



@IOM Port of Spain

DTM

Displacement
Tracking Matrix

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

1. INTRODUCTION

Trinidad and Tobago consists of two main islands and numerous smaller islands. It is situated 12 km (7 miles), at its nearest point, northeast of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (henceforth referred to as Venezuela). Thus, this proximity has traditionally facilitated human and cultural exchanges between the two States. Notwithstanding this, the worsening situation in Venezuela has triggered unprecedented migratory flows into Trinidad and Tobago.

Concomitant to this trend, there were two major events that produced deleterious socio-economic impacts to the island-state. In the first instance, plummeting oil and gas prices precipitated a contraction of the country's energy sector from 2014 to 2017. This situation was further exacerbated by the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, which inadvertently threatened the non-energy sectors and labour market¹.

In June 2019, prior to the pandemic, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) conducted a Venezuelan Registration Exercise. This exercise registered 16,523 Venezuelan nationals and authorized successfully screened persons, in irregular circumstances, to work for a period of one year in Trinidad and Tobago.

Immediately following this exercise, however, on 15th June 2019, the GORTT instituted visa requirements for Venezuelan nationals to enter or transit Trinidad and Tobago. Furthermore, with the onset of COVID 19, on 23rd March the GORTT officially closed the national borders and these measures were still in place up to the time of reporting.

Accordingly, local authorities observed a marked increase in the number of irregular Venezuelan entrants from 2018 onwards, but with the implementation of the above-mentioned measures, there was a dramatic spike in irregular entries. The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) 2020 therefore offered an ideal opportunity to review the situation of Venezuelan migrants, within these contexts.

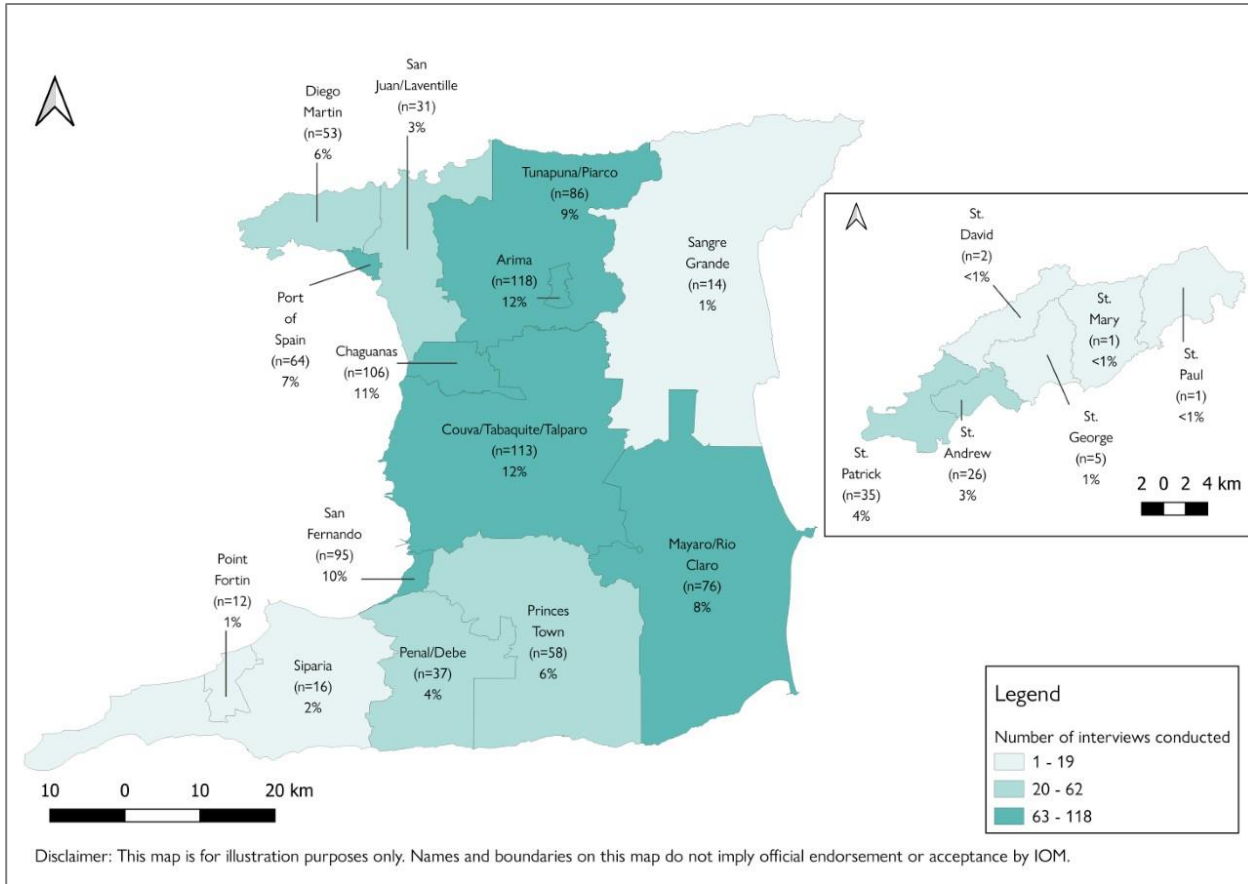
IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. It is designed to capture, process, and disseminate critical multi-layered information on the mobility, vulnerabilities and needs of displaced and mobile populations, regularly and systematically. Hence, the DTM provides decision makers and responders with better context to offer specific assistance to these populations.

A total of 950 Venezuelan migrants participated in DTM 2020 and the area with the highest number of respondents was Arima closely followed by Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo, as shown in Map 1.

1 <https://www.central-bank.org.tt/sites/default/files/reports/economic-bulletin-july-2020.pdf>

MAP 1

Number of Surveys by Region



2. METHODOLOGY

The DTM 2020 employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to capture information on key thematic areas. More specifically, twenty-six (26) Baseline Interviews were convened with key stakeholders to inform preliminary migrant profiles and the creation of a Venezuelan migrant database for the enumeration process.

Surveys were administered only to Venezuelan migrants, who willingly consented to participate in the interview process, and were over the age of 18 years.

The data collection method was influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, which permitted only telephone-based interviews, as opposed to the face-to-face approach.

