

0800 -

VZLA

connecting
Venezuelan Refugees
and Migrants with their
host communities in
Latin America

Abstract

0800-VZLA

Integrating Venezuelans through connections

“I decided to become a migrant 3 years ago, when I realized that the best way to help my family was to become a “foreign”. I tried to put all my belongings in 2 bags, but while I was doing so, I understood that it was impossible to fit my whole life into such limited space. I was leaving everything behind, my family, my friends, my culture. I was changing my whole world for the unknown. I was starting over, alone...”.-Maura.

“I decided to migrate temporarily to learn from best practices from developed countries on how to develop human capacity in my own country. As a Venezuelan Production Engineer and Industrial Mathematician I was drawn to the attention of the few possibilities Venezuelan youth have to develop professional careers. Coming from a family of four sisters the four of us now live abroad. My oldest sister, who has top certifications on film making and graduated with honors in communications, when she migrated to Donosti, Spain the cultural and language barrier was such that it took her two years to find a few friends and a job. I want to help people in her situation to adapt quickly to their new reality.”.-Lucía.

“Venezuelan refugees leave an invaluable lesson of resilience and determination at a context of turmoil and crisis on a daily basis, and with or without a crisis, they have the right to dignified livelihoods. As migrant myself, I see my homeland in the solidarity of its diaspora, the perseverance of its most vulnerable communities, and the co-responsibility we all have to foster new scenarios for a global Venezuelan society that came from the nation that was once the ultimate host for development and humanity in the region”.- Cristina.

Our stories are not uncommon, as we share it with more than 5 million Venezuelans across the globe. As Venezuelans and migrants, we have witnessed first-hand how difficult it is to start over in a new country. The presence of a support system and the amount of information you know about your host country makes a difference on how you adapt to this new environment. 0800-VZLA (8952) is all about the integration of Venezuelans to society. By using the most common method of communication, a phone call (more than 70% of migrants have constant access to a phone) to a free toll number, migrants receive all the information they need to start their new life as well as a support system to help them cope with the psychological stress caused by migration.

Key Words

integration, connections, Venezuelan migrant and refugee crisis, humanitarian response, community, collective identities.

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Figure 1. Arianny Torres with her son Lucas, and daughter, Alesia has traveled 976km from Maracaibo [VE] to Bogotá [COL]. Photo by Gregg Segal for UNHCR, 2020.



VENEZUELAN REFUGEES & MIGRANTS IN THE REGION



4.3 M

APPROX. VENEZUELAN REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

5.2 M

TOTAL APPROX. VENEZUELAN REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN THE WORLD



Overview

The Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant Crisis

A Global issue with limited regional response

The Venezuelan Migration Crisis challenges all general assumptions on mass migration, continuously blurring the lines between asylum seekers and migrants for host countries and the international community. The separate definitions of a *refugee* and a *migrant* established by the 1951 Refugee Convention¹ fail to illustrate what Venezuelans currently leaving their country are, as they voluntarily leave their country to seek a better life, but that will is often fueled by a fear of persecution and survival outside of a context of turmoil, conflict, and the systematic violation of human rights (Van Praag, 2019).

More than 5,4 million people have been forced to flee from their homes in Venezuela, making it the second country of origin for displaced communities across international borders after Syria (ACNUR, 2020). This exodus increased exponentially in 2015, but it was only in 2018 when UNHCR officially referred to Venezuelan migrants as refugees, in accordance with the Cartagena Declaration of 1984 (CIPRLA,1984) given the evident deterioration of the political, economic, social and humanitarian situation in the country. (UNHCR, 2018).

Most of the Venezuela refugees have chosen South America as their main destination. Los Caminantes -the walkers-, as they are commonly identified, travel by foot mainly to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina (Figure 2). With an important concentration in developing countries, the high influx of Venezuelans has created not only a humanitarian crisis but also a development challenge that calls for a multilevel cooperation for it to be properly addressed. It is estimated that during the next couple of years, the number of Venezuelan leaving abroad will increase to up to 8.2million (OAS, 2019).

Even though it represents the biggest migratory problematic in Latin America, the Venezuelan refugee crisis receives a fraction of the attention and funding when compared to other migration crisis worldwide. The lack of support and proactive international response can be seen in the fact that it is still considered a regional problem, minimizing its urgency, and ultimately overseeing the global impact of the world's worst refugee crisis of 2020, and the most underfunded in modern history. (Acevedo, 2019).

