

HIGHLIGHTS

FLOW MONITORING REGISTRY


Source: Migrant Reception Station (MRS) Los Planes de Gualaca, Chiriquí.
Government of Panama, 2021



3,570 PEOPLE DEPARTING FROM PANAMA

FLOW MONITORING SURVEY

Source: IOM, 2021



75% OF THE FLOW IS COMPOSED OF MEN BETWEEN 26 AND 35 YEARS OLD



HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES

CUBA (28%), BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA (24%), HAITI (18%) AND OTHERS (30%)



70% OF PEOPLE REPORTED COMMUNICATING IN SPANISH



8% OF PEOPLE HAVE COSTA RICA AS THEIR FINAL DESTINATION




82% OF PEOPLE TRAVEL WITH RELATIVES OR FAMILY MEMBERS




67%
men



33%
women



3% older adults
(+60 years old)



16% persons under 17
years of age or younger

METHODOLOGY

The Flow Monitoring component of the DTM (Displacement Tracking Matrix)¹ consists of a registry of migrants and the application of surveys aimed at representatives of travel groups and allows the generation of quantitative estimates on the flow of people through a defined location and, from this, the collection of qualitative data on populations in a situation of mobility. The data for the flow monitoring registry is obtained from official data provided by the Government of Panama, corresponding to the voluntary departures of migrants from the MRS Los Planes, in Gualaca, through the National Migration Service (SNM).

For the application of the Flow Monitoring Surveys, the instrument used is in Spanish, English and Haitian Creole, in order to expand the number of people who can be surveyed and collecting data on gender, age, nationality, characteristics of the trip, migratory route, country of habitual residence, in addition to counting the people who make up the travel group of the people surveyed. For the definition of monitoring sites (Map 1), Baseline Assessment of Irregular Migration Flows and Mobility Tracking in Border locations in Southern Costa Rica in the context of COVID-19 was taken as a reference, based on consultations with key informants² and field work.

For the study, records of irregular departures from Panama between December 1 and December 31, 2021 were obtained, corresponding to 3,570 irregular departures into Costa Rica. In parallel, a stratified random sampling was carried out during the month of December by monitoring points, based on the flow monitoring registry. A total of 274 surveys were conducted with migrants, of which 62 percent (169) were valid surveys and 38 percent were invalid (refusals by respondents). The data analysis was based on the assignment of the sample weight, which is useful for extrapolating the characteristics of the persons interviewed to the rest of the persons recorded in the exit registers. With this statistical analysis it is possible to know, by means of estimates, the characteristics of the total number of people counted. Of the total of 274 surveys carried out, 105 responses were obtained in which informed consent was not accepted; therefore, when it came to weighting with the weight of the sample, they were excluded from the calculation.

Map 1. Distribution of flow monitoring points



This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

1. Information associated with the data collection methodology is available at www.dtm.iom.int/about.
2. Retrieved from: <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/costa-rica-linea-base-para-la-evaluaci%C3%B3n-de-flujos-migratorios-y-presencia-de-migrantes-1>

CONTEXT



Within the framework of the COVID-19 emergency, since March 19, 2020, the Government of Costa Rica has kept its land border with Panama closed, and the Controlled Flow Binational Operation, agreed between the governments of Costa Rica and Panama at the Paso Canoas border to ensure an orderly and safe migration of migrants moving through the Americas,³ was stopped. As of the date of this report, there is no approximate date for its reimplementation.

