

INTEGRATION OF VENEZUELAN MIGRANT BENEFICIARIES OF IOM DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

KEY FINDINGS USING A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH
TO MEASURE MIGRANT INTEGRATION OUTCOMES

STUDY REPORT

2022



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For more information, please download the [IOM/IPL Migrant Integration Index](#) Infosheet or visit our [SharePoint](#) (internal).”

The findings contained in this study are preliminary and are meant to provide a snapshot of the integration outcomes of migrant beneficiaries of IOM CBI programming in Dominican Republic. To understand more about the IPL Migrant Integration Index, please access the following related documents:

[The IPL Integration Index Website](#)

[Multidimensional measure of immigrant integration](#)

[Supplementary Information for Multidimensional Measure of Immigrant Integration](#).

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region, intra- and inter-regional migration flows have intensified since the end of the 20th century. Labor migration is one of the most frequent, mainly due to the diverse socioeconomic situations of the countries in the region. The new migratory trends (from 2000 to date) are developed for political, social, economic, environmental, and climatic reasons; however, there is little information on the degree of social, political, economic, linguistic and psychological integration that migrants have in the destination countries.

Dominican Republic is host to the **largest population** of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the Caribbean sub-region, more than one hundred thousand Venezuelan live in DR. Through the Normalization Plan for Venezuelans, more than 42,000 Venezuelan migrants (out of a total of 114,000 Venezuelans) were registered in Phase 1 ([United Nations, 2022](#)). In recent years, the Dominican Republic has become a destination country for various Latin American and Caribbean migrants also hosting migrants of other nationalities such as Spaniards, French, Italians and others.

However, little is known about migrants' broader integration experience and their perspectives of arrival and settlement in different facets of community life. A review of existing surveys and recent assessment studies on Venezuelans in Dominican Republic has shown that the focus has been mostly on employment, service access and to a lesser extent, on levels of discrimination and social belonging.

Oftentimes, these studies and surveys look at "integration" from a purely "service access" perspective or more so in economic terms, without looking at the social and relational aspects that migrants have towards their communities. Many of the existing integration frameworks and assessment tools and studies fail to consider migrants' existing ability and knowledge to establish themselves in new communities, a process which includes psychological, linguistic, social and political or civic dimensions, among others.

Against these trends and the lack of comparative data and empirical tools to examine the integration of migrants, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has adapted a multidimensional approach to measure integration outcomes of migrants originally created by the Immigration Policy Lab (IPL) at ETH Zurich to the LAC context. Together with IPL, IOM developed accompanying materials, allowing practitioners to use it in other contexts. Central to this approach is the adaptation of the IPL Integration Index, a survey-based tool, originally developed by IPL to the LAC context. The approach captures six key areas of migrant integration, was tested in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and Peru among IOM's migrant beneficiaries.

IN THIS STUDY, **INTEGRATION IS** DEFINED AS THE DEGREE TO WHICH MIGRANTS HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY TO BUILD SUCCESSFUL, FULFILLING LIVES IN THE HOST SOCIETY. THIS DEFINITION RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF MIGRANTS' EXISTING KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY.









2. MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO MEASURE MIGRANT INTEGRATION

To address these developments, this study has adopted a multidimensional approach to measure migrant integration outcomes. The study focuses on the multidimensionality of the integration process, which is defined as the degree to which migrants have the knowledge and capacity to build a successful, fulfilling life in the host society. This definition recognizes the importance of **knowledge and capacity**. **Knowledge** entails aspects such as fluency in the national language and the ability to navigate the host country's labor market and social institutions. **Capacity** refers to the mental, social, and economic resources migrants have to invest in their futures. The operationalization of this approach is described in the following section.

As mentioned, central to this approach is the IPL Integration Index, a survey-based tool, containing questions that have clear directionality and dedicated scores such that higher values obtained by respondents signal higher levels of integration. It was designed to be adaptable to different national and local contexts. Given the focus on **integration**, as opposed to assimilation, the Index does not presuppose that migrants shed cultural repertoires of their home country.

