4Mi in Latin America

The Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) collects information about mixed migration flows through a network of field monitors continuously conducting interviews with people on the move. 4Mi data provides indicative findings to inform policy and programming. For more information, see www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/

In Latin America, 4Mi is currently being implemented in six locations across two countries (Riohacha, Cúcuta, Barranquilla, Bogotá and Ipiales in Colombia; and Lima in Peru) on the southwestern route out of Venezuela, and interviews exclusively Venezuelans on the move, more specifically people who are in transit or who arrived at the location of interview less than 12 months earlier.

Figure 1: Interview locations

Mixed migration movements out of Venezuela

According to the most recent estimates, more than 4,700,000 Venezuelan nationals have left Venezuela.[1] The main destinations of this mixed migration movement are other countries in Latin America. There are three main migration routes out of the country. The Southwestern route, through or to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile is the most commonly used; and Colombia and Peru have the highest number of Venezuelan migrants and refu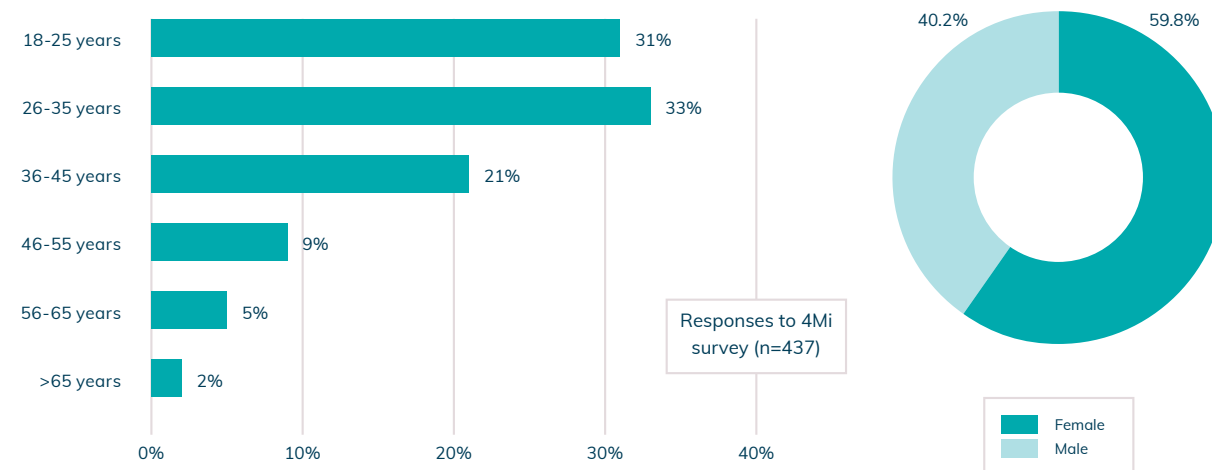gees on their territory (more than 1,630,000 in Colombia, and more than 860,000 in Peru[2]). The two other routes are the South-eastern to Brazil; and that to the North and East (to the Caribbean islands and Guyana).

Profiles of 4Mi respondents

The purpose of this snapshot is to provide some initial findings on the profiles of the people interviewed, the reasons why they left Venezuela, and the locations they identified as the most dangerous along their route. These findings will be built on as the project progresses and the sample size grows.

This snapshot is based on 437 interviews conducted between 9 November 2019 and 7 January 2020: 381 interviews conducted in Colombia and 56 in Peru. 60% of respondents were women and 40% were men. The average age among respondents was 33.4 years, 18 being the lowest age and 76 the highest.

Figure 2. Age range and sex

Responses to 4Mi survey (n=437)

- 18-25 years: 31%
- 26-35 years: 33%
- 36-45 years: 21%
- 46-55 years: 9%
- 56-65 years: 5%
- >65 years: 2%

Female 59.8%
Male 40.2%

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1   Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela. Data last updated on 5 December 2019.

2   *Idem.*

66% of respondents said they were single and 30% were married. The remaining 4% reported being either divorced or widowed. 86% of respondents reported that they had children, with an average of 2.7 children per person.

