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RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN CITIES ACROSS THE AMERICAS



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The Organization of American States is the region's leading political forum, gathering all independent nations in the Western Hemisphere to collectively promote democracy, strengthen human rights, foster peace, security and cooperation, and advance common interests. Since its inception, the OAS has had the primary objective of preventing conflict and providing political stability, social inclusion, and prosperity in the region through dialogue and collective actions such as cooperation and mediation.

Reception and Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Cities Across the Americas

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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Name
CAS	Health Care Centers (Colombia) In Spanish: <i>Centros de Atención Sanitaria</i>
CDMX	Mexico City (Mexico) In Spanish: <i>Ciudad de México</i>
CLIP	Calgary Local Immigration Partnership (Canada)
COMAR	Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (Mexico) In Spanish: <i>Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados</i>
CRAI	Immigrant Attention and Referral Center (Brazil) In Portuguese: <i>Centro de Referência e Atendimento para Imigrantes</i>
CURP	Unique Population Registry Code (Mexico) In Spanish: <i>Clave Única de Registro de Población</i>
DEM	Department of Foreign Affairs and Migration (Chile) In Spanish: <i>Dirección de Extranjería y Migración</i>
DPVIH	HIV-AIDS Prevention and Control Division (Peru) In Spanish: <i>Dirección de Prevención y Control de VIH-SIDA</i>
ESL	English as a Second Language
GCFE	Global Concessional Financing Facility
GIFMM	Interagency Group on Mixed Migratory Flows (Colombia) In Spanish: <i>Grupo Interagencial de Flujos Migratorios Mixtos</i>
HIAS	Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IAT	Immigrant Advisory Table (Canada)
ICAFE	Costa Rican Coffee Institute (Costa Rica) In Spanish: <i>Instituto del Café de Costa Rica</i>
IDPAC	District Institute of Participation and Communal Action (Colombia) In Spanish: <i>Instituto Distrital de la Participación y Acción Comunal</i>
ILDA	Open Data Latin American Initiative In Spanish: <i>Iniciativa Latinoamericana para los Datos Abiertos</i>
ILO	International Labor Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee

IRCC	Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (Canada)
LEC	Local Employment Centers (Canada)
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LIPs	Local Immigration Partnerships (Canada)
MMC	Migrants Municipal Council (Brazil)
MOIA	Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (United States)
MUMI	Migration Museum (Uruguay) In Spanish: <i>Museo de las Migraciones</i>
OAS	Organization of American States
PADF	Pan American Development Foundation
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PANI	National Children's Trust (Costa Rica) In Spanish: <i>Patronato Nacional de la Infancia</i>
PIL	Local Integration Program (México) In Spanish: <i>Programa de Integración Local</i>
PIM	Comprehensive Migration Policy (Colombia) In Spanish: <i>Política Integral Migratoria</i>
PRIIME	Employment Integration Assistance Program for Immigrants and Visible Minorities (Quebec, Canada) In French: <i>Programme d'aide à l'intégration des Immigrants et des Minorités Visibles en Emploi</i>
PRIMES	Population Registration and Identity Management Eco-System
R4V	Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela
RCA	Refugee Cash Assistance (United States)
SDDE	District Secretariat for Economic Development (Colombia) In Spanish: <i>Secretaría Distrital para el Desarrollo Económico</i>
SEDEREC	Secretariat for Rural Development and Equity for Communities (Mexico) In Spanish: <i>Secretaría de Desarrollo Rural y Equidad para las Comunidades</i>
SEERPM	Secretariat of Ethnic Racial Equity and Migrant Populations (Uruguay) In Spanish: <i>Secretaría de Equidad Étnico Racial y Poblaciones Migrantes</i>
SFA	State Family Assistance (United States)
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPOs	Service Provider Organizations (Canada)
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (United States)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
UWI	University of West Indies

Preface

Current migration dynamics in the Americas are clearly different from what they were a few decades ago. Inequalities and recent socio-economic, political, and environmental crises have given rise to new migratory movements and a regional human mobility panorama that urgently requires further study.

It is evident that local actors are at the center of this new context. They are often the ones who provide initial assistance to people arriving in their territories and they have the opportunity to offer support to ensure their well-being, security, and respect and safeguarding of their rights; and in particular, to accompany them—through public policies, programs, projects, and services—in reception and integration processes.

In the Americas, the issue of human mobility is increasingly a top priority for local actors. Some places continue to be traditional destinations and have a long history of facilitating the reception and integration of migrants and refugees while others are just starting out on this path. Each has much to offer and, at the same time, much to learn. This is what this report is about.

Through an institutional lens and based on more than 200 interviews, we share the reception and integration challenges faced by local governments and civil society in 109 localities across 25 countries in the Americas. We also share numerous and varied case studies that provide a snapshot of the various policy responses that support the reception and socio-economic, socio-cultural, and political integration of asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants within their host communities.

This novel regional study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which also allowed us to address the response capacity of local actors in times of emergency.

It became evident throughout the course of this research that local governments do not operate in a vacuum. Federal governments undoubtedly influence the local level while international and civil society organizations play an important role in assisting people in situations of human mobility in the localities studied.

The report is a promising preamble for an informed, data-driven, and evidence-based conversation with local actors. Such a dialogue should promote action and make it possible to address the challenges identified, increase local capacity, and gather applicable lessons learned from practices that have worked in different contexts.

We are certain that the perspectives provided by the 231 people interviewed, as well as by the partner institutions of this project (OAS, PADF, IOM, UNHCR, Toronto Metropolitan University, ILDA, and MG Group) are the starting point for launching new programs and policies to support millions of people who cross borders believing that greater rights and a better and more dignified life is possible for all people across the Americas.

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Introduction

There are approximately 281 million international migrants (3.6% of the population) and 89.3 million forcibly displaced people worldwide (1 in 6 people in the world are displaced).¹ In the Americas, there are an estimated 73.5 million international migrants, including 58.7 million in North America and 12.5 million in Latin America and the Caribbean.² Additionally, in the region, there are approximately 7.2 million internally displaced persons, 2.8 million asylum seekers, 1.2 million refugees, and 100,000 returnees.³

In 2020, the migratory corridor from Latin America and the Caribbean to North America, and the intra-regional corridors within Latin America and the Caribbean were among the top 10 migrant corridors in the world. The former received the second largest number of migrants in the world (~25 million people) while the latter received the tenth largest number (~10 million people).⁴ It is likely that for 2021 and 2022 these numbers are significantly higher due to lifting of COVID-19 mobility restrictions.

The Americas are the epicenter of some of the most complex mixed migratory movements in recent decades. Some of the most notable migratory processes currently taking place in the Americas include: the massive emigration of Venezuelans mainly to South American countries; the Central American migration to Mexico and the United States, including the so-called “caravans;” the historic migration of Nicaraguans to Costa Rica; the high levels of forced displacement of Colombians both internally and externally; the migration of Cubans and Haitians to and through multiple countries in the region; the migration of people from Bolivia and Paraguay—and to a lesser extent, Peru—mainly to Argentina and Chile; and the growing numbers of extra-continental migrants from Africa and the Middle East crossing the region to reach the United States and sometimes settling in South and Central America.

Local actors are key to responding to these migration trends. Like members of their host communities, migrants and refugees also seek to access services and programs offered by municipalities where they live. As a result, mass migration dynamics across the Americas has created challenges for many local governments as municipalities have had to assume new responsibilities to address increasingly complex migration dynamics. This has been an even greater challenge for small and low-income localities, which have experienced considerable changes in their demographic composition.

Likewise, many localities have experienced a change in migratory dynamics in the past couple of years. Some localities that used to be places of transit are now receiving migrants who arrive there to settle permanently. Others where there were minimal arrivals are now receiving more and more migrants and refugees. Traditional destinations are no longer the only ones where migrants and refugees seek to settle and integrate.

Therefore, more and more localities are facing new challenges in the reception and integration of migrant and refugee populations, especially in promoting intercultural integration in communities

¹ IOM, World Migration Report 2022, eds Marie McAuliffe and Anna Triandafyllidou, Geneva, Switzerland, 2021, <https://publications.iom.int/books/informe-sobre-las-migraciones-en-el-mundo-2022>

² Migration data portal, https://www.migrationdataportal.org/data?amp%3Bm=2&%3Bfocus=profile&i=stock_abs_&t=2020&m=2

³ UNHCR, Global Report 2021, Regional Summary for the Americas, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/americas>

⁴ Clare Menozzi, “Regional trends for international migrant stocks and SDG indicator 10.7.2,” presentation, UN DESA, 2022

where diversity has been increasing. Given this situation, there is not only an enormous variety in the responses of local actors to the reception and integration of migrants and refugees, but there is also an opportunity to learn about specific challenges and good practices seen at the local level.

This report seeks to take advantage of this opportunity. Firstly, the report highlights the challenges in the reception and socio-economic, socio-cultural, and political integration of migrants and refugees at the local level. It also provides key information for national and local actors who want to improve their policies, programs, and other initiatives in this area. Additionally, it provides the most comprehensive overview to date of the situation of reception and integration of migrants and refugees in select localities, including information from 25 countries and 109 localities in the region. The report does not seek to present a comprehensive analysis of each locality included, but rather an overview based on a series of local responses to current trends and challenges associated with human mobility in the Americas.

Certainly, the focus on local dynamics is not entirely new. In the past two decades, migration literature has increasingly incorporated city-based perspectives. There has also been increasing focus—in policy analysis and practical initiatives—on local challenges, actors, and solutions for a wide range of public policy areas, and migration has been no exception. While this approach has already been applied to research, collaborative platforms, and local programs, this report provides one of the first regional reviews of local migration institutions and policies in the Americas on a continental scale.

Taking a local approach, the report addresses areas of reception and integration of migrants and refugees. When speaking of reception, the authors of this report refer to a set of short-term policies, measures, and decisions aimed at providing primary care upon the arrival of migrants and refugees in a territory, satisfying their basic needs, guaranteeing their referral to appropriate processes, and safeguarding their human rights in accordance with international and inter-American standards. Reception services include humanitarian assistance, such as shelter, food, emergency healthcare, transportation, and orientation on regularization processes and access to social programs.

Although there is no agreed definition of integration, IOM has broadly defined it as: “the process by which migrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and as groups. [Integration] refers to a two-way process of adaptation by migrants and host societies. [...] It does imply consideration of the rights and obligations of migrants and host societies, of access to different kinds of services and the labor market, and of identification and respect for a core set of values that bind migrants and host communities in a common purpose.”⁵

The integration of migrants and refugees is a dynamic process. According to the Canadian Institute for Identities and Migration (CIIM), immigrant integration is visualized as a “two-way street,” where there is a metaphorical meeting of the migrant and the receiving population somewhere in the middle of the street. The integration process aims at achieving relative parity with the general population in key areas (i.e., economic, social, health, civic, and democratic participation). This also assumes that the receiving population will make adjustments to facilitate the integration process.⁶ Narrowing the gaps for social participation and ensuring equitable access to services are also critical to successful integration.

In addition to the above, other concepts related to integration are social inclusion and social cohesion. Social inclusion refers to the inclusion of migrants and their full participation in the economic, social, cultural, and political spheres of the receiving communities. Social cohesion, however, refers to concepts such as the fight against discrimination, the fight against xenophobia, and the promotion of mutual understanding.⁷

⁵ OIM, Glossary on Migration, 2nd edition, 2011, <https://www.corteidh.or.cr/sitios/observaciones/11/anexo5.pdf>

⁶ Canadian Institute for Identities and Migration (CIIM), Indexing Integration, 2nd edition, p. 2, <https://www.integrationindex.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Indexing-Integration.pdf>

⁷ IOM, Global Compact Thematic Paper, 2017, https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/our_work/ODG/GCM/IOM-Thematic-Paper-Integration-and-Social-Cohesion.pdf

For the purposes of the research and this report, the term “integration” is used to refer to a multidimensional dynamic that integrates a diversity of processes, policies, actions, and experiences aimed at promoting settlement and a sense of belonging, full social and economic inclusion, parity, civic participation, social recognition, and political involvement that guarantees the achievement of a dignified life based on the full exercise of the human rights of people who settle in a new country of residence. Furthermore, it is important to conceive that adequate integration of newcomers into a society does not necessarily require that such settlement be regarded as definitive—a condition that is difficult to know and prove.

Further, in addition to the various topics that should be covered by a comprehensive policy aimed at the social, economic, political, and cultural inclusion of migrants in host societies, an intercultural integration policy must be developed. This, which also constitutes a comprehensive set of policies and initiatives by several governmental tiers, including the local level, is a multidirectional process. It is a matter of fully internalizing the diversity—cultural, religious, gender, ethnic, among others—of a society that must guarantee coexistence and social cohesion, based on the safeguarding of the rights of all the people who make up a multicultural society.

With regard to migrants and refugees, it is possible to organize integration policies into four groups: (i) policies of a universal nature for the entire population, which includes migrants and refugees and considers their specific needs; (ii) policies aimed at people in situations of vulnerability, with migrants and refugees being a focus; (iii) policies aimed at different social groups, including migrants and refugees, but based on other identity aspects, such as children, women, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people, laborers, among others; and (iv) specific policies for the migrant and refugee population.

It is important to note that the integration, inclusion, and protection of equal rights of migrants and refugees have progressed differently in the global North and South, gaining more space in public and theoretical debates depending on the political and social context of each region. And it is for this reason, perhaps, that definitions of reception and integration are understood in different ways depending on the country and locality, and recognition of their importance does not always exist.

Generally speaking, traditional destinations tend to have a greater recognition of the importance of receiving and integrating migrants and refugees. However, such recognition is not always perceived in border towns or new destinations. In these cases, the response to migratory movements is generally limited to specific and unstructured actions to process people or provide limited humanitarian assistance. Nevertheless, in some border towns or localities that have begun to receive migrant and refugee populations in recent years, there is a growing trend that acknowledges that the reception policies need to be structured, stable, and planned, instead of demand driven. Thus, reception policies in some cases also include relocation opportunities and incorporate elements of integration policies, such as access to health, regularization, and orientation. Some new destinations have also developed structured and rigorous responses, even more so than some traditional destinations.

In countries where national migration policy is generally well established, national authorities recognize the importance of reception and integration services at the local level. In others, actions at the local level are largely determined by a lack of priority at the national level. Nevertheless, in practically all cases, major challenges have been identified in the coherence between policies at different governance levels.

Three central tensions between national and local policies were identified. The first concerns the effects of national migration policies of containment, restriction, or dissuasion without regular channels for entry or the renewal of certain migratory statuses, which consequently generate instability. This has repercussions on local governments who faces challenges in the identification, reception, and care of migrants and refugees, as well as in their integration and social and economic inclusion in the medium and long term. Many local actors pointed out that difficulties in accessing a regular or official migratory status was as one of the main challenges in their localities. Effective

coordination to facilitate regularization processes has been highlighted as a central element of the contributions that local governments can make.

The second tension refers to national policies or regulations that restrict access to social services based on migratory status, which has a considerable impact on the inclusion and integration of migrants and refugees at the local level.

The third tension relates to when narratives or discourses of discrimination and exclusion are prevalent at the national level, resulting in acts of xenophobia that impact the local level. Some local government officials underscored the impact that negative narratives on migration at the national level had on their work, making it more difficult to promote coexistence, social cohesion, and conflict prevention, and propagating stereotypes, prejudices, or misrepresentations of migrants and refugees.

Despite these differences, tensions, and limitations, local governments are increasingly at the forefront of the response to new and persistent migratory movements, but they do not operate in a vacuum. On many occasions, their actions appear to be closely linked to those of civil society, including religious and/or social and humanitarian organizations, as well as international organizations. In countries with less migratory experience, the presence of non-state actors is even stronger for the identification of priorities and the implementation of programs, given the lack of resources and experience of public institutions (both national and local) in this area. In these cases, the challenge lies in how the assistance of international and local civil society actors inadvertently results in the lack of processes and initiatives to strengthen competent government agencies through stable, comprehensive, and sustainable public policies, which are key to the inclusion and integration of migrants and refugees in the medium and long term.

This report explores the diversity of challenges and local responses to this complex, varied, and dynamic regional phenomena.

Methodology

This report is built on a comparative methodology that utilizes primary sources from the localities surveyed to identify the dynamics of reception and integration in those locations. The main data collection technique consisted of semi-structured qualitative interviews. Eight interviews were conducted with regional specialists on the subject and 231 interviews were conducted in 109 locations in 25 countries of the Americas over the course of 2021. Standardized tools were developed and used for data collection, processing, and systematization.

These interviews provided most of the information for the report and addressed the following topics: characterization of the migrant population in that locality, challenges in the response and availability of services for that population, and programmatic and policy responses at the local level regarding the reception and integration of migrants and refugees.

Of the 231 interviews conducted (Table 1), 45% were in South America, 22% in North America, 21% in Central America and Mexico, and 12% in the Caribbean. Of the total number of interviews, one third (34%) corresponded to civil servants, followed by members of civil society organizations (21%), national public officials (13%), members of international organizations (9%), members of local communities or community-based organizations (8%), and other categories (15%).

►► **Table 1.**
Profile of People Interviewed

Region	%	Sex of Respondents		Time in Office	%	Role	%
		Female	Male				
North America	22%	55%	45%	Less than 1 year	11%	Civil servant	34%
Central America and Mexico	21%			1 year to 3 years	37%	Member of a civil society organization	21%
South America	45%			Over 3 years to 5 years	24%	National public official	13%
Caribbean	12%			More than 5 years	28%	Member of an international organization	9%
						Member of a local community or community-based organization	8%
						Member of a migrant, refugee, or diaspora organization	6%
						Member of a religious organization	4%
						Other	5%

Source: compiled by the authors based on interviews conducted for this study.

The 109 localities (Annex I) that make up the study were chosen for their relevance as transit or destination localities for migrants and refugees in each of the 25 countries. These include capital cities, secondary cities, and border towns. Their characteristics vary in several aspects: from megacities such as Mexico City, new migratory destinations such as Puerto Montt in Chile, to remote locations such as Bajo Chiquito, near the Darien Gap on the Panama-Colombia border.

To conduct the interviews, we first located relevant people in each locality based on pre-existing knowledge, an exhaustive survey of websites, and using established networks including the research team's own contacts in the field, as well as those of partners including OAS, IOM, and UNHCR. Afterwards, the snowball method was used. It is important to mention that since the interviews were conducted in 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic context may have affected them.

The information collected in the 231 interviews was entered and processed in an analytical digital platform to quantify the findings and thus identify patterns and anomalies. Based on the information captured through the interviews (Annex II), 217 reception and integration policies for the migrant population implemented at the local level were analyzed. It is necessary to emphasize that the analysis of policies is neither exhaustive nor representative, but rather is used to develop an initial characterization of existing policies at the local level.

In addition to studying the results by subregion, geographic and temporal classifications were developed for each locality. The localities were categorized according to their geographic location (border, non-border, and locality in SIDS) and according to each locality's migration dynamics since 2010 (changing or stable). This classification is used for the analysis when the research results demonstrate specific patterns according to these geographical classifications, so it is not consistently used throughout the study.

In addition to the interviews, secondary sources were used, such as other literature on the subject, policy documents, information produced and published by the government agencies themselves, and other sources (Annex III).

The selected methodology provides a regional perspective on the subject from the perspective of people who are in direct contact with the challenges and opportunities posed by the reception and integration of migrants and refugees at the local level. The study does not foresee providing an in-depth analysis of each locality or present information from the perspective of migrants and refugees themselves, since the methodology chosen would not be adequate to do so.

Structure of the Report

The first chapter presents six key factors proposed for the proper reception and integration of migrants and refugees, based on the findings of the report. These six factors will be supported by case studies and concrete examples throughout the report.

The following chapter addresses the institutional context of the local governments included in the study. This context includes assessments of the management and capacities of these entities with respect to migrants and refugees. It also includes an examination of existing local policies and programs for migrant and refugee populations.

The third chapter addresses the subject of reception. It analyzes the current understanding of reception and how it varies by locality and country, the challenges localities face in receiving migrants and asylum seekers, what is known about what works for a proper reception, and what policy and programmatic responses exist at the local level in the Americas. This chapter includes a greater emphasis on border towns as they are often the first to come into contact with these populations.

The following three chapters maintain a similar structure to the previous one, but focus on the following topics: socio-economic integration, socio-cultural integration, and political integration. Each chapter includes different nuances and case studies with valuable information on how successful policies and practices have been implemented.

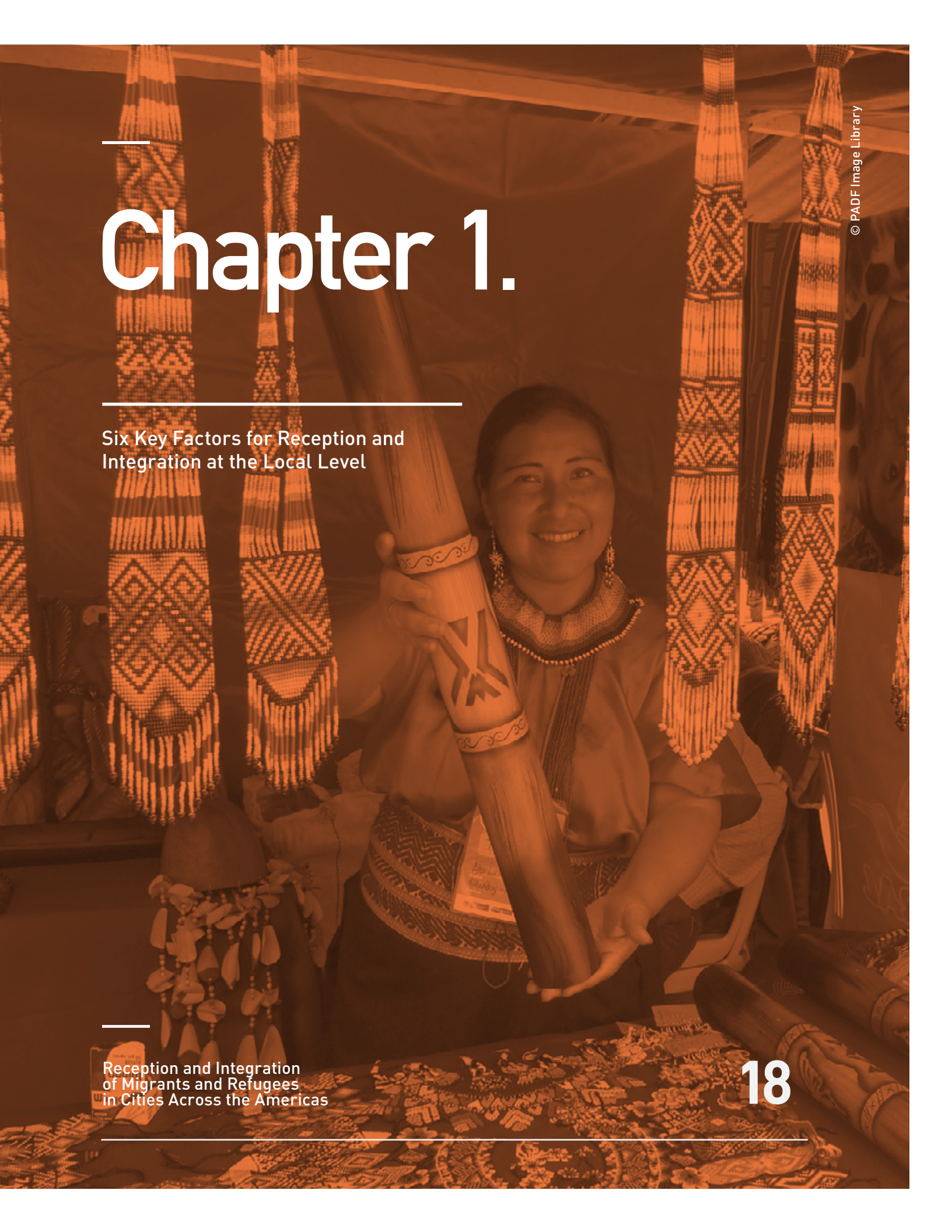
The seventh chapter highlights reception and integration policies and practices adopted in times of emergency, such as those implemented in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report closes with a concluding chapter that discusses key findings and policy implications.

Chapter 1.

Six Key Factors for Reception and Integration at the Local Level

Reception and Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Cities Across the Americas



Six Key Factors for Reception and Integration at the Local Level

This study provides evidence of existing policies and practices for the reception and integration of migrants and refugees in more than a hundred cities and localities throughout the Americas. It also reveals that in various localities, and for various reasons, it is still necessary to foster greater recognition of the role of local governments in the area of human mobility. In addition, the study reveals that one of the main challenges concerns how to design, implement, and finance these policies and each of the programs, actions, and practices that are part of them.

A considerable number of the 109 localities analyzed in the study have adopted successful practices and implemented policies for the proper reception and integration of migrants and refugees within their communities. It is from these experiences that six key factors for reception and integration at the local level emerge, which will be reflected in case studies and examples throughout the report. These are:

- 1. Adaptation:** It is essential to adapt policy responses to local needs and priorities in order to ensure an adequate reception and integration of migrants and refugees. To this end, it is essential to create more spaces for participation migrants, refugees, and host communities, which can inform the design and implementation of public policies.
- 2. Training:** Along with ongoing training focused on regulations and human rights, it is important to expand training opportunities to focus on practical aspects aimed at the design and implementation of local policies and programs, based on human rights principles and standards as well as other basic objectives, such as sustainable development goals.
- 3. Inclusiveness:** It is very important that policies facilitate the inclusion of migrants and refugees in existing services, such as education, health, social protection, and labor market integration, to name a few. Beyond emergency humanitarian assistance (carried out through local, national, and international actors), integration processes require universal access to services for the whole community, strengthening these services, and, at the same time, avoiding separate and parallel services which could potentially lead to xenophobic attitudes.
- 4. Communication:** It is important to carry out communications campaigns specifically aimed at migrants and refugees, which frequently encounter barriers in identifying and accessing services. These programs can be strengthened through the participation and interaction of civil society organizations that work with these populations, as well as associations and groups organized by migrants and refugees themselves, taking advantage of their networks and digital platforms.
- 5. Partnerships:** It is necessary to establish sustainable and strategic partnerships with other national and local actors, such as civil society organizations and international organizations.

It is also important to link reception policies with integration policies to guarantee human rights and a dignified life for migrants and refugees.

- 6. Regularization and Identification:** Although regularization processes depend on national governments, they were one of the greatest needs that emerged in this study. However, even in contexts where there are practical difficulties or formal obstacles to accessing a residence permit at the national level, local governments can develop various measures to register and provide local identification to people who have arrived and/or settled within their communities, thus facilitating access to services and opportunities.



Chapter 2.

Local Governance and Participation
of Migrants and Refugees

Reception and Integration
of Migrants and Refugees
in Cities Across the Americas

Local Governance and Participation of Migrants and Refugees

This chapter uses an institutional lens to study local dynamics and to review local actors' responses for the reception and integration of migrants and refugees within their communities. As seen in several reports published on various cities in the region over the last decade, a central finding of this report is that, in the majority of countries studied, local governments are increasingly incorporating migration into their public agenda. This is showcased through various public policies and programs that include and/or target migration issues as well as in the institutional frameworks of local governments.

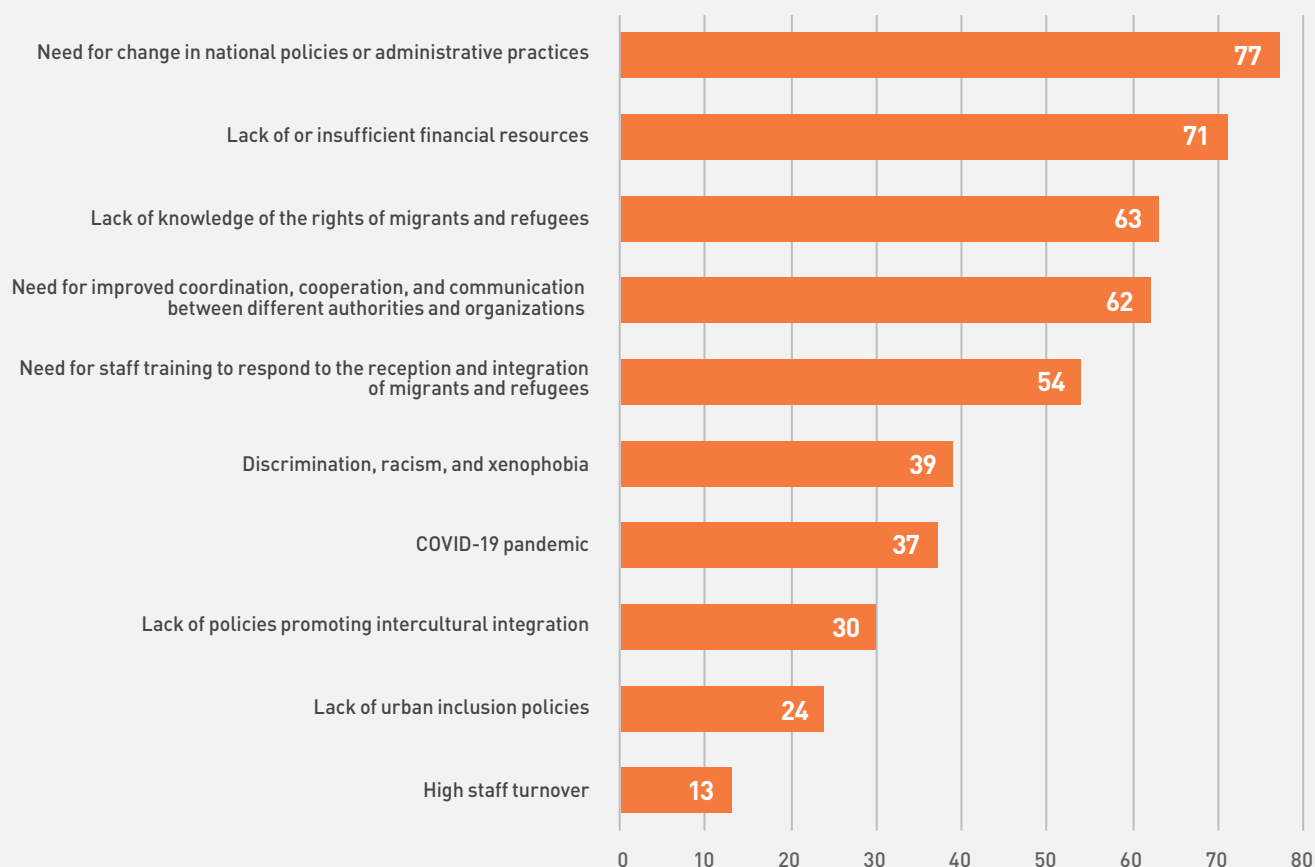
The challenges faced by local governments vary significantly from place to place and country to country. In addition to these challenges, this chapter addresses three institutional characteristics that determine a local government's ability to respond to migration issues: 1) the existence of a focal point or department in charge of migration; 2) the participation of migrants, refugees, and host communities in the design of relevant policies; and 3) the training of local officials on migration, migrant and refugees rights, and similar issues. Finally, the chapter concludes with a general description of the public policy response observed in the study.

