

## BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

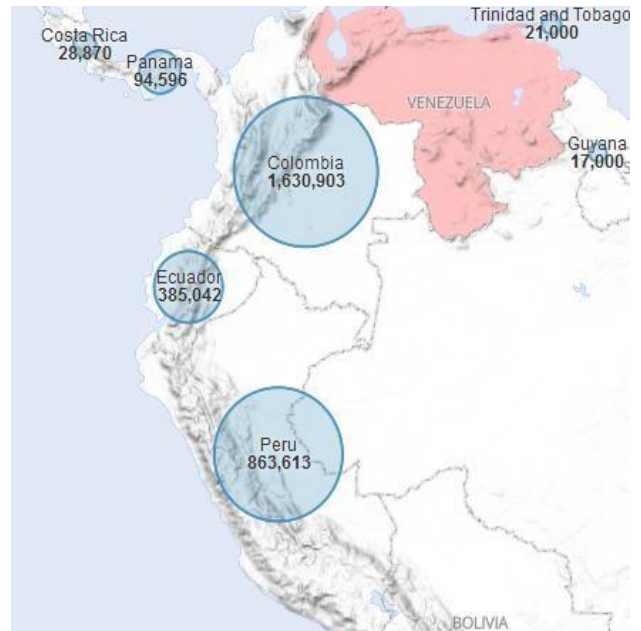
The political and economic crisis in Venezuela is resulting in an unprecedented number of people leaving the country. According to the Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V) an estimated 4.7 million Venezuelans have migrated, with Colombia, Ecuador and Peru being the main destinations in the region, hosting nearly 2.9 million migrants/refugees (Oct. 2019)<sup>1</sup>.

The situation inside Venezuela and host countries is extremely dynamic and projections indicate that the number of migrants is likely to increase during 2020. It is, therefore, critical to monitor how the situation changes over time and how it is affecting the lives of Venezuelans and host communities.

To achieve this goal, WFP Regional Bureau in Panama (RBP), in close collaboration with WFP Headquarters, implemented a study to assess the overall situation of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru: how the crisis affected their livelihoods, their ability to meet their food and other essential needs, the challenges they face along their journey and in the host countries, as well as their future intentions. In addition to Venezuelan migrants, the study was also administered to host communities to assess their situation and capture their perception in relation to the arrival of the migrants in their respective countries. The first round of this [study](#) was administered in March 2019, the second round was conducted in the beginning of 2020. One of the primary objectives of this research is to monitor and assess trends overtime amongst both populations to inform WFP and other relevant stakeholders working on the Venezuelan crisis.

Only migrants who left Venezuela since 2017 were considered, and the survey covered migrants who have settled, those who are still on the move as well as circular migrants who are moving back and forth (figure 2). Migrants respondents originated from all 24 states in Venezuela.

Figure 1 – Presence of Venezuelan migrants/refugees in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru



## METHODOLOGY

By leveraging an increased internet coverage among migrants, WFP implemented web-based surveys using a patented *Random Domain Intercept Technology* (RDIT™)<sup>2</sup> to collect real-time information from Venezuelan migrants and host community populations. Internet coverage in these three countries is as follows: Colombia 69 percent, Ecuador 57 percent and Peru 53 percent.<sup>3</sup>

The survey consisted of both close-ended and open-ended questions, allowing for a complementary quantitative and qualitative analysis. Analysis was primarily conducted through a regional perspective. Only when there are differences between countries they are noted.

A total of 1,172 Venezuelan migrants were surveyed across the three countries, in addition to 21, 331 host community households in areas with presence of Venezuelan migrants.

<sup>1</sup> R4V [Plataforma de Coordinación para Refugiados y Migrantes de Venezuela](#) (October 2019)

<sup>2</sup> Detailed information regarding RDIT can be found on the service provider's website: RIWI Corporation <https://riwi.com/>

<sup>3</sup> World Bank, individuals using internet % of population, 2017-2018. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS>