Thus, given this new mode, the questionnaire was condensed to avoid interviewer and respondent fatigue and the referral system was modified to ensure compatibility with the enumeration strategy.

Hence, a Venezuelan migrant database was created to support communication with the target population, in various communities.

This database was primarily informed by the Baseline Interviews, IOM’s existing database and referrals from key stakeholders.²

Similar to DTM 2019, a snowball sampling strategy was utilized, in the absence of a defined sampling frame, to facilitate practical access to a ‘hard-to-reach’ population.

Nonetheless, this nonprobability sampling strategy, coupled with mobility restrictions, imposed some limitations on the exercise regarding its representativeness.³

Yet, it must be noted that 80 per cent of the DTM respondents were reportedly registered during the Government of Trinidad and Tobago’s exercise in June 2019.

Data collection spanned approximately three weeks and it was executed by a team of bilingual enumerators, trained in DTM procedures. Accordingly, a survey instrument, which maintained respondent anonymity, was the data collection tool and the individual migrant was the sampling unit.

Furthermore, tablets were used during data capture and the information generated was cleaned, coded, and analyzed, using standardized statistical techniques.

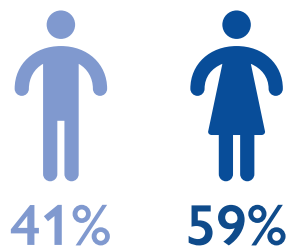
2 Some key stakeholders included UNHCR, religious organizations and non-governmental organizations.

3 Non-probability samples cannot be relied upon to draw conclusions or make inferences on the entire migrant population.

3. MIGRANT PROFILES

The pre-established criteria for participation in DTM 2020 determined the nationality and age of the respondents and it was noted that there were more female respondents than male respondents. Graph 1 refers.

GRAPH N°1
Distribution by sex

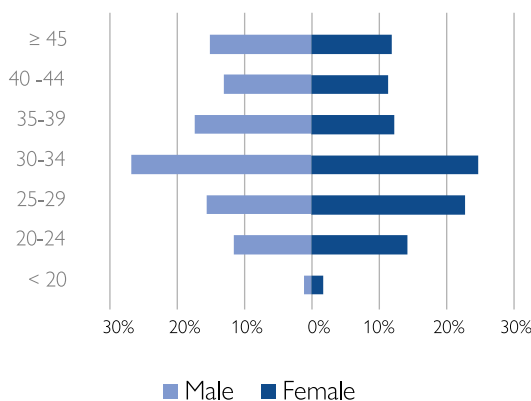


A breakdown by age and sex also revealed that the 30-34 age group had the highest number of respondents, followed by the 25-29 age group, as highlighted in Graph 2.

Interestingly, these findings varied from the DTM 2019 data, which recorded more males than females and identified the 25-29 age group as having the highest percentage of respondents.

The baseline interviews, however, noted no difference between the sexes of the migrants with whom they interacted with.

GRAPH N°2
Distribution by sex and age



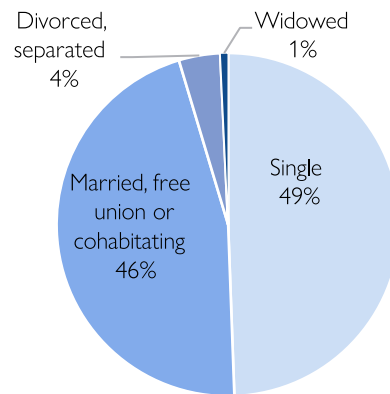
Additionally, approximately 4 per cent of the female interviewees were pregnant, of which 40 per cent were between 18 and 25 years old and 30 per cent were single.

On the contrary, the baseline interviews referred to mounting numbers of pregnant female migrants, some of whom arrived in Trinidad and Tobago already pregnant, while others became

pregnant subsequent to their arrival. Instances of pregnant teenagers were also highlighted.

There were marginally more single persons than married, free union or cohabiting persons, as illustrated in Graph 3. It was apparent, though, that most respondents fell within these two categories, a trend that differed from the DTM 2019, where respondents were predominantly single.

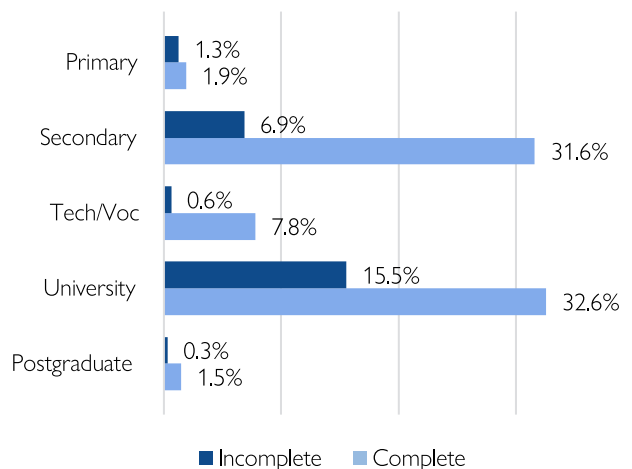
GRAPH N°3
Marital Status



Aside from this, approximately 33 per cent of the respondents had completed university education, which is a 16 per cent increase from the 2019 findings, and about 32 per cent of the interviewees had completed secondary level education. Graph 4 refers.

Hence, almost two-thirds of the DTM interviewees had completed either secondary or university education.

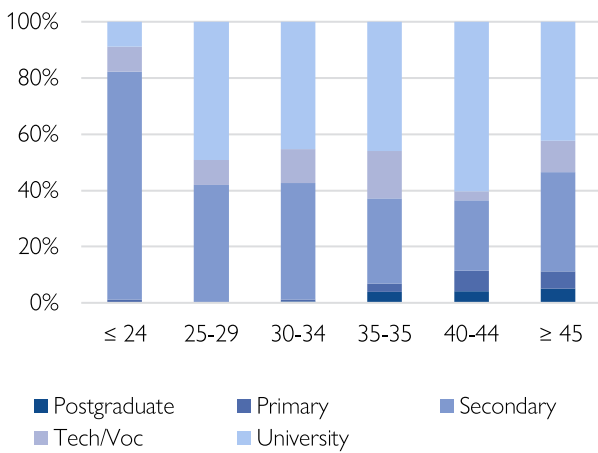
GRAPH N°4
Education Level



Moreover, a disaggregation of completed education by age group highlighted that the 40-44 age group had the highest percentage of university graduates whereas the 'less than or equal to 24' age group had the largest percentage of secondary graduates. Graph 5 refers.