Main Challenges

In terms of challenges, this study reveals that the main challenge faced by local governments across the Americas is "the need for change in national policies or administrative practices" (Graph 1). This remained the most mentioned challenge in all subregions except for South America where it was second after "insufficient financial resources to guarantee institutional response."



▶▶ **Graph 1.**
Main Challenges Identified in Selected Localities



Number of localities in which a topic was mentioned as one of their top three challenges.

These findings confirm that local actors are indeed limited by national policies and, in many cases, by a lack of or insufficient resources, or by insufficient knowledge of migrant and refugee rights. To some extent, this explains the important role that civil society and international organizations play in addressing the emergency needs of migrants and refugees, but at the same time this generates another series of challenges in the sustainability of these responses. There are cases in which the plans developed by international organizations respond to specific or emergent needs that do not necessarily address the structural aspects of migratory crises. This makes them effective in addressing emergency needs (such as shelter and healthcare), but not in providing sustainable alternatives beyond emergency situations.

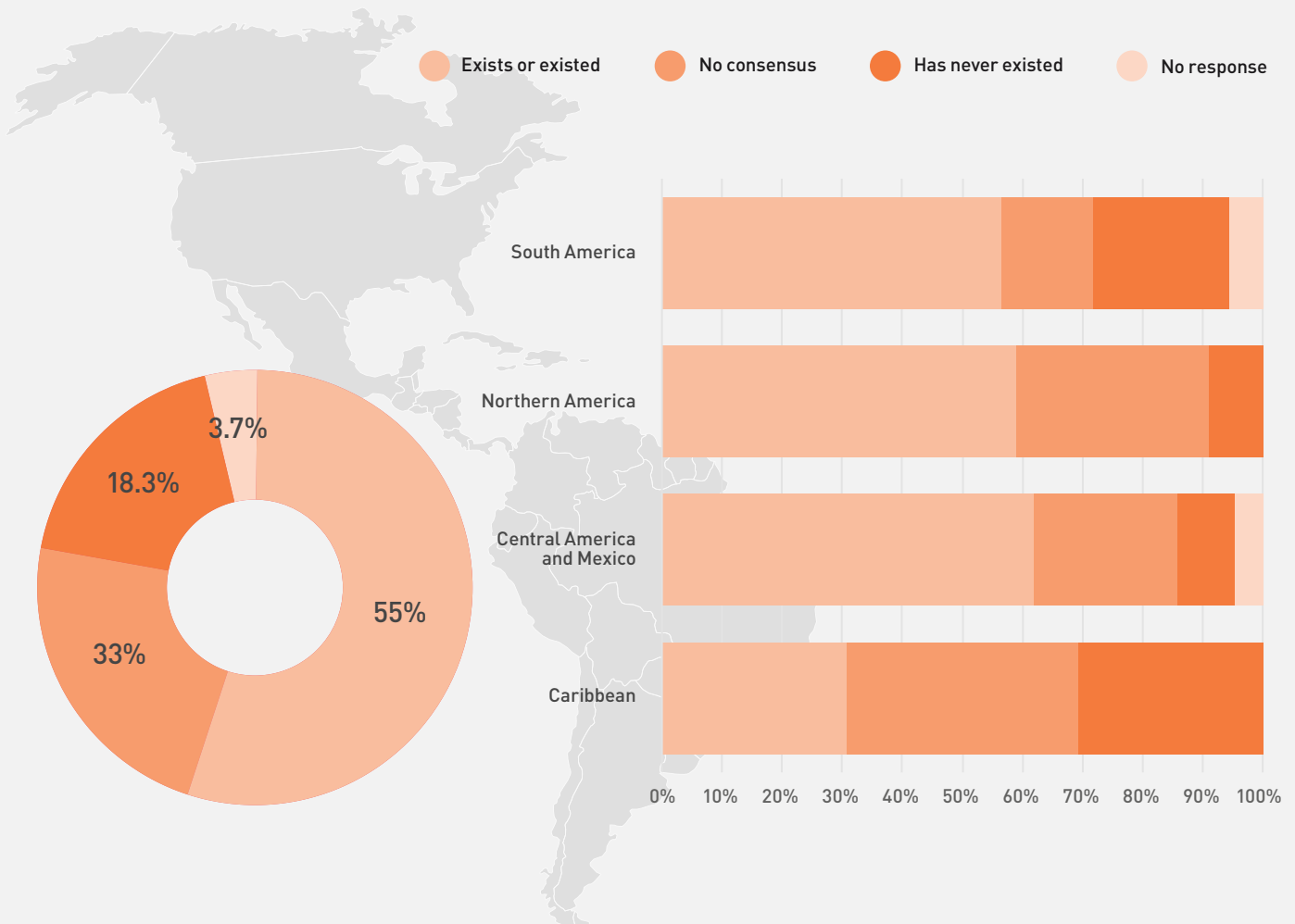
There are, however, specific strategies and measures that can be designed or implemented by local actors that seek to address migration challenges in a more sustainable manner, adapting the response to the specific characteristics of each locality. In the words of a local government official in the United States interviewed for this study, “many localities and state governments do not recognize the immediate power they can have in improving the lives of migrants and refugees in their localities.” Those localities that have more successfully dealt with migration challenges within their communities have had a focal point or department in charge for migration; fostered the participation of migrants, refugees, and host communities in the design of relevant policies; and adequately trained their staff on topics relevant to the reception and integration of migrants and refugees, as further explained below.



Migration Focal Point or Department

In 55% of the localities studied, a focal point on migration exists or existed. However, as migration is a relatively new issue on the local public agenda in many of the cities in this study, a wide variety of institutions were identified. There was also a wide range of understandings on what constitutes a focal point, department, or agency in charge of dealing specifically with migrants and refugees and coordinating with other relevant actors. Relatedly, in 23% of the localities analyzed, there was no agreement among those interviewed on the existence of a focal point (Graph 2).

►► **Graph 2.**
Existence of a Migration Focal Point or Department



Some regional trends were also observed. In 62% of the cities studied in Central America and Mexico, there is a local focal point specifically responsible for assisting migrants and refugees and facilitating coordination with other areas in local government. There are no major differences according to the type of locality, although there is a slightly greater presence of these agencies in capital cities, and relatively fewer institutions in border towns. The existence of these institutions is relatively new as they have been created and evolved with the emergence of new, larger, and more diverse migratory flows in the region.

In South America, there is or had been a focal point for migration in 57% of the localities, and two types of institutions are observed. In border towns with less migratory history and impacted by the massive migration of Venezuelans and other recent migratory movements, it is common to find a coordination desk among authorities—such as the Intersectoral Working Table for Migration Management in Peru—which, in general, depends at some level on the support of international organizations.

Meanwhile, in cities with a well-established history of migration, such as some capital cities and a number of others (for example, Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Rosario, San Pablo, and various municipalities in the metropolitan region of Santiago), there are more institutionalized and specialized focal points, although with considerable differences among them in terms of their years of existence, the scope of their initiatives, their impact, and several other aspects. In some cases, focal points are part of a pre-existing government agency (such as a social development or human rights agency), while in others, entire departments have been created exclusively for migration issues, or to address various groups within agencies dedicated to intercultural integration (as is the case in Montevideo).

The Caribbean localities had the highest number of cases (31% of the localities studied) in which it was indicated that there is not and has not been a focal point. This may reflect the fact that in the Caribbean countries studied there is not always a clear local-national dynamic. Often, national authorities and stakeholders are the main actors at the local level, and thus there are no specific local reception and integration policies.



Participation

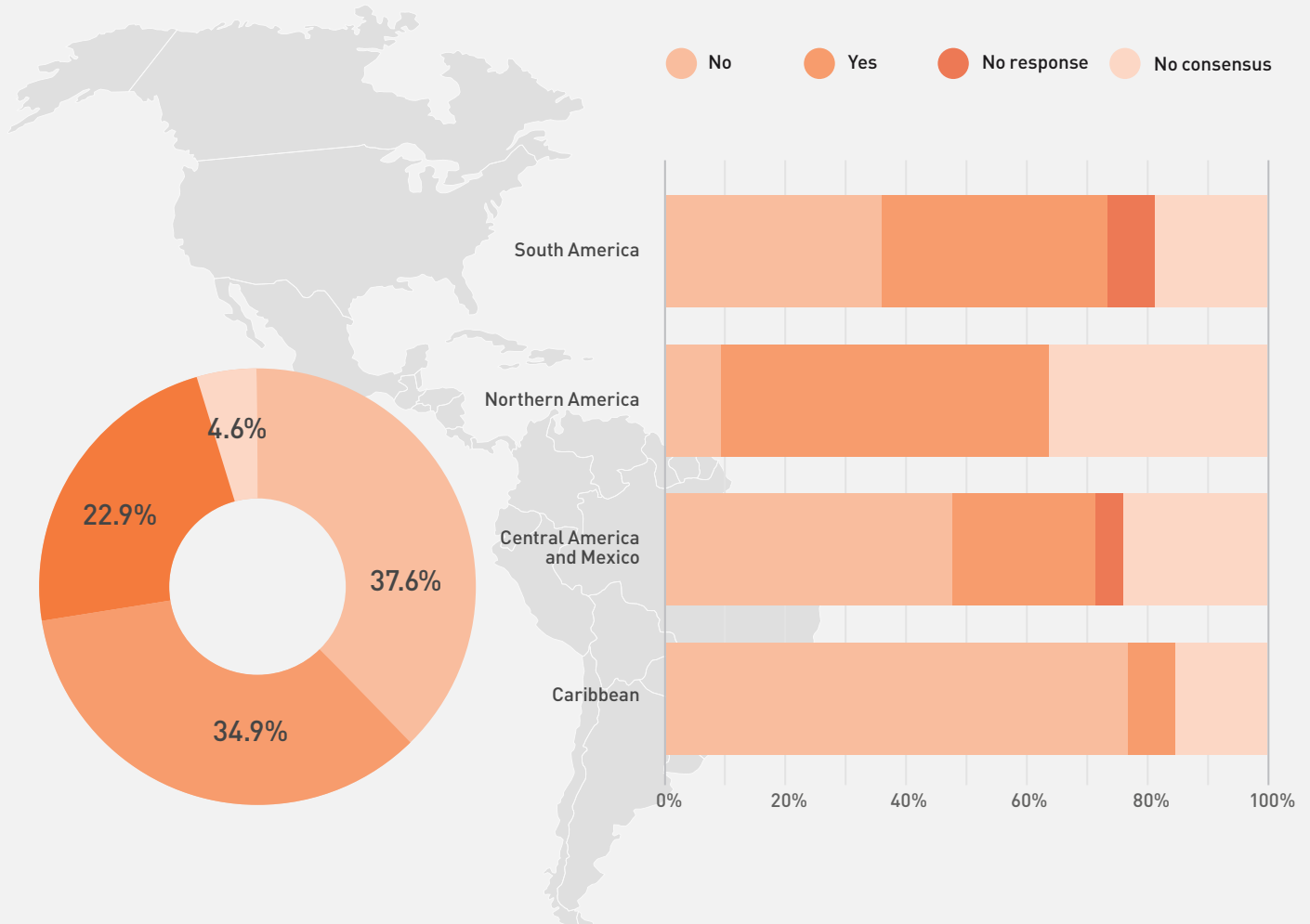
The study addressed two instances of local participation: one was the participation of migrants and refugees in the design of policies and programs that affect them, and the other was the participation of host communities in initiatives related to the reception and integration of migrants and refugees within their communities. According to the study results, participation measures for migrants and refugees exist in 35% of the localities and they do not exist or there is no consensus on whether they exist in 61% of localities (Graph 3).

An important difference is evident when analyzing the results by subregion. In North America, there are measures for the participation of migrants and refugees in the design of policies that affect them in 55% of the localities studied, which is higher than the regional average of 35%. In South America, 38% of the localities analyzed had such measures in place while only 24% of localities in Central America and Mexico had such measures in place. The Caribbean had the weakest levels of participation measures, with them identified in only 8% of localities in the subregion.

Although there is an evident gap in the existence of such measures, they are not always effective, even in those cases where they do exist. For example, in Canada, participants who reported the existence of programs for the inclusion of migrants and refugees in program design noted that these initiatives

do not always result in real participation with direct impact on immigration policies. Some of the initiatives that were mentioned relate to surveys with migrants about the labor market in cities and provinces or programs to promote citizenship and the Canadian political system among immigrant youth, but no specific policies were cited in which migrants and refugees were directly involved in the design or implementation of any programs.

▶▶ **Graph 3.**
Existence of Participation Measures for Migrants and Refugees



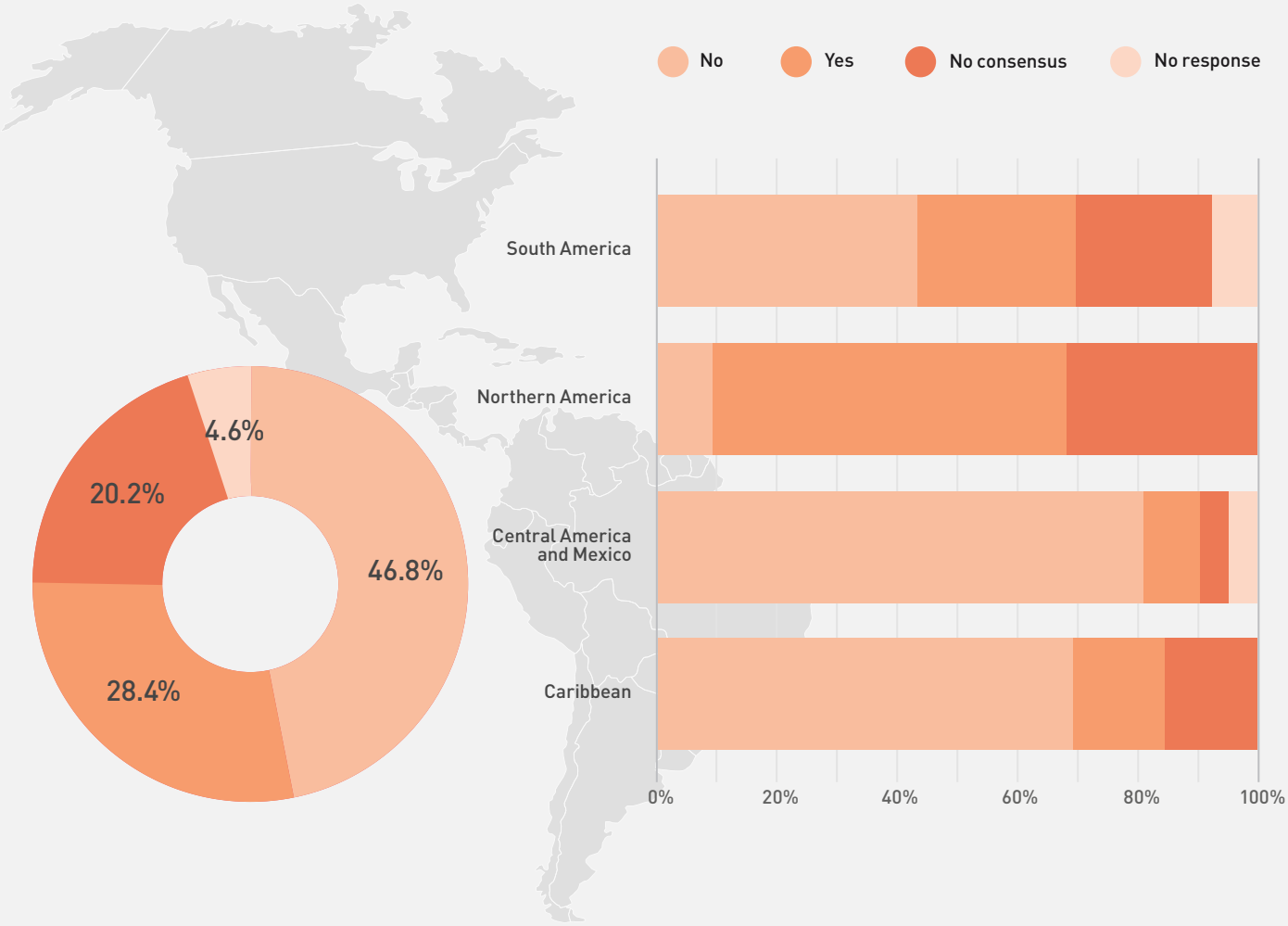
Based on the interviews conducted, measures to facilitate the participation of host communities in the design and implementation of policies and programs aimed at the migrant and refugee population (Graph 4) were identified in 28% of the localities. No such measures were available in 47% of the localities, in 20% there was no consensus among the people interviewed, and in 5% of interviewees did not know or did not answer the question.

There were also regional differences in this case. In North America, the existence of these measures was reported in 59% of localities, while in all other subregions this percentage did not exceed 26%. Given the long and continuous history of immigration to Canada and the United States, many

government agencies and NGOs are staffed by migrants or people of migrant origin. Therefore, there is participation of migrants within these institutions, which may lead to greater efforts to include consultations with these populations in the design and implementation of programs.

In Central America and Mexico and in the Caribbean, a lower incidence (10% and 15%, respectively) of participation measures for the non-migrant population in the planning and implementation of migration policies and programs was observed.

Graph 4.
Existence of Participation Measures for Host Communities



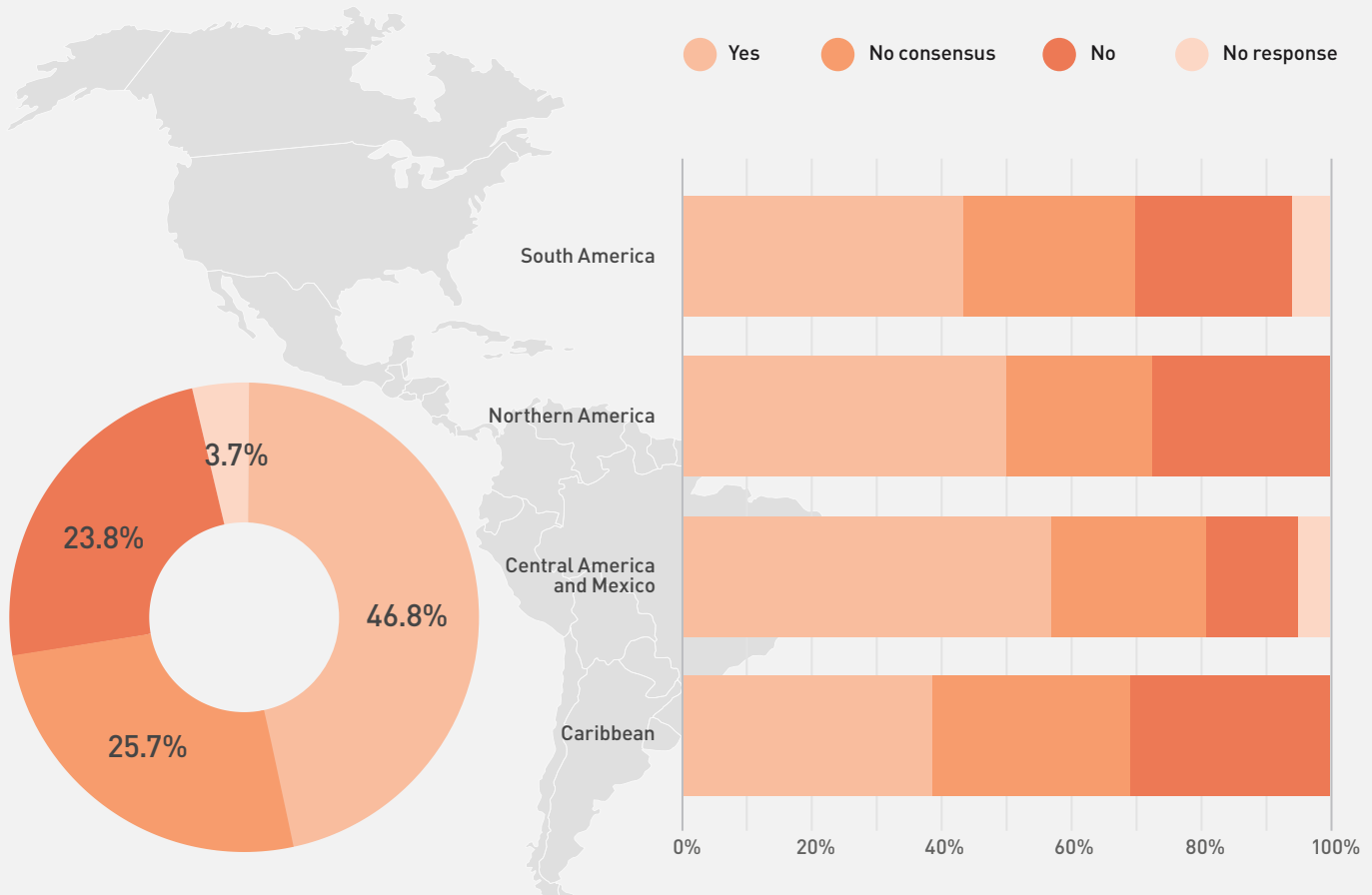


Training

Compared to the previous two topics, a greater number of localities (47%) reported having trained their officials on their responsibilities and the rights of migrants and refugees. In addition, no trainings were carried out in 24% of the localities and there was no consensus on whether trainings existed in 26% of them (Graph 5).

In Central America and Mexico, 57% of localities reported having trainings for local government officials, exceeding the percentage for other regions. To some extent, this result is linked to several years of the implementation of technical assistance programs by international agencies in the north of Central America, which include training components. It is important to emphasize that training tends to focus on regulations and rights, a fundamental aspect for strengthening reception, inclusion, and integration policies. Nevertheless, there is also a need to incorporate practical aspects of policy and program design and implementation, based on a rights-based approach and inclusive development.

►► **Graph 5.**
Existence of Trainings for Local Government Staff



International organizations are the leading entities providing trainings to local government staff. In 75% of the cases, trainings were offered by IOM (16%), UNHCR (14%), an unspecified UN entity (32%), UNICEF (13%), and the OAS (1%). Other actors identified include bilateral cooperation entities, such as USAID and PADF from the United States of America, GZ from Germany, and NRC from Norway. Independent non-profit organizations such as the ICRC, Caritas, and the Refugee Education Foundation were also identified, albeit to a lesser extent.

In addition, the majority of training opportunities identified (42%) focused on “policies and regulations” and “human rights,” thus identifying a need for more practical trainings that contribute to the development of daily activities. About 40% of training opportunities identified focused on “procedures and care guidelines” and there were also trainings focused on specific topics, such as human trafficking and smuggling (18%), domestic violence (4%), labor and entrepreneurship (4%), and health and sanitation (3%).



Institutional Trends at the Local Level

In addition to the trends observed regarding the existence of focal points, participatory mechanisms, and training opportunities, three important trends at the local level were identified: 1) the existence of well-established institutional structures with different levels of success in assisting migrants and refugees; 2) the creation of new local bodies and practices to address growing or new migratory movements,⁸ sometimes with the support of civil society and international organizations; and 3) the varying degrees of dependence on civil society, central government, or international organizations to provide services and assistance to migrants and refugees.

Consolidated Institutional Structures and Well-Established Responses

Some of the localities studied showed strong institutional structures that enable a sustainable and comprehensive response to reception and integration. While some of these localities are located in traditionally destination countries, such as the United States and Canada, not all of the localities studied in these countries have such structures.

In the cases of Canada and the United States, important examples of institutional structures were found, such as the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs in New York City.

⁸ There are currently multiple migratory movements in the region, many of which are of a mixed nature, meaning that they are made up of people with different profiles regarding protection, needs and motivations, who travel along the same routes in an irregular manner. A considerable number of the people who migrate or are displaced in these migratory movements are people in vulnerable situations, who often face multiple infringements and obstacles in accessing and guaranteeing their human rights.

CASE STUDY: Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, New York City, USA

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) was created in 1990 in New York City, which has a long history of migration and a large immigrant population. The office has significant resources and highly qualified staff, many of whom are of immigrant origin themselves. MOIA aims to serve migrants and their children, who make up about half of the city's population.

The office is dedicated to increasing migrants' access to city programs, services, and benefits, among other things.

Some of MOIA's initiatives include support programs for entrepreneurship projects, assistance with the naturalization process to facilitate the civic and political participation of the migrant population, and legal support services. In fact, a law was passed in New York City in 2022 that allows its residents to vote in municipal elections, even if they are not U.S. citizens.

MOIA consults with the community and other stakeholders and coordinates an inter-agency working group on immigration issues. In fact, one vital program that grew out of these consults is ActionNYC, which provides free legal assistance to migrants navigating the country's complex immigration system or who find themselves in detention. The program is staffed by legal counsels and pro-bono volunteers.

In addition to these programmatic offerings, the office also advises the mayor on issues affecting the migrant population and monitors relevant state and federal policies.

As for Canada, the six cities studied (Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Hamilton, and Moncton) have an institutional platform for the reception and integration of migrants and refugees. At the municipal level, the focal point is the Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs), and the six cities develop specific plans on reception and integration, which cover between two to six years of multi-sectoral strategies.

CASE STUDY: Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs), Canada

The objectives of the LIPs are very broad and cover a wide range of aspects related to the process of reception and integration of migrants and refugees at the local level. The central focus is to engage diverse multi-sectoral actors for research, strategic planning, and connecting migrants with local integration support services.

An example of this is the Calgary Local Immigration Partnership (CLIP), which is composed of a general council, an oversight committee, an immigrant advisory table (IAT), and several local task forces. While the general council determines plans and priority areas, the task forces carry out activities in specific areas to support the migrant community. The advisory board provides recommendations based on its members' own immigration experiences, and the oversight committee acts as a liaison between the task forces and the general council. The work of the Calgary LIP has followed the guidelines of the 2018-2020 Local Settlement Strategy and 2021-2022 Action Plan, which has three main pillars: socio-economic development, English/French proficiency, and civic and community engagement.

The beneficiaries of LIP services are newcomers to Canada, in particular asylum seekers and refugees. LIPs have been successful in articulating activities at the local level and creating participation spaces for migrants, refugees, and host communities. In the province of Ontario, for example, research and community engagement strategies have included forums with migrant communities, focus groups, service provider consultations, service mapping, and migrant interviews. This has allowed for community outreach and for ongoing data to be collected and updated to continuously identify barriers and achievements of migrants and refugees in the main cities of the province. An annual report on the results and progress of each initiative is shared with other federal and provincial government agencies and with other organizations involved in the reception and settlement of migrants and refugees, including community centers, civil associations, and universities.

LIPs are funded by the federal government through Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, a department that has been responsible for migration and citizenship issues nationwide since 1994. Some of the criticisms that the LIP funding system has received focus on how these partnerships favor or emulate “business models” or “neoliberal models” that privilege greater competition among agencies providing services to migrants and refugees, and promote a model in which priorities, plans, and policies are imposed “from the top,” limiting decision-making from grassroots communities themselves.

As such, LIPs are connected to the economic policies established by the federal government, which can be affected by budget cuts and/or the priorities of the governing party, which may not always support migration. The challenge for LIPs has been to find and develop their own strategies to build local networks and collaborative initiatives around common objectives that balance the rigidity of the funding model with the need to promote greater community participation and decision-making at the local level. As a result, LIPs in provinces such as Ontario and Alberta have developed their own strategic action plans that reflect not only the priorities of each municipality, but also how these partnerships build their own institutional support networks, collaboration mechanisms, and advocacy strategies at the local and provincial levels.

In Brazil, the seven localities analyzed have or had some type of institutional framework or focal point for the design and implementation of local policies for migrants and refugees: three have or had specific institutions and/or authorities working on the issue (Florianopolis, Belo Horizonte, and São Paulo) and four (Rio de Janeiro, Manaus, Pacaraima, and Boa Vista) have coordination groups between different intersectoral authorities led by national authorities and/or international organizations. Two have focal points within dedicated agencies. In the cities where there is no specific institution, migration and refugee affairs are dealt with by another department with a thematic focus, such as development and social assistance. Another interesting aspect in Brazil are the initiatives to institutionalize local policies through the adoption of specific regulations. For example, São Paulo and Florianopolis are the only cities that have city laws that establish a municipal policy for migration and refuge, while the city of São Paulo and the states of Rio de Janeiro and Amazonas have local plans for assisting migrants and refugees.

