



2022

U-Report On The Move **Uniendo Voces**

Connecting refugee and migrant adolescents and young adults

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ANNUAL REPORT

U-REPORT
UNIENDO VOCES

2022

INTRODUCTION

U-Report On the Move for the **R4V (UV)** is a Latin American regional and interagency strategic tool that supports the delivery of outcomes of the Regional Inter-agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V). It primarily targets **young Venezuelan refugees and migrants** and seeks to:



Ensure refugees and migrants, including unaccompanied children and adolescents, access relevant, reliable, and accurate information and means of **two-way communication**.



Include **feedback** and complaints mechanisms as part of the Interagency Response.



Amplify the voices of refugees and migrants, empowering them to help orientate the response and influence decision-makers, including host governments.



To provide **real-time monitoring** and evaluation of program interventions from an end-user perspective.



Engage with communities for behavior change and measure the impact.

SUMMARY AND CONTEXT OF THE INITIATIVE



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Venezuela's ongoing political, human rights, and socio-economic developments have led to over **5.4 million Venezuelans** outflowing into neighboring countries and beyond. The exodus of Venezuelan nationals is already the largest in the modern history of **Latin America and the Caribbean** and involves both refugees and migrants from Venezuela.

Based on conservative government figures, it is estimated that the number of Venezuelans in countries across Latin America rose from 700,000 in 2015 to over **4.6 million in November 2020**. Nevertheless, the total number of Venezuelans in the region is likely higher, as most data sources do not account for Venezuelans without regular status.

The countries receiving the most significant number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela are Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, and Peru. The **COVID-19 pandemic** also introduced new hardships for already

vulnerable populations. Prolonged but necessary confinement measures and restrictions on mobility have affected the ability of refugees and migrants to maintain their livelihoods and access essential goods and services, as many refugees and migrants from Venezuela have suffered a loss of income.

At the same time, they have not been systematically included in the social safety nets established for local populations. Moreover, changes in the mechanisms of access to social and humanitarian protection measures and the COVID-19 vaccination have deepened the limitations in access, calling for the strengthening of advocacy for their inclusion in state programs and improved communication about these services and how to access them. Their plight has led some refugees and migrants to consider returning to Venezuela, often through irregular channels, raising additional protection and health concerns.

U-REPORT ON THE MOVE – UNIENDO VOCES

In 2019, a Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform was set up under United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) leadership to work at the regional level on **coordinating responses** to refugees and migrants from Venezuela. There are over **40 platform partners**, all involved in different aspects of the response to complement these efforts and the interventions of national and local government authorities.

Under the coordination leadership of UNHCR and IOM, country-level in Brazil, Colombia,

Ecuador, Peru, and other impacted countries, the regional coordination platforms have been set up. Platform developed a detailed regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP). In line with identified response priorities, the Regional Platform is structured around several technical thematic areas, including a dedicated AAP/ Communication with Communities (CwC) group. In 2021, the workplan of these group included nine overarching activities, and the implementation of U-Report was directly reflected in this work plan.

U-REPORT ON THE MOVE – UNIENDO VOCES FOR THE R4V (UV) WAS INITIALLY SET UP IN THREE INITIAL COUNTRIES:

BRAZIL, BOLIVIA, ECUADOR, AND HAS EXPANDED TO MEXICO IN 2022.



1
Brazil
uniendovoces-br.ureport.in

2
Bolivia
uniendovoces-bol.ureport.in

3
Ecuador
huniendovoces-ec.ureport.in

4
Mexico
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/UREPORT
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ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2022

The Journey of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Latin Americas and UNICEF's U-Report Role

MEXICO

In 2022, Mexico launched its version of the Uniendo Voces platform, aimed at connecting and engaging Venezuelan refugees and migrants. What has been successful following four key surveys (Polls), including: 1) Education access in Mexico, 2) Refugee applications, 3) How to speak with someone about Mental Health, and 4) Managing Emotions.

A 4th poll on 'managing emotions' was launched in November in which U-Report Mexico seeks to inform migrants and refugees about the six primary emotions and how to cope with them based on their situation. It was in response to a government-led survey which found that children on the move feel guilty about leaving home and would like to talk more about their emotional state.