Why do Venezuelans emigrate?

The conditions in Venezuela are not as different as those experienced in conflict areas with greater coverage by the media and support from the international community. From 2013 to 2019, the economy contracted by 45% making it the largest one outside of *war*² in 45 years (Bahar and Doherty, 2019). With a minimum wage of \$2.40 US dollars a month at a country in hyperinflation, 74% of Venezuelan households face extreme poverty and food insecurity (ENCOVI, 2020). In this context, Human Rights Watch has been urging the United Nations to call this crisis a complex humanitarian emergency (HRW, 2019).

Since 2017, almost one million Venezuelans left the country each year, mostly in the quest for economic opportunities and security. This translates into 1 in every 5 households in Venezuela with at least one member who has migrated in the last 4 years (ENCOVI, 2020). Since COVID-19 started and countries closed their borders, an estimate of 2,000 people per day have left the country using illegal and improvised roads. This irregularity coupled with the pandemic makes it harder for them to receive a regular status and help.

1. The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as "someone with a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a social group or political opinion" while the definition of migrant states that it is "someone who voluntarily leaves his or her country of origin in order to seek a better life and who does not face impediments to returning home."

2. The term "armed conflict" is used instead of, or in addition to, the term "war" with the former being more general in scope.

Figure 2. Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Latin America as for July 2020. Source: Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela [R4V].

Refugee Integration Process

Conflicts and challenges

The burden of an uncertain journey

“The facts for Venezuelan refugees and migrants are stark: over half don’t have enough to eat, 80 to 90% have lost their source of income, one in four children are separated from their families during the journey, and many women and girls face particular challenges, such as gender-based violence and lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services”

. - Michael Grant, Assistant Deputy Minister for the Americas at Global Affairs Canada.

With scarce resources and little to no knowledge about their destination country, migrants are exposed to countless challenges, as the hope and determination refugees bring to their host countries is often accompanied by the trauma of a journey filled with uncertainty. According to UNHCR, a great part of Venezuelans migrating to South America are families with children, pregnant women, elders and people with disabilities (UNHCR, 2021). Additionally, the pandemic and the limited border accessibility it brought, has increased the vulnerability of these demographic groups to be exposed to scenarios of violence, exploitation, insecurity, and the overall risks of taking irregular routes to reach safety.

What it means to be part of society

Refugees’ arrival to their host country is only the first of the many challenges they must overcome. Depending on the circumstances and context of their arrival, they must deal with a structural limitation; the irregular migratory status caused by the lack of legal documentation and the burden it holds on opportunities in the labor market and socio-economic development. This problem is enhanced by the limited access to information, inadequate professional skills and lack of educational credentials accepted in the host country. These circumstances often force Venezuelans to generate alternative opportunities for themselves, from taking jobs with no type of work security, to engaging in illegal practices that compromise the security they were seeking in the first place (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2017).

As more families arrive with few-to-no resources, they are in urgent need of shelter, protection, food, medicine, and documentation. The feasible and fair provision of all these basic needs makes integration an extremely complex process from many perspectives, generating important pressures on both the host country and its refugee communities. Never-

theless, a feasible, inclusive integration process is crucial for nations to address this crisis, as Venezuelan refugees and migrants are more likely to represent aggregate value to development once they become self-reliant, productive, and actively contributing citizens to national and regional development (Shamsuddin and Schwengber, 2021).

Lack of access to healthcare and education

“I work all day and did not have time. I am the only one in my house who works, and to get all the paperwork done, they say I need an entire day, and that means no money to eat”.

.- María, a Venezuelan migrant in Barranquilla, Colombia

The irregular migratory status that most Walkers (Figure 3) have when they arrive to their host country, do not give them the right to work and access basic services. The Sustainable Development Goals emphasizes on the need to target vulnerable populations and the job of governments to work on a more inclusive country, leaving no one behind³ (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). Two of these goals are good health and well-being and quality education. Migrants face discriminations and information asymmetry with both goals, making it hard for them to access these basic services.

Most Walkers live on a daily basis; with informal jobs or job insecurity, no insurance, and no legal documentation to access public services in their host country. They do not have savings, which means that they can’t afford to spend wages on healthcare. Sometimes they must battle between seeking healthcare assistance or eating that day.

