

Medellin (Colombia) | PROFILE 2022

MIGRATION

GOVERNANCE

INDICATORS

LOCAL



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Required citation: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2023. *Migration Governance Indicators Local Profile 2022 – Medellin (Colombia)*. IOM, Geneva.

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ISBN 978-92-9268-645-1 (PDF)

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## CONTENTS

OBJECTIVES // 6

**INTRODUCTION // 7**

**CONTEXT // 10**

**KEY FINDINGS // 16**

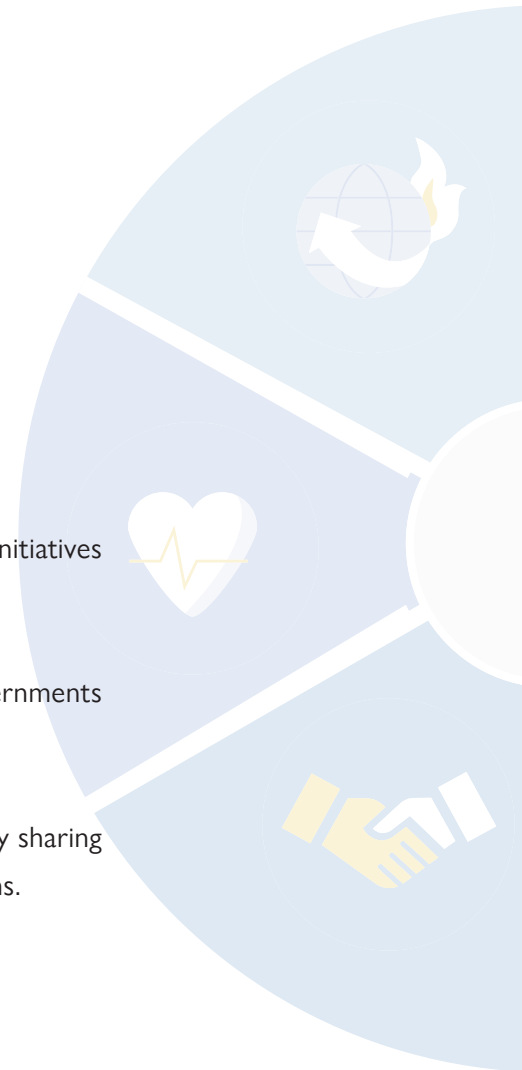
COVID-19 ANALYSIS // 34

**KEY SOURCES // 36**

**ANNEXES // 42**

## OBJECTIVES

- 1 Help local authorities take stock of the migration initiatives they have in place.
- 2 Foster dialogue on migration between national governments and local authorities.
- 3 Enable local authorities to learn from one another by sharing common challenges and identifying potential solutions.



“Rapid urbanization continues to transform the demographic landscape of many countries around the world. Cities are already home to the majority of international migrants, driven by opportunity as well as necessity, and local authorities are becoming leaders in finding creative solutions for rapid social change, supporting communities through innovation.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> António Vitorino, IOM Director General, [Report to the 109th Session of the IOM Council](#) (November 2018).

# INTRODUCTION

## The Migration Governance Indicators<sup>2</sup>

The need to maximize the opportunities and face the challenges that mobility brings has been recognized with the inclusion of migration in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and with the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.<sup>3</sup> The incorporation of target 10.7 into the 2030 Agenda created the need to define “planned and well-managed migration policies”. This is why, in 2015, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) developed the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF). This Framework offers a concise view of an ideal approach that allows a State to determine what it might need to govern migration well and in a way that suits its circumstances. That same year, IOM in collaboration with Economist Impact developed the Migration Governance Indicators (MGIs), a set of almost 100 indicators that help States assess the comprehensiveness of their migration governance structures.

The indicators constitute a starting point to engage governments in a consultative process that allows them to identify areas that are well-developed and others that would benefit from further development, and most importantly, priorities that are in line with the specific challenges and opportunities that a given country is facing.

The MGIs are characterized by three main fundamental attributes:

1. The MGI process is a **voluntary** exercise: The MGIs are conducted in countries that have requested to be part of the process.
2. The MGIs are **sensitive to national** specificities: The MGIs recognize the different challenges and opportunities of each context, and therefore, do not propose a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather aim to spark a discussion on what well-governed migration can mean.
3. The MGIs constitute a **process**: The MGI process is not a static tool to collect data on countries' migration frameworks. It is rather the first step of a dynamic exercise that can enable governments to identify areas of their migration policy in need of further development, or that could benefit from capacity-building.

## Migration Governance Indicators: From national to local

The role of cities and municipalities in migration governance<sup>4</sup> has grown significantly in recent decades, given the rapid pace of urbanization and the importance of cities as destinations for all forms of migration and displacement. Researchers, policymakers and international development agencies have all highlighted the crucial role of cities and municipalities in both accommodating migrants and formulating sustainable responses to migration-related matters.

The role of local governments, not only in the management of migration at the local level, but also in realizing the urban dimensions of the 2030 Agenda, has been recognized in the New Urban Agenda at the Habitat III Conference in Quito (Ecuador), the Global Compact for Migration, and the Call to Local Action, to mention a few.

<sup>2</sup> All terms used in the report are defined in the IOM *Glossary on Migration* (2019).

<sup>3</sup> “The *Global Compact* is the first inter-governmentally negotiated agreement, prepared under the auspices of the United Nations, covering all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. It is a non-binding document that respects States' sovereign right to determine who enters and stays in their territory and demonstrates commitment to international cooperation on migration. It presents a significant opportunity to improve the governance of migration, to address the challenges associated with today's migration, and to strengthen the contribution of migrants and migration to sustainable development.”

<sup>4</sup> “Migration governance” refers to the system of institutions, legal frameworks, mechanisms and practices aimed at regulating migration and protecting migrants. It is used almost synonymously with the term “migration management”, although the latter is also sometimes used to refer to the narrow act of regulating cross-border movement at the State level.



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To support the discussion between levels of governments on migration governance, IOM has adapted the MGIs<sup>5</sup> to the local level. The Local MGIs seek to offer a more comprehensive picture of a country's migration governance landscape by juxtaposing a local dimension to MGI national assessments. The [Local MGIs](#) are based on a set of about 80 indicators helping local authorities take stock of local migration strategies or initiatives in place and identify good practices as well as areas with potential for further development. The aim of the exercise is to foster dialogue on migration between national governments and local authorities and enable local authorities to learn from one another by discussing common challenges and identifying potential solutions.

While the Local MGIs retain the attributes of the National MGIs, they are also anchored in the notion that cities and local authorities have different capacities, competencies and added value when it comes to governing migration. Therefore, the methodology has been adapted to reflect the fact that the degree of fiscal and political autonomy of participating cities influences the kind of migration governance they can practically and legally engage in. Furthermore, new indicators of the level of autonomy and capacities have been added to give some context to the results of the assessment.

Given the differences outlined between the MGIs at the national and local levels, the purpose of the Local MGIs is to be a tool for government authorities to use in taking an introspective look at the measures they have in place to manage migration, as well as to share their experiences. Furthermore, the Local MGIs recognize that good practices can take different forms depending on the division of competencies between local and national authorities. Therefore, the Local MGI analysis should not be interpreted as an invitation to change the division of competencies, but rather be understood as a catalyst to open dialogues on what cities can do with regard to migration within the scope of their mandate. A comprehensive picture of migration governance can be captured only by looking at the different levels of government.

To supplement the national MGI assessment carried out in 2018,<sup>6</sup> three local MGI assessments were conducted simultaneously in 2018 in Colombia – in the municipalities of Villa del Rosario<sup>7</sup> and San José de Cúcuta<sup>8</sup> in the Department of Santander, and in the municipality of Barranquilla<sup>9</sup> in the Atlantic Department. An assessment was carried out in Bucaramanga,<sup>10</sup> the capital of the Department of Santander, in 2021, and in Medellín, Department of Antioquia, in 2022. The 2020 and 2021 assessments were conducted under the auspices of the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships within the framework of Inclusive Cities, Communities of Solidarity, an inter-agency initiative run by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and IOM.

This report is the outcome of the local MGI process conducted in Medellín. It summarizes key examples of well-developed migration governance structures as well as those with potential for further development. This exercise arises from the need of the municipality to think about migration management and generate public policies for migrants who are in Medellín. This and other information management processes supported by IOM at the local level allow for a more comprehensive view of governance, considered in terms of not only the population's demands and needs, but also municipal capacities.

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<sup>5</sup> The Migration Governance Indicators were developed in 2015 by IOM in collaboration with Economist Impact.

<sup>6</sup> See the [2018 Migration Governance Snapshot for the Republic of Colombia](#).

<sup>7</sup> See the [2021 Local Migration Governance Indicators Profile for Villa del Rosario \(North Santander\)](#).

<sup>8</sup> See the [2021 Local Migration Governance Indicators Profile for San José de Cúcuta \(North Santander\)](#).

<sup>9</sup> See the [2021 Local Migration Governance Indicators Profile for Barranquilla \(Atlantic\)](#).

<sup>10</sup> See the [2022 Local Migration Governance Indicators Profile for Bucaramanga \(Santander\)](#).