CASE STUDY: Coordination of Policies for Immigrants and Promotion of Decent Work, São Paulo, Brazil

São Paulo has historically been one of the primary destinations of migrants in Brazil, with a current total of around 360,000 migrants from 203 different nationalities⁹ registered in the municipality.¹⁰ As a result of this trend and due to a strong influx of Haitian nationals between 2010 and 2013, the Coordination of Policies for Immigrants and Promotion of Decent Work of São Paulo was created.

Under Law No. 15.764/2013, this initiative is led by the municipality's Human Rights Agency. This initiative aims to coordinate public migration policies in the municipality through a transversal, intersectoral, and interagency manner, in addition to providing specific services to the migrant population. It is part of an institutional framework composed of a municipal law, its own budget (which is derived from the agency), a functional structure, and different mechanisms instituted to promote the participation of the migrant population.

As part of this initiative, the Migrant Municipal Policy Plan was prepared through interagency collaboration, with broad debate and active participation by the Migrants Municipal Council. The Plan was regulated by Municipal Decree No. 59.965/2020, with activities planned between 2021 and 2024 to strengthen the municipal policies of migrant care and develop implementation and follow-up measures.

The plan included the creation of the Immigrant Attention and Referral Center (*Centro de Referência e Atendimento para Imigrantes*, CRAI Oriana Jara¹¹). The CRAI offers specialized and multilingual support to migrants, focusing on providing information on migratory regularization and access to basic rights as well as on reporting human rights violations. Over the period between November 2014 and October 2019, the CRAI supported 11,834 migrants and refugees.¹²

New Institutional Structures

In localities with a more recent history of migration, mainly as a result of the influx of Venezuelan migrants and refugees, new local institutional structures have been created with the support of civil society and international organizations. Colombia is perhaps the country most recognized for the way in which it has developed institutional structures at the local level to address the large influx of Venezuelans, particularly within the past 5 years. Public policy for the reception and integration of Venezuelans in Colombia has included the development of new institutional structures to address the growing needs of this population. In addition, entry and residence permits of a temporary nature have been created, such as the Temporary Protection Status for Venezuelan Migrants, which allows Venezuelans to establish residence in the country for a period of up to 10 years. The Comprehensive Migration Policy (PIM) was also created to specify national, departmental, and municipal policies, particularly on the development of strategies for the protection of the human rights of the migrant population, the development of activities for the protection of migrant women and people in vulnerable situations, and the pursuit of safe, orderly, and regular migration in dignified conditions.

⁹ Cyntia Sampaio and Camila Baraldi, "Políticas migratorias em nível local: análise sobre a institucionalização da política municipal para a população imigrante de São Paulo," CEPAL, Santiago, 2019

¹⁰ https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/upload/Informes_Urbanos/41_IU_IMIGRANTES_final.pdf

¹¹ Since 2021, the CRAI is named after Oriana Jara, a Chilean activist and advocate for the rights of migrants and the prominence of migrant women in the city of São Paulo

¹² City of São Paulo, "Imigrantes na cidade de São Paulo," Urban Reports, no. 41. São Paulo, December 2019

Similarly, in Chile, new institutional structures have been created as a result of recent migratory movements. Its new 2021 migration law incorporates a series of provisions that allude to the role of local governments in migration policy, including the participation of municipalities in the Migration Policy Council. It is important to highlight practices developed by various municipalities (Puerto Montt, Arica, Valparaíso), consisting of expanding services and initiatives aimed at migrants, in order to reach people residing beyond their jurisdiction. There are also regional networks of coordination between different municipalities that work with and for the migrant population (for example, between Arica, Iquique, Antofagasta, and other localities in the north of the country). A similar response has been observed in places such as Quilmes and Pilar in Argentina, as further examined in the case study below.

En casos como el de Chile, también existe una respuesta reciente a nuevos movimientos migratorios. Su nueva ley en materia migratoria (2021) ha incorporado una serie de disposiciones que aluden al rol de los gobiernos locales en materia de política migratoria, incluyendo la participación de municipalidades en el Consejo de Política Migratoria. Es importante destacar prácticas desarrolladas por diversas municipalidades —Puerto Montt, Arica, Valparaíso—, consistentes en ampliar los servicios y actividades dirigidas a migrantes, con el objeto de llegar a personas que residen más allá de su jurisdicción. También se destacan redes regionales de articulación entre áreas municipales que trabajan con y para la población migrante (ejemplo, entre Arica, Iquique, Antofagasta y otras localidades del norte del país).

A parte de localidades como Puerto Montt en Chile donde se han realizado acciones institucionales en respuesta a los movimientos migratorios, en localidades como Quilmes y Pilar en Argentina también se han realizado acciones importantes en años recientes.

CASE STUDY: New Institutional Structures in Puerto Montt, Chile and Quilmes and Pilar, Argentina

Puerto Montt is a city in the south of Chile and the capital of the province of Llanquihue, with a population of around 250,000 people (2017). Estimates by the National Institute of Statistics (INE) indicate that in the years 2018-2020, the growth of the migrant population living there reached 22.5% in the region and 29.9% in the city. Among the main nationalities of origin of the migrant population were Venezuelan (over 50%), Haitian, Argentinian, Colombian, and Peruvian.

In response, the Municipal Office of Immigrants was created within the Department of Social Inclusion in 2018. This new local department has been under the direction of a resident of migrant origin since its creation. Among the main objectives of this office is to promote the socio-economic, cultural, and political inclusion of migrants; provide support services to all migrants residing in the city and other municipalities in the region, especially those who are most vulnerable and those who do not benefit from official programs due to lack of permanent residency; assist migrants in their residency applications; promote alliances with other public, social, academic, and international institutions; and raise awareness of the benefits of immigration to promote social cohesion, among other things.

Similarly, in Argentina, the municipalities of Quilmes and Pilar, close to Buenos Aires, have been receiving migrant populations from neighboring countries such as Bolivia, Paraguay, and Peru. More recently, in the case of Quilmes, migration has increased from Haiti, Senegal, and Venezuela.

In response, the municipality of Quilmes created the Migrant Bureau in 2019, which is managed by staff referred by migrant civil society organizations in the country. The main objective of

the bureau is to promote and disseminate information on migration rights; provide advice on migration procedures; provide services to the migrant population, especially to vulnerable situations; coordinate activities with other agencies at national (Migration, Social Development, etc.) and international level (embassies of countries of origin of the migrant population, promoting joint efforts for documentation and residency).

In the same year, the municipality of Pilar also created a new department responsible for the care of the immigrant population residing there. Among their main objectives of this department are to support the socio-economic inclusion of migrants, to provide services to facilitate access to residency processes, and to inform them of their rights. They also aim to promote and facilitate the exercise of the right to political participation through suffrage.

Coordination Between Local Government Authorities, Civil Society, and International Organizations

The localities studied in Peru, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Panama show limited development of institutional structures that oversee the reception and integration of migrants and refugees within their communities. These localities also have a higher dependence on other government agencies or international organizations to provide these services. In Peru, which has more institutional structures than the other three aforementioned countries, the main structures include intersectoral roundtables with varying levels of leadership by international organizations depending on the locality. For example, Lima has a policy to promote participation through the Neighborhood Participation Program, which includes recently created Migrant Neighbors' Offices that seek to support migrants and refugees to participate in the development of local policies.

In Paraguay and Bolivia, where no local institutional structures on migration were identified, the Public Defender's Offices are the main responsible for assisting migrants and refugees. In Panama, authorities from the western district of La Chorrera have only recently begun to identify the needs of migrants and refugees within their territory and to coordinate with civil society and international organizations (IOM-HIAS). In Cemaco, an ethnic community in the Darien province of Panama, the local government has made limited attempts to address the needs of the migrant population using its own resources, with no direct coordination with the National Border Service.

Further, in some United States border cities there is no recognition of the need for institutional structures to facilitate adequate reception and integration of migrants and refugees. In cities such as El Paso, McAllen or Yuma, civil society organizations assume the main role of addressing the needs of this population.

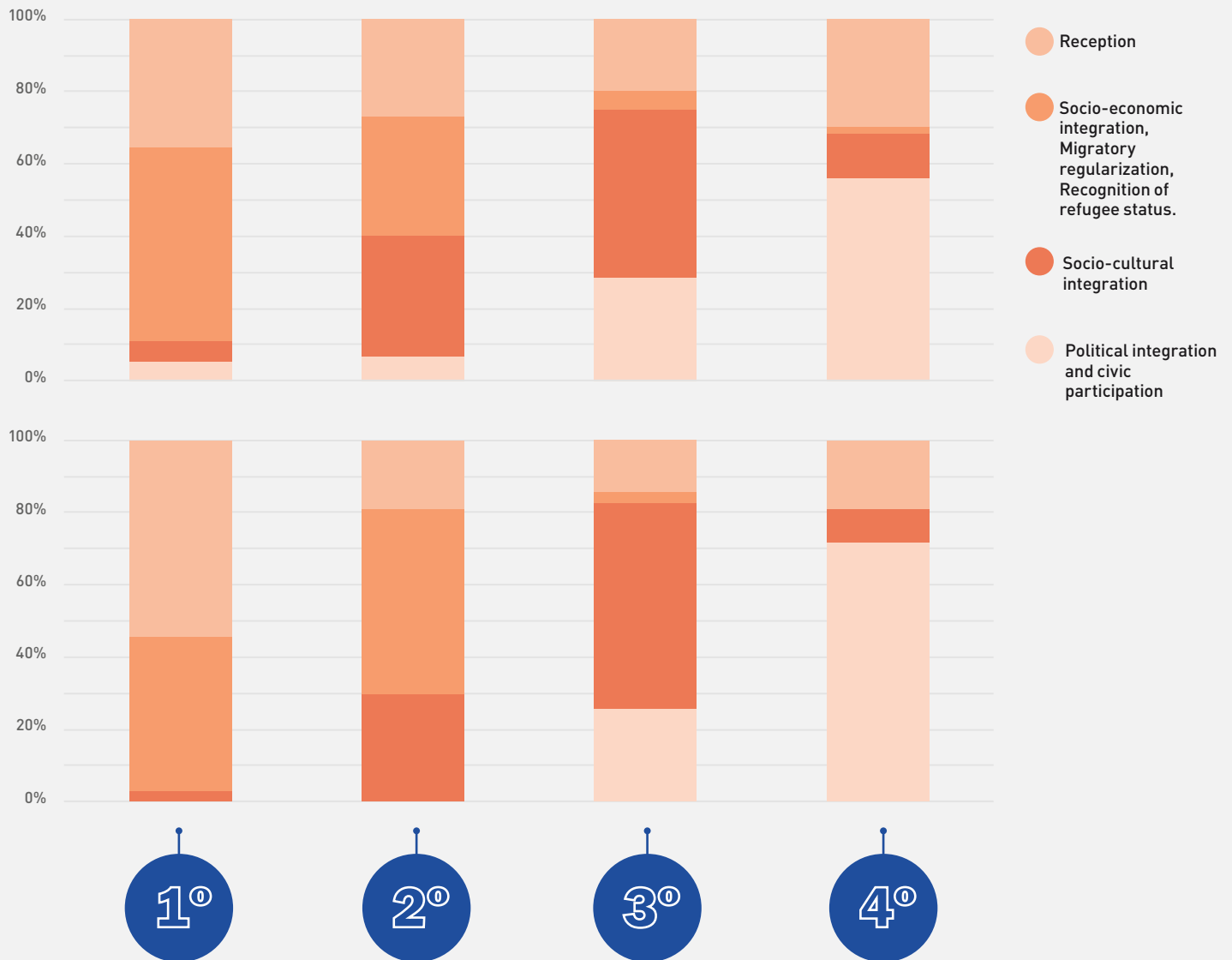


Local Needs and Policies

Socio-economic integration was identified as the main need in the majority (52%) of localities in the study. This was followed by reception (36%), socio-cultural integration (6%), and political integration (6%). This ranking varied by type of locality. For example, in the case of border localities, reception was mentioned as the most important necessity in 54% of the cases, while political integration did not appear in the first or second place in any of the localities (Graph 6).

▶▶ Graph 6.

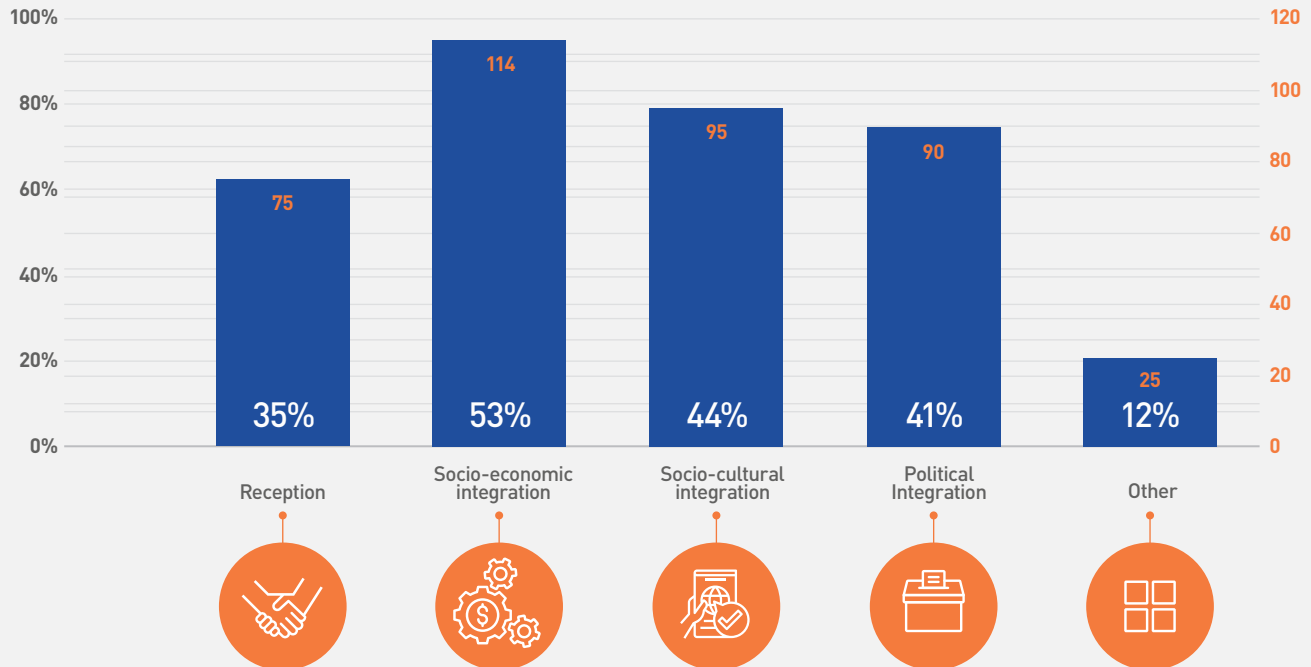
Identified Needs in All Localities (Top) and in Border Localities (Bottom)



Note: Percentage of localities in which any of the four needs appeared at least once in the ranking.

Of the policies mentioned by people interviewed for this study, 53% were related to socio-economic integration, followed by those related to socio-cultural integration (44%), political integration (41%), and reception (35%) (Graph 7). The importance of socio-economic integration is evidenced by its ranking as the main need identified as well as the number of policies focused on this subject. It is noteworthy that, although reception appears as the second highest need, it is where there is a smaller number of local policies. Often, reception is linked to emergency and short-term situations, so the development of policies and the designation of resources are not always prioritized. In addition, migrants and refugees do not normally stay in the areas where substantial reception efforts are required, and therefore they do not receive prioritization.

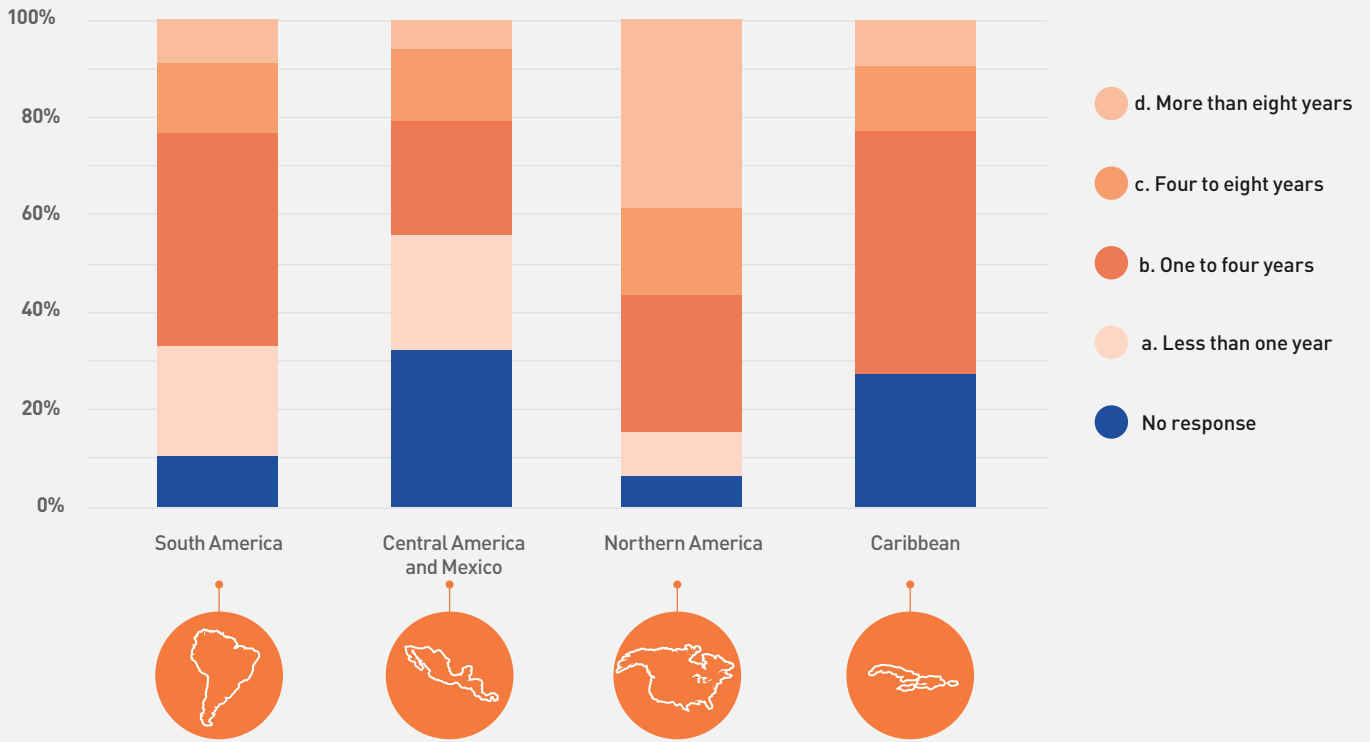
Graph 7.
Classification of Policies by Subject Matter



Note: Respondents were asked to mention two relevant policies currently being implemented. Policies could fall under more than one classification category.

Furthermore, most of the policies identified under this report have been implemented between one and four years. When examining this aspect by sub-region, a considerable difference is observed between North and South America. In North America, 53% of policies have been implemented for at least four years. In South America, where many new migration dynamics are taking place, 72% of policies have been implemented for four years or less (Graph 8). Although, in some cases, the time that a policy has been implemented may be an indicator of its impact and scope, examples of effective policies implemented more recently were also identified. These newer policies tend to incorporate some updated practices and guidelines, including newer standards on protection and integration from a rights-based approach.

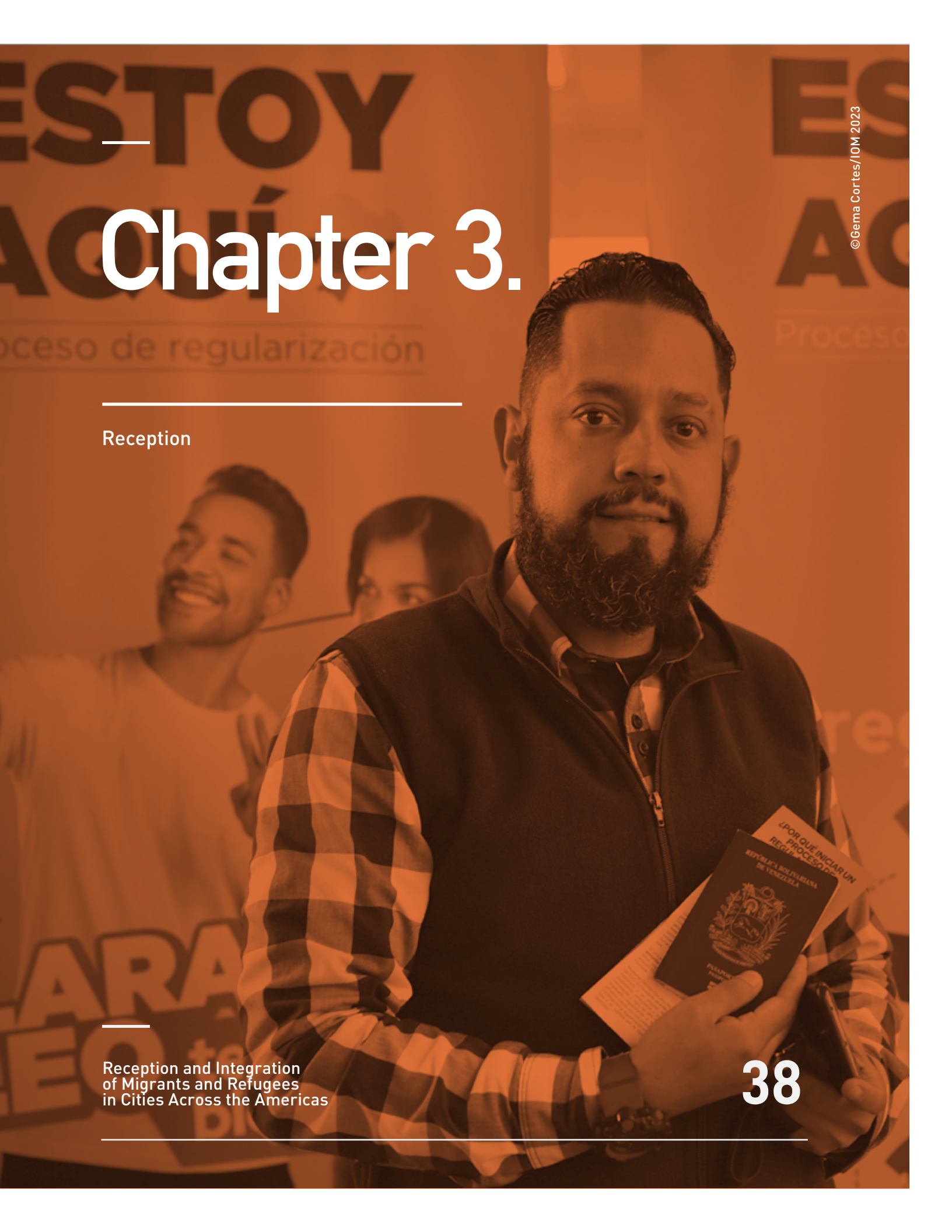
▶▶ **Graph 8.**
Policy Implementation Period by Sub-Region



Chapter 3.

Reception

Reception and Integration
of Migrants and Refugees
in Cities Across the Americas



Reception

There is sufficient evidence to show that migrants and refugees contribute significantly to the economies and human development of their host communities. However, this does not happen automatically. The timing and level of contributions depend largely on the policies, decisions, and initiatives adopted at their time of arrival.

Reception refers to a set of policies, measures, and short-term activities that aim to provide primary care to migrants and refugees upon their arrival, satisfy their basic needs, guarantee their access to appropriate processes, and protect their human rights in accordance with international standards. Reception services include the provision of shelter, food, primary healthcare, financial assistance, relocation services, and orientation on available regularization processes and access to basic rights.

The information gathered through the interviews conducted for this study show that in order for reception to be adequate, local governments must not only have in place a stable structure to respond to emergency situations but must also develop structured medium- and long-term programming. In addition, while there must be specific services for migrants and refugees, there must also be efforts to ensure equal access to local populations in order to prevent xenophobia. Finally, adequate reception requires comprehensive orientation services that ensure that migrants and refugees have information on accessing available regularization processes and public services, and that they are also connected to available integration opportunities.

Reception was identified as the main need in 36% of the localities studied. Its ranking varied according to the type of locality, with it being identified as a main need in 54% of border localities and in 31% of non-border localities. Although it is in border localities where the importance of reception is most recognized, it is also relevant in destination cities since migrants and refugees may arrive in these localities in very vulnerable conditions or simply not being familiar with the local dynamics.

Despite being one of the most recurrent needs, the understanding of reception is limited. In some localities, especially border localities, reception is understood only as the management of people in transit and not necessarily as the comprehensive provision of basic services. This processing also tends to be unplanned and ad hoc in response to the increasing number of people arriving in vulnerable conditions, a trend that was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given the lack of resources and capability reported by local authorities, a large part of the reception activities is led by civil society and religious organizations—especially in Mexico, the Caribbean, and the United States—or by international organizations (UNHCR, IOM), occasionally supported by the national government.

CASE STUDY: Frontera Welcome Coalition, El Paso, United States

As security has increased along the major U.S.-Mexico border crossing points, other border towns are experiencing an increase in irregular migration flows for which they do not have the resources or institutional capacity to respond.

In March 2020, the United States closed its land borders to everyone but citizens, legal permanent residents, essential workers, and students to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Due to this new restriction, border police reported 1.6 million more encounters with undocumented migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border in fiscal year 2021 than in the previous year. To address this situation, civil society organizations joined forces to fill the institutional vacuum and respond to the needs of people crossing.

In El Paso, TX, the Office of New Americans, established in 2020, joined other agencies, such as the Border Hope Institute and Annunciation House, to create the Frontera Welcome Coalition to assist migrants and refugees by providing shelter, food, and clothing. Each organization specializes in providing one type of service, but they coordinate their responses through the coalition.

As El Paso is a border town, these programs focus primarily on assisting new arrivals who are likely to move towards other cities in the country to reunite with family members. As one interviewee mentioned, “there are refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers, but most of them are not going to stay here. Most of them go elsewhere. So, we really don’t know what ends up happening to people after they are gone.”

A Community Development Program was created for those who settle on the periphery of El Paso, where migrant and refugee populations are concentrated. It provides basic assistance regardless of the person’s immigration status, including medical care, support with housing options, and help enrolling children in school.

The organizations in this coalition receive funding from local, state, and national governments but rely heavily on donations, volunteers, and interns from the University of Texas, El Paso to provide these services.

In South America, the large influx of highly vulnerable Venezuelans has put a wide range of local governments to the test, from border towns such as Cucuta, Boa Vista, Pacaraima, and Rivera, to emerging destinations including Puerto Montt and Concepcion in Chile and Port-of-Spain in Trinidad and Tobago. Some of these destinations have had significant support from national governments, the international community, and civil society organizations (such as in Brazil with Operation Welcome and in Colombia with support for migrants in transit by foot), while others have had to develop humanitarian responses on their own without external support.

CASE STUDY: Operation Welcome (*Operação Acolhida*), Brazil

Brazil has a long history of receiving migrants and refugees. Historically, it has welcomed people from countries in the region through its various borders and it has also been a destination for extra-continental migrants, such as Europeans during the twentieth century and, more recently, migrants from Africa.

Since 2015, Brazil has become one of the destinations for Venezuelans, with an estimated 300,000 currently in the country.¹³ The vast majority enter through the border between Brazil and Venezuela in the state of Roraima. Pacaraima is the arrival point and Boa Vista, which is 200 kilometers away, is the capital where reception policies have been developed.

Since 2018, the humanitarian response in Brazil is coordinated by the Federal Government through Operation Welcome (*Operação Acolhida*). This initiative is composed of three strategic areas (border management, reception, and interiorization) and has activities in Boa Vista, Pacaraima, and Manaus. It is coordinated by the Civic House, and the Army leads the daily and logistical support of the operation, with the support of federal and local entities, the Public Defender's Office of the Union, international agencies, civil society organizations, and private entities.

Services include the provision of shelter, food, documentation, basic medical care, employment access programs, and transfer to other regions of Brazil (officially known as interiorization program). Every migrant and refugee who enters the country through these sites, regardless of their socio-economic status, receives support to regularize their status and access to health services, such as mandatory vaccinations. However, only people in vulnerable situations are provided with additional services, such as food, shelter, and internalization.

As of March 2022, it is estimated that more than 2 million Venezuelans have been assisted by the Operation Welcome, more than 370,000 identification documents have been issued, and nearly 70,000 refugees and migrants have already been relocated to other parts of the country.¹⁴

A major success of this initiative is that it has a solid structure that responds to reception needs in a stable and comprehensive manner. However, one of the challenges identified by different people interviewed is that it is an emergency measure, which does not emphasize as a priority the development of structural policies that benefit the entire locality, which can lead to xenophobia.

While border towns are usually transit zones, in some cases, due to their distance from the rest of the country, migrants and refugees may settle there for some time, as has happened in Boa Vista and Pacaraima in Brazil and Arica and Iquique in Chile. As a result, there is a need for a better structured and well-planned reception policy, including medium- and long-term objectives, without focusing exclusively on emergency responses and policies for shelter, food, and other humanitarian needs. Given that in the case of new destinations there are few social networks in place to meet the basic needs of migrants, it becomes even more urgent to provide primary services while gradually supporting their integration and inclusion.

