

2. EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION: OBSTACLES AND CAPABILITIES OF MIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN FROM VENEZUELA

As of 5 November 2020, there were 4,6 million refugees and migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (Venezuela) living in Latin America and the Caribbean.¹ Since 2017, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has conducted surveys in 16 host countries and inside Venezuela with mobile and stationary populations, at border crossings, along migratory routes, and in those areas with a high concentration of refugees and migrants from Venezuela. Although this data is not representative,² it is possible to conduct a gender analysis of human mobility from Venezuela. To respond in a dignified, appropriate and safe manner to the human mobility crisis, the needs, skills and opportunities of various affected groups, such as women, must be analysed.³ In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic aggravated the conditions of access to services and the guarantee of women's rights,⁴ which is why it is essential to have a disaggregated analysis of data collected through the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM).

This paper, which is the second in a series of four,⁵ presents and analyses information collected by DTM in 2019, regarding the employment and education of migrant and refugee women from Venezuela, identifying their needs, gaps and capabilities.

Key points:

- Only two per cent of Venezuelan migrant and refugee women reported having no education, followed by 15 per cent that had primary education, 48 per cent a secondary level education and 13 per cent a technical degree.
- A higher percentage of women (21%) compared to men (17%) had obtained a university degree.
- Thirty-nine per cent of the women interviewed compared to 26 per cent of the men interviewed reported being unemployed. Of this group, 22 per cent had a university degree.
- Seventy-three per cent of the women interviewed reported working in the informal sector. Of this group, 54 per cent had no regular migration status, 24 per cent had a university degree, four per cent reported not being paid

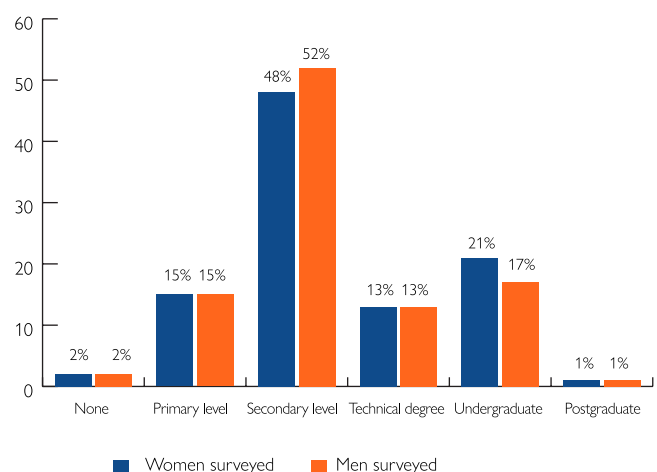
at all by their employer and 12 per cent confirmed that they were not treated well.

MIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN'S CAPABILITIES AND EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

Regarding their highest level of education obtained, it is important to note that more women than men have a university degree, 21 per cent of women compared to 17 per cent of men. In addition, only two per cent of women reported having no education, 15 per cent had some primary education, 48 per cent had a high school diploma and 13 per cent had a technical degree (Graph 1). This means that one third of Venezuelan migrant and refugee women interviewed have a higher level of education (34% between technical and undergraduate degree) and half of them have secondary level of education. This highlights women's valuable skills and possible significant contributions, which should lead to greater and better paid access to the labour market in host countries. Other research confirms these figures, such as a study carried out in Peru on the integration of Venezuelan women into the labour market, which found that 60 per cent had higher education and 85 per cent had previous work experience.⁶

GRAPH 1

Highest level of education completed by gender



1 See: <https://r4v.info/es/situations/platform>

2 The sample is not representative, i.e. it does not necessarily have the same characteristics as the entire Venezuelan population; this does not mean that it does not allow for a solid analysis of gender characteristics.

3 The DTM does not collect data from girls and young women under the age of 18, only the questions about respondents' relatives.