CONTEXT

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## Migration trends

Between 1973 and 2005, Colombia was a net deporter of migrants entering the country in search of job opportunities, for the purposes of family reunification, to improve their quality of life or to obtain access to higher education, among other reasons (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, 2013a). Moreover, in 2013 there were an estimated 4.7 million Colombians living abroad, chiefly in the United States of America (35%); Spain (23%); the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (20%); Ecuador (3%); Canada (2%); Panama, Mexico and Costa Rica (1% each); and the United Kingdom, Australia, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia (less than 1%) (ibid.).

Colombia has only recently become a country of destination. The past few years have seen an increase in the number of Venezuelan nationals migrating to the country with the intention to stay and of Colombians returning from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. According to a 2020 survey conducted by the Centre for Migration and Economic Stabilization (2021), among 1,061 Venezuelans in Barranquilla, Bogotá, Cali, Cúcuta and Medellín,<sup>11</sup> 63 per cent of those surveyed indicated that they preferred to remain in Colombia, 27 per cent said that they wished to return to their country, and 10 per cent expressed that they wished to travel to a third country.

According to the 2018 National Population and Housing Census published by the National Administrative Department of Statistics (2018), 48,258,494 people resided in Colombia that year; 6,407,102 were residents of the Department of Antioquia, and 2,427,129 lived in Medellín. The population of Medellín represents 38 per cent of the department's population and 5 per cent of the national population. In population terms, Medellín is the country's second-largest city and the department's largest city (Governor's Office of Antioquia, 2018).

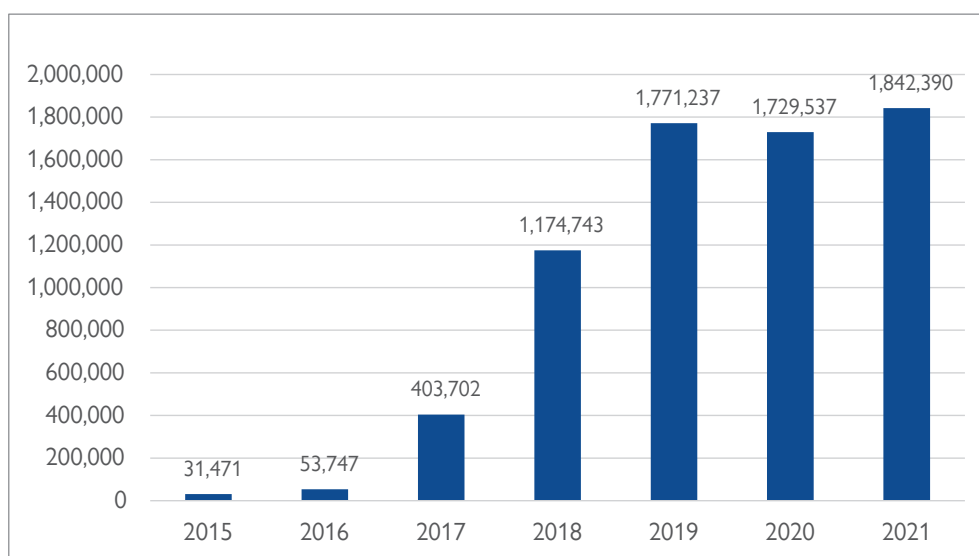
Regarding migratory flows from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as of 31 August 2021 there were 1,842,390 Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Colombia (see Figure 1). Of these, 18.7 per cent (344,688) were reported to be regular migrants, 64.2 per cent (1,182,059) were in the process of obtaining temporary protection status, and 17.1 per cent (315,643) were irregular migrants.<sup>12</sup> Of the total, 14.3 per cent (264,148) were in the Department of Antioquia, and 8.1 per cent (148,714) were in Medellín (Migración Colombia, 2021). In 2021, the Venezuelan migrant and refugee population represented 6.1 per cent (148,714) of the total population (2,427,129) of Medellín.

In terms of internal displacement caused by the armed conflict in Colombia, the Victim Assistance and Comprehensive Reparation Unit (2022) reports that 8,231,887 people were internally displaced between January 1985 and February 2022. This includes 139,117 displacements in Medellín.

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<sup>11</sup> These five cities are home to 38 per cent of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia.

<sup>12</sup> See Law No. 2136 of 2021 (Congress of the Republic of Colombia, 2021b).

**Figure 1.** Migrants of Venezuelan nationality in Colombia

Source: Migración Colombia, Distribución de venezolanos en Colombia (February 2022).

## Competencies of the local government of Medellín

### Level of decentralization of local authorities

Colombia's 1991 Constitution provides for a hybrid system between a unitary State and a State in which territorial entities have some autonomy. In administrative terms, Colombia is made up of the Nation, departments, municipalities and Indigenous territories. Under Article 319 of the Constitution, when two or more municipalities wish to do so, they may establish a metropolitan area without losing their independence or autonomy, for the purpose of carrying out common social development projects.<sup>13</sup> In addition, Law No. 1625 of 2013,<sup>14</sup> also known as the Metropolitan Areas Law, updated the system governing such entities, thus repealing Organic Law No. 128 of 1994.

The departments and municipalities benefit from partial delegations of authority in the following sectors: education, health, residential public services, drinking water and basic sanitation, culture, tourism, housing, social security, transport, environment, sports and recreation, disaster prevention and management, public order and land-use planning.

<sup>13</sup> The concept of metropolitan area first appeared in Colombia in 1968, in *Legislative Act No. 1*, which modified Article 198 of the 1886 Constitution.

<sup>14</sup> Pursuant to Article 8 of this Law, the constitution of metropolitan areas is a voluntary exercise in which the municipalities concerned designate a core municipality. The municipalities can be from the same or different departments. They must initiate the process before the Special Commission for Monitoring the Decentralization and Territorial Planning Process of the Senate of the Republic and the House of Representatives, which ascertain the reasons for which they wish to establish a metropolitan area. This is followed by a process of consultation in which the populations of the municipalities concerned vote on the proposal to create the metropolitan area.

## The competencies of Medellín's local authorities in relation to migration

Under Legislative Act No. 1 of 2021, the city of Medellín is a Special District for Science, Technology and Innovation. The aim is to turn the Jesús Nazareno, Chagualo, San Pedro and Sevilla neighbourhoods in the north of the city into an innovation ecosystem.<sup>15</sup> This does not, however, affect the continued discharge of the functions and powers invested in the Aburrá Valley Metropolitan Area.

Agreement No. 89 of 2018, for its part, sets out the standing orders of the Council of Medellín, which comprises the General Secretariat, the Governing Board, the President and two Vice Presidents, and three standing committees. The first committee is in charge of the Development Plan, the Land Management Plan and the Valuation Statute;<sup>16</sup> the second handles budget and fiscal matters; and the third is in charge of administrative tasks and social affairs.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the government department in charge of formulating migration policy and issuing authorizations to enter the country in the form of permits and visas. It also promotes, inter alia, the development of border areas, implementing projects having a social and economic impact, and the reinforcement of integration processes with neighbouring countries. The migration authority of the Republic of Colombia is the Migración Colombia Special Administrative Unit, which is in charge of monitoring and controlling migration, including in border municipalities.

In February 2018, the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia established the Border Management Office, which seeks to coordinate, hand in hand with Migración Colombia and other national and local entities, all government efforts for Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

In August 2021, the Congress of the Republic of Colombia promulgated Law No. 2136 of 2021, which establishes, inter alia, definitions, principles and guidelines for the regulation and orientation of the Integrated Migrant Policy of the State of Colombia. The relevant entities of the national Government must now carry out the corresponding regulatory process and define in greater detail the roles of the different entities, local governments and other stakeholders.

Multiple national entities have offices and specific plans aimed at managing migration within the limits of their remit. For example, the Ministry of Labour's Labour Migration Policy Management Group is in charge of formulating, implementing and evaluating policies aimed at refugees and migrants. The Colombian Institute for Family Welfare, for its part, drew up the Migrant Childhood Strategy in 2021, in an effort to better integrate the response to migrant children/adolescents and host communities by providing migration services that facilitate the journey, from emergency assistance to family stabilization.

<sup>15</sup> For more information, see *Distrito Especial de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación de Medellín*.

<sup>16</sup> More information on the first committee is available on the [website of the Council of Medellín](#).

Efforts have also been made to promote the joint work of national entities such as the Special Migration Group, in which Migración Colombia, the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare, the National Police, and the National Tax and Customs Directorate work together, with a view to exercising control over the proper use of migration instruments, recovering public spaces occupied by refugees/migrants and Colombian returnees living on the streets, controlling smuggling, and protecting minors who have been abandoned or separated from their parents.

With respect to migration responsibilities, subnational entities address issues such as health, education and home services (sectors in which they are empowered to act independently), both in operational and financial terms. They act under the permanent leadership of the national Government, represented by those in charge for each sector; at the national level, of public policy and guaranteeing access to services. Regularization, for its part, is the direct responsibility of the national Government, which up to now has not formally delegated authority for migration matters to departmental or municipal governments.

In March 2021, the national Government issued Decree No. 216 establishing temporary protection status for Venezuelan migrants under the temporary protection system. Venezuelan migrants benefiting from that status can regularize their migration situation and engage in legal activities or occupations for 10 years in the country. This mechanism, which applies to migrants who were in Colombia on 31 January 2021, promotes regularization and facilitates protection of the rights of Venezuelan migrants. The Decree does not confer tacit or explicit powers on local authorities, which nevertheless work with Migración Colombia to promote awareness and disseminate information on the different phases of implementation of temporary protection status.