Medical conditions represent loss in productivity which impacts food security and household stability. The lack of information on navigating the public healthcare system and its institution forces refugees and migrants to seek for private healthcare providers or what is worst; extra-legal care networks professionals with dangerous consequences that go from financial hazard to malpractices.

One of the most important ways to integrate young migrants into society is through education. The lack of a strong educational system in the host countries, the asymmetry of information in the Walkers when compared to the host population, the irregular legal status and the discrimination they



Figure 3. Footage of a group of Venezuelans caminantes -walkers- on their journey to Ecuador. Photo by Juan VITA / AFP.

encounter decrease the possibility of migrants to enter the educational system. Due to the pandemic and the poor living conditions that the Walkers face, currently 100% of Venezuelan children and adolescents are out of school and without a clear return date (UNESCO 2020). This situation decreases their adaptation process while it increases household violence and mental healthcare problems.

Coping with loss and a -global- health crisis

Venezuelan migrants are exposed to numerous psychological stressors starting with extreme hardship inside of Venezuela that forces them to flee. Once they leave the country, they experience loss, not only of their tangible resources but also their support system which is formed by family and friends. At the same time, they experience stress about the unknown.

50,2% of families were at risk of harm while they traveled or resorted to survival behaviors (including prostitution and sexual exploitation). Because of the before exposed most of the Venezuelan’s immigrants experience depression, generalized anxiety, and or PTSD. (Neuwahl, J. 2020) The Walkers are mostly poor and marginalized people who are often invisible to society.

Covid-19 has affected the whole world, but low-income populations have suffered the most. For irregular migrants, Covid-19 has created an avalanche of unfortunate situations that has plunged their living conditions. (Espinel Z, et al.2020). Consequently, it has created a mental health crisis. “Fear of infection, confinement and isolation measures, stigma, discrimination, loss of livelihoods and uncertainty about the future are all contributing factors”. (UNHCR. 2020)

The isolation measures taken to decrease the spread of COVID-19 has decreased the psychosocial support that refugees had before the pandemic, thus increasing the need to create new solutions to help immigrants cope with stress. (UNHCR 2020) Loneliness and the lack of support in the country they arrive to, increases the probability of suffering a mental health disease.

Thus, It is extremely important for migrants to find in the country of arrival a support system that helps them overcome the obstacles of being an outsider and provides them with the knowledge needed to adapt to a new life.

3. Those whose needs are reflected in the Agenda include all children, youth, persons with disabilities, with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants.



Home away from home

Opportunities from the Venezuelan diaspora across the globe

A resilient connection to the homeland

Even though the Venezuelan migration became a global crisis in the last few years, it is essential to highlight the early migration patterns and critical point of inflection in Venezuelan migration history in the context of Hugo Chávez's rise to power in the beginning of the 21st century. An estimated of three migration waves over the last two decades [Muñoz-Pogossian, 2018], with Venezuelans from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, have generated a Venezuelan international community of its own, and has become a key agent in the global response to the current refugee and migrant crisis.

In a combination of solidarity, co-responsibility, and empiric knowledge, helping incoming refugees and migrants has become for the historic Venezuelan diaspora both the norm and the ultimate way to stay connected to their homeland. Globalization has also fostered new opportunities for outreach, as pleas and funding opportunities in social media have supported thousands of Venezuelans in the quest for a better future, within and outside the physical boundaries of the country [CC, 2020].

The Venezuelan diaspora has also become an important catalyst of multilateral cooperation. Members from all over the world have become spokespeople for the humanitarian emergency, raised awareness within their communities, influenced policymakers and ultimately found the necessary means to guarantee the voices of vulnerable Venezuelan refugees and migrants are heard. According to experts at the World Economic Forum, tapping into diasporas convening power is a key part of response success. Consolidated Venezuelan communities at host countries are the ultimate agent to engage with migrant and refugee communities, as they share valuable insight around how to prioritize aid when their countries are in conflict [WEF, 2019].

"Global Shapers from Medellín, Colombia joined forces with a local NGO called "Fundación Solidaridad Sin Límites" in September 2018. They carried out a "Health Day", collecting medical supplies to bring aid to hundreds of Venezuelan refugees in their area. Continuing collaborative efforts between Global Shapers and the Venezuelan diaspora will help reunite, channel and amplify solidarity towards this vulnerable population, wherever it may be."

.- Alexandra Winkler Osorio, on *How the diaspora is helping Venezuela's Migration Crisis*.

