


# ILO'S WORK TO STRENGTHEN THE SOCIOECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF VENEZUELAN REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

in Latin America and the Caribbean

Our region currently faces the largest human displacement in its history and the second largest in the world: the Venezuelan displacement

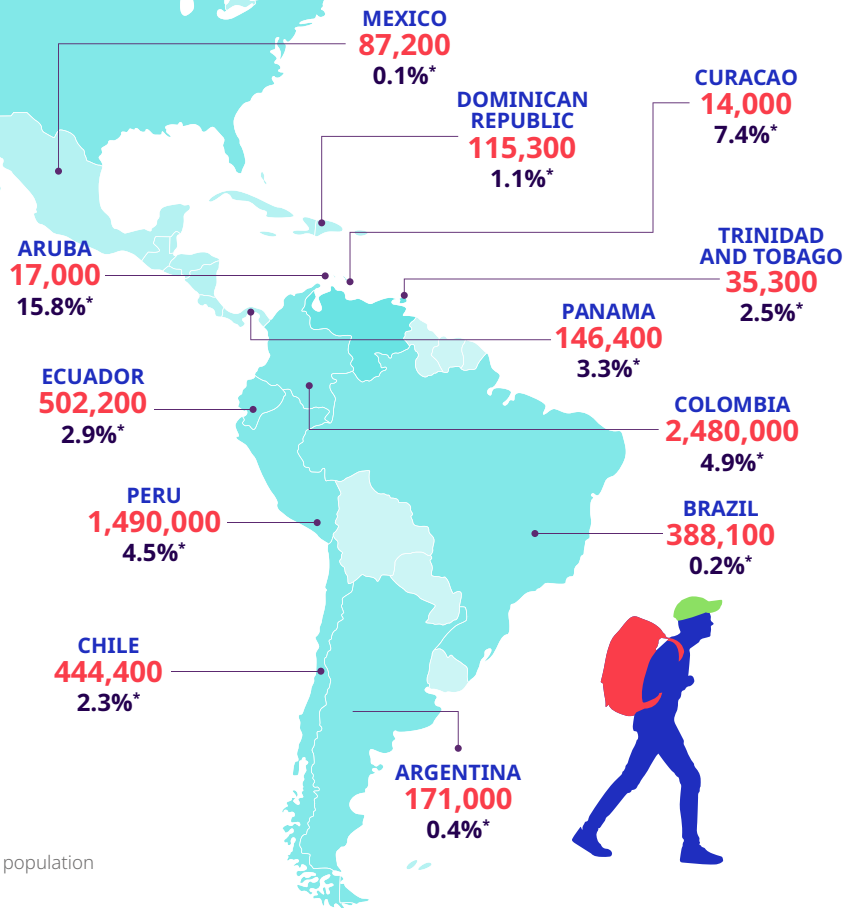
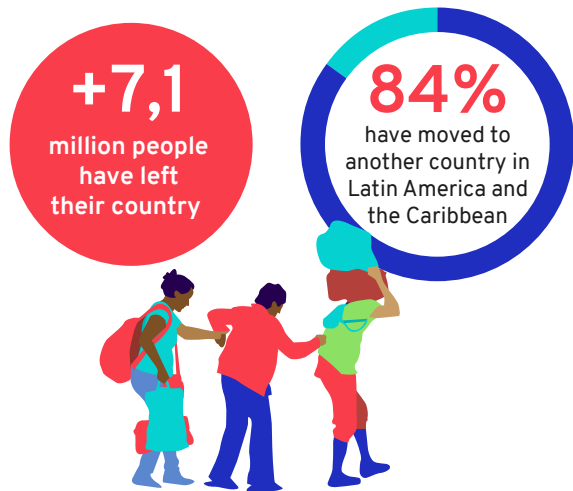




Access to decent work is key to realize refugees and migrants' development potential and contribution to host communities.

*Gilbert F. Hounou, ILO Director-General*

# How many Venezuelan refugees and migrants are there in Latin America and the Caribbean?

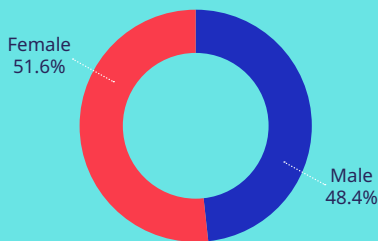


Source: R4V, 2022.