The Index measures the multidimensional capacities and resources of migrants to settle in their new environment, considering the following six integration dimensions:

INTEGRATION DIMENSIONS					
PSYCHOLOGICAL 	LINGUISTIC 	SOCIAL 	ECONOMIC 	POLITICAL 	NAVIGATIONAL 
<p>Captures respondents' feeling of connection with host country, their wish to continue living there, and their sense of belonging.</p>	<p>Captures respondents' assessment of their ability to read, speak, write, and understand the dominant language of their host country or region.</p>	<p>Captures social ties and interactions with nationals in the host country, as well as bridging social capital as evidenced by participation in organizations with nationals.</p>	<p>Captures income, employment, satisfaction, with employment situation, and the ability to meet different levels of unexpected expenses.</p>	<p>Captures understanding of the important political issues facing the host country and the degree to which respondents engage in discussion and political knowledge.</p>	<p>Captures the ability to manage basic needs in the host country, such as seeing a doctor, addressing legal problems, and searching for jobs.</p>

Each dimension is captured by a set of two to four questions, which may include some sub questions¹. The score of each question is computed between 1 and 5 points. The measure is then rescaled to range from 0 to 1 such that the higher the score, the more integrated the respondent is. The overall score is then obtained by calculating the mean of each dimension's integration score. To know more about the index and how to calculate the scores, click on the following link: [Supplementary Information for Multidimensional Measure of Immigrant Integration](#).

¹ In case of the Dominican Republic, the questions about linguistic dimension are excluded since Venezuelan migrants speak Spanish as in the host country.

3. APPLICATION OF THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL INTEGRATION MEASUREMENT TOOL IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

To validate the effectiveness of the IPL Integration Index (hereafter “the index”), a pre-pilot survey was conducted with 18 respondents and a pilot survey with 64 respondents. After this phase, the actual data collection was conducted through phone surveys with 816 Venezuelan migrants living in the Dominican Republic and beneficiaries of IOM.

IOM Dominican Republic applied the index with beneficiaries of the cash-based interventions (CBI) program, who were assisted in the framework of projects such as ‘Inclusive Cities, Communities of Solidarity’ and the regional program Venezuela’s Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) during the years 2020 - 2021. These projects and programs aimed to reduce the socio-economic effects of the pandemic.

The actual data collection took approximately 2 months to complete. Data analysis, interpretation and reporting was conducted by the IPL and the IOM mission in the Dominican Republic. The data presented in this report is a detailed summary of the most relevant findings throughout this study.



Using a random sample, the study aims to obtain data on Venezuelan beneficiaries of some IOM Dominican Republic monetary intervention projects. Therefore, based on this study, no conclusions can be drawn for all Venezuelans in the Dominican Republic, for migrants of other nationalities supported by IOM projects or for the entire population of vulnerable migrants in the Dominican Republic.

Similarly, this study seeks to:

- 1) Understand and capture the results and experience of the multidimensional integration of Venezuelan migrants who are beneficiaries of IOM,
- 2) Adapt and standardize the IPL index to conduct this type of survey in other contexts,
- 3) Contribute to the development of evidence-based policymaking and take action in line with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.


OVERVIEW OF THE DATA RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

816 RESPONDENTS


71% Women   **29%** Men


747 OF THE RESPONDENTS ARE BETWEEN 25 AND 39 YEARS OLD

 More than **80%** of respondents are **employed**


less than **20%** are **unemployed** 

 More than **88%** of men are **employed**

78% of women are **employed** 

 **30%** work in the **service** sector


27.7% work in **sales** 


 **13%** work in **administrative activities**


11% have jobs in **professional and technical** sectors 


 **9%** work in the **non-specialized** sector

9% work in the **semi-specialized** sector 

 Among women, **30%** work in the **service** sector and almost **30%** work in the **sales** sector


Among men, **27.5%** work in the **service** sector and almost **25%** in the **sales** sector, while **17%** work in the **semi-specialized** sector 

 Almost **2/3** of the respondents have a **Bachelor's degree** while a **minimal percentage** has only a **secondary school**


Around **95%** of Venezuelans in this sample have a **Venezuelan identity card** 


 **97%** have a **Venezuelan passport**

17% have a **work visa*** 

 Men have **more** **basic migratory documents** (identity card and passport) than women

Almost **97%** and **98%** of men hold **Venezuelan identity cards and passports, respectively** 

 **94%** and more than **97%** of women hold **Venezuelan identity cards and passports, respectively**

76% of those surveyed have **irregular migratory status**** 

* THIS FIGURE IS NOT REPRESENTATIVE, AFTER THE NORMALIZATION PLAN FOR VENEZUELAN, THE NUMBER OF WORK VISAS ISSUED HAVE INCREASED, APPROXIMATELY 21,000 WORK VISAS HAVE BEEN ISSUED.

