

# LABOR MARKET ACCESS AND INTEGRATION

A KEY ELEMENT FOR **LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS AND POPULATIONS COMING FROM VENEZUELA**

The dynamics of the armed conflict in Colombia have left around **9 million** victims since 1985, of which around 7 million are considered to be subject to attention and reparation for the victimising acts contemplated by law. This includes cases of forced displacement, homicide, forced disappearance, crimes against sexual freedom, torture, kidnapping, illegal recruitment of minors, among others. Since 2016, following the signing of the peace agreement with the FARC, 652,141 victims of internal displacement have been identified. In addition to the above, it is estimated that more than **4 million Venezuelans** have fled their country, of which approximately 1,717,352 are in Colombian territory. The arrival of such a large number of Venezuelans in Colombia, together with the commitments made by the national government in the peace agreements, has posed multiple challenges for the country.



Venezuelans arriving at Las Delicias. UNHCR/ Rolón, M

In this regard, a key element in strengthening the livelihoods of UNHCR's persons of concern is to ensure **the right to work legally and free from any kind of labour discrimination**, whether as formal employees or as entrepreneurs. On the one hand, guaranteeing the Venezuelan population their right to work is essential; if they can work legally, they will be able to provide for themselves and the need for direct humanitarian assistance will be reduced. In addition, they will be able to contribute to the Colombian economy through tax payments, generate higher levels of demand and an increase in economic productivity. On the other hand, if internally displaced persons have greater job opportunities, this will not only **reduce the high rates of informality, but also reduce incentives to engage in work that increases their protection risks**, for example, involuntary involvement in illegal armed groups, child exploitation, survival sex and/or human trafficking, among others.

In the current context of COVID-19, **the income generation and livelihoods of displaced persons, as well as refugees and migrants coming from Venezuela, have been severely affected**. Against this backdrop, UNHCR is working with partners and government entities to improve the response to the pandemic and ensure the safety of all workers.

## KEY FIGURES

**652.141**

Victims of forced displacement between 2016 and 2020 recognized by the National Registry of Victims (RUV in Spanish)

**1.7 million**

Of Venezuelan refugees and migrants estimated to be present in Colombia, the majority of whom are in need of international protection.

**770.246**

Venezuelans are in the country on a regular basis, so they can work legally. Many face discrimination, xenophobia and exploitation in their workplaces.

# UNHCR RESPONSE

WORKING WITH PARTNERS TO PROMOTE ACCESS TO DECENT WORK

**UNHCR builds partnerships with key actors** such as the Ministry of Labor, the Public Employment Service (PES), the National Apprenticeship Service (SENA), Family Compensation Funds, employment agencies, banks, employers and industries, trade union groups and UN agencies.

- UNHCR supports and works with the Ministry of Labor in Colombia to promote the inclusion of Venezuelan nationals in the labor market and their regularization through the Special Permit to Stay for the Promotion of Formalization (PEPFF).
- UNHCR supports the organization of job fairs for the Venezuelan population in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor, the Public Employment Service, the National Apprenticeship Service (SENA), and other municipal economic development agencies.
- UNHCR together with IOM and ILO are conducting a labor market study on the labor demand and educational offer available for refugees and migrants from Venezuela in the following cities: Medellín, Barranquilla, Bogotá, Cucuta, Cali and Bucaramanga.

**Reaching out to the private sector to promote employment of refugees and migrants coming from Venezuela.**

- UNHCR Colombia has established a working relationship with several companies such as Sierra Nevada, Sunshine Bouquets, Hoteles Estelar, Red Cotelco Bogotá-Cundinamarca, Teleperformance and WeWork, as part of their commitment to hire and include our persons of concern.
- UNHCR in collaboration with the Foundation of the National Association of Colombian Businessmen (ANDI in Spanish) launched the white pages directory "Se le Tiene Refugiados y Migrantes", which compiles information on refugee and migrant entrepreneurship throughout the country with the purpose of disseminating it among affiliated companies.

**Incorporating workplace themes in UNHCR's anti-xenophobia campaign 'Somos Panas Colombia'**

- UNHCR is developing videos and other tools for the #WorkingTogether sub-campaign to promote labour and economic integration of the Venezuelan population: <https://somospanascolombia.com/trabajando-juntos/>

## CIFRAS CLAVES

### 27.145 employees in RUTEC

Venezuelans have a work contract and are registered on the platform of the Single Registry of Foreign Workers in Colombia set up by the Ministry of Labor.

### 79.663 in PILA

Venezuelans registered in the PILA social security contributions system.

### 969 trained employers

Belonging to the corporate sector and the financial and banking sector.

### 147 supported

### entrepreneurships

Of internally displaced populations in the framework of international cooperation projects.



*UNHCR staff visiting income generation projects and entrepreneurship initiatives in the Villa Rosas community, Mocoa (Putumayo). UNHCR/Lina Guarnizo.*

### Raising awareness of the right of Venezuelans to work formally

- UNHCR, together with the Tent Partnership for Refugees, HIAS and the Ministry of Labor, launched the first guide for the recruitment of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, with the aim of orienting employers in all recruitment and employment processes.
- UNHCR, ILO, Ministry of Labor, Public Employment Service, SENA, PADF, Compensar and Fundación Corona launched the orientation guide for refugees and migrants from Venezuela, with the aim of guiding them in their search for employment in the country.



## Livelihoods in the field

Learn about [Gaby Cris Urbaneta's story](#) and how the [Graduation Model](#) has enabled her to generate sustainable livelihoods.

Gaby Cris Urbaneta left her life in Venezuela and came to Colombia alone with her baby in search of new opportunities. Through the house of rights in Granizal, Bello, Gaby learned about the UNHCR Graduation Model and was selected as a beneficiary by the Medellín Field Office in 2020 to participate in it. This year she will be part of the graduated families and says that her life has changed since then. When Gaby arrived in Colombia, she received legal advice and assistance from UNHCR to re-establish her life project and generate sustainable livelihoods that would allow her to stay. With the help of seed capital, she was soon able to establish a clothing entrepreneurship, which despite the socio-economic impact caused by COVID-19, has been able to stay afloat through its "Knitting in Web" strategy.



Visit to Gaby Urbaneta's enterprise by the Deputy Representative for Operations, Mathew Brook, and the head of the Antioquia-Chocó Sub-Office, Elisa Calarccini. UNHCR/Vargas. Y.

UNHCR and Ayuda Humanitaria (implementing partner) not only trained Gaby in digital marketing skills that enabled her to improve and maintain her income during the pandemic, but also supported her in overcoming negative emotions that prevented her from moving forward. Through her entrepreneurship, Gaby has been able to participate in different fairs in the city and her vision is to see her business grow to generate many more jobs in the city of Medellín.

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