65% used to live in urban areas and 35% in rural areas. The ratio of respondents originating from rural areas is higher than the percentage of rural population reported for Venezuela, which was 12% as of 2018[3].
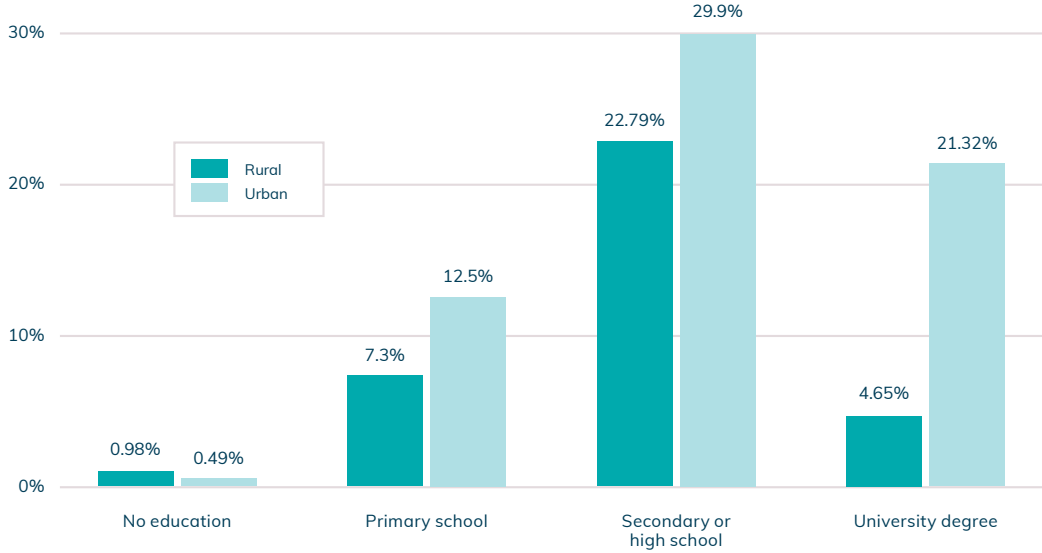
63% of respondents came from the following five states, out of the 23 federal states of the country: Zulia (32%), Carabobo (9%), Aragua (8%), Distrito Capital (8%) y Lara (6%). This generally reflects the distribution of the population in Venezuela, as the five states mentioned are among the six most populated in the country[4]. Nevertheless, it is also important to note potential sampling bias due to the location of our field monitors: two sampling locations are in departments of Colombia that are close to the border with Zulia. The regions of origin reported by respondents so far in Peru is much more diverse and without an apparent concentration in any particular state.

Education and occupation: 32% of respondents had a regular paid job before leaving

More than half of respondents reported have completed secondary school (53%), 26% reported having completed a university education, and 20% primary school.

There is a significant difference between the education level reported by respondents coming from rural areas and those from urban areas. Out of all respondents, Figure 3 shows that secondary school (30%) and university (21%) were more frequently reported in urban areas, while primary (7%) and secondary school (23%) were the more frequently reported categories among those from rural areas.

Figure 3. Education by area of origin

*Note: Mentions omitted: Other (27), Vocational training (1), Refused (1).
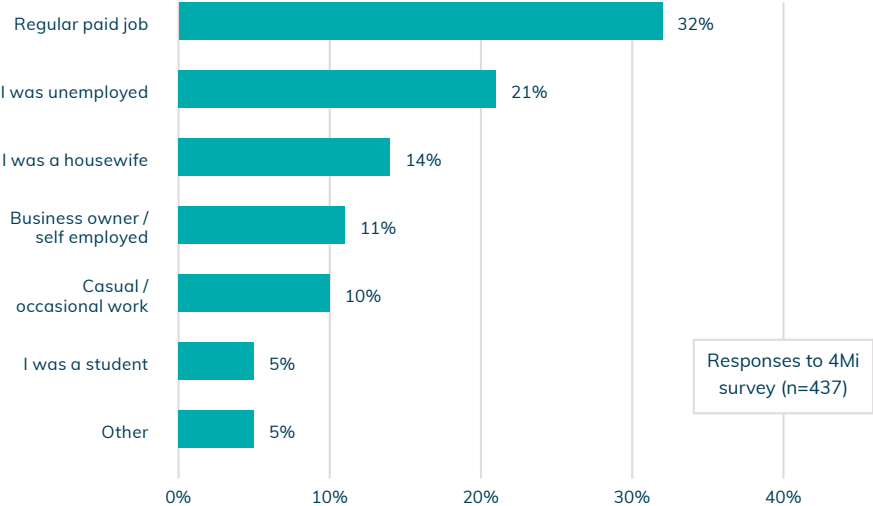**Note: Percentage calculated based on n=408.