** THIS FIGURE IS NOT REPRESENTATIVE; AFTER THE NORMALIZATION PLAN FOR VENEZUELAN, THE FIGURE MAY BE LOWER

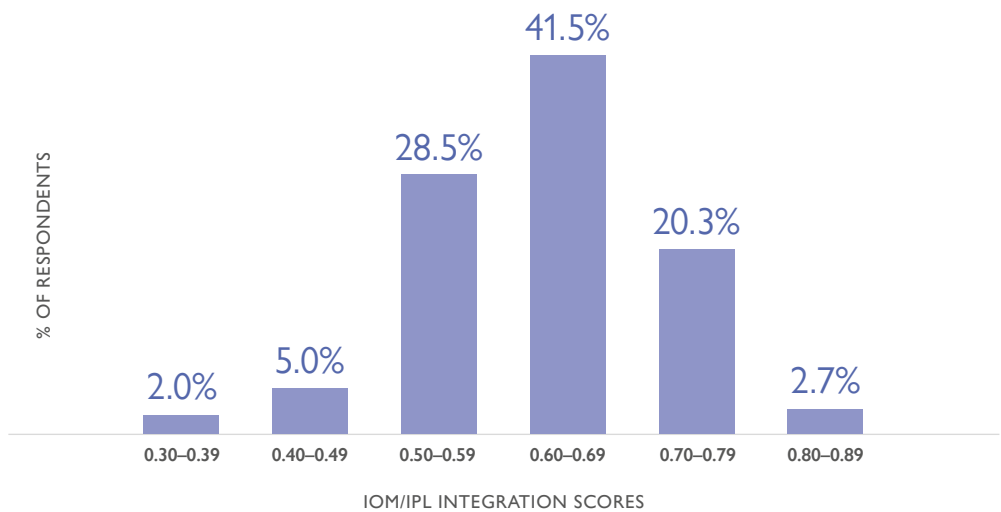
4. KEY FINDINGS

The following findings present an overview of the integration of Venezuelan beneficiaries of IOM programming in the Dominican Republic. The results presented below provide a breakdown of this score according to the respondents' demographic characteristics as well as to the six dimensions of the tool.

Considering that the questions were not mandatory, respondents could skip questions. When grouping answers by different categories (e.g. educational attainment for men only), some values for a variable may have not so many observations. This makes it difficult to capture the mean of the outcome of interest for this particular group (e.g. integration score of men who did not complete primary school). For statistical significance, every group category, unless explicitly mentioned, has at least 30 responses. Therefore, categories with less than 30 responses were not considered for presentation in the following graphs and analysis.

MIGRANT INTEGRATION INDEX
The scores follow a normal distribution from 0 to 1: the higher the score, the higher the integration.

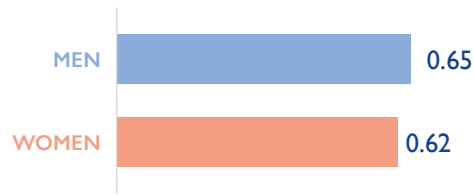
MIGRANT INTEGRATION INDEX IPL INDEX DISTRIBUTION



The integration score mean for this sample of Venezuelan migrants in the Dominican Republic is of 0.63. To put this into perspective, the integration scores of Venezuelan migrants in Peru and Brazil are of 0.52 and 0.50, respectively. However, it is important to mention that the samples of Venezuelan migrants living in these 3 countries are different not only because they are currently living in different countries, but also because of the difference in characteristics of the populations from which each sample was drawn. These differences include but are not limited to eligibility and access to assistance, factors that caused the migrants to move to country A instead of country B, and time of migration and causes thereof.

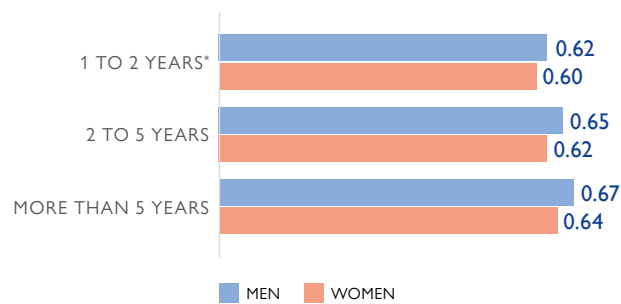
41.5% of the respondents have integration scores between 0.60 and 0.69.