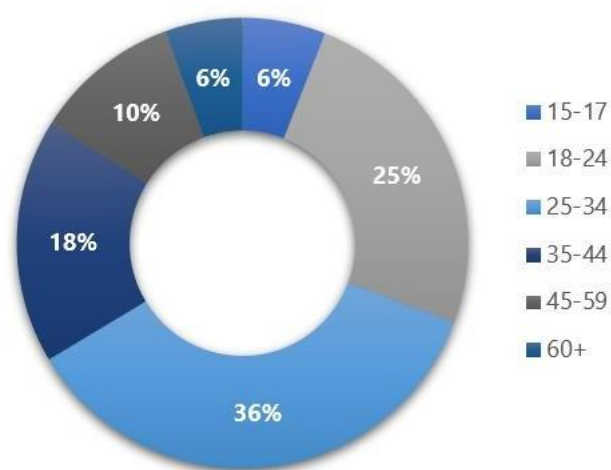
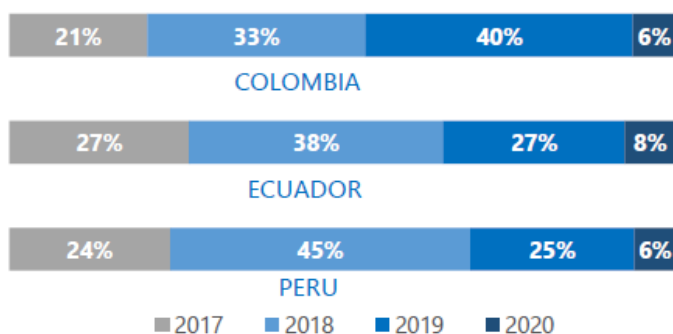


Figure 3 – Age groups of respondents - migrants

One of the key limitations of this methodology is that only those with internet can be selected to participate in the survey. Often those with internet access are considered to have greater economic means than those who do not, indicating that the survey is less likely to reach the most vulnerable populations. In addition, this methodology in data collection receives a higher proportion of youth respondents compared to elderly<sup>4</sup>.

Figure 2 – Year of departure from Venezuela by host country



## PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The survey reached male and female Venezuelan migrants and host populations across all age groups. Of the total 1,172 migrant respondents, 36 percent were females and 64 percent males. For the 21,331 host community respondents, nearly equal percentages were reported, at 35 percent and 65 percent respectively. These figures were consistent with the initial round of data collection in 2019.

The majority (67 percent) of respondents for both migrant and host community populations were between 15 and 34 years old, of which 6 percent are minors between 15 and 17 years old (see figure 3). Age does not show significant differences by gender of respondent and presents a similar distribution by country.

In terms of education, similar statistics were observed from 2019, the majority (57 percent) reported secondary school or vocational training as the highest level achieved. Twenty-three percent completed university and the remaining have either primary school (12 percent) or no formal education (8 percent).

## MIGRANTS

### DRIVERS OF MIGRATION

Venezuelan migrants were asked to select the two main reasons why they ultimately decided to leave Venezuela. When combining these drivers, food comes out as one of the main factors forcing people to leave. The main drivers of migration were consistent with 2019 findings (figure 4).

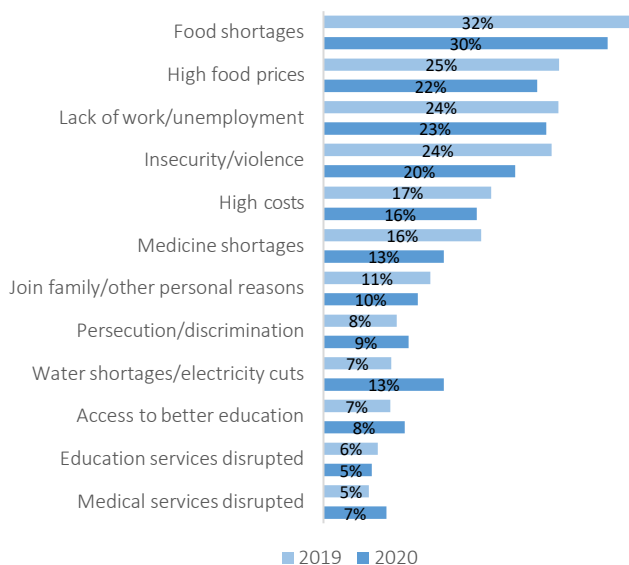
In fact, respondents reported food shortages (30 percent) and high food prices (22 percent) among the main reasons for leaving the country and similar to findings in 2019 (32 and 25 percent respectively). This is particularly evident in Colombia compared to the other countries.