4 See: IOM, UNHCR, UN WOMEN (2020) Migrant and Refugee Women in the Context of COVID-19. p.1.

5 The other three documents have information on education, health and protection, and gender-based violence (GBV).

6 Investigación Perú, página 10.

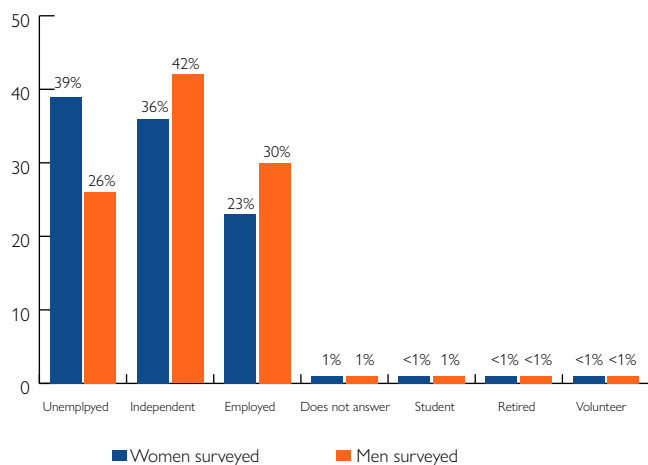
GENDER GAPS AND INEQUALITY IN WOMEN'S ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET IN RELATION TO THEIR EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Thirty-nine per cent of women interviewed in the different countries are unemployed, compared to 26 per cent of unemployed men (Graph 2). Of this group of unemployed women, 51 per cent had graduated from high school, 12 per cent had a technical degree and 22 per cent had a university degree (Graph 3). It should be noted that the fact that tertiary level of education (the sum of technical and undergraduate education) both for the average migrant women (34%) and for the group of unemployed women (34%) are relatively high percentages. It therefore seems that having higher education does not have a direct relationship with women's possibility of accessing employment since the unemployment rate of migrant and refugee women from Venezuela is very high (39%). Moreover, although men have lower levels of tertiary education (18%), they do have greater access to employment with a lower unemployment rate than women (26%).

This could be because the type of work men have access to does not require qualifications. However, these figures show evident gender gaps in access to the labour market that put women at a disadvantage, place them in so-called "low-skilled" labour conditions,⁷ and increase inequality in their search for income for themselves and their families. This has been confirmed by research which shows that, for example, in countries such as Colombia: according to the GEIH and official records, women are not in a better position than men to enter the labour market, despite having higher levels of education and more work experience than men who migrate to Colombia from Venezuela.⁸

GRAPH 2

Employment status by sex

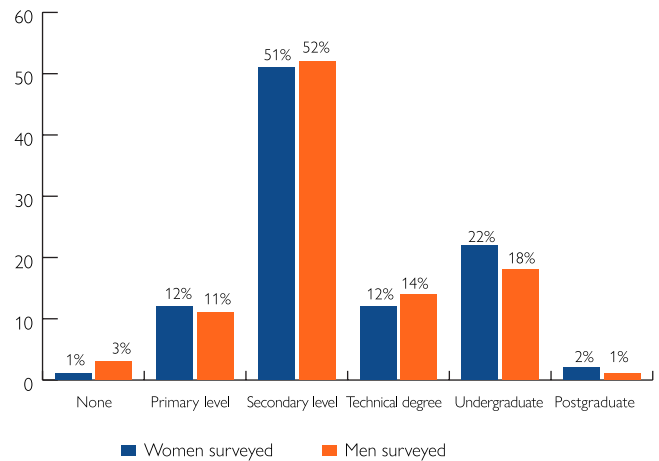


7 UNDP and R4V, "Reinventarse sobre la marcha: Mujeres refugiadas y migrantes de Venezuela. Un estudio sobre condiciones y acceso a medios de vida en Colombia, Ecuador y Perú", 2020, p. 8.