INTEGRATION SCORES PER GENDER



In this sample, women have lower overall integration scores (0,62) than men (0,65). This trend is reflected in several dimensions of integration and variables included in this study.

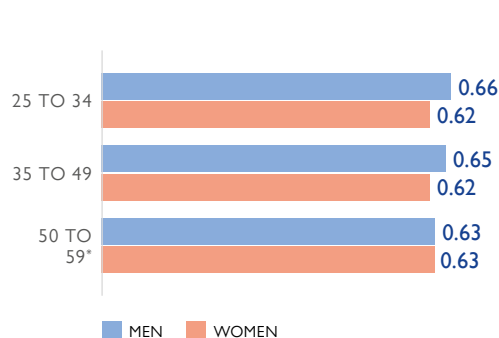
INTEGRATION SCORES PER LENGTH OF STAY SORTED BY GENDER



*THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH OBSERVATIONS FOR THE CATEGORY 1 TO 2 YEARS

Although there is no significant statistical difference between the categories, there is a slightly upward trend for integration outcomes (for both men and women) as time in the Dominican Republic increases. Also, there is a small difference in terms of gender, showing that men tend to have slightly higher integration scores across all groupings of 'length of stay'.

INTEGRATION SCORES PER AGE SORTED BY GENDER



*THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH OBSERVATIONS FOR THE CATEGORY MEN OF 50 TO 59.

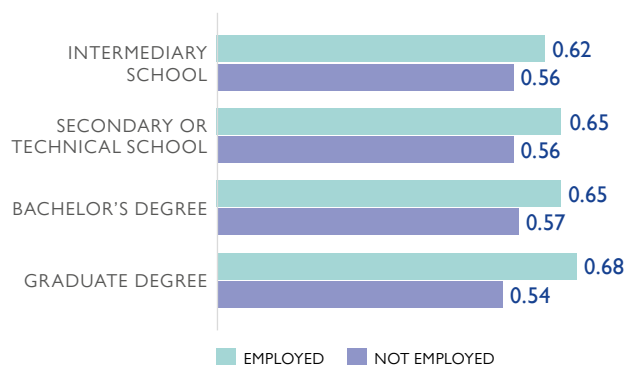
Integration scores are the highest for men respondents between the age of 25 and 34 years old. Once again, there is a difference in terms of gender, women show lower integration scores across all age categories.

INTEGRATION SCORES PER EMPLOYMENT STATUS



Lower integration scores are seen among those who are unemployed (0,57) as opposed to those who are employed (0,65), irrespective of gender. Also, there is a small difference in terms of gender and men tend to show slightly higher integration across both categories of employment status.

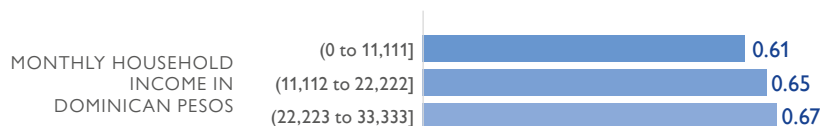
INTEGRATION SCORES PER EMPLOYMENT STATUS SORTED BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINMENT



Statistically significant differences in integration scores are observed between employed and unemployed respondents with a bachelor's degree, 0.65 and 0.57, respectively.

Even though there are very few observations for the category "Graduate Degree", the lower integration scores of unemployed respondents with graduate degree when comparing to all the other categories may be due to the fact that their academic degree may not be valid in the Dominican Republic and therefore, they cannot benefit from their education.

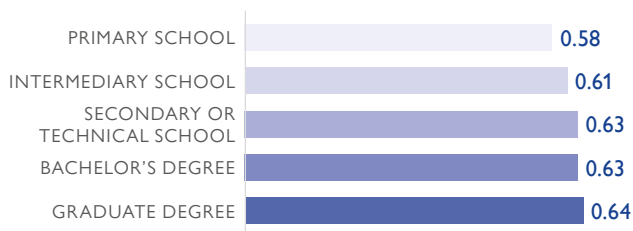
INTEGRATION SCORES PER INCOME



NOTE: SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION COEFFICIENT= .27

Income has a positive correlation with integration. In other words, the higher the household income, the more integrated the migrant is. Integration scores significantly increase for respondents who live in a household with relatively high income (more than 11,111 Dominican Pesos per month).