The lack or loss of economic opportunities (23 percent) represents the third most mentioned driver of migration, followed by insecurity/violence, which affected 20 percent of respondents overall (similar percentages observed in previous round 24 and 24 percent respectively).

Other drivers included the inability to meet essential needs, such as the lack of medicines (13 percent), water and electricity cuts (13 percent) and access to better education opportunities (8 percent).

<sup>4</sup> To mitigate against biases introduced by the technology, a weighting system was introduced. For each target group, a specific weight was assigned to each respondent based on the age and sex composition of its respective population.

Figure 4 - Main drivers of migration overtime



The one notable change over time was in the increase in shortages of electricity and water a reason for migration, from 7 to 13 percent.

Figure 5 – Change in life experienced as a result of migration



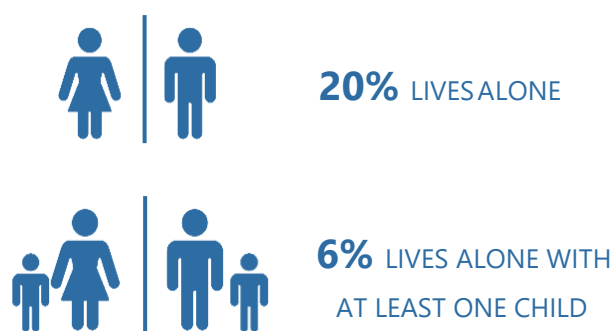
Migrants were asked about their change in life since they left their home country. Most migrants indicated it has been a positive change citing they have ‘access to food’, their situation has ‘improved’ or that the change was ‘good’ compared to the how they were living in Venezuela (figure 5). Others referenced the challenges they faced migrating to another country, indicating the change has been ‘difficult’, ‘hard’, ‘different’, with fewer indicating that their current situation is worse than their previous.

## LIVING SITUATION

The majority of migrants (79 percent) reported living with other immediate family members (same percentage observed in 2019). Similarly, most migrants live with at least one child, 60 percent. While one in five migrants live alone which is consistent 2019 results.

The most reported accommodation arrangement for migrants and their families is renting a room (34 percent) or an apartment (34 percent), similar to 2019 findings (39 and 34 percent respectively). The second most reported type of accommodation is being hosted for free (10 percent). A significant share of respondents also claimed to be homeless, living in the street or on a beach (9 percent, a 2 percent increase from the previous year).

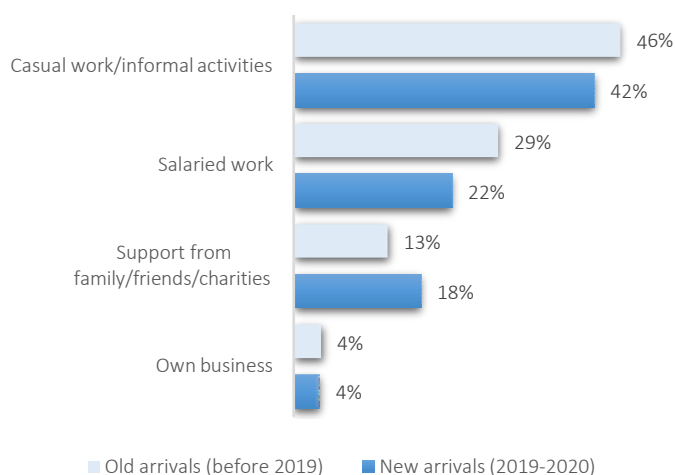
The study found that accommodation arrangements change in relation to the year of arrival, an observation that was highlighted in the previous study. In fact, recent arrivals (2019/20) show a higher share of respondents who reported living in the street (15 percent) compared to migrants arrived during 2018 or before (6 percent). These percentages drastically increase if only referencing 2020 figures (40 percent). When comparing with the initial round, this demonstrates a substantial increase from 20 percent to 40 percent. Those with greater time in their host country are more likely to show improved accommodation arrangements as a result of an increased integration and recreation of their livelihoods.



## LIVELIHOODS

The highest proportion of migrants rely on casual work/informal activities (44 percent). One out of four (26 percent) reported more reliable income sources, such as public or private salaried work. An additional 15 percent rely on help from family/friends or assistance from governments/NGOs and other organizations. Compared to migrants that arrived in 2017/18, migrants who moved in 2019/20 rely to a much greater extent on unsustainable income sources (figure 6).

