
**MIGRATION AND
AGEING:**
INCOME SECURITY
DURING OLD AGE
FOR THE REFUGEE
AND MIGRANT
POPULATION IN
COLOMBIA AND PERU

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HelpAge International is a global network of organisations with a mission to promote the right of all older people to lead a dignified, healthy, and safe life.

Migration and Ageing: Income Security in Old Age for the Refugee and Migrant Population in Colombia and Peru

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List of abbreviations

AFP	Pension Fund Administrators
BEPS	Periodic Economic Benefits
CONPES	National Council for Economic and Social Policy
CPP	Temporary Permanence Permit Card
DANE	National Administrative Department of Statistics
DNI	National Identity Card
DNP	National Planning Department
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ENPOVE	Venezuelan Population Residing in Peru Survey
ETPV	Temporary protection status for Venezuelan migrants
GEIH	Great Integrated Household Survey
GMDAC	IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre/Portal de Datos Mundiales sobre la Migración de la OIM
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
INEI	National Institute of Statistics and Informatics of Peru
IPC-IG	International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth/Centro Internacional de Política para el Crecimiento Inclusivo
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
Mintrabajo	Colombia's Ministry of Labour
NGO	Non-governmental organisation(s)
PEP	Special Permit of Permanence
PEPFF	Special Permit of Permanence for the Promotion of Formalisation

PILA	Integrated Social Security Contribution Form
PP	Percentage points
PPT	Temporary Protection Permit
PTP	Temporary Permanence Permit
R4V	Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela
RAIS	Individual Solidarity Savings System
RAMV	Administrative Registration of Venezuelan Migrants
RPM	Average Premium Scheme
SENA	National Learning Service
SGP	General Pension System
SIEM	Migration Statistics System
SISFOH	Household Targeting System
Sisbén	System for Potential Beneficiaries of Social Programmes
SNP	National Pension System
SPP	Private Pension System
UN DESA	The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPF	United Nations Population Fund/Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas
WFP	World Food Programme/Programa Mundial de Alimentos



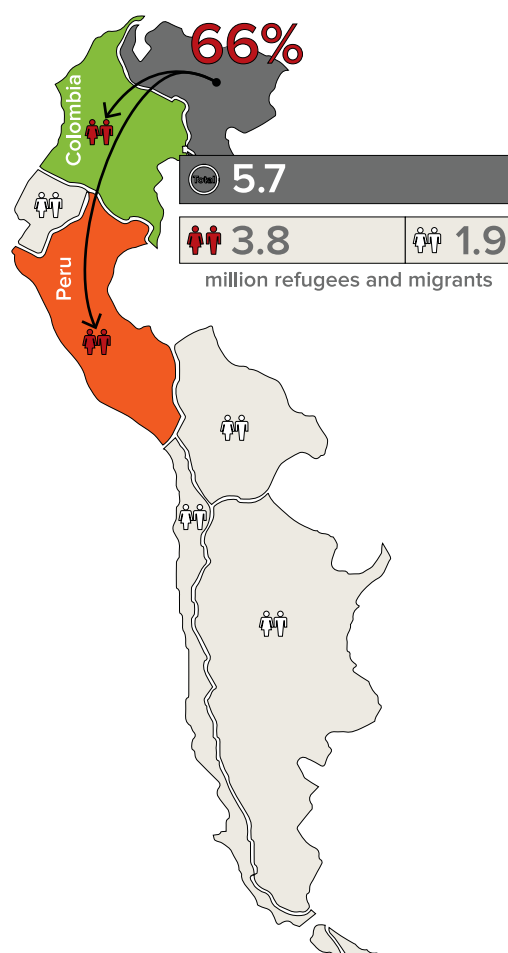
1. Executive summary

The study identifies how social security systems in Colombia and Peru are adapted to protect older people in mixed migratory movements. Colombia and Peru serve as the primary destinations for migrants from Venezuela, a nation that ranks second globally in terms of the largest number of refugees and individuals seeking international protection. As of August 2022, of the 5.7 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela residing in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Colombia and Peru hosted 3.8 million, or 66 per cent of this population in LAC (Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela [R4V], 2022b).

The study focuses on the income security of older people and highlights what cash transfer mechanisms that serve this purpose. The report titled “[A claim to dignity: Ageing on the move](#)” (HelpAge 2021), provides a regional assessment of the circumstances and requirements of older individuals on the move in the Americas. It sheds light on the challenges faced by older people in five Latin American nations, including Colombia and Peru. These individuals experience significant vulnerability and a lack of adequate protection due to various factors such as limited access to essential services, low income, inadequate housing options, and food insecurity, among other pressing issues.

