data presented in this report are nonrepresentative, they provide a valuable indication of trends and insights to support effective policymaking in the region.

Over the studied periods, the Venezuelan share of the total population has increased in each of the five studied countries. In Colombia and Peru, the countries in the region that have received the largest aggregate number of Venezuelan migrants and refugees, Venezuelans now make up more than 3 percent of each country’s total population. DTM data show that the profile of surveyed Venezuelan migrants and refugees across the region is relatively young and more likely to be of working age than receiving-country populations. While men were over-represented among Venezuelan migrants and refugees in the initial
study period, migration of Venezuelan women has become more prominent, and migration flows are now more equally distributed by gender. The profile of Venezuelans on the move in the region has also changed as more are traveling with family members and fewer heads of household are traveling alone. The greatest change was seen in Chile, where surveys indicate that the share of Venezuelans migrating with family increased from 27 percent in the second period to 42 percent the third period.

With the exception of Chile, these South American countries were long used to being countries of origin and not destination; all five initially faced the influx in Venezuelan migrants and refugees with outdated or limited migration and integration policies. For this reason, states have relied on creative and largely ad hoc migration policies and structures to regularize and—to a lesser extent—integrate Venezuelans. Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru have created regularization programs to register and grant Venezuelans legal status, and the new administration in Ecuador has publicly expressed interest in a new process for regularizing the country’s Venezuelan population. Brazil has maintained flexible and accessible regularization processes and has by far granted asylum to the greatest number of Venezuelans of any country in the region. But despite these efforts, and with the exception of Brazil, large shares of Venezuelans in these countries are without a regular migration status—40 percent or more in almost all periods. And while the rate of irregularity has been relatively consistent in Colombia, it has continued to increase throughout the studied periods in both Ecuador and Peru.

Employment rates are an important indicator of economic integration. In all five countries, Venezuelan migrants and refugees have experienced unemployment at higher rates than the receiving-country population, and many have lost jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Colombia and Peru, unemployment rates had decreased between the first and second study periods but rose once again following the onset of the pandemic and its economic fallout. By contrast, unemployment rates in Brazil and Ecuador have risen throughout each of the three studied periods. Data on unemployment in Chile are varied and inconclusive.

While securing employment is important to families’ financial health, the type and quality of employment is crucial, too. Informal employment is common in the region, but Venezuelan migrants and refugees work in the informal market at even higher rates than their counterparts in receiving countries. High levels of informality and independent work render the population more vulnerable to exploitative working conditions and poverty. And in fact, the International Labor Organization has documented poor working conditions among Venezuelans throughout the region, and in DTM surveys Venezuelans have reported working longer hours and earning less income than receiving-community counterparts, with underemployment common.

Significant shares of Venezuelan migrants and refugees earn less than the legal minimum wage. DTM data from Colombia for the second period show 87 percent of Venezuelans were earning below the legal monthly minimum wage. Gender gaps in both employment and income mean that Venezuelan women are employed at lower rates and earn less than their male counterparts. As it has for many around the world, the pandemic has taken a toll on the income of many Venezuelan migrants and refugees: in an October 2020 survey by Equilibrium CenDe, Venezuelans in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru reported a more than 50 percent drop in their income since March 2020.
In addition to a lack of regular migration status, difficulties getting academic and professional credentials recognized have hindered many Venezuelans’ access the formal labor market. Venezuelan migrants and refugees—and particularly those who arrived in the first period or prior and, in some countries, women—tend to have high levels of educational attainment, and in some countries, they have higher tertiary education rates than the receiving-country population. Yet, bureaucratic barriers and the high costs of the recognition process can inhibit them from having their credentials validated and accessing formal work in their fields—a situation that both limits their economic opportunities and prevents receiving communities from fully benefitting from newcomers’ skills. Only 10 percent of Venezuelans in Chile, Colombia, and Peru reported having had their credentials recognized as of October 2020. Thus, many migrants and refugees who worked in the professional sector in Venezuela are now experiencing underemployment by working in low-skilled and poorly paid jobs in their receiving countries.

### Venezuelan migrants and refugees—and particularly those who arrived in the first period or prior and, in some countries, women—tend to have high levels of educational attainment.

As more families are migrating together and settling down in receiving countries, securing access to the education system for Venezuelan children is becoming increasingly critical. The legal frameworks of these countries generally guarantee the rights of all children to access an education. Nonetheless, several barriers (such as families’ lack of the standard documents needed for enrollment, limited familiarity with national education systems, and classroom capacity constraints) have resulted in a significant number of out-of-school children in the region. Chile is the country with the highest rates of school enrollment: in the second and third study periods, between 85 percent and 93 percent of Venezuelan children and adolescents were enrolled in school. In other countries, school enrollment rates have been much lower among Venezuelans, generally hovering between 40 percent and 80 percent.

Access to health care, while already an important dimension of integration, has taken on new urgency during the COVID-19 pandemic. Chile and Brazil have universal health-care systems, but barriers such as fear of deportation and discrimination can limit accessibility in practice. Ecuador guarantees the right to free health care, regardless of immigration status, but similar barriers limit access to services, and participation in public, contributory social security insurance is low. In Colombia and Peru, health care is not universal. In the latter, less than 10 percent of Venezuelans have reported accessing the subsidized public health insurance regime throughout all three periods. Access has been limited in Colombia, too, with a 2019 DTM survey showing that just 12 percent of Venezuelan respondents had any form of health insurance.

Social cohesion between Venezuelan migrants and refugees and longer-standing residents of receiving communities is a key (if difficult to measure) dimension of integration. Many Venezuelans have reported experiencing discrimination. Although rates of discrimination have remained relatively static in Brazil, they have grown steadily over time in each of the other four study countries. Reducing discrimination is imperative, as it can have negative effects on immigrants’ livelihoods, employment opportunities, and access to essential services such as education and health care, as well as harming community cohesion and at times leading to anti-immigrant violence. Although public opinion polling on views toward Venezuelan immigration tends to be limited—with Colombia as the exception to this—the data that are available suggest that public opinion of Venezuelan migrants and refugees has generally soured over time, with some
members of receiving communities expressing the desire to limit their access to essential services and/or the view that they increase insecurity.

With more Venezuelan migrants and refugees reporting in surveys their intention to stay in their receiving countries, it is important that governments transition from humanitarian, short-term responses to Venezuelan displacement to longer-term integration policies. The sociodemographic and educational characteristics of the population and information about the obstacles to economic inclusion, access to services such as health care and education, and challenges to social cohesion presented in this report can help inform policymaking in this regard. Among the priority areas for focus suggested by this analysis are: redoubling efforts to ensure Venezuelan migrants and refugees can access regular immigration status, improving credential recognition processes, addressing capacity in systems ranging from health care to education, and supporting robust research through data collection and transparency.

1 Introduction

Large-scale emigration from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has played a preeminent role in South America’s migration landscape since 2015, creating new challenges and opportunities for receiving-country governments and communities and for migrants and refugees alike. As of June 2021, the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for the Response for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), co-led by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), estimated that 5.6 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees were living abroad, at least 4.6 million of whom resided in countries across Latin America and the Caribbean.¹ The COVID-19 pandemic has added an additional layer of complexity to these movements by exacerbating economic drivers of migration and political tensions, and by creating new public-health risks and policy conundrums.

One of these sets of policy conundrums centers around the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan migrants and refugees. It has become abundantly clear that many Venezuelans will remain in other countries in the medium to long term, if not permanently, and ensuring that they can find their footing in receiving-country labor markets, health-care and education systems, and local communities promises to benefit both these migrants and refugees and the societies in which they live. This report utilizes data and resources shared by IOM with Migration Policy Institute (MPI) researchers and additional data and analysis identified during a literature review, including resources from a wide range of organizations showcased in MPI’s Latin America and the Caribbean Migration Portal.²

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2 Launched in February 2020, the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Latin America and the Caribbean Migration Portal is the first comprehensive, curated online resource for data, research, and analysis on immigration policy in the region. It features a selection of literature, including reports, briefs, surveys, and government regulations, from various organizations as well as original research and analysis from leading experts and MPI analysts. It can be found at: www.migrationportal.org.
A key source for this analysis is the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), which follows and monitors displacement and mobility across the globe, recording critical information about the demographics, characteristics, and socioeconomic status of migrant and refugee populations. As part of the regional response to the situation of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Latin America and the Caribbean, the DTM is being used in conjunction with the R4V platform, which was established in 2018 to coordinate the response to Venezuelan displacement, together serving as rich sources of information on this rapidly changing situation.

This report explores five dimensions that are important for understanding the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan migrants and refugees: (1) their sociodemographic profile, (2) levels of economic inclusion, (3) education, (4) access to health care, and (5) social cohesion (see Box 1 for details). While there are some similarities across receiving countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, there are also notable differences. To examine these trends, this analysis spans five South American countries—Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru—that together host more than 70 percent of the total Venezuelan migrant and refugee population worldwide. Although the aggregated data discussed in this report are nonrepresentative, with varying methodological approaches, they provide valuable insights and an indication of trends, which are key for effective policymaking in the region. A more in-depth explanation of the methodology used in this report can be found in Appendix A.

**BOX 1**

**Dimensions and Indicators of Venezuelans' Socioeconomic Integration**

Within the five key dimensions of socioeconomic integration, this report considers the following:

- **Sociodemographic profile:** Venezuelan share of the total population, gender and age distribution, migration status and regularization pathways, share who migrated with family, share who intend to transit to a different country, and housing

- **Economic inclusion:** unemployment rate, types of employment, participation in the informal economy, credential recognition, sectors of employment, income, and remittances

- **Education:** educational attainment and school enrollment

- **Health care:** access to health insurance and health coverage, types of health insurance, women's health care, and access to COVID-19 vaccines

- **Social cohesion:** share reporting experiencing discrimination, public opinion of Venezuelans and their access to services, and perceived criminality

Through a disaggregation of data, this report assesses the five dimensions over three periods in each country: (1) 2017 to June 2018, characterized by the beginning of accelerated emigration from Venezuela; (2) July 2018 to 2019, characterized by an increasingly coordinated and attentive regional response to high levels of Venezuelan displacement, shortly after the launch of the R4V platform; and (3) 2020 to 2021, characterized by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and new migration dynamics, including travel restrictions.

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The data in this report are often presented in ranges, including an upper and a lower bound, so as to present the full array of data for each indicator. Given the diversity in values for data points for several indicators, as well as varying degrees of comparability between studies, it is often more valuable and accurate to assess ranges of data than averages.

The final section of this report reflects upon the data findings, identifying data gaps as well as opportunities for new policies to increase the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelans across the region. Improving the economic inclusion of migrants and refugees can create added value by assisting broader communities in their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, while taking measures to ensure access to health care and education are vital to strengthening public health, economic development, and social equity across the region. Finally, tackling xenophobia and reinforcing social cohesion are important for ensuring newcomers’ successful integration and inclusion in receiving communities.