¹³ Federal Subcommittee for the Reception, Identification and Management of Migrants. "Venezuelan Migration, January 2017 - December 2021." IOM, Ministry of Justice and Public Security and Federal Government, December 2021. <https://brazil.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1496/files/documents/informe-migracao-venezuelana-jan2017-dez2021.pdf>

¹⁴ Brazilian Federal Government, "Operação Acolhida," Retrieved May 2, 2022, <https://www.gov.br/casacivil/pt-br/acolhida>

CASE STUDY: The Five Stops in the Migrant's Route, Norte de Santander, Colombia

According to Migration Colombia, around 21,000 Venezuelans entered the country between January and February 2022 crossing its land borders. However, this figure is likely to be significantly higher, as Migration Colombia's statistics are based on entry through formal migration checkpoints and do not include irregular routes (*trochas*) used by about 30% of Venezuelans.¹⁵

Cucuta, located in Colombia's northern border with Venezuela, is only a transit point for many Venezuelans who plan to continue travel to Bucaramanga, Medellin, or Bogota. Making the journey to Cucuta and then to other cities within the country's interior is extremely demanding and dangerous. Given the magnitude of the influx as well as the risks identified, promoted the design of a strategy to provide services and orientation to migrants in transit by foot (*caminantes*) at various points along this long and difficult route.

The risks faced by these migrants are not only related to harsh weather and long distances, but also to narrow roads, high vehicle flow, tunnel passages, landslides in mountainous areas, and altitude sickness. Other risks include the presence of armed criminal groups, trafficking networks, sexual abuse and gender-based violence, labor exploitation, underage recruitment, and lack of medical care.

The 2022 Migrant and Refugee Response Plan (RMRP), developed by the R4V Platform, notes that one-third of Venezuelan migrants in transit faced safety concerns during their journey, which included mainly robbery, physical violence, and threats. This value was close to double the number reported in 2020.

This initiative began in 2018, the year in which the Border Management Office of the President of Colombia was also created. By November of that year, 58,000 food rations had already been delivered in collaboration with UNHCR. To date, more local authorities and municipalities have been incorporated into the route and the components of the strategy and its organization have been strengthened.

The objective of providing support throughout the route is to promote safe and orderly migration, as part of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration. The initiative seeks to enforce compliance with the objectives of the Global Compact, among them:

1. To provide accurate and timely information at every migratory stage.
2. Increasing the availability and flexibility of regular migration pathways.
3. Addressing and reducing vulnerabilities in migration.
4. Providing integrated, secure, and coordinated border management.
5. Providing access to basic services to migrants.
6. Saving lives and launching coordinated international initiatives on missing migrants.

¹⁵ Migration Colombia, "2022 Migratory Flows," Retrieved May 25, 2022, <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/migraci.n.colombia/viz/FlujosMigratorios-2022/Inicio>

This initiative has been funded by the Colombian government and several international aid agencies (IOM, UNHCR, among others). A new fundraising drive was launched in 2020 to address the added challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and increase the sustainability of the strategy. A US\$ 500 million loan from the World Bank has been approved and complemented by a US\$ 26.4 million contribution from the Global Concessional Finance Facility (GCFF).

In terms of the number of people benefited by the strategy, by the end of 2020 more than 23,000 people had been assisted along the route. Although no consolidated figures have been reported for 2021, this initiative demonstrates that intersectoral coordination in the territory can help to address risks in accordance with the objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.

The success of this initiative has been driven by close coordination between local authorities and civil society organizations, not only to meet migrants and refugees' basic needs, but also to increase their safety, especially for women and children.

In Central America and Mexico, although reception is the most recurrent need identified in every locality studied in this sub-region, there are differences according to the locality type. In border localities, reception is much more important than in capital and intermediate localities, where, although it is still identified as a pressing need, it is considered second to integration. The priority in localities where there has been an increase in the number of migrants returning in recent years is providing food, clothing, and healthcare, and, to a lesser extent, shelter and housing. As mentioned in the interviews, it is possible that this is because most of the returning migrants have family in the localities that provide them with shelter, but not food or healthcare.

In Mexico, the capital and other non-border localities (such as Saltillo) have had greater institutional capacity for the reception of migrants and refugees. This is partly because they have a more dynamic labor market, but also because they are not the first to respond to the influx, but rather they receive those who have already received preliminary services and orientation at border localities. Although Mexico City has historically had a relatively low number of migrants, it has developed the "Hospitable City and Human Mobility" program, which seeks to contribute to the economic, social, and cultural integration of migrants and refugees, as well as citizens, by providing social assistance, goods, and services.

An existing network of civil society and religious organizations that have been operating for more than three decades in Mexico was identified through the interviews conducted under this study. Originally providing assistance to citizens in transit or returning, they have expanded their target population in recent years to include migrants and refugees. According to the 2020 Migrant Homes, Shelters, and Dining Halls Map for migrants and refugees in Mexico, there are around 96 migrant homes, shelters, and dining halls along the most common migratory routes across Mexico.¹⁶ A number of the people interviewed stated that in addition to initial reception, some shelters also provide primary care, including access to food, clothing, and even some health services and legal counsel. In addition, some shelters are organized in coalitions and networks to carry out research and documentation activities on human rights violations, which are reflected in yearly or specific reports, as well as advocacy activities and communication campaigns.¹⁷

¹⁶ Juan José Li Ng, "2020 Migrant Homes, Shelters, and Dining Halls in Mexico," BBVA Research, March 2, 2020, https://www.bbvarsearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Mapa_2020_Albergues_Migrantes_Observatorio.pdf

¹⁷ María Dolores Paris Pombo, *Violencias y migraciones centroamericanas en México*, México: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2020

In the cities of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula (Honduras); Guatemala City, Tecun Uman, and Quetzaltenango (Guatemala); and San Salvador (El Salvador), shelter services are more limited and are managed by religious organizations. Shelter is mainly provided to returnees, including people from indigenous communities, who only stay for short periods of time while they complete their relocation to their homes or communities. The challenges faced by some border towns, as illustrated in the case of Brazil, are similar to those identified in Tapachula, a town in the south of Mexico, which receives around 70% of asylum seekers. Although the intention of most people is to continue on their way north, they are required by law to remain in the state until the process is resolved, which can take several months.

An exception to the Central American experience is Costa Rica, which has historically been a receiving country. Although it is known as the main destination for Nicaraguans, there is also significant circular migration from Panama. To respond to this, key reception practices and arrangements have been developed, as in the case of the reception of seasonal indigenous migrant workers in Coto Brus.

CASE STUDY: Reception and Assistance for Seasonal Indigenous Migrant Workers and their Families in Coto Brus, Costa Rica

Historically, Ngöbe Buglé indigenous people from Panama have seasonally moved with their families to harvest coffee in farms located in the municipality of Coto Brus in Costa Rica. Around August and December, the Ngöbe Buglé indigenous people and their families arrive from Panama to work at the coffee farms. The living conditions of this population, both in their place of origin as well as in their seasonal destination, have been poor, as evidenced by low indicators in health, education, housing, and living conditions of children, among other factors.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, local governments in Costa Rica had developed various initiatives to support this population, including the Casas de la Alegría, supported by various actors.¹⁸

In the context of the pandemic, the decision to close the borders posed a huge challenge for the population who needed to enter the country in order to conduct their seasonal work, which is very important for the Costa Rican economy. Therefore, various stakeholders in the sector, such as farm owners and the Coffee Institute (ICAFFE), as well as the Ministry of Health, created an initiative to guarantee ongoing coffee production throughout the pandemic. The initiative facilitates the entry and reception of the seasonal indigenous migrant workers and their families, and promoted access to social services for this population, especially healthcare.

At the same time, the Municipality of Coto Brus decided to seize the opportunity to develop a local policy aimed at caring for this population. The policy considered the living conditions of the population—evidenced, among other factors, by the multiple challenges faced by local health services every year during those months, when the demand for basic services, such as maternity and child health, and indicators such as infant mortality, increased significantly.

Along with the health measures established by the Ministry of Health in the context of a pandemic, a protocol was implemented to promote the care of workers and their families in terms of reception, housing, and basic needs—such as food and healthcare—in the context of the pandemic. One key aspect of this protocol included the provision of primary healthcare upon arrival, shelter services, linguistic support, and accessible and supervised employment.

¹⁸ UNICEF and IMAS, “Sistematización del Modelo de Atención de Cuido y Desarrollo Infantil, Casas de la Alegría (Jami-gara Judö Jüe) 2014-2018,” San Jose, Costa Rica, August 2019, <https://www.unicef.org/costarica/sites/unicef.org.costarica/files/2020-07/Sistemaizaci%C3%B3n%20de%20Casas%20de%20la%20Alegr%C3%ADa%202020.pdf>

An intersectoral commission (local authorities, national government, and the private actors) was also created within the framework of the protocol promoted by the municipality. It is important to point out that as a result of this protocol and in cooperation with the National Children's Trust (PANI), UNICEF, and PAHO, the "Casas de la Alegría" established prior to the pandemic, were set up to provide different childcare services to working families.

The initiative has had various impacts, including:

- Identification of reception, assistance, and protection needs and, in particular, of the role of local government in meeting these needs.
- Development of a local public policy in this area.
- Decrease of historical negative health indicators among this indigenous migrant population.
- Replication of the health care protocol in other municipalities in the coffee-growing region.
- Identification of challenges that could lead to a reinforcement and amplification of these initiatives, in order to protect the rights of the indigenous migrant families that work on the farms each season.

This initiative, unprecedented in the region, also faces numerous challenges. At the operational level, there are challenges in terms of human and budgetary resources to strengthen services for families; training and expanding staff to provide care; achieving regular coordination with national authorities; and, in particular, ensuring the continuity of these practices so that they become an institutionalized public policy.

Other challenges include reinforcing oversight measures to verify compliance with labor conditions and the provision of basic services and improving coordination with authorities in order to promote and guarantee access to education for indigenous children, along with other rights. The latter includes ensuring that there are policies to ensure that there are indigenous caretakers for children and, in some cases, teachers hired by the farms, as well as the prohibition of child labor. Finally, it is essential that bilateral coordination and cooperation between the two nations exists to fully guarantee the rights of the indigenous communities that live in border zones and temporarily migrate from one country to the other, including the right to consultation and participation in these initiatives, in accordance with Agreement 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO).

Lastly, in the Caribbean, localities have also welcomed a large influx of migrants, mainly from Venezuela. Broadly speaking, a policy of "detain and deport" is evidenced in this sub-region. This practice is specific to Curaçao and Trinidad and Tobago, and somewhat less prevalent in Aruba. On the other hand, Guyana has more welcoming reception policies, perhaps because the mixed migration flow includes the return of people of Guyanese descent to the country. Finally, the cities of Santo Domingo and Dajabon in the Dominican Republic have no reception policies linked to primary care such as food, nutrition, and shelter. Dajabon is a transit point where migrants cross the border regularly; therefore, there is a limited perception of the need for reception and integration, according to data provided by civil society organizations. Since there is a weak institutional response, migrants arriving in both localities rely on a support network of family members and acquaintances driven by the long-standing cross-border dynamics.

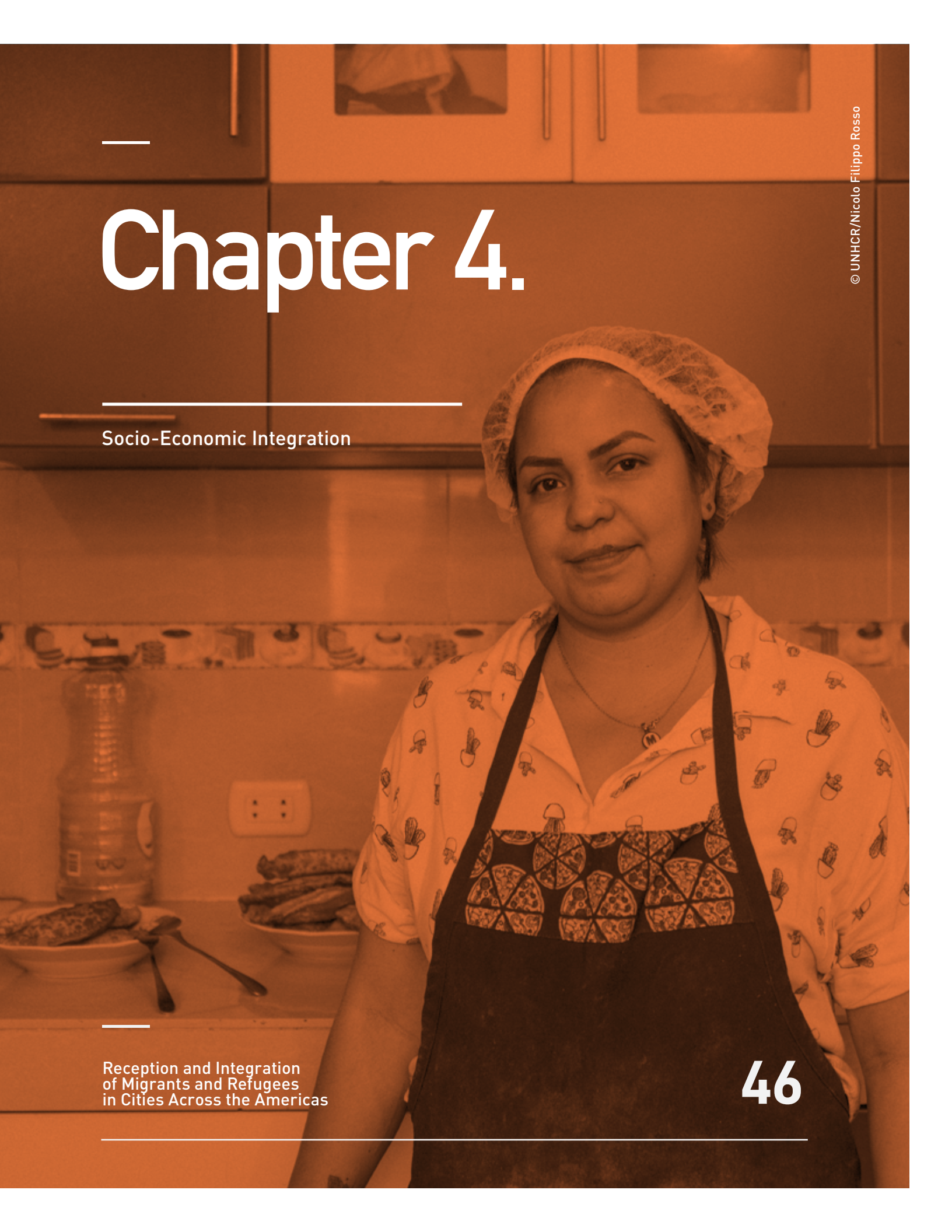
Chapter 4.

Socio-Economic Integration

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Reception and Integration
of Migrants and Refugees
in Cities Across the Americas

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Socio-Economic Integration

The socio-economic integration of migrants and refugees was chosen as the highest priority in most of the localities analyzed under this study. It was ranked as a top priority in 55% of the non-border localities, while elsewhere, particularly in the border towns, it came in second place, after more urgent reception matters.

In various localities, such as those located in the southern Caribbean, there has been resistance to socio-economic integration due to the perception of competing with limited local employment. However, international organizations and civil society organizations have led efforts to generate positive changes in these perceptions and foster socio-economic integration.

Socio-economic integration refers to initiatives that facilitate migrants' access to goods and services—including employment—to meet their basic needs and those of their families. In emergency situations or in particularly vulnerable circumstances, access to social protection programs should also be possible, in order to avoid conditions of exclusion and marginalization that deepen such circumstances and hinder the reception and integration of these populations. In this report, socio-economic integration is understood to include access to employment, decent working conditions and fair wages, as well their access to housing and economic assistance, and the prevention of exploitation, among other issues.

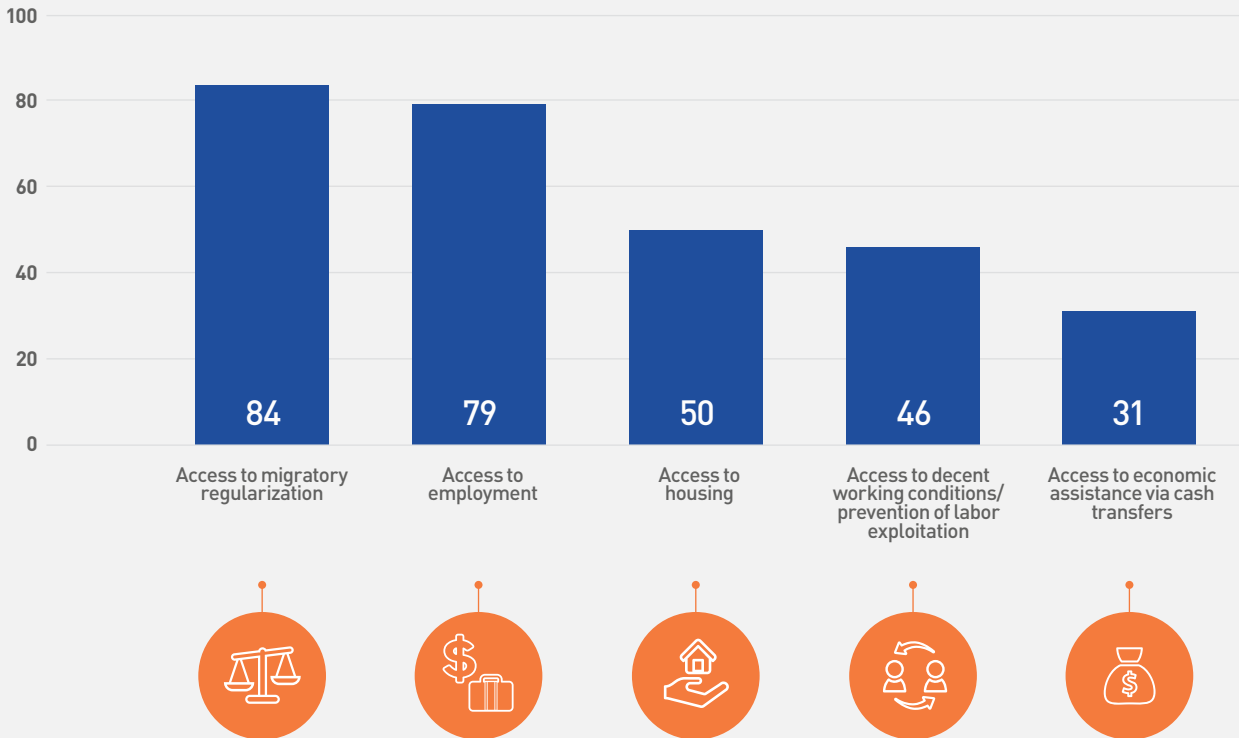
Most of the developments evidenced to date have been promoted and supported by international organizations and partnerships between local governments, civil society actors, and private companies. With some exceptions among the localities studied, there are not many programs or policies established through a local normative framework that guarantees and promotes socio-economic integration.

It is in places that have recently become migrant destinations where there is a greater degree of understanding of the role that local governments can and should play in facilitating socio-economic integration. As in the case of reception, the absence of social and family networks in this kind of “newer” destinations results in a greater need for institutional support for income generation as well as to tackle other challenges of the integration process, such as those related to obtaining and/or renewing residence permits. Although migratory documentation and regularization are important for any type of integration, in the case of socio-economic integration they become an essential prerequisite, due to the positive impact that having work authorization and access to decent work can have.

In the localities studied, there is a practically unanimous consensus that regularization is an essential condition for the success of any socio-economic integration policy, as well as for other aspects of integration (cultural, political, etc.). The people interviewed, both from local governments and other institutions, emphatically corroborate migratory regularization is the starting point to social integration. Regularization, however, is not enough, as migrants and refugees require access to other critical needs, such as labor and housing.

In addition to regularization, it is essential to develop articulated policies involving reception and socio-economic integration, as well as policies to support migrants and refugees to gradually decrease their dependence on social support so that they can have increasing autonomy. Additionally, public services for the general population must be strengthened, in order for the entire community to have access to quality services, guaranteeing that everyone's rights are respected, and no one is left behind.

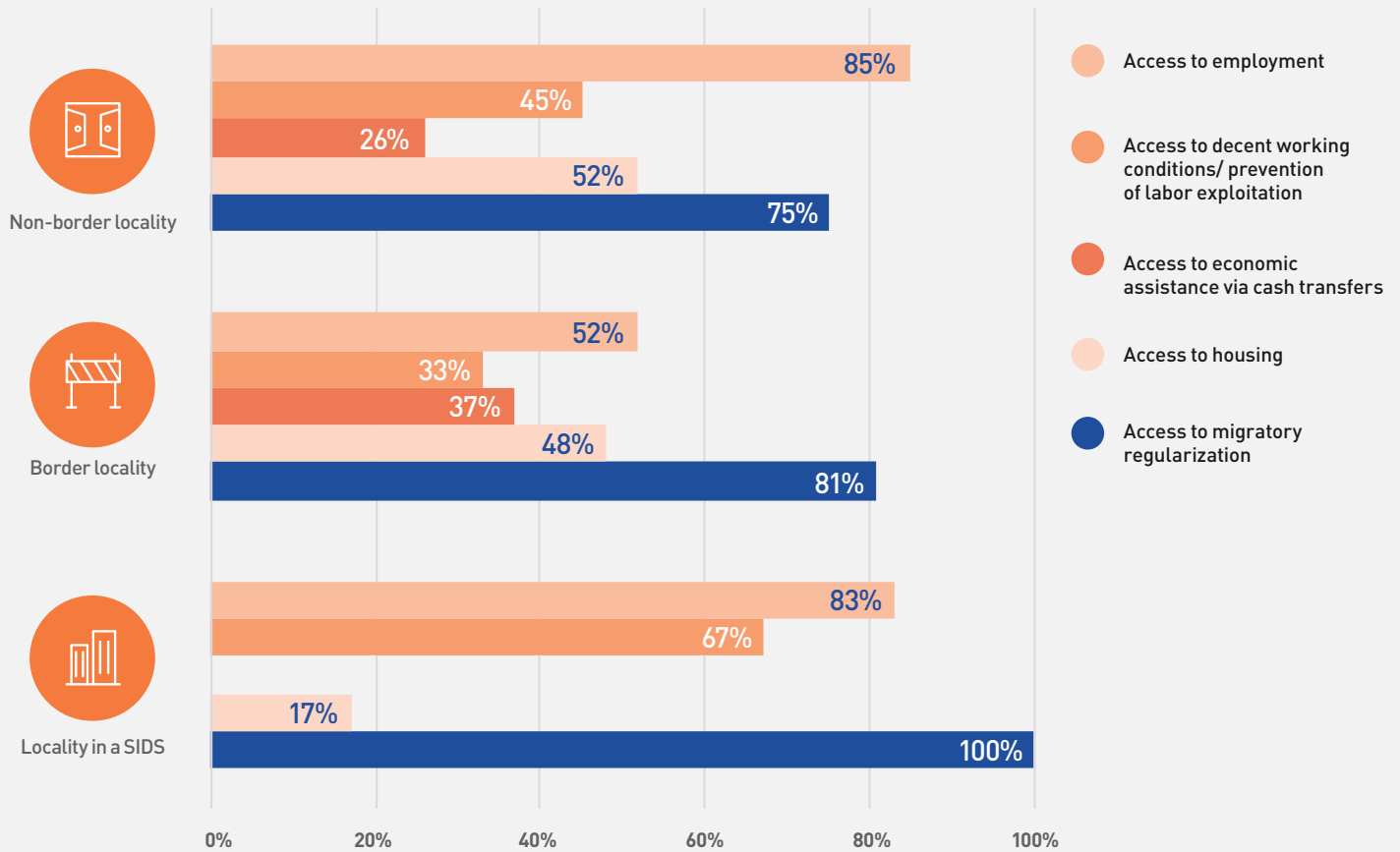
▶▶ **Graph 9.**
Priority Needs for Socio-Economic Integration



Note: Number of localities in which each need appeared among the three most important needs for socio-economic integration.

As previously mentioned, the priority need identified among all the localities studies, was migratory regularization, followed by access to employment, and access to housing (Graph 9). This varied according to the type of localities. Access to employment was chosen as the main need in 85% of the non-border localities, compared to 52% in border localities. In contrast, access to migratory regularization was chosen as the highest priority in 81% of border localities, compared to 75% in non-border localities (Graph 10). These trends reflect the intention of migrants and refugees to stay in non-border localities, for which access to employment becomes fundamental, while in border towns, regularization is often the first step to gaining access to available reception and integration services.

▶▶ **Graph 10.**
Priority Needs for Socio-Economic Integration by Locality Type



Note: Percentage of localities in which each need appeared among the three most important needs for socio-economic integration.

Through the interviews conducted, the study identified several challenges that migrants and refugees face in achieving socio-economic integration. For example, the revalidation of academic decrees and job qualifications was identified as a challenge to accessing employment given that the process is often lengthy and bureaucratic.¹⁹ Labor exploitation and lack of access to decent working conditions also came up repeatedly as an issue that migrants and refugees face when accessing employment, especially when it is informal. Finally, it was identified that migrants and refugees often have difficulties in accessing adequate and safe housing at affordable prices, especially in non-border cities where they seek to settle.

In some countries, depending on the degree of decentralization, many of the solutions to these challenges tend to come from the national government. Nevertheless, there are initiatives that can be led by local stakeholders. The study identified three key areas of local engagement: access to housing, access to the financial system, and access to jobs through engagement with the private sector. For example, in both Cordoba and Buenos Aires (Argentina), financial inclusion programs

¹⁹ UNESCO, Global Education Monitoring Report, UNHCR, Education for All. "What a waste: Ensure migrants and refugees' qualifications and prior learning are recognized," December 2018, <https://www.unhcr.org/5c3c6f1f14.pdf>; & Linda Rabben, "Credential Recognition in the United States for Foreign Professionals," Migration Policy Institute, May 2013, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/credential-recognition-united-states-foreign-professionals>

were developed with the Bank of Cordoba and Banco Ciudad (Migrant City Program), respectively. Regarding access to employment, there are examples of positive programs for the inclusion of refugees in several cities in central and northern Mexico, with the participation of local and national governments, refugee agencies, civil society organizations, UNHCR, IOM, and the private sector. As for housing, there are programs in Brazil and Canada, among others, to facilitate access to safe and affordable accommodations.

There have also been initiatives that seek to generate and/or strengthen coordination between the national and local government and to strengthen institutions that work on migration issues, with the objective of facilitating the socio-economic integration of migrants and refugees. One such initiative is the Migrant Seal (*Sello Migrante*) program in Chile, created in 2015.

CASE STUDY: Migrant Seal (*Sello Migrante*), Chile

The Migrant Seal (*Sello Migrante*) program was created by the Chilean government in 2015 and has since been extended to cover various municipalities and districts. There are currently 98 registered municipalities, 38 certified municipalities, and nine recertified municipalities, making this program noteworthy due to its geographic coverage as well as because it fosters close coordination between national and local authorities.

Specifically, the Migrant Seal is a recognition granted by the Chilean government, through its National Migration Service (SNM), to municipalities that develop plans, programs, and initiatives that promote the integration of migrant populations within their communities. The certification is provided to municipalities that meet certain standards for inclusion and non-discrimination by working through a rights-based approach. In addition to the certification, the SNM also provides support and guidance for municipalities to establish or strengthen local institutions in charge of integration efforts.²⁰

In order to obtain the Migrant Seal, local authorities must commit to carrying out at least one of the following activities:

- Establish an institutional structure that serves the migrant population.
- Provide trainings for municipal personnel on migration-related topics.
- Implement inclusive and non-discriminatory local public policies.
- Support the participation of migrant communities in community affairs.

As a result, the mere application process to obtain this certification means that local governments must develop political and institutional initiatives as well as prepare an assessment in order to meet the requirements. In addition, governments that have already obtained the certification must periodically submit a report on how their work has continued and what impact it has had, as a requirement for renewing the certification. This means that it is not a permanent status, as it requires continuity in the development of policies in this area, thus influencing the nature of public policy, which goes beyond the political agenda of any particular government.

The municipalities that are granted the Migrant Seal receive technical support and training from the SNM; support and recognition from the government of Chile for the work they carry out; sponsorship opportunities from the SNM for activities that promote interculturalism and

²⁰ Exempt Resolution No. 10,331, subsequently replaced by Exempt Resolution No. 1744 of 2017

the inclusion of the migrant population; and the opportunity to share good practices with other municipalities.

Municipal officials and people from other institutions interviewed for this study agreed that this policy had had a positive impact on promoting municipal reforms and the creation of new programs to foster the integration of migrants and refugees. Although some respondents warned of some negative changes in national policies, or even of the contradiction between this initiative and another series of actions implemented by the SNM in recent years, there was consensus that policies of this type can promote a more active and autonomous role of local governments in the care and integration of migrants and refugees within their communities.

One of the main challenges of the Migrant Seal program is ensuring that there is sufficient coordination between the national and local governments. In addition, it is necessary to prevent incumbent governments from affecting the program or diverting its objectives, particularly by making changes to the national migratory policy that have negative impacts on integration efforts. For example, restricting migratory regularization pathways at the national level or promoting negative institutional narratives around migration, can have negative consequences for the implementation of the program. Another challenge lies in ensuring frequent coordination between municipalities within the framework of the network created through this program, in order to foster the development of joint initiatives as well as the exchange of best practices.