This study examines two key aspects: the present conditions faced by older people in mixed migratory movements and the strategies available for individuals under 60 to ensure financial stability during their old age. The majority of the refugee and migrant population actively participates in the economic activities of their host countries and falls below the age of 60. As a result, it is important to identify pathways that enable them to

Main recipients of migrants from Venezuela



access social security mechanisms to secure their income in old age.

The objective of this proposed study is to generate fresh evidence that can empower governments to effectively manage migration, recognising it as an opportunity to address population ageing challenges, and promote the long-term sustainability of their social security systems.

1.1 Regional context

The Latin American and Caribbean region is currently experiencing the fastest ageing process globally, with inadequate social security coverage to ensure sufficient income for older people. In Peru and Colombia specifically, the proportion of the population aged 65 and above is projected to increase from 10 per cent to 20 per cent within 28 and 25 years, respectively. Comparatively, in Europe, it took 56 years for older people to reach the 20 per cent mark of the population. While the ageing process in Latin American and Caribbean region is expected to occur at an accelerated pace, it is unlikely that the countries will achieve high-income status by the time 20 per cent of their population falls into the 65+ age group, as is the case in Europe today (Altamirano et al., 2022).

Informal employment is a prevailing issue in the region, leaving many individuals without sufficient income. According to the International Labour Organisation's (ILO), World Social Security Report 2020-22, while the percentage of people in the Latin America and Caribbean region who have access to at least one social security benefit is slightly higher than the worldwide average (56.3 per cent vs 46.9 per cent), it falls short of the average for upper-middle income countries (64 per cent) and the Europe and Central Asia regions (83.9 per cent) (ILO, 2021a).

In Colombia, 50.6 per cent of people above pension age receive either a contributory or non-contributory pension, while in Peru, this percentage is 35.7 per cent. In Peru, the weight of both contributory and non-contributory pensions is similar, whereas in Colombia, the percentage of people receiving income under

the contributory scheme is higher than those receiving income under the non-contributory scheme (Aranco et al., 2022, p. 45).

The region has experienced a large number of migratory movements and this phenomenon is expected to become more dynamic, due to the challenges that countries may face, such as climate change, conflict, and economic deterioration. Moreover, the global trend indicates that the time refugees spend in the place of reception has extended. While the average time was nine years in 1993, it increased to 20 years by 2013 (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, et al. 2014).

1.2 Methodology

A Mixed methods approach and an action research methodology were used for the study.

The research involved both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather comprehensive data. In addition, a participatory process was implemented, engaging various stakeholders, including the population being studied, to collaboratively identify and develop practical solutions.

The quantitative information was processes to conduct a descriptive analysis of the labour and income situation of the older migrant population. Specifically, it provided insights into the labour, income, and savings situation of refugees and migrants in Colombia and Peru during their old age. The quantitative component involved analysing secondary data sources, such as household surveys conducted by the respective statistical institutes of each country.

The qualitative analysis complemented the findings from the quantitative analysis and shed light on barriers to income security, identified best practices, and explored potential areas for improvement in the countries studied. The qualitative component encompassed both primary and secondary information sources. Primary information was gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with key stakeholders and informants. Thematic analysis was applied, utilising coding techniques to synthesize the collected information.

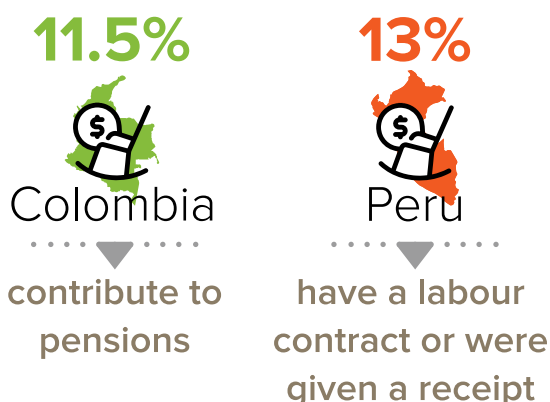
1.3 Working conditions of refugees and migrants from Venezuela

The Venezuelan population residing in Colombia and Peru actively engages in the labour market, although a significant portion is employed in the informal sector. This explains the low percentage contributing to the pension systems in both countries. In Colombia, only 11.5 per cent of working individuals contribute to pensions. In Peru, while precise data is unavailable, it is estimated that only 13 per cent have formal employment contracts or receive payslips for their services.