\* Venezuelan refugees and migrants as a percentage of the country's total population

# More refugee and migrant women than men—but less visible

Distribution by sex of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean



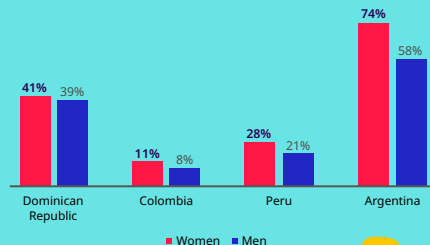
- ▶ Lack of disaggregated data
- ▶ Limited understanding of specific obstacles
- ▶ Migration policies lacking gender sensitivity



## Higher educational attainment

Refugee and migrant women from Venezuela have higher educational attainment levels than their male counterparts; and in several countries, higher than local women.

Venezuelan refugees and migrants with university-level education (4 countries in LAC)



Sources: Peru (Enpove, 2022); Colombia (GEH, 2020); Argentina (ENMA, 2020); Dominican Republic (IOM, 2022).



## Low job-placement levels

Although women represent over half of the Venezuelan refugee and migrant population, and they have higher educational levels than men, they suffer from:

- ▶ Less labour market participation
- ▶ Lower monthly income
- ▶ More precarious working conditions



Studies show that, at the macroeconomic level, **recipient countries have benefited from the boost in internal demand and the labour force due to the inflow of Venezuelan migrants** ([IMF, 2022](#)). These findings are coherent with international evidence that migrants and refugees contribute significantly to the development of their host countries ([OECD/ILO, 2018](#)):



They constitute human capital that helps countries respond to shortages of manpower in some sectors of the economy



They consume and invest, thereby fuelling aggregate demand and therefore contributing to GDP growth



They pay (direct and indirect) taxes, thereby contributing to a healthy fiscal balance

[The Regional Strategy for the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan refugees](#) and migrants and their host communities (ILO/UNDP, 2021) was designed with a view to maximizing refugees' and migrants' contributions to the sustainable development of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through this Regional Strategy, and in coordination with Governments, Employers' Organizations and Workers' Organizations, ILO promotes Decent Work for Venezuelan refugees and migrant workers and their host communities.



# Regional strategy for the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan refugees and migrants and their host communities



## OBJECTIVES

The Regional Strategy seeks the formulation of concrete responses to meet three objectives:

- ▶ Reduce the levels of socioeconomic vulnerability of refugees and migrants from Venezuela.
- ▶ Maximize the contribution of this population to the economies of host countries.
- ▶ Promote social cohesion by ensuring that host communities also benefit from the strategic initiatives.



## PRIORITY PILLARS

The Strategy seeks impact in the mid- to long-term, acknowledging that the situation of Venezuelan refugees and migrants is one of protracted displacement, and that the only viable option for them to contribute to the sustainable development of their host countries is the promotion of their socioeconomic integration and social cohesion with host communities.



### 1 REGULARIZATION AND SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILING OF THE POPULATION FROM VENEZUELA

- Flexibilization of regularization mechanisms
- Characterization of the demographic and socioeconomic profile of the migrant population from Venezuela



### 2 RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION OF SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Vocational training
- Validation of qualifications awarded in Venezuela
- Certification of skills and competencies (including recognition of prior learning)



### 3 EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION AND FAIR RECRUITMENT

- Access for refugees, migrants and returnees to Public Employment Services
- Promotion of employment at the local level, including in rural areas
- Strengthening of labour administration and ensuring Fair Recruitment
- Employability of refugees and migrants
- Adoption of measures for the transition from informality to formality



### 4 ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- Enabling environment for sustainable businesses and effective integration of refugees and migrants into value chains
- Building capacities of refugees and migrants for their economic integration through entrepreneurship



### 5 FINANCIAL INCLUSION

- Eliminating regulatory and administrative barriers that prevent the Venezuelan population from accessing financial services in their host countries
- Awareness raising for financial institutions on the rights of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers
- Financial literacy and education
- Adapting of the banking and credit offer to the needs of refugees and migrants