2 A Sociodemographic Profile of Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees

Since 2017, Venezuelans have made up an increasing share of the total population in the five studied countries, although the absolute number of migrants and refugees in each country has varied. Colombia and Peru have received the largest numbers of Venezuelan migrants and refugees, with 1.7 million and 1 million respectively, and in 2020 these Venezuelans made up more than 3 percent of the total population in both countries (see Figure 1). Chile and Ecuador have also had comparable experiences, both receiving almost half a million Venezuelan migrants and refugees, who have made up more than 2 percent of the total population in each country since 2019. Brazil, meanwhile, has received about 260,000 Venezuelans, who as of 2020 represented 0.12 percent of the country’s total population. However, it should be noted that the distribution of Venezuelans in Brazil is lopsided, as the greatest share live in the border state of Roraima, Brazil’s least populous state. The University of Campinas found that 54,902 Venezuelans were registered as active residents of the state in 2019, representing 9 percent of Roraima’s total population at the time. It is likely that an even greater number are actually present in the state, as 71,919 Venezuelans were registered as active residents of the state in October 2020, representing more than 11 percent of the state’s total population.

According to a June 2020 survey by Equilibrium CenDE, Venezuelans who migrate to Colombia and Peru are more likely to be moving for employment reasons, whereas those who migrate to Chile and Ecuador are more likely to do so as a result of violence and insecurity, despite the consistent prevalence of economic factors in all four countries. This suggests that Venezuelans in Colombia and Peru may be more economically vulnerable than those who arrive in Chile and Ecuador. Similarly, a round of DTM data

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4 The population figures in this paragraph are from R4V, “Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela,” updated June 5, 2021.
5 Rosana Baeninger, Natália Belmonte Demétrio, and Jóice de Oliveira S. Domeniconi, Atlas temático (Campinas, Brazil: Núcleo de Estudos de População “Elza Berquó,” 2020).
6 Federal Police of Brazil data provided to the authors by IOM.
collected in Colombia in 2017, which surveyed Venezuelans, Colombian returnees, and mixed families, noted that 74 percent migrated to Colombia for economic reasons.\(^8\)

**FIGURE 1**

*Venezuelan Share of Total Population, by Country, 2017–21*

Venezuelan migrant and refugee populations are generally young and have a roughly equal distribution by gender. Although men were slightly over-represented during the initial period of migration, gender distributions have achieved greater parity over time, as shown in Figure 2. For example, while 60 percent of migrants and refugees in Ecuador were male during the first period of study (2017 to mid-2018), the male share of migrants and refugees dropped to 54 percent by the third period (2020–21). The data show that Chile, Colombia, and Peru have followed similar patterns. In Brazil, the data are more varied, though increased female migration and gender parity also appear to be the case there.

Venezuelan migrants and refugees are generally younger and more likely to be of working age compared to the population of their receiving countries (see Figure 3). According to MPI’s tabulation of 2019 DTM data, in Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador, about three out of four Venezuelan adult male migrants and refugees were between the ages of 18 and 35. The male Venezuelan population was a bit older in Chile and Brazil, albeit still younger than the Chilean and Brazilian populations. Venezuelan women are similarly younger than the female population in at least four out of the five countries.\(^9\) Brazil has the lowest share of adult female Venezuelan migrants in the young working-age range, at 64 percent, though that is still markedly higher than the 41 percent of the Brazilian female population; in the other studied countries, the percentage of female Venezuelan migrants and refugees in that age range is several points higher.

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9  Recent data disaggregated by gender and age for Ecuadorians could not be found.
FIGURE 2
Gender Distribution of Venezuelan Migrant and Refugee Populations (% male), by Country, 2017–21

See Appendix B for a full list of data sources used in this figure.

FIGURE 3
Age Distribution of Adult Venezuelan Migrant and Refugee Populations and Receiving-Country Populations, by Country and Gender, 2017–19*

* This figure presents the most recent comparable data available for each population. Data are from 2019, except for those for the Colombian population (2018) and the Chilean and Peruvian populations (2017). Comparable recent data disaggregated by gender and age for Ecuadorians could not be found.

Note: The exact age bands in each of the data sources used to create this figure varied slightly. The following groups were devised based on data available: Venezuelans in all five countries (Younger Working Age [18–35 years old], Older Working Age [36–65 years old], Elderly [over 65 years old]); Colombians, Chileans, and Peruvians (Younger Working Age [20–34 years old], Older Working Age [35–64 years old], Elderly [over 64 years old]); and Brazilians (Younger Working Age [20–39 years old], Older Working Age [40-64 years old], Elderly [over 64 years old]).

See Appendix B for a full list of data sources used in this figure.
In all of the studied countries, the percentage of adult Venezuelans between 36 and 45 years old (a subset of the older working-age category) hovered between 16 percent and 21 percent in 2019. Venezuelans older than age 65 made up no more than 1 percent of the adult population across the five countries, and in Colombia, almost 40 percent of all Venezuelans are minors. In comparison, the elderly make up a notable share of the populations of these receiving countries. Thus, elderly people in receiving communities are likely to be retiring at the same time that many young Venezuelans are entering the labor force.

The first step towards sustainable socioeconomic integration is for migrants and refugees to have a regular immigration status. Generally, legal status opens a door to the formal labor market and to improved access to essential services such as health care and education. High regularity rates are also beneficial for the receiving country’s government and broader population. Generating effective public policies requires knowledge of the target population, which in the case of Venezuelan migrants and refugees may be achieved through state registries of those with a regular status. Additionally, regularity allows migrants and refugees to pay taxes and contribute to the social welfare system of the country.

For these reasons, some receiving countries have found creative ways to regularize their Venezuelan migrant and refugee populations. Brazil has extended opportunities for regular status through temporary residence and maintained flexible entry requirements. Moreover, Brazil has extended asylum to the greatest number of Venezuelans in the region, with more than 45,000 granted asylum in the country as of May 2021, and more than 100,000 currently seeking asylum. By contrast, less than 1,000 Venezuelans were granted refugee status in Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador combined between 2017 and 2020, and just slightly more than 1,100 were recognized as refugees during the same period in Peru. As a result of robust residence and asylum opportunities, irregular status has been relatively rare among Venezuelans in Brazil, with just 7 percent irregular during the first period of study (2017 to mid-2018), as shown in Figure 4.

In 2017, Colombia created a pathway to regularization with the Permiso Especial de Permanencia (PEP), a temporary permit that granted two years of regular status, a work permit, and access to social services. The exercise has been positive, and 762,857 Venezuelans were registered as of June 2020, according to a report by the Colombian Presidency. Despite this achievement, however, a large and relatively consistent
share of the Venezuelan population has remained irregular throughout the three studied periods, ranging from 41 percent to 57 percent. As of May 2021, Colombia had started a new regularization process in which the government aims to grant regular status to Venezuelans who entered the country before January 31, 2021.\(^{15}\) The status lasts up to ten years and creates a pathway to residency, importantly emphasizing durability, long-term inclusion, and pathways to permanence. In contrast with other countries in this study, Venezuelans are less likely to apply for asylum in Colombia.

Peru also implemented a temporary stay permit in 2017 (Permiso Temporal de Permanencia, or PTP). PTP granted Venezuelans regular status and access to some services for a year, and created legal pathways for permanent residence.\(^{16}\) While the program was effective in promoting regularization, irregularity has risen with time, as the PTP lapsed in late 2018, more restrictive entry requirements have been put in place, and migration has continued. Between the second and third periods of study, irregularity rates jumped from less than 10 percent to more than 50 percent. As a result of dwindling pathways to legal status, asylum applications have started to rise.\(^{17}\) While 34,300 asylum applications were filed in Peru in 2017, the next year saw a 446-percent increase, with a total of 187,300 applications filed. Peru was unprepared to manage this sharp increase in asylum claims and has faced severe backlogs, which has made humanitarian visas and asylum hard to access. The rate of acceptance is notably low, as less than 1 percent of Venezuelan applicants are granted asylum. Most claims have not been processed yet, and the asylum system has been suspended since October 2020.\(^{18}\) However, a decree from that same month is meant to increase regularization by granting irregular immigrants a Temporary Permit of Permanence Card (Carné de Permiso Temporal de Permanencia, or CPP), which would include work authorization.\(^{19}\)

Following regional patterns, the percentage of Venezuelans in an irregular status has increased in Ecuador over time. Around 44 percent of Venezuelans were in the country irregularly between 2017 and mid-2018, but by 2020, the share had reached up to 72 percent. According to the World Bank, Venezuelans who arrive in Ecuador have had fewer financial resources in recent years. This increased economic vulnerability could be partially contributing to the rise in irregularity levels, and it is reflected in the ways Venezuelans are migrating to the country: while 72 percent of Venezuelans registered their arrival at an airport in 2014, 86 percent of Venezuelan migrants and refugees entered the country through the land border in Rumichaca in 2018.\(^{20}\) Following Colombia’s announcement of its new regularization process in 2021, the new Ecuadorian administration has been vocal about its desire to introduce a regularization program in Ecuador.\(^{21}\) This would build upon the previous administration’s efforts in 2019 and 2020, which regularized 40,407 Venezuelans in Ecuador through the Exceptional Visa for Humanitarian Purposes (Visa de Excepción

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21 Milenio, “Presidente electo de Ecuador promete regularizar estatus a migrantes venezolanos,” Milenio, April 12, 2021.
por Razones Humanitarias, or VERHU). Although data on the irregularity of Venezuelans in Chile are scarce, a forthcoming DTM survey with a small sample size near the northern border showed high rates of irregular entry into the country among Venezuelans, potentially complicating their regularization.

FIGURE 4
Share of Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees in an Irregular Migratory Status, by Country, 2017–21

The share of Venezuelan migrants and refugees who travel with family members has increased over time, albeit more so in some countries than others. At the same time, migration by heads of households traveling alone has become less prevalent. The biggest increase in family migration was seen in Chile: a 2018 DTM survey found that 27 percent of Venezuelans travelled to the country with family members in the second period, while Equilibrium CenDe found that 42 percent did so in the third period (2020–21). In Peru, migration with family members has also increased over time, particularly between the first and second periods. The share of Venezuelans travelling with family has increased marginally in Brazil across the three periods, but it has mostly hovered around 50 percent. Migration with family members has not changed much over time in Ecuador, where the share doing so has generally stayed between 41 percent and 47 percent, though the lower bound of the rate in the second period dropped to 33 percent. A 2018 survey of 283 Venezuelans conducted by the Norwegian Refugee Council in the Venezuelan border state of Zulia.

See Appendix B for a full list of data sources used in this figure.

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showed that many potential migrants and refugees already have family waiting for them in a receiving country; just 24 percent reported intending to migrate alone.25

A greater prevalence of families, especially those with children, has increased the interest among Venezuelan migrants and refugees in setting down roots in their receiving communities. It has also increased the importance of assessing indicators of inclusion such as employment, income, school enrollment, and health-care access.