INTEGRATION SCORES PER EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

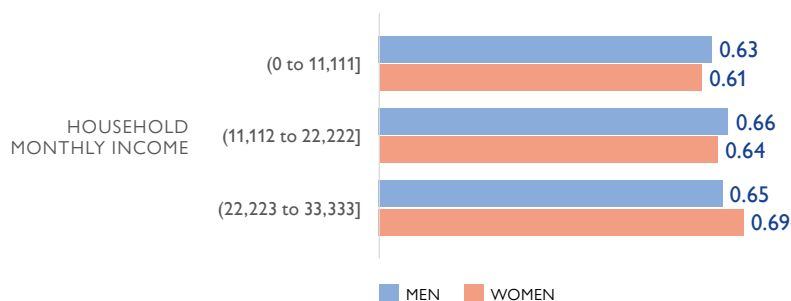


NOTE: SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION COEFFICIENT= 0.10

In general, educational attainment has a positive correlation with integration. In other words, the higher the level of education, the more integrated the migrant is.

Although both income and education have a positive correlation with integration, income tends to be more significant. This is evidenced when the Spearman's correlation coefficient, which measures the strength and direction of association between two ranked variables, is 0.27 for income and integration and 0.10 for educational attainment and integration – a value closer to 1 indicates a stronger positive correlation.

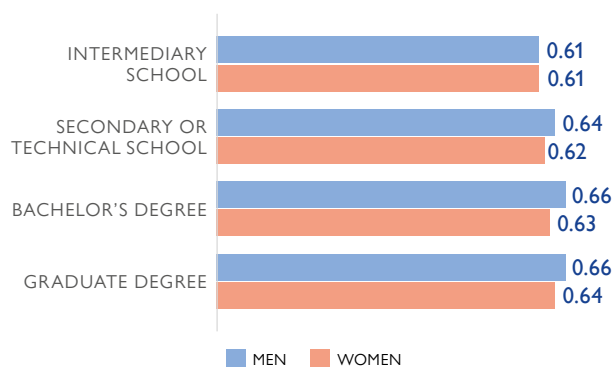
INTEGRATION SCORES PER INCOME SORTED BY GENDER



For women, income has a significant positive relationship with integration scores, which is not the case for men. For them, income does not have a significant impact on the integration scores. This may be due to the fact that, in this study, women are more generally heads of households. Among the respondents who earn the highest, they often work in sales or in services. Presumably, those working in the service sector may also have higher scores in the social dimension. To a lesser extent, they have a technical or professional occupation, or have an administrative occupation.

As income has a relatively strong relationship with integration, it may explain why for the employment status variable, the difference in terms of gender is not that significant.

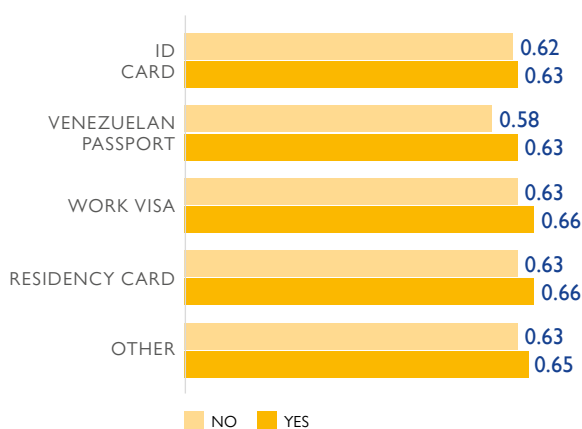
INTEGRATION SCORES PER EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT SORTED BY GENDER



*THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH OBSERVATIONS FOR THE CATEGORIES INTERMEDIARY SCHOOL (MEN) AND GRADUATE DEGREE (MEN).

For both men and women, educational attainment has a positive correlation with integration scores. Women with graduate degrees show the same integration score as men with secondary or technical school degree. The difference in the level of integration of women may be due to their level of unemployment. Even if they are employed, they are usually working in sectors that are lesser paid compared to men (see section on integration by employment status).