## 6 ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION

- Roadmap to guarantee access to social protection for refugee and migrant workers and their families
- Roadmap to disseminate information on access to social security and to create a culture of social security



## 7 SOCIAL COHESION

- Institutional capacity building at the national and local level
- Awareness-raising campaigns with host communities to fight discrimination and xenophobia

### Strengthening regional cooperation mechanisms on the socio-economic integration of refugees and migrants in their host communities

For the successful implementation of the seven pillars, it is crucial that host countries in Latin America and the Caribbean strengthen cooperation mechanisms and adopt truly regional policies. The Strategy suggests how to develop and implement such regional initiatives, focusing on four areas:



Human mobility  
and regularization



Mutual recognition  
of skills and  
qualifications



Labour  
intermediation



Social  
protection



# Fostering enabling environment for employability

## ► MAIN PILLARS



Employment promotion  
and Fair Recruitment



Social  
Protection

## Colombia



Communication campaign **“Entrelazando: Migrant Talent and Inclusive Enterprises”**, which seeks to guide employers and raise their awareness on how to hire refugees and migrants. In partnership with the Labour Ministry, the Public Employment Service and the National Association of Colombian Industry (ANDI). Supported by USAID and Sida.



**“Rights Migrate Too”** campaign, targeting refugees, migrants and returnees from Venezuela to explain **access to social protection programmes and services** (health, pension, coverage in case of illness or accident at work, unemployment, etc.) In partnership with WFP. Supported by the EU.





Analysis of **vocational training institutional policies** and technical assistance to the National Training Service (SENA), to improve the inclusion of refugees and migrants. Supported by Sida and IRCC.



Analysis of **specific barriers in accessing job orientation services, job training and self-employment for LGTBIQ+ migrants**, leading to the design of better mechanisms for socioeconomic integration with a gender approach and providing short, medium and long-term policy recommendations to further the protection of labour rights for these groups. Supported by IRCC.



Profiling of **Venezuelan refugee and migrant women and identification of barriers** in accessing sustainable livelihoods, for the design of pilot projects to improve employability. Supported by Sida.



Joint technical assistance to the Public Employment Service of Colombia and the Labour Ministry of Ecuador for the development of a **vacancy exchange mechanism that supports regional labour mobility**, based on and aligned with the countries' labour market needs. Supported by IRCC, Sida and USAID.



Design and implementation of a **Fair Recruitment training programme aimed at civil servants**, particularly in the labour sector, at the national and local levels, to strengthen the protection of labour rights and prevent abusive practices against refugees and migrants. Supported by Sida and IRCC.



# Expanding labour insertion and livelihoods

## ▶ MAIN PILLARS



Employment promotion  
and Fair Recruitment



Capacity  
building



Entrepreneurship and  
business development

## Peru



**Design and implementation of a Fair Recruitment training programme aimed at officials and staff from the National Employment Service** and the Regional Employment Centres, to strengthen protection of labour rights and prevent abusive practices against refugees and migrants. Supported by Sida, AECID and USAID.



Design and technical assistance for the implementation of the **Inter-Union Plan on Labour Migration and Human Mobility** with CGTP, CUT, CATP and CTP. In coordination with Solidarity Center, CEDRO and Veneactiva. Supported by Sida and AECID.



**Profiling of Venezuelan refugee and migrant women and identification of barriers in accessing sustainable livelihoods**, for the design of pilot projects to improve employability. Supported by Sida.





Technical assistance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Superintendence of Migration and Labour Ministry, for **strengthening joint policy-making on the socioeconomic integration of refugees and migrants** at the national and local levels, and implementation of inclusive programmes and services. Supported by Sida, AECID and USAID.



Technical assistance for the analysis of **statistical data on migration and capacity building for the management and interoperability of administrative records** (especially on migration, employment and social protection services). Supported by Sida.



Technical assistance to the National Employment Service for **analysis and adaptation of services with an inclusive approach for refugees and migrants**. Includes pilot projects. Supported by Sida.



Design of **Regional Action Plans in Piura and Tacna for labour inclusion** of refugees, migrants and vulnerable nationals in economic sectors and green production chains, and technical assistance for their implementation. Supported by AECID.