FIGURE 5
Share of Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees Who Migrated with Family Members, by Country, 2017–21

With the passage of time, Venezuelan migrants and refugees are increasingly settling down in receiving-country communities, as their intention to transit to another country is decreasing. In Ecuador, almost one-third of Venezuelans showed interest in traveling to another country during the first period examined, but this figure dropped to around 10 percent during the second period and has continued to decrease during the pandemic (see Figure 6). The intention to stay has persisted despite the difficult economic circumstances some Venezuelans are experiencing, and 27 percent of Venezuelans in a 2020 survey by the Grupo de Trabajo para Refugiados y Migrantes in Ecuador reported they are waiting for the arrival of even more family members or friends.26

In Peru, even though the intention to transit to another country decreased from the first to the second period, it increased again during the pandemic, reaching 28 percent. Chile—and Argentina to a lesser extent—has been the principal destination country for those transiting through Peru or intending to move on from Peru. In Brazil, rates of intention to transit have generally remained quite low. In a 2017 study,

29 percent reported intending to return to Venezuela, although almost half said they would return after more than two years in Brazil.\(^{27}\) But over time, Brazil’s interiorization program—which relocates Venezuelan migrants and refugees on a voluntary basis from the Brazil-Venezuela border to locations across Brazil—has grown in popularity, due to the economic opportunities and chances for family and social reunification found elsewhere in the country.\(^{28}\) As a result, interest in transiting to another country has dropped. As of May 2021, 51,735 Venezuelan migrants and refugees had taken part in the interiorization process.\(^{29}\)

**FIGURE 6**
Share of Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees Who Intend to Transit to a Different Country, by Country, 2017–21

Homeownership rates are relevant to the measurement of integration and sociodemographic status. A 2019 DTM survey in Chile indicated that only 0.4 percent of Venezuelans were homeowners, while the vast majority (95 percent) rented a home.\(^{30}\) Similarly, a November 2019 DTM survey in Colombia found that 86 percent of surveyed Venezuelans were renting a home.\(^{31}\) Venezuelans in Brazil are more likely to experience homelessness, with a 2020 study by Caritas showing one in five Venezuelan migrants and refugees living on the street in Porto Velho, Roraima, as were 34 percent in Boa Vista, the capital of Roraima.\(^{32}\) Unfortunately, with depleting income sources and little job security during the pandemic, many Venezuelan migrants and refugees have become more vulnerable to eviction and homelessness.\(^{33}\) According to a 2020 study by

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\(^{30}\) IOM DTM, *Monitoreo de flujo de población venezolana en el Chile DTM Ronda 3* (Santiago: IOM, 2019).

\(^{31}\) IOM DTM, “Un entendimiento del desplazamiento para una mejor respuesta humanitaria y responsable” (presentation, IOM, Bogotá, June 2020).


Equilibrium CenDe, 72 percent of Venezuelan migrants and refugees surveyed during the pandemic in Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru reported being at risk of homelessness. And in another study, conducted in Ecuador in October 2020, 13 percent of Venezuelans reported having to move from their home because they were evicted.

**BOX 2**

**Migration Typologies from Venezuela to Colombia**

Colombia and Venezuela share a 2,219-kilometer-long border with only seven formal border crossing checkpoints, which has made Colombia a crucial transit corridor for displaced Venezuelan migrants and refugees. However, migration between the two countries has several different typologies: (1) pendular migration, (2) migration with intention to settle, (3) transit migration, and (4) Colombian returnees.

Due to Colombia’s half-century-long civil conflict, many Colombians migrated to Venezuela decades ago. Now, given the political and economic crises in Venezuela, many Colombians and their descendants have opted to return to Colombia. Additionally, in 2015, Venezuela prompted further return migration when it closed the border with Colombia and expelled more than 22,000 Colombians who were living in Venezuela. According to a 2017 DTM survey in Colombia, while 52 percent of migrants surveyed were Venezuelans, 19 percent were Colombian Venezuelans, and 28 percent were Colombian returnees. Through an extraordinary procedure, the Colombian state has granted birth certificates to 528,332 Venezuelans with Colombian parents who entered the country between January 2015 and March 2020. Similarly, the Colombian state has granted nationality to Venezuelan children born in Colombia to Venezuelan parents if the children are at risk of statelessness. According to official sources, as of June 2020, 45,467 minors have received Colombian nationality.

In addition, there are an estimated 5 million pendular Venezuelan migrants. These Venezuelans do not enter Colombia with an intention to stay; rather, they move across the border to shop, work, and study. After the Venezuelan government closed the border, the Colombian government created a humanitarian corridor for students in Venezuela who study in Colombia and for those who need to access health-care services. In August 2016, Colombia launched the Tarjeta Migratoria de Tránsito Fronterizo (Border Transit Card). A 2017 DTM survey found that 55 percent of Venezuelans interviewed at border crossing checkpoints were planning to return to Venezuela within the day or the week. However, it also recorded notable transit migration: 20 percent of respondents said neither Colombia nor Venezuela was their final destination.

Sources: Colombian Presidency, *Acoger, integrar y crecer: Las políticas de Colombia frente a la migración proveniente de Venezuela* (Bogotá: Colombian Presidency, 2020); Ana María Tribín-UrIBE et al., *Migración desde Venezuela en Colombia: caracterización del fenómeno y análisis de los efectos macroeconómicos* (Bogotá: Banco de la República de Colombia, 2020); International Organization for Migration (IOM), “DTM Colombia: Resultados fase II. Implementado en zona de frontera con Venezuela y ciudades intermediarias” (presentation, IOM, November 2017).

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3 Economic Inclusion

The DTM has collected useful information on the socioeconomic inclusion of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in the region. Unemployment rates for Venezuelans decreased in Colombia and Peru between the first and second periods, but then rose following the onset of the pandemic. In Brazil and Ecuador, unemployment rates for Venezuelans have generally risen over time, whereas in Chile they have varied. In all of the studied countries, the unemployment rates of Venezuelan migrants and refugees have been significantly higher than those of the receiving-country population and/or local community, as shown in Figure 7. As Venezuelans spend longer periods of time in these communities, however, their opportunities for integration and employment typically improve. This is exemplified in Colombia, where data from the Colombian National Administrative Department of Statistics show that unemployment rates for Venezuelans who left their home county five years ago are more similar to those of the national population than to those of newly arrived Venezuelans.\(^{36}\)

FIGURE 7
Unemployed Share of Venezuelan Migrant and Refugee Populations and Receiving-Country Populations, by Country, 2017–21

See Appendix B for a full list of data sources used in this figure.

\(^{36}\) Colombian National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), “Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares, Publicación del módulo de migración: Resultados y análisis del módulo” (survey presentation, DANE, September 2019).
The data show a disparity in job security between Venezuelan migrants and refugees and other members of the communities in which they live, which is further exacerbated by gender gaps. Venezuelan men are employed at higher rates than Venezuelan women. In fact, a January 2021 DTM survey found that 31 percent of Venezuelan women in Chile lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to 19 percent of Venezuelan men.37 And among the 17 percent of Venezuelans in Lima who reported being unemployed during a November 2020 study by the UN Development Program, more than 70 percent were women.38 Legal status has great bearing on one’s chances of employment, with 30 percent of Venezuelans in Peru identifying documentation as their principal barrier to work in a 2021 report by the Danish Refugee Council.39 Regularization is thus critical to helping bridge these employment gaps and ensure Venezuelan migrants and refugees are able to work and integrate successfully into receiving communities.

While gaining employment is a fundamental indicator of integration, assessing the type and quality of employment is important as well. Working independently or informally can have a considerable impact on one’s job security during times of economic crisis or health problems, and it can lead to unstable incomes. In addition, such working arrangements can increase vulnerability to exploitation and poor working conditions.40 In many cases, as documented by the DTM and other sources, Venezuelans are underemployed and work longer hours than receiving-community members, yet make less money. Cases have also been recorded in which they are paid less than agreed upon, or not at all.41

Since 2017, the share of Venezuelan workers in Peru who work directly for an employer has fallen as the share working independently has risen (see Figure 8). Although the split between employed versus independent workers has varied in Brazil and Ecuador, significant shares have consistently worked independently there as well. In Colombia, meanwhile, working Venezuelan migrants and refugees have increasingly been employed and become less likely to work independently over the course of the three assessed periods.

Latin America already has notably high rates of labor informality, and Venezuelan migrants and refugees have found it even more difficult to access formal job opportunities. A sizeable majority of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Brazil are working informally, as illustrated by a 2020 IOM study of 958 Venezuelan adults living in shelters in Boa Vista, of whom only one individual reported having a formal job.42 And during government labor sweeps conducted in Roraima from 2017 to 2019, 47 percent to 65 percent of Venezuelans inspected were found to be working informally, and among those working informally, 45 percent held jobs in construction, a sector in which Venezuelan employment is growing in the country.43

41 World Bank, *Resumen ejecutivo: Retos y oportunidades*.
FIGURE 8

Period 1: 2017 - mid-2018
Period 2: Mid-2018 - 2019
Period 3: 2020 - 2021

Brazil | Colombia | Ecuador | Peru
---|---|---|---
Period 1: 78% | 74% | 81% | 83%
Period 2: 57% | 50% | 35% | 51%
Period 3: 53% | 39% | 18% | 58%

See Appendix B for a full list of data sources used in this figure.

FIGURE 9

Period 1: 2017 - mid-2018
Period 2: Mid-2018 - 2019
Period 3: 2020 - 2021

Brazil | Colombia | Ecuador | Peru
---|---|---|---
Period 1: 90% | 97% | 93% | 91%
Period 2: 87% | 90% | 88% | 89%
Period 3: 63% | 73% | 60% | 94%

See Appendix B for a full list of data sources used in this figure.
As Figure 9 shows, Venezuelans in Brazil work informally at markedly higher rates than the Brazilian population. This trend is seen in Colombia and Ecuador as well, where informal labor has long been the norm. Peru is a somewhat unique case; informality in the country is more than 70 percent for the overall population, so while informality rates for Venezuelans are even higher, the gap between them and other workers is smaller than in some other countries. Unfortunately, there are insufficient data in Chile to draw meaningful conclusions.44

Aside from regular migration status, another key obstacle to quality jobs and the formal labor market has been credential recognition. Many Venezuelan migrants and refugees arrive in other countries with strong qualifications and professional experience but find it difficult to get their educational and professional credentials recognized. This limits their job opportunities and economic inclusion, as they are unable to access jobs that are similar to those they held in Venezuela and are instead restricted to lower-skilled positions that garner lower wages and may have poorer working conditions. It also prevents receiving countries from fully benefiting from these newcomers’ skills.