Nevertheless, the Migrant Seal—which could be considered a state policy or in the process of becoming one—has undoubtedly helped to foster the creation or consolidation of institutions and initiatives that provide direct services to migrant populations and foster their integration in Chile. The main impacts of this program include:

- The development of migration-related municipal action plans.
- The implementation of initiatives that support the integration of migrant populations in local communities.
- An increase in accountability towards the implementation of initiatives.
- The recognition of local governments' work on this issue.
- The creation of a network of Migrant Seal-certified municipalities.

A significant difference in socio-economic integration initiative was observed in localities with large asylum seeking and refugee populations. These groups tend to receive more structured and institutionalized support, generally through civil society organizations and particularly in the United States. There is also specific support for refugees in Latin America, mainly led by international organizations. For example, in Belmopan (Belize), where there has been a growing influx of people from Guatemala and Nicaragua, UNHCR and the organization Help for Progress implemented a program to provide asylum seekers with entrepreneurial skills. Programs such as this one exist in numerous localities in the region, including Cordoba (Argentina), Desamparados (Costa Rica), Estacion Central and La Pintana (Chile), Canelones and Montevideo (Uruguay), and in Aruba, among others.

In other places, the challenge for asylum seekers and refugees, as well as for migrants, is not necessarily lack of skills—or lack of legal acknowledgement of their skills—but lack of opportunities. Unemployment in both southern Mexico and Cucuta (Colombia) and the declining labor supply in Calgary (Canada), emerged as examples of three cases in which the lack of local opportunities is a

major challenge to the socio-economic integration migrants and refugees. In response to this issue, a local relocation and integration program was created in Saltillo (Mexico) and replicated in 10 other Mexican cities.

CASE STUDY: Local Integration Program (PIL), Mexico

Due to the high percentage of asylum claims in southern Mexico, where integration opportunities and access to services are limited, a relocation and local integration program was designed by UNHCR in coordination with international (IOM and IRC), national, and local actors. Under the Local Integration Program (PIL by its acronym in Spanish), asylum seekers and refugees are relocated to municipalities located in the industrial corridor of the north and central part of Mexico, where there is a greater demand for labor and a higher absorption capacity in the education and health sectors.

The initiative specifically seeks to support asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons, and recipients of complementary protection to achieve socio-economic integration in various cities in Mexico. PIL was initially launched in 2016 and since then has been extended to 11 cities across the country: Saltillo, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Aguascalientes, San Luis Potosi, Queretaro, Puebla, Leon, Torreon, Irapuato, and Silao.

PIL offers the following services: 1) Ground transportation and economic support to cover expenses related to relocation; 2) lodging for a maximum period of seven days; and 3) one-time economic support to cover basic needs during the first month in the new city (the amount varies depending on the number of family members).

The program also provides guidance for: seeking formal employment; seeking employment opportunities for those who wish to work while continuing their studies; accessing health services; enrolling in public schools; certification of schooling or academic accreditation for people over 15 years of age; accessing social programs, such as food banks, cultural, and sports activities and scholarships; and completing immigration procedures (with free legal counsel, if necessary).

This program has enabled vulnerable women, men, girls, boys, and teenagers to be supported with temporary housing, cultural orientation, vocational training, school enrollment, and job placement.

The following criteria is required in order to participate:

- Be recognized as a refugee or recipient of complementary protection by COMAR.
- Hold permanent residency and a Unique Population Registry Code (CURP by its acronym in Spanish).
- At least one member of the family must be over 18 years of age, in addition to being willing and able to work.
- Speak Spanish.

If the applicant does not meet all the requirements, sometimes the program is also applicable to: 1) Those with a COMAR recognition certificate but who have not yet applied for permanent residency; and 2) asylum seekers with a humanitarian permit and a temporary CURP.

To date, over 19,000 people have been resettled and integrated through PIL. According to data collected by UNHCR, within the first six months of their integration process, refugee families become independent of assistance. UNHCR has also measured a series of indicators of the program's impact by contrasting beneficiaries' situations before and after relocation: 87% of beneficiaries of working age found work, which reduced the number of unemployed refugees by 60%; the percentage of refugee children and adolescents not attending school decreased from 82% to 10%; refugees' access to a bank account doubled from 29% to 59%; and the percentage of people with an income below the poverty line decreased from 54% to 12% after six months of being relocated.²¹

The impact has been favorable not only for the refugee population, but also for approximately 300 private companies that are involved in the project. MABE, a household appliance company, has been involved since the beginning of the project. This company has historically had a dropout rate of between 6% and 10%. The dropout rate among the refugees they have hired is around 0.7%.²²

Similarly, in Brazil, the Interiorization Program supports migrants to relocate to different parts of the country by matching them with employment opportunities.

ESTUDIO DE CASO - Programa de Interiorización, Brasil

La Operación Bienvenida tiene como una de sus estrategias principales el llamado Proceso de Interiorización²³ de las personas venezolanas a otros territorios brasileños. Tanto para reducir la presión sobre los servicios y las tensiones generadas por olas xenófobas en Roraima, como para promover la integración socio-laboral de las personas migrantes y refugiadas en Brasil.

La estrategia se basa en el traslado de personas migrantes y refugiadas venezolanas que manifiestan su voluntad de dirigirse a otros estados brasileños y se lleva a cabo en alianza con sectores privados y organismos sociales. Entre las modalidades de interiorización están aquellas que ocurren a raíz de "vacantes de empleo señaladas" en razón de oportunidades laborales originadas de la intermediación de entidades que componen la Operación.

Se estima que desde el 2018, más de 72.696 venezolanos han sido trasladados a 810 municipios brasileños.²⁴ Sin embargo, un reto significativo identificado por los actores entrevistados reside en el escaso monitoreo de las vacantes y oportunidades de empleo para las cuales se dirigen las personas migrantes y refugiadas, lo que aumenta los riesgos de explotación laboral y ausencia de condiciones dignas de trabajo.

²¹ UNHCR, "Protection and solutions in pandemics," 2022

²² AUNHCR, "Refugees and access to employment," Twitter, May 9, 2022, <https://twitter.com/AcnurMexico/status/1523769782020894721>

²³ Brazilian Federal Government, "Interiorization," May 2, 2022, <https://www.gov.br/casacivil/pt-br/acolhida/base-legal-1/interiorizacao>

²⁴ Brazilian Federal Government, "Over 70 thousand Venezuelan refugees and migrants have been internalized in Brazil," May 2, 2022, <https://www.gov.br/casacivil/pt-br/acolhida/noticias/em-quatro-anos-mais-de-70-mil-refugiados-e-migrantes-venezuelanos-foram-interiorizados-no-brasil-1>

Además, este programa demanda que las localidades para donde se trasladan las personas migrantes y refugiadas estén preparadas para recibirlos, lo que no siempre se verifica en la práctica. Es decir, demanda una fuerte coordinación con todas las localidades que son parte del programa, en particular aquellas que reciben el mayor flujo de migrantes, para identificar las necesidades de esta población.

While national policy has a strong impact on the socio-economic integration of migrants and refugees, there are many opportunities to foster integration at the local level. As one government official said in their interview, “it is often at the local level where innovation happens the quickest.”

Based on the interviews and case studies addressed, several factors emerged as critical to the success of socio-economic integration policies at the local level. The main one was that regularization is essential to achieve full socio-economic integration, but it is not sufficient by itself. Thus, it is necessary to have policies that promote access to decent and formal employment, and there must also be a clear link between reception initiatives and socio-economic policies to provide comprehensive support to migrants and refugees and help them transition from short-term assistance in the context of an emergency to gradual inclusion in social programs, guaranteeing their access to rights and resources that allow them to enjoy opportunities and become autonomous.

Finally, close coordination between government entities, civil society, and the private sector has proven successful in bringing migrants and refugees closer to resources that support their socio-economic integration, as seen in the case of Quebec (Canada). Furthermore, including migrants and refugees as beneficiaries of public policies and services for the general population also tend to have a positive impact in their socio-economic integration.

CASE STUDY: Immigrant and Visible Minority Work Integration Program, Quebec, Canada

Due to low population density, among other factors, Canada has invested in population growth and economic development by attracting and retaining migrants from all over the world. Each year, Canada approves more than 300,000 permanent residence visas through a well-defined immigration program comprised of three broad categories: economic immigration, family reunification, and humanitarian considerations. The application and selection process for migrants is very strict and follows the country’s socio-economic development plans. As a result, immigration has been considered a key factor in the political agendas promoted by the national government.

The vast majority of people who obtain permanent residency in Canada do so through the categories of economic immigration and family reunification, which in turn have their own types of sub-categories: Express Entry (migrants are selected by a point system in which English and/or French language skills, education, professional experience, among other factors, are evaluated); Provincial Nominee Program (through which each province—with the exception of Quebec—selects immigrants according to its own socio-economic development needs); Start-up Visa (intended for entrepreneurs interested in investing in Canada); Caregiver Program (intended for people with Canadian experience in child care or people with specific medical care needs), and the Quebec-Selected Skilled Workers (in which the province of Quebec selects its own migrants, according to its own economic needs and prioritizing proficiency in French).

Like other Canadian provinces, one of the major obstacles to the socio-economic integration of many migrants in Quebec is the difficulty of incorporating or adapting their work experience from their countries of origin to the labor or experience requirements in Quebec, which considerably limits their access to decent employment. In addition, the need to master French at the professional level often makes the labor adaptation process more complex, particularly for migrants from Latin America or Asia.

The province has developed its own mechanisms to try to streamline socio-economic integration processes. One of these strategies is the Employment Integration Assistance Program for Immigrants and Visible Minorities (PRIIME by its acronym in French), which aims to provide newcomers or visible minorities with the possibility of accessing a lasting first job in their field of specialization or professional experience.

PRIIME was developed by Quebec's Ministry of Immigration, Francization, and Integration, with support from Investment Quebec. The program is administered by the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Solidarity, which implements the program through the network of Quebec Services and Local Employment Centers (LEC).

This initiative provides financial support to corporations to support the reception and integration of migrants or visible minority workers, whether or not they were born in Canada. The provincial government provides financial assistance that covers part of the salary of the people hired and, in some cases, the cost of training courses, workshops, and continued education.

Migrants are eligible if they have permanent residency or refugee status and have lived less than five years in the province. Visible minorities are eligible if they have permanent residency or citizen status and belong to Arab, Chinese, West or Southeast Asian, Afro-descendant, Korean, Filipino, Japanese, Latin American, or similar communities not considered indigenous or Caucasian.

Employers eligible to participate in this program include municipalities, private companies, social enterprises, non-profit organizations, health and social service networks, and government agencies with staff not part of the Quebec Public Service Act. To be eligible for PRIIME, the company or organization must have no more than 20% of its jobs subsidized, in order to ensure adequate supervision of new workers.

PRIIME seeks to incorporate migrants and visible minorities into regular employment, that is, a job that offers a good chance of retention beyond the duration of the subsidy, which is generally up to 32 weeks, with the possibility of extension to 52 weeks.

One of the challenges that the program faces is conducting more outreach migrant communities. The Canadian media has reported that the program could serve a larger number of migrants and refugees. Between 2018 and 2019, the program benefited less than 1,500 people, which is insufficient according to local organizations given that more than 40,000 migrants arrived in the province during that period.²⁵ The failure to reach more communities that could benefit from this type of program continues to be a determining factor that limits the program reach.

Some civil society organizations have also reported that there is discrimination against some North African migrant communities, including Algeria and Tunisia, which do not benefit from the program despite the fact that they speak French, and that many of the jobs arranged under the program are still below the skill level of beneficiaries and therefore do not always lead to an effective job placement in accordance with beneficiaries' potential.²⁶

²⁵ Hendry, L., September 25, 2019, 'I didn't come here to live this kind of life': Skilled immigrants on desperate hunt for jobs in Quebec, CBC, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-immigration-skilled-workers-election-1.4833739>

²⁶ Chicha, M., & Gril, E., 2018, L'interminable course à obstacles, *Gestion* (HEC Montreal), 43(1), 58-61, <https://doi.org/10.3917/riges.431.0058>

Chapter 5.

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Socio-Cultural Integration

Reception and Integration
of Migrants and Refugees
in Cities Across the Americas

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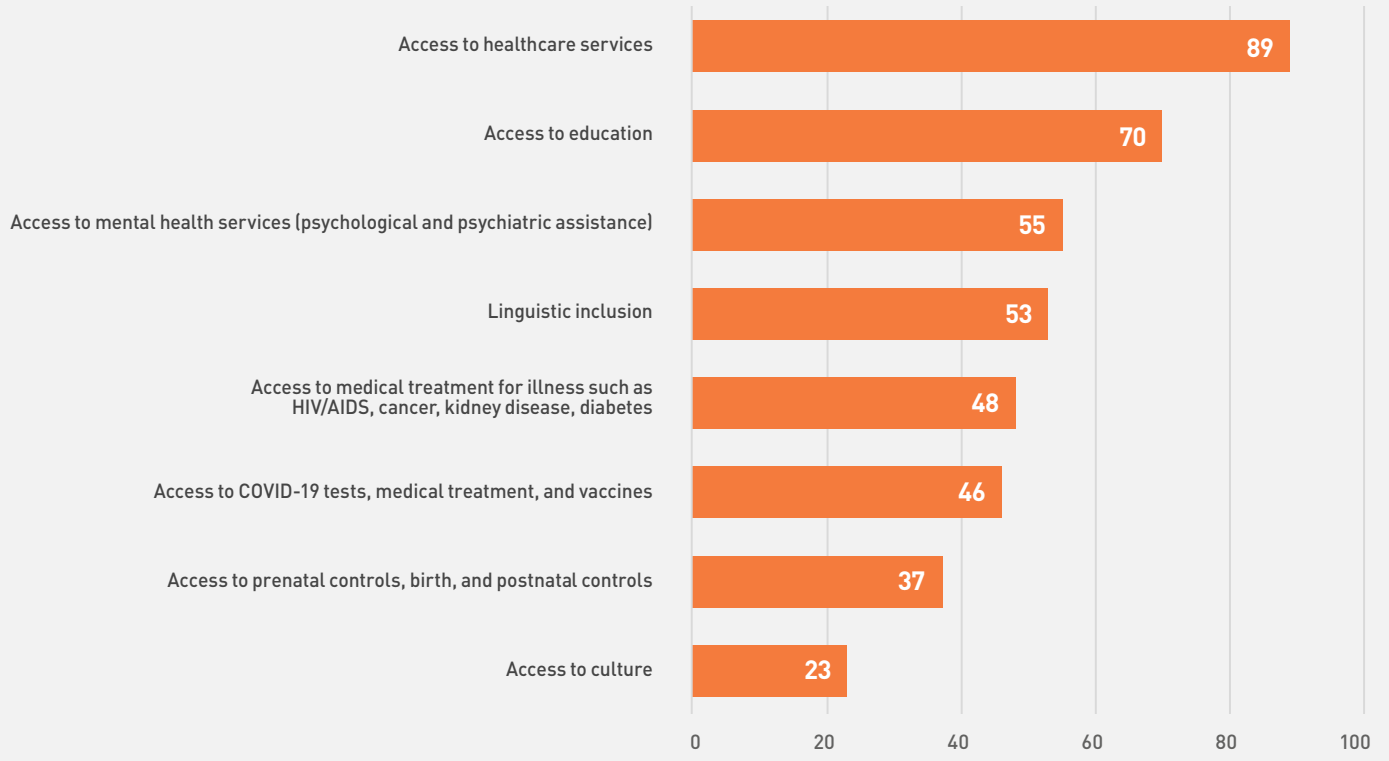
Socio-Cultural Integration

Although socio-cultural integration was not highlighted among the most urgent needs in the region, given greater needs in reception and socio-economic integration, it was however acknowledged as a key aspect for the well-being and quality of life of migrant populations, and definitely as a crucial part of their long-term integration within their host community. In this report, socio-cultural integration is understood as a set of measures that facilitate access to education, health care, and culture, as well as linguistic integration.

Within socio-cultural integration, the main priority reported was access to healthcare services, followed by access to education. This is reflected both in the list of priority needs (Graph 11) as well as in the socio-cultural integration policies identified. Access to mental health also emerged as an important issue, mentioned by 50% of the respondents. Linguistic inclusion, even if less prevalent, figured prominently in some of locations, such as in the Caribbean, in Brazil, and in Argentina, Chile, and other countries that received Haitian populations. Linguistic inclusion in these locations is a key to facilitating access to various services. Finally, access to culture was considered a lower priority need compared to the other aspects mentioned.



▶▶ **Graph 11.**
Priority Needs for Socio-Cultural Integration



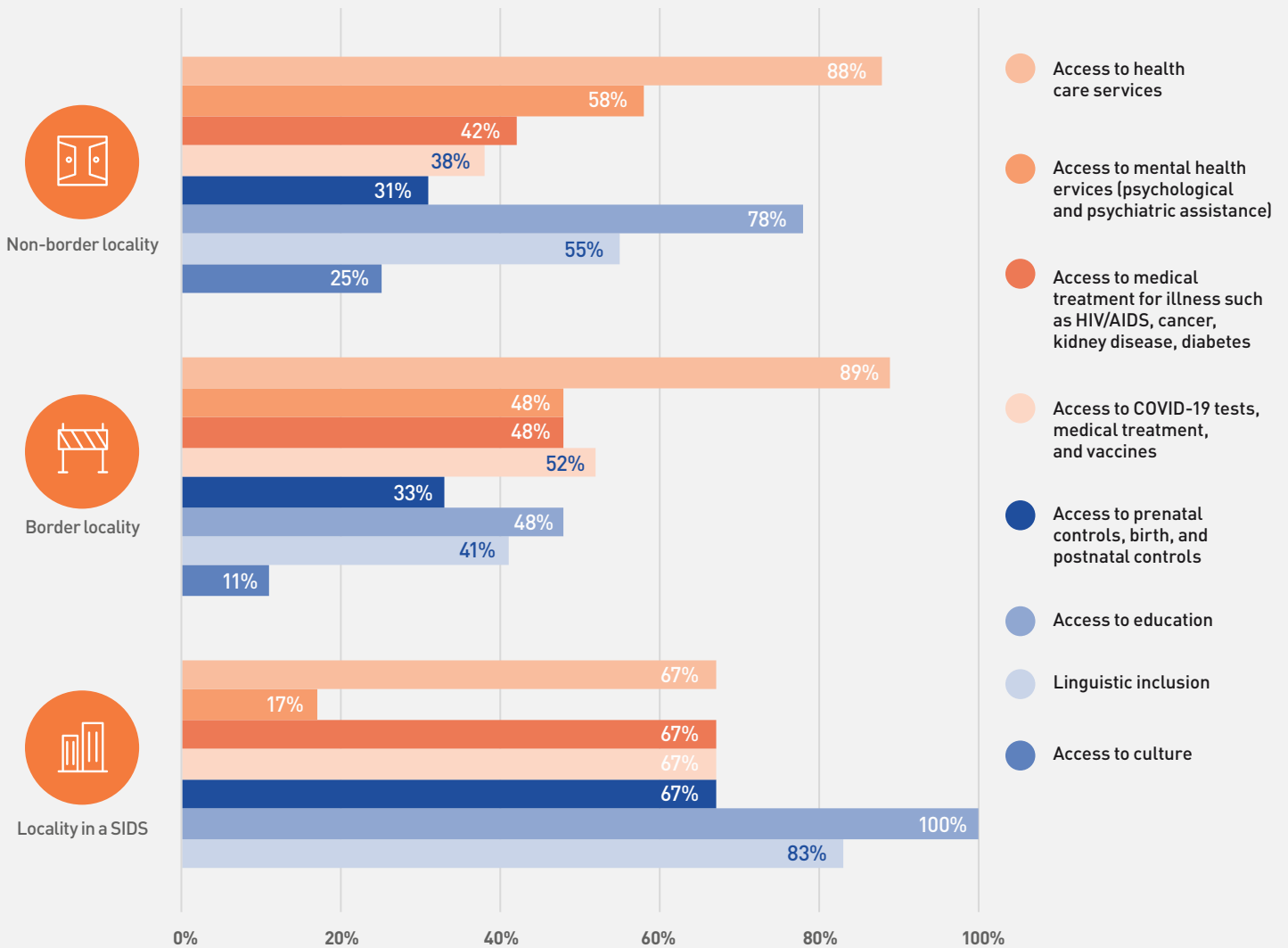
Note: Number of localities in which a need was among the three most important needs for socio-cultural integration.



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As in previous chapters, there is heterogeneity in terms of the needs prioritized within each of the realms of socio-cultural integration. Although access to healthcare was identified as a priority need in 82% of localities, in border localities, access to COVID-19 tests, medical treatment, and vaccines was mentioned as a more urgent need (52%) than in non-border localities (38%). Access to mental health care services was also identified as a greater priority in non-border localities (58%) than in border localities (48%). Similarly, access to education was identified as a more urgent need in non-border localities where people usually intend to stay permanently (78%) compared to border localities (48%) (Graph 12).

Graph 12.
Priority Needs for Socio-Cultural Integration by Locality Type



Note: Percentage of localities in which a need was among the three most important needs for socio-cultural integration.

There were diverse local policy responses to address priority needs across the region. For example, in Peru, Urban Mobile Brigades were rolled out to address healthcare needs.

CASE STUDY: Urban Mobile Brigades, Peru

Peru has an estimated population of 1 million 223 thousand migrants and refugees, which amounts to about 3.8% of the population residing in the country. Of the total migrant population, 85.3% are of Venezuelan origin, followed by other nationalities, such as the United States (2.5%), China (1.9%), and Bolivia (1.7%).²⁷ This data implies that, although the country has a long history of migration, the massive displacement of Venezuelans in recent years has left its mark on migratory context in Peru.

Prominent in the public health area in the country are the “Urban Mobile Brigades”, which function as territorial services and reach users of the system through “various strategies that maximize the individual and collective participation of the population with great flexibility and adaptability to the challenges arising with intervention.”²⁸ Even if the policy of the Brigades is not specifically designed for the migrant and refugee population, it reaches this vulnerable population, especially those living with HIV.

Through this program, the Bureau for HIV-AIDS Prevention and Control of the Ministry of Health of Peru, was able to map the HIV positive migrant population by including the variable “nationality” as part of its medical check-ups. The data generated by this process made this population visible, and also revealed its specific needs. Additionally, during the most intense periods of arrival of migrants, especially from Venezuela, it was possible to develop health brigades in public spaces, together with a communications strategy focused on this population from the moment they entered the country.

The brigades offer an answer to the challenges experienced by migrants by providing specific care to this vulnerable population and addressing their healthcare needs, seeking to break down barriers and to include all people in the promotion of quality public healthcare. However, the stability of this public policy faces challenges related, not only to the lack of financial resources and qualified personnel, but also to issues of coordination among different levels of the government.

The importance of linguistic inclusion differs significantly depending on the context. But in those cases where it is relevant, evidence shows that it may be one of the most important predictors of socio-cultural integration.²⁹ In the Dominican Republic and in the city of Guatemala, it is of utmost importance because of historical migration from Haiti, in the Dominican case, and the internal movement of indigenous communities in Guatemala. In localities of Brazil, the Caribbean, Canada, and the United States, linguistic inclusion is also of relative importance because of the reception of Spanish speaking migrants from diverse sociocultural contexts.

In various localities in South American countries —such as in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, among others— in which population from Haiti and/or various African countries (e.g., Senegal) have settled, linguistic inclusion has been incorporated into some of the measures and initiatives developed by local authorities. These initiatives include offering free Spanish courses for these migrant populations. In

²⁷ Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos. “Informe alternativo al comité de protección de los derechos de todos los trabajadores migratorios y sus familiares”, 2020, <https://cdn01.pucp.education/idehpucp/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/21213437/Versi%C3%B3n-Digital-Informe-alternativo-diagramado.pdf>

²⁸ Ministerio de Salud. “Según el Manual de Intervención de las Brigadas Móviles Urbanas”, 2019, <http://bvs.minsa.gob.pe/local/MINSA/5559.pdf>

²⁹ Reza Nakhaie. “Language proficiency and socio-cultural integration of Canadian newcomers”. *Applied Psycholinguistics* 41 no.6 (2020): 1-28

the case of Quilicura (Chile), the municipal government has launched a linguistic insertion program to promote the educational inclusion of Haitian children, as well as training activities in creole for local officials.

CASE STUDY: Language Access Policy, Seattle, United States

The city of Seattle, in the northwestern United States, is an important destination for migrants and refugees. Seattle takes pride in being a welcoming city and values inclusion and equity. About 20% of Seattle's population was born outside the United States. All people living within the city, regardless of their immigration status, can access the city's public services.

Seattle's language access policy was created by an executive order seeking to improve the inclusion of the non-English speaking immigrant population. As part of the policy's efforts, the city hires staff for its Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs who speak the 7 to 8 languages spoken by the immigrant and refugee population" Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Spanish, Portuguese, Tagalog, Russian, and Ukrainian, among others.

Additionally, the Department of Social and Health Services has a program to support people with limited English language proficiency with employment services (training, placement, and retention) and English language training, reaching 4,000 participants per year. Eligible for these services are immigrants and refugees receiving public assistance through government programs, such as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), and the State Family Assistance (SFA) programs.

Even migrants and refugees not receiving assistance from these government programs are eligible to access all city public services if they have lived in the United States for 5 years or less.

Separately, while access to culture was not generally included among priority needs, in non-border localities this aspect was of more importance than in border areas and in SIDS. Additionally, in localities with new migration dynamics there is a pressing need to raise awareness among the host community about migrants, their contributions, cultures, and their condition as new member of the community. When migrants and refugees arrive, communities themselves become more diverse and require intercultural integration policies, such as the Migrations Month program in Montevideo, Uruguay.

CASE STUDY: Migrations Month, Montevideo, Uruguay

In 2015, the Municipality of Montevideo (*Intendencia de Montevideo*) created the Secretary of Ethnic and Racial Equality and Migrant Populations (SEERPM), which has since then developed programs for migrant and refugees in the city.

Two key aspects of the context that led to the development of this local policy are worth mentioning. First, there was a gradual increase and diversification of the migrant population settled in Uruguay, and specifically in Montevideo. Second, a new migratory legal framework was adopted in 2008, which recognized migration as a human right as well as a broad set of rights for migrants, regardless of their immigration status.

In this context, the SEERPM organized the first edition of the Migrations Month, in cooperation with the Museum of Migrations (MUMI), The Department of Culture of the Municipality of Montevideo, civil society organizations (Migrants Support Network), and OIM. From November 18 to December 18, the Municipality of Montevideo supports activities by several organizations to inform, celebrate, and reflect on the presence of the migrant population within its host community. The objective is to raise awareness on how the arrival of migrant populations is an enriching factor for the city. The Month includes training and recreational activities about cultural diversity, human mobility, interculturality, and human rights of migrant people. The aim is also, more generally, to promote a society free from racism, xenophobia, and all forms of discrimination, as well the creation of mechanism to ease the situation of arrival of migrant persons in conditions consistent with their human dignity.

Activities include artistic performances (theater, films, exhibitions); training and awareness-raising activities for public servants' employment training for migrants; open talks on issues of human mobility and rights of migrants and refugees; festive events; conferences and other activities focused on adolescents, migrant women, and recent migrations (such as the Venezuelan case). The closing ceremony was held on December 18, International Migrants Day.

In other cases, access to education has become an important challenge. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, several civil society organizations provide temporary services to migrant and refugee populations who experience challenges in accessing education in the country.

CASE STUDY: Equal Place, Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago is a SIDS in the southern Caribbean. It has traditionally been a destination for migrants from Venezuela. Before the Venezuelan migration crisis intensified, Trinidad and Tobago was a popular destination for Venezuelans seeking to provide an education in English for their children.³⁰ Trinidad and Tobago is a SIDS in the southern Caribbean. It has traditionally been a destination for migrants from Venezuela. Before the Venezuelan migration crisis

³⁰ Michelle Reis, "Contemporary Venezuelan Student Emigration to Trinidad," in *Freedom and Constraint in Caribbean Migration and Diaspora*, ed. Elizabeth Thomas-Hope, Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 36-51, 2009

intensified, Trinidad and Tobago was a popular destination for Venezuelans seeking to provide an education in English for their children.³¹

In the current context, access to education is one of the main needs. Although registration authorities have granted residence and job permits to some migrants, access to education has not been guaranteed for children (R4V, 2020). There are about 4,000 migrant children aged between 4 and 17 without access to education.³² Registration of migrant and refugee children in primary and secondary education has increased, but it remains below overall levels.³³

Since 2019, the Catholic organization *Living Water Community*, has been operating “Equal Place,” a non-formal education program for asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrant children. “Equal Place” is a joint initiative with UNHCR, UNICEF, and TTV Solidarity Network, a local NGO led by Venezuelan immigrants. Additionally, PADF and the University of the West Indies are training educators to enhance their capacities in the implementation of an English learning curriculum for immigrant children.³⁴

The “Equal Place” program complies with the national curriculum and initially operated under a mixed online and on-site format. With the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the program became completely online, offering both English and Spanish language platforms. The number of students in the program increased from 610 in 2020 to 1,744 in early 2022.³⁵

There have been implementation challenges, such as irregular attendance by students, lack of resources, space limitations, and language barriers.³⁶

Although this program, which operates jointly with the public and private education systems, was designed as a temporary solution, it has provided crucial services to hundreds of children otherwise excluded from the education system.