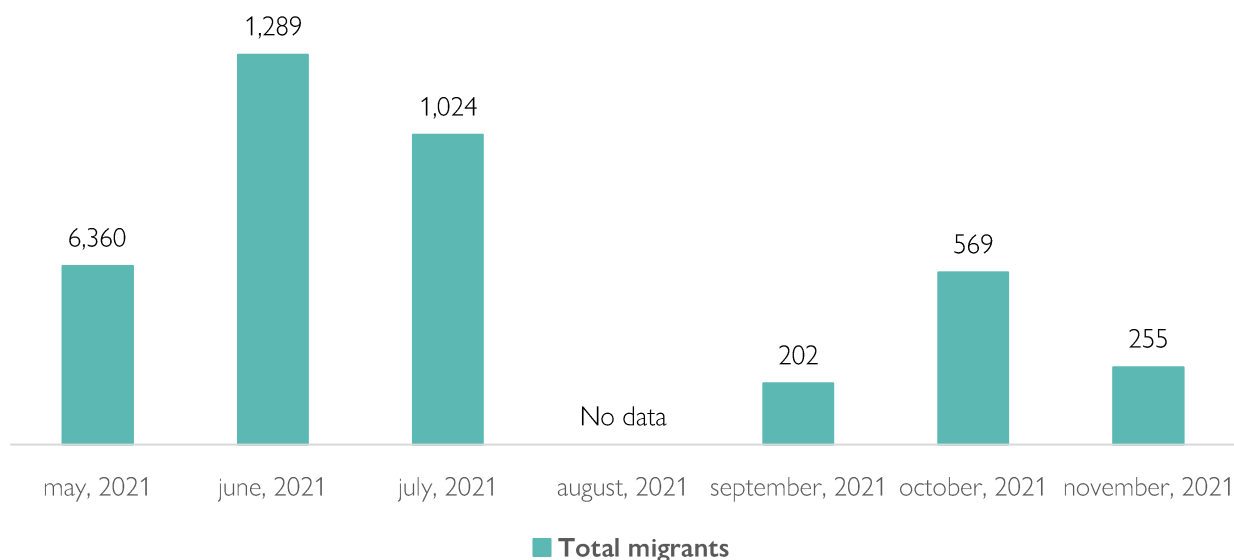


Given the presence of this irregular migration flow, since August 24, 2021, IOM Panama has published information on the irregular migration flow in Darien, Panama⁴ under the context of COVID-19. Based on this information, it has been identified that during 2021 the flow of people in a situation of mobility through the Americas with destination to North America is on the rise: according to SNM data, in the period between August and November 2021, the irregular entry of 126,675 migrants has been registered at the border between Colombia and Panama, mainly from the following nationalities: Haiti (62%), Cuba (13%), Chile (8%), Brazil (7%), Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (2%), among other countries in South America, Africa and Asia.



In Costa Rica, an increase has been identified in the number of migrants who decide to stay in the country, mainly people from Haiti, who, in some cases, have requested refuge in the country before the General Directorate of Migration and Foreigners (DGME). According to data from the DGME, between May and November 2021, 9,699 rejections⁵ were registered in Paso Canoas.