Available data indicate that few Venezuelans have had their credentials recognized after migrating. According to a survey conducted by Equilibrium CenDE in October 2020, one in ten Venezuelans in Chile, Colombia, and Peru have gotten their tertiary education degrees validated. While a greater share have successfully done so in Ecuador (28 percent), there is still much work to be done to ensure Venezuelans can access jobs for which they are qualified and that the communities in which they now live benefit from their skills.45 The leading hurdle for Venezuelans in Chile, Colombia, and Peru is the high cost of credential recognition, followed by a lack of the necessary documents, according to a June 2020 Equilibrium CenDE survey. While half of those in Ecuador reported that they simply had not had time to complete the process, a further 27 percent stated that they were principally limited by the high cost of the process.46 During both surveys, women had their credentials recognized at slightly lower rates than men. Many further surveys and studies, including from Proyecto Migración Venezuela47 and the U.S. Agency for International Development,48 demonstrate the lack of educational and professional credential recognition among Venezuelan migrants and refugees in South American countries, with varied estimates of the extent of the challenge in each. For example, the Peruvian National Institute of Statistics and Information (INEI) reported that less than 8 percent of Venezuelans in Peru had validated their professional credentials as of 2018,49 while a 2020 survey by Plan International found that just 6 percent of Venezuelans surveyed in Peru had either begun or completed the validation process, as had just 12 percent of those in Ecuador.50

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44 The data that do exist are mixed. A June 2020 survey by Equilibrium found that 55 percent of Venezuelans in Chile reported working informally, while in a January 2021 DTM survey 11 percent of Venezuelans reported working informally. For comparison, 28 percent of Chilean nationals were working informally in 2019, according to the Chilean National Statistics Institute (INE). See Equilibrium CenDE, “Encuesta Regional Trimestral: Migrantes y Refugiados Venezolanos”; IOM DTM, Encuesta de población venezolana en Chile Ronda 4; INE, “Boletín estadístico: informalidad laboral” (bulletin, 9th edition, INE, Santiago, April 2020).
46 Equilibrium CenDE, “Encuesta Regional Trimestral: Migrantes y Refugiados Venezolanos.”
48 U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU), “Estudio de inclusión financiera de refugiados y migrantes venezolanos y población local” (survey, USAID and WOCCU, September 2020).
Being unable to access jobs in their areas of expertise or experience can have a marked impact on Venezuelans’ income and economic security. DTM data show that Venezuelan migrants and refugees are often underemployed and typically work in low-skill, low-paying sectors such as commerce, services, food services, and construction; among Venezuelans in Chile, for example, many had worked in the professional sector in Venezuela, but once in Chile they were far more likely to work lower-skilled, lower-paying jobs. In Peru, 37 percent of surveyed Venezuelans who were economically active reported working in street commerce (comercio ambulatorio), according to an Equilibrium CenDE survey from June 2020. Although comercio ambulatorio was far less prevalent in Chile and Ecuador than in Peru, lower-skilled and lower-paying sectors of employment were still the norm.51 The lack of higher-skilled job opportunities is demonstrated clearly in Brazil, where research from the World Bank has shown that Venezuelans’ level of education has little effect on their wages, highlighting the need for better credential recognition processes.52 Similarly, a 2017 study in Ecuador found that only 17 percent of Venezuelan professionals reported working in their fields of expertise, while a 2018 study in Peru found that less than 8 percent of those with a tertiary education were working in their field of study.53

Often working informally in low-skill jobs, Venezuelan migrants and refugees, on average, have lower incomes than their receiving-country counterparts. Across DTM surveys during all three studied periods in Brazil, the majority of Venezuelans were consistently making below the legal monthly minimum wage. In Manaus, the average monthly salaries of Venezuelan men and women who had lived there for at least four months were R$ 723 and R$ 449, respectively, in comparison to R$ 2,419 and R$ 2,087 for their Brazilian counterparts in the city, according to an IOM study in 2020.54 In addition to this wage gap between Venezuelans and the receiving-country population, there is also a sizeable gendered wage gap that merits further, robust study and policy attention. In Colombia, Proyecto Migración Venezuela found a 26.5-percent income gap between Venezuelan men and women in the country in 2019.55 And as in Brazil, DTM data point to a majority of surveyed Venezuelans in Colombia (87 percent in November 2019) making less than the legal monthly minimum wage, showing heightened levels of poverty and economic vulnerability.56

Similar levels of poverty were also found by the DTM in Ecuador, where many migrants and refugees make below the legal monthly minimum wage. In Peru, a 2019 study by IOM and the Antonio Ruiz de Montoya University57 found that about 45 percent of Venezuelans in the country were earning less than the legal

51 Equilibrium CenDE, “Encuesta Regional Trimestral: Migrantes y Refugiados Venezolanos.”
55 Proyecto Migración Venezuela, ¿Cuál era la brecha de género de migrantes en el mercado laboral antes de la pandemia? (Bogotá: Proyectos Semana, 2021).
56 IOM DTM, “Un entendimiento del desplazamiento.”
57 Koechlin Costa, Solórzano Salleres, Larco Drouilly, and Fernández-Maldonado Mujica, Impacto de la inmigración venezolana.
monthly minimum wage. In addition, a study by the UN Development Program found that 84 percent of Venezuelans in Metropolitan Lima were earning less than S/ 1,000 in November 2020, with men two times as likely to earn between S/ 1,000 and S/ 1,500 as women. For context, the legal monthly minimum wage in Peru has been S/ 930 since April 2018. Data in Chile are a bit sparser and more varied, and thus insufficient to draw meaningful conclusions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated the economic integration of many and decreased opportunities for well-paying jobs. In an October 2020 survey by Equilibrium CenDE, an average of 42 percent of Venezuelans in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru reported having their incomes fall by more than 50 percent since March 2020; in Chile, 21 percent reported similar drops. Just 13 percent of respondents across the four countries reported maintaining or increasing their incomes since the beginning of the pandemic, and women were more likely to have their incomes reduced than men.

While one’s migration experience and integration outcomes are shaped by a variety of factors, location is a leading factor in Brazil. Experiences in the border states of Roraima and Amazonas are radically different from those in metropolitan cities such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Venezuelan migrants and refugees who voluntarily relocate away from the border region through the country’s interiorization program are more likely to be better integrated and have jobs; they move from an area with a high-density Venezuelan population to areas of the country with far fewer migrants and refugees, many more job opportunities, and better access to services. Moreover, Brazil’s interiorization program has been linked to opportunities for higher pay, including by a 2019 UNHCR study that found that 77 percent of interiorized Venezuelans found work within a few weeks of their move, while only 7 percent had managed to find permanent work in Roraima prior to interiorization. Research from the World Bank has also shown that integration is stronger where there are fewer Venezuelan migrants and refugees, and that interiorization has proven a key factor in strengthening the economic inclusion of Venezuelans in Brazil.

As Venezuelan migrants and refugees arrive in their new countries, find jobs, and develop roots, they often send remittances back to family and friends still living in Venezuela. The share sending remittances has remained relatively steady in Colombia and Ecuador since mid-2018, as shown in Figure 10, and it makes up a significant portion of the Venezuelan population in both countries. In Peru, remittance sending has increased slightly over time, with the majority of Venezuelans sending remittances. Although comparable data for Chile is only available for the third period of study, it indicates that more than three-fourths of Venezuelans in the country were sending remittances in 2020–21, the highest proportion of any of the studied countries. In Brazil, remittance sending has dropped over time, though a sizeable share of Venezuelans in the country still send remittances. This may be explained by increasing interiorization, as

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59 UNDP, *Conociendo a la población refugiada y migrante en Lima Metropolitana.*


63 UNHCR and REACH, *Venezuelan Migration in Brazil: An Analysis of the Interiorisation Programme* (Brasilia: UNHCR and REACH, 2019).

64 Shamsuddin et al., “Integration of Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in Brazil.”
migrants and refugees move further away from the border and their connections with Venezuela, and by
the increasing number migrating with family members.

Remittances are principally sent in the form of money, and are often sent to family and friends in Venezuela
through informal channels. This is in large part due to exchange restrictions set by the Venezuelan
government. In a March 2018 DTM survey, 76 percent of respondents in Brazil said they sent remittances
informally, followed by 16 percent who sent them through friends and acquaintances; just 4 percent
said they sent their remittances through formal transfers.65 Similarly, in Colombia, a December 2020
survey by the Proyecto Migración Venezuela found that just 22 percent of Venezuelans sent remittances
through banks or other financial institutions, as informal channels were the predominant mode for
sending remittances.66 Among remittance senders in Ecuador and Peru, the principal channel for transfers
was through family or friends (43 percent), while banks made up one-quarter of transfers, followed by
remittance sending firms (19 percent), according to a September 2020 study by the U.S. Agency for
International Development.67 Meanwhile, the DTM found in May 2018 that one-third of remittance senders
in Peru used “independent persons,” while 63 percent utilized bank transfers or remittance sending agencies,
without specification as to the formal or informal nature of these channels.68

66 Proyecto Migración Venezuela, “Encuesta de Calidad de Vida e Integración.”
67 USAID and WOCCU, “Estudio de inclusión financiera.”
68 IOM DTM, Perú — Flujo de Migración Venezolana, Ronda 3.
4 Education

Venezuelan migrants and refugees, particularly those who left Venezuela less recently, tend to have high levels of educational attainment. In some countries, their educational qualifications are even greater than those of the receiving-country population. In Chile, levels of tertiary educational attainment among Venezuelan migrants and refugees have been high, relatively stable, and grown slightly over time; they have also been comparable to those of the Chilean population. According to the 2017 Chilean census, 75 percent of Chilean nationals had tertiary education, in comparison to between 61 percent and 84 percent of Venezuelans in the country. However, among those surveyed in DTM Round 5 in 2021, the levels of tertiary education among those who had recently entered Chile were markedly lower, perhaps signaling a change in the sociodemographic profile of Venezuelans migrating to Chile. Meanwhile, in Peru the educational attainment level of Venezuelan arrivals has decreased somewhat over time, though their tertiary education rates have generally been around or higher than those of their Peruvian counterparts, as shown in Figure 11.

The data for educational attainment in Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador are more variable, making it harder to draw conclusive statements. In Brazil, Venezuelans’ levels of tertiary education have varied, but they have mostly remained in the 25 percent to 35 percent range. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, 21 percent of Brazilians had a higher education in 2019, suggesting that Venezuelans are generally more educated than the local population. In Colombia, the share of Venezuelans for whom secondary school is their highest level of education is mostly estimated at between 41 percent and 50 percent, but the share with a tertiary education is more varied, ranging between 12 percent and 59 percent. According to a 2019 national survey, 24 percent of Colombian nationals have a higher education (see Figure 11), suggesting that Venezuelans in Colombia may have similar or higher levels of education compared to their Colombian counterparts.

In Ecuador, the rates of tertiary education among Venezuelans have fluctuated over time, dropping in the second period, and rising again in the third. A 2020 report by the International Labor Organization focusing on the cities of Quito and Guayaquil concluded that there is a correlation between time of migration and educational attainment, as the share of Venezuelan migrants and refugees with higher education has decreased over time. According to the report, in 2017 the highest level of education of 32 percent of Venezuelans was a basic education, compared to 67 percent of Venezuelans in 2020. Despite the decrease in the share of Venezuelans with high educational attainment, this population remains more educated than their Ecuadorian counterparts; 45 percent of Ecuadorians have only completed a primary education, as shown by research from the World Bank.

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70 IOM DTM, Quinta DTM: Estudio migración venezolana encuesta frontera.
72 This includes people for whom primary or secondary school was their highest level of education.
73 ILO, OIT: Estudio de sectores económicos con potencial para la inclusión laboral de migrantes y refugiados venezolanos, en las ciudades de Guayaquil y Quito (Quito: ILO, 2020).
74 World Bank, Resumen ejecutivo: Retos y oportunidades.
In some of the studied countries, Venezuelan women are more highly educated than Venezuelan men. Government data, analyzed by Proyecto Migración Venezuela, shows that attainment of higher education degrees was 8 percentage points higher for women than men in 2019; 33 percent of women had higher education degrees, compared to 25 percent of men. In Colombia, this follows the gender patterns of the local population: Colombian women are also more educated than Colombian men. World Bank research has shown a similar pattern among Venezuelans in Ecuador. A 2020 DTM survey indicated that 20 percent and 16 percent of Venezuelan women and men in Ecuador had a university education, respectively, further confirming this finding. In a 2017 local Brazilian study conducted in Boa Vista, Roraima, 31 percent of Venezuelan women had tertiary education degrees, compared to 27 percent of Venezuelan men.