1,103 refugees, migrants and nationals in vulnerable situations strengthened their **business management skills** during the COVID-19 pandemic. Supported by USAID.



726 enterprises by refugees, migrants and nationals in vulnerable situations **improved or maintained their sales level** through the COVID-19 pandemic. Supported by USAID.



# The value of regional coordination for the economic inclusion of refugees and migrants from Venezuela

Latin America and the Caribbean as a region has a long tradition of integration, which is reflected in several regional, subregional and thematic mechanisms (MERCOSUR, CARICOM, SICA, etc.), which constitute assets to promote growth, sustainable development, mobility, and to strengthen social and cultural inclusion, based on an agenda of protection and promotion of rights.

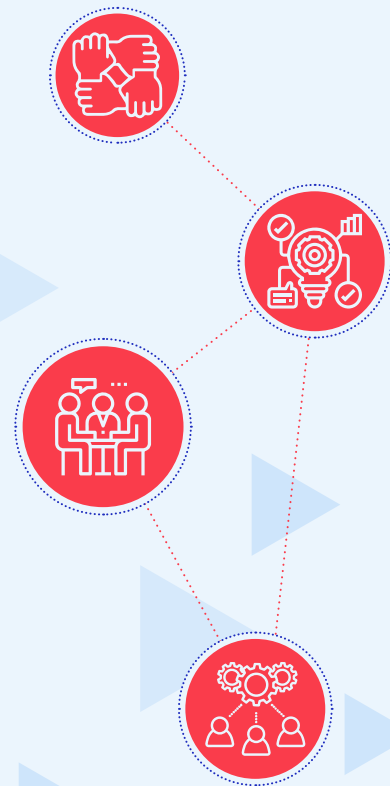
In addition, in the field of migration and mobility, there are consultation and coordination mechanisms that are crucial to the response to the Venezuelan displacement, and to which the ILO, as an observer organization, provides specialized technical assistance in labour-related matters.


- ▶ To strengthen coordination among [Quito Process](#) member countries, the ILO has organized two regional meetings of their ministers of labour, with participation or private sector employers and trade unions. Additionally, ILO developed, jointly with UNDP, the [Regional Strategy for Socio-Economic Integration](#), which now provides a coherent framework for action at the regional level and guides responses at the country level. The ILO also coordinates with IOM, UNHCR and other UN agencies to promote the exchange of good practices and South-South cooperation on specific issues under this mechanism.




- ▶ To support the action of the [South-American Conference on Migration \(CSM\)](#), the ILO provides technical assistance to the thematic networks on Social and Labour Integration – Labour and Education; Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants; Migrant Children and Adolescents; and Gender and Migration. To address regional flows, the CSM is increasing coordination with the [Regional Conference on Migration \(CRM\)](#), another mechanism where the ILO provides technical assistance to address labour migration and socio-economic integration.
- ▶ In the [Integrated Regional Framework for Protection and Solutions \(MIRPS\)](#), in close collaboration with the MIRPS Technical Secretariat (UNHCR) and with Costa Rica as the lead country of the employment and livelihoods cluster, the ILO provides technical assistance to strategies for generating decent employment and livelihoods for refugees. A Regional Strategy for the Recognition of Labour Skills is currently being developed to facilitate labour mobility for refugees and asylum seekers in Central America and Mexico, together with a roadmap for its implementation at the national level.
- ▶ The ILO is a member of the Executive Committee of the United Nations Network on Migration, and actively participates at the global, regional, as well as national levels in [12 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean](#), to support the implementation of the United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration. Together with UNDP, ILO co-leads the [regional mechanism linking civil society to the Global Compact for Migration](#).

The ILO promotes the participation of ministries of labour, employers' and workers' organizations in these regional spaces; it leads on the inclusion of the labour dimension in their agendas, and facilitates coordinated action among them to strengthen inclusive labour migration policies that stimulate labour markets to reap the benefits of migration and human mobility.





 The International Labour Organization supports governments, employers and workers to make fair labour migration a reality.

*Gilbert F. Hounbo, ILO Director-General*



International  
Labour  
Organization



Inter-Agency Coordination  
Platform for Refugees and  
Migrants from Venezuela

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