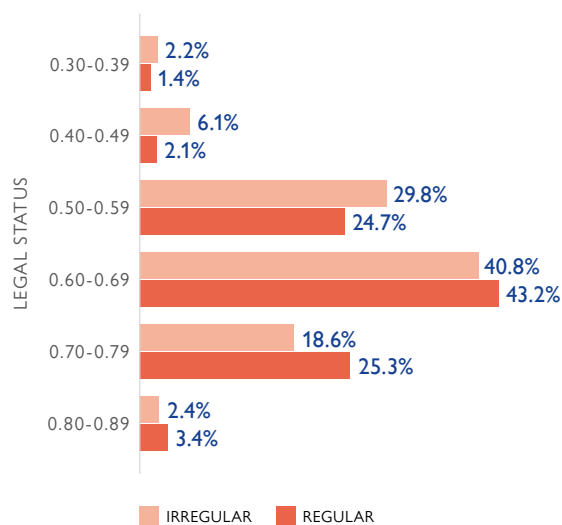
INTEGRATION SCORES PER LEGAL DOCUMENTATION



*THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH OBSERVATIONS FOR THE CATEGORY VENEZUELAN PASSPORT

Having a work visa is correlated with higher integration scores. Respondents with a work visa have, on average, an integration score of 0.66, whereas respondents without one have, on average, an integration score of 0.63.

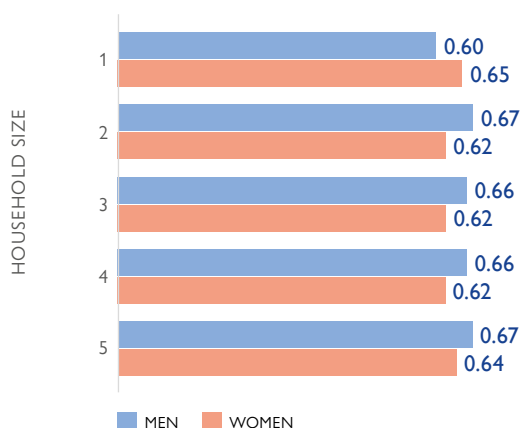
INTEGRATION SCORES PER MIGRATION STATUS



Approximately 38% of respondents with irregular status have an integration score up to 0.59 when approximately 28% of respondents with regular status have an integration score up to 0.59. 21% of respondents with irregular status have an integration score of 0.7 or more, while more than 28% of respondents with regular status have an integration score of 0.7 or more.

40.8% of respondents with irregular status have an integration score of 0.60 vs. 43.2% of the respondents with regular status have an integration score of 0.69. Only 29.8% of respondents with irregular status have an integration score of 0.50.

INTEGRATION SCORES PER HOUSEHOLD SORTED BY GENDER



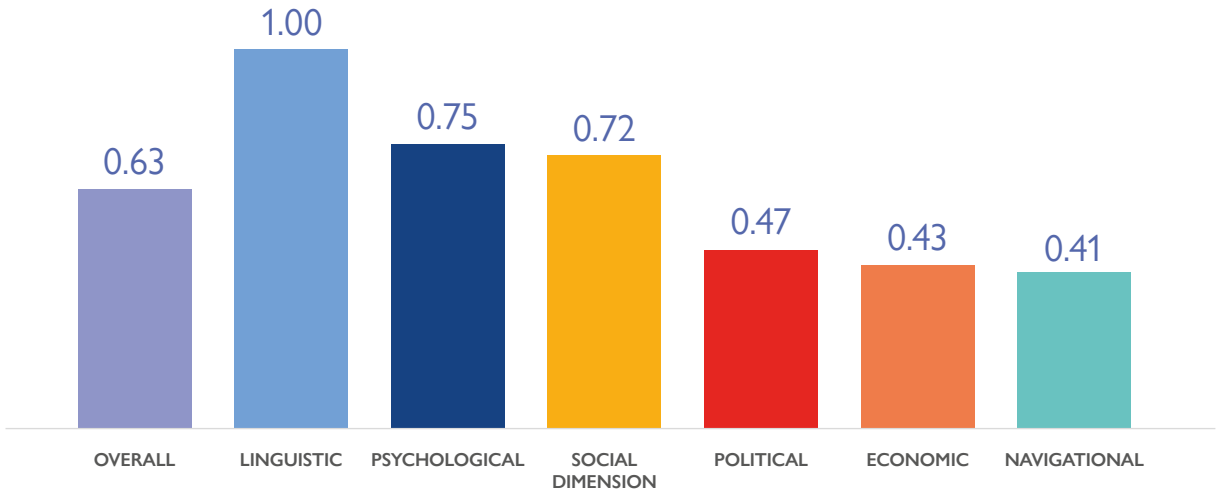
Men living in a 3-member household have higher integration scores than women living in a household of the same size.