An institutional diagnosis by the Mayor's Office of Medellín (2021a) led to a clearer picture of the migratory phenomenon in the city and the specific needs of Venezuelan migrants, with a view to formulating policy guidelines and thus addressing the phenomenon in the district. In addition, the Medellín Future Development Plan 2020–2023 (2020) included the migrant population in the Territorial Partnerships for the Management of International Migration programme, highlighting that the Administration's actions are aimed at ensuring that the migrants and vulnerable people living in Medellín have access to processes for social, economic and cultural integration, in coordination with public and inter-institutional cooperation entities, in areas such as health, education, housing and labour.

### Local financing mechanisms and the restrictions on their use

The resources needed to give assistance to refugees and migrants are provided jointly by the municipal and departmental governments and the national Government. Support has also been received from international cooperation agencies, the United Nations system and civil society organizations, among others.

Municipalities must finance activities in areas in which they enjoy autonomy, such as health, education or home services, with their own resources, but they can, as required, request financial support from the national Government.

### Local participation in the formulation of migration policy

With the arrival of new political cabinets in the departmental and municipal governments in January 2020, migration-related issues were included in municipal development plans to improve the management capacity of territorial entities in this matter. The Department of National Planning provided elected mayors, at the beginning of their administrations, with a territorial planning kit that includes guidelines for migration management.

There is no indication that local administrations participated in the preparation of Law No. 2136 on migration policy or of the National Council for Economic and Social Policy's Strategy for the Management of Migration from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (Document No. 3950), which was adopted in 2018. They nevertheless took part in the process indirectly, implementing first-responder assistance programmes and participating in the Unified Command Posts and/or in the Migration Management Boards. These units for coordination between the nation and the territories, launched in 2015, were established to coordinate the response to the emergency arising from the migratory phenomenon that began that year. The Migration Management Boards, which are headed by the Border Management Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Directorate for Border Development and Integration, operate particularly in departments with large populations of Venezuelan migrants/refugees and Colombian returnees. In both cases, national, departmental and local authorities, and occasionally international cooperation agencies, participate as guests.

The Boards, which bring together the three levels of government (national, departmental and municipal) and representatives of international cooperation at the local level, are supported by the Attorney General's Office. Their purpose is to coordinate and articulate the response on issues such as education, health, childhood, housing, drinking water, basic sanitation, security and coexistence. The Migration Management Board in Medellín and Antioquia, in which the Mayor's Office of Medellín participates, also links public entities and international cooperation agencies that serve the migrant and refugee population in the territory.

The Territorial Partnerships for the Management of International Migration programme being carried out as part of the Medellín Future Development Plan 2020–2023 aims to “contribute to the comprehensive management and social, economic and cultural integration of the migrant population, returnees and host population in order to contribute to the stabilization of migration in the city of Medellín”. The programme's implementation is the responsibility of the Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights. Likewise, the Mayor's Office of Medellín coordinates with Migración Colombia and with the Ministries of Education and Health and Social Protection to guarantee that services are extended to the migrant population in the territory.

At the time of writing, the Mayor's Office was drawing up a public policy on migration issues (one of the goals of the aforementioned Development Plan). IOM supports this initiative, signing an agreement of understanding and through two information management processes: the Displacement Tracking Matrix and the Migration Governance Indicators.



## KEY FINDINGS



The Local MGIs are composed of approximately 80 indicators grouped under the six different dimensions of migration governance that draw upon the MiGOF categories:<sup>17</sup>



MIGRANTS' RIGHTS  
PAGE 18

Indicators in this category look at the extent to which migrants have access to certain social services such as health, education and social security. They also examine measures to ensure integration and access to work.



WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT  
APPROACH  
PAGE 22

Indicators in this category assess the institutional frameworks of cities, municipalities or states for migration. This area also examines the existence of migration strategies consistent with development objectives, as well as institutional transparency and coherence in migration management.



PARTNERSHIPS  
PAGE 25

Indicators in this category focus on cities', municipalities' or states' efforts to cooperate on migration issues with the national government as well as other cities and relevant non-governmental actors, including civil society organizations and the private sector.



WELL-BEING  
OF MIGRANTS  
PAGE 27

Indicators in this category assess cities', municipalities' or states' initiatives in terms of international student mobility, access to the labour market and decent working conditions for migrant workers. Aspects related to diaspora engagement and migrant remittances are also included in this domain.



MOBILITY DIMENSION  
OF CRISES  
PAGE 29

Indicators in this category examine the type and level of readiness of cities, municipalities or states to deal with aspects of mobility crises. The questions focus on the processes in place for citizens and non-citizens in relation to disasters and climate change, especially whether humanitarian assistance is available for migrants and citizens.



SAFE, ORDERLY AND  
REGULAR MIGRATION  
PAGE 32

Indicators in this category look at the cities', municipalities' or states' approaches to migrant safety as well as return and reintegration policies and the fight against trafficking in persons.

<sup>17</sup> IOM Council, Migration Governance Framework, 106th Session, C/106/40 (4 November 2015).



## ADHERE TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND FULFIL MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

### 1.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

Under the terms of Colombia's 1991 Constitution, health care is a fundamental right and, therefore, an essential public service to be provided by the State. Basic health care must be guaranteed to all those living on the territory of Colombia, without discrimination based on origin, regardless of their migration status and without the need to present any document (although any document they do have must be presented). Thus, the local administration, in the discharge of its duty to ensure this right, has advocated that the migrant population be able to access the emergency services of health-care institutions.<sup>18</sup>

In line with this, health care for the migrant population was included in the Medellín Future Development Plan 2020–2023 (2020), in view of the deficiencies or tensions in Medellín in terms of safeguarding this population and including their realities and contexts in the care provided. Through the Territorial Partnerships for the Management of International Migration programme, the Development Plan promotes this population's access to health care in accordance with current national and territorial statutes. Thus, the Department of Health and the local entities dispensing services have provided consultations, hospital treatment, medicines, medical procedures, and newborn and emergency care for the entire population, including migrants.<sup>19</sup>

Pursuant to Colombia's Constitution, children and adolescents have a fundamental right to education, which is an essential public service provided by the State. Education is to be provided free of charge in State institutions, without prejudice to those who can afford to defray the costs. The document of the National Council for Economic and Social Policy (2018) recalls that, according to circulars from the Ministry of National Education, Venezuelan children and adolescents who do not have regular migration status can enrol in educational institutions. The document also establishes lines of action to improve access to education for this group. Joint Circular No. 16 (2018) of the Ministry of National Education and the Migración Colombia Special Administrative Unit indicates that if students from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela do not have a valid identification document in Colombia, they must register with a number provided by the Medellín Department of Education.

In line with national legislation, the Mayor's Office of Medellín issued Circular Nos. 60000005 (2018) and 60000030 (2019) establishing that "the right to education must always be guaranteed", even in the presence of possible administrative barriers.<sup>20</sup> The Mayor's Office therefore collects data on school enrolment figures among the migrant population and carries out activities for children and adolescents with special abilities, such as providing computers to 190 students (including migrants) to continue their studies.

Since 2006, the Medellín Department of Education's *Buen Comienzo* (Good Start) programme has provided initial education to and promoted the development of boys and girls, including migrant children, during the first five years of life.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, within the framework of the Department's *Entorno Escolar Protector*

<sup>18</sup> According to the June 2022 figures in the Unique Member Database, 73,069 Venezuelan migrants in Medellín were affiliated – that is, approximately 49 per cent of the district's total migrant population, which is estimated at 148,714 (August 2021 data from Migración Colombia). Of the total affiliated migrants, 55 per cent paid contributions, and 45 per cent were subsidized. The fact that more members contributed than were subsidized is a good indication of the migrants' labour status (i.e. their ability to pay when engaged in formal work or self-employed).

<sup>19</sup> In 2020, 73 per cent of the health care dispensed to people of Venezuelan nationality was provided by a network of public providers, 26 per cent by private providers and 1 per cent by institutions of a mixed legal nature (see: Mayor's Office of Medellín, 2021a). According to a report prepared by Universidad del Rosario and Fundación Konrad Adenauer (2020), in June 2020, 36,368 migrants were receiving health care. Those who were denied care could appeal to the Ombudsman's Office of Medellín.

<sup>20</sup> According to data compiled by the Medellín Department of Education, in June 2022 education was guaranteed for 34,024 migrants, of which 32,692 were of Venezuelan origin; 31,050 attended official institutions, 1,304 went to institutions with coverage and 1,670 chose private institutions. Of the total, 17,309 were female and 16,715 were male. According to the Refugee and Migrant Response Plan 2021 (GIFMM, 2021a), 75 per cent of school enrolment was concentrated in nine of the country's departments, including Antioquia, for a total of 58,459 enrolments in the first semester of 2021.

<sup>21</sup> According to the data contained in a report prepared by Universidad del Rosario and Fundación Konrad Adenauer (2020), this programme assisted 5,039 Venezuelan minors in 2020, approximately 16 per cent of all beneficiary children.

(Protective School Environment) programme, educational establishments are advised on how to strengthen school management, coexistence and mediation, student leadership, and the enjoyment of human rights, among other topics.<sup>22</sup>

In terms of entrepreneurship, and through the Software Valley Centres (previously called Zonal Business Development Centres), the Medellín Department of Economic Development facilitates access to occupational instruction and training for migrants. This includes training in soft skills and the use of technological tools, and instruction in financial, administrative, legal and marketing aspects. Since its launch in 2005, the Software Valley Centres programme has sought to foster the creation, development and consolidation of microenterprises and entrepreneurs in Medellín.

