

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last two years, there has been a significant increase of the Venezuelan population flow to Latin America and the Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago in particular, has experienced an unprecedented increase due to its geographical proximity to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Although Trinidad and Tobago has always seen the presence of Venezuelan migrants, the sudden surge in numbers has raised concern among state agencies, NGO's and the wider population.

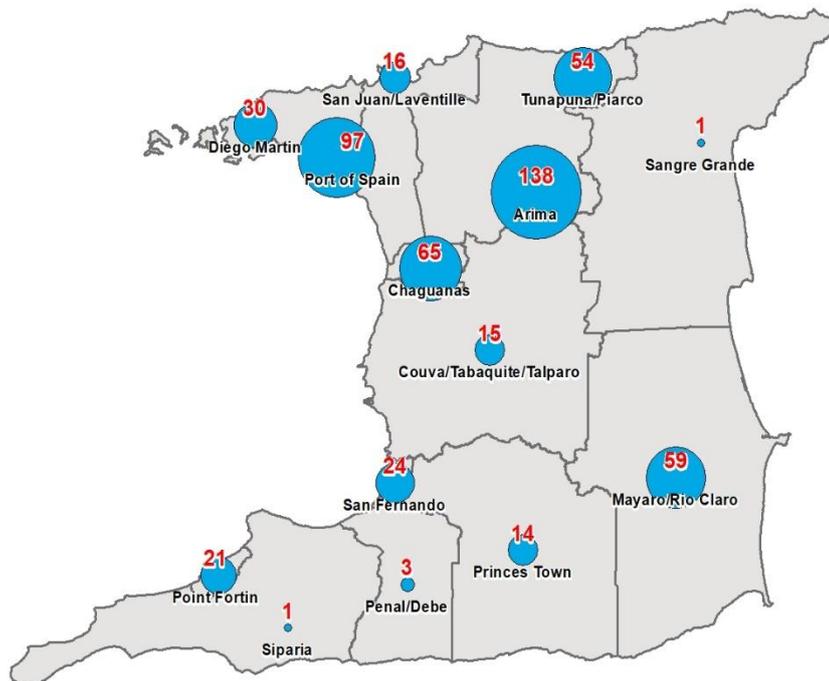
Although not historically categorized as a source country for mass movement of migrants, a combination of internal events in Venezuela has recently changed this reality. With a mandate to promote orderly and safe migration based on the respect for migrants' rights, this phenomenon is of special interest to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). As such, IOM launched a study geared towards monitoring the presence of Venezuelan migrants in Trinidad and Tobago. The study sought to characterize the Venezuelan population, gathering information on their mobility towards and within Trinidad and Tobago. This information would provide a better understanding of the routes explored, motivations for travel and challenges faced during their journey, all of which is necessary to inform decision-making among policy makers.

During the data collection exercise, 555 Venezuelans were interviewed across the twin-island Republic, the majority being located throughout the fourteen regional corporations in Trinidad and a minority in neighbouring island of Tobago. The following map illustrates the locations where the surveys were conducted.

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Map 1: Number of Surveys per Regional Corporation



II. METHODOLOGY

A bilingual team of Spanish and English speakers, were trained as enumerators in data collection techniques. A snowball methodology was adopted whereby key informants were first interviewed by the group of enumerators. Subsequently, these informants garnered other Venezuelan migrants to be interviewed. Rapport building and establishing some level of trust among the migrant population was imperative to finding persons willing to participate in the survey. However, this technique did not allow all of the Venezuelan migrants an equal chance to participate in the survey. As such, the results are only considered a representation of the

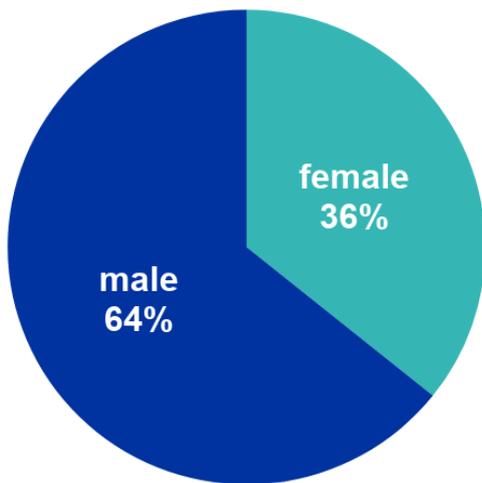
surveyed population, thus generalizations of the entire Venezuelan population should not be made.