The poll focuses on "the survivor's guilt," "resilience skills," and "uncertainty." It aims to inform children that moving away from their country and families was not their fault. By December 2022, the poll reached out to 411 answers. The U-Reporters who navigate into it get 45% of the total flow—indicating their preference for separated small flows instead of large ones. Social media also boosted the campaign, reaching 1,500 people with 3,037 interactions.

The U-Reporters are provided with hotlines linked to the refugee platform within HIAS to find a safe space to talk about their emotions. Moreover, the Mexico platform

positioned itself on the Northern and Southern border of Mexico as UNICEF's reliable communication tool. The platform collaborated with HIAS to provide psychosocial care and follow-up on cases of gender-based violence, based on a ticketing system and an established alliance with more than 32 specialized institutions.



Additionally, Mexico created a flowchart on the refugee and asylum application process in Mexico, which COMAR, the governmental institution for refugees in Mexico, approved. The flow can be expanded to serve the region where young people from Central America can access information before arriving in Mexico. Mexico also conducted a socio-artistic event where more than 18 murals were painted by young migrants from the community, with the QR code directing them to U-Report OTM.

BOLIVIA

The UNICEF Bolivia Country Office has engaged Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees from 2019-2022 through U-Report Uniendo Voces. The platform engaged the population over four key polls on topics of interest for adolescents and young migrants. These included 1) Direct emergency assistance, 2) Protection, 3) Socio-economic and cultural integration, 4) Capacity building.

The Introductory poll conducted in January 2022 found that Facebook and WhatsApp are the preferred means of communication among migrants (50%). Others preferred Television, YouTube, Google, and others. The poll also identified football as the hobby most preferred by young migrants.

The second poll identified Venezuelan adolescents and young people's expectations regarding education in Bolivia. The survey results indicated that 24% currently access some service either in person or online, 46% have not accessed any educational service for one to four years, 47% want to continue their studies, and 18% don't want to continue with their studies.

Regarding the problems faced in accessing education, 47% perceive that the problem is money, 19% that the problem is lack of time, 4% that the problem is discrimination, 4% that there are not enough places to study, and 6% do not know or did not want to answer the question. A total of 123 people participated in the survey, 67% female and 33% male between the ages of 15 and 19 years.

Other scheduled surveys that were in the process of being developed by the end of 2022 are 1) Perceptions that Venezuelan migrants have in terms of immigration legal services and refuge in Bolivia. 2) Perceptions of Venezuelan adolescents and young people about work and the economy in Bolivia. 3) Perception of situations of violence in family and school environments.

Based on the results obtained from the polls in Bolivia, a study was carried out to know the perceptions and behaviors of the host communities of the municipalities of La Paz (Ciudadela Ferroviaria, Chasquipampa, and Bella Vista), Desaguadero, El Alto, Oruro, and Pisiga, towards people in a situation of human mobility who are in these spaces, both as a stayer or in transit to other countries.

The research emphasizes perceptions and behaviors regarding Venezuelan migrant boys, girls, and adolescents. Based on the information obtained in the study, it can be concluded that there are people with empathy and the desire to welcome Venezuelan migrants who coexist. Although they have specific fears and concerns, for example, many people state that they understand the circumstances that force them to migrate and empathize with the migrant, especially minors.

However, a large group, especially from border communities (Desaguadero and Pisiga), do not hesitate to express their rejection and affirm that they expect stricter border policies to be applied. The study also identified that within the host communities in Bolivia, young people, neighbors, and merchants are the most affordable actors to integrate with Venezuelan migrants. These outcomes have influenced the creation of a strategy for social and behavioral change against xenophobia and discrimination, designed to be implemented in 2023.

For Andrés and every child, education right



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Andrés arrived in Bolivia two years ago with his mother and sister. The economic difficulties over their situation as migrants and the lack of job opportunities have added to the impossibility of the boy attending school.

Due to misapplied regulations in the educational units, the family was requested to present legalized school notes with an apostille from the chancellery – almost impossible to fulfill – as a requirement for Andrés to attend school.