Mechanisms exist to facilitate foreigners' access to city services. Through the Territorial Partnerships for the Management of International Migration programme, the Medellín Future Development Plan 2020–2023 promotes comprehensive management of the migrant population and social, economic, and cultural integration. In 2020, the Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights opened a hotline, 123 Social – Migrants Module (available round the clock), to serve as the entry point for district services, consider migrant needs and refer them to the services available in the district.<sup>23</sup>

Since 2020, the Special Group for Ethnic and Migrant Affairs of the Medellín Ombudsman's Office has been providing migrant rights monitoring, assistance, protection and defence services.<sup>24</sup> In addition, the Department of Territorial Management and Control engages in prevention, surveillance and intervention activities. Through its *Construye Bien* (Build Well) programme, the Undersecretariat for Urban Control coordinates with other entities, holds community meetings, and provides assistance with a view to preventing disasters, avoiding illegal construction and reducing encroachment; it works with the entire resident population. The Department of Economic Development, for its part, makes its training in entrepreneurship available to the migrant population.

Medellín's Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights and the Early Alert System for Children, Youth and Families both have procedures to ensure the protection of migrant children, unaccompanied minors and children who have fallen behind. The System receives reports about children and adolescents whose rights risk being violated so that the Department can take action. To that end, the Subcommittee on Refugee and Migrant Children, under the leadership of the Children's Unit in the Mayor's Office, has designed a road map for assistance for unaccompanied Venezuelan refugee and migrant children.<sup>25</sup> Unaccompanied minors are referred by assistance teams to the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare, which assumes custody until the protocols to restore the minors' rights are implemented. In 2020, the Institute, which is a national entity for the prevention and comprehensive protection of early childhood, childhood and adolescence, issued the brochure entitled *Orientaciones para la atención integral de niños, niñas y adolescentes migrantes* (Guidelines for the Comprehensive Attention to Migrant Children and Youth), which describes the entities of the Family Welfare System, such as municipalities and districts and the Institute's Zonal Centres.

In 2021 and 2022, the Subcommittee on Refugee and Migrant Children, which was established in 2020, developed a workplan with various stakeholders that sets the following objectives: to serve as a venue for the coordination of the stakeholders and offices in charge of the comprehensive protection of migrant and refugee children and their families; to develop a coordinated inter-institutional operational response for migrant and refugee children in Medellín, with the support of the authorities and national and international platforms; to ensure that migrant and refugee children and their families have equitable access to available

<sup>22</sup> The programme assisted 382 migrants in 2021 and 497 in 2022. More information is available on the [website of the Medellín Department of Education](#).

<sup>23</sup> Between January and June 2022, 123 Social responded to 11,268 migrant users, 99 per cent of whom were from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

<sup>24</sup> Between 2020 and the date of obtaining the information (July 2022), the Group served 1,468 migrants, both at its headquarters and in the field, offering awareness-raising services regarding routes and access to rights.

<sup>25</sup> Assistance was provided to 1,258 migrants in 2021 and to 729 migrants in 2022.

humanitarian services and resources; and to consolidate the Subcommittee as a venue for the active and effective participation of all those serving this group.

At the national level, in order to prevent statelessness, the Congress of the Republic of Colombia established, through Law No. 1997 (2019), a special and exceptional regime enabling the sons and daughters of Venezuelan regular or irregular migrants and asylum-seekers to acquire Colombian nationality at birth.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, the national Government approved a temporary measure (National Civil Status Registry Resolution No. 8470 of 2019), stipulating the validity of the Civil Birth Registry to prove nationality in cases in which the person does not meet the residency requirements. In 2021, the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare published the Migrant Childhood Strategy, to further mainstream the response to migrant children and host communities.

Lastly, the Interagency Group for Mixed Migration Flows<sup>27</sup> in Medellín is the co-lead, together with the Children's Unit of the Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights, of the Subcommittee on Refugee and Migrant Children, which involves joint action by international cooperation agencies, the national Government and local authorities for the protection of the rights of refugee and migrant children and adolescents of all nationalities. The Subcommittee's 2021 workplan called for the following: (a) the organization of two fairs bringing together institutional and international cooperation services in response to the specific needs of migrant and refugee children; (b) the development of a directory listing the services offered by the Subcommittee's members for migrant and refugee children and adolescents; and (c) the organization of training spaces for professionals assisting refugee and migrant children, together with the Department of Education, the Department of Health, Migración Colombia, the Women's Department and the Registrar's Office.

In March 2021, the national Government issued Decree No. 216 establishing temporary protection status for Venezuelan migrants as part of the temporary protection system, which consists of the National Registry for Venezuelan Migrants and the Temporary Protection Permit. Venezuelan migrants benefiting from temporary protection status can regularize their migration situation and exercise any activity or legal occupation in the country for 10 years.<sup>28</sup> This mechanism benefits migrants who were in Colombia on 31 January 2021, facilitates regularization and makes it easier for the Colombian authorities to protect the rights of migrants.<sup>29</sup>

## 1.2. Areas with potential for further development

Although municipal policies for housing subsidies include the migrant population, there is no specific budget line at the local level for this group. Medellín's Municipal Housing Subsidy, which was introduced in 2013, is administered by the Social Institute for Housing and Habitat. To obtain a subsidy, households must show that their revenues are equal to or less than two minimum wages<sup>30</sup> and that the head of the household has been a resident of Medellín for a period of no less than six consecutive years. If a migrant household meets these requirements, it can benefit from the Municipal Housing Subsidy. However, this programme is not explicitly designed for migrants, who have not benefited from such subsidies as they generally do not meet the requirements in terms of time, occupancy and documents.

<sup>26</sup> The measure is applicable to those born on Colombian territory between January 2015 and January 2021.

<sup>27</sup> The Interagency Group for Mixed Migration Flows was established in late 2016 and is co-led by IOM and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>28</sup> More information is available in this [article on the website of the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia](#).

<sup>29</sup> As of 19 August 2022, a total of 2,450,794 people were registered with the National Registry for Venezuelan Migrants. In Medellín, 71,369 Special Resident Permits had been issued by October 2021, and 95,312 Temporary Protection Permits had been issued by May 2022. For more information, see: Migración Colombia, n.d.

<sup>30</sup> Pursuant to the requirements set out in Article 15.2 of Decree No. 1053 of 2020.

Various units run by the Mayor's Office provide services for migrants. For example, the Disability Unit provides economic support and psychosocial assistance to migrants with a disability. The economic support consists of a subsidy for education, empowerment and rehabilitation processes. Persons receiving the subsidy must prove that they meet certain requirements, including having a bank account, which can constitute a barrier for migrants.

The services that various departments, such as the Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights and the Women's Department, provide to migrants have been adapted. However, further adaptation in the form of a range of services corresponding to the needs and potential of migrants is an area of improvement.

At the time of writing, the preparation of strategies to combat hate crimes, violence, xenophobia and discrimination against refugees and migrants constitutes an area with potential for further development. The Mayor's Office of Medellin has implemented no policy in this regard, nor has it implemented an information and awareness campaign to combat discrimination and xenophobia. Although the Mayor's Office has taken steps to enhance knowledge about the migration context, training officials and promoting acceptance of diversity under an inclusive education strategy, its strategies are not transversal. In 2018 and 2019, the Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights carried out a campaign, *Valoramos nuestras diferencias porque enriquecen nuestra cultura* ("We value our differences as they enrich our culture"), to promote inclusion of the migrant population and ethnic groups, and thereby prevent discrimination and xenophobia.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> More information is available in this article from [El Tiempo](#).



## 2

## FORMULATE POLICY USING EVIDENCE AND WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH

## 2.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

The Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights has two undersecretariats – for Human Rights and for Population Groups (specifically, the Special Social Programmes Unit) – that are in charge of designing and implementing policies for population sectors in Medellín, including the migrant population. The Department's functions include coordinating the design, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of policies and projects that promote equal rights and limit discriminatory practices.

At the time of writing, the Inter-institutional Migration Board for the Management of Mixed Migration Flows of the Medellín Special District for Science, Technology and Innovation is in the process of being set up. Decree No. 0417 (2022) sets out actions to promote and protect rights and make them available, and to generate opportunities for migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees and the host community. It proposes that these actions be coordinated with other national and territorial entities, international cooperation agencies, community-based organizations, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations, among others (Article 1).

Municipal officials from the Aburrá Valley Metropolitan Area receive training in cultural sensitivity and migration issues. The Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights has a training strategy for consultants and public officials, framed within the Territorial Partnerships for the Management of International Migration programme, on basic aspects of international migration.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, in 2020 and 2021 the University of Antioquia, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Subdirector for Security, Coexistence and Peace of the Aburrá Valley Metropolitan Area, carried out four training and two certificate courses on mixed migration and refugee protection for public officials of the Metropolitan Area who are in charge of managing the refugee and migrant population in need of international protection in the Area's 10 administrations.<sup>33</sup> The certificate courses included training in the context of human mobility in Colombia and the legal framework for protection in mixed migration contexts.

The Mayor's Office of Medellín provides information on migrants' rights, obligations and access to public services. In person, the information is provided mainly in Spanish. Staff operating the 123 Social hotline assist foreigners in English or French. The information available via official media, such as the website of the Mayor's Office or the Medellín Joven website,<sup>34</sup> is in Spanish.