The literature and the most successful cases considered in this study show that a key for integration in general, but in particular for socio-cultural integration, is the inclusion of migrants in the social policies and general social services. This allows greater efficacy and also contributes to the prevention of xenophobia. Also, it is essential to train and raise awareness among officers in the social services on issues of xenophobia, racism, and discrimination, as well as on adequate linguistic inclusion for access to services. In addition, it is important to advise and support migrant persons so they are able to navigate the bureaucratic process and the obstacles or hurdles they might encounter —general

31 Kamilah Morain, “Actualidad: Registro de Migrantes venezolanos-as en Trinidad y Tobago,” Obmica, <http://obmica.org/index.php/actualidad/268-registro-de-migrantes-venezolanos-as-en-trinidad-y-tobago#:~:text=en%20t%C3%A9rminos%20num%C3%A9ricos.-,Con%20una%20poblaci%C3%B3n%20de%201.3%20millones%2C%20alberga%20a%20unos%2040%2C000,afluencia%20tan%20grande%20de%20personas>

32 ACNUR, “Informe de Educación de ACNUR de 2021”, 2021, <https://www.acnur.org/publicaciones/educ/61365bed4/informe-de-educacion-de-acnur-2021-manteniendo-el-rumbo-los-desafios-que.html>

33 Loop News, “UNHCR: Refugee and migrant children facing challenges in education,” published September 2, 2021, <https://tt.loopnews.com/content/unhcr-refugee-and-migrant-children-facing-challenges-education>

34 Kamilah Morain, “Migrant Children Access Education in Trinidad and Tobago through PADF’s Innovative Programming”, The Collaborative Forum Georgetown University, April 20, 2022, <https://globalchildren.georgetown.edu/responses/migrant-children-access-education-in-trinidad-and-tobago-through-padf-s-innovative-programming>

35 ACNUR, “Trinidad y Tobago, Enero-Febrero 2022,” Factsheet, https://www.r4v.info/sites/default/files/2022-03/2022-TTO_02_UNHCR%20Factsheet%20Jan-Feb%202022.pdf

36 UNICEF and USAID, “Impact of COVID-19 on migrant children in Trinidad and Tobago,” accessed May 27, 2022, <https://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/media/2096/file/Impact%20of%20COVID-19%20on%20migrant%20children%20in%20Trinidad%20and%20Tobago.pdf>

obstacles or those faced by immigrants in particular—. Complementing these aspects, it is necessary to promote the training and recruitment of professionals and specialists in cultural mediation. This would, not only facilitate the adequate access to services, but also promote social cohesion and intercultural integration.



Chapter 6.

Political Integration

Reception and Integration
of Migrants and Refugees
in Cities Across the Americas

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Political Integration

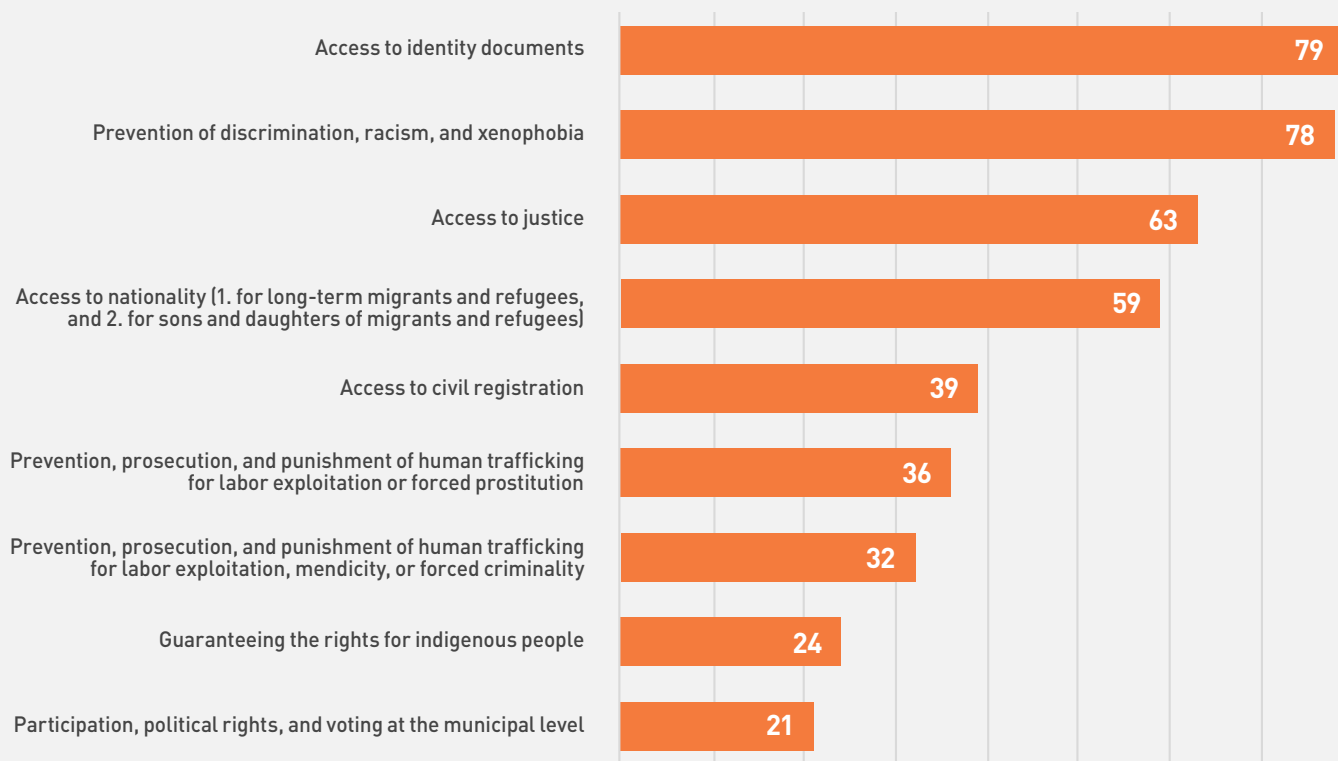
Political integration refers to the process of granting political participation to migrant populations, including—among other mechanisms—the recognition of their political rights in the community in which they reside. Additionally, political integration also refers to the process of accessing regularization, residence, and nationalization, which also contributes to the political integration of migrants within their host community. In this report, access to justice, prevention of violence, and prevention and punishment of human trafficking are also included as part of political integration.

Political integration was considered of least importance relative to other needs of the migrant and refugee population. In a way, this is a reflection of the experience of persons in situation of human mobility, who upon arrival at the host city first require basic reception services and economic opportunities. This is why some of the classical issues of political integration, such as voting rights and other forms of participation, are identified as more relevant in localities that have historically received migration populations, with migrants having settled there for many years. Examples of this are localities such as Buenos Aires and Pilar, in Argentina. As will be explained further below, Buenos Aires modified its electoral law to expand and strengthen the voting rights of migrants, and, in Pilar, campaigns and other actions were developed in order to promote and facilitate these rights.

Regarding the different needs analyzed as part of political integration, the need mentioned in most surveyed localities (73%) was “access to identity documents,” followed by “prevention of discrimination, xenophobia, and racism” (72%). Identity documents provide a sense of belonging, but they are also crucial for gaining access to a number of public and private services. In addition, prevention of discrimination, xenophobia, and racism —recurring problems in almost all localities— was mentioned emphatically in smaller localities and medium-size cities in which there have been recent changes in migration trends. These communities also face considerable difficulties in matters of access to employment and to other social services.

▶▶ **Graph 13.**

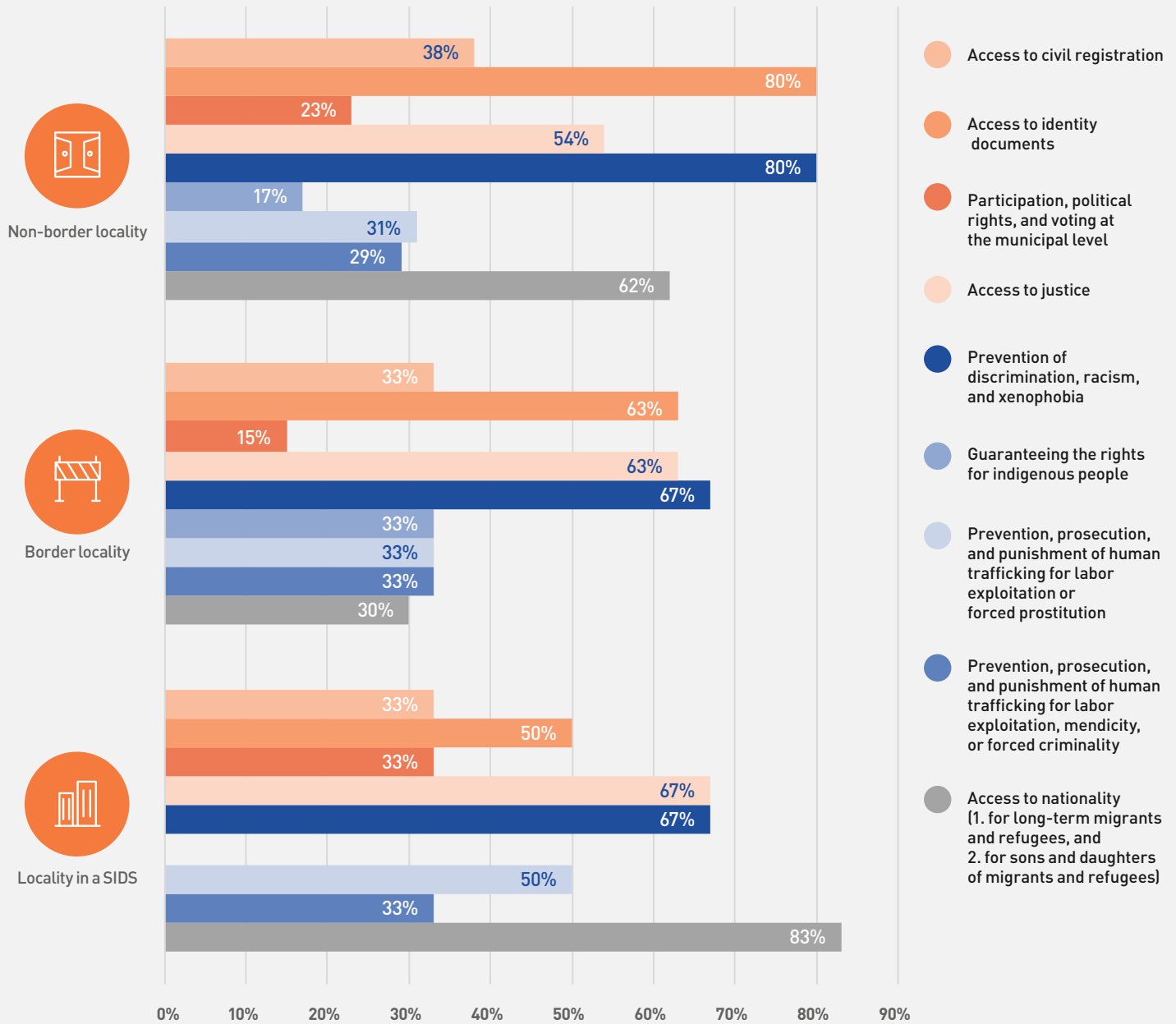
Necesidades prioritarias en materia de integración política



Note: Number of localities in which a need was among the three most important needs for political integration.

Two needs were also mentioned frequently: “access to justice” (58%), and “access to nationality” (54%). The issue of “access to nationality” emerged mostly in non-border localities (62%) compared to border localities (30%). This is perhaps due to the fact that migrant persons may be more inclined to settle in non-border localities.

Graph 14.
Priority Needs for Political Integration by Locality Type



Note: Percentage of localities in which a need was among the three most important needs for political integration.

In response to the main need observed in this report, “access to identity documents,” several localities have implemented programs and mechanisms to provide migrants and refugees with various forms of identification. Guyana, for example, developed an identification system in cooperation with UNHCR.

CASE STUDY: Population Registration and Identity Management EcoSystem, Guyana

Guyana is a country in the Caribbean which shares borders with Venezuela, Brazil, and Suriname. It has been classified as a heavily indebted poor country (HIPC) and it has one of the highest emigration rates in the world. Historically, persons from Guyana have migrated to Venezuela in search of employment, although there has also been migration of Venezuelans to Guyana to work in the mining sector. Recently, as Venezuela's migration crisis has become more acute, there has been large increase of migration flows from Venezuela to Guyana, including Guyanese returnees, indigenous communities, and non-indigenous Venezuelans.

With support from UNHCR, Guyana was the first country in the Americas to implement an electronic registration system, the Population Registration and Identity Management EcoSystem (PRIMES) for persons arriving from Venezuela.

This system enabled migration officers to register biometric information of persons arriving, as well as information about their needs. The system provided migrants with an entry permit, renewable after three months, and a home registration certificate. Once registered in the system, the person had access to social services and the guarantee that they would not be returned to Venezuela.

By February 2020, 2,000 Venezuelans had been registered under PRIMES.³⁷ However, maintaining up-to-date information within the system represented an important challenge, for example in following up with persons once they had settled in the country. The system is no longer operational because of a change in government and data management issues yet to be solved between UNHCR and the government of Guyana.³⁸ There are important lessons to be drawn from this experience, such as the need to institutionalize practices, the development of local capacities in support of the implementation of the system, and finally, clear and transparent agreements on the issue of data management.

A program for the documentation of migrants was also implemented in Mexico City called the SEDEREC Credential.

³⁷ Suenanica De Rozario, "Guyana pioneers use of advanced technology to help Venezuelans," Georgetown, Guyana: AC-NUR, 2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/stories/2020/2/5e4b144e4/guyana-pioneers-use-of-advanced-technology-to-help-venezuelans.html>

³⁸ News Room Guyana, "Fingerprint Collection, Eye Scan for Venezuelans in Guyana on Pause," News Room Guyana, Published October 26, 2021, <https://newsroom.gy/2021/10/26/fingerprint-collection-eye-scan-for-venezuelans-in-guyana-on-pause/>

CASE STUDY: SEDEREC Credential for Migrants, Mexico City, Mexico

As part of the government's Social Development Program 2013-2018, which created a series of public policies to reduce poverty and eliminate social deprivation, the Ministry of Rural Development and Equality for Communities (SEDEREC by its acronym in Spanish) implemented various programs to protect and guarantee the rights of migrants, including the provision of documentation known as SEDEREC Credential.

This document granted migrants and refugees living in Mexico City a valid means of official identification, recognized by local authorities in order to guarantee their access to different services and social programs. The Law on Interculturality, Attention to Migrants, and Human Mobility establishes that all persons are entitled to exercise their rights, regardless of their migratory status in the country. With this identification, it was possible to guarantee effective access to rights for the population.

In order to get the SEDEREC Credential, migrants were required to show evidence of residence of at least 30 days in the Mexico City, through the following documents: receipt of payment of utilities (water, electricity, and telephone) or proof of residence issued by a hospital, shelter, private institution, or civil association.

This document helped migrants in Mexico City to access social programs and services offered by the city government, such as hospital services and training and promotion of self-employment programs, among others. In addition, this document was used in banking transactions to facilitate the financial access for migrants.

In 2017, the program benefited 1,960 people, 1,187 men and 773 women. Identification documents were issued to 696 people from Venezuela, 499 from Mexico, 177 from Honduras, 145 from Colombia, 115 from Guatemala, 92 from El Salvador, 50 from Haiti, 37 from the United States, 20 from Cuba, 14 from Congo, 14 from Nigeria, and 13 from Somalia. The remaining 88 were issued to nationals from a range of other countries in the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa.³⁹

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the program was suspended, which has been recognized by many voices representing civil society, and even the government, as a mistake.

Finally, in several localities of the United States, municipal identity documents have been created for migrant populations.

³⁹ SEPI, "Con tarjeta Sederec protegemos derechos de población migrante y huésped," Published December 15, 2017

CASE STUDY: Municipal Identification, United States

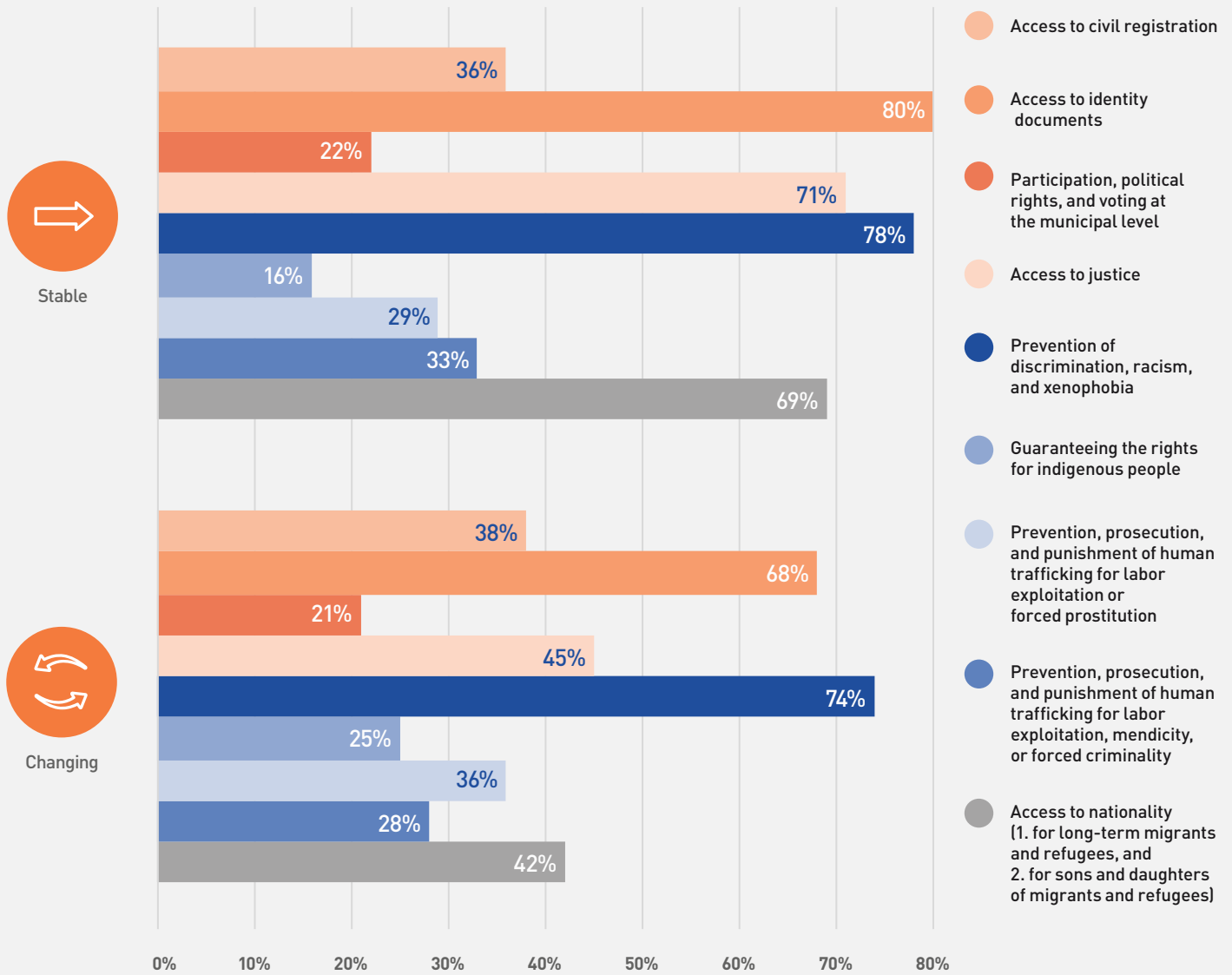
Several cities and counties in the United States (New Haven, Detroit, New York City, Philadelphia, etc.) issue municipal identity documents to their residents, allowing them to access municipal services and other benefits. These identity documents, which are also granted to migrants, can be used to access food assistance programs, libraries, discounts at local businesses and pharmacies, and also allow them to open accounts with financial institutions and utility companies.

IDNYC is a free municipal identification document for all residents of New York City, regardless of immigration status. It is the largest municipal ID program in the United States, with its mobile application available in 35 languages. As a widely recognized photo ID, IDNYC allows people in the city to access countless local services and programs, including free access to a range of cultural institutions such as museums and theaters. It also enables migrants to open accounts at banking and credit institutions, and grants access to discounts at supermarkets and urban mobility services, such as *Zipcar* and *CitiBike*, among others.

Within a year of IDNYC's launch in January 2015, the city received 750,000 applications for the identity document and more than 50% of the inquiries received were from people who did not speak English. Being an identification document for all the people of the city, it generated a sense of connection and belonging for the migrant population. In the words of a person from the New York City Office of the Mayor for Immigration Affairs: "We anticipated that maybe 100,000 or 200,000 people in the city would obtain the document when we launched it, but in two years, more than a million people got it. It was a pleasant surprise to realize that many people got it for its intangible value, not only the concrete benefits of accessing museums and so on, but also for the intangible feeling of being part of the city."

Noticeable differences in priorities were identified between localities with stable migration trends and those with changing trends over the last ten years. Access to justice and access to nationality were mentioned more often as priorities (71% and 69%, respectively) in localities with stable trends than in localities with changing trends (45% and 42%, respectively). This may reflect the fact that in localities with stable trends, people may have been settled for more years and have greater desire to stay, which allows them to prioritize more complex needs, such as access to justice, as well as to apply for the nationality of the country of residence, in cases where the national legislation allows it and the requirements in each country are met.

▶▶ **Graph 15.**
Priority Needs for Political Integration by Migratory Trend



Note: Percentage of localities in which a need was among the three most important needs for political integration.

Policies or programs that promote the political participation of migrants and refugees in the LAC region are limited. Although in some cases there is awareness about the importance of political participation, this does not always result in the promotion and/or approval of initiatives, or in the allocation of the necessary resources for them. “In general, there are no policies by governments to encourage the organization and citizen participation of migrants and refugees and the difficulties in accessing the civil registry of children of migrants born in the host community are generally widespread.” (Interview with a civil society organization of San Salvador).

National laws in countries do not necessarily prohibit the political participation of migrants and refugees in host communities, particularly those rights related to direct participation and the freedoms

of expression, association, and assembly. However, the recognition of participation through voting rights – active and/or passive – varies, not only from country to country, but also between localities, as illustrated in the South American region by a website developed by the city of Buenos Aires.⁴⁰ Indeed, there is a wide diversity of regulations and practices in this area. In some countries, migrants have the right to vote – at the national level – after certain years of residence, while in others they do not enjoy such rights until they obtain nationality. The recognition of voting rights in local communities has a much broader implication, although effective access depends on different normative requirements (regular residence and a minimum number of years of residence in the country and/or the respective locality) and practical requirement (individual registration in a specific register).

In localities with a more extensive history of immigration, it is more common to find: activism and association of migrants; reforms for the recognition of voting rights and the election of migrants in local government areas; and/or the expansion of their effective participation in participation and political processes. Municipal registration systems and identity documents have also been created, mainly in cities in the United States but also in Mexico City, to facilitate access to public and private services, as well as to generate a sense of belonging.

Another example can be found in the City of Buenos Aires, where the electoral law was reformed in 2018. The reformed law included provisions aimed at guaranteeing and expanding the voting rights of migrants residing there, as had happened a few years earlier in the province of Buenos Aires. The municipality of Pilar also carried out an initiative to inform local migrants about their political rights –in particular, the right to vote– and facilitate their exercise. In both cases, these measures had an immediate and considerable impact in terms of the quantitative expansion of the political participation of migrant residents in these localities, for example, in the most recent electoral processes held in 2021.

In some Colombian and Brazilian localities, initiatives have focused on promoting ad-hoc spaces for participation and consultation, in order to identify some of the basic needs of the recently settled migrant population. In other localities, these spaces are much more established, such as through the creation of the Municipal Council of Immigrants in São Paulo, Brazil.

CASE STUDY: Municipal Council of Immigrants, São Paulo, Brazil

The Municipal Council of Immigrants of São Paulo (CMI by its acronym in Spanish) was created in 2017 as a consultative body responsible for supervising compliance with the implementation of the Municipal Policy for the Immigrant Population established in 2016. The CMI is made up of 32 councilors elected for two-year periods and distributed equally among representatives of public entities and civil society, including migrant groups and associations. Council meetings are held at least once a month and are open to the public.

The CMI elections are aimed at non-Brazilians living in São Paulo, regardless of their immigration status. It is therefore an important initiative for migrants and refugees to ensure their participation in policies that affect them, although their general political participation is not included in the Brazilian Constitution.⁴¹ In the 2021 elections, there were 42 candidacies in the three authorized categories: public entities, civil society organizations, and individuals. A total of 1,292 migrants of 43 nationalities voted in person and online during these elections.⁴²

⁴⁰ Buenos Aires Ciudad, "Voto migrantes," <https://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/ministerio-de-gobierno/atlas-de-reglas-electorales/voto-migrantes>

⁴¹ <https://migramundo.com/sao-paulo-tem-44-candidaturas-deferidas-para-concorrer-ao-conselho-municipal-de-imigrantes/>

⁴² <https://migramundo.com/conselho-municipal-de-imigrantes-de-sp-define-novos-integrantes-conheca-os-eleitos-e-suplentes/>

The CMI is also responsible for convening and organizing the Municipal Immigrant Policy Conferences, in coordination with the municipality and the organizing committee. The conferences generate spaces for broad participation of the entire population and are held periodically to define the agenda of the municipality in migration matters.

The Second Municipal Conference was held in 2019 and was responsible for designing the 1st Municipal Plan of Policies for Immigrants of São Paulo.⁴³ To achieve this plan, the CMI held four regional pre-conferences, 18 free validation conferences, and three days of discussion and deliberation of the 78 priority proposals for municipal management. With the technical support of UNHCR and OIM, these proposals were transformed into 80 concrete actions divided into eight topics that must be carried out in four years.

The Council has also taken a number of initiatives, such as:

- Demands for access to justice to the Public Defender's Office of the State, for example in the case of the promotion of decent work and protection of street vendors in the city⁴⁴
- Advocacy with the National Congress for migratory regularization in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic⁴⁵
- Advocacy for universal access to the "Emergency Aid," a social benefit established during the COVID-19 pandemic, together with banking institutions that imposed bureaucratic obstacles for the collection of the emergency aid by the migrant and refugee population⁴⁶

In the case of Bogota, the District Institute of Communal Participation and Action has carried out several actions aimed at the migrant and refugee population.

⁴³ Conselho Municipal de Imigrantes e Prefeitura de São Paulo, 1º Plano Municipal de Políticas para Imigrantes de São Paulo 2021-2024, https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/upload/direitos_humanos/MIGRANTES/PUBLICACOES/Plano%20Municipal_Produto%20Final_Atualizado_02.pdf

⁴⁴ https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/upload/direitos_humanos/MIGRANTES/CONSELHO%20IMIGRANTES/Oficio28_CMI_2019DPE_ambulantes.pdf

⁴⁵ https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/upload/direitos_humanos/participacao_social/CONSELHOS/CONSELHO%20IMIGRANTES/DELIBERACOES/Oficios%20CMI.pdf

⁴⁶ https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/upload/direitos_humanos/MIGRANTES/CONSELHO%20IMIGRANTES/SEI_PMSP%20-%20028448484%20-%200f%C3%ADcio%20CEF.pdf

CASE STUDY: District Institute of Communal Participation and Action, Bogota, Colombia

The District Institute of Communal Participation and Action (IDPAC by its acronym in Spanish) of Bogota was created in 2006 as a district public establishment, attached to the District Secretariat of Government. IDPAC seeks to encourage, facilitate, and strengthen citizen participation and empowerment in order to improve the well-being of local communities.

Bogota is the city that receives most Venezuelans in the country, with around 400,000 Venezuelans living there at the end of 2021. Surveys⁴⁷ on the perception of migration in Colombia reveal differential patterns by region: in the Caribbean and the central region there is a more positive perception of migration, while in Bogota and in the northeastern region there is reluctance towards migrants and integration measures, and also manifestations of discrimination.⁴⁸ These perceptions reflect influences of prejudices or stereotypes, based on generalizations, as well as ignorance due to lack of direct contact and experiences with the “other group.”

In this context, in 2019, IDPAC, jointly with the Secretariat of Social Integration, the Secretariat of Economic Development, and the Institute of Migration and Peace Studies, created the District *Festival Venezuela Aporta*. This festival began with an invitation for proposals that received 89 applications from the Venezuelan migrant population with innovative, gastronomic, or cultural ventures aimed at contributing to erase xenophobic imaginaries and promote social and community integration. This work was accompanied and supported by the Australian Embassy, the Chamber of Commerce, and OIM.

Continuing this line of work and in order to recognize the positive contributions of the Venezuelan population for the local economy, culture, and development, in 2021, within the framework of the World Day of Refugees and Displaced Persons, the IDPAC launched an invitation to the Festival “*Panas y Parces Bogotá Unid@s Pa'lante*” [Panes and parces broadly means “friends” in Venezuelan and Colombian Spanish, respectively] with the support of UNHCR, *We are Panas*, PADF, the General Secretariat, Open Government, the Foreign Ministry of Colombia, the Legal Option Corporation, and the District Secretariat for Economic Development (SDDE).

An open invitation was made for the local and Venezuelan population to propose ventures that could contribute to the mitigation of xenophobia and the promotion of social integration. Four categories were convened: culture, gastronomy, productive initiatives, and social inclusion. For each category, eight initiatives were selected, which received an incentive for their strengthening, sponsorship for the exchange of experiences, and participation in the festival.