GRAPH N°5

Completed Education by age



The data further showed that 11 per cent of university graduates worked in the construction sector and 6 per cent were engaged in domestic work.

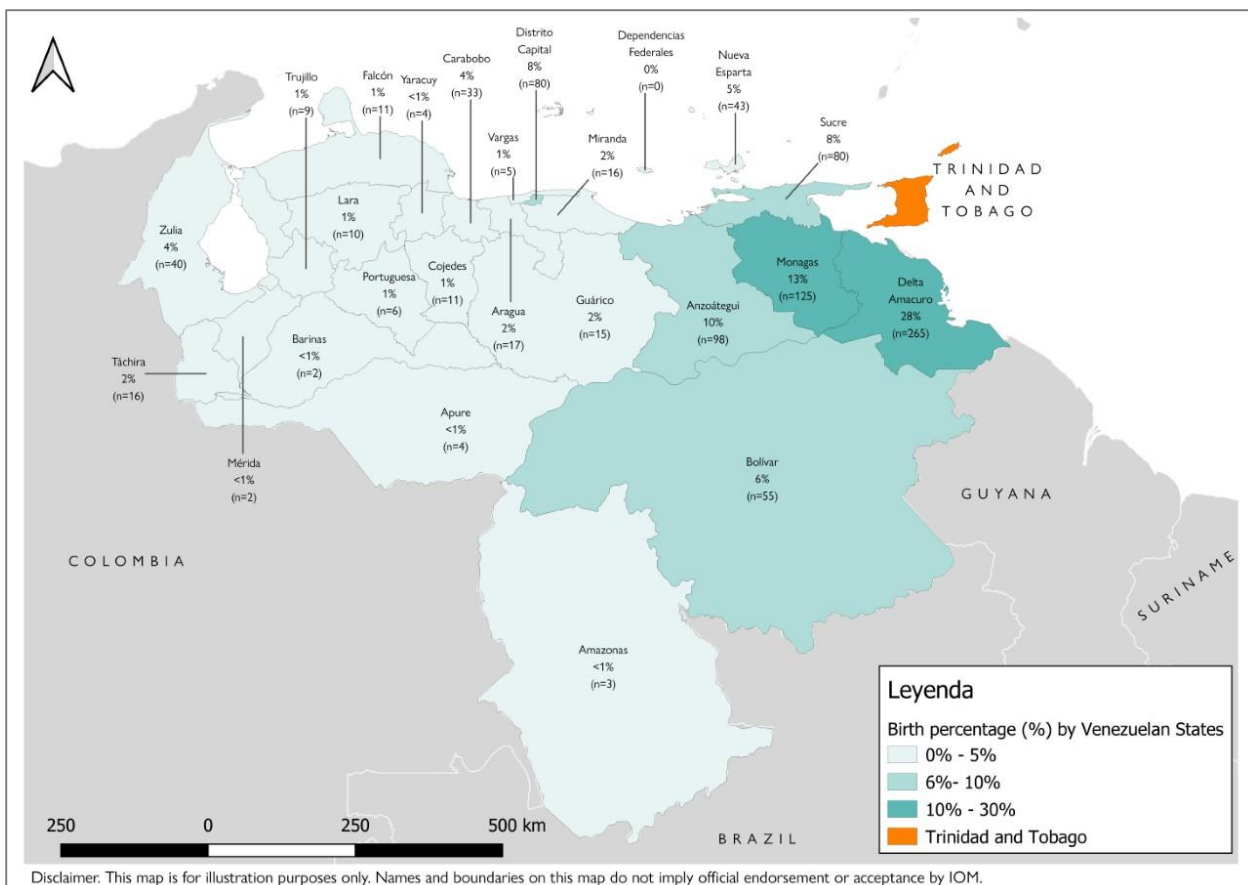
Information from the GORTT Registration Exercise, however, varied to these findings as it indicated that approximately 73% of the registrants had only secondary education and most of them did not complete this level.⁴

It was also noted that approximately 98 per cent of the interviewees were Venezuelan nationals only, and of those with a second nationality, Colombian and Guyanese were most-frequently mentioned.

The majority of respondents were born in the eastern states of Venezuela and the highest number of interviewees reported that they were born in Delta Amacuro, as was evident in DTM 2019 and depicted in Map 2.

MAP 2

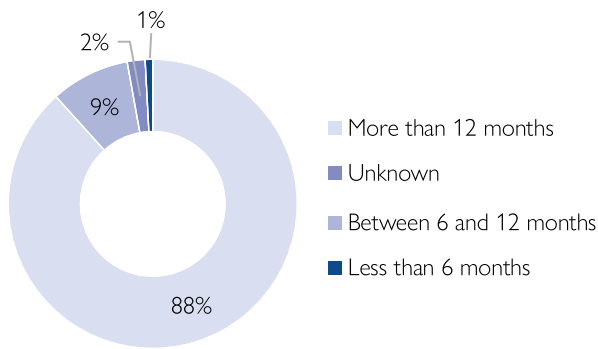
State of Birth



4 This information was obtained through stakeholder consultations, as the IOM did not have access to the data generated from GORTT Venezuelan Registration, up to the time of the DTM 2020 Report.

With respect to the length of stay in Trinidad and Tobago, 88 per cent of the persons interviewed were present in the country for more than twelve months, as shown in Graph 6.

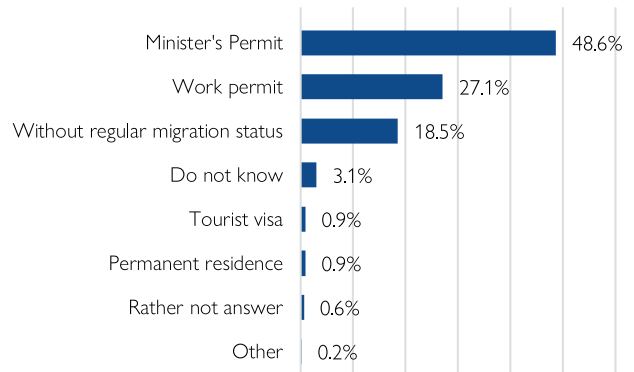
GRAPH N°6
Time in Trinidad and Tobago



In addition, more than two-thirds of the respondents began their journey either in 2018 or 2019, which underscored the recency of their movement.