The Integrated Family Centres provide information in Spanish on employment, education, nutrition, health, housing, the law, family dynamics and banking. The Centres work hand in hand with their partners to manage and coordinate opportunities and make them available in response to the needs and situations of families, in order to promote inclusion and social equity, strengthen ties, and improve living conditions. The Centres are open to all residents of Medellín, regardless of age, social status, gender or place of birth.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> The strategy reports that 575 persons received training between 2020 and 2021.

<sup>33</sup> In 2020, 31 participants in the certificate courses belonged to a public or private entity in Medellín; and in 2021, 13 people from the district took part in the training courses.

<sup>34</sup> The [Medellín Joven](#) website provides information on study grants, job opportunities and possibilities in terms of entertainment, health, rehabilitation, sports and recreation, and entrepreneurship.

<sup>35</sup> In 2022, 3,619 migrant users were informed about the opportunities available, and 428 were provided with psychosocial assistance.

Along the same lines, the Medellín Centro Intégrate, which was established in coordination with the United States Agency for International Development, UNHCR, IOM and the Border Management Office of the Presidency of the Republic, helps with procedures, services, orientation and referrals, providing migrants with support in terms of regularization processes, access to the Identification System (for potential beneficiaries of social programmes), health care, education, psychosocial and legal guidance, employability and entrepreneurship, and guidance for women and the LGBTI population.<sup>36</sup>

The Medellín Ombudsman's Office, for its part, has developed a road map for access to rights for vulnerable population groups and people, which it uses to provide legal support so that people can access public services.

## 2.2. Areas with potential for further development

At the time of writing, the final steps are being taken to formulate a local migration policy. Under the Medellín Future Development Plan 2020–2023 (2020), it falls to the Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights to develop the city's migration policy. The Mayor's Office, in agreement with the National University of Colombia (Medellín Campus), therefore carried out a diagnostic and description process (to provide the essential elements and inputs for the development of the Public Policy for Migration Management) involving consultation with communities and invitations to attend workshops.<sup>37</sup> The workshops were led by the Department, and participants included leaders of social, academic, cooperation and grass-roots organizations.

Despite the formal participation of civil society and the migrant population in the aforementioned diagnosis, there is no formal advisory body at the local level that intervenes at this initial stage or in the implementation of public policies. The only regular consultative groups identified by the local government represent segments of the population, such as ethnic groups, the LGBTI community and age cohorts (such as youth associations).

The collection of migration-related data at the local level is an area with potential for further development. The Medellín Future Development Plan 2020–2023 established the Social Technology programme, the aim of which is to “[i]mplement a social intelligence system to define, guide, manage, refer and monitor people and population groups, especially those affected by social, natural and/or human-caused emergencies”. The migrant population is one of the groups indicated. The programme also proposes a unique social intelligence system enabling the Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights to channel migration issues, in order to “promote access to information, facilitate the capture and analysis of data, integrate information, modernize processes, manage knowledge and guide decision-making based on big data analysis, with a view to the social transformation required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”.

In 2019, the Mayor's Office of Medellín began to compile information on migrants from the records of the various agencies involved<sup>38</sup> and through socioeconomic description processes. The Department of Health Insurance Unit conducted a virtual census to identify migrants of Venezuelan origin holding a valid Special Resident Permit and residing in the city. In 2021, it developed a management and affiliation data reporting

<sup>36</sup> See: Palomares, 2022.

<sup>37</sup> A total of 45 workshops were held for the migrant, returnee and host populations in various parts and sectors of the city, and 5 focus group workshops and 8 in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with people with theoretical knowledge and experience of mixed migratory flows.

<sup>38</sup> The Department of Education uses the Student Enrollment System for Primary and Secondary Education (*Sistema de Matrícula Estudiantil de Educación Básica y Media*, SIMAT) information registry, which categorizes migrants by educational institution, municipality, gender, age group, type of institution, and whether they are conflict victims or have a disability. The Department of Health uses the Information System for Reports on Foreigners. The Women's Department uses the Single Benefits System to record information on the migrant population served within the framework of its projects; since 2018, it has incorporated the variable “nationality”. The Department of Economic Development does not have a special registry of information for the migrant population, and instead it records the information that the person provides when enrolling in one of its specific programmes (for example, nationality). The Department of Territorial Management and Control, in the Build Well component, establishes a separate category for nationality.

mechanism on its website, to capture information and support for the regular migrant population, to proceed with their affiliation.<sup>39</sup>

At the national level, migration-related data and information are compiled and published by the Migración Colombia Special Administrative Unit and the National Administrative Department of Statistics. The plan is to have the local integration centre for migrants collect information from people seen in the different sectors of the local administration.

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<sup>39</sup> Between 2020 and 2021, the Department of Health entered 1,049 records identified as pertaining to Venezuelan migrants with Special Resident Permits, the intention being to affiliate them to the subsidized health-care system.



## 3

## ENGAGE WITH PARTNERS TO ADDRESS MIGRATION AND RELATED ISSUES

## 3.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

As part of the process to develop the Public Policy for Migration Management, in 2021 and 2022 the Mayor's Office of Medellín identified the academic sector as a key participant in the first phase of institutional preparation. In 2021, the National University of Colombia launched the initial institutional diagnosis, which will be used to identify the approach of departments of the Mayor's Office and international cooperation organizations to the issue.

In parallel, the University of Antioquia provides the migrant population with legal counselling.<sup>40</sup> Most of the consultations focus on legal assistance for obtaining regular migration status or nationality, to access fundamental rights. The University also helps people at risk of statelessness.<sup>41</sup> It has four main workstreams: legal assistance, training (diplomas and courses), strategic litigation and advocacy action, and research. In 2022, it launched a study on the risk of statelessness in the Aburrá Valley Metropolitan Area.<sup>42</sup>

Medellin is part of two international networks for the exchange of knowledge about migration. It is a member of the Euro-Latin American Alliance for Cooperation between Cities (*Alianza Eurolatinoamericana de Cooperación entre Ciudades, AL-LAs*),<sup>43</sup> which seeks to strengthen international relations of member cities with a view to improving public policies and territorial development. Its ninth *Cuadernos para la Internacionalización de las Ciudades* (Notes for Cities' Internationalization) (2019) discusses migration as a common global challenge that must be managed through initiatives and partnerships between cities to ensure more inclusive, secure and sustainable societies. AL-LAs has identified the migration management agenda as one of its objectives, promoting events such as conventions, forums, courses, and other activities on human mobility and diversity.

Medellin is also a member of Mercociudades,<sup>44</sup> which promotes the participation of municipalities in the regional integration process of the Southern Common Market (*Mercado Común del Sur, MERCOSUR*), strengthening the institutions of MERCOSUR cities and developing exchanges and horizontal cooperation among the region's municipalities. In its 2021 annual report,<sup>45</sup> Mercociudades refers to the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Retreat, where "the migration narrative" was discussed as a critical element that cities must work on. Along the same lines, the UCLG Executive Bureau organized a thematic session, "From migration management to a community-based approach to human mobility" (Mercociudades, 2021:63), and within the framework of the United Nations High-level Political Forum, it reiterated its commitment to a balanced narrative of human mobility and to local action for migration governance.

Medellin actively cooperates in tackling migration issues with the United Nations and international cooperation agencies. Through the Antioquia Interagency Group for Mixed Migration Flows, international cooperation activities are coordinated to complement and promote the response of departmental and municipal authorities, IOM and other United Nations agencies, and international cooperation entities to the

<sup>40</sup> This was through an agreement between the University's Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the non-profit Corporación Opción Legal. Although the Mayor's Office is not party to this agreement, it is named as the coordinating entity for achieving this response (to the request for legal counselling).

<sup>41</sup> In agreement with UNHCR, between July 2020 and the date of writing, the Office provided 1,737 legal opinions for refugees and migrants in need of international protection in Medellín.

<sup>42</sup> Unpublished at the time of writing.

<sup>43</sup> AL-LAs was established in 2013.

<sup>44</sup> Mercociudades was established in 1995.

<sup>45</sup> More information is available on the [page of Medellín, Colombia](#), on the website of the Mayors Migration Council.

needs of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. In 2022, the Antioquia Group had 24 members,<sup>46</sup> more than 50 implementing partners and over 25 partner organizations.

### 3.2. Areas with potential for further development

Medellin works with migrant associations, such as *MeSumo* (I Join), on an ad hoc basis to set the local policy agenda.<sup>47</sup> Social policies are formulated using a participatory approach. For example, in October 2021 the Mayor's Office began a participatory diagnostic process, organizing 45 workshops in the city's 16 communities and 5 districts to advance the formulation of the Medellin Public Policy for Migration Management. The meetings were attended by councillors, community action boards, township and community planning councils, social organizations, non-governmental organizations and local administrative boards.

The Mayor's Office collaborates on an ad hoc basis with the private sector and social partners to implement migration-related strategies and programmes. Through the *Escuela para la Inclusión* (School for Inclusion) programme (2020–2021), the Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights worked with the private sector to establish links with the beneficiary population.<sup>48</sup> Run by the Mayor's Office in collaboration with IOM, Cuso International and Microenterprises of Colombia, the programme seeks, on the one hand, to strengthen the skills and capacities of vulnerable people to improve their employability and, on the other, to advocate for businesspeople and employers to include groups of people with diverse disabilities on the payroll. From 2020 to February 2021, 48 ventures (210 people<sup>49</sup>) received financial support. Between 2020 and 2022, the programme also provided training in labour skills and supported the registration of fledgling businesses and undertakings at the concept stage.<sup>50</sup>

The development of bilateral cooperation programmes on migration between cities in the same country and internationally is an area with potential for further development. The Agency for Cooperation and Investment in Medellin is spearheading the process of internationalizing the city-region, forging strategic international relations, managing the supply of and demand for cooperation, attracting national and foreign direct investment, and effecting political impact as a local government. However, most of the agreements on migration to which the Mayor's Office is currently a party are with international cooperation agencies.