As more Venezuelans migrate with their families and Venezuelan children grow up outside their country of origin, questions of school enrollment are increasingly relevant. Although enrollment rates vary across the region and time periods (see Figure 12), governments have taken creative and positive steps to make sure migrant and refugee children and adolescents have access to an education. Of the five study countries, 75

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75 Proyecto Migración Venezuela, ¿Cuál era la brecha de género de migrantes en el mercado laboral antes de la pandemia?
76 World Bank, Resumen ejecutivo: Retos y oportunidades.
78 de Frota Simões, Perfil Sociodemográfico.
Chile has the highest rates of school enrollment: 85 percent of Venezuelan adolescents and children were enrolled in school in the country, according to a September 2019 DTM survey. The rate, already quite high, increased in the third period, when between 88 percent and 93 percent of Venezuelans attended school.

FIGURE 12
Share of Venezuelan Migrant and Refugee Children and Adolescents Enrolled in School, by Country, 2017–21

See Appendix B for a full list of data sources used in this figure.

In Peru, data on school enrollment are varied, but the majority of Venezuelan children and adolescents were reportedly attending school during the first and third periods. Peru’s legal framework guarantees all children full access to primary and secondary school. However, limited available classroom seats, Venezuelan families’ economic challenges, a lack of the documents needed to complete the enrollment process, and families’ limited knowledge of the Peruvian education system have limited enrollment, according to studies by MPI and the Durable Solutions Platform and by INEI. Data also show that while there is a roughly equal number of school-aged Venezuelan girls and boys in the country, girls attend school at higher rates than boys (46 percent versus 37 percent). A 2018 INEI survey found that girls and boys tend to be out of school for different reasons: while more girls report not attending school due to their family’s lack of knowledge of the education system, more boys do not enroll for economic reasons (for example, a need to work to contribute to the family income).

79 IOM DTM, Monitoreo de flujo de población venezolana en el Chile DTM Ronda 3.
80 Camille Le Coz et al., A Bridge to Firmer Ground: Learning from International Experiences to Support Pathways to Solutions in the Syrian Refugee Context (Washington, DC: MPI and Durable Solutions Platform, 2021); INEI, “Condiciones de vida de la población venezolana que reside en el país.”
82 INEI, “Condiciones de vida de la población venezolana que reside en el país.”

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Brazil | Chile | Colombia | Ecuador | Peru
---|---|---|---|---
Period 1: 2017 - mid-2018
Period 2: Mid-2018 - 2019
Period 3: 2020 - 2021

Brazil: 37% 37% 41%
Chile: 37% 45% 65%
Colombia: 53% 61% 60%
Ecuador: 47% 59% 53%
Peru: 60% 67% 82%

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0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Period 1 | Period 2 | Period 3
Period 1 | Period 2 | Period 3
Period 1 | Period 2 | Period 3
Period 1 | Period 2 | Period 3

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See Appendix B for a full list of data sources used in this figure.
To tackle these issues, the Peruvian Ministry of Education created a strategy called Lima Aprende—“Lima Learns, Not a Child without Studying”—in 2019. The program expanded the capacity of the public school system and boosted enrollment of out-of-school Venezuelan and Peruvian children. The decision to target both Peruvian and immigrant children reflects both an acknowledgment of the widespread capacity challenges facing the region's schools and an attempt to avoid a backlash that could result from serving only newcomers when many local children also face enrollment difficulties. While the strategy has yielded some positive results and enjoyed public support, some officials have noted that a more targeted approach to enrolling migrant and refugee children could help overcome issues unique to that population (e.g., lack of knowledge of the country's education system).

In Ecuador, the Constitution guarantees children and adolescents access to education, regardless of immigration status. The Ecuadorian government has also taken steps to guarantee access in practice, passing a law in 2019 to facilitate school enrollment. However, data on enrollment varies greatly depending on the source, making it hard to draw precise conclusions about the results of governmental measures. During the second period of study (mid-2018 to 2019), between 32 percent and 67 percent of Venezuelan children and adolescents were enrolled in schools. In the final period (2020–21), the range was between 53 percent and 82 percent. While both ranges are wide, these data suggest that a greater share of Venezuelan children and adolescents were enrolled in schools in Ecuador by the third period. But there is still work to be done to provide an inclusive education; for example, a 2020 R4V study showed that 9 percent of Venezuelan children and adolescents were out of school because they had a disability and were unable to find services to accommodate their specialized needs.

Levels of school enrollment have also been variable in Brazil, but they have increased across the time periods studied. According to a DTM survey from May and June 2018, 37 percent of Venezuelan children and adolescents were enrolled in school. During the next two periods, enrollment increased to between 41 percent and 65 percent. The World Bank notes that Brazil has higher levels of Venezuelan educational integration and enrollment in areas of the country with smaller Venezuelan populations. This again points to the importance of the interiorization process for increasing integration. Notably, a 2020 DTM survey showed that Warao Indigenous Venezuelan minors had considerably lower rates of school enrollment than other Venezuelans in Brazil. This is due in part to their more frequent displacement compared to other mobile Venezuelans. Nonetheless, more in-depth research should explore the conditions of Warao migrants and refugees and their obstacles to accessing basic services such as education. Finally, in contrast to other

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83 For a discussion of this program, see Le Coz et al., A Bridge to Firmer Ground.
85 Le Coz et al., A Bridge to Firmer Ground.
86 World Bank, Resumen ejecutivo: Retos y oportunidades.
87 R4V, Ecuador: Evaluación Conjunta de Necesidades.
89 Shamsuddin et al., “Integration of Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in Brazil,” 32.
90 UNHCR and REACH, Venezuelan Migration in Brazil.
countries in the region, Venezuelans in Brazil face a language barrier: as of 2017, less than one-quarter of Venezuelans in the country had mastered Portuguese.\(^\text{92}\) Thus, opportunities to support language learning, among both minors and adults, merit greater research and investment.

In Colombia, school enrollment rates have varied over time. Since the beginning of the influx in Venezuelan migration, the Colombian government has taken proactive steps to incorporate Venezuelan children into the education system. However, these efforts were at first focused on the border areas, were concentrated on immediate humanitarian needs, and occurred in the context of the Venezuelan border closure in 2015. In 2017, as it became clear that more Venezuelan migrants and refugees intended to stay in the country, the government expanded their efforts throughout the territory and transitioned to an integration-focused approach.\(^\text{93}\) The data shows that more than half of Venezuelan minors were attending school during the first and third study period. During the second period, the lower bound of the enrollment rate fell slightly to 47 percent. Nonetheless, in the third study period, 2020 data from the Ministry of Education showed that while 56 percent of minors were enrolled in primary school, just 4 percent were enrolled in 11th and 12th grade.\(^\text{94}\)

## 5 Health

Promoting access to health-care services has become increasingly important due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, even before the pandemic, many Venezuelan migrants and refugees had pre-existing conditions, malnutrition, or other vulnerabilities that made access to care a critical issue. Health-care systems vary considerably across the region, as does Venezuelans’ ability to access needed care.

In Chile and Brazil, the health-care system is universal, and all migrants and refugees have access, regardless of status. Even still, barriers exist in practice, limiting their true access. For those in an irregular status, fear of deportation and discrimination are major obstacles, and many are unaware of their right to health care, as are some health-care workers. In Chile, a September 2019 DTM survey found that 57 percent of respondents reported lacking health insurance, unaware of their right to access care.\(^\text{95}\) And in Brazil, language barriers play a role, particularly in ensuring that migrants and refugees are aware of their rights. Lack of capacity within health-care systems is an additional barrier that can impede access. Roraima has the fewest ICU beds per capita among Brazilian states, with just four for every 100,000 people, and UNHCR has noted that overcrowding has been a principal barrier to Venezuelans’ health-care access in the state.\(^\text{96}\) A UNHCR and REACH study in Roraima and Amazonas in October 2018 found that 26 percent of Venezuelan households had been unable to access health-care services despite

\(^{92}\) de Frota Simões, *Perfil Sociodemográfico*.


\(^{94}\) Equilibrium CenDE, *Niños, niñas y adolescentes venezolanos en Colombia*.

\(^{95}\) IOM DTM, *Monitoreo de flujo de población venezolana en el Chile DTM Ronda 3*.

\(^{96}\) Alelrandre Barros, “IBGE divulga distribuição de UTIs, respiradores, médicos e enfermeiros,” Agência IBGE Notícias, May 7, 2020; UNHCR and REACH, *Venezuelan Migration in Brazil*. 
needing to do so, and another study in Roraima found that residents with a regular migration status were 4 times more likely to have received medical treatment at a public hospital than those in an irregular status.\footnote{UNHCR and REACH, \textit{Information Needs Assessment, Venezuelan Migration in Northern Brazil} (N.p.: UNHCR and Reach, 2018); João Lucas Zanoni Da Silva, “A imigração Venezuelana para o Brasil: do ingresso em Pacaraima – RR ao início da interiorização em Dourados – MS” (dissertation, Universidade Federal da Grande Dourados, Brazil, 2020), 146.}

In Ecuador, the right to free health care, regardless of immigration status, is enshrined for all, yet Venezuelans experience similar limitations to those found in Brazil and Chile.\footnote{Government of Ecuador, \textit{Ley Orgánica de Salud}, Ley 67, Art. 7 (December 18, 2015); Government of Ecuador, \textit{Ley Orgánica de Movilidad Humana}, Oficio No. T.7166-SGJ-17-0100, Art. 52 (January 31, 2017); Selee and Bolter, \textit{An Uneven Welcome}, 39.} Furthermore, the country’s contributory, public social security program (IESS) includes expanded access to health-care services, but DTM surveys have found that less than 5 percent of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in the country were registered with the program during periods two and three. A consistently large share of Venezuelans in the country have not had any form of health insurance throughout the three periods (see Figure 13), instead relying on the availability of the more basic, universal system. According to DTM surveys, Venezuelans in Ecuador are often unaware of their rights to medical attention or of what options exist in relation to health insurance and health-care services.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure13.png}
\caption{Share of Venezuelan Migrant and Refugee Populations and Receiving-Country Populations with No Health Insurance, by Country, 2017–21}
\end{figure}

\textit{See Appendix B for a full list of data sources used in this figure.}

In Colombia and Peru, although emergency medical assistance is open to all, regardless of immigration status, the two countries’ health-care systems are not universal.\footnote{Colombian Presidency, \textit{Acoger, integrar y crecer}.} There are a few different health-care regimes: subsidized public, contributory public, and private. In both countries, access to health insurance
in general has consistently remained very limited over time. Data from Colombia on access to subsidized public health insurance are limited, but a 2019 DTM survey found that 88 percent of Venezuelan respondents did not have health insurance, and that three out of four of those with health insurance were partaking in the subsidized regime.\footnote{IOM DTM, “Un entendimiento del desplazamiento.”} In Peru, Venezuelans’ access to the subsidized insurance regime has increased slightly over time, but it remains less than 10 percent and has been considerably lower for Venezuelans than for Peruvians throughout all three periods.

FIGURE 14
Share of Venezuelan Migrant and Refugee Populations and Receiving-Country Populations with Subsidized Health Insurance, by Country, 2017–21

See Appendix B for a full list of data sources used in this figure.

Immigration status is often a leading barrier to access to health insurance and adequate health-care services, particularly in subsidized public regimes. A 2021 Danish Refugee Council report in Peru found that that “documentation” was the second greatest barrier to access to health care, surpassed only by “consequence of the pandemic”; the report also cited cost and discrimination as common barriers.\footnote{Danish Refugee Council, Protection Monitoring Report (Jan-Feb).} Regularization is thus important for health-care access, both in terms of identification and documentation and of facilitating access to formal employment, which may entail health-care benefits.