Men living alone have lower integration scores than men living in a 2- or 3-member household. It might be because men are not as well socialized in the social – emotional area and, as a result may deal with their loneliness in ways that alienate them even further from social contact (Bristol, 2014), affecting their integration score due to the transversal impact of social isolation or loneliness.

There are some signs that women living alone have higher integration scores than women living in a 2-, 3-, or 4-member household. However, these differences are not statistically significant.

5. INTEGRATION SCORES PER DIMENSION

Out of the 816 who were interviewed, we can calculate the integration scores for 636 respondents. For these, the average IPL Integration Index is 0.63.



* LINGUISTIC INTEGRATION RECEIVED THE MAXIMUM INTEGRATION SCORE OF 1 SINCE ALL RESPONDENTS ARE NATIVE SPANISH SPEAKERS.

The reason why we can't calculate the integration scores for some respondents can be explained by one of the following scenarios:

- The respondent refused to answer an IPL Index-related question (i.e., the enumerator selected the answer option 'Refuse to answer').
- The respondent did not know the answer to an IPL Index-related question (i.e., the enumerator selected the answer option 'Don't know').
- The response for an IPL Index-related question was not recorded (i.e., the enumerator did not select any answer option).

PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

INTEGRATION SCORE
0.75

MALE

FEMALE

0.77

0.74

The overall score for the psychological dimension is 0.75, the highest value among all five dimensions. This indicates that respondents have a strong connection to the Dominican Republic and describe feeling a sense of belonging and have intentions to continue living in the country.

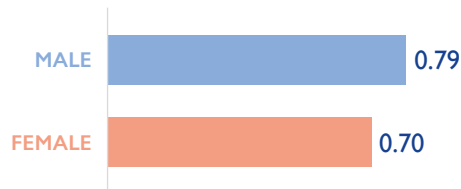
When considering the gender of the respondents, men show higher integration scores than women, but it is minimal.



SOCIAL DIMENSION

INTEGRATION SCORE

0.72



The overall score for the social dimension is 0.72, the second highest value among all dimensions. This shows that respondents have social ties and interactions with nationals in the Dominican Republic.

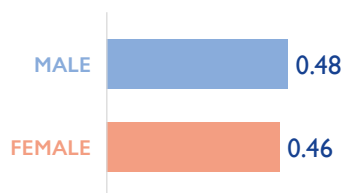
When comparing genders, women show much lower social integration scores than men. The social dimension is responsible for the greatest integration gaps in terms of gender, indicating that women may be more isolated and have less interactions with nationals.



POLITICAL DIMENSION

INTEGRATION SCORE

0.47

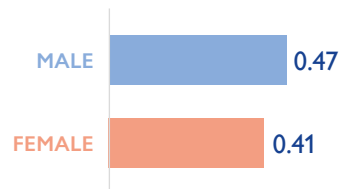


The overall political integration score is 0.47. Even though it is the third highest value among all dimensions, the results show that a certain number of respondents skipped the political questions, which may indicate a certain level of discomfort regarding this dimension. Possibly there is less understanding of the important political issues facing the host country and less engagement in discussion and political action.



ECONOMIC DIMENSION

INTEGRATION SCORE
0.43



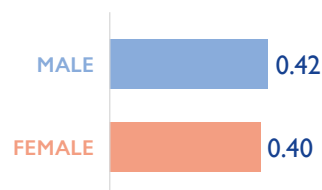
The overall economic integration score is 0.43, the second lowest value among all dimensions, which indicates that respondents have more difficulties regarding income, employment, satisfaction with their employment situation and the ability to meet different levels of unexpected expenses.

It also shows an important difference in terms of gender. This dimension has the second greatest integration gap between men and women.



NAVIGATIONAL DIMENSION

INTEGRATION SCORE
0.35



The overall navigational integration score is 0.41, the lowest value among all dimensions. This indicates that respondents face more difficulties when managing basic needs, such as searching for a job, seeing a doctor or getting legal help, in the host country.