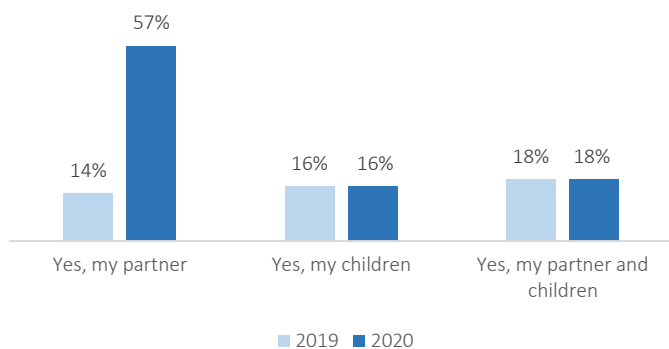
Figure 6 – Main livelihood activities by year of departure



### FAMILIES LEFT BEHIND AND REMITTANCES

Nine out of ten respondents claimed having left immediate family members in Venezuela, a huge increase from 2019 (48 percent). Of these, 57 percent said to have left only the partner, compared to only 14 percent the year before (figure 7). Percentages whom left their children and child and partner were similar to 2019 findings, at 18 and 16 percent respectively.

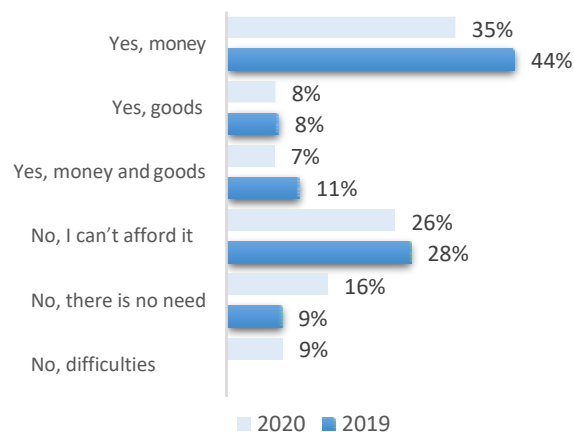
Figure 7 - Proportion of migrants that left family left behind overtime



Remittances play a crucial role in sustaining livelihoods for loved ones that remain in Venezuela. In 2020 a decrease was observed in the proportion of migrants that sent remittances, from 63 percent to 50 percent.

Similar to the previous round, over one fourth of migrants do not send remittances due to the lack of money or difficulties in sending them. There was a slight increase in the proportion of migrants which indicated they did not send remittances because there is no need from 9 to 16 percent (figure 8).

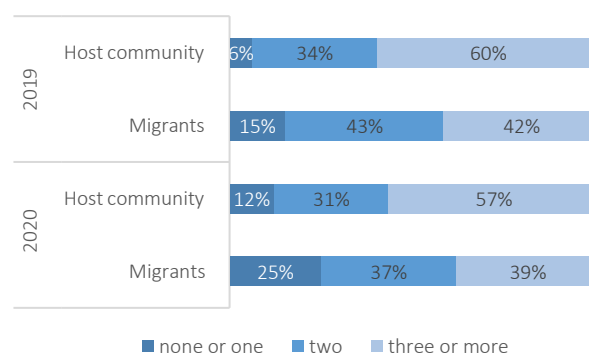
Figure 8 - Remittances overtime



### FOOD SECURITY SITUATION

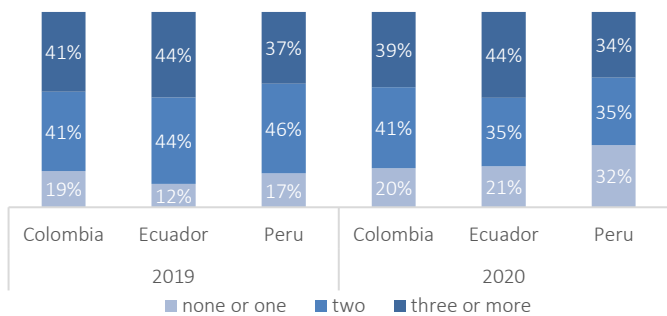
Overall, 62 percent of Venezuelan migrants expressed their worry about not having enough food to eat, compared to 44 percent of respondents in the host communities. In terms of food consumption, nearly nine out of ten (88 percent) respondents in host communities consumed two or more meals during the previous day. Conversely, on average one in four migrants consumed only one meal (16 percent) or none (9 percent) in the previous 24 hours, as shown in Figure 9. This is particularly evident for migrants that arrived during 2019/20. Food insecurity levels for both migrants and host community rose over the year.