8 Ibid, p. 77.

GRAPH 3

Highest level of education completed by sex (if reported to be unemployed)



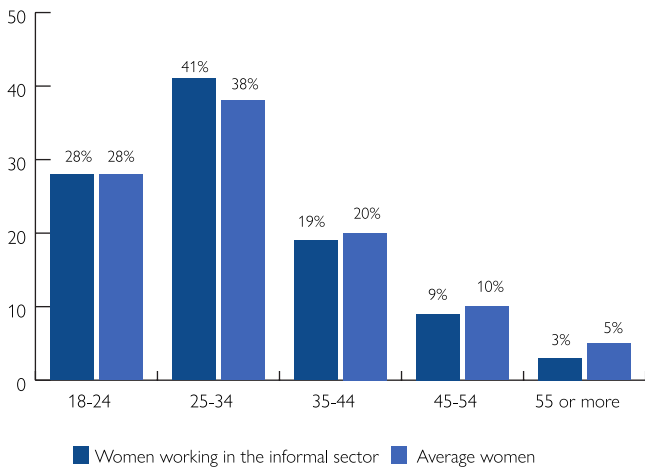
RISKS, VULNERABILITIES AND PERSISTENT GAPS IN MIGRANT WOMEN'S INFORMAL WORK

Results show that 73 per cent of employed women work in the informal sector. Of this percentage, the vast majority were 18-34 years old (69%) (Graph 4), 49 per cent graduated from high school and 24 per cent have an undergraduate degree (Graph 5). It is important to note that 13 per cent of this group received lower pay than originally agreed with their employer; four per cent received no pay at all; and 12 per cent reported not being treated well (Graph 6). Lastly, 54 per cent of women in informal employment do not have a regular migration status and 14 per cent are seeking asylum and/or refugee status (Graph 7).

These figures together with the previous show, once again, that even though a significant percentage of women have a university degree or a high school diploma, this does not imply that they have access to formal jobs with better employment prospects. On the other hand, it is striking that a percentage of women in this sector, often associated with precarious working conditions, are being exploited by not receiving the agreed remuneration or not receiving one at all. These situations also involve economic violence against women in the context of abusive power relations and xenophobia. It is concerning that more than half of these women do not have a regular migration status, as this may imply less access to information about their labour rights and difficulties in finding more dignified employment opportunities. All these factors increase the likelihood of experiencing gender-based violence (GBV) as well as blackmail and exploitation, and therefore have a negative impact on dignified life projects and on the basic guarantee of human rights of migrant and refugee women from Venezuela.

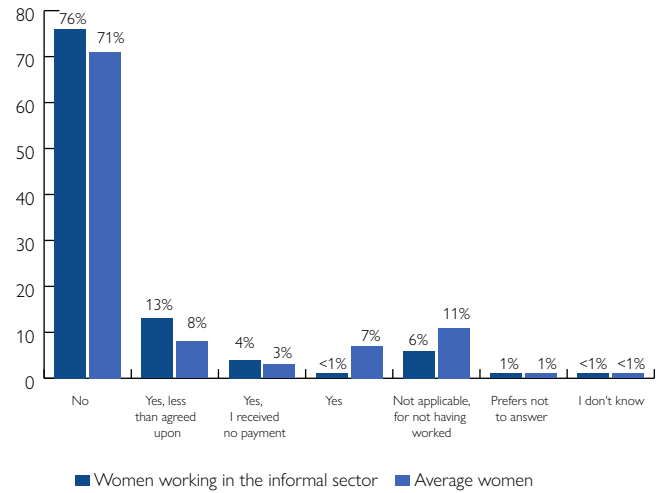
GRAPH 4

Women who reported working in the informal sector by age group⁹



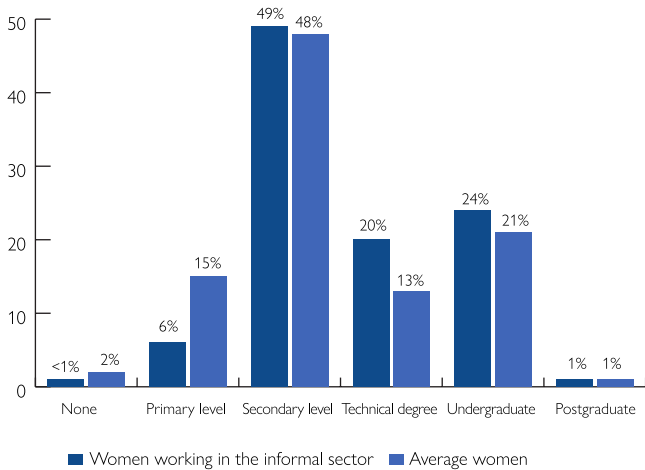
GRAPH 6

Women who reported working in the informal sector and reported working without receiving what was agreed upon payment