Responses to 4Mi survey (n=408)*

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3   World Bank, _Rural population (% of total population): Venezuela, RB_.

4   Consejo Nacional Electoral, _Elecciones municipales 2018_ .

Most respondents (32%) had a regular paid job before leaving Venezuela. The second most commonly reported socio-economic situation was unemployment (21%), and 14% of respondents were housewives. 11% were business owners or self-employed, 10% had a casual or occasional job.
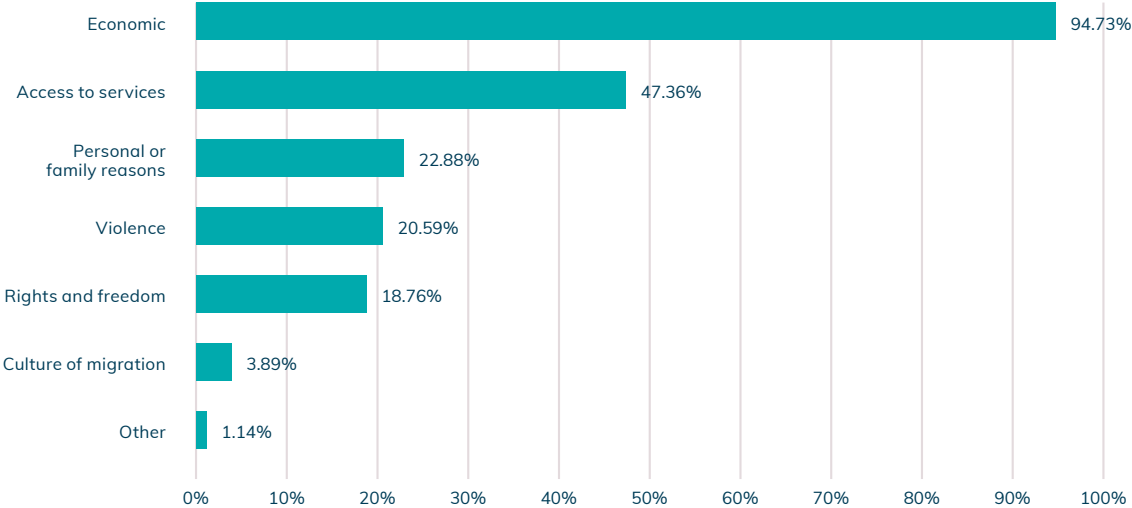
Figure 4. Occupation

Responses to 4Mi survey (n=437)

Main drivers are economic and lack of access to services

The majority of respondents stated multiple reasons for having left Venezuela, with an average of two main categories of drivers mentioned per person.

As Figure 5 shows, economic factors were most frequently mentioned (by 95% of respondents). The second most frequently cited category concerns difficulties accessing services, mentioned by almost half of respondents (47%). The third category corresponds to personal or family reasons (23%); while around one-fifth cited reasons related to violence (21%) and elements pertaining to rights and freedoms (19%).

Figure 5. Migration drivers

*Note: Respondents may select more than one answer to this question.

Responses to 4Mi survey (n=437)*

Most respondents mentioned more than one economic reason for leaving their country, including: not earning enough in the job they had (63%), being unemployed (41%) and having faced difficulties in making business (25%).

The drivers related to access to services included: insufficient access to basic goods and services (82%), the services most frequently mentioned being water, electricity and gas alongside food as basic good; lack of good healthcare services (72%); lack of good educational opportunities (41%); and corruption in government bodies (32%).