Further to this, a review of the migratory status of the interviewees indicated that approximately 19 per cent were without regular migration status, whilst about 76 per cent had either a Minister's Permit or a work permit, as depicted in Graph 7.

GRAPH N°7
Migration Status

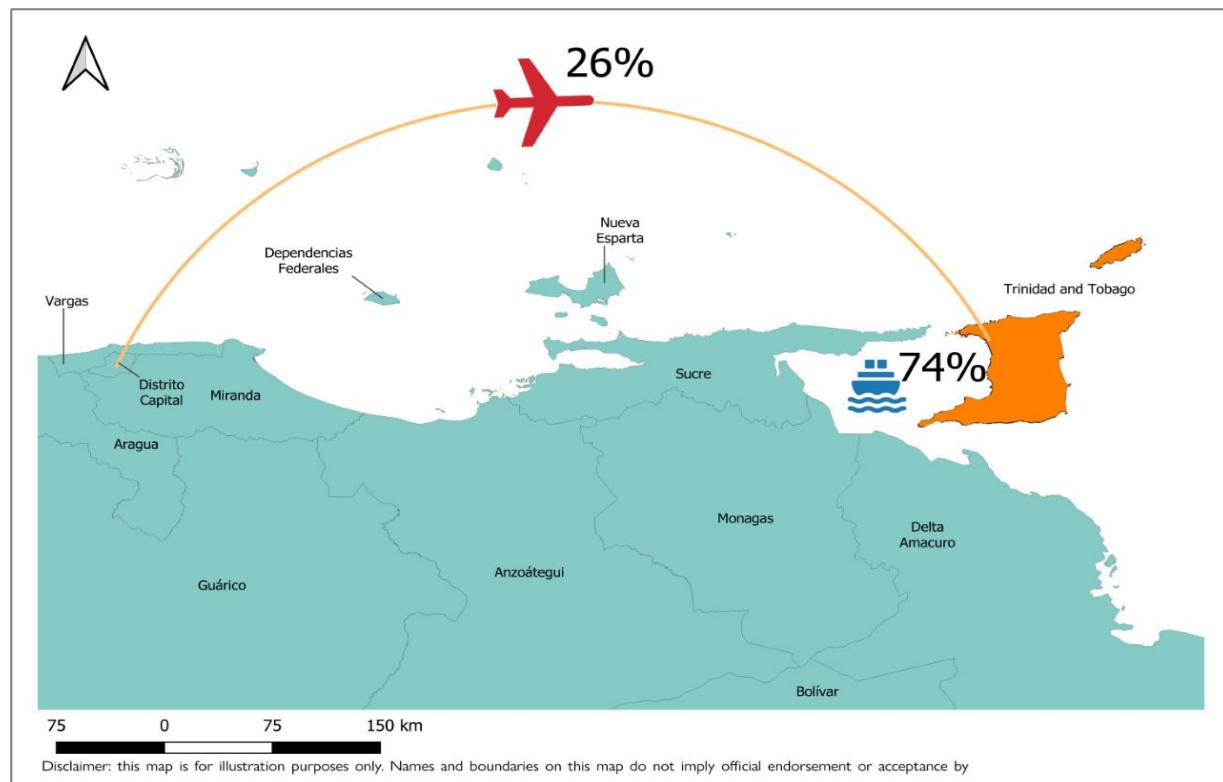


Accordingly, 80 per cent of the DTM respondents were reportedly registered during the Government registration exercise and 89 per cent of these individuals were either asylum seekers or recognized refugees, by UNHCR, as was noted in DTM 2019.

4. ROUTES

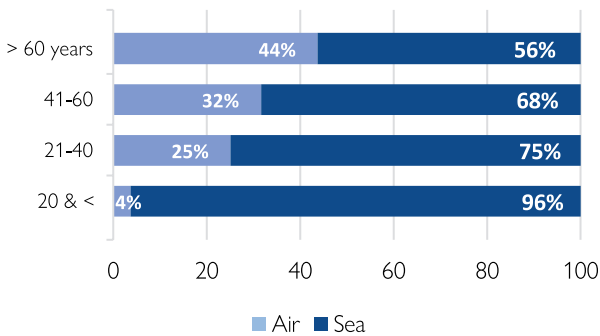
Detailed scrutiny of the actual transit routes utilized by the migrants revealed that 55 per cent began their journey in Delta Amacuro and 74 per cent of all the respondents confirmed that their mode of transport to Trinidad was via boat. Map 3 refers. These two discoveries were comparable to DTM 2019 findings and supported by the information captured during the baseline interviews.

MAP 3
Routes



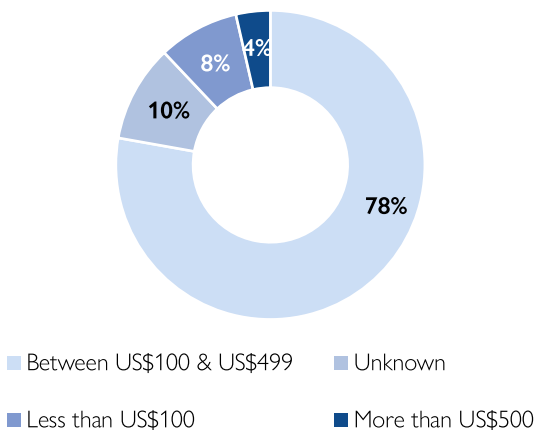
Also, a breakdown of the modes of transportation by age showed a prevalence of sea travel amongst all groupings, which differed from the 2019 observation of a preference for air travel amongst older persons. Graph 8 refers.

GRAPH N°8
Transportation Type by Age



Equally noteworthy was the cost of these journeys. It was found that 78 per cent of the interviewees incurred expenses between 100 to 499 US Dollars for their trip and most of these travelers used sea routes. Nevertheless, a few respondents faced higher costs, as 4 per cent of the persons purportedly paid more than 500 US Dollars, as shown in Graph 9. Similarly, information from the baseline interviews confirmed the costliness of the travel to Trinidad and Tobago and alleged that there were payments to border authorities.