The study was completed over a period of one month from September 2nd to September 30th, 2018. Despite efforts to strengthen trust, there were still many persons who expressed unwillingness to participate due to their fear of being reprimanded, detained or deported. The enumerators interviewed each migrant individually and explained that IOM is seeking to gather information on the vulnerabilities of Venezuelan migrants in Trinidad and Tobago. Participant responses to each question were immediately recorded so that the data could later be coded. In order to ensure consistency and efficiency, the survey questions were uploaded to a Samsung Tablet for easy data collection.

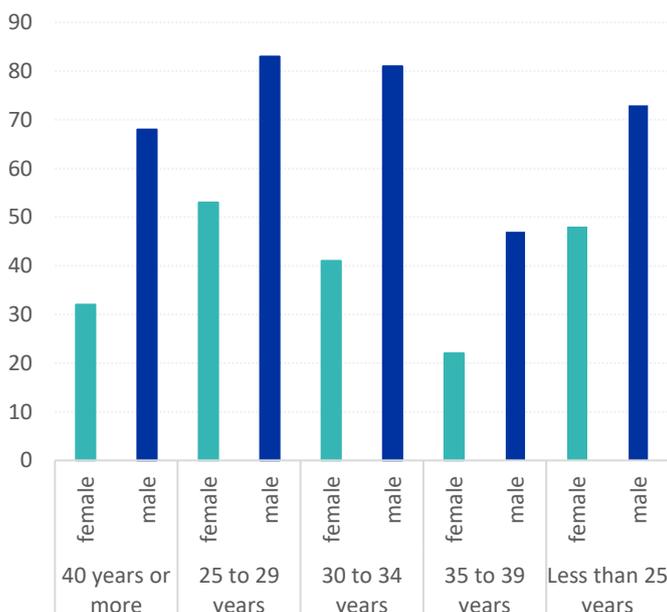
III. PROFILES

In most instances, the interview was conducted with the father or senior male of the household, which resulted in 64% of the responses being male and only 36% representing female. Additionally, some male respondents stated that their spouses and dependents were left behind as they migrated in search of alternative ways to support their families.

Graph 1: Distribution per Sex



Graph 2: Distribution per Sex and Age



Interviews were only conducted with persons who were over the age of 18. Most of the persons interviewed were between the ages of 25 to 29. The second largest group of participants were between the ages of 30 and 34.

Nationality

97% of the respondents indicated that they are of Venezuelan nationality only, while 3% claimed dual nationality belonging to both countries- Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

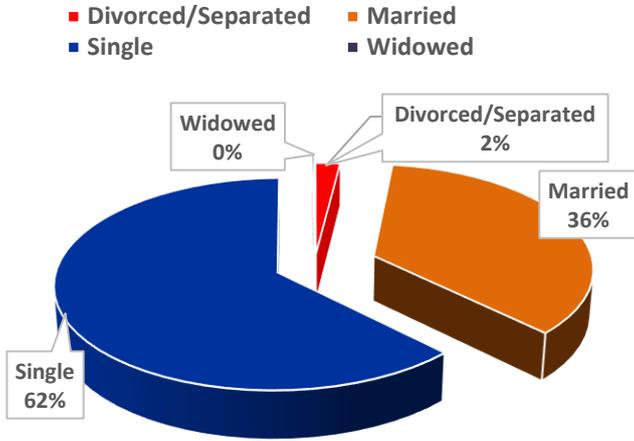
When asked how long they have been in the country, one-third (24%) of the respondents indicated that they have been residing in Trinidad and Tobago for more than a year. Of the persons interviewed, 45% indicated they have been in Trinidad and Tobago for less than a year.

Graph 3: Time in Trinidad and Tobago



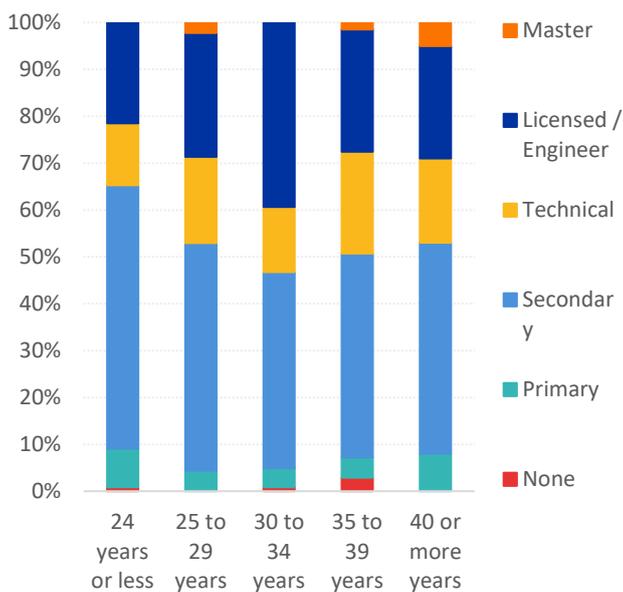
Moreover, 95% of respondents denied receiving requests for money from the local authorities except in cases where an official bond or charge had to be paid. Over 90% considered Trinidad and Tobago to be generally safe. Nevertheless, one-third of respondents expressed their fear of the authorities due to their irregular migratory status as most of cases interviewed were undocumented. Furthermore, over 80% were attempting to seek asylum in Trinidad and Tobago.