Figure 4. Over 5.6 million Venezuelans have left their country, most of them for countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Photo by Ilaria Rapido Ragozzino for UNHCR.

Regional Refugee Response

South America and social services in numbers

+400k people	Ecuador Venezuelan migrants and refugees incorporated in the public Health System	10 years	Colombia Legalization of undocumented Venezuelans in Colombia, making them eligible to receive 10-year residency permits.
since 2019	Peru Only Venezuelans with Peruvian visas will be allowed entrance to the country	85%	Brazil of Venezuelans in Brazil have access to Bolsa Familia, the country's social welfare program.
+55k visas	Chile Social Responsibility visas were given to Venezuelans for access to work, education, and the country's social security system.	70%	Argentina of Venezuelans have access to salaries over the minimum wage.

Sources: World Bank Group, Reuters, Organization of American States, International Labour Organization and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

0800-VZLA

A call for local response

Integrating Venezuelans through local connections

We believe that creating an assistance center for the Walkers using a toll-free line can support their integration process in their host communities in a faster, more inclusive and less traumatic way.

Connecting the dots

Throughout history, toll-free numbers have been a valuable resource to connect people and services. While the internet has drastically transformed communications, toll-free numbers prevail as the easiest and most inclusive means of outreach, as access to mobile data and internet service can be compromised in refugees and migrants' early stages of arrival. Furthermore, UN studies found out that 71% of refugee households own at least a basic phone as means of communication while only 39% had internet access (UNHCR, 2016).

On Migration and Mental Health (Bhugra, 2004), Professor Dinesh Bhugra⁴ developed a contingency model (Figure 5) which hypothesizes risk (vulnerability) and protective factors (resilience) for psychological disorders based on the stages of migration. Based on his work and diagrams, the potential network of connections between the refugees-migrants, and the host community -composed by fellow Venezuelans and locals- places 0800-VZLA at the core of postmigration responses for refugees.

Considering the circumstances most Venezuelan refugees and migrants face during their journey and upon arrival, a toll-free based information center can enhance their quest for opportunities by fostering the following scenarios:

4. Professor of mental health and diversity at the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College London, honorary consultant psychiatrist at the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, and is former president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, UK.

- 1. I'm here, now what?:** connecting with people at organizations and institutions focused on immediate response related to food, medicine, and shelter.
- 2. Host country 101:** connecting with Venezuelans for guidance on local institutions, social security, legal, education and public health systems.
- 3. A helping hand:** connecting with both Venezuelans and host country nationals in the psychology and mental health sector for emotional support across temporalities (short-mid-long term).
- 4. Collective identity:** connecting with Venezuelans and locals in the cultural sector for further integration and cultural exchange.
- 5. Call-back:** connecting with the 0800-VZLA staff in the host country to contribute and support future migrants and refugees.