Venezuelan migrants generally earn incomes that are close to or barely above the minimum wage, resulting in limited capacity for voluntary savings. In Colombia, the average income is even lower than the minimum wage, which can be attributed to a significant portion (49.5 per cent) being self-employed in low-value-added occupations. In Peru, calculations indicate that being an employee is more common (64.2 per cent) than being self-employed (29 per cent).

Gender disparities are prevalent in both countries, particularly in terms of labour participation, unemployment rates, and income levels, with women experiencing more unfavourable outcomes. Women participate in the labour market less than men, with a difference of 29.2 percentage points (pp) in Colombia and 17.3 pp in Peru. They also face a higher prevalence of unemployment (11.6 pp difference in Colombia and 6.10 pp in Peru).

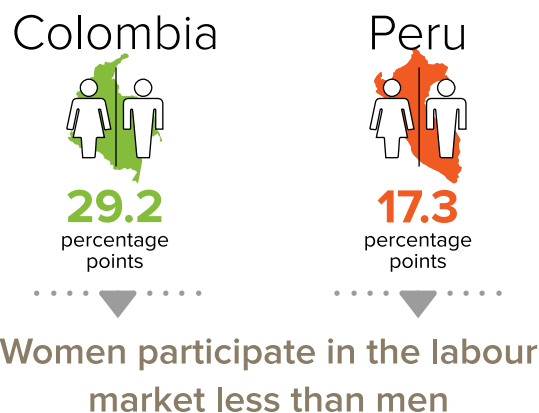
Venezuelan population in Colombia and Peru



Average income is very close to the minimum wage



Wide gender gaps in both countries



1.4 Labour and income conditions for older Venezuelan citizens in Colombia

The older population among Venezuelan migrants in Colombia and Peru ranges from 2% to 3% of the total migrant population, with a notable presence of women. In Colombia, 58.2 per cent of the total number of refugees and older migrants are women, while in Peru, this percentage is 64.3 per cent.

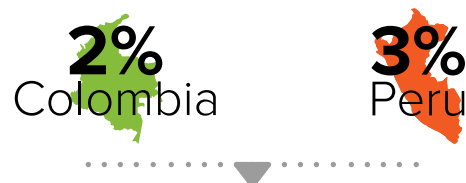
The sources of income for older people from Venezuela are very limited, meaning that they are either highly dependent on their relatives or are left economically vulnerable. The employment rate among older people from Venezuela does not exceed 35 per cent in both countries. Colombia has a slightly higher employment rate compared to Peru, with rates of 34.9 per cent and 29.5 per cent respectively.

The percentage of older people from Venezuela who receive other sources of income is also low. In Peru, only 9.3 per cent receive pensions, while in Colombia the percentage is slightly lower at 6.3 per cent. Additionally, in Colombia, 13.7 per cent of older people receive income from other households or governmental and non-governmental institutions. Unfortunately, comparable information for Peru was not available, preventing a direct comparison.

1.5 Migration policy, management, and regularisation

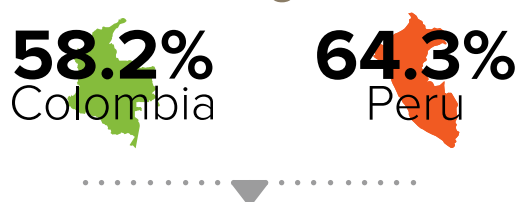
The influx of refugees and migrants from Venezuela in both Peru and Colombia was rapid and unprecedented. Historically, these countries had been characterised by patterns of migration to North American or European countries like Spain, or experiences of forced internal displacement, particularly in the case of Colombia.

Older migrant persons



High participation of women

women refugees and older migrants



of the total number of refugees and older migrants

Percentage of older persons who work



percentage of older persons that receive pensions



Colombia and Peru have implemented special mechanisms to regularize and integrate refugees and migrants from Venezuela, although the processes have differed between the two countries. In Colombia, there has been consistent progress in providing increased protection and rights for the migrant population from Venezuela. In Peru, the process has experienced more fluctuations, with periods of favouring regularisation and integration and other periods of interruptions. Both countries have introduced specific regularisation documents to address the situation. Colombia implemented the Temporary Protection Permit (PPT), allowing a 10-year period of residence. In Peru, the Temporary Permanence Permit (CPP) grants one year of residence. These permits enable migrants and refugees to regularize their status, even if they did not enter through official channels, although there may be restrictions based on the migrants' entry date into the country. These documents grant migrants and refugees the right to work and access various private and public services.

