I. INTRODUCTION

The Venezuelan population flows in Latin America and the Caribbean have shown a significant increase in the last two years. Due to its geographical closeness with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago is one of the countries that has seen this increase on a larger scale. Although Venezuelan foreigners in Trinidad and Tobago are not new, the highly unusual increase in numbers within a short time span have attracted the local authorities' attention.

Traditionally, Venezuelans were not known as a population aiming to stay permanently outside Venezuela in massive number, however, a conglomerate of internal events has recently changed this reality in all countries sharing borders with Venezuela, and many others far beyond. This new reality is of special interest for the International Organization for Migration (IOM), whose mandate is to promote the benefits of an orderly and safe migration based on the respect of the immigrants' rights.

The study was geared towards monitoring Venezuelans citizens' presence in Trinidad and Tobago, to know a profile which would aid in developing a better understanding of their needs, vulnerabilities, working and health status, and the challenges they have faced in the routes they follow to get to Trinidad and Tobago. During the data collection exercise, 548 Venezuelans were interviewed along the territory, with the following distribution:

Map 1: Number of Surveys per Regional Corporation
II. METHODOLOGY

A bilingual team of Spanish and English speakers, was trained as enumerators to gather data from the Venezuelans, as well as trained to identify and refer protection cases. A snowball methodology was adopted whereby key informants were first interviewed by the group of enumerators, then these informants garnered other Venezuelan citizens to be interviewed. This process continued until the end of the exercise which resulted in a sample of Venezuelan citizens located in all 14 regional corporations being interviewed. All 548 Venezuelans participated voluntarily.

Considering how the sample was constructed, the results are only indicative of the characteristics of the surveyed population. It is not possible to establish a probabilistic generalization for all Venezuelan citizens in the country.

It is understandable that while visiting this way, when getting to a house where a Venezuelan family was residing, the interviewer got to speak only with the father of the family, which is what happened in around a third of the cases, and that lead to men being over-represented among the interviewees.

III. PROFILES

The main findings led to the profile described in the following charts, where one may see that the amount of men is almost twice the number of women.

Graph 1: Distribution per Sex and Age

Graph 2: Distribution per Sex

Graph 3: Time in Trinidad and Tobago

95 per cent of respondents indicated that the local authorities had never asked them for any money unless it was because of an official fee or charge. Over 90 per cent considered Trinidad and Tobago a safe place. At the same time, one third of respondents expressed fear of the authorities due to their migratory status.

The migratory status of most cases interviewed was Irregular, and over 80 per cent were making efforts to become asylum-seekers in Trinidad and Tobago.
6.63 per cent of the women were pregnant when they were interviewed, and a third of the pregnant women were single with an average of 2.4 dependents.

46 per cent of the interviewed individuals had obtained professional degrees and, considering only those without any professional degree, 87 per cent of them had completed their secondary education.

IV. WORK STATUS

When comparing "BEFORE" - the work status in Venezuela before migrating, and "AFTER" - the work status in Trinidad and Tobago, the following chart shows that most students stopped studying, some employees became unemployed and most independent workers remained as such.

Although more than 90 per cent of the individuals assessed did mention that they were working in the informal sector, close to a third did not specify the actual work sector they were working in, before or
after migrating. So, among the other two thirds, only the most relevant sectors were considered for the following chart.

**Graph 8: Work Sector Comparison**

![Chart showing work sector comparison before and after migrating.]

In terms of salaries, 27 per cent of surveyed individuals were earning at least one Trinidad and Tobago's mandated minimum wage, either rated hourly or monthly, while 47 per cent said that they were underpaid, with a salary lower than the minimum, and 26 per cent refused to answer.

20 per cent said that they had received a job offer in Trinidad and Tobago, most of those offers were received upon arrival. A quarter of the offers included a debt, meaning that the contractor was going to cover expenses that were going to be repaid by the hired Venezuelan. In regards of the sectors, 55 per cent of the offers were evenly distributed among over a dozen sectors, while 10 per cent were in commerce and 35 per cent in construction.

14 per cent complained about the way they were treated in their jobs. A clear majority of 92 per cent of the complaints were based on verbal aggressions received because of the migratory status.

While outside their jobs, the migratory status had been a bigger problem, because 53 per cent of them complained about being discriminated due to their nationality, in 8 per cent of the cases affirming to have suffered physical violence.

Although most of them said that they have never had to work or perform any activity against their will, 23 per cent of them did state that they were either not paid or not paid entirely for a job done, more than half of these incidents took place in the construction sector, and around a quarter in commerce.

V. DEPENDENTS

**Graph 9: Dependents' Location**

![Chart showing dependents' location.]

2 per cent of the interviewed had dependents only in Trinidad and Tobago, while 88 per cent of the interviewees claimed that they had on average more than four dependents that at that moment were living in Venezuela. For those traveling with dependents, meaning, close to 30 per cent of the interviewed, an average of only little bit more than two dependents per interviewed was registered.

Not much less than 80 per cent were sending or had sent resources to Venezuela. 95 per cent of the cases directly sending money, but over 20 per cent had also sent food, and 18 per cent medicine.

**Graph 10: Means to send resources**

![Chart showing means to send resources.]

25% through acquaintances, 37% informal transfers, 12% formal transfers, 6% others.
Family Groups

As previously stated, approximately one third of respondents did not migrate alone and, above 90 per cent of their companions were family. Of this, 90 per cent of the family was born in Venezuela, and 3 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago. Only a small difference in the amount per sex.