The initiative was very well received. A total of 1,000 people participated, including Venezuelans and Colombians, and 135 initiatives were proposed. The 32 winning initiatives, as a whole, sought to combat xenophobia through the promotion of creativity, innovation, and the economic reactivation of Bogota.

⁴⁷ Andrés Rosales. “Xenofobia, el otro contagio,” *Semana*, May 25, 2022, <https://migravenezuela.com/web/articulo/xenofobia-el-otro-contagio/1842>

⁴⁸ *Semana*, “Diferencias regionales en la percepción de los colombianos sobre la migración en el país,” boletín 14, May 25, 2022, https://s3.amazonaws.com/semanaruralvzla/documentos/1609184052_boletin_16_de_percepcion_regionalpdf

The trends identified in terms of political integration of migrants and refugees represent an important option to foster safe and orderly migration and to use regularization as a tool for access and not as an instrument of selection and restriction. It is also crucial to accompany political integration with complete and viable schemes of access to employment and other livelihoods opportunities. At the same time, as described below, political integration must ensure the promotion of spaces for participation and community dialogue.

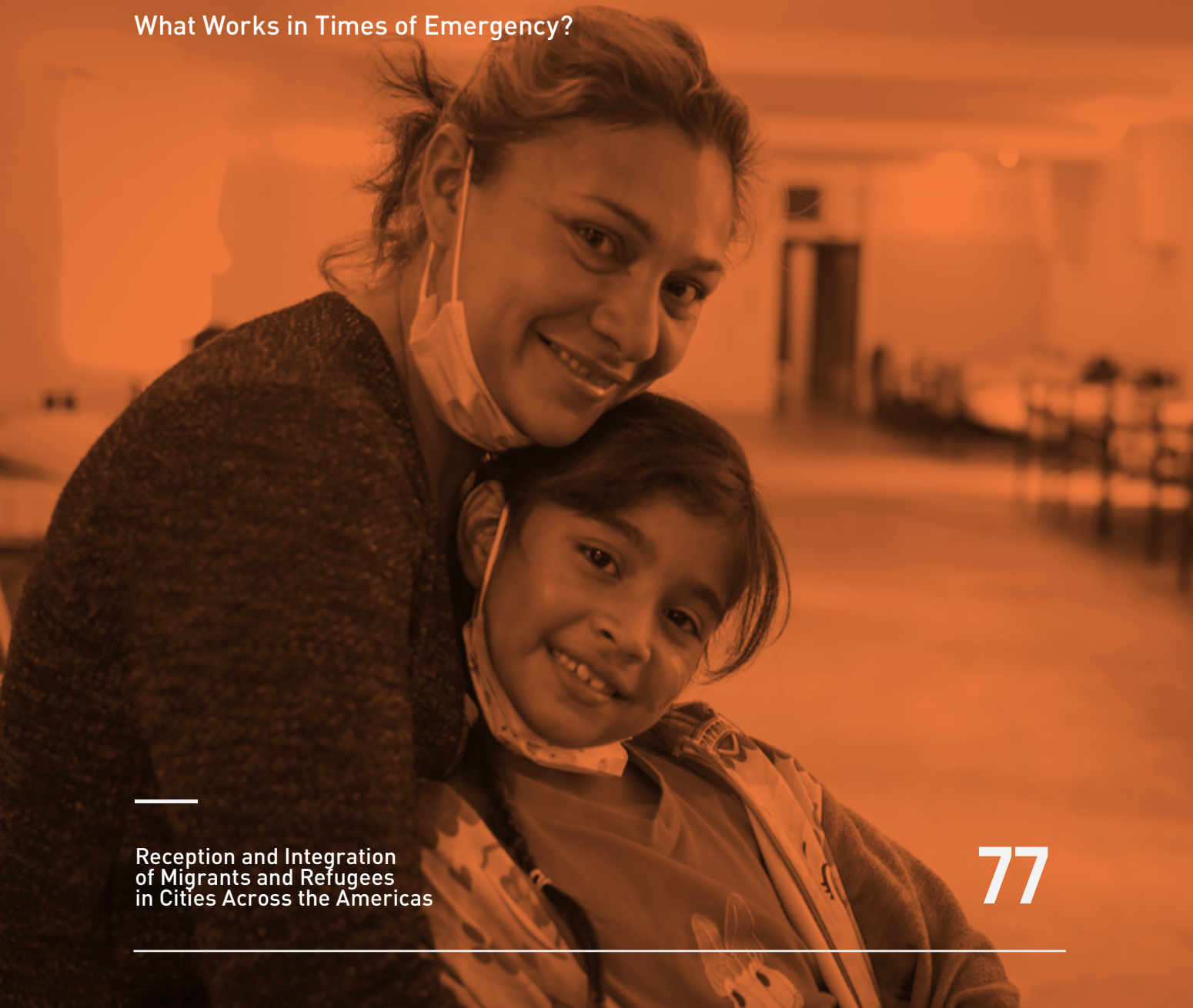
In the most successful examples, institutionalized, stable, broad, and democratic spaces for the participation of migrants were observed. These spaces aimed at identifying needs and capacities; listening, presenting, and debating proposals; and disseminating information, among others. Although in the localities studied there were, in several cases, associations of migrants, it is necessary to promote further associativity, not only of migrants, but also through their inclusion in social institutions of the host society. As mentioned in the other areas of integration, it is essential to mainstream migration in all local policies and programs in order to achieve greater efficiencies and prevent xenophobia. Finally, politically, an official narrative is required in which migrants become neighbors, are part of the community in all its dimensions, and are ultimately considered citizens.



Chapter 7.

What Works in Times of Emergency?

Reception and Integration
of Migrants and Refugees
in Cities Across the Americas



What Works in Times of Emergency?

— The COVID-19 pandemic had profound effects on people, communities, and economies across the world. For migrants and refugees, the pandemic was especially hard. When borders were closed in many of the countries across the Americas, regular entries stopped, which considerably aggravated the pre-existing vulnerabilities for many people who were already on the move, as they continued to migrate through irregular routes despite greater restrictions.

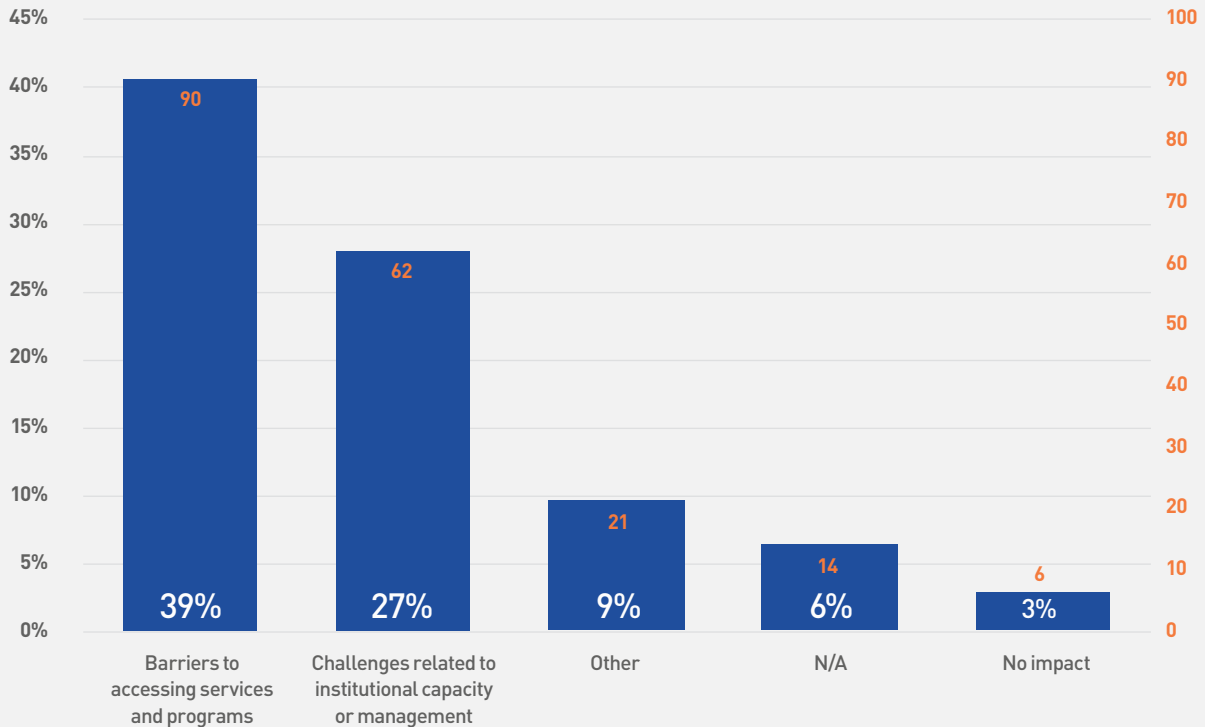
As such, irregular migration and all the risks associated with it increased significantly during the pandemic. In some countries, irregular entry is, to this day, an impediment to accessing public services, to obtaining a residence permit, and to exercising several essential rights. Due to this and other factors related to the pandemic, access to reception and integration programs were hindered. During this period, family groups were also separated in many cases and migratory and asylum processes were delayed, which left hundreds of thousands of people in legal limbos.

The pandemic also exacerbated unemployment, homelessness, and food insecurity among migrants and refugees, even when these populations were considered “essential workers.” This was due, among other reasons, to the population’s underlying vulnerabilities prior to the pandemic, as well as to restrictions—based on nationality, time of residence, and/or immigration status—imposed in some countries to access social programs that sought to mitigate the impact of public health restrictions.

According to the interviews carried out for this report, the main impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the reception and integration of migrants and refugees at the local level was an increase in barriers for accessing public services and programs (Graph 16). This included difficulties in accessing services remotely, especially due to limited internet access and lack of digital tools among the vulnerable migrants and refugees across the region.

▶▶ **Graph 16.**

COVID-19-Related Impacts on the Implementation of Policies for Migrants and Refugees at the Local Level



In 66% of localities studied there was at least one COVID-19 national and/or local policy that included migrants and refugees. For example, several healthcare policies covered migrants and refugees, facilitating their access to prevention, vaccination, and treatment, although this did not always occur on equal terms with nationals and there were instances of discrimination based on nationality or immigration status. Despite being covered by public policies, some people, especially those with an irregular migratory status, also feared approaching public entities to access services.

A recent study which analyzes migrants and refugees' access to non-contributory social programs before and during COVID-19 pandemic in seven Latin American countries, revealed that, although there was a wide heterogeneity and complexity regarding the different degrees of inclusion of these populations, responses to the pandemic largely reflected continuity, and further normalization, of existing exclusionary practices prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in most cases, identity documents were required to access social programs, representing a barrier for accessing for migrants and refugees, especially those with irregular migratory status.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Vera Espinoza et al, Towards a typology of social protection for migrants and refugees in Latin America during the COVID-19 pandemic, CMS 9, 52 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-021-00265-x>

CASE STUDY: CAS Tienditas, Norte de Santander, Colombia

Between 2017 and 2020, the northern border between Colombia and Venezuela was the crossing point, not only for more than 70% (1,944,911 people) of Venezuelans entering Colombia by land (Statistics Migration Colombia, 2017-2020), but also for thousands of Venezuelans seeking to return to their country, as the economic and social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic had left them with no livelihood alternatives in their host countries.

In response, the Government of Norte de Santander, the Secretariat of Borders, the GIFMM, and the national government created Health Care Centers (CAS by its acronym in Spanish) as part of their collective strategy to promote orderly, safe, and controlled migration. The CAS were healthcare stations located across migratory routes in Norte de Santander, which provided Venezuelans returning to their country with health screenings, primary healthcare services, food security, hygiene kits, temporary shelter, and information on their rights and duties.

The Tienditas CAS, located in the municipality of La Parada, bordering the city of San Antonio in Venezuela, was opened in 2020 in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Venezuelans were able to stay at the Tienditas CAS for up to 48 hours before returning to their country, while they underwent health screenings and accessed other available services. Upon arrival, each person was fully identified by name and identity documents, and the station worked alongside security authorities to ensure the safety of migrants.

Maintaining an orderly entry and exit of people at the Tienditas CAS required close coordination between local and national entities as well as international organizations (UNHCR and IOM). Coordination activities involved not only entities in Norte de Santander but also others within Colombia's 31 departments, especially the cities of Cali, Bogota, Bucaramanga, and Medellin, as well as localities close to the border with Ecuador, where migrants were still arriving. Public-private partnerships, including with organizations of the Catholic Church, also helped to strengthen services provided.

The Tienditas CAS made it possible to overcome health risks at a time when more than 1,000 returning Venezuelan remained crowded and without the minimum bio-security elements on the International Highway, near the Simón Bolívar International Bridge.

Although most of policies and programs created to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic were led and coordinated by national governments, the interviews made for this report also evidenced organized responses in intermediate cities and capitals, such as Mexico City, Boa Vista, Seattle, and Toronto, where there is greater institutional and budgetary capacity.

CASE STUDY: Protocol for Emergency Humanitarian Assistance for Migrants and/or Persons in Need of International Protection, Mexico City, Mexico

The *Protocol for Emergency Humanitarian Assistance for Migrants and/or Persons in Need of International Protection* in Mexico City, commonly known as the “humanitarian bridge,” is a humanitarian assistance strategy coordinated by the Human Rights Commission of Mexico City and the Government of Mexico City. The strategy has facilitated inter-institutional coordination and vertical and horizontal intersectoral coordination (between different levels of government and specific Secretariats) to provide reception services to migrants and refugees, including healthcare, food, and temporary shelter.⁵⁰

This protocol was initially implemented in the context of the migrant caravans of 2018 and 2019 and was later maintained given the continued arrival of migrants and refugees in the city. This precedent facilitated its implementation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The protocol includes specific guidelines for public servants, the migrant and refugee population and the media; suggested formats for records and logs; training proposals for the teams involved in assistance; a proposal for the location of support spaces; and a directory of organizations, shelters, and consulates that support migrants and refugees.

Behind this protocol, there are different participating actors (OIM, UNHCR, UNICEF, PAHO, and local organizations) as well as several national and local government agencies.

At the local level, this protocol, in addition to solidarity, is a first step toward advancing the implementation of public policies geared towards the social, economic, and cultural integration of migrants and refugees in the city.

Although various COVID-19 responses faced serious challenges, some localities, such as Toronto and Calgary (Canada), were able to establish multi-sectoral alliances through which they provided immediate emergency support to the populations most affected by the pandemic, especially migrants and refugees.

⁵⁰ Comisión de Derechos Humanos del Distrito Federal, “Protocolo para la atención humanitaria de emergencia a personas migrantes y/o sujetas de protección internacional en la Ciudad de México,” 2019, https://cdhcm.org.mx/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Protocolo_Humanitario_migrante_prote_intern.pdf

CASE STUDY: Temporary COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund, Toronto, Canada

A multisectoral response plan was created in Toronto in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan allowed migrants and refugees without a health card granted by the provincial government to access COVID-19 vaccines. As part of this plan, the city also self-managed a fund called Temporary COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund, which distributed C\$10.2 million in emergency funding to 80 community agencies serving the most vulnerable residents, including newly arrived migrants and refugees. The municipality partnered with local organizations, such as FCJ Refugee Centre, to provide medical and financial assistance to those who had to remain isolated or confined because they were COVID-19 positive and not eligible to receive benefits from the federal government.

Toronto Mayor John Tory announced in March 2022 that the city's vaccination rate was higher than that of New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Berlin, London, and Brussels. Effective coordination between the municipality, its Toronto Newcomer Office, and local organizations providing settlement services was identified as a good practice for addressing health emergencies at the local level. Another positive factor of this plan is the fact that Toronto was reconfirmed as a sanctuary city in 2021 through the Toronto for All campaign, which seeks to raise awareness about the difficulties experienced by migrants without regular migratory status in Canada and the social and economic contributions that migrants make in the city.

The COVID-19 pandemic and other emergencies experienced by the localities studied resulted in a series of recommendations to promote the reception and integration of migrants and refugees in times of emergency. A recurrent suggestion from interviewees was to include the migrant and refugee population in general emergency and social programs (particularly healthcare and economic support programs). Other important recommendations included the importance of developing targeted communication and outreach strategies for migrants and refugees, taking advantage of their networks, digital channels, and civil society organizations. Finally, interviewees highlighted that emergencies also reveal the urgent need to simplify bureaucratic processes to facilitate and accelerate access to several services.

Conclusion

This study is a first attempt to provide a broad perspective of the varied landscape of policies and measures that are being developed at the local level for the reception and integration of migrants and refugees in the Americas. It is a heterogeneous context, but there are relevant trends that show progress, opportunities, and challenges. Faced with the rise of nationalist and populist tendencies observed in recent years worldwide and in some countries of the region, the policies and projects developed at the local level for the reception and integration of migrants and refugees in many cities and localities of the Americas have, in many cases, gone against the tide of repressive migration policies at the national level. At the same time, they have represented positive innovations to provide protection and better life opportunities for migrants and refugees.

Local governments do not operate in a vacuum.

One of the main findings of this study is that local governments do not operate in a vacuum when working on the reception and integration of migrants and refugees. On the one hand, the heavy influence of national governments on local action was evidenced—both in positive and negative ways. For most local governments, coordination with national policies represents one of their main challenges. On the other hand, civil society organizations and international organizations play a key role in most of the localities studied. These organizations fill institutional gaps to meet the needs of migrants and refugees. Although support from international organizations helps to address short-term needs and, in some cases, to strengthen local governments, when international organizations fill government gaps, challenges arise regarding the sustainability of these measures in the medium and long-term.

Local structures and capacities vary significantly.

There is significant diversity in the structures and capacities of the 109 localities studied under this report. On one side of the spectrum, there are localities with a long migratory history and with resources, which have stable structures designed to provide services to migrants and refugees. These include the Mayor's Office for Migration Affairs in New York City in the United States and the Coordination of Policies for Immigrants and Promotion of Decent Employment of São Paulo in Brazil. There are also localities with new migratory dynamics, which have been overwhelmed and have had to depend on the support of international organizations but have been able to develop local response initiatives, such as seen in several non-border localities in Colombia, Chile, and Brazil. Finally, at the other end of the spectrum are border localities that are generally isolated and have few resources to provide a comprehensive response to the needs of migrants and refugees. Lastly, in terms of capacities, although there are still significant gaps, in 47% of the localities training programs training for local officials on issues of reception and integration of migrants were reported. It is important to emphasize, however, that 42% of these training programs are based on normative and rights issues, and do not focus on practical aspects of policy design and implementation.

Socio-economic integration is a priority, followed by reception, although needs and priorities vary by type of locality.

In all the sub-regions studied, socio-economic integration was identified as the main need, followed by reception. This suggests that at the beginning, the main need is to provide migrants and refugees with measures that facilitate access to goods and services—including employment—to meet their basic needs and those of their families. For this, and for any type of integration, access to migratory regularization is a fundamental precondition. It is worth highlighting that for border localities in particular, the priority was reception, although this was often understood as the rapid processing of people and not as the comprehensive provision of services for the population. Lastly, in some of the newer destinations, in the absence of sufficient social networks that can provide support to migrants and refugees in host communities, there is greater awareness, urgency, and need for local actors to provide adequate reception and socio-economic integration services. Finally, for all localities, it is essential to have disaggregated and updated information on migrants at the local level to facilitate the creation and access to appropriate reception and integration services.

There is still a long way to go to achieve political integration.

In most of the localities studied here, there are almost no mechanisms for the political participation of migrants and refugees, which goes against their intention to stay and their priorities. In this area, access to identity documents was identified as the main need since this allows access to public and private services.

With regard to identity documents, different models of municipal identification have been adopted in Mexico City and in localities across the United States. Likewise, in cities such as Bogota and São Paulo, permanent spaces for political participation have been developed for migrants and refugees. However, there is a long way to go and a pressing need to adopt an official narrative that presents migrants and refugees as neighbors, newcomer, and citizens, and also to encourage associativity not only within migrant spaces but in other broader community spaces.

General policies, specific communication efforts.

Given limited resources in most of the localities studied, there is a need to include migrants and refugees in general policies. This not only allows for greater efficiency by not having to create new policies and programs, but also helps to avoid xenophobia since the perception of favoring these groups with differentiated programs or services does not arise.

However, it is still important to make differential efforts to ensure access to public programs and services for migrants and refugees. In many cases, and especially in times of emergency, targeted communication and orientation efforts are required to reach this population and can be carried out taking advantage of existing networks and organizations. Normalizing migration in our countries and cities and, therefore, to stop perceiving it as a problem or from reactive and repressive approaches, requires proactive work in the development of an official narrative that highlights the positive contributions that migrants and refugees bring to our communities, as well as the development of targeted communication campaigns that facilitate access to reception and integration services for this population.

Perhaps the most pressing conclusion of this study is that at the local level, there are opportunities for the reception and integration of migrants and refugees, and that local actors can play a key role in

the reception and integration of this population. Despite numerous challenges, the cases shown here demonstrate that with will, innovative ideas, respect for human rights, and the support of international organizations, civil society, the private sector, academia, and the media, there are important advances at the local level that can serve as the foundations for future progress on the successful reception and integration of migrants and refugees across the Americas.



The socio-economic integration of migrants and refugees was chosen as the highest priority in most of the localities analyzed under this study.

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Annex I. List of Localities and Characteristics

Locality/City	Country	Subregion	Geographic	Temporal ⁵¹
Buenos Aires	Argentina	South America	Non-border	Constant
Cordoba	Argentina	South America	Non-border	Constant
Pilar	Argentina	South America	Non-border	Constant
Quilmes	Argentina	South America	Non-border	Constant
Rosario	Argentina	South America	Non-border	Constant
La Paz	Bolivia	South America	Non-border	Constant
Santa Cruz de la Sierra	Bolivia	South America	Non-border	Constant
Belo Horizonte	Brazil	South America	Non-border	Change
Boa Vista	Brazil	South America	Border	Change
Florianopolis	Brazil	South America	Non-border	Change
Manaus	Brazil	South America	Non-border	Change
State of Roraima	Brazil	South America	Border	Change
Pacaraima	Brazil	South America	Border	Change
Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	South America	Non-border	Change
São Paulo	Brazil	South America	Non-border	Constant
Arica	Chile	South America	Border	Change
Concepcion	Chile	South America	Non-border	Change
Estacion Central	Chile	South America	Non-border	Change
Iquique	Chile	South America	Border	Change
La Pintana	Chile	South America	Non-border	Change
Providencia	Chile	South America	Non-border	Change
Puerto Montt	Chile	South America	Non-border	Change
Quilicura	Chile	South America	Non-border	Change
Santiago de Chile	Chile	South America	Non-border	Change
Valparaíso	Chile	South America	Non-border	Change

⁵¹ Temporal in this study refers to whether the migration dynamics have been constant or suffered changes in the past ten years.

Araquita	Colombia	South America	Border	Constant
Barranquilla	Colombia	South America	Non-border	Change
Bogota	Colombia	South America	Non-border	Change
Bucaramanga	Colombia	South America	Non-border	Change
Cucuta	Colombia	South America	Border	Constant
Maicao	Colombia	South America	Border	Constant
Medellin	Colombia	South America	Non-border	Change
Necocli	Colombia	South America	Border	Constant
Manta	Ecuador	South America	Non-border	Change
Quito	Ecuador	South America	Non-border	Constant
Asunción	Paraguay	South America	Non-border	Constant
Ciudad del Este	Paraguay	South America	Border	Constant
Department of Alto Parana	Paraguay	South America	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Callao	Peru	South America	Non-border	Constant
Lima	Peru	South America	Non-border	Constant
Tacna	Peru	South America	Border	Change
Tumbes	Peru	South America	Border	Change
Canelones	Uruguay	South America	Non-border	Change
Montevideo	Uruguay	South America	Non-border	Constant
Municipality B	Uruguay	South America	Non-border	Change
Rivera	Uruguay	South America	Border	Change
Calgary	Canada	North America	Non-border	Change
Hamilton	Canada	North America	Non-border	Constant
Moncton	Canada	North America	Non-border	Change
Montreal	Canada	North America	Non-border	Constant
Toronto	Canada	North America	Non-border	Constant
Vancouver	Canada	North America	Non-border	Constant
Arlington	United States	North America	Non-border	Constant
Boston	United States	North America	Non-border	Constant
Chicago	United States	North America	Non-border	Constant
Doral	United States	North America	Non-border	Change
El Paso	United States	North America	Border	Change

Los Angeles	United States	North America	Non-border	Constant
McAllen	United States	North America	Border	Change
Miami	United States	North America	Non-border	Constant
Montgomery County	United States	North America	Non-border	Constant
Nashville	United States	North America	Non-border	Change
New York City	United States	North America	Non-border	Constant
Philadelphia	United States	North America	Non-border	Constant
Phoenix	United States	North America	Non-border	Constant
San Diego	United States	North America	Border	Constant
Seattle	United States	North America	Non-border	Constant
Yuma	United States	North America	Border	Change
Desamparados	Costa Rica	Central America and Mexico	Non-border	Change
San Jose	Costa Rica	Central America and Mexico	Non-border	Constant
San Vito	Costa Rica	Central America and Mexico	Border	Change
Upala	Costa Rica	Central America and Mexico	Border	Change
San Salvador	El Salvador	Central America and Mexico	Non-border	Constant
City of Guatemala	Guatemala	Central America and Mexico	Non-border	Constant
Esquipulas	Guatemala	Central America and Mexico	Border	Change
Quetzaltenango	Guatemala	Central America and Mexico	Non-border	Change
Tecun Uman	Guatemala	Central America and Mexico	Border	Change
San Pedro Sula	Honduras	Central America and Mexico	Border	Change
Tegucigalpa	Honduras	Central America and Mexico	Non-border	Change
Mexico City	Mexico	Central America and Mexico	Non-border	Constant
Juarez City	Mexico	Central America and Mexico	Border	Change
Puebla	Mexico	Central America and Mexico	Non-border	Constant
Saltillo	Mexico	Central America and Mexico	Non-border	Change
Tapachula	Mexico	Central America and Mexico	Border	Change

Tijuana	Mexico	Central America and Mexico	Border	Change
Cemaco	Panama	Central America and Mexico	Border	Constant
Panama City	Panama	Central America and Mexico	Non-border	Change
La Chorrera	Panama	Central America and Mexico	Non-border	Change
Darien Province	Panama	Central America and Mexico	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Country	Aruba	Caribbean	Cities in SIDS	Change
Country	Bahamas	Caribbean	Cities in SIDS	Constant
Belmopan	Belize	Caribbean	Non-border	Constant
Country	Curaçao	Caribbean	Cities in SIDS	Change
Dajabon	Dominican Republic	Caribbean	Border	Constant
Santo Domingo	Dominican Republic	Caribbean	Non-border	Constant
Bartica	Guyana	Caribbean	Non-border	Constant
Georgetown	Guyana	Caribbean	Non-border	Constant
Portland	Jamaica	Caribbean	Cities in SIDS	Constant
Country	Trinidad and Tobago	Caribbean	Cities in SIDS	Change
Port of Spain	Trinidad and Tobago	Caribbean	Cities in SIDS	Change



Annex II. Survey Instrument

Date of Interview: _____ / _____ / _____

Good morning/afternoon/night, my name is _____. “Mr. (Ms.) XXXXXX - Position: XXXXXX, in order to guarantee your rights to habeas data, or informative self-determination and privacy, before we begin, we would like your express consent that you agree to this interview (ASK FOR THE EXPRESS RESPONSE OF THE INTERVIEWEE TO EACH OF THE QUESTIONS).

1. ¿Do you declare that you have received an explanation on what the study “Reception and Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Cities Across the Americas” is about and what its objective is?
2. Do you declare that you have been informed that the information you provide in the course of your interview will be treated confidentially and that it will only be used for research purposes and analysis of public policies specific to the objectives of the study?

As such, do you freely and voluntarily ACCEPT that the interview in which you will participate be recorded in audio format for subsequent transcription and analysis, this being a material to which part of the consulting team of the study may have access to?

IF you have accepted our request, we may now proceed at XX hour of day XX, to start the interview and to record it in audio format.

If you wish to confirm the veracity of this study, please email: oearefugiados@oas.org. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

RESEARCHER DATA

PART I CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERVIEWEE

1 General data

- a) Country: (Drop-down list of countries)
- b) City: (Drop-down list of cities)
- c) Name of interviewee _____
- d) Email * _____@_____
- e) Phone Number _____

2 Gender

Male

Female

Non-binary

Prefers not to respond

3 What is your role at the local level?

(Drop-down list to select category and text box to record specific job title)

1) Mayor

2) Public official at the local

3) Public official at the national level

4) Official of an international organization

5) Official of an inter-governmental organization (e.g., MERCOSUR, SICA)

6) Member of local community or community organization

7) Member of a civil society organization

8) Member of an organization of migrants, refugees, or diaspora

9) Member of a religious organization

10) University researcher, member of a research center, or think-tank

11) Member of the private sector

12) Other:

Job title: _____

4 What is the name of the institution/organization where you work?

5 How long have you been in that position? (full year)

Less than one year

One to 3 years

More than three years to 5 years

More than 5 years

**PART II:
GENERAL INFORMATION**

6 For the following variables, tell me if the local government collects, receives, or tracks (consults), information from other sources about the situation of migrants and refugees in its territory.