Graph 4: Marital Status



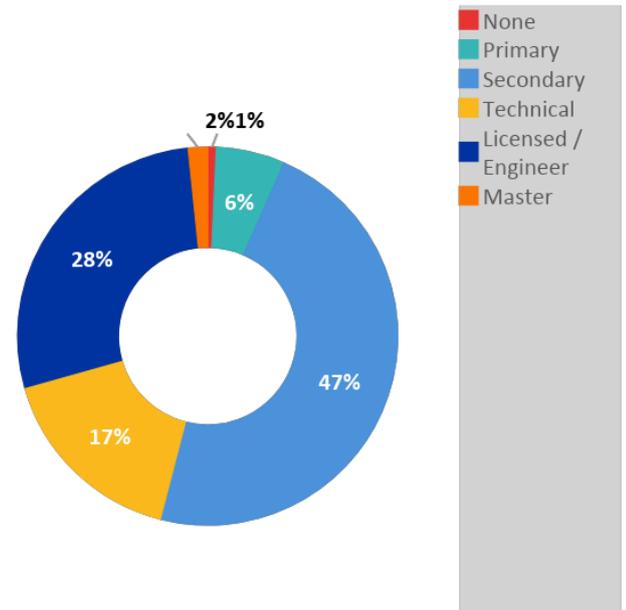
Of the interviewed migrants, 36% were married, 2% were divorced; while the majority declared that they were single. Approximately 6% of the women were pregnant at the time of the interview, a third of whom were single with an average of 2 dependents.

Graph 5: Education per Age Range



46% of the migrants interviewed attained tertiary level education, which includes: Masters, licensed or technical. Overall, 87% of respondents completed secondary level education, having been forced to flee while pursuing tertiary education. In Venezuela, the most saturated fields are engineers and lawyers.

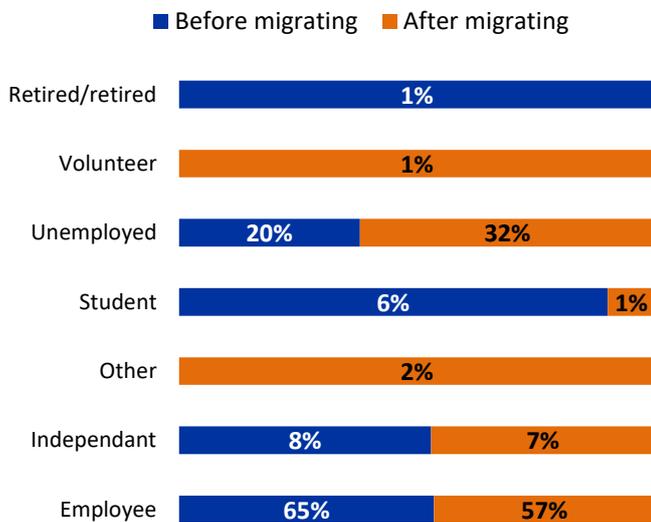
Graph 6: Global Education Level Distribution of the Interviewees



IV. WORK STATUS

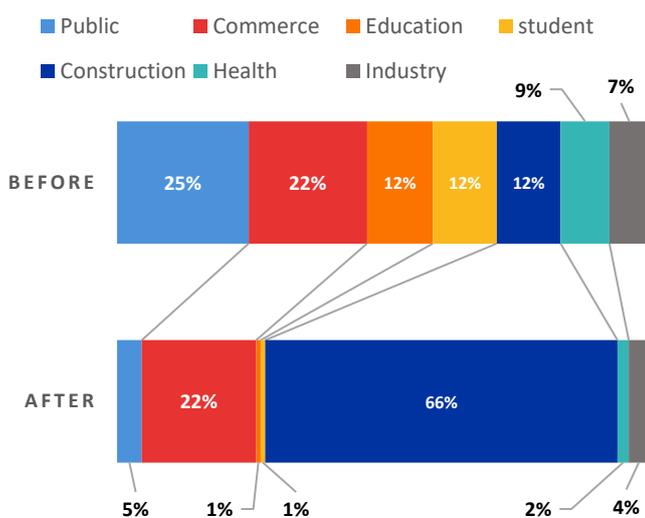
When comparing realities, their work status in Venezuela before migrating differs vastly from their current work status in Trinidad and Tobago. The following chart illustrates their changes in realities. Most students were unable to continue their studies, persons who were previously employed became unemployed and most independent workers remained as such.