Overall, there is a lack of research on women’s health-care issues among Venezuelan migrants and refugees in the region. Some DTM surveys, however, have taken the important step to ask questions regarding topics such as prenatal health care and reproductive and sexual health care. In DTMs conducted in Brazil, 48 percent to 68 percent of respondents (typically toward the higher end of this range) reported receiving reproductive and sexual health services. And in one October 2018 DTM, 71 percent of pregnant Venezuelans reported receiving prenatal health services.\footnote{IOM DTM, “Brasil — Monitoreo de Flujo de Población Venezolana 2 (25 janeiro — 16 outubro)” (fact sheet, IOM, Brasilia, 2018)} DTMs in Ecuador during the second period have particularly rich data on women’s health-care issues, finding that a range of 24 percent to 38 percent of Venezuelan...
women in the country had access to reproductive and sexual health care. Among those who were pregnant, access to prenatal health services was varied, with the range extending from 40 percent to 81 percent.

Data from Colombia and Chile DTM surveys are more limited. A November 2019 DTM in Colombia found that just 43 percent of adult women respondents who were interested in receiving contraceptives reported access to them, while half of those who were pregnant reported receiving prenatal health care. Among recent arrivals surveyed in Chile’s DTM Round 5 in 2021, 44 percent of pregnant Venezuelans reported receiving prenatal health-care services during their travel. The Inter-American Development Bank has found that in Ecuador and Chile in 2018, the migrant population (without specification for nationality) made up a greater share of hospitalizations for labor, yet a smaller share of hospitalizations for perinatal care. This indicates that relatively few pregnant migrants and refugees are accessing health-care services outside of the time of labor, which potentially puts them and their children at risk.

Venezuelan migrants and refugees have also been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and have a heightened level of vulnerability in comparison to other residents in receiving countries. They are more likely to live in crowded spaces or on the street and to work informal jobs with a lack of protections, and less likely to be able to afford to quarantine if potentially exposed to the virus. Their ability to access health care has thus become particularly critical during the pandemic.

COVID-19 vaccination campaigns have been limited and slow-moving across Latin America, and access to vaccines has been particularly challenging for Venezuelan migrants and refugees. The same types of obstacles to health care discussed above also exist with regard to access to vaccines. Fear of deportation is a leading barrier, even when irregular migrants are eligible for a vaccine. In Ecuador and Peru, the vaccination process is to be universal, but migrants and refugees must provide identification to receive a vaccine in either country, potentially impeding access; the experience in Chile has been similar. In Brazil, the vaccination campaign has included Venezuelans, regardless of immigration status, although the fear of deportation remains a barrier. Despite initially planning to exclude Venezuelan irregular migrants from the country’s vaccination plan, Colombia has since decided in favor of increasing access to vaccines, and the country’s new regularization initiative could further improve access for Venezuelans. It is also valuable to note that because Venezuelan migrants and refugees are generally younger in age, many are likely to be among the last groups vaccinated, as they are not in a high-priority age range.

103 IOM DTM, “Un entendimiento del desplazamiento.”
104 IOM DTM, Quinta DTM: Estudio migración venezolana encuesta frontera.
107 Author interview with Leticia Carvalho, Advocacy Advisor at Missão Paz, May 24, 2021. Although fear of deportation remains an important factor, IOM Brazil notes that the Brazilian government is not actively conducting deportations of Venezuelans.
6 Social Cohesion

Social cohesion is a crucial dimension of societal well-being, and in the context of migrant and refugee integration it involves reducing xenophobia and discrimination. The DTM has collected rich information on discrimination experienced by Venezuelan migrants and refugees across the region. In Brazil, the share of Venezuelans reporting discrimination has remained relatively steady over time, hovering between 21 percent and 35 percent over the three periods. In Ecuador, meanwhile, rates of reporting discrimination have varied; although around half or more of Venezuelans in the country have reported experiencing discrimination in all three periods, rates grew slightly in 2020–21. And in Colombia and Peru, increasing shares of Venezuelans have reported discrimination over each of the three periods; by the most recent period, a majority of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Colombia had reported experiencing discrimination, as had 45 percent or more of those in Peru. Although comparable data are more limited in Chile, the evidence that do exist suggest that Venezuelans in the country have also experienced increasing levels of discrimination over time.

FIGURE 15
Share of Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees Who Reported Discrimination, by Country, 2017–21

See Appendix B for a full list of data sources used in this figure.
Discrimination can take many forms, but it regularly occurs in public spaces (such as on the streets, in shops, and in workplaces) and is principally perceived by Venezuelan migrants and refugees as based on their nationality. There have also been some cases of reported discrimination by government officials: in a 2017 survey of Venezuelans in Boa Vista, Brazil, 8 percent of those who reported experiencing discrimination said the perpetrator was a public servant.\textsuperscript{109}

Prevalent xenophobia can have considerable negative effects on the socioeconomic inclusion of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in the region. It can limit their access to essential public services, employment, and housing, in addition to increasing the risk of suffering violence or other forms of aggression. According to a June 2020 survey by Equilibrium CenDE, Venezuelans in Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia cited discrimination as the leading obstacle to gaining formal employment, with 42 percent, 41 percent, and 36 percent, respectively, highlighting this challenge.\textsuperscript{110}

Although the DTM and complementary sources have collected valuable data on experiences of discrimination among Venezuelan migrants and refugees, rich data on public opinion vis-à-vis Venezuelan migration is more limited throughout the region. In Brazil, this is particularly true and may reflect the fact that Venezuelans represent a much lower share of the total population than in other countries. In fact, an April 2019 survey found that 35 percent of Brazilians were not even aware of the political crisis going on in the neighboring country, though 68 percent affirmed their support for Brazil taking in Venezuelan refugees.\textsuperscript{111} But despite this support, there have been many cases of documented xenophobia and some of anti-Venezuelan violence in the country,\textsuperscript{112} and some studies have asserted that political discourse—particularly in Roraima—has adopted xenophobic rhetoric.\textsuperscript{113}

The use of anti-immigration rhetoric by public officials and political candidates is a pressing issue in the region, with some seeking to scapegoat migrants and refugees for pre-existing issues or using xenophobia as a rallying cry to garner political support. Studies suggest that responses to inflammatory, xenophobic rhetoric by public officials have been mixed: when a high-level public official in Colombia blamed Venezuelans for insecurity in the country, xenophobic and discriminatory messages online increased by 576 percent, but messages in support of immigrant integration and inclusion increased by 1,152 percent, according to Barómetro de Xenofobia.\textsuperscript{114}

In Chile, public opinion polling typically explores views toward migrants and refugees in general, and does not disaggregate data by the immigrants’ nationality. It is thus difficult to draw insights from these data, as

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  \item Discrimination can take many forms, but it regularly occurs in public spaces (such as on the streets, in shops, and in workplaces) and is principally perceived by Venezuelan migrants and refugees as based on their nationality.
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  \item But despite this support, there have been many cases of documented xenophobia and some of anti-Venezuelan violence in the country, and some studies have asserted that political discourse—particularly in Roraima—has adopted xenophobic rhetoric.
  \item The use of anti-immigration rhetoric by public officials and political candidates is a pressing issue in the region, with some seeking to scapegoat migrants and refugees for pre-existing issues or using xenophobia as a rallying cry to garner political support. Studies suggest that responses to inflammatory, xenophobic rhetoric by public officials have been mixed: when a high-level public official in Colombia blamed Venezuelans for insecurity in the country, xenophobic and discriminatory messages online increased by 576 percent, but messages in support of immigrant integration and inclusion increased by 1,152 percent, according to Barómetro de Xenofobia.
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\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{109} de Frota Simões, \textit{Perfil Sociodemográfico}.
\textsuperscript{110} Equilibrium CenDE, “Encuesta Regional Trimestral: Migrantes y Refugiados Venezolanos.”
\textsuperscript{111} Datafolha, Instituto de Pesquisas, “Situación Política na Venezuela” (survey presentation, Datafolha, São Paulo, April 9, 2019).
xenophobia in the country has long been focused on Haitian migrants and refugees, with less of a spotlight placed on Venezuelans. Although Venezuelans made up 31 percent of Chile’s foreign-born population in December 2019, and Haitians made up just 13 percent, a 2020 study of Twitter activity found that 63 percent of discrimination was directed towards Haitians, whereas 13 percent was directed towards Venezuelans.\textsuperscript{115} In addition to the role race plays in these dynamics, class and economic status may also factor in. These two immigrant populations have different socioeconomic profiles: Haitians in Chile are more likely to be economically vulnerable, while Venezuelans in the country are more likely to be well-educated and less likely to be economically vulnerable.

Across the region, polling from Gallup in 2016 and 2019 found a deterioration in attitudes towards migration. The three largest declines in the firm’s global Migrant Acceptance Index over the period were in Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia, whose scores all dropped from more than 6 to less than 4 (out of 9). Chile was an exception to this pattern, marking the third-largest increase in the index over the period with a jump from a score of 5.17 to 6.28.\textsuperscript{116} Polling in Peru from El Comercio and the Institute of Peruvian Studies has corroborated Gallup’s findings, showing negative views of Venezuelans among Peruvians growing steadily, from 43 percent to 73 percent between February 2018 and June 2019.\textsuperscript{117} Following a similar trend, a focus group convened in Ecuador by the World Bank in 2019 found that “the majority of Ecuadorians believe that Venezuelan migrants have a negative impact on the economy and are a bad influence for the society’s culture.”\textsuperscript{118} And in Colombia, Proyecto Migración Venezuela and the Invamer-Gallup Survey found that the share of the Colombian population that had negative views of Venezuelan migrants and refugees rose from 52 percent in October 2018 to a peak of 81 percent in April 2020, although it declined slightly to 71 percent in August 2020, as COVID-19-related containment measures were loosened.\textsuperscript{119} Interestingly, polling consistently shows that Colombians who have had contact with Venezuelan migrants and refugees are much more likely to have favorable opinions of Venezuelans than those who have not had such interactions.