In November 2021, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Mayor's Office of Medellin and the City Council of Barcelona, Spain, to promote, develop and strengthen mutual cooperation with a view to exchanging experiences and knowledge of development programmes and models to improve people's well-being. Since March 2022, in coordination with the Barcelona City Council and civil society organizations,<sup>51</sup> the Mayor's Office of Medellin has been working on the initiative *Sin Rumores Construimos Cultura de Paz* (Without Rumors, We Build a Peaceful Society), which aims to counteract the spread of misinformation, rumours, stereotypes and prejudices that affect the human rights of people from various groups.

<sup>46</sup> These are Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Aid for AIDS, Amicare, the Archdiocese of Medellin, Caribe Afirmativo, the Colombian Red Cross – Antioquia Chapter, Corporación Ayuda Humanitaria, Cuso International, Las Golondrinas Foundation, Humanity & Inclusion, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Rescue Committee, IOM, Mercy Corps, the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Pan American Development Foundation, Pastoral Social the Diocese of Sonsón–Rionegro, Profamilia, Psychologists Without Borders, UNHCR, the Unimedicos Foundation, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Food Programme and World Vision.

<sup>47</sup> The Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights is currently working with the following migration-related institutions: Corporación Vive, Vivan Los Niños, Fundación Amar y Servir, Fundación Coloreando Mis Derechos, Pastoral Social, Albergue de Víctimas and Corporación Educativa Combos.

<sup>48</sup> More information is available on the website of the [Mayor's Office of Medellin](#).

<sup>49</sup> Of this total, 99 were women and 111 were men; 169 were Venezuelan migrants, 17 were returning Colombians and 24 were from the host community. For more information, see: Mayor's Office of Medellin, 2021b.

<sup>50</sup> In all, 115 migrants were trained in labour skills, and 26 fledgling businesses and 28 concept ventures were registered. The figures may vary since many enterprises close at the fledgling stage or do not move beyond the concept stage.

<sup>51</sup> The initiative includes the migrant population and involves the participation of Corporación Región and organizations such as Picacho con Futuro, young people from the Warmi Pacha association, La f@brica Foundation and the Foundation for Community Development of Barcelona, Spain.



## 4

## ADVANCE THE SOCIOECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF MIGRANTS AND SOCIETY

### 4.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

The Mayor's Office of Medellín implements measures to promote gender equality in the workforce, including for migrants. The Medellín Future Development Plan 2020–2023 (2020) has a cross-cutting gender component on which the Urban and Rural Women strategy is based, to promote equitable wages and good gender practices in new industries, and women's participation in boards and senior management. The same document promotes “economic independence for women and their incorporation into the Software Valley”, with the delivery of economic stimuli to community mothers, the participation of women in the road maps for economic autonomy and the management of opportunities, and awareness-raising and assistance for companies with regard to best practices in gender matters.<sup>52</sup> These initiatives are implemented by the Women's Department, whose Subcommittee on Migrant and Refugee Women implements projects and thematic programmes on security, a violence-free life, leadership and empowerment.

The Subcommittee on Migrant and Refugee Women trains public officials and staff who work with migrant and refugee women (such as the Police, family commissioners and the Prosecutor's Office) on issues related to legislation, rights, and pathways to assistance and protection; analyses these pathways; and monitors their implementation. It issues reports on barriers, establishes a unified strategy to manage cases and ensure more effective follow-up in terms of assistance and identified barriers, and determines what needs to be done to overcome them, to guarantee a comprehensive response for migrant and refugee women. In addition, the Subcommittee provides input on the structure and definition of public migration management policy; implements communication and information strategies on the rights of migrant and refugee women from a gender, differential and intersectional perspective; and issues proposals for legal reform at the municipal and national levels to incorporate such approaches.

At the local level, national guidelines are implemented to promote and facilitate the inclusion of migrants in the labour force. Through the national strategy entitled Labour Inclusion Route for Migrants from Venezuela (2020), the Administrative Unit of the Public Employment Service ran the compensation funds in Medellín. The Department of Economic Development's Public Employment Office matches labour supply and demand, offering free employment intermediation services by registering jobseekers, affords occupational guidance, registers companies and publishes job opportunities. It does this generally for all populations, including migrants, through open calls or by competition among those interested, in the different service centres (Software Valley Centres and Public Employment Office). The strategy works with Mercy Corps to raise awareness among the population and assist them, and incorporates the protocols defined by the Public Employment Service – in this case, for the migrant population. Therefore, as long as a migrant's situation in the country has been legalized and he/she is domiciled in Medellín, he/she will be able to access the different services that the Department provides in terms of placement, training, and business creation and strengthening.

Medellín also has programmes to support foreigners engaged in entrepreneurship. The Youth Department implements Youth 4.0, a training strategy in entrepreneurship that led to the establishment of Vitrina Comercial, where young people can showcase their ventures.<sup>53</sup> While Vitrina Comercial was not designed exclusively for migrants, it has supported initiatives by young migrants. In addition, the Software Valley Centres seek to promote initiatives by microenterprises and entrepreneurs in the city, including migrants.

<sup>52</sup> In 2021, 50 migrant women took part in the Road Map for Economic Independence, in two groups from Communities 3, 8 and 10.

<sup>53</sup> More information is available on the website of the [Mayor's Office of Medellín](#).

## 4.2. Areas with potential for further development

The Central Bank of Colombia, the National Administrative Department of Statistics, and the Centre for Economic and Social Research (*Fedesarrollo*) conduct national evaluations of migration dynamics in the labour market. However, no evaluations are conducted to monitor the local labour market demand for immigrants. In 2021, IOM, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), with the support of the Centre for Economic and Social Research, carried out a labour market study focused on Venezuelan refugees and migrants and on returning Colombians in the cities of Riohacha, Bucaramanga, Cali, Cúcuta, Bogotá, Barranquilla and Medellín. The study, published in May 2022, analyses labour supply and demand together with educational possibilities, and identifies human capital gaps.

Similarly, no local evaluations have been made of the labour supply and the effects of emigration on the labour market. Medellín has two instruments that allow it to monitor various aspects of the labour market: the Major Integrated Household Survey carried out by the National Administrative Department of Statistics in Medellín, which has a territorial approach (communities and districts) and publishes results annually; and the Medellín Quality of Life Survey (which has a territorial focus as well). Neither instrument, because of their representativity in statistical terms, serves to measure the participation (supply or demand) of the migrant population in Medellín. However, the Mayor's Office is an active member of the Antioquia Regional Labour Market Observatory, which “captures information and monitors, analyses and produces forecasts for the Antioquia labour market, in an endeavour to influence plans and public policies, through the technical units attached to the institutions that are part of the Observatory”.<sup>54</sup>

Although local measures have been developed to promote the employability of migrants, such as the organization of job fairs, there is no strategy to attract migrant workers according to labour market needs. In 2019, UNHCR and the Family Compensation Fund held a job fair in Medellín and the Aburrá Valley for around 2,000 Venezuelan nationals, providing information on legal services, courses, guidance to prevent gender violence, recreational activities, statutes applicable to refugees and the restoration of rights.

Medellín still has no action plan to counteract the public problems of unemployment, informality and informal salaried work. The Inter-American Development Bank and ILO (2020) have identified three types of barriers that prevent Venezuelan migrants from obtaining formal employment: individual, environmental and organizational. The first has to do with lack of knowledge of Colombian labour law, poor relationship skills, inadequate presentation for job interviews, low educational level, lack of documents certifying studies and work experience, difficulties and barriers in the certification of diplomas, and the absence of a residence permit. The second is related to the lack of public policies promoting labour inclusion in the territory, financial system barriers that prevent migrants from opening a bank account for the payment of their wages, and the complex procedures for joining the social security system. Lastly, organizational barriers include employers who are prejudiced against migrants and ignorant of the procedures for hiring them and the applicable regulations.

These problems (unemployment and informality) give rise to labour and sexual exploitation, abandoned children and adolescents, child labour, poverty, begging, homelessness, tenement housing and informal settlements, among other consequences directly affecting the migrant population. The labour sector is thus one of the areas with the greatest potential for further development in Medellín.

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<sup>54</sup> For further information, visit the [Observatory's website](#).



## 5

## EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS THE MOBILITY DIMENSIONS OF CRISES

## 5.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

The Disaster Risk Management Administrative Department is the local entity responsible for articulating strategies and coordinating inter-institutional work for the prevention and management of disasters or emergencies, according to Agreement No. 59 (2011). Disaster and risk management is also coordinated by the Municipal Fund for Emergency and Disaster Risk Management and, through Decree No. 1240 of 2015, the Municipal Disaster Risk Management System.

The Municipal Disaster Risk Management Plan of Medellín, Antioquia 2015–2030 (2017) is the local instrument promoting the city's territorial development and risk management, in coordination with the Development Plan and the Land Management Plan. The Risk Management Plan identifies risks, such as hillside communities with a high population density and which are home to displaced persons. The activities include identification of population groups in contexts of mobility, raising their awareness of the risks they face by area, and the development of protection measures.