GRAPH N°9
Cost of Trip

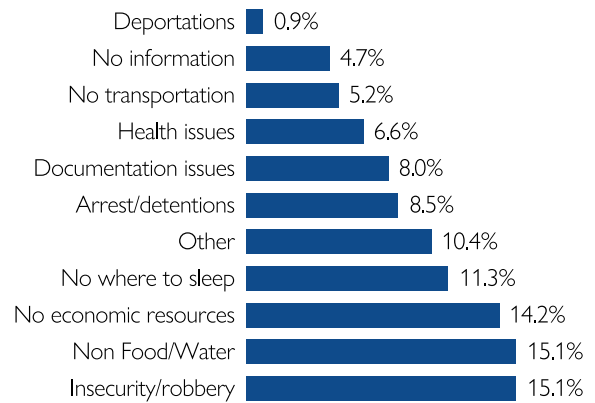


Approximately 42 per cent of the interviewed migrants entered through unofficial entry points, which represented a 28 per cent reduction from DTM 2019, and 56 per cent of the respondents reportedly used their passports to cross borders.

This finding, however, conflicted with information from local authorities who noted an escalation in irregular entries amongst Venezuelan nationals, especially after the introduction of visa requirements for Venezuelan nationals in June 2019 and the closure of national borders in March 2020.

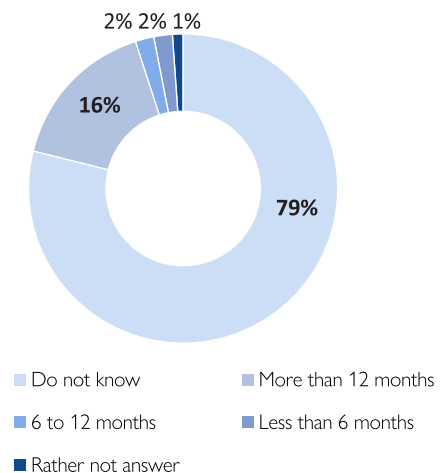
Regarding the journey itself, 89 per cent of the persons did not report any difficulties during the trip. Contrastingly, of the 11 per cent who did encounter challenges, the most frequently cited difficulties were, insecurity and robbery, lack of food, water and economic resources and not having a place to sleep. Graph 10 refers.

GRAPH N°10
Trip Difficulties



Having arrived in Trinidad and Tobago, 79 per cent of interviewees were uncertain of their intended period of stay, whilst 16 per cent expressed their intention to stay for more than 12 months, which is twice as many as the 2019 figure. Smaller percentages of the respondents reported that they intended to stay for '6 to 12 months' and 'less than 6 months' as shown in Graph 11.

GRAPH N°11
Length of Stay



Nonetheless, Trinidad and Tobago was the final destination country for 81 per cent of the persons interviewed and Canada emerged as the second most popular destination, for a significantly lower number of migrants.

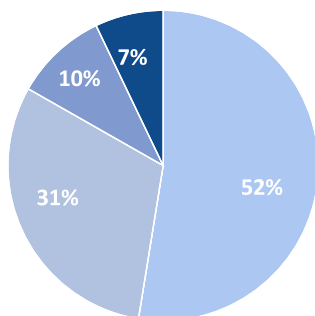
It is interesting to note however, that although 52 per cent of all the respondents planned to return to Venezuela, many were undecided on when they would do so, and 48 per cent of the migrants did not intend to return.

5. DEPENDENTS

In the case of economic dependents, 52 per cent of the interviewees had dependents in both Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela, while 31 per cent had dependents only in Venezuela and 10 per cent of the persons had dependents in Trinidad and Tobago only. Graph 12 refers.

GRAPH N°12

Dependents by Location



- Venezuela & Trinidad
- Only Venezuela
- Only Trinidad
- No dependents

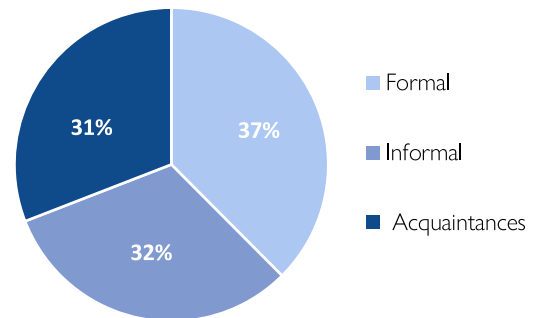
Compared to the DTM 2019, this data reflected a 23 per cent decrease in the number of persons with dependents only in Venezuela, whereas the reported per cent of dependents in both countries doubled in 2020.

Likewise, the baseline interviews recognized an increase in the number persons coming in with their families, inclusive of children.

In spite of the reduction in dependents only in Venezuela, however, 74 per cent of the respondents sent resources to Venezuela, and 67 per cent of these persons transferred money that was intermittently commingled with food and medicine. Additionally, of the top three means of remitting money, formal bank transfers were most popular, as depicted in Graph 13. These trends were similar to the DTM 2019 findings.

GRAPH N°13

Means of Remitting Money



Family Groups

An examination of travelling companions showed that 44 per cent of the respondents did not journey alone and 83 per cent of these persons travelled with their families, which represented a 13 per cent increase from DTM 2019.

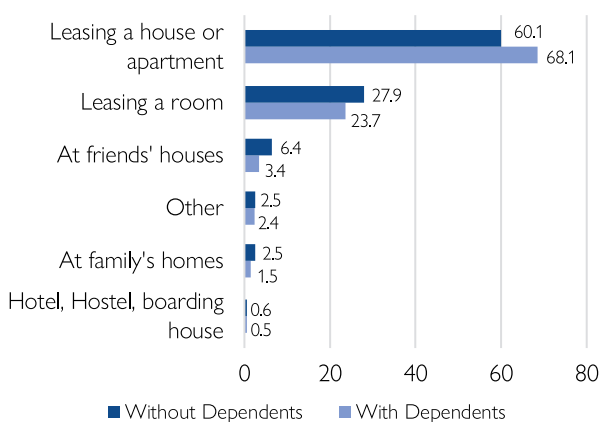
In addition, approximately two-thirds of the respondents who did not travel alone had children in their travel group and 64 per cent of these children travelled with their mothers.

