



Challenges and opportunities of Venezuelan migration in Ecuador

● Causes for migration

As of September 2019, 4.3 million people left Venezuela, which is comparable to countries affected by war. Ecuador has received an estimated 1.15 million Venezuelans since 2015. Most have continued their journey to countries further to the south, although around 400,000 have chosen to settle in Ecuador. One of the main reasons to settle in Ecuador is the high level of legal protection and social assistance offered to migrants. For example, all new arrivals in Ecuador are entitled to free education and healthcare.

● Demographic profile

Venezuelan and refugees residing in Ecuador are typically young (three years younger than their host community counterparts), distributed equally by gender (49.8 female and 50.2 male), and well-educated (i.e. with a secondary-school certificate or above). In general, they are healthier than average Ecuadorians, although incidences of malnutrition are high. The migratory and refugee population is widely dispersed through the country, although a substantial number (around 40 percent) have settled in Quito.

● Conditions for migrants

Despite the rights and legal protections afforded by Ecuador to migrants and refugees, Venezuelans who have settled in the country experience vulnerability in a variety of ways. Such vulnerability is exacerbated by their legal status, which is irregular in over half (54 percent) of all cases. Lack of documentation and other bureaucratic hurdles represent primary causes for this irregularity. Among other consequences, this means that Venezuelan migrants struggle to enter the formal workforce. Many are therefore employed informally or on temporary contracts. Compared to Ecuadorians, Venezuelan in mobility tend to work longer hours, for less pay, and in worse conditions.

Ecuadorians have a variety of misconceptions concerning the impacts of Venezuelan migration. For example, Venezuelans are frequently blamed for taking jobs from the host population and, more widely, for having a negative impact on the Ecuadorian economy. Likewise, Venezuelans are thought to overburden state services, especially in respect of the education and healthcare system. Although no empirical evidence exists for any of these fears, they continue to persist.

Female migrants are particularly vulnerable. Some problems are specific to their status as migrants, such as workplace discrimination. For adolescent migrant women and girls, in particular, the risks of under-age labor and school absenteeism are disproportionately high.

● Opportunities

Ecuador could stand to benefit significantly from cross-border flows. Take employment. It is projected that Ecuador's GDP would increase by two percent if Venezuelans could access jobs in line with their qualifications. In the same vein, the country would be set to benefit from greater human capital if migrant children could obtain fuller access to education. Higher levels of school attendance would also have the knock-on effect of freeing up mothers to become more economically productive.

Finally, Ecuadorians enjoy a close cultural and linguistic affinity with Venezuelan in mobility. This holds out hope for the latter's rapid integration into Ecuadorian society. Policies aimed at promoting mutual understanding and social cohesion would enable Venezuelans to become a positive force in their host communities more quickly.



Challenges and opportunities of Venezuelan migration in Ecuador

Around **400 000** Venezuelans have settled in **Ecuador** since **2015**

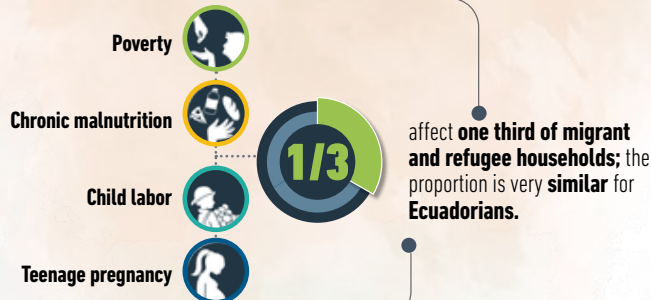
2,3%

Demographics

The **migrant population** represents 2.3 percent of **Ecuador's total population**.



Challenges



Labor Market

Less than **15%** of the **Venezuelans in mobility** have a **regular migratory status** that allows them to **work** in the formal sector; nevertheless

65% of working-age **Venezuelans** have some form of employment

compared to fewer than half of their **Ecuadorian peers**.

47%



Venezuelans in mobility work **5 hours** more per week than **Ecuadorians** on average, yet their money wage is **42%** lower.



Education and Well-being

An estimated **56%** of **children and adolescents** of **Venezuelan nationality** are not integrated into Ecuador's education system.

Children under five years of age are **chronically malnourished**

migrant communities

18%

host communities

25%

Around one sixth of **Venezuelan migrants and refugees** have a **health condition** that **affects their lives** on a daily basis, compared to around one-fifth) of **Ecuadorian nationals**.

15%

Venezuelans

21%

Ecuadorian

Misconceptions

Most Ecuadorians believe that **Venezuelan migrants and refugees** have a **negative impact** on the **economy**, overburden state services, and push up crime. Yet, in truth, they...

Cause an impact of less than **1%** point of GDP

Represent fewer than **1%** of the total number of Ecuador's health, education, and social services users.

Are associated with a **period of low violent crime in Ecuador** robberies and homicide rates are at their lowest for five years, including in areas where migrant populations are prevalent.

If **Venezuela's migrant and refugee workers** had **jobs** consistent with their **skill levels**, the result would be an **increase** in GDP of about two percent ...

... yet only **20%** percent have managed to register their titles with the Senescyt.

Opportunities