Migrants and Mental Health: a contingency model

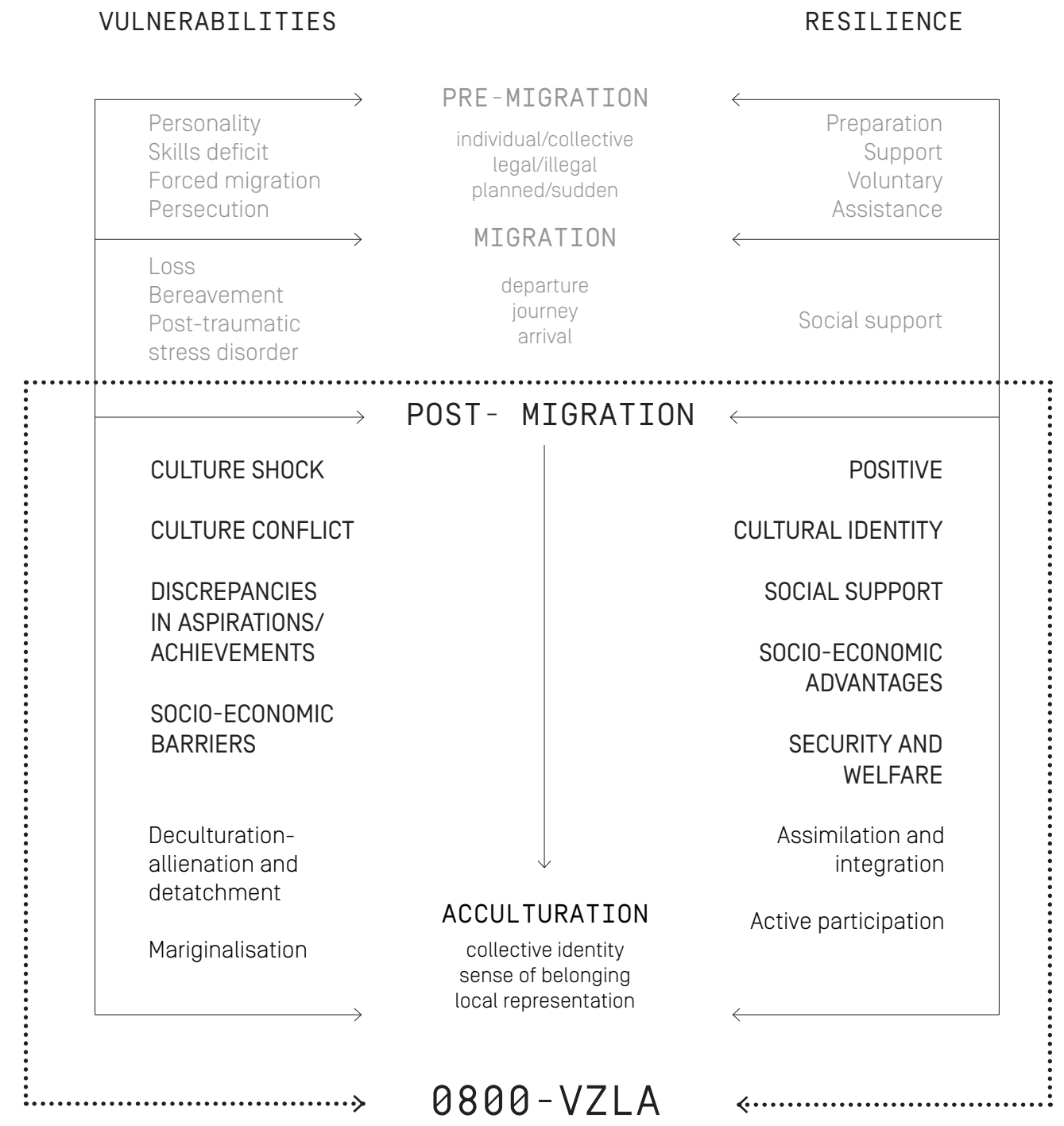


Figure 5. Representation by the authors on the scope of 0800-VZLA in Bhugra's contingency model. Source: Bhugra, 2004.

Call us up!

How to use the service

0800-VZLA main features

Offer a free service that informs migrants about key information upon arrival to a new country.

Support users with information on immigration and processes to legalize their status in the host country.

Inform users on shelter and, immediate forms of response at the early stages of arrival.

Introduce users to the Venezuelan diaspora communities in the host country.

Connect to an operator volunteer if the migrant needs personalized help or just wants to chat with a volunteer.

Enable psychological therapy and coaching upon requests.

Provide information about the host country traditions and local activities.

Identify custom employment and study opportunities for users with continuous engagement with the service.

Keep record of number and contact of migrants with their expressed consent.

Foster communications and cultural exchanges between immigrants and local communities.

Integrate volunteer capabilities and service providers from the Venezuelan diaspora, NGOs, and local civil society.



1. Call the number 0800-VZLA (8952)

- An automated system will identify the user's location.
- The system will ask 4 initial questions related to the user's demographic characteristics (Age, sex, legal status, and number of family members traveling with them)
- The system will ask the motive of the call⁵.
- To answer the questions, users must dial the number that corresponds to their answer, after hearing all the available options.
- Based on their answers the system will pair users with a volunteer for further assistance.

5. 1-immediate response related to food, medicine, and shelter.2-guidance on local institutions and services.3-emotional and mental health support. 4-integration and cultural exchange.5-sign-up as a volunteer.6-comments and feedback.

2. Talk to a Venezuelan or local volunteer

- The volunteer will ask preliminary questions to analyze the circumstances and timing of outreach, and evaluate security and health-related indicators from initial interactions towards an adequate response⁶.
- The volunteer will assist the user by providing all the pertinent information based on their needs including: organizations, phone numbers, directions, and assistance.
- Users are able to ask all the questions and inquiries they have on their selected options at the moment of the call. If they want to go over other inquiries apart from the previously selected, the volunteer can address those questions as well, and even redirect the user for specialized support if necessary.