The Disaster Risk Management Plan and the Municipal Emergency Response Strategy, which were adopted by Decree No. 1240, set forth specific provisions to reduce the social impact of the massive mobilization of people as a result of risks or in an emergency or disaster. They generate collective strategies to broaden the scope of the Municipal Disaster Risk Management System. This includes the Community Committees for Disaster Risk Management,<sup>55</sup> which were created by the Mayor's Office of Medellín through the Disaster Risk Management Administrative Department to facilitate risk awareness and reduction processes in the communities. Under the Disaster Risk Management Plan, citizens are to be mobilized through the Community Committees to participate in decision-making on risk management in the city, with a view to taking account of their practices/knowledge and upholding their right to live in safety.

The Mayor's Office has communication systems to receive and provide information on crisis developments. In addition to the aforementioned Community Committees, people can communicate their needs in an emergency via the 123 Social hotline (unique security and emergency number). The hotline can activate different entities providing social, police and emergency assistance aimed at mitigating, inter alia, the impact on the migrant population of the absence of family and social networks (i.e. living on the streets); it provides information and referrals to temporary shelters, food plans, housing assistance and humanitarian transportation (Mayor's Office of Medellín, 2021a).

In addition, the Medellín Early Warning System seeks to prevent violations of human rights by publishing reports on its virtual platform.<sup>56</sup> The Municipal Emergency Response Strategy sets out protocols for social care in emergency situations. These cover items such as population registration, temporary accommodation, the management of food and non-food humanitarian aid, restoration of family ties, and the evacuation of communities in at-risk situations. The protocols and their respective responsibility matrices apply to the entire population in the district and have been applied since 2019 in emergencies involving Venezuelan refugees/migrants and Colombian returnees. Likewise, the website of the Medellín Disaster Risk Management Administrative Department provides a link to the directory of the Information System for Risk Management

<sup>55</sup> The Committees' volunteers are active and altruistic members of the community, some of whom are migrants. They have participated in activities to promote risk knowledge and reduction.

<sup>56</sup> More information is available on the website of the [Mayor's Office of Medellín](#).

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of the Aburrá Valley Metropolitan Area, which contains information on the Community Committees in the Metropolitan Area, among other data.<sup>57</sup>

At the national level, the early warning system of the Ombudsman's Office monitors and issues alerts to the civilian population about risks related to internal armed conflict and promotes humanitarian preventive action. In 2020, the Office issued Early Warning No. 032, which identified the Venezuelan migrant population in Medellín as being at risk.

In addition, the Ombudsman's Office has one delegate providing guidance and advice to the victims of internal armed conflict and another for the rights of people on the move. The former takes statements from migrants who are displaced internally or within an urban agglomeration, so that they are recognized as victims. The latter establishes and adopts general policies, plans and programmes for the specialized management of victims of forced displacement and for follow-up in terms of prevention, protection and socioeconomic stabilization of the displaced population,<sup>58</sup> in cooperation with work teams, the Community Defenders and the Vereda Granizal House of Rights. The Community Defenders work to strengthen communities, protect displaced persons and migrants, and prevent human rights violations. The House of Rights guides, advises and protects the population living in Granizal who are victims of forced displacement, as well as the migrant population.<sup>59</sup>

The Emergency Assistance Project of the Medellín Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights has a housing assistance component, a transitional measure granted to individuals or families who are at risk of homelessness and who do not have the economic resources or family or social support networks enabling them to obtain housing. Between May 2020 and June 2022, 6,576 migrants received assistance.

Medellín has direct agreements with consulates<sup>60</sup> related to nationals caught up in an emergency. According to the National Emergency Response Strategy (2015), the local authorities must call a municipal crisis room when an emergency occurs and, depending on its severity, connect to the departmental government (which in turn calls a departmental crisis room) and/or the national Government (which operates a national crisis room). Finally, the local authorities have direct systems for contacting the entities that make up the Social Protection Commission established by Decree No. 1240 and can request emergency humanitarian assistance.

The Mayor's Office of Medellín has a gender-sensitive emergency response strategy. The hotline *123 Mujer Metropolitana* (123 Metropolitan Woman), which operates in Medellín and in the municipalities of the Aburrá Valley Metropolitan Area, provides emergency services to all women in connection with domestic violence, guidance on the termination of pregnancies, and alerts on violence against women. Additionally, the Women's Department has four mechanisms to assist women victims of gender-based violence: the hotline *123 Agencia Mujer* (123 Women's Agency), halfway houses, technical defence, and psycholegal assistance. All these mechanisms assist migrant and refugee women who are victims of gender-based violence.<sup>61</sup> Incidents can also be reported via the Department's WhatsApp numbers.

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<sup>57</sup> Including the Metropolitan Area Technological Risks Commission, Care Group leaders and the Fire Department.

<sup>58</sup> More information is available on the [website of the Ombudsman's Office of Colombia](#).

<sup>59</sup> On 20 July 2022, the Human Mobility Delegate had assisted 697 migrants in need of international protection in the district.

<sup>60</sup> Agreements have been signed with the consulates of Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, Germany, Haiti, Mexico, Norway, Peru, Slovakia, Switzerland and the United States of America.

<sup>61</sup> For more information on the Road Map for Violence Management, see the [Department's web page](#).



## 5.2. Areas with potential for further development

The Municipal Disaster Risk Management Plan does not refer to the specific needs of displaced persons, refugees or migrants. The same thing holds true at the national level, since neither the National Disaster Risk Management Plan 2015–2025 (2016) nor the National Emergency Response Strategy contains specific provisions for displaced persons, refugees and migrants. Specific measures have nevertheless been taken at the national level for Venezuelan refugees and migrants and for Colombian returnees, with the collaboration of municipal governments. In 2019, the National Disaster Risk Management Unit developed the Contingency Plan for Migration from Venezuela to Colombia, which documents some of the actions carried out so far and establishes a framework of future risks.

The 123 Social hotline provides psychological and legal support services to nationals and foreigners, and it has a comprehensive response scheme with entities such as the Police, the Fire Department, the Traffic Police and the hospital network. However, it has no specific functions in post-crisis recovery contexts. In addition, the National Disaster Risk Management Plan, the Antioquia Departmental Disaster Risk Management Plan (2015) and the Municipal Disaster Risk Management Plan have no post-crisis recovery strategies aimed at migrants or nationals. The programmatic structure of the Municipal Plan includes Programme 3: Management, which deals generally with response and recovery preparation and execution; it applies to all the inhabitants of the territory without distinction based on social, economic or migration status.

Medellin has a cross-cutting post-disaster recovery strategy that is implemented by the Disaster Management Subdirectoriate of the Disaster Risk Management Administrative Department, through the Municipal Disaster Risk Management System. Although the strategy does not target migrants specifically, it applies impartially to everyone in all emergency or disaster situations using a differential systemic approach based on development and the community.



## 6

## ENSURE THAT MIGRATION TAKES PLACE IN A SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MANNER

## 6.1. Migration governance: Examples of well-developed areas

The Mayor's Office of Medellín has specific mechanisms for ensuring that migrants have access to justice, including public security. Access to justice is an essential service, according to the Constitution of Colombia (1991). The Special Group for Ethnic and Migrant Affairs, as mentioned earlier, carries out activities to monitor, oversee, protect, defend and uphold the rights of the different ethnic groups and migrants in Medellín.<sup>62</sup>

Migrants who feel that their rights have been violated can also bring complaints to the attention of the District and Municipal Ombudsmen's Offices.<sup>63</sup> The Attorney General's Office and the city's Houses of Justice, which are part of the Ministry of Justice and Law's National Programme of Houses of Justice and Citizen Coexistence, serve the same purpose. They provide guidance on rights restoration, formal and alternative conflict resolution services, and access to other local institutions. In this respect, since 2021 IOM has been running national reference and orientation points for Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Colombia, which provide guidance and humanitarian assistance, including information on rights and duties; how to register children; and potential risks, such as human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

The Mayor's Office has adopted programmes to train public officials in migration regulations and the rights of migrants. The Medellín Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights has a training strategy in basic aspects of international migration for consultants and public officials.<sup>64</sup>

The Antioquia and Medellín Territorial Anti-trafficking in Persons Committee, which was established by Decree No. 1217 (2008),<sup>65</sup> aims, inter alia, to trigger local action and venues for the prevention, investigation and prosecution of the crime of trafficking in persons, and for the protection and assistance of victims. The Committee's members include representatives from the Departments of Governance, Health, Education, Citizen Culture, Women, Social Development, Social Welfare and Youth; representatives from entities such as the Valle de Aburrá Metropolitan Police, the Medellín Prosecutor's Office and the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare; and a non-governmental organization representative.<sup>66</sup>

The Antioquia and Medellín Territorial Anti-trafficking in Persons Committee (2021) developed the Territorial Action Plan 2021–2024 with technical advice from the Ministry of the Interior. The Plan addresses the action lines and approaches of the National Anti-trafficking in Persons Strategy (2016). Its goals were set with the Ministry of Governance, Migración Colombia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and it defines joint actions such as raising awareness of human trafficking, through workshops, talks and meetings, among national citizens, migrants and other vulnerable populations, and the general public; participating in verification operations; promoting and restoring victims' rights; and spreading knowledge of temporary protection status for Venezuelan migrants.