Compared to Peru, Colombia has a lower percentage of refugees and migrants with irregular migration status. As of 2022, only 11.3 per cent of refugees and migrants in Colombia had irregular migration situation, while in Peru, 35.7 per cent did not have a valid migration permit.

Colombia has implemented several legal instruments to support the regularisation and protection of the rights of refugees and migrants from Venezuela. The country has also issued regulatory decrees, circulars, and resolutions in key areas such as health, education, regularisation, identification and registration, and labour.

1.6 Socioeconomic integration

Colombia has implemented comprehensive policies for the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan migrants, focusing on enhancing their labour inclusion and access to public services. The government, in collaboration with international cooperation agencies, non-governmental organisations, and the

private sector has taken several initiatives to improve the migrants' access to public and private services. These efforts are designed to facilitate their integration into the labour market, including formal employment opportunities, as well as to provide financial support to vulnerable individuals and those living in poverty, and access to essential services such as education and healthcare.

To support these integration efforts, the Government of Colombia, through the Ministry of Labour (Mintrabajo) and the National Learning Service (SENA), has introduced programmes like Saber Hacer Vale to certify migrants' competencies. The Ministry of Labour has also implemented several initiatives to safeguard the rights of migrant workers, including training programmes for government officials and the labour sector; communication campaigns targeting territorial entities, the migrant population, and the business sector; and anti-human trafficking campaigns (Ministry of Labour, 2022). These activities have received support and coordination from international cooperation agencies.

Peru imposes restrictions on the hiring of foreign personnel, which creates obstacles for migrants in securing formal employment. According to the law, the percentage of foreign personnel that a company can employ cannot exceed 20 per cent, and the remuneration of foreign personnel may not exceed 30 per cent of the company's total wages and salaries. Also, the maximum duration of employment contracts for foreign individuals may not exceed three years.

1.7 Access to social security and protection

In Colombia, the targeting system for monetary transfers includes the newly created identification mechanisms for Venezuelan migrants. In Peru, only the regular identification mechanism for foreigners is accepted. Accordingly, in Colombia, refugees and migrants can access the System for Potential Beneficiaries of Social Programmes (Sisbén) using a Special Permit of Permanence (PEP or PPT).

Both Colombia and Peru have contributory and non-contributory mechanisms in place to ensure income for the population during old age. Access to these mechanisms for refugees and migrants depends on the specific rules and regulations of each country, as well as the support and opportunities provided to this population to participate in these programs.

Although progress has been made in terms of social security and protection in Colombia and Peru, there are still significant gaps in coverage and high levels of informality. Operational and coordination challenges exist between government entities, particularly in areas beyond migration management. There are opportunities for improvement in terms of coordinating actions, sharing information, and establishing joint action plans that are not limited to the field of migration.

1.8 Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted governments in the Latin America and Caribbean region to implement rapid responses and increase the supply of social security programmes to address the needs of vulnerable populations. According to the ILO (2021), between February 2020 and October 2021, 45 countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region adopted a total of 488 social security measures. In response to the pandemic, many countries extended existing programmes and created new ones to cover vulnerable population groups. Emergency cash transfers were adopted, and the use of mobile and online applications for transfer payments was expanded (ILO, 2021a).

Neither Colombia nor Peru made the conditions of existing transfer programmes more flexible to include refugees and migrants in these schemes. Quotas for existing cash transfer programmes such as Familias en Acción or the Juntos programme were not increased in either country.

Only Colombia included the refugee and migrant population in the new cash transfer programmes, but only those with regular status who were already registered in Sisbén

and met the programme's own requirements. In Peru, refugees and migrants were not explicitly included in the new state programmes. The Government of Peru coordinated with international cooperation organisations to provide humanitarian aid or monetary transfers to the refugee and migrant population.

Technology played a pivotal role in promoting the inclusion of the refugee and migrant population. Mobile applications were used to streamline communication and information gathering, and enable convenient money transfers. text messages were widely used to disseminate information on emergency measures. Mobile applications for money transfers may have improved access for refugees and migrants in Colombia, as opening bank accounts through mobile applications is often more flexible than traditional channels.