6. In case the refugee is having any mental/physical health emergency or is exposed to a vulnerable situation while calling, the volunteer will help the caller to cope, as the supporting staff at 0800-VZLA Information Center reach out to local authorities/organizations for on-site support [if applies].

3. Share your thoughts and stay connected!

- After addressing all the user's inquiries, the volunteer will send the user back to the automated system for them to share some feedback on the provided assistance⁶.
- The automated system will ask for the user's willingness to share their full name and contact information (if applies) for future outreach.
- The system will also ask the user if they would like to be connected to the same volunteer/organization, to guarantee continuity and enhance potentions with refugees and migrants.

Figure 6. Graphic representation of the user experience and interactions with both the automated system and the volunteer in the context of a call from a migrant/refugee in Bogotá, Colombia, related to information on access to the local healthcare system. The information is presented in English for comprehension purposes, yet 0800-VZLA will have Spanish as its official language of operation.

Behind the phone

What -and who- it takes to connect us all

A diverse network of partners

Multilateral cooperation

The United Nation's High Commissioner Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Regional Platform of Interagency Coordination for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V) are continuously collecting data to better understand the specific needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in host countries. They support States by improving integration processes; coordinating assistance to meet Venezuelans' immediate basic needs including shelter; and addressing discrimination and xenophobia through awareness campaigns. (UNCHR, 2021).

Financial institutions

Acknowledging the potential replication of the service across regions, and the incorporation of additional features, financial institutions such as (but not limited to) the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank can play a key role in redefining the scope of response and accessibility to communication infrastructure in remote areas/for specific populations⁷.

Non-profit sector and civil society

Many organizations such as Venezuela sin Fronteras, CARE Venezuela have been alleviating different immigrants need. CARE is focused on addressing the basic needs of Venezuelan immigrants (health, WASH, food and nutrition and financial aid through cash transfers. (CARE, 2021)

-Venezuela sin Fronteras publishes inspiring Venezuela migrant stories and organizes gatherings around art, music, poetry, creativity, gastronomy, and the preservation of collective identities of the Venezuelan diaspora.

- iMMAP is in charge of tracking the movement in Latin America of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. They do so, by analyzing the behavior of facebook users. (iMMAP, 2021)

Private sector

Phone carriers such as Telefonica/Claro/Telcel are key partners in the provision of toll-free numbers services. Also enterprises and employers who hire Venezuelan migrants and support immigrant development in their host countries.

Venezuelan diaspora + Volunteers

Mostly through social media, volunteers and Venezuelan migrant communities from all over the region have enabled new means of communication that can strengthen connections with users with access to internet and mobile data services. For instance, currently in Colombia, Venezuelans are able to find and join over forty groups ranging from twenty thousand to a hundred sixty thousand participants.

Risks assesment and management

Trust issues and deportation

One of the biggest fears migrants face is the continuous risk of deportation and the lack of trust in organizations. To mitigate this problem, we will train our team of volunteers to provide accurate responses at the same time we will continuously evaluate our volunteers approach to the calls as well as the feedback received after every call.

Implementation and volunteer engagement

We will create a screening process to choose our volunteers based, afterwards, during the training we will develop engagement activities to increase their support to the program. Continuous training and activities such as volunteer gathering, emails with real life experiences

Privacy

All the information collected will be encrypted and stored in a secured program. If the caller does not want to share sensitive information such as their name and location, the volunteers will respect their decision, won't force them, and will support them in the means of their possibilities.

7. including but not limited to indigenous communities, foreign-speaking groups, visually impaired users, and people with disabilities.



Figure 7. Footage people are bypassing immigration controls as they exit Venezuela. Photo by Tomer Urwicz.

Sustainability and scope

The cost for providing the service, from the basic infrastructure to the employment of essential personnel will be covered through grants offered by multilateral organizations, financial institutions, and contributions from our partners. 0-800 VZLA will also be formed as a non-profit organization that attract financial support from civil society and the private sector through tax-deductible contributions.

We seek to enable a support system for migrants in their process of arrival and adaptation while connecting them with opportunities in the host country. At the same time, we want to allow already settled Venezuelan migrants to "pay it forward" by becoming volunteers in our network and/or making other forms of contribution to guarantee the continuous provision of the service. The Venezuelan diaspora has been praised by their "pay it forward" philosophy and their support to their peers. Due to the simplicity of the solution, the use of a toll-free number and the volunteers being from the same nationality as those being supported, this solution is scalable and replicable across regions, refugees and diaspora communities.