Understanding public opinion on migrants and refugees’ access to services is particularly important. Even when laws legally enshrine their rights to use public services, xenophobia can present major obstacles to doing so. While the 2018–19 Vanderbilt University Latinobarómetro found that almost two-thirds of Chileans and Brazilians agreed that their governments should provide health, education, and housing services to Venezuelan migrants and refugees, a more limited 59 percent of Colombians, 48 percent of Ecuadorians, and 36 percent of Peruvians expressed this view.\textsuperscript{120} Similarly, a February 2021 Plaza Pública poll found that 84 percent of Chileans were in support of providing equal access to education and health services to migrants and refugees in general (the survey did not specifically ask about Venezuelans).\textsuperscript{121} Although eight

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{115} INE, \textit{Estimación de personas extranjeras residentes habituales en Chile al 31 de diciembre de 2019} (Santiago: INE, 2020); Diego Gálvez, Patricio Durán, Tomás Lawrence, and Nicolás Rojas Pedemonte, \textit{Barómetro de percepción de la migración, 2018-2020} (N.p.: Servicio Jesuita de Migrantes, Interpreta, and Centro de Ética y Reflexión Social Fernando Vives, 2020).
  \item \textsuperscript{117} Fernando Alayo Orbeogo, “El 67% de limeños no está de acuerdo con la inmigración venezolana al Perú,” \textit{El Comercio}, April 29, 2019; Institute of Peruvian Studies (IEP), “Conocimiento y actitudes hacia la migración venezolana” (survey presentation, IEP, Lima, June 2019).
  \item \textsuperscript{118} World Bank, \textit{Resumen ejecutivo: Retos y oportunidades}.
  \item \textsuperscript{119} Proyecto Migración Venezuela, “Percepción de la migración durante la flexibilización de las medidas para contener la covid-19: una mirada desde los estereotipos” (Bulletin 15, Proyecto Semana, Bogotá, 2020).
  \item \textsuperscript{120} Paolo Moncagatta et al., \textit{Cultura política de la democracia en Ecuador y en las Américas, 2018/19: Tomándole el pulso a la democracia} (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, Latin American Public Opinion Project, 2020).
  \item \textsuperscript{121} Cadem, “Encuesta Plaza Pública” (survey presentation, Cadem, Santiago, February 2021).
\end{itemize}
in ten Colombians (and seven in ten Ecuadorians and Peruvians) reported believing that social services were “collapsing due to the presence of migrants” in a 2019 Oxfam study, polls between July 2019 and September 2020 in Colombia found that roughly three-fourths of Colombians believe in extending access to education and health services to Venezuelans.\textsuperscript{122} Social cohesion, as measured through solidarity with displaced Venezuelans and support for providing them access to public services, thus appears to be stronger in some countries such as Chile and Colombia than in others such as Ecuador and Peru.

Social cohesion, as measured through solidarity with displaced Venezuelans and support for providing them access to public services, thus appears to be stronger in some countries such as Chile and Colombia than in others such as Ecuador and Peru.

A key obstacle to social cohesion in a number of South American countries is perceptions of criminality, with significant shares of national populations expressing the belief that the presence of Venezuelan migrants and refugees increases insecurity. Polling of Colombians between 2019 and 2020 found that between 43 percent and 53 percent believe Venezuelans increase insecurity in the country, as did the majority of Ecuadorians in a 2019 World Bank focus group.\textsuperscript{123} In Chile, meanwhile, polls have not asked about Venezuelans specifically, though between 29 percent and 59 percent of respondents report believing that migrants in general increase insecurity in the country.\textsuperscript{124} Considering the disproportionate levels of discrimination against Haitians in Chile, these data may not directly reflect perceptions of Venezuelans in the country, but they remains a relevant indicator of social cohesion overall.

There is some evidence that immigrant women may be more likely to experience discrimination than immigrant men, and Venezuelan women have been criminalized and sexualized in countries across the region. In a 2019 Oxfam study, around 70 percent of Colombians, Ecuadorians, and Peruvians expressed the belief that migration increases insecurity, and more than 40 percent of respondents in Peru and Ecuador and almost 50 percent in Colombia said that “the majority of immigrant women end up engaging in prostitution.”\textsuperscript{125} Such views point to the particular vulnerability of immigrant women to exploitation and sexual violence.

Perceptions of Venezuelan migrants and refugees’ criminality, however, are not rooted in reality. A 2020 analysis of crime data by MPI and the Brookings Institution found that Venezuelans commit a smaller share

\textsuperscript{122} Oxfam, \textit{Yes, but Not Here: Perceptions of Xenophobia and Discrimination towards Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru} (Oxford: Oxfam, 2019); Proyecto Migración Venezuela, “Percepción de la migración.”

\textsuperscript{123} Proyecto Migración Venezuela, “Percepción de la integración de los migrantes en Colombia en tiempos de coronavirus” (Bulletin 10, Proyecto Semana, Bogotá, 2020); Proyecto Migración Venezuela, “Percepción de la migración”; World Food Programme (WFP), “Migration Pulse - February 2020: Remote Assessment Venezuelan Migrants and Host Communities Colombia, Ecuador and Peru” (issue brief, WFP, Rome, February 2020); Cuso International, \textit{Dinámicas laborales de las mujeres migrantes venezolanas en Colombia} (Ottawa: Cuso International, 2020); World Bank, \textit{Resumen ejecutivo: Retos y oportunidades}.


\textsuperscript{125} Oxfam, \textit{Yes, but Not Here}, 11.
of crimes—and particularly violent crimes—relative to their share of the total population. Thus, despite public perceptions, there appears to be little reason to believe that Venezuelan migrants and refugees increase insecurity in the region.

7 Reflections and Recommendations

The rich collection of data and information offered by the DTM and by other surveys and research sketch a profile of a Venezuelan migrant and refugee population that is increasingly composed of families migrating together and settling in their receiving countries. These sources also point to both commonalities and differences in the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelans in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru—and areas where further policy attention and research are needed, particularly as countries shift from a primarily humanitarian response to large-scale Venezuelan migration to a longer-term focus on sustainable integration.

Since 2017, the Venezuelan share of the population in all five studied countries has grown, with Venezuelan migrants and refugees tending to be younger than the receiving-country population and roughly equally distributed by gender. While governments in the region have taken creative approaches to provide Venezuelan newcomers regular immigration status, a sizable number remain in irregular status. Sustaining such efforts will be important as regularization is a critical stepping-stone to sustainable integration, increasing immigrants’ access to essential services, such as education and health care, and to the formal labor market.

Addressing these challenges will be important both for the integration and well-being of the millions of Venezuelans in these countries and for the broader societies in which they live.

Throughout the five studied countries, unemployment rates are higher for Venezuelans than their local counterparts. In addition, Venezuelan women are employed at lower rates than Venezuelan men. Despite high levels of educational attainment—particularly among those who migrated in earlier periods and, in some countries, women—many Venezuelan migrants and refugees have only been able to access informal jobs with low wages, partly due to barriers to having their credentials recognized. Obstacles to financial inclusion have left many Venezuelans with below-minimum-wage incomes and living in poverty, and the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic has caused many to lose jobs. For Venezuelan children, besides capacity constraints in education systems, poverty has also contributed to the considerable number who remain out of school. Addressing these challenges will be important both for the integration and well-being of the millions of Venezuelans in these countries and for the broader societies in which they live.

126 Dany Bahar, Meagan Dooley, and Andrew Selee, Venezuelan Migration, Crime, and Misperceptions: A Review of Data from Colombia, Peru, and Chile (Washington, DC: MPI, 2020).
A. Gaps in the Research

Despite the plethora of research and important findings discussed in this report, there are notable gaps that merit further investigation. Disaggregating collected data on migrants and refugees by nationality is essential to understanding the situation of different populations and should be done when conducting research in all of these countries. This is particularly pertinent in Chile, where data are frequently not disaggregated.

Issue areas where additional research could be especially beneficial include:

► economic inclusion in Chile, where information on the topic is particularly lacking;

► indicators of economic inclusion not addressed in this report, including access to financial services, formal banking, and entrepreneurship;

► the adaptation of Venezuelans in Brazil to the Portuguese language, including exploration of what is being done to bridge the language gap and how it has affected integration;

► trends in remittance sending and use, including how remittances are used by recipients (e.g., the degree to which they are used for consumption, to fund further migration and family and social reunification, or other purposes); and

► social cohesion and public opinion polling on how receiving communities perceive and interact with Venezuelan migrant and refugee populations. Although Colombia has collected rich data on the subject, information is far more limited in other countries such as Brazil and Chile.

Another set of key gaps in data relate to the situation of Venezuelan migrant and refugee women in comparison to that of Venezuelan men. Disaggregating educational data by gender and age would shed light on the nature of gender gaps in school enrollment as well as on when and for what reasons children drop out of school. Women’s health care and employment are additional topics that require greater research in order to better understand the experiences of Venezuelan migrant and refugee women and what policies may help them overcome the distinct challenges they face. There is currently minimal information on their access to reproductive health services and contraceptives throughout receiving countries and on the needs of pregnant migrants and refugees in border areas and cities. There is also a need for further research and analysis of how these various gender gaps affect Venezuelans' integration. Particularly given the pandemic’s disproportionate adverse effects on the economic situation of many Venezuelan migrant and refugee women, research should seek to closely monitor and document its short- and long-term impacts on their wages, levels of informal work, and unemployment.

Decisions about data disaggregation and research design should also take into account the different challenges faced by Indigenous and Afro-Venezuelan migrants and refugees. This is particularly relevant to Brazil and Colombia, which have received significant numbers of Warao and Wayuu Indigenous Venezuelans, respectively. Although IOM has conducted research on Indigenous Venezuelans in Brazil—including a DTM
on Warao in Maranhão state and a recently launched national survey—there is still relatively little research on these markedly vulnerable populations.127

Finally, a differentiated approach could be useful with regards to researching the different integration experiences of migrants and refugees depending on their migratory intentions. Pendular, return, and transit migration and the situation of those who have reached their final destination all constitute differing personal and policy contexts. These forms of migration also frequently meet with different receptions from receiving-country residents, public services, and other institutions that can shape migrants’ integration experiences. Continuing to gather updated data and information about the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan migrants and refugees—and important groups within this population—will be paramount in order to continue to assess their levels of integration and to construct effective and relevant policy responses.

B. Recommendations for Regional Governments

There is much that receiving-country governments can do to facilitate the socioeconomic integration process, to the benefit of both Venezuelan newcomers and the broader society. Foremost among them are to:

► **Reduce irregularity.** Chief among the recommendations is that governments redouble their efforts to reduce irregularity among Venezuelan migrants and refugees by increasing options to access regular immigration status and by bolstering asylum system capacity. With this, it is crucial to make regularization durable, including a pathway to permanence. The drawbacks of the temporary nature of some regularization programs have been seen most notably in Colombia and Peru, where their short-term nature increases vulnerability, creates recurring bureaucratic requirements for migrants and refugees, and may throw them into irregularity in a few years. Where options to apply for regular status are scarce, Venezuelans may be left reliant on asylum systems with low capacity and facing mounting backlogs, as seen in Peru. Colombia’s new regularization initiative is commendable, as it offers a more durable solution with a clear pathway to permanency. But as it sets a cut-off date for when applicants must have arrived in the country, it will also be necessary to design and implement programs that address the situation of future Venezuelan arrivals, given there are no signs that Venezuelan migration will end any time soon. Governments should seek to ensure that flexible, legal channels for migration are cultivated, and that asylum systems work smoothly and quickly so as to maintain international protection standards and best limit any potential for irregularity among Venezuelans.

By taking steps to increase access to regular status, governments would also effectively be addressing key gaps in access to health care, education, and employment. Increased regularization benefits receiving-country governments and communities as well, and can contribute to economic development, particularly within the context of economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, as the data show, the low percentage of Venezuelan migrants and refugees who have health insurance are particularly reliant on subsidized health insurance regimes. Regularization and

incorporation to the formal job market, which goes hand in hand with higher wages, would increase the migrants’ and refugees’ contributions to not only the health-care system but also the fiscal system. In other words, increasing regularity can alleviate costs to the state. As part of such efforts, governments should promote awareness in the private sector of Venezuelans’ skills and qualifications and work to improve employers’ willingness to formally hire immigrants.