GRAPH 5

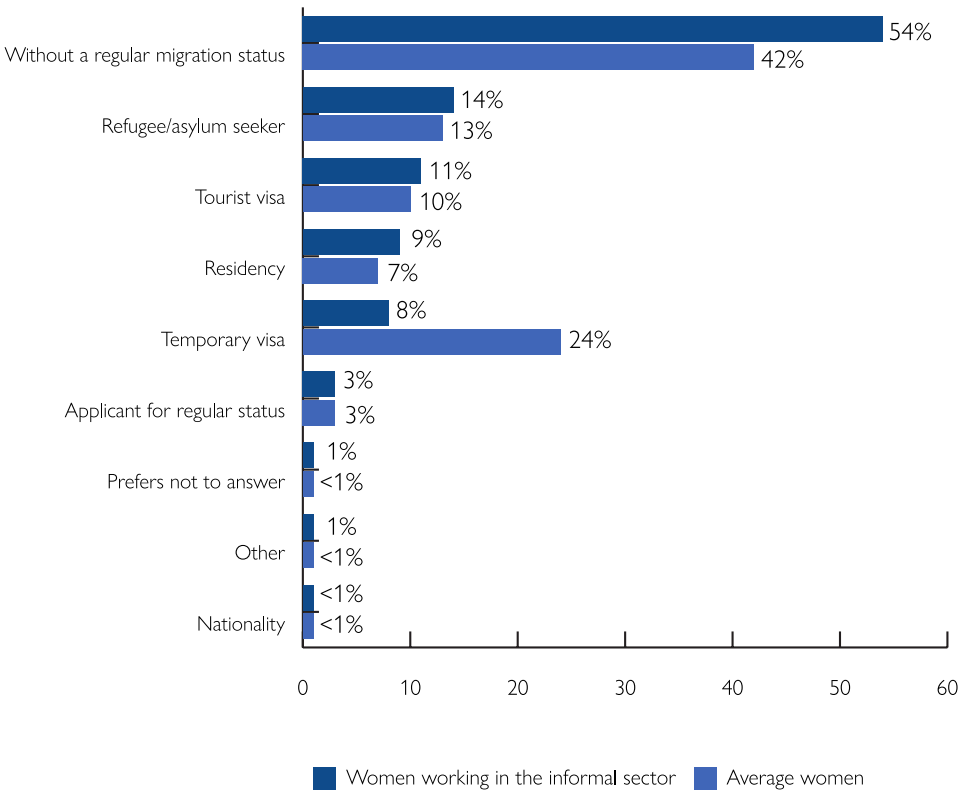
Women who reported working in the informal sector by highest level of completed education



⁹ The use of the word "average women" refers to the average of the responses given by Venezuelan migrant and refugee women.

GRAPH 7

Women who reported working in the informal sector by migration status



METHODOLOGY

The database used in this report was compiled by IOM DTM teams in 11 countries that host refugees and migrants from Venezuela in Latin America and the Caribbean to better understand their movements, profiles and needs. Assessments were conducted in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay. The teams conducted surveys with moving and stationary populations both at border crossings and along migratory routes as well as locations with a high concentration of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, collecting disaggregated information including: demographics, education, labour profile and livelihoods, monitoring of mobility and routes, assessment of location, protection, health, needs and vulnerabilities. The surveys have a common and harmonised methodology, which allows the information to be used at the country level, to inform response and operations, but also gives a sub-regional view of the Venezuelan migration phenomenon. In most of the sample countries, IOM teams collected data through convenience sampling and surveys were administered face-to-face by trained enumerators.