Graph 7: Work Status Comparison



Furthermore, although more than 90% of the individuals assessed mentioned they were working in the informal sector, close to a third chose not to disclose information regarding their employment status. The following chart reflects those that were mentioned.

Graph 8: Work Sector Comparison



There was a significant increase in the Venezuelans employed in the construction sector, with numbers rising from 12% before migrating to Trinidad and Tobago to 66% after arrival.

In terms of salaries, 27% of surveyed individuals were earning at least the minimum wage as mandated by Trinidad and Tobago's law, either rated hourly or monthly. **On the other hand, 47% said that they were underpaid, with a salary lower than the minimum, while 26% declined to respond.**

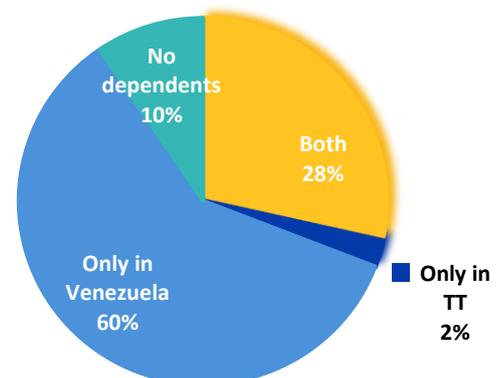
20% of the respondents received a job offer in Trinidad and Tobago, most of which were received upon arrival. A quarter of the offers included unusual contractual obligations, whereby the contractor offered to cover expenses which would then have to be repaid by the hired Venezuelan migrant. Of the job offers received, 10% were in commerce and 35% in construction.

14% of respondents complained of being mistreated at their workplaces, where employers justified maltreatment and threats using the migrants' irregular status as a tool for manipulation. **53% of the Venezuelan migrants interviewed faced discrimination due to their nationality.** 8% of the participants confirmed being victims of physical abuse.

Although most persons indicated working willingly as a means of survival, 23% revealed being in conditions which violated the local labour laws - either not being paid or being underpaid. These cases were most common in the commerce and construction sectors.

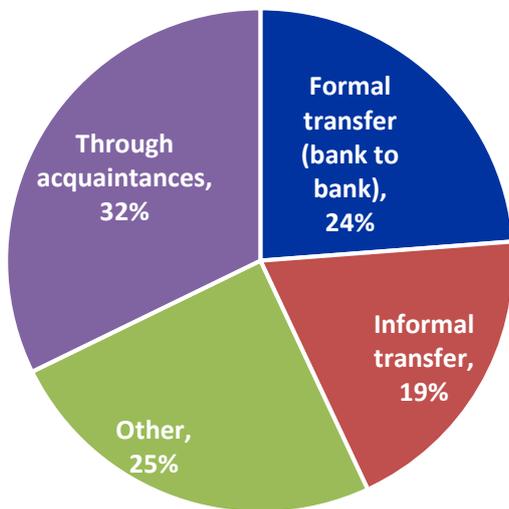
V. DEPENDENTS

Graph 9: Dependents' Location



Of the interviewed migrants, 2% confirmed that all their dependents accompanied them to Trinidad and Tobago. 60% revealed that all their dependents were left in Venezuela, 28% had dependents both in Trinidad and in Venezuela while 10% did not have dependents. For those who left their dependents behind, 80% send resources to Venezuela - the majority being money, while over 20% have also sent food and 18% medicine. The following graph depicts the means through which resources are sent.