Figure 9 - Number of meals consumed overtime



Overall, six out of ten Venezuelan migrants in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru are worried about not having enough food to eat. These figures are in line with 2019 results (2019 61 percent, 2020 62 percent). The only country that observed an increase in preoccupation with regards to food was Colombia (from 65 percent to 69 percent). In terms of food consumption both Ecuador and Peru observed a decrease in perceived food security from 2019 to 2020 (figure 10). With nearly a 10% increase in the proportion of migrants that indicated they consumed only one meal or did not eat the previous day.

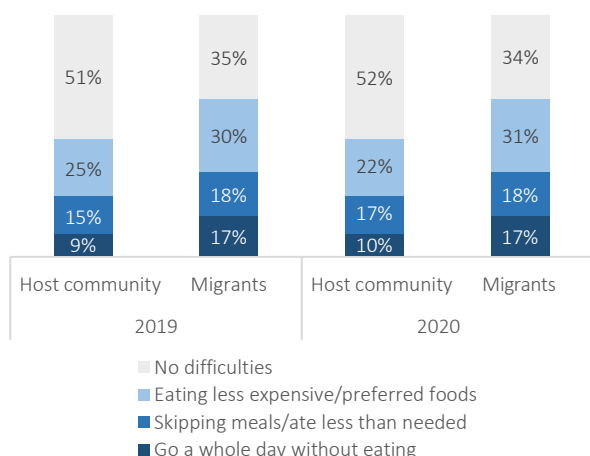
Figure 10 - Average number of meals consumed overtime by country - migrants



The study found that the usage of food-related coping strategies remains to be common among the migrant population, as observed in 2019, only one out of three migrants claim not having difficulties eating. Migrants show a higher use of coping compared to the host community population (figure 11). When migrants were asked about their perceived food security situation during the previous month, 31 percent report having resorted to less preferred/less expensive food and 18 percent to regularly skip meals. Nearly one in five migrants regularly spent days without eating over the previous 30 days. This proportion is higher among recent arrivals (23 percent) compared to migrants with more time in their host country (14 percent).

The majority of respondents in host communities did not report difficulties eating (52 percent) over the previous 30 days, or did not apply severe coping strategies, such as regularly spent days without eating (10 percent).

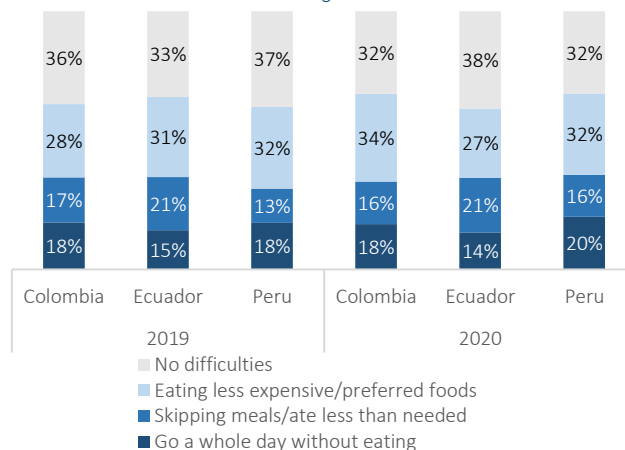
Figure 11 - Food coping strategies overtime



The usage of consumption strategies among the three countries remained consistent with 2019 findings. Peru observed a slight increase in the percentage of respondents that used more severe strategies such as skipping meals and going a day without eating. While in Colombia there was an observed increase in migrants eating less preferred and expensive foods (figure 12).

Data demonstrates that the majority of migrants, 63 percent, use mainly cash (37 percent) to purchase food or have their own production (26 percent). While the remaining rely on help from family/friends (13 percent), exchange or barter (9 percent), use credit (8 percent), rely on or food assistance from charities (7 percent).