Only after six months of auditing the classes could his mother formally enroll him in the school. This story was shared in one of the integration and registration activities promoted by U-Report Uniendo Voces, highlighting the problem faced by many migrant children and adolescents in accessing their right to education. UNICEF

and other partners are promoting a ministerial resolution that determines a protocol so that there are no obstacles of this type in the enrollment of this population in school through a table for risk and emergency management in education at the national level.

It is expected that throughout 2023, the resolution will be shared with the directors of all schools with instructions for immediate application.

Andrés' story raised awareness among the education authorities from UNICEF. Thanks to this, Diego, a Venezuelan teenager who arrived in Bolivia after, went from a listening student to a regular enrollee. Now, he is part of the football team of his course and participates in all the educational and recreational activities, becoming more and more integrated with his Bolivian classmates.

ECUADOR

The UNICEF Ecuador Country Office has been engaging Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees since 2019 through U-Report Uniendo Voces. In 2022, the platform engaged the population through four key polls below:

Transforming Education Poll: In articulation with the Ministry of Education, the survey was developed to ensure that adolescents and youth have a safe space to express their opinions regarding the changes they consider pertinent in the formal education system. Launched in June, the poll received more than 30,000 responses that highlighted that 61% of respondents believe that schools address issues that are of interest to young people, 20% think that the most important skill for their future is languages, 60% believe that curricula should change after the pandemic, and 34% find that educational tasks and activities should be built in a flexible way with students

Youth Law: This survey was developed in partnership with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES), U-Report Ecuador and U-Report on the Move. This raised the voices of more than 13,000 adolescents and young people, including 1,138 participants on the move. This made it possible to provide input and contribute to building a more inclusive and culturally relevant policy. The results of the U-Report on the Move survey show that 47% of them consider that the current youth law does not protect them against discrimination, 58% think that the law is not inclusive, 83% stated that they have never been part of a government program that promotes human rights.

Express Yourself with Pride: Diversity Action Plan. This survey was carried out with the Secretariat of Human Rights (Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion) from the human rights axes. Through this survey, 34,680 people raised their voices for the participatory construction of the first work plan of the Ecuadorian State to ensure the integration of LGBTIQ+ population, defining actions that promote more inclusive and safe communities. Through social networks, the campaign reached 646,002 people and 97,450 interactions.



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Audiovisual Production Workshops at U-Report Uniendo Voces: Ten young Ecuadorians and Venezuelans who are part of Uniendo Voces and Fudela participated on these workshops. The young people received training in documentary photography, video production and writing to create their own stories. Adolescents and youth, between 13 and 20 years old, worked on stop motion stories, portrait style photography, as well as video reports to express their opinion on different topics such as the right to communication, inclusion, among others. The workshops had a face-to-face approach with virtual reinforcements and weekly photographic challenges, which allowed them to generate many audiovisual products.

U-Reporters from Uniendo Voces at the NDC Workshop: Eight members of U-Report Ecuador and Uniendo Voces were part of the 40 young activists who received a workshop regarding climate change policies in Ecuador in September of 2022. During the workshop they learned about climate change from UNICEF Ecuador's WASH and CEED Officer as well as masterclasses from the Ministry of Water, Environment and Ecological Transition of Ecuador. The 40 young activists worked in groups to state what they want to include in Ecuador's next NDC (National Determined Contributions).

BRAZIL

In 2022, almost 4,000 Venezuelan refugees and migrants have accessed tailored information on access to rights and services in Brazil through Uniendo Voces, including on documentation, education, health and work. Moreover, the initiative celebrated last year the mark of 5,000 refugees and migrants registered in the platform.

Brazil conducted three surveys to find out the opinion and situation of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, particularly youth:

Food Security and Habits in Brazil (June 2022). With 234 responses, the survey indicated that 74% of those surveyed say they buy less food than on previous year, with over half pointing inflating food costs as the main cause.

Learning to Earning – Right to be heard (September 2022). The survey, which had 120 responses, found that 89% of refugee and migrant youth expressed difficulty in getting a job in Brazil.

Access to University and college entrance exam (November 2022). The survey had 73 responses. The results indicated that 87% of the refugees and migrants who responded wished to study at some college or university institute in Brazil, but almost 7 in every 10 did not know the ENEM, the national college entrance exam.