The baseline interviews however, emphasized rising cases of unaccompanied migrant children entering Trinidad and Tobago from Venezuela.

Apart from this, approximately 69 per cent of the persons, with dependents in Trinidad and Tobago, were renting houses or apartments, however, almost a quarter of the persons in this category were recorded as renting single rooms. Graph 14 refers.

GRAPH N°14

Accommodation



Incidentally, some key informants stressed that the COVID-19 pandemic spurred huge job losses amongst the migrant population, which substantially heightened their vulnerability to evictions and homelessness.

A view of escalating frustration amongst the migrants was also expressed, as unemployment stymied their remittances to relatives in Venezuela, who are dependent on these transfers.

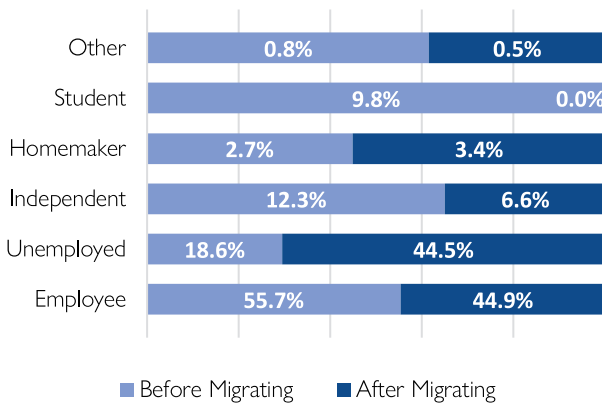
6. WORK STATUS

Migratory movements could sometimes affect the work status of migrants.

More specifically, in the post-migration period there was an evident surge in unemployment amongst the interviewees, coupled with a moderate decrease in employment, as illustrated in Graph 15. This finding varied from the DTM 2019 data, which reported a slight rise in employment subsequent to migration.

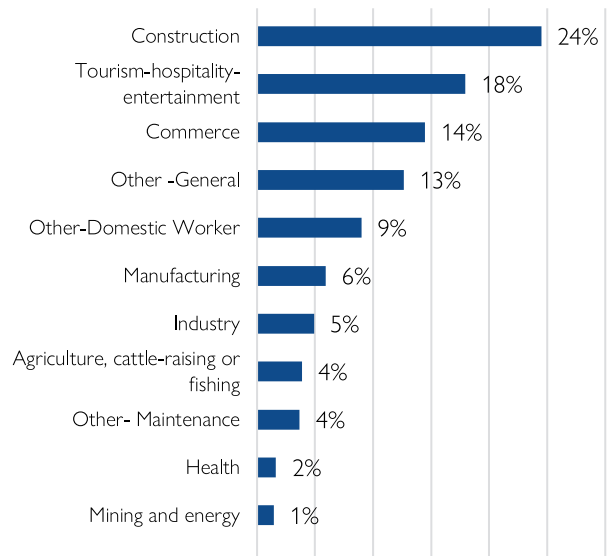
Additionally, in the post migration period all students discontinued their educational pursuits and some of them were absorbed into the labour market as employees, while a little over half were recorded as unemployed.

GRAPH N°15
Work Status by Migration



An analysis of the current work sector indicated that almost a quarter of the employed persons were engaged in the construction sector, as highlighted in Graph 16, which is 22 per cent less than the DTM 2019 figure.

GRAPH N°16
Work Sector



The data also showed that 46 per cent of the currently employed interviewees worked in the informal sector, which was a 14 per cent reduction from the 2019 DTM. This decline may have been impacted by the Government's registration exercise that enabled legitimate Venezuelan migrant employment options.

Moreover, it was discovered that approximately 93 per cent of the persons working in the informal sector, and 65 per cent of the persons working in the formal sector had not signed a contract and/or had no proof of payment for their services.

Likewise, an assessment of salaries, either rated hourly or monthly, indicated that 36 per cent of the respondents working in the formal sector and 54 per cent of the respondents working in the informal sector were underpaid, as they allegedly received less than Trinidad and Tobago's minimum wages.

These findings denoted an increase from the DTM 2019 data, which found that 25 per cent of the persons working in the formal sector and 30 per cent of the persons working in the informal sector were underpaid.

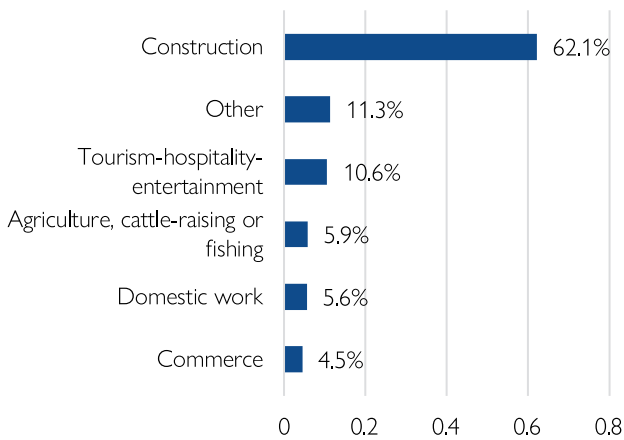
7. PROTECTION

The protection section of DTM 2020 explored some key vulnerabilities of migrant populations.

More specifically, it was discovered that 47 per cent of the respondents were aware of someone in their migrant community who worked without receiving the agreed upon payment and approximately 62 per cent of these incidents were reportedly in the construction sector, as shown in Graph 17.

GRAPH N°17

Unpaid Work



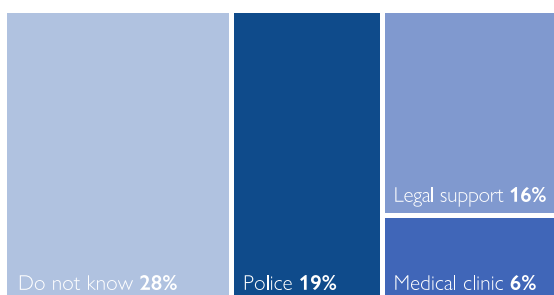
Apart from this, approximately 8 per cent of the persons interviewed were aware of someone in their migrant community who was forced to perform work, or other activities, against their will. These cases occurred in the construction sector, the tourism-hospitality-entertainment sector and sex work, respectively.