Another reason for the lower score is that the navigational dimension measure also tests knowledge of basic laws in the host country. An important number of respondents skipped the questions or answered I don't know.

7. CONCLUSIONS



OVERVIEW OF INTEGRATION SCORES

- Over 40% of the respondents have integration scores between 0.60 and 0.69 and almost all the respondents (90%) have integration scores between 0.50 and 0.79.
- Men have higher integration scores (0.65) than women (0.62) across multiple variables of integration and dimensions.



INCOME, EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION



- Most of the respondents (80%) are employed. 88% of men are employed, while only 78% of women are working. Employed respondents show higher integration scores than unemployed respondents.
- Most respondents (over 65%) have bachelor's degrees. Men with bachelor's degrees have higher integration scores than women with bachelor's degrees. Additionally, employed respondents with a bachelor's degree have higher integration scores than unemployed respondents with bachelor's degrees.
- Over half of the respondents have a monthly household income of less than 11,111 Dominican Pesos.
- Income has a stronger correlation with high integration scores than educational attainment.



LEGAL DOCUMENTATION

- Most respondents (over 94%) have a Venezuelan ID card and/or a passport. Over 17% of respondents have a work visa. Those with a work visa have higher integration scores than those without.
- Respondents with irregular status have lower integration scores than respondents with regular status.



HOUSEHOLD

- Women living in a household with relatively higher income also have higher integration scores than other women. For men, household monthly income is not strongly correlated with integration scores.
- Men living in a household of 3 members have higher integration scores than women living in a household of the same size.



INTEGRATION DIMENSIONS

- The social and economic dimensions show the biggest gaps in terms of gender.
- The 3 sub-dimensions where respondents score the lowest are the Navigational, Economic, and Political. The other 3 sub-dimensions Social, Psychological, and Linguistic show statistically significant higher levels of integration.
- Since all respondents are native Spanish speakers, they are all assigned maximum integration scores for the Linguistic dimension.



8. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

This study using the IPL Integration Index provides a deeper overview on where integration gaps and barriers exist, to better map and target vulnerable populations, and to tailor programming, policies, and interventions on their integration.

Some key considerations from the study's findings are the following:



The Index can be used for monitoring the degree to which migrants have the knowledge and capacity to build a successful and fulfilling life, and determines the level of access to human rights such as Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) in the host community.



The findings can help actors better design interventions in ways that are supportive of migrants' integration. They confirm the need for further investment in systematic assessment of integration outcomes of migrants to inform policy and practice.



The gender gap across various integration indicators reinforces that gender considerations need to be taken into account in research studies, humanitarian needs assessments, and in the design of sustainable integration interventions.



The findings confirm that employment and income play an important role in integration but also suggest that income is even more important in explaining higher integration scores for this group of beneficiaries. The findings suggest that promoting partnerships between education providers and the private sector, through work-based learning, internships and apprenticeships and other pathways to labour market inclusion could support migrant empowerment and self-sufficiency.



The Normalization Plan for Venezuelans shows that opening pathways to obtain regularization is an important factor for the integration of migrants. Given the high scores in the psychological dimension, broadening pathways to regularization will open opportunities for migrants to invest their time, skills and resources more productively in the Dominican Republic.



To achieve stronger integration levels, there is a need to establish effective mechanisms and guidelines for the recognition of educational qualifications, especially for those with higher education degrees. Also, it would be key to facilitate profiling, development, and application of newcomers' skills through simplified mechanisms of recognition of skills/prior learning and to provide access to reskilling and training opportunities.



Integration programmes should focus not only on employment and income-related support but also facilitate access to education or skills development opportunities. The systematization of orientation course and comprehensive information provision on essential services, given that navigational dimension showed quite low scores, including cultural orientations and language courses, could promote early integration.



Based on the findings from the social and psychological dimensions, there is a need to invest in community cohesion activities which allow new arrivals and local community members to interact in safe spaces with the aim of cultivating trust and mutual understanding across differences. This can be fostered through the organization of multicultural and intergroup contact activities, peer-to-peer buddy systems and mentorship schemes which do not only promote mutual understanding and social interactions between new arrivals and local populations but also support migrants and refugees' access to institutional resources.





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