Graph 11: Sex Distribution of the Family Members

Graph 12: Ages per Sex of the Family Members

But, other than highlighting that more than half of the family members were minors (less than 18 years old), it is necessary to mention that 2.65 per cent of the women inside the family groups were pregnant. Notable, in 20 per cent of the pregnancy cases, the women were minors.

In regards of their education, considering only those who were no longer within school ages, the level of completed education increases with age.

Graph 13: Education Level of Family Members by Age Range

Over 90% had a non-regular legal status, 1.24 per cent had student visas, and, over 6 per cent were residents, half due to their parent’s nationality.

VI. ROUTES

The following map presents the percentage of interviewed Venezuelan citizens per state they were born, after showing that 13 per cent were born in Distrito Capital and 6 per cent in Cojedes, it shows that, counting the 8 per cent that came from Sucre, 57 per cent of them came from the eastern states of Venezuela.

Map 2: State of Origin Distribution
40 per cent of respondents did share details about the routes they took. More than 95 per cent of the travels made internally in Venezuela were made by land, and 55 per cent declared that they used passenger boats to travel out of Venezuela.

For those using boats, approximately 80 per cent started the Boat Trip in Tucupita, through the river and then the sea, while close to a 20 per cent started in Güiria. Both cases with the same destination, meaning, both main fluvial routes had their final destinations at the most southern coasts of Trinidad.

Map 3: Routes

Graph 14: Transportation Type by Age of Respondent

Based on the responses that did specify a cost range, 85 per cent of the times, the cost of the trip was above 100 US Dollars, and in 5 per cent of the cases above 500. These percentages did not vary much between those who traveled by boat and those who traveled by airplane. Almost 60 per cent said that they were not advising their routes to others, and only around 17 per cent had made the trip more than once.

Graph 15: Trip Cost

73 per cent of the interviewed individuals entered Trinidad and Tobago through an official point of access and claimed to have sealed their passports. For the remaining 27 per cent, most of them did not use a passport nor used an official point to enter the country.

87 per cent of assessed persons did not complain about any difficulties encountered during the trip. The difficulties most mentioned by the remaining 13 per cent are listed below.

Graph 16: Main Difficulties in Trip

Moreover, 39 per cent of the respondents were unsure of how long they will stay in Trinidad and Tobago, even though they indicated they did not
intended to stay indefinitely, those respondents had no plans of leaving the islands either. 44 per cent of the responses received did mention that they planned to stay for good. 11 per cent said that they were going to stay between 6 and 12 months, and a six per cent said that they were going to stay for less than 6 months.

Among the final destinations mentioned by those who did have plans of leaving Trinidad and Tobago, the following graph shows the destinations that were mentioned.

VII. NEEDS

While assessing the living situation of Venezuelans in Trinidad and Tobago, 91 per cent of them were living in rented accommodations, where over 40 per cent of those with dependents in Trinidad and Tobago were renting only a room, including a room in a hotel or Boarding Houses' rooms. Over 70 per cent of them said that they did not have privacy at their accommodations.

Graph 19: Top Needed Assistances for each Priority Level

47 per cent of assessed individuals indicated that they had not tried to access health services because they
had not had the need thus far. So, considering only the responses from those who had tried to access health services, 35 per cent assured that they did not have access and described the issues they have faced as seen in the following chart.

**Graph 20: Main Issues when seeking for Health Services**

- Don’t know where to go: 32%
- Fear: 19%
- Attendance was denied: 13%
- Mistreatment (Health Staff): 8%
- Cost of attention or moving: 8%
- Not having health Insurance: 7%
- Language: 6%
- Look for private assistance: 5%
- Distance to health center: 3%

**Graph 21: Children’s Access to School per Time in the Country**

Amongst the respondents with school aged children, more than 75 per cent of the children that had been in Trinidad and Tobago for more than a year still didn’t have access to formal education.

When asking if the children were properly following their vaccination schedule, for a third of the children with less than five years the answer was no.

**Graph 22: Was the Vaccination Schedule Being Followed?**

80 per cent expressed that they did not have any chronic medical condition, 20 per cent mentioned suffering from chronic conditions like: back pain, allergies, asthma, visual deficiencies and gastrointestinal diseases. In addition, more than 20 per cent declared that they were eating less than three times a day.

92 per cent said that they had not received any institutional support.

93 per cent did have safe access to water, electricity and sanitarian services. All comments gathered from the remaining 7 per cent were related to having water for everything except drinking, to have drinking water they had to buy it separately.

**VIII. SUMMARY**

Based on the data gathered from this study, it can be suggested that Trinidad and Tobago was not just a Transit Country for the Venezuelan flows. Approximately 83 per cent of Venezuelans interviewed had intended to stay within the country.
indefinitely. Of the remaining 17 per cent, the majority planned on returning to Venezuela.

Over 80 per cent were less than 40 years old. Two thirds of the interviewed were men and 35 per cent married.

46 per cent surveyed persons had obtained at least a technical certification, and most of the others had completed secondary education. Assessed individuals were mostly traveling with their family, where again over 80 per cent of the companions were less than 40 years old, and when they were older than 25 years old, over 40 per cent of the companions were at least technicians as well. Also, the significant number of more than four dependents back in the country of origin was mentioned.

Construction was the most mentioned source of employment, over two thirds, while Commerce took the secondary position with a fifth. A half with a salary lower than the minimum in the country. The legal status was Irregular in most cases, and over 80 per cent were making efforts to become asylum seekers in Trinidad and Tobago.

Passenger boats were the main transport means for a flow where 70 per cent of the people were not having privacy at their accommodations by the time of the interview. 80 per cent of the cases school-aged children did not have access to formal education, and in more than 50 per cent of the cases had complaints about being discriminated.

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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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