Also, close to 25 per cent of the respondents witnessed physical and sexual violence during their time in Trinidad and Tobago.

Correspondingly, the top three options for respondents to seek assistance, in situations of violence against females they knew, were the police, legal support, and a medical clinic, respectively. Yet, 28 per cent of the respondents did not know where to seek assistance, as highlighted in Graph 18.

GRAPH N°18

Assistance to Female Victims of Violence



Furthermore, the survey data informed that 59 per cent of the respondents experienced discrimination that was primarily attributable to their nationality, which was an 11 per cent fall from 2019 DTM figures.

Some stakeholders in the baseline interview though, observed that there were growing cases of xenophobia and domestic violence against women.

8.

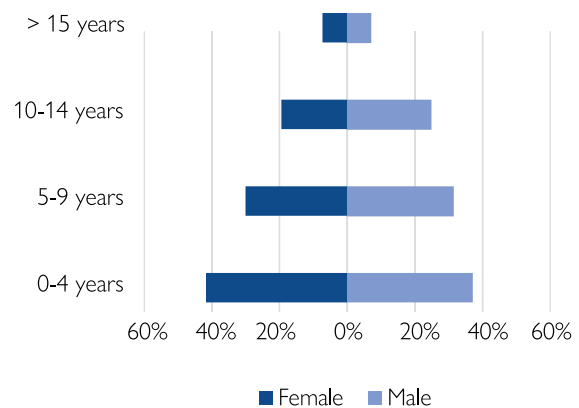
CHILDREN

Children were specifically examined in DTM 2020 and it was noted that there were 1,216 children, under the age of 18 years, who lived with 65 per cent of the interviewees.

Moreover, an age and sex breakdown of the children dwelling with the respondents revealed that there were 8 per cent more males than females and the 0-4 category had the largest number of children, followed by the 5-9 age group. Graph 19 refers.

GRAPH N°19

Children by Age and Sex



The issue of birth certificates was also considered, and it was found that 13 per cent of the respondents were aware of circumstances whereby a child was born in Trinidad and Tobago to a Venezuelan migrant and did not have a birth certificate.

This finding corresponds to a view of one stakeholder in the baseline interview, who expressed concern over unregistered births of Venezuelan migrant babies, possibly due to financial constraints faced by the parents.

Apart from this, the data showed that 59 per cent of the children living with the respondents did not have access to education in Trinidad and Tobago and over half of the interviewees identified lack of documents and costs as the main reasons for this inaccessibility. Also, there were four cases where 'working' was indicated as the reason for no access to education and one case of 'early marriage/ pregnancy'.

Furthermore, a few cases of child detention and instances of children involved in work that jeopardizes their health and safety were specified.

It must be mentioned however, that there is neither a policy nor provisions for the detention of children by the authorities in Trinidad and Tobago. Nonetheless, some stakeholders referred to extenuating conditions whereby the court may place children under the custody of a specific authority.

Moreover, within the context of COVID 19 and the subsequent national border closure on 23rd March 2020, all irregular entrants are placed within quarantine stations, in accordance with prevailing health protocols.

Similarly, the reported situations of separated and unaccompanied children, were negligible, which contradicted information from the baseline interviews that referred to an increase in unaccompanied minors.

The data also determined that 12 per cent of the respondents had heard of both physical and sexual violence against children, within their migrant community.

In addition, 39 per cent of the interviewees that resided with children reported strong changes in the child's/children's mood since their departure from Venezuela, with detachment from family and friends being the most cited change.

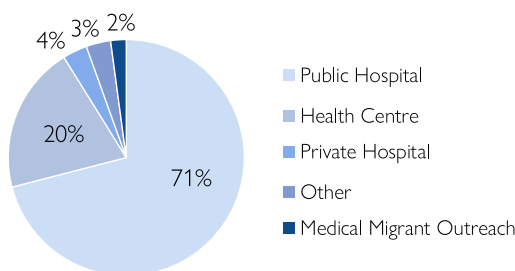
9. HEALTH

Health is a core theme of the DTM. Notwithstanding this, 20 per cent of the respondents stated that they had no current need for health care services, which is an 18 per cent decrease from DTM 2019.

Moreover, 20 per cent of the interviewees asserted that they had no access to health services when they needed it.

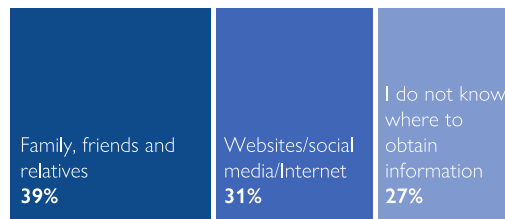
Of the persons who had access to health services, 71 per cent reported that the public hospital was their primary option, followed by the Health Centre, as shown in Graph 20.

GRAPH N°20
Health Service Options



Additionally, 39 per cent of the interviewees received information about health services from their relatives and friends, however, 27 per cent did not know where to obtain this information. Graph 21 refers.

GRAPH N°21
Top 3 Sources of Information on Health Services



Also, 84 per cent of the respondents did not access reproductive and sexual health services. However, persons who did obtain these services listed HIV tests, contraceptives (inclusive of condoms) and STD tests as the top three services accessed, respectively.

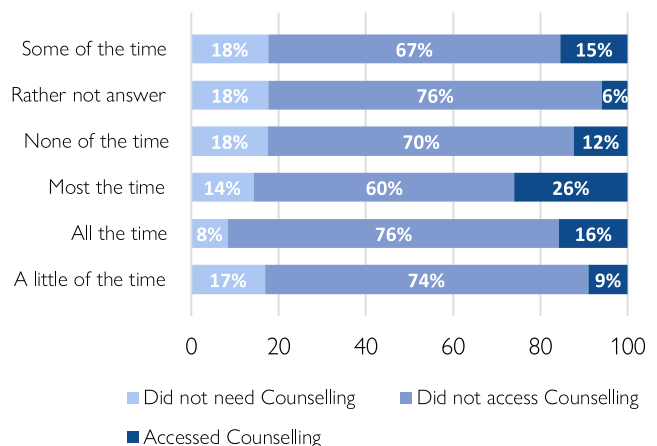
Another discovery was that one quarter of the pregnant mothers did not access prenatal services.