Figure 12 - Food coping strategies overtime by country - migrants

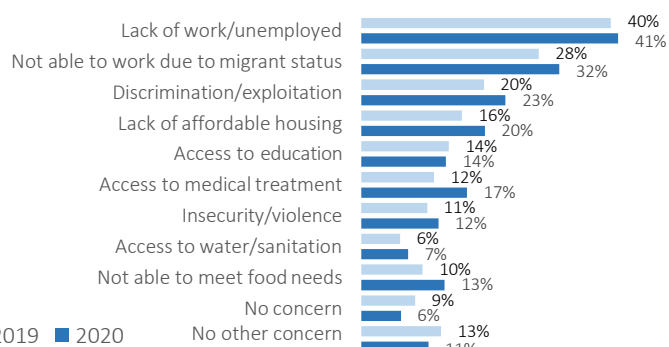


## MAIN CONCERNS

Venezuelan migrants were asked the two main concerns they are currently facing in their host countries. In line with 2019 findings, migrants' main concerns are lack of work (41 percent), not being able to work due to their migrant status (32 percent) and discrimination/exploitation (23 percent). Figure 13 illustrates how the type of challenges migrants are facing affect the overall dimension of essential needs, ranging from access to housing, to health, education, water and food, all of which have increased overtime.

Migrants were asked about what type of help is needed. Most cited 'financial support' and 'money' as key immediate needs (figure 14). In addition, 'access to work', 'more work' or 'better wages' were expressed as common needs among the population. Protection related needs such as their 'legal status' and 'documentation' were also key needs reported by migrants, as they can facilitate better

Figure 13 - Main concerns of migrants over time



working conditions (stable and dignified work). Some migrants expressed their desire to access education or to have their children access education. Food and medical support were also basic needs noted by some migrants.

Reuniting with family and less discrimination were also mentioned along with.

Figure 14 – Type of help needed



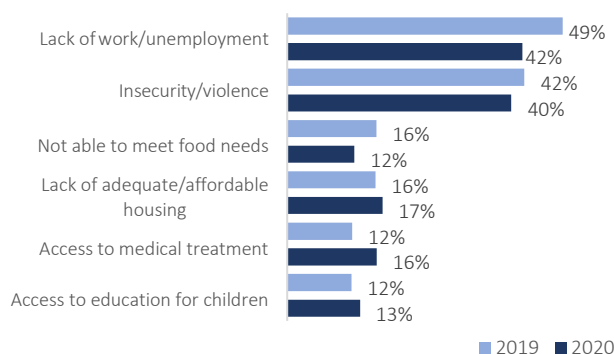
Financial aid to be able to do medical examinations, my wife for a tumor and if it is necessary to operate it, do it, and to give a fair education to my older daughter.

A well-paid job, I want to be able to pay a rent on a house [...] That my husband has a job. We just want to work and that our dedication is recognized.

## HOST COMMUNITIES

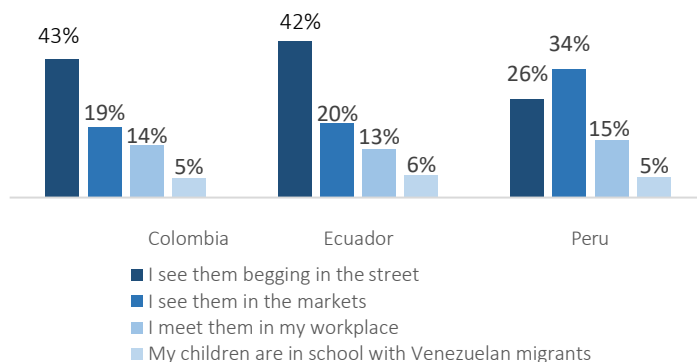
When host community respondents were asked about their main concerns, the three countries show a similar pattern. The lack of work/unemployment is the most mentioned concern, closely followed by insecurity and violence, as shown in Figure 15. Host community participants reported a slight increase in their concern of affordable housing, access to medical treatment and education, compared to 2019.

Figure 15 - Main concerns of host communities overtime



Host communities were asked where they interact most often with Venezuelan migrants. Figure 16 illustrates the different locations where interactions take place between migrants and host communities.

Figure 16 – Interactions with Venezuelans by country



In Colombia and Ecuador, the majority of respondents see migrants begging in the streets, while in Peru they have a higher interaction in markets. Most strikingly, a relatively small percentage meets migrants in their workplace or sees Venezuelan children in the schools.