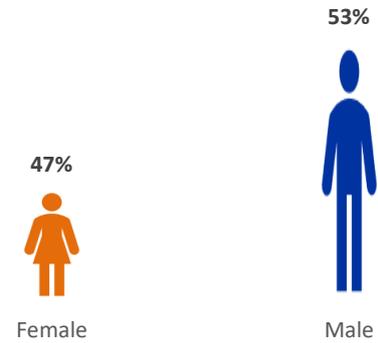
Graph 10: Means to send resources



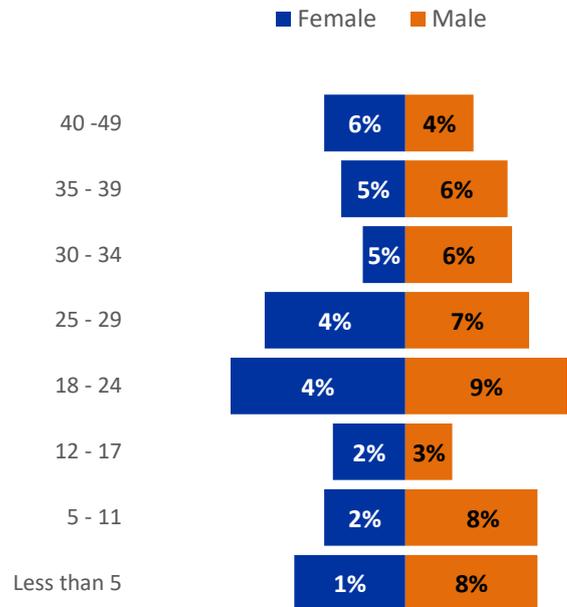
Family Groups

As previously stated, approximately one-third of the respondents did not migrate alone, but rather, were accompanied by family members. As shown in Graph 11, there is little distinction between the sex ratio throughout the Venezuelan family members in Trinidad and Tobago.

Graph 11: Sex Ration of the Family Members

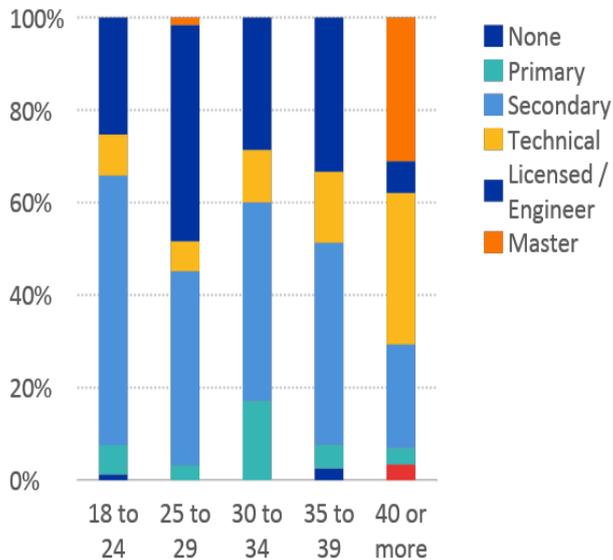


Graph 12: Ages per Sex of the Family Members



Most male and female family members belonged to the 18 to 24 age group. Approximately 3% of the women within the families were pregnant. Notably, 20% of pregnant females were minors.

Graph 13: Education Level of Family Members by Age Range

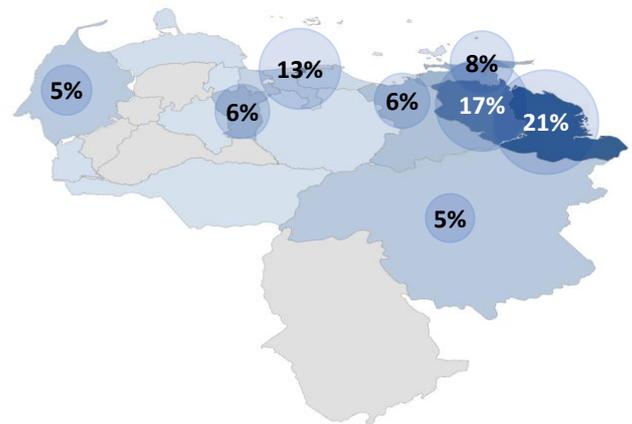


When considering the level of education among family members, the data gathered reveals that the level of education is highest among those 40 years or older.

VI. ROUTES

In gathering information on Venezuelan mobility towards Trinidad and Tobago, it was necessary to determine which areas had the highest departure rates in Venezuela. The following chart portrays the distribution of departed migrants according to their birthplace in Venezuela. The majority of persons (57%) originated from the eastern states of Venezuela, 13% were born Distrito Capital and 6% in Cojedes.

Map 2: State of Origin Distribution



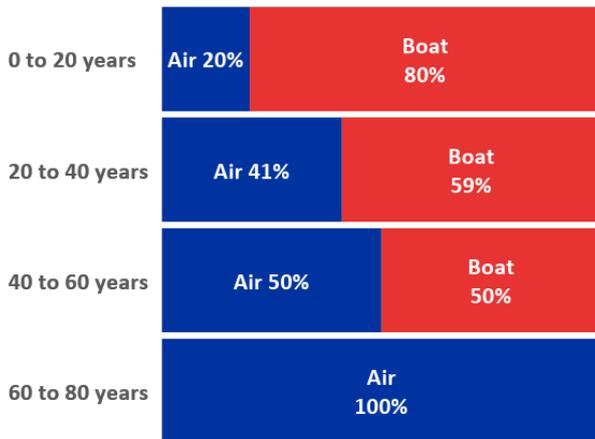
Map 3: Routes



When comparing means of arrival, 55% declared that they used passenger boats to travel out of Venezuela and 45% traveled by plane.