The results were received by the Education Sector of the R4V platform as a warning of the need to narrow the gap between migrant youth and host community.

All the surveys have generated reports shared with national and local governments, as well as with the R4V platform (UN agencies and civil society), besides U-Report Uniendo Voces channels, including the [website](#). Two (02) new surveys are currently in the approval phase on the topics: Access to mental health; and the Perspectives of Venezuelan young refugees and migrants.

In 2022, Uniendo Voces has started a volunteer group of 25 u-reporters in Roraima, the bordering state between the countries and the most affected by the Venezuelan migration outflow. Mobilizers live in shelters, informal settlements and migration affected indigenous communities, and will be responsible for disseminating information and engaging the community on Uniendo Voces activities and surveys.

Also in 2022, three new information centers were made available to refugees and migrants, once approved by the respective R4V national clusters: one on Protection, aiming to support Venezuelans on the correct referral on cases of violence while reinforcing rights of vulnerable groups and prevention guidelines.

The infocenter on Banking provides information on how to access banking services, including opening accounts, wires, loans, etc. Lastly, the information on HIV/AIDS addressed prevention, detection, and treatment services, as well as how to fight stigma and discrimination. An infocenter on the new regulations for the entry of Venezuelans into the US is currently in the approval phase.



"Being a mobilizer is about understanding people and the reality in which one lives"

Working for the good of the community is something that comes naturally to 22-year-old Yulianita Tovar. Her intense community activity in Venezuela, her native country, has been replicated in Brazil, where, since 2022, the young woman has been acting as a volunteer mobilizer of the U-Report Uniendo Voces.

"Being a mobilizer is about understanding people. It's about being empathetic to the reality in which each one lives. It is an activity that demands responsibility, because it has to do with being able to help other young Venezuelans like me. This experience allowed me to reflect on the importance of supporting ourselves, refugees and migrants"



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– says Yulianita who, in addition to bringing reliable information to the community, works so that the young people where she lives give their opinion on issues that concern them, through regular polls. The young woman lives in Jardim Floresta, a shelter for indigenous refugees and migrants who are part of the Venezuelan migration flow, in Boa Vista, Roraima, the Brazilian state on the border with Venezuela. The space is part of Operation Welcome, the humanitarian response of the Federal Government and partners.

Yulianita is of the Warao ethnicity, the second largest community in her native country. It is estimated that more than 5,000 Warao have migrated to Brazil since the beginning of the Venezuelan crisis.

The young mobilizer says that since she was a teenager she volunteered, participating in various projects and social organizations that assisted vulnerable communities. This work was fundamental during her adolescence and led her to later graduate as a community nurse, a few months before coming to Brazil.

History – Like many migrants, Yulianita started her journey searching for a better life. In December 2021, she left the city of Puerto Ordaz and arrived at her first stop after almost 24 hours of traveling by road, alone and without many resources: the border town of Pacaraima, on the Brazilian side. Her destination was the state capital, Boa Vista, where her sister awaited her.

On her first night in Brazil, she had the support of some relatives who welcomed her into their home. The next day, she was able to register at a shelter and stayed there for three days while he processed the paperwork to continue her trip. Finally, she could buy the ticket to Boa Vista with the documents in hand. "I was tired but thrilled to keep moving on and finding my sister," she said.

The young indigenous woman was born in the city of Tucupita, capital of the Delta Amacuro state in eastern Venezuela, where she lived most of her life with her parents and as the youngest of five siblings. For her, one of the hardest things about having migrated was having to separate from her loved ones: "I've never been so far from my family for so long in my life," says the young mobilizer.

While making her life in Brazil, Yulianita wishes to one day return to her land to reconnect with the people and places where she left so many roots and memories.

Above all, she keeps alive the hope for the future of young Venezuelans who have also had to move to another country. "I dream that every family can count on a stable job and their own home, where they can live with their loved ones and support themselves, being able to buy their children's medicines and take them to the doctor when needed," she says.

Ensuring that Venezuela's young people and adolescents know their rights and how to access services, as well as having their voices heard in their new country is how Yulianita expects to contribute as a mobilizer of the U-Report Uniendo Voces.



DREAM

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