1.9 Conclusions

Regularisation processes play a crucial role in granting refugees and migrants access to social security, cash transfer programmes, and employment protection and incentive programmes. However, regularisation alone is not enough to ensure the adequate socio-economic integration of refugees and migrants.

Colombia has already established guidelines to promote the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan migrants. However, there is still a need to develop a public policy that goes beyond the scope of Venezuelan migration and encompasses other migratory movements.

Peru still needs further developments in terms of the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan migrants, who constitute a significant group of foreigners in the country. The country should also adapt its regulations to minimize disincentives for hiring foreign personnel.

Based on the experiences of Colombia and Peru, the following are some general recommendations that may be useful for other countries and contexts, along with specific recommendations for each country.

1.10 General recommendations

a. Regularisation

Regularisation policies should ensure that the documents created for migrants are seamlessly integrated with existing identification instruments, enabling their recognition and acceptance by the institutions and other sectors (health, labour, financial).

b. Information and data systems

- Cooperation and coordination between entities are crucial for sharing and utilising information on the situation of refugees and migrants to inform policy formulation.
- The information systems used to consolidate pension contributions should be adjusted to ensure the transferability of contributions, despite an individual's different identification numbers in different pension systems.

c. Coordination and complementarity

- Support from the international community is essential to complement the efforts of governments, particularly in countries with limited fiscal resources.
- It is important for international cooperation organisations, civil society, and the private sector to coordinate their actions with the national government and align them with the country's institutional framework.

d. Information and education

- Information and awareness campaigns targeting the refugee and migrant population should utilize diverse communication channels, employ clear and accessible language, and even involve refugees and migrants themselves in the design of the campaigns.

- When designing awareness and education programmes on pension systems, it is crucial to consider the perceptions and understanding of refugees and migrants regarding old-age savings and pensions. These programmes should be tailored to address their unique perspectives, concerns, and knowledge gaps.

e. Socioeconomic integration

- Efforts should be made to support the integration of older refugees and migrants into the country's formal work and care systems.
- Employability and income generation among refugees and migrants should be enhanced. A gender approach that specifically addresses the barriers and challenges faced by women is essential.

f. Relaxation of social security and protection systems

- Exploring the use of digital wallets or other electronic payment methods can significantly enhance the delivery of cash transfers to refugees and migrants.
- Considering the high levels of informality and vulnerability among older refugees and migrants, it is crucial to address their specific needs regarding income security during old age.

g. Recommendations for Colombia

- Continue to strengthen coordination between government entities, international cooperation agencies, and civil society organisations.
- Enhance the collection and utilisation of data on the situation of refugees and migrants in Colombia.
- Integrate formalisation strategies within income generation programmes supported by international cooperation and civil society organisations.
- Modify the contributory systems to create a default pension contribution obligation, unless evidence of contributions to a pension system in another country is provided.

- Strengthen bilateral transferability mechanisms to protect individuals' pension rights during old age.
- Consolidate existing mechanisms or create new mechanisms to include vulnerable populations who cannot access cash transfer programmes.
- Refugees and migrants should not be excluded from non-conditional transfer mechanisms and voluntary savings programmes such as Periodic Economic Benefits (BEPS).
- Establish a minimum income floor.

(PTP), into the Household Targeting System (SISFOH).

- Study and assess how registration in the SISFOH can be made more flexible to accommodate the vulnerable foreign population.
- Strengthen bilateral mechanisms to combine contribution periods across countries in order to protect the rights of individuals in old age.

Note

The full report is available in Spanish ([here](#))

You may also find the Policy Brief of this report ([here](#))

h. Recommendations for Peru

- Incorporate indicators to measure international migration as a regular part of statistical operations.
- Enhance the identification of information on the foreign population in Peru through the use of administrative records. This information can complement the efforts of statistical agencies like the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics of Peru (INEI) and the Superintendency of Migration.
- Compile comprehensive data on the situation of refugees and migrants in Peru to inform policy development.
- Improve the collection and analysis of information to identify the contributions made by the refugee and migrant population in social, cultural, and economic terms.
- Raise awareness about the economic contributions of refugees and migrants and the benefits of promoting formal employment for both the refugee and migrant population and the host communities.
- Conduct a comprehensive analysis to identify gaps and areas of demand within the Peruvian labour market that can be filled by utilising the skills and capabilities of the migrant labour force.
- Address and eliminate disincentives to hiring refugees and migrants in Peru.
- Explore the possibility of integrating identification documents such as the Temporary Permanence Permit (CPP) and the Temporary Permanence Permit

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