Of those travelling by boat, approximately 80% of the migrants' journeys initiated in Tucupita, followed by a trip through the Orinoco River and then towards the Gulf of Paria. However, approximately 20% of the Venezuelan migrants started in the town of Güiria and journeyed to Trinidad. In both instances, migrants indicated that their final destinations were at the southern coasts of Trinidad.

Graph 14: Transportation Type by Age



Based on the responses received, 74% of the migrants revealed that the cost of the journey to Trinidad amounted to more than 100 USD, with 4% paying more than 500 USD. Almost 60% said that they would not recommend their traveled routes to others, while only 17% had made the trip more than once.

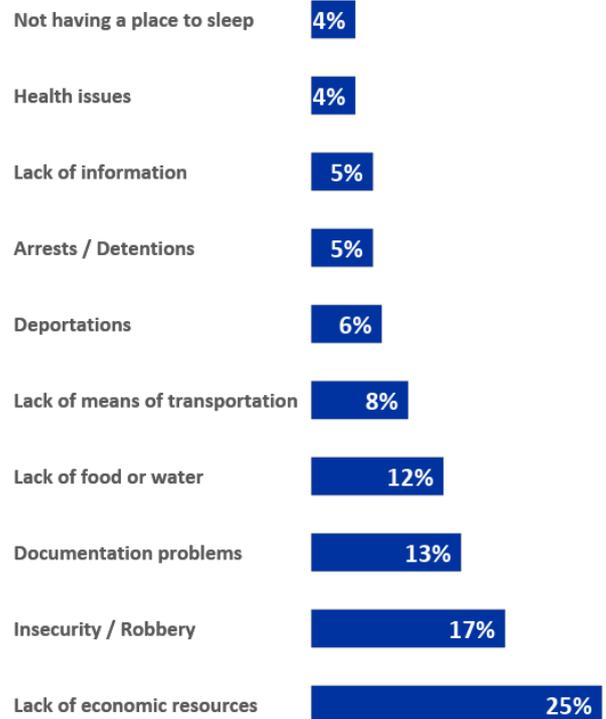
Graph 15: Trip Cost



73% of the interviewed migrants arrived at Trinidad and Tobago through an official port of entry and claimed to have had their passports stamped by local authorities. For the remaining 27%, most did not present a valid passport neither did they enter via an official port of entry.

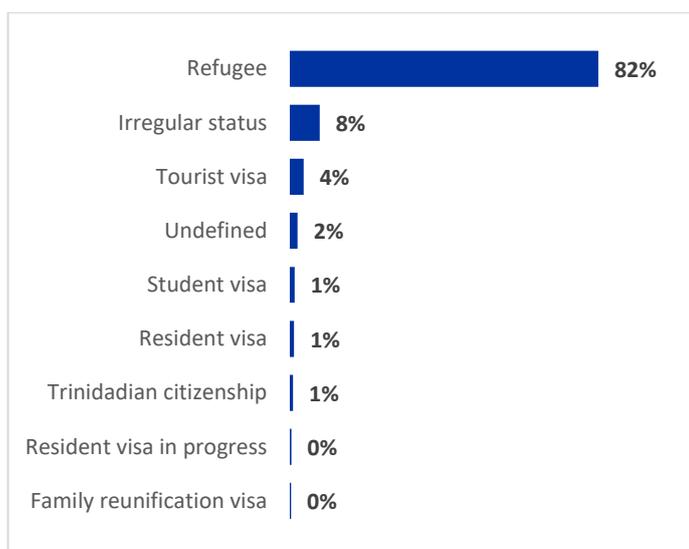
87% of assessed migrants were satisfied with the journey. On the contrary, 13% of the Venezuelan migrants mentioned the following difficulties.