## ATTITUDE TOWARDS MIGRANTS

Respondents expressed their views on sharing the same workplace, having a Venezuelan neighbor, having children attending the same schools or marrying a Venezuelan migrant would be perceived as positive, neutral or negative.

Perceptions of host communities towards Venezuelan migrants were found to be either neutral or positive in most cases, demonstrating, in general, a welcoming attitude towards migrants (Table 1). Overtime the changes in attitude were observed in the host communities being in agreement with sharing the same workplace, living next to a Venezuelan, or having their children attending the same school.

Table 1 – Attitude towards Venezuelan migrants' overtime

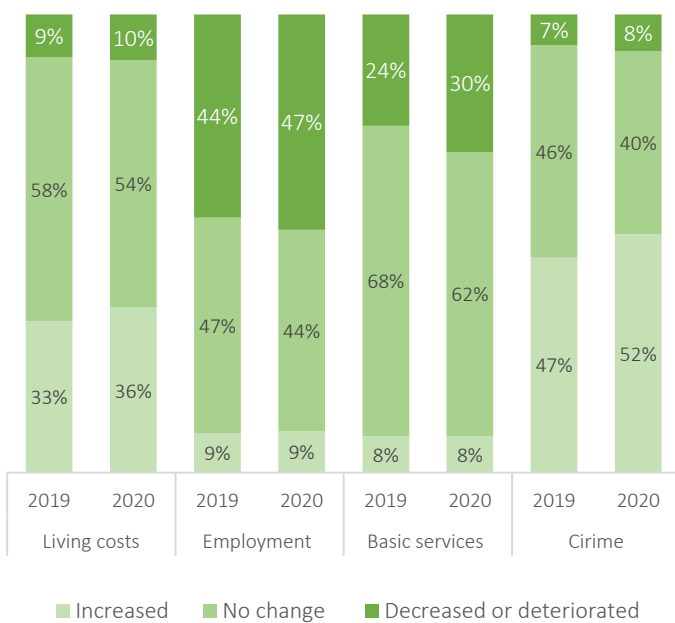
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
Sharing the same workplace	34%	41%	47%	44%	19%	15%
Living next to a Venezuelan	23%	27%	47%	47%	30%	26%
Children attending school with a Venezuelan	39%	47%	45%	40%	16%	12%
A member of your household marrying a Venezuelan	27%	30%	48%	49%	25%	21%

## PERCEIVED IMPACT

Host communities expressed higher concerns about the impact that the arrival of Venezuelan migrants had on their general sense of security. The survey collected their perceptions on four key aspects: living costs (including rent and food), crime rate, employment opportunities and basic services (including health and education).

Results show that host communities perceive, following the arrival of migrants, an increase of crime and a higher cost of living, nearly half and one third of households respectively. These perceptions demonstrated an increase over time, conversely, employment opportunities and access to basic services decreased (figure 17). Data shows that Colombian respondents perceive a higher sense of deterioration across all four dimensions compared to respondents in Ecuador and Peru.

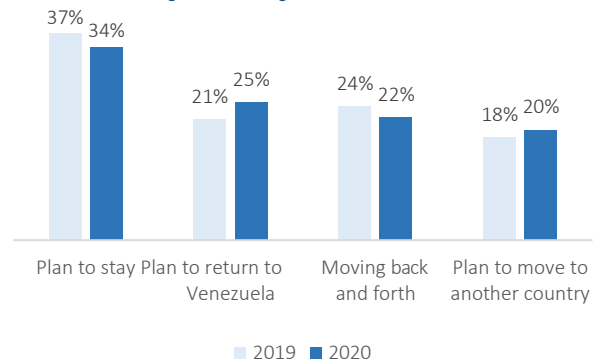
Figure 17 - Perceived impact of migrants - host communities



The survey also captured migrants' future plans, which show common patterns across the three countries. Migrants' responses were consistent to 2019 findings (figure 18). Around one third (34 percent) of the respondents expressed their intention to remain in their respective country.