The personal or family-related reason most frequently cited for leaving Venezuela was uniting with relatives or friends abroad (66% of respondents). As regards the drivers relating to violence, the most commonly mentioned factors included general insecurity and crime (93%) and political unrest or riots (62%). Finally, among the drivers relating to rights and freedoms, lack of freedom or repressive government (73%) and discrimination of persecution (45%) stand out[5].
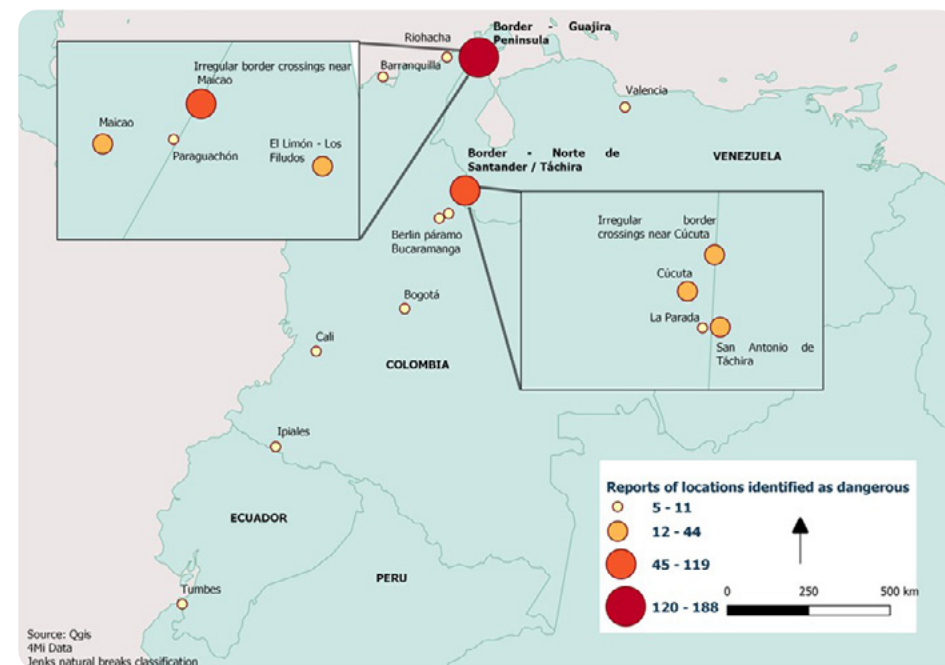
Dangerous locations along the migration route

The following data constitute an initial exploration of the protection risks faced by Venezuelans on the move along the migration route. This will be explored in more detail in a later snapshot.

78% of respondents reported having crossed at least one dangerous location[6] along their migration route. Respondents identified a total of 54 dangerous locations. As the map in Figure 6 shows, the locations most frequently identified as dangerous by respondents are located on or near the border between Venezuela and Colombia. The 10 locations that were most frequently labelled as dangerous were: irregular border crossings ("trochas") near Maicao, on the border between Colombia and Venezuela (27%); the city of Cúcuta, in the Colombian department of Santander North (10%); irregular border crossings near Cúcuta, also on the border between Colombia and Venezuela (8%); the municipality of Maicao in Colombia (8%); the El Limón area in Venezuela (5%); the city of San Antonio de Táchira in Venezuela (5%); the Berlin paramo, located in Colombian territory between the cities of Cúcuta and Bucaramanga (3%); the village of Paraguachón in Colombia (2%), at the border with Venezuela; the municipality of Los Filudos in Venezuela (2%); and the city of Cali in Colombia (2%).

Again, it must be noted that sampling locations are likely to influence these findings, and that as the distribution of data collection widens, and data is captured from people across a broader geographic area, we will expect the findings to change. There is also potential bias as respondents may not be able to identify the places that were dangerous.

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5   All percentages in this and the previous two paragraphs are calculated on the basis of the number of respondents who mentioned the specific main category of migration drivers, not the total of respondents to the survey.
6   "Dangerous locations" are intended as places where people on the move are exposed to the risks of being a victim of violence or other crime.

Figure 6. Locations identified as dangerous by respondents