Graph 16: Main Difficulties Encountered during Transit

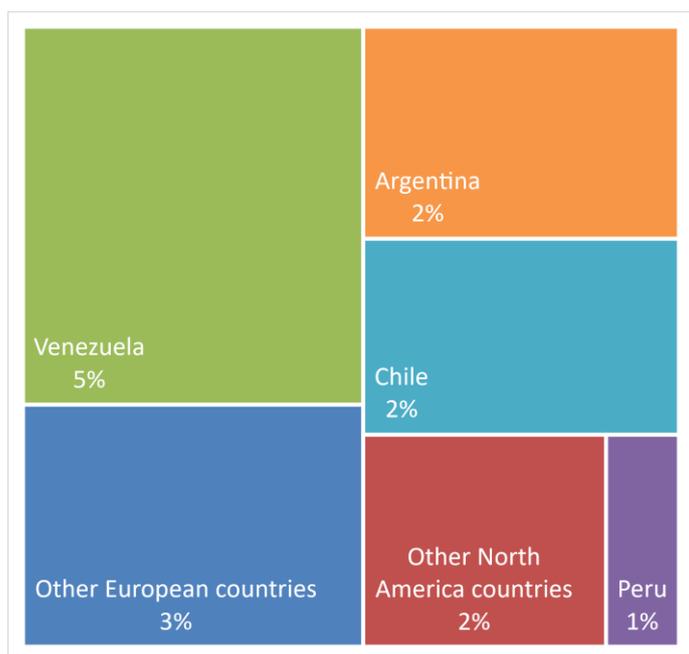


Moreover, 39% of the respondents were unsure of how long they will stay in Trinidad and Tobago. Even though they indicated they did not intend to stay indefinitely, those respondents also had no immediate plans of leaving the islands. 44% of the respondents mentioned that they intend to seek residency in Trinidad and Tobago. 11% said that they intended to stay between 6 and 12 months, and 6% stated that they wished to stay less than 6 months.

As illustrated in the graph below, 82% of Venezuelan migrants interviewed identified themselves as refugees. In addition, 8% stated they have irregular legal status.

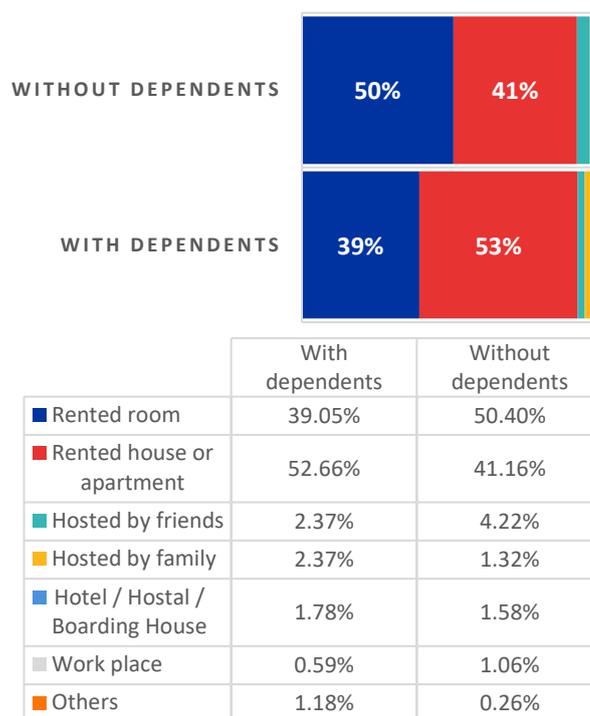


Graph 17: Final Destinations



Among those for whom Trinidad and Tobago was simply a transit country, there were various final destinations mentioned, which are reflected in Graph 17.

Graph 18: Accommodation



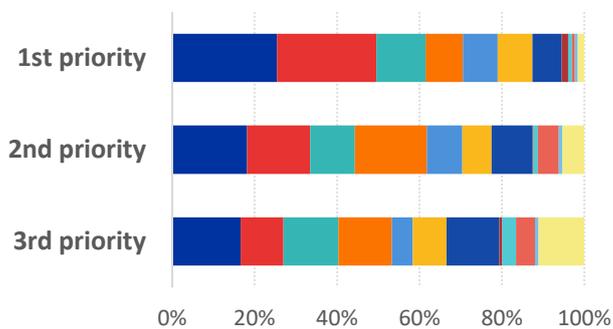
While assessing the living situation of Venezuelans in Trinidad and Tobago, 91% were living in rental accommodations. Of those living in rental accommodations, 40% were sharing a single room with their dependents, some a mere hotel room. The majority of migrants lamented a lack of privacy at their accommodations, with some even sharing rooms with friends.

VII. HEALTH AND NEEDS

Since migrant health can impact the wider public health of the receiving country, migrants were also questioned about their overall health. 80% expressed that they were not suffering from any chronic medical condition. On the other hand, 20% mentioned suffering from conditions such as back pain, allergies, asthma, visual deficiencies and gastrointestinal diseases.

Graph 19: Migrants' Needs Prioritized

Based on their current living situations and vulnerabilities, Graph 19 illustrates the hierarchy of needs among the Venezuelan migrants. 93% had access to potable water, electricity and health services. However, more than 20% revealed that they did not have three meals per day and were in urgent need of food assistance. 36% of the migrants stated that they were in need of medical assistance, of whom 12% cited medical assistance as their first priority.