	Collects (Yes/No/NA)	Receives from other sources (Yes/No/NA)
a. Number of migrants		
b. Number of refugees and asylum applications		
c. Country of origin		
d. Access to public services		
e. Situation of vulnerability/needs		

7 What are the most common countries of origin of migrants and refugees in your locality? List the top five.

#	Country (drop-down list)
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

8 Are there Venezuelan migrants and refugees in your city or locality? (applies if this country was not mentioned in the previous question)

Yes

No

PART III: NEEDS OF MIGRANTS, REFUGEES, AND THEIR HOST COMMUNITIES

9 In your role of assistance to migrants, of the following topics, which do you consider to be the most important needs of migrants and refugees in terms of reception and integration in your locality?

Order according to the most important needs of migrants and refugees in your locality (where #1 is the most important).

Need	Order
A. Reception	
B. Socio-economic integration, migratory regularization, and recognition of refugee status	
C. Socio-cultural integration	
D. Political integration and civic participation	

10 Regarding the themes mentioned in the previous question, from your role and/or perspective, which do you consider to be the most important needs of migrants and refugees in terms of reception and integration in your locality?

A. Reception

Order the following reception needs by importance for your locality (where #1 is the most important).

Reception Needs	Order or N/A
a. Primary assistance on arrival in the territory (food, clothing, health, etc.)	
b. Access to temporary lodging	

Additional comments on reception (optional): _____

B. Socio-Economic Integration, Migratory Regularization, Recognition of Refugee Status

Select/order the two most important socio-economic integration needs for your locality (where #1 is the most important).

Socio-Economic Integration Needs	Order
a. Access to employment	
b. Access to decent working conditions/prevention of labor exploitation	
c. Access to economic assistance via cash transfers	
d. Access to housing	
e. Access to migratory regularization	

Additional comments on reception (optional): _____

C. Socio-Cultural Integration

Select/order the three most important needs for socio-cultural integration for your locality (where #1 is the most important).

Socio-Cultural Integration Needs	Order
a. Access to healthcare services	
b. Access to mental health services (psychological and psychiatric assistance)	
c. Access to medical treatment for illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, cancer, kidney disease, diabetes	
d. Access to COVID-19 tests, medical treatment, and vaccines	
e. Access to prenatal controls, birth, and postnatal controls	
f. Access to education	
g. Linguistic inclusion	
h. Access to culture	

Additional comments on reception (optional): _____

D. Political Integration and Civic Participation

Select/order the three most important political integration needs for your locality (where #1 is the most important).

Political Integration Needs	Order
a. Access to civil registration	
b. Access to identity documents	
c. Participation, political rights, and voting at the municipal level	
d. Access to justice	
e. Prevention of discrimination, racism, and xenophobia	
f. Guaranteeing the rights of indigenous people	
g. Promoting gender equality/preventing gender-based violence	
h. Prevention, prosecution, and punishment of human trafficking for sexual exploitation or forced prostitution	
i. Prevention, prosecution, and punishment of human trafficking for labor exploitation, mendicancy, or forced criminality	
j. Access to nationality (1. for long-term migrants and refugees, and 2. For the children of migrants and refugees)	

Additional comments on reception (optional): _____

11 What are the main challenges faced by the government of your locality for the reception and integration of migrants and refugees?

Select/order the three most important challenges (where #1 is the most important).

Challenges	Order
1. Needs for change in national policies or administrative practices	
2. Ignorance or little knowledge of the rights of migrants and refugees	
3. Lack of urban inclusion policies	

4. Lack of policies aimed at promoting intercultural integration	
5. Needs related to improving coordination, cooperation, and communication between the different authorities and organizations active at the local level	
6. Needs to improve staff skills to respond to the reception and integration of migrants and refugees at the local level	
7. Lack or insufficient financial resources to guarantee institutional provisions to migrants and refugees at the local level	
8. High staff turnover at the local level	
9. Climate of discrimination, racism, and xenophobia towards migrants and refugees at the local level	
10. COVID-19 pandemic	
11. Other _____	

- 12** Rate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very low and 5 very high, the contribution made by each of the following actors in terms of reception and integration of migrants and refugees at the local level.

Actors	Contribution to the reception and integration of migrants and refugees					
	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	N/A
1. Mayor's office and municipal agencies						
2. Police						
3. Local community						
4. Immigration authorities						
5. Military forces						
6. National level institutions working locally (Ministries, Secretariats, among others)						
7. National human rights institutions (Human Rights Commissions, Ombudsman, or equivalents)						
8. Local human rights institutions (State Commissions, local commissions, representatives, among others)						

9. Civil society organizations						
10. Religious organizations						
11. Migrant, refugee, and diaspora organizations						
12. International Organizations (UN agencies, IOM, UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, among others)						
13. Universities and research institutions						
14. Private sector						
15. Media						

PART IV: INSTITUTIONALITY AND PARTICIPATION OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

13 At the local level, is there or was there a focal point or unit in charge of assisting migrants and refugees and of facilitating coordination with other areas of the local and national government, international organizations, civil society organizations, and other relevant actors?

There is There was There isn't and there wasn't

In the affirmative cases (There is or There was), What does/did it consist of?

a) Scope, objectives, and activities

b) Evaluation of work done (reach and impact)

c) Approach and priorities

14 a) Do officials at the local level receive training on their responsibilities and on the rights of migrants and refugees?

a) Yes (go to Q15b) No (go to Q15A)

- b) Could you describe what the training is about? _____
- c) Who are the instructors? _____
- d) How is it funded? _____

15 a) Are there any measures to promote and facilitate the participation of migrants and refugees in the design and implementation of policies and programs aimed at them?

a) Yes (go to Q15b) No (go to Q15A)

b) What are these measures?

15 A a) Are there any measures to promote and facilitate the participation of the local host community in the design and implementation of policies and programs aimed at migrants and refugees?

a) Yes (go to Q15b) No (go to Q15A)

b) What are these measures?

PART V: DEVELOPMENT OF GOOD PRACTICES AND PUBLIC POLICIES

Please choose one or two public policies (programs, projects, or initiatives) that are already being implemented in your locality and that in your opinion are the most relevant or that you consider important for the care of migrants or refugees.

Policy No. 1:

16 General information about the policy

a) Name of the policy (program, project, or initiative): _____

b) Select the type/reach/theme of the selected policy: (Multiple choice)

- 1) Access to primary assistance on arrival in the territory
- 2) Access to temporary lodging
- 3) Residence: role of the local government in access to migratory regularization, residence permits, etc.
- 4) Access to employment and integration services
- 5) Access to economic assistance via cash transfers
- 6) Access to healthcare services
- 7) Access to education
- 8) Linguistic inclusion
- 9) Access to culture
- 10) Participation, political rights, voting at municipal level
- 11) Access to justice
- 12) Prevention of discrimination, racism, and xenophobia
- 13) Guarantee the rights of indigenous people
- 14) Promotion of gender equality
- 15) Other: _____

c) What is the main objective of this public policy? _____

d) Which agency/agencies is/are responsible for designing and implementing this public policy?

e) Which is the population to be reached with this public policy?

f) Is it universal for all migrants and refugees or is it intended for a specific group, for example based on gender, sexual orientation, or age?

Universal Specific Which group? _____

g) What are the criteria for accessing this policy? _____

h) Does the migrant have to prove their regular immigration status and home address in the city or locality to access the benefits of this policy?

Yes No

i) Who are the national actors (differentiate municipal/provincial), development agencies, international cooperation, and civil society organizations involved in the implementation of the policy?

#	Name	Type
1		National municipal actor
2		National provincial actor
.		International cooperation
.		Development agency
n		Civil society organization

j) What kind of resources were necessary for the implementation of this public policy and what actors involved in the policy? (Suggest – personnel, supplies, space, knowledge)

#	Type of resource	Actors involved
1		
2		
.		
n		

k) What is the regulatory framework of this public policy to guarantee access to public services for migrants and refugees?

l) Are there any barriers between immigration control functions and the provision of this policy, in order to prevent fear of detention and deportation of migrants in an irregular situation?

Yes No

m) For how long has this policy been implemented?

Less than one year One year and one day to four years
 Four years and one day to eight years More than eight years

17 a. What have been the positive impacts of this policy?

b. Rating-scale question: What has been (or are) the challenges in implementing this policy according to the following aspects?

Challenge	Level of Challenge					
	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	N/A
1. Financial resources						
2. Lack of staff						
3. Staff training						
4. Coordination with national authorities						

18 a. If actions could be taken to improve this policy, what would they be?

b. What kind of additional resources and skills are needed to make improvements (government requirements, planning, training, budgeting, coordination, socio-political and cultural knowledge)?

Policy No. 2: (Repeat Q16-Q18)

19 a. How has the COVID-19 pandemic crisis affected the implementation of reception and integration policies for migrants and refugees at the local level?

b. Were there any specific policies at the national level for migrants and refugees in this context?

Yes No

Explain: _____

c. Were there any specific policies at the local level for migrants and refugees in this context?

Yes

No

Explain: _____



Anexo III. Documentos consultados

Region / Country	Ciudad	Tema	Source	Año	Resumen
South America		Migration dynamics in border countries of South America	IOM Regional Office for South America	2018	This Migration Workbook #10 comprises two studies of the dynamics of territorial mobility in border cities of four countries (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay).
South America		Inequality and migratory regularization in South America	Center for Legal and Social Studies and the Argentine Commission for Refugees and Migrants	2020	Laberintos de papel studies the migration policies of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay and highlights the problems generated by migratory irregularity.
Argentina	Rosario	Diagnostic	Migrants Area of the Secretariat of Gender and Human Rights of the Municipality of Rosario	2018	Survey of information gathered by the Municipality on the situation of migrants and refugees in the city of Rosario. Proposals for action based on the diagnosis.
Argentina		Regional guide on SDGs, cities, and migration	UNESCO	2018	Practical guide for local governments in Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development Goals, Human Mobility, and the role of Cities.
Argentina		Declaration Latin American and Caribbean Coalition	Regional Declaration	2017	Cordoba declaration of the Latin American and Caribbean Coalition of Cities against racism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia.
Aruba		Social	Central Bureau of Statistics	2016	Provides an overview of foreign-born population in Aruba based on the 2010 census.
Aruba		Migrant rights	Adviescommissie voor Vreemdelingenzaken/ The Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs (ACVZ)	2019	Review of legislation and policy regarding international protection of migrants in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.
Belize	Belmopan	Refugees	UNHCR	2021	An overview of how the Global Compact on Refugees is being turned into action in Belize. Includes information on Belize's response to the refugee situation according to the Comprehensive Framework for Protection and Regional Solutions.

Canada	Toronto	Toronto Immigration Strategy	Mayor's Office of Toronto	2014	The Toronto Immigration Strategy is the official document that the city has used to coordinate the work of different organizations linked to the reception and integration of immigrants (particularly newcomers). It contains statistics (2014), information on programs and policies implemented by the municipality, links to other municipal agencies, and short, medium, and long-term plans. The document is available in English and French.
Canada	Moncton	Immigrant Integration Services	Mayor's Office of Moncton (Greater Moncton)	2020	The document is a brochure that provides names of integration services and programs for migrants in Greater Moncton. It includes organizations that provide these services and eligibility criteria.
Canada	Moncton	Greater Moncton Immigration Strategy	Mayor's office of Moncton (Greater Moncton)	2020	The document summarizes the seven central objectives of the City of Moncton's immigration plan, which covers the period 2020 - 2024. It includes information on priorities for the socio-economic and cultural integration of migrants and refugees, organizations linked to the plan, current immigration statistics in the city, and partnerships made by Immigration Moncton to increase the attraction of immigrants to the city and province (New Brunswick).
Canada	Calgary	Guide of Immigration Services Providers	Mayor's Office of Calgary	2020	The document summarizes information about the Calgary Local Immigration Partnership (CLIP), a partner agency of the Mayor's Office that is responsible for coordinating and implementing programs with different community, diaspora, and civil society organizations. It also contains a comprehensive directory of the services offered to newcomers, municipal policies, and the organizations that implement them. The document is only available in English.
Canada		Province of Quebec Immigration Plan	Government of Quebec	2021	The document contains the priority policies for the processes of selection and settlement of new immigrants in the province of Quebec, in which the city of Montreal is located. It also contains current statistics on immigrant communities in major cities, information on organizations assisting immigrants and refugees, plans that have been implemented during the pandemic, and strategic objectives in the post-pandemic period.
Canada	Vancouver	Immigrant Profile	Vancouver Immigration Partnership	2016	The document analyzes demographic information provided by Statistics Canada on immigrants and refugees in Vancouver, including aspects ranging from age to working conditions and some references to political participation and civic integration.

Canada	Vancouver	Immigration Strategic Plan 2016 - 2025	Mayor's Office of Vancouver, Vancouver Immigration Partnership	2016	The document summarizes the priority aspects of the strategic plan for the integration and reception of migrants and refugees in Vancouver. The plan is divided into four thematic areas: access to services, socio-political integration, labor inclusion, and government and civil society institutions. It also includes recommendations for the effective integration of government agencies and outlines the core objectives of the Vancouver Immigration Partnership, which until 2021 served as an agency of the Mayor's Office.
Canada	Hamilton	Research Guide for Services Providers	Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council	2021	The document is a guide for researchers who wish to conduct research projects focused on the immigrant communities of Hamilton, Ontario. It contains facts and statistics about immigrants in the city (particularly 'newcomers') and the names of organizations that have conducted research in the last five years. The only version available is in English.
Caribbean		Response to Venezuelans in the Caribbean	R4V	2021	Describes local responses to reception of Venezuelans in Aruba, Curaçao, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago.
Chile		Migrants and Cities Report	IOM	2018	IOM Report on migrants and cities in Chile covering the period of 2014-2017.
Chile	Macul	Information for migrants	Municipality of Macul	2018	Information guide (services, resources, etc.) developed by the Municipality of Macul, Metropolitan Region.
Chile	Santiago	Guide for migrants	Municipality of Santiago	2018	Municipal guide with information for migrants.
Chile	Santiago	Interculturality and local government policies, integration for migrants	Jesuit Service for Migrants	2019	Evaluation of intercultural integration policies in municipalities of the metropolitan region of Santiago.
Colombia		Guidance of migrant's rights	<i>Dejusticia</i> - Venezuela Migration Project	2021	This booklet provides information on: 1) the paths currently open to access regular immigration status; 2) the right to refuge; 3) the right to nationality; 4) the right to due process; 5) the right to healthcare; 6) the right to education; and 7) the right to work.
Colombia		Measuring instruments - characterization surveys	National Statistics Department DANE	2021	Migration survey covering July-August 2021.
Colombia		Guidelines on regularization procedures in Latin America	Jesuit Service for Refugees	2018	Information on important aspects to be considered by any person who, for reasons beyond their will, is forced to leave their country of origin and transit through the countries of South America in search of protection or refuge.

Colombia		Demographic characteristics and migration	IOM	2019	Venezuelans in the country are, on average, 10 years younger than Colombians. Many believe that this difference may be an opportunity to extend Colombia's demographic bonus, but this depends on the structural age magnitude of the local and foreign population in each of the host territories.
Colombia		Healthcare for Venezuelans	USAID, Profamilia	2020	Since 2019, Profamilia, in partnership with the United States Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA-USAID), is developing the project: Healthcare and rights guarantees of the migrant population in the framework of the humanitarian crisis. This program aims to increase the provision of health services to Venezuelan migrant and refugee population, and the host community in 12 departments of Colombia. As part of this project, between November 2019 and January 2020, research was conducted to identify needs, inequalities, and expectations in access to healthcare services for Venezuelans. The research focused on six cities prioritized for their high migratory flow: Bogota, Barranquilla, Cartagena, Cucuta, Riohacha, and Santa Marta. In order to generate evidence to improve the response of the healthcare system at the local level, this research also investigated the use of services and inequalities in the host community.
Colombia		Participation of the migrant population in Latin America	European Union Diaspora Facility (EUDiF), International Center for Migration Policy Development	2021	This document is a regional analysis of diaspora participation in Latin America and the Caribbean. It draws on knowledge gathered through the mapping 24 countries to study relevant policy and institutional frameworks, trends, good practices, and recommendations at the regional level. The resulting document provides a consolidated source of information for: the promotion of the contribution of diaspora groups to development; orienting action at the regional level; and identifying peer-to-peer exchange opportunities.
Costa Rica	Coto Brus	Coordination among multiple actors, migrant workers, healthcare services, and others	Municipality of Coto Brus (San Vito, Costa Rica)	2020	Initiative to facilitate the entry of seasonal migrant (indigenous) workers and their families, to work on coffee plantations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Includes information on coordination among multiple stakeholders, including local government authorities.
Curaçao		Migrant rights	Refugees International	2019	Discusses implications of lack of refugee and asylum policy on reception in Curaçao.
Curaçao		Migrant rights	Amnesty International	2018	Discusses policy of detention and deportation of the undocumented in Curaçao.

Dominican Republic		Migrations, vulnerability, and disaster risk reduction	OBMICA	2019	Studies on migration, vulnerability, and disaster risk reduction with emphasis on groups in situations of greater vulnerability (Haitians and Venezuelans, with a gender and childhood focus).
Dominican Republic		Labor integration	OBMICA	2021	Decent work across borders: an exploratory situational study focused on the banana sector of the Northwest Line, Dominican Republic. This study provides inputs for subsequent actions within the framework of a binational project, executed by a consortium of NGOs led by Service Jésuite aux Migrants - Haïti (SJM Haiti), and in which AVSI Foundation, NGO CESAL, Commission Episcopale Nationale Justice et Paix d'Haïti x Migrants-Haïti, (JILAP), and the Center for Migratory Observation and Social Development in the Caribbean (OBMICA) participate, with the financial support of the European Union.
Dominican Republic		Socio-economic integration	IOM.	2021	Measuring socio-economic integration outcomes in the Dominican Republic. IOM has made efforts to assist the Venezuelan population that has migrated or sought refuge in different countries of the Latin American region. A major challenge of this exodus is to be able to integrate these populations into their respective host communities, thus ensuring benefits for both social groups.
Dominican Republic		Application for refugee status	ACNUR. (s/a). UNHCR.	2021	How to apply for refugee status? Explanation of the procedure and requirements to be met for application for refugee status in the Dominican Republic.
Dominican Republic		Migration data	World Bank	2021	General statistics data of the Dominican Republic.
Dominican Republic	Santo Domingo	Socio-cultural Integration	Inclusive cities	2021	The Dominican Republic bets on music, as a vehicle for integration between Dominicans and Venezuelans. Article about how Venezuelan and Dominican musicians agreed on the idea of playing together, appreciating music, and building a message of alliance and example of integration.
Dominican Republic		Forced migration	OBMICA	2019	Forced migration: land deportations from the Dominican Republic to the Republic of Haiti. Analysis of land border deportation figures in the Dominican Republic: deportation procedure; audit, management control and reception of deportees in Haiti.

Dominican Republic		Refugees	UNHCR	2021	World Refugee Day 2021 in Dominican Republic. UNHCR and the Dominican-Venezuelan Symphony Orchestra present the "Caribe Unido" medley in commemoration of World Refugee Day in the Dominican Republic, as part of the Jam Festival 2021. This selection responds to the spirit of integration and peaceful coexistence between Venezuelans and Dominicans, who share a long tradition of mutual solidarity and common values.
Dominican Republic		Migrant women	Petrozziello, Allison J and Wooding, Bridget	2011	A perspective on Violence against Haitian Migrant Women, in Transit and Displaced at the Dominican-Haitian Border. Haitian migrant women, as well as displaced women and those in transit in the Dominican-Haitian border area, are particularly vulnerable to violence against women. The Women and Health and Women of the World Collective commissioned this study, within the framework of the project "Women in transit: Improving the quality of life of migrant, transit, and displaced women in the Dominican-Haitian border through the reduction of levels of violence and improvement of sexual and reproductive health." The immediate objective of this study is to serve as a baseline for the creation of an observatory on violence against migrant, transit, and displaced women in Elías Piña and Belladère localities, and more broadly as an instrument of political advocacy in favor of the rights of Haitian migrant women.
Dominican Republic	Santo Domingo	Inclusion of Venezuelan migrants	Enecia Pérez, Hogla	2021	<i>Gracias dominicana</i> , A campaign through which Venezuelans seek to repay the reception in the country. The Venezuelan community in the Dominican Republic launched the "Gracias dominicana" campaign, through which they express their gratitude towards the nation for welcoming them in a time of crisis in Venezuela, and also for allowing them to normalize their immigration status.
El Salvador		Migration regional plan	Central American Integration System	2020	SICA develops a migration regional plan for El Salvador. This Action Plan for the Comprehensive Assistance to Migration in Central America PAIM-SICA, was presented in the Forum organized by IOM entitled "Towards safe, orderly, and regular migration in El Salvador."
El Salvador	San Salvador	Employment of person in mobility	UNHCR (2021).	2021	UNHCR and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of El Salvador promote the employability of forcibly displaced people by agreeing to cooperate to promote the formal employment among the population.
United States	Arlington, VA	Immigrant Community and Trust	Arlington County document	2021	A Framework for Arlington's Commitment to Strengthening Trust with Our Immigrant Community.

Global		Guide: COVID-19 and Human Rights of Migrants	OHCHR	2020	The current public health crisis caused by COVID-9 disproportionately affects individuals and communities already in vulnerable and marginalized situations.
Global		Cities and Forced Migration	Forced Migration Review	2020	The FRM issue focused on refugees in cities and towns.
Global		Joint guidance on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the rights of migrants	UN Committee on Migrant Workers and UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants	2020	In the midst of this global crisis, the Committee and the Special Rapporteur highlight the valuable contributions of migrants at the front lines of COVID-19 responses.
Global		Social inclusion of refugees	UNHCR	2021	Including refugees in the societies where they have found refuge after fleeing conflict and persecution is the most effective way of helping them to rebuild their lives. Inclusion can take many forms: having the same rights as citizens, forging ties and friendships, being able to apply for local jobs or go to local schools, and having access to different services like housing or healthcare.
Global		World Migration in 2020	IOM	2019	The drafting of the Migration Report in the World 2020 began to take shape in September 2016 and culminated with the presentation of the final report in November 2019 by the Director General during the One Hundredth Session of the IOM Council.
Guatemala		Flows of migrants and refugees	United Nations Guatemala	2020	Situation report on migrant caravans in Central America, based on information from members of the protection, food security, WASH, shelter, and health sectors.
Guyana		Migration Governance	IOM	2020	Guyana needs assessment on migration governance.
Guyana		Migrant rights	United Nations Guyana	2020	Provides an overview of the human rights context, including migrant rights in Guyana.
Central America and Mexico		Protection and solutions	UNHCR, OEA	2020	Annual Report of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS).
Mexico		Protection of refugees	Government of Mexico	2019	Mexico's legal framework and commitments and the six main points of Mexico's agenda on the issue of refugees.
Mexico	Mexico City	Destination and settlement in Mexico	Destination and settlement in Mexico of Central American refugees	2020	The objective of this paper is to analyze the settlement of migrants and refugees in Mexico in terms of why they choose this country as their final destination and as a place to request refuge or another form of international protection. Additionally, the context of Mexican and U.S. migration policies that promote the settlement of migrants in Mexican territory is analyzed.

Mexico	Refugee System	Torre Cantalapiedra, Eduardo; París Pombo, María Dolores; Gutiérrez López, Eduardo Elías; and Cejudo-Espinosa, Luis.	2021	The Mexican Refuge System: Between Protecting and Containing. Based on the documentary review and statistics of the administrative records of COMAR, the obstacles encountered by those who require international protection to be granted refugee status, or where appropriate, complementary protection, are analyzed. While Mexican legislation is generous in terms of the possibility of granting these legal protections, the analysis of their implementation allows us to account for practices of blockade and deterrence that – in the logic of containment – hinder, as well as often prevent, achieving international protection.
Mexico	Local Integration	UNHCR	2009	Report of the results of the first UNHCR study on local integration of the refugee population in Mexico. Includes background information on the local integration of refugees, description of the method used for the research and results of the study, and programs to facilitate the integration process.
Mexico	Reception	United Nations	2020	Mexico is increasingly called to play the role of a country of reception for refugees. Note on the presentation to UNCC on Refugee Day by Mark Manly. Highlights main aspects of this crisis and the new role that Mexico is playing given the changing migratory dynamics.
Mexico	Migration policy	Vega Macías, Daniel	2017	Recent migration trends and policies on refuge in Mexico. For decades, a series of legal instruments and advances in public institutions to protect the rights of refugees were consolidated worldwide. However, these humanitarian gains now come under threat, as the influx of refugees can put pressure on labor and social protection markets in host countries. This research supports the hypothesis of a gradual increase in restrictive policies in Mexico, as well as a shortage of specific institutional assistance programs for the refugee population. The work is supported by statistical methods and is based on government administrative records.
Paraguay	The crossing of international borders in Argentina and Paraguay by children and adolescents	IOM, MERCOSUR	2014	This report presents and discusses the results of an investigation conducted during in 2014 with the purpose of contributing to a better understanding of the reasons and modalities by which children and adolescents cross international borders. On occasions these transits can be associated with violations of rights (such as child labor or human trafficking) for purposes of sexual or labor exploitation. The issue has become a growing focus of governmental and institutional concern in the MERCOSUR countries and, as such, is at the center of discussions on migration and child protection.

Paraguay	Migration profile of Paraguay	IOM, Paraguayan Association of Population Studies (ADEPO by its acronym in Spanish)	2011	Country Migration Profiles in the South American region emerge as an initiative of the IOM's regional office for the Southern Cone to generate a tool to promote the effective management of international migration in Latin America and to improve the knowledge base of the migratory processes of the region.
Paraguay	Survey of Migration Regulations in Paraguay	IOM	2013	A study-diagnosis submitted for consideration, based on the survey of the body of migration regulations in Paraguay, as a starting point for the discussion of a new immigration policy in the country.
Paraguay	Social and labor dynamics of migrant workers in Paraguayan border cities	IOM	2011	This report explores how migrants arrived in cities across Paraguay. In addition, the modality of labor and migratory recruitment was investigated. The main finding was that migration and the search for jobs are related to family networks - some members of the family help and support recent arrivals in the search for jobs, mainly in the cities of Pedro Juan Caballero and Salto del Guairá which are specialized in commerce.
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Peru	Digital transformation and modernization in Peru	National Superintendence of Migration	2019	The years 2018 and 2019 have been periods of consolidation of the new management model and digital modernization of the Superintendence National Migration. The present administration has competence in the internal migration policy and has a key role in national security and internal order.
Peru	Statistics on International Emigration of Peruvians and Immigration of Foreigners, 1990-2018	OIM, National Institute of Statistics and Informatics	2020	This publication is a tool for the analysis of migratory flows in the country, contributing to the knowledge of the sociodemographic characteristics of Peruvians who have emigrated, returnees, as well as migrants arriving in the country. It seeks to provide information for the creation and monitoring of public policies on migration, as well as to the elaboration of specialized studies for researchers, academics, and society in general.

Peru	Situation of Foreign Migrants In Peru and Their Access to Social Services, Healthcare, and Education	OIM	2015	The objective of this report is to describe and analyze migrants' access in Peru to healthcare, education, and social services, and to make a technical proposal to improve access to those services.
Peru	Governance Indicators for Migration	OIM	2019	The Governance Indicators for Migration seek to support governments to achieve a well-managed migration governance by providing a methodology for the analysis of the structures of country governance and by identifying good practices and areas for improvement.
Peru	Venezuelan migrants and refugees and development of Peru	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, World Bank	2019	This study provides an analysis of the flow of Venezuelan migrants to Peru, including their trajectory to the country, the existing institutional framework of reception and response, opportunities and challenges for integration, access to services, and labor insertion. The analysis also provides recommendations for the strengthening migration management and the proper integration of the population in Peru.
Peru	Impact of Venezuelan immigration on the labor market	IOM, ILO, Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion Directorate of Labor Migration, Antonio Ruiz de Montoya University	2019	This document presents the results of the research "Impact of Venezuelan immigration in the labor market of three cities: Lima, Arequipa, and Piura." The objective of this research is to identify the effects of the entry of Venezuelan citizens into Peru in the last two years on some of the main socio-labor indicators of employment and working conditions.
Peru	Study on the socio-economic profile of the Venezuelans and their host communities in Peru	Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas e Informática- INEI, Superintendencia Nacional de Migraciones – MIGRACIONES, Organización Internacional para las Migraciones - OIM	2019	This study takes into account psychosocial aspects of coexistence and the sense of belonging developed by the migrants and refugees during their integration process. Using quantitative and qualitative methodologies, positive and negative relevant findings are discovered. Positive findings include demonstrations of community integration from both populations and negative findings include outbreaks of discrimination and/or GBV.
South America	Migration dynamics at borders of South American countries	IOM	2018	Movements of people across borders are a reality throughout the history of humankind. Thus, the circulation between the territories of what today are the countries of South America are long-standing. However, in recent decades these processes have been transformed and redefined. The shaping of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) adds one more actor to consider in border management. Territorial mobility between neighboring countries has intensified and become complex, defining new scenarios of exchange of diverse natures, which represent new challenges in migration governance.

Trinidad and Tobago	National Legislation	Government of Trinidad and Tobago (Ministry of National Security)	2014	Phased approach towards the establishment of a national policy to address refugee and asylum matters in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (draft document).
Trinidad and Tobago	Registration and Regularization	Shiva Mohan	2019	An overview of the 2019 exercise to register Venezuelan Immigrants in Trinidad and Tobago.
Uruguay	Xenophobia	LAC Cities Coalition	2006	10 points Action Plan of the LAC Cities Coalition against racism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia.



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