<sup>62</sup> See: Ombudsman's Office of Medellín, 2021a.

<sup>63</sup> Between 2021 and 2022, the Ombudsman's Office of Medellín handled complaints from 227 migrants claiming that their fundamental rights had in some way been violated.

<sup>64</sup> A total of 575 people were trained in 2020 and 2021.

<sup>65</sup> See: Spaces for Women, n.d.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.



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## 6.2. Areas with potential for further development

While activities exist to promote the reintegration of migrants, the Mayor's Office does not have a formal programme focused on facilitating reintegration. The Family Unit of the Medellín Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights developed a strategy, *Volver a Casa* (Returning Home), to strengthen the social and individual family ties of people who are at risk of exclusion (e.g. people whose rights are being restored or rehabilitated, persons deprived of liberty, the population at risk of consuming psychoactive substances, children and adolescents whose rights have been violated because they are victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, and teenage mothers<sup>67</sup>). The strategy uses sociodemographic questions to establish a relational diagnosis of the ties between the participating person and their support network. Lastly, the Migrant Service Office<sup>68</sup> in Medellín seeks to respond to, guide and refer the requests of Colombian returnees and their families.

In Colombia, refugee affairs are handled directly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in accordance with Decree No. 2840 (2013). Those interested in applying for refugee status in Medellín must apply to the office of the Migración Colombia Special Administrative Unit. The local government occasionally participates as a guest in the Interagency Group for Mixed Migration Flows, which addresses issues related to refugee and migrant flows from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The local authorities have taken ad hoc measures to combat the labour exploitation of refugees and migrants. For example, spaces have been established to raise awareness about the plight of the migrant population and the migratory context in general, with different departments, grass-roots organizations and other interested stakeholders. The labour inspectors of the Territorial Directorate of the Ministry of Labour in Medellín are in charge of ascertaining and responding to cases of abuse of labour rights, including those involving migrants.

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<sup>67</sup> The number of migrant families benefiting from assistance under *Volver a Casa* was 19 in 2019, 61 in 2021, and 75 from January to June 2022. More information is available on the website of the Mayor's Office of Medellín.

<sup>68</sup> The Migrant Service Office was established based on the initiative of the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with support from departmental governor's offices, local entities and IOM.



## PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROTOCOLS ON THE RISKS OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

This annex summarizes key local COVID-19 policy responses in Medellín from a migration governance perspective. It is based on 11 questions that were added to the standard Migration Governance Indicators (MGIs) assessment in the municipality in order to effectively assess local migration governance in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.



The local authorities facilitate migrants' access to COVID-19-related health services on the same conditions as nationals. At the local level, the Territorial Health Plan: Healthy Communities, Bodies and Minds, Towards a Healthy Territory 2020–2023 (2020)<sup>1</sup> calls for interventions in accordance with national guidelines. The Department of Health has various service providers through which the migrant community can access these services.<sup>2</sup> The vaccine is available to migrants, regardless of their migration status. The Medellín Department of Health conducted a census of irregular migrants, with an online link for voluntary registration.



The Medellín Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights provided information on referrals to temporary shelters, food plans, housing assistance and humanitarian transportation via the 123 Social hotline. In addition, with the Humanitarian Corridor strategy, the Mayor's Office oversaw the safe return of at least 3,000 Venezuelan migrants to their country.<sup>3</sup> To that end, in coordination with the National Police and Migración Colombia, it developed a protocol to facilitate the movement of people. Migración Colombia authorized the departure of the means of transport, while the Mayor's Office and the Police facilitated and oversaw the return.<sup>4</sup>



Medellín took measures to help people who could not return to their countries of origin or continue their migration journey during the COVID-19 crisis. The Mayor's Office of Medellín opened two temporary shelters for migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (the Carlos Mauro Hoyos Coliseum and the Florencia Multipurpose Coliseum).<sup>5</sup> Likewise, through the housing assistance programme, accommodation was provided for three or four months in hotels, rentals, residences or homes, and a food package and other humanitarian aid were delivered.<sup>6</sup> The shelters and temporary housing are open to the entire local and migrant population, regardless of their migration status.

<sup>1</sup> Mayor's Office of Medellín, Plan Territorial de Salud, Comunidades, cuerpos y mentes saludables, hacia un territorio saludable 2020–2023 (2020).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Mayor's Office of Medellín, Alcaldía de Medellín acompaña a más de 3,000 venezolanos que esperan regresar voluntariamente a su país. 14 May 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> On 1 April 2020, 151 admissions had been registered. See: *El Pitazo*, 20 albergues pueden proteger del COVID-19 a venezolanos en Colombia. 6 May 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Mayor's Office of Medellín, Un auxilio habitacional transitorio que da esperanza a familias vulnerables en medio de las dificultades. 3 June 2021.



## PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROTOCOLS ON THE RISKS OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



At the local level, general protocols are implemented to ensure physical distancing and appropriate prevention (such as handwashing) in environments with a high concentration of migrants. When the pandemic first reached Colombia, strategies were implemented at the Carlos Mauro Hoyos Coliseum and the Florencia Multipurpose Coliseum temporary accommodation centres to promote respiratory hygiene, handwashing, and other preventive measures, such as the installation of portable sinks.



The COVID-19 health statistics compiled and published by Medellín do not capture information on migration status as a separate category. The Mayor's Office publishes the number of active cases, the capacity of intensive care units and hospitals, the recovery percentage, the fatality rate, the number of deaths, the number of recoveries, and the number of cases by community, age group and sex.<sup>7</sup>

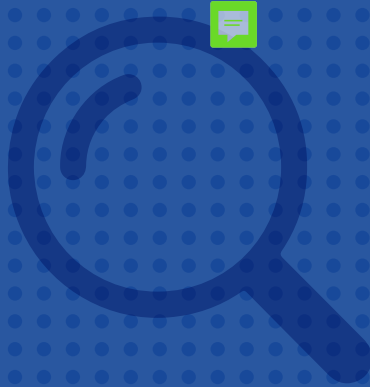


The Mayor's Office publishes information on COVID-19-related institutional services (including those provided by the Department of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights) in Spanish on its website, which all residents can consult. The information includes the procedures and requirements for applying to programmes such as *Medellín Me Cuida* (Medellín Takes Care of Me), along with more general information about vaccinations and tests.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Mayor's Office of Medellín, *COVID-19 Medellín* (accessed 21 February 2022).

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\* All hyperlinks were working at the time of writing this report.



# ANNEXES

## MiGOF: Migration Governance Framework<sup>69</sup>

In an attempt to define the concept of “well-managed migration policies”, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) devised a Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF), which was welcomed by the IOM Council in November 2015. For the purposes of the Migration Governance Framework, IOM defines governance as “the traditions and institutions by which authority on migration, mobility and nationality in a country is exercised, including the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies in these areas”.

The Framework sets out the essential elements of “good migration governance” – three principles and three objectives which, if respected and fulfilled, would ensure that migration is humane, safe and orderly, and that it provides benefits for migrants and societies.<sup>70</sup> IOM’s view is that a migration system promotes migration and human mobility that is humane and orderly and benefits migrants and society:

When it:

- (i) Adheres to international standards and fulfils migrants’ rights;
- (ii) Formulates policy using evidence and a “whole-of-government” approach;
- (iii) Engages with partners to address migration and related issues;

As it seeks to:

- (i) Advance the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society;
- (ii) Effectively address the mobility dimensions of crises;
- (iii) Ensure that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner.

The MiGOF does NOT create new standards or norms. In drafting the Framework, IOM relied on its expertise and analytical work, as well as on existing commitments, non-binding declarations and statements. It does NOT address global migration governance that is the international architecture for dealing with issues related to migration and human mobility. Instead, the focus is on the governance and management of migration from the point of view of the State as the primary actor. It does NOT propose one model for all States. The Framework presents a “high road” or ideal version of migration governance, to which States can aspire.

The MiGOF is based on the understanding that, as the primary actor in migration, mobility and nationality affairs, a State retains the sovereign right to determine who enters and stays in its territory and under what conditions, within the framework of international law. Other actors – citizens, migrants, international organizations, the private sector, unions, non-governmental organizations, community organizations, religious organizations and academia – contribute to migration governance through their interaction with States and each other.

<sup>69</sup> IOM Council, *Migration Governance Framework*, 106th Session, C/106/40 (4 November 2015).

<sup>70</sup> *Migration Governance Framework infosheet*, 2016.

## The MGI process



### 1 Launch of the Local MGI process

The first step of the process is to explain to key national and local government officials what the Local MGIs entail, in order to ensure full understanding of the project and complete buy-in at both levels.



### 2 Data collection

The second step of the process is to start the collection and analysis of data based on adapted indicators from the MGIs. A draft local migration governance profile based on analysis of the findings is then shared with the government counterparts.



### 3 Multi-stakeholder discussions on the results of the MGIs

The third step of the process is to convene a consultation where local and national government officials and other stakeholders discuss the good practices and main gaps identified in the draft local migration governance profile. It is also an opportunity for them to comment on and provide suggestions to the draft profile.



### 4 Final report

The last step is to finalize the local migration governance profile, obtain final validation from the local authorities, and publish a printed version of the report as well as an online version on the [Migration Data Portal](#) and upload it on the [IOM Publications Platform](#).





[www.migrationdataportal.org/mgi](http://www.migrationdataportal.org/mgi)

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