► **Facilitate credential recognition and address income gaps.** Making it easier for immigrants to have foreign-earned credentials recognized by easing documentation requirements and making the process less costly would help address important barriers to employment and higher-paid positions. At a regional level, the share of Venezuelan migrants and refugees who work in their field of study is remarkably low. Venezuelans also tend to be young and highly educated, meaning there is a big pool of human capital that receiving countries have yet to tap into effectively. Improving credential recognition processes would allow these countries to more fully benefit from the skills Venezuelans bring with them, while also benefiting individual Venezuelans by increasing their access to the formal labor market and higher-paying, better quality jobs. Due to the employment gender gap, integration policies in this area should seek to address the unique vulnerabilities faced by Venezuelan women.

► **Improve access to education.** While the legal frameworks of most of the study countries guarantee the right to a basic education regardless of nationality or immigration status, barriers remain in practice. And despite efforts by governments to integrate Venezuelan children and adolescents into their respective education systems, thousands remain out of school. The steps to support economic integration outlined above may help in this respect as there is likely to be less pressure for children to drop out of school and work in financially healthy families. Other important barriers to school enrollment that governments should seek to address include Venezuelan families’ difficulties providing the proper documentation to enroll children, their limited knowledge of the education system, and school capacity limitations. Peru’s Lima Aprende program—which has sought to enroll both Peruvian and Venezuelan children who are out of school and, as a result, has been well received by the local population—could serve as a model for school enrollment and social cohesion policy proposals elsewhere.

► **Address capacity and knowledge gaps in health-care and other systems.** Capacity is a pressing issue in terms of health care, too. It is crucial that governments ensure there is adequate capacity in the health-care system so that migrants and refugees can access needed care, including reproductive and prenatal health care. In the context of the pandemic, it is also vital that states ensure immigrants’ access to COVID-19 vaccinations, both for their own health and the broader society’s public health.

In addition to capacity, a common issue that impedes access to essential public services such as education and health care is a lack of knowledge. Governments should conduct information campaigns to educate migrants and refugees on their rights and on how to navigate key systems. In the case of Brazil, it is imperative that this be done with consideration for the language barriers many Venezuelans face, including by providing Spanish-language materials and involving Spanish speakers in public outreach.
► **Strengthen social cohesion.** Political leaders and public officials must reject xenophobia and lead from the top on supporting and using welcoming and inclusive rhetoric. Local governments and their engagement with community leaders are crucial in this effort. More broadly, it is important that they actively recognize the harm discrimination causes within a society and seek to address it, both rhetorically and through policy. Promoting diversity and rejecting discrimination can lead to improved public opinion of Venezuelan migrants and refugees and boost social cohesion in communities across the region.

► **Uphold transparency and support research.** It is crucial that governments uphold high standards for transparency, making data and other key information publicly available without unnecessary delays and collecting a greater breadth of data on indicators relevant to the socioeconomic integration of migrants and refugees. Such efforts should also ensure that government-operated data sources are regularly updated and easy to navigate, and that public information requests are answered promptly. Ensuring open, efficient access to information is crucial to supporting research and initiatives to improve the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan migrants and refugees.

As Venezuela’s political crisis continues and the broader region grapples with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, Venezuelan migration is unlikely to stop any time soon. It is thus crucial that the region’s governments make a concerted effort to promote the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan migrants and refugees and that the international donor community supports them in doing so.
Appendices

Appendix A. Methodology and Data

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) designed the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), which has evolved over time through continuous dialogue with nonprofit organizations, United Nations agencies, and the ministries and government offices responsible for migration policies and services in each country. Although specific methodologies vary, in most sample countries, IOM teams collect data at interview points using convenience sampling. These interview points, where Venezuelan migrants and refugees were available for interviews, are known as flow monitoring points (FMP). FMPs include both border points of entry and larger urban areas. It is important to note that the DTM data collection sampling is nonrepresentative.

This report primarily utilizes DTM data from urban and neighborhood-based FMPs in order to gain an understanding of the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan migrants and refugees who have settled in a country, and not just recently entered. However, it also uses data from border point of entry FMPs when deemed relevant. Data from migrants and refugees actively in transit were generally excluded from this analysis, so as to best focus on experiences of integration among those who are most likely to remain in a country for some period of time.

This study supplements data from the DTM with comparable, relevant data from a range of resources, including censuses, nonrepresentative surveys, and representative surveys, some of which are showcased in the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Latin America and the Caribbean Migration Portal (www.migrationportal.org). The methodologies of these additional resources vary, but special emphasis has been placed on the comparability of data so as to ensure that findings are based on strong data with reasonably comparable sample sizes and target populations.
Appendix B. Sources for Figures

FIGURE 1


FIGURE 2


FIGURE 3

Figures for Venezuelans in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru are based on the authors’ tabulation of data shared with them by IOM from DTM surveys, collected between January and December 2019, and originally discussed in Diego Chaves-González and Carlos Echeverría-Estrada, “Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Regional Profile” (fact sheet, MPI, Washington, DC, August 2020).


FIGURE 4

Brazil, Period 1 (1 data point): Gustavo da Frota Simões, Perfil Sociodemográfico e Laboral da imigração venezuelana no Brasil (Curitiba, Brazil: Editora CRV, 2017).


FIGURE 5

**Chile, Period 2 (3 data points):** IOM DTM, “Chile — Monitoreo de Flujo de Población Venezolana 1”; IOM DTM, “Chile — Monitoreo de Flujo de Población Venezolana 2”; IOM DTM, “Chile — Monitoreo de Flujo de Población Venezolana 3.” 


**Ecuador, Period 1 (1 data point):** IOM DTM, “Ecuador — Monitoreo de Flujo de Movilidad Humana 1.” 


**Period 3 (2 data points):** Equilibrium CenDE, “Segunda Encuesta Regional”; IOM DTM, “Ecuador — Monitoreo de Flujo de Población Venezolana Ronda 9.”

**Perú, Period 1 (1 data point):** IOM DTM, “Perú — Flujo de Migración Venezolana, Ronda 1 (Septiembre 2017)” (fact sheet, IOM, November 2017). 

**Period 2 (3 data points):** IOM DTM, “Perú — Flujo de Migración Venezolana, Ronda 5 (Abril 2019)” (fact sheet, IOM, April 2019); IOM DTM, “Perú — Flujo de Migración Venezolana, Ronda 6 (Setiembre 2019)” (fact sheet, IOM, September 2019); INEI, “Condiciones de vida de la población venezolana.” 


**FIGURE 6**

**Brazil, Period 2 (3 data points):** IOM DTM, “Brasil — Monitoreo de Flujo de Población Venezolana 2”; IOM DTM, “Brasil — Monitoreo de Flujo de Población Venezolana 4”; IOM DTM, “Brasil — Monitoreo de Flujo de Población Venezuela - Rodada 5.” 

**Period 3 (1 data point):** IOM DTM, “Brasil — Monitoramento Do Fluxo Migratório Venezolano Manaus Ronda 1.”

**Chile, Period 2 (1 data point):** IOM DTM, “Chile — Monitoreo de Flujo de Población Venezolana 1.” 

**Period 3 (1 data point):** IOM DTM, “Chile — Monitoramento Do Fluxo Migratório Venezolano Manaus Ronda 1.”

**Ecuador, Period 1 (1 data point):** IOM DTM, “Ecuador — Monitoreo de Flujo de Movilidad Humana 1.” 


**Period 3 (1 data point):** IOM DTM, “Ecuador — Monitoreo de Flujo de Población Venezolana Ronda 9.”


**Period 2 (5 data points):** IOM DTM, “Peru — Migration Flows from Venezuela, Ronda 4 (Septiembre - Octubre 2018)” (fact sheet, IOM, December 2018); INEI, “Condiciones de vida de la población venezolana.” 

**Period 3 (1 data point):** IOM DTM, “Peru — Flujo de Migración Venezolana, Ronda 5”; IOM DTM, “Perú — Flujo de Migración Venezolana, Ronda 6”; IOM DTM, “Perú — Flujo de Migración Venezolana, Ronda 7 (Febrero 2020)” (fact sheet, IOM, February 2020). 

**Period 3 (1 data point):** IOM DTM, “Peru — Flujo de Migración Venezolana a Perú por Tumbes, Reporte 8.”

**FIGURE 7**

**Brazil, Period 1 (3 data points):** da Frota Simões, Perfil Sociodemográfico e Laboral da imigração venezuelana no Brasil; Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV) Department of Public Policy Analysis (DAPP), “DESAFIO MIGRATÓRIO EM RORAIMA: Repensando a política e gestão da migração no Brasil” (policy paper, FGV DAPP, Rio de Janeiro, 2018); IOM DTM, “Brasil — Monitoramento do Fluxo Migratório Venezolano Manaus Ronda 1.” 

**Period 2 (2 data points):** IOM DTM, “Brasil — Monitoreo de Flujo de Población Venezolana 2”; IOM DTM, “Brasil — Monitoreo de Flujo de Población Venezolana - Rodada 5.” 

**Period 3 (1 data point):** IOM DTM, “Brasil — Monitoramento Do Fluxo Migratório Venezolano Manaus Ronda 1.”

**Chile, Period 1 (1 data point):** Mundaca Ovalle, Fernández Cavada, and Vícuña Undurraga SJ, Migración en Chile. 

**Period 2 (1 data point):** IOM DTM, “Chile — Monitoreo de Flujo de Población Venezolana 1.” 

**Period 3 (4 data points):** Instituto de Ciencias e Innovación en Medicina (ICIM) – Universidad del Desarrollo y Clínica Alemana, Colegio Médico de Chile, Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, and MICROB-R, Encuesta sobre COVID-19 a poblaciones migrantes internacionales en Chile (Santiago: Universidad del Desarrollo, 2020); Equilibrium CenDE, “Encuesta Regional Trimestral: Migrantes y Refugiados Venezolanos” (survey, Equilibrium CenDE, July 2020); Equilibrium CenDE, “Segunda Encuesta Regional”; IOM DTM, “Chile — Monitoreo de Flujo de Población Venezolana 4.”


**Colombia, Period 1 (2 data points):** IOM DTM, “RESULTADOS FASE II”; IOM DTM, “Matriz de monitoreo de desplazamiento Colombia.” **Period 2 (2 data points):** Castro Padrón, *Inclusión laboral de la población migrante venezolana en Colombia*; Proyecto Migración Venezuela, ¿Cuál era la brecha de género de migrantes en el mercado laboral antes de la pandemia? **Period 3 (1 data point):** Equilibrium CENDE, “Encuesta Regional Trimestral.”


FIGURE 9


FIGURE 10


FIGURE 13


FIGURE 14

Peru, Period 1 (2 data points): INEI, Características sociodemográficas de la población venezolana; Authors’ calculations using share of total population and public information requested from the General Office for Institutional Image and Transparency of Peru. Period 2 (2 data points): INEI, “Condiciones de vida de la población venezolana”; Authors’ calculations using share of total population and public information requested from the General Office for Institutional Image and Transparency of Peru. Period 3 (2 data points): Authors’ calculations using share of total population and public information requested from the General Office for Institutional Image and Transparency of Peru. Peruvian Population: INEI, Población afiliada a algún seguro de salud.

FIGURE 15

Chile, Period 2 (1 data point): IOM DTM, “Chile — Monitoreo de Flujo de Población Venezolana 1.” Period 3 (1 data point): Equilibrium CenDE, “Segunda Encuesta Regional.”


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