The road to connectivity

a Colombian case study



Enhancing accessibility

One of the biggest problems that migrants face is not the lack of people willing to help, but the lack of an accessible system that concentrates all the available information and tackles misinformation and asymmetry of information. As Colombia is the main destination for Venezuelan refugees and migrants, it will operate as our pilot host country.

Our regional coordination team will develop the idea of the free tool center to refugees and migrants, under the premise of creating a simple and accessible resource, understands the importance of adaptable and long-lasting solutions. Furthermore, the team will also acknowledge the mental hazards that migrating produces, and also organize and define the commissions managing the service at the host country.

Commissions on host countries oversees 0800-VZLA's operations on a national scale. The commission consists of a public relations teams will ensure and nurture alliances with local partners and Venezuela diaspora network as well as local authorities. The technology team, and the finance department will ensure the resources are in place to continue our operations, generating periodic reports on resource allocation and on-site progress.

Building up the network

Carry out an extensive search of all the organizations (multilateral, NGOs and private sector), local responses, and people who aid immigrants in Colombia. This process will take 2 months, in which the team will travel to Colombia to talk to experts, volunteers, organizations and other pertinent actors as well as they will determine if the conditions of such organizations are suitable for migrant assistance. A list of all organizations will be collected, organized, and uploaded to a private platform that will become accessible once the service is active in the country.

A preliminary selection of organizations and volunteers will be made by the local liaison and approved by the regional coordination team. Local coordinators will then interview the volunteers that will be answering the questions through our tool free line. The volunteers will be categorized based on their individual experiences as migrants and characteristics: sex, age, level of education and family members that traveled with them. This will us help to connect those that are calling with people with similarities to create a rapport between the person in need and the volunteer.

Design and capacitation

Purchase of free toll number contract in Colombia with the support of our partners. The initial payment will be made by the main team; future payments will be achieved through contributions and alliances. The number is 0800-VZLA [8952], a VZLA is the acronym for Venezuela. Then, we will proceed to design the structure of the automated system that will initially take the call and direct it to the most suitable volunteer.

All volunteers go through a 3-week duration training process, delivered by specialists in each area, and structured in 3 modules:

- a. Soft skills with an emphasis on communication (listening and clear communication) and empathy
- b. Psychological support: we will follow the WHO approach that consists of "screening for stressors and common mental disorders using validated instruments, applying a stepped-care model to route migrants with symptom elevations and evidence-based interventions"(Espinel, 2020)
- c. A review of the different aspects of migration and the organizations and actors that help Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the host country.

On every phonebooth and kiosk

Create a massive campaign to reach both the walkers and potential partners, in the second half of 2022. We will provide flyers to the different organizations that currently work in the border between Venezuela and Colombia with the free phone number and an explanation of the program. At the same time, we will use the mouth to mouth, online networks and social media, from whatsapp to Facebook and twitter.

As our solution acknowledges the resilience and versatility of conventional means of communication, we will also rely on traditional media such as radio and newspapers. This comprehensive campaign is the reflection of the diverse demographics groups we seek to engage on a solution that includes them all.

Continuous feedback

We will evaluate outreach by measuring the number of people that call the free toll number. At the same time, we will measure the number of follow up calls that they do from the same number, identifying predominant reasons for outreach and effective responses.

At the end of every call the walkers will be asked to answer if they thought that the call was useful and if they think they might call again. All the information generated throughout the assistance process can provide insightful lessons on the needs of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, as long as its use is done in compliance of the service's privacy policy.

Towards a regional response

Scale up to the rest of South America, starting with Peru, the 2nd country with the highest migration rate for Venezuelans in the region. We estimate this process will start a year after we launch in Colombia, but would be open to adapt and start building our network in Peru in advance, depending on the current state of our partnets and host communities in the context.

To do so we will keep the same number, 0800-VZLA [8952]. The reason for this is that the Walkers, tend to travel through different countries before settling, and by repeating the same number and using the acronym we ensure that they will remember it.

Additionally, since we understand the importance of strong relationships and the need for connectivity in our globalized society, in the future we plan to facilitate local and international free calls, and enhance accesibility through technology research and development in collaboration with our partners.

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connecting
Venezuelan Refugees
and Migrants with their
host communities in
Latin America