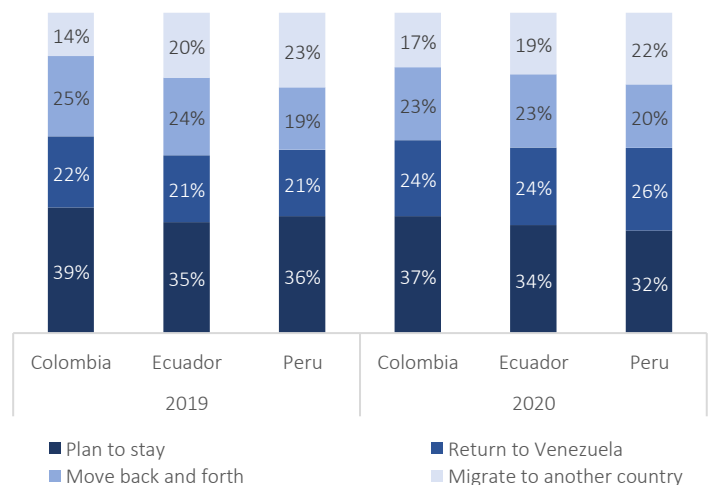
Nearly half (47 percent) are planning to return to Venezuela: 25 percent reported that they made concrete plans to go back to Venezuela, while 22 percent plan to move back and forth between Venezuela and their host country. The remaining 20 percent plans to move to another country. The top three destinations are Europe (16 percent), North America (USA & Canada, 14 percent) and Chile (11 percent).

Figure 18: Migrants' intentions over time



Migrants future intentions overtime remain consistent over time in the three countries. However, all countries observed a slight increase in the proportion of respondents with intentions to return to Venezuela in 2020 compared to the prior year (figure 19). Venezuelan migrants in Colombia mentioned Peru as their main destination (16 percent), while 8 percent of migrants in Ecuador expressed their intention to reach Bolivia.

Figure 19: Migrants' intentions overtime by country



## FUTURE INTENTIONS

Migrants were asked under what conditions would they return to Venezuela. Common answers included but not limited to, 'change in government', 'new leadership', under 'improved political and economic conditions' (lower inflation, dollarization of the currency), if stable and dignified work that provided a living wage is obtainable. Some respondents cited under no circumstances would they return to their country while others indicated they would see their family, only if there was a family emergency.

## CONCLUSIONS

The second round of data collection in the three Andean countries most impacted by the Venezuelan migration crisis supported to monitor the trends of the migrant and host community population over time. Results reconfirm the main drivers of migration are to better secure their economic means and meet their basic food and medical needs.



In 2020 a higher proportion of migrants indicated they left their immediate family behind in Venezuela, largely their partner, compared to the previous year. This suggests that the situation in Venezuela continues to deteriorate and while families are torn apart it is the only means to seek a better life.

The data suggests that migrant living conditions and livelihoods vary by the length of time in their host country, signaling those with less time in their host country are more likely to live in precarious conditions with unreliable income.

While migrants' usage of food related coping strategies remained consistent with the previous year, there was an observed increase in perceived food insecurity among migrants in Peru and Ecuador. With a higher proportion of migrants reported to consume less than in 2019. Migrants concerns largely stem from lack of work and inability to access the formal labor market due to migrant status and discrimination.

While host community populations reported better food security and less dependency on food relating coping strategies to meet their food needs, than the migrant population, their food security did decrease compared to the previous year and should be monitored.

Similar to migrants, host community respondents were concerned by work/ unemployment, however, they are also worried about the presence of insecurity and violence in their community. While attitudes towards Venezuelans appeared to improve from 2019, host communities did indicate the perceived impact migrants are having in terms of increased of living costs, higher sense of insecurity, a decrease in employment opportunities and access to basic services.

This study was a second round of monitoring which WFP plans to conduct and revise this type of exercise regularly based on the evolving context, to better ensure data gaps are covered and trends over time are assessed.

Figure 20 – Condition/s needed in place to facilitate a return to Venezuela



*Under the condition, that the government changes, that my country is stable, with prices that remain so much to be able to buy food, as well as medicines, clothes and everything necessary to lead a normal life. I want my Venezuela from before when I was a boy, where you could live well. Where I can get ahead, and where I can go back.*

*If at any time I would return to Venezuela, it would be to visit my kind and beautiful family, very simple, humble and with a good heart. I would also do it to fight for a better future for my country by putting a grain of sand.*