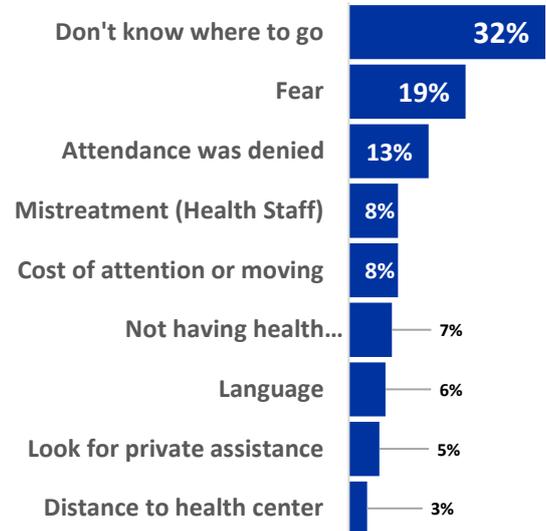


- Income generation or employment
- Legal assistance (Migration Status and Refugee Status)
- Medical care
- Food
- Assistance with documents
- Secure shelter or accommodation
- Education and training
- Family reunion
- NFIs, clothes and personal care
- Safety and security
- Others
- None

Graph 20: Challenges to Accessibility of Health Services

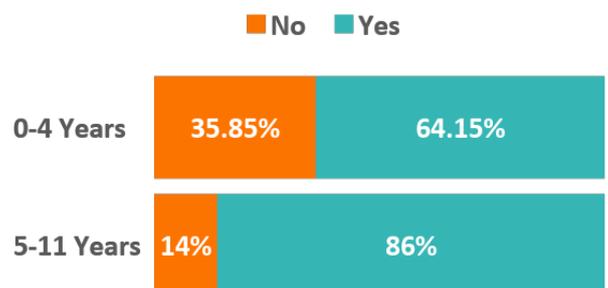
The migrants were also asked about their access to the public health care facilities in Trinidad and Tobago. 36% of interviewed migrants indicated that they were yet in need of health care, and as such could not comment on the accessibility of these services to migrants. Of those who were in need of health care, 35% confirmed they were unable to access public

health care. Graph 20 depicts the challenges faced when attempting to access health care services locally.



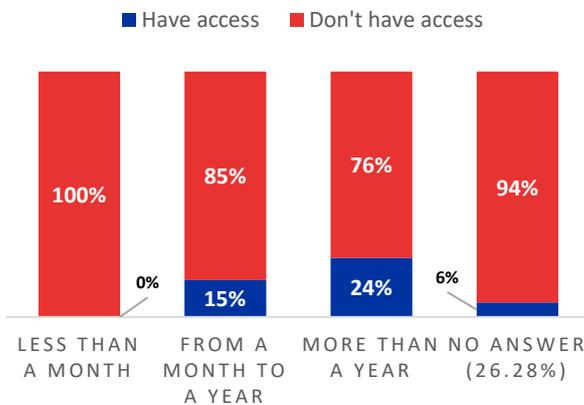
Medical assistance was also of significant importance to migrants with young children. With regards to vaccination, one-third of the children under the age of five were unable to access vaccinations or maintain vaccination schedules.

Graph 22: Maintenance of Vaccination Schedules



Another priority cited by Venezuelan migrants was access to education or training (30%) - of which 7% deemed it a first priority. Amongst the respondents with children between 5-18 years, more than 75% of the children that have been in Trinidad and Tobago for more than a year, do not have access to formal education.

Graph 21: Children's Access to Education vs Time in the Country



VIII. SUMMARY

Based on the study, Trinidad and Tobago, which was traditionally a transit country for the Venezuelan migrant flow, can now also be deemed a destination country. An increasing number of migrants are leaving Venezuela with intentions of residing in the twin-island Republic. Migrant profiles showcased the arrival of persons less than 40 years, the majority being male, with a minority being married. Many of the migrants traveled with their families and dependents, inclusive of children under 18.

Certified technicians, other skilled persons and secondary school graduates are among those seeking refuge in Trinidad and Tobago. As such, many of the migrants resorted to the fields of Construction and Commerce. This gave rise to labour issues such as underpayment and other violations of the local labour laws.

Another commonality among the Venezuelan migrant population were claims to asylum, with a vast number being undocumented as a result of entering through unofficial ports or overstaying their allotted time. The majority of migrants entered via passenger boats.

Once they arrived, many migrants faced challenges with accommodation, access to formal education and health care. Other Venezuelan migrants experienced discrimination and other forms of abuse due to their vulnerable migratory status and their nationality.

Although the study is merely a representation of the persons surveyed, which may be only a fraction of the entire Venezuelan migrant population, the findings can be used to inform policy decisions in managing migration for the benefit of both the state and the migrants.

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in the meeting of operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

When quoting, paraphrasing or in any way using the information mentioned in this report, the source needs to be stated appropriately as follows: "Source: International Organization for Migration (IOM). *Monitoring Venezuelan Citizens Presence: Trinidad and Tobago. September 2018*".

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