In addition, 77 per cent of the interviewees advised that they did not have any chronic medical conditions, whilst 17 per cent referred to chronic conditions such as: hypertension; asthma; sensory and motor conditions; visual deficiencies; kidney problems, mental health conditions and allergies.

Respondents were also asked about their emotional well-being and almost a quarter of them were upset 'some of the time' during the past two weeks prior to the interview, whilst 17 per cent were upset either 'most of the time' or 'all of the time'.

More interestingly, 60 per cent of the persons who felt upset most of the time and 76 per cent of those of who felt upset all the time did not access counselling or psychosocial support in Trinidad and Tobago, as depicted in Graph 22.

GRAPH N°22
Emotional Support



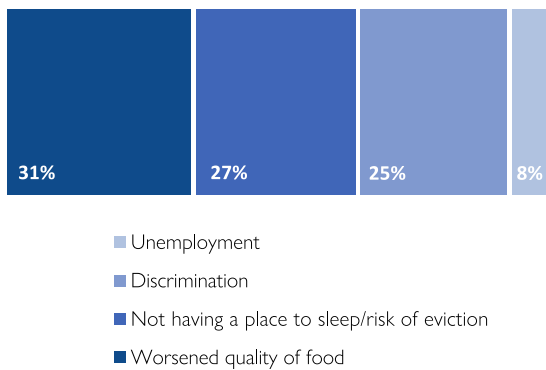
This finding supports the views of key informants who echoed sentiments of despair amongst the Venezuelan migrant population.

10. COVID-19

Most societies have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020. Accordingly, almost two thirds of the interviewed persons experienced difficulties since the start of the COVID-19. Within this population, the most pressing issue was the worsened quality of food, which confronted 31 per cent of the persons. Not having a place to sleep/risk of eviction, discrimination and unemployment were respectively the second, third and fourth most cited concerns, as shown in Graph 23.

GRAPH N°23

Top 4 COVID-related Difficulties



These challenges were also recorded during the baseline interviews and unemployment and eviction problems were especially emphasized.

In addition, 68 per cent of the unemployed respondents reportedly lost their jobs in Trinidad and Tobago due to the pandemic.

It was however noted that 55 per cent of the respondents received support during the COVID-19 pandemic, with in-kind assistance being the most widely accessed type. Furthermore, 81 per cent of this support was provided by religious organizations and international organizations.

Additionally, 82 per cent of the interviewees indicated that they had access to essential hygiene and disinfection supplies, inclusive of masks and sanitizers.

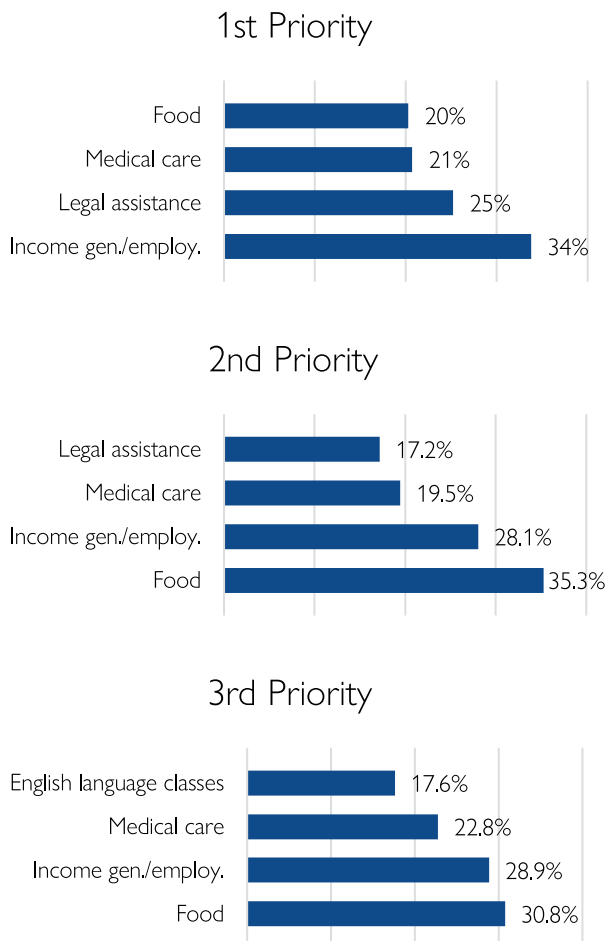
11. NEEDS

Respondents were asked to prioritize their needs, and through this process income generation/ employment emerged as the first priority need, followed by legal assistance and medical care respectively. The data also showed that food needs topped the second and third priorities. Graph 24 refers. These findings generally concurred with the DTM 2019 figures, however the need for food was more evident in DTM 2020.

On the other hand, the baseline interviews prioritized shelter, jobs, and food respectively, as main migrant needs.

GRAPH N°24

Top 4 Prioritized Migrant Needs



A closer review of the interviewees' food circumstances though, revealed that 41 per cent of them 'skipped meals or ate less than usual' during the past seven days before the interview.

12.

SUMMARY

Evidently, a comparison between DTM 2019 and 2020 showed that migratory flows persisted, with a reported prevalence of sea entries amongst the respondents.

Also, less than a quarter of the respondents were in irregular situations and there was a notable shift away from the informal work sector, which may have been prompted by the Government's registration exercise.

Thus, legal job options for registered migrants are encouraging developments, as it could assist with improved access to priority needs.

However, there are increasing instances of employer underpayment and, in the wake of Covid-19, a noticeable contraction of local employment opportunities has tremendously challenged the livelihoods of the migrants.

The post-migration period also did not produce the usual impact on employment.

Moreover, the thrust towards family migration and family reunification in Trinidad and Tobago, has essentially expanded the immediate housing and food requirements of the migrants.

In the same vein, the specific needs of children within these settings, particularly their education, cannot be ignored given that a substantial number of migrants are uncertain of their duration in Trinidad and Tobago.

Apart from this, there were apparent information gaps regarding available health services and options to address violence against women.

Most respondents also did not access to reproductive and sexual health care, which could negatively impact the wider society.

Finally, discrimination remained an issue for the migrants, but the claims, based on nationality, fell between 2019 DTM and 2020 DTM.

Hence, the constantly evolving migrant situation should be continuously analyzed to inform programmatic efforts and policy initiatives and ensure that existing needs are adequately met.

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