Figure 1. Number of rejections at the Paso Canoas border, 2021



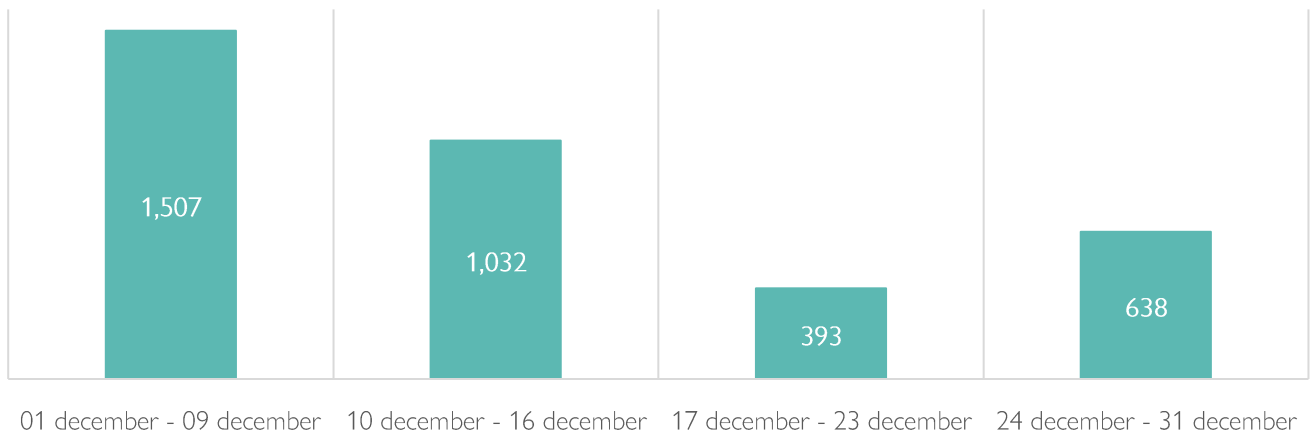
Source: DGME Costa Rica, 2021

3. People in mobility through the Americas is understood as the migratory flow of people who choose to migrate from Panama to Costa Rica, through Central America and North America, and is mainly composed of people of nationalities from Haiti, Cuba, as well as other countries in South America, Africa and Asia.
4. Information on the DTM: Monitoring of Migratory Flows in Darien, is available at www.panama.iom.int/es/dtm-monitoreo-de-flujos-migratorios-en-darien.
5. Section 64 of the General Immigration and Foreigner Law establishes that rejection is the action by which the immigration authority denies the foreigner entry to the country, ordering his/her immediate return to the country of origin or precedence, which is executed when the person does not comply with the entry requirements demanded by the legislation in force, presents an impediment to enter the country or is caught trying to evade immigration control or entering through a place not authorized for such purpose.

REGISTRY OF VOLUNTARY DEPARTURES OF MIGRANTS FROM THE MRS LOS PLANES, PANAMA

According to the record of voluntary departures of migrants from the MRS Los Planes in Gualaca, Panama, entries to the MRS Los Planes in Chiriqui, Panama (Graph 2), between December 1 and December 31, 2021, 3,570 departures of migrants in mobility through the Americas were recorded, equivalent to an average of 119 departures per day.

Figure 2. Registered departures of migrants in the MRS Los Planes, Chiriqui, by date range. 2021



Source: Government of Panama, 2021



Migrants moving through the Americas in the MRS of Los Planes, Gualaca, Chiriqui, Panama.
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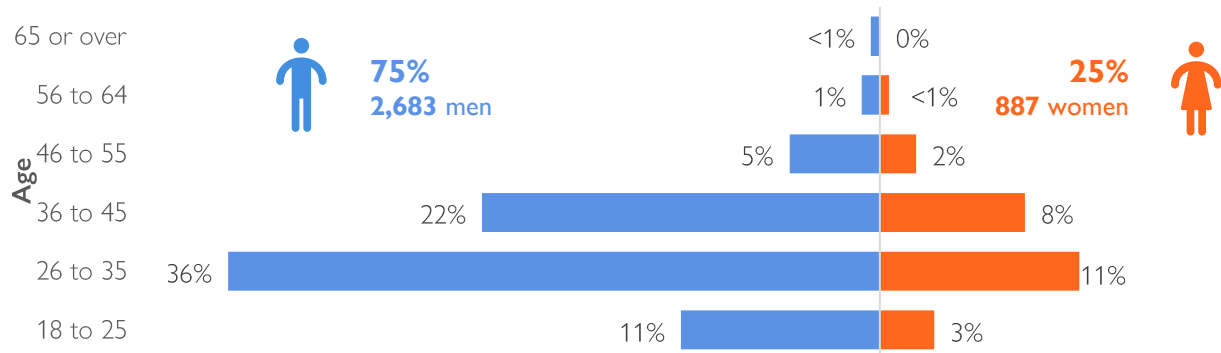
FLOW MONITORING SURVEY

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

A) Gender and age

Between December 1 and December 31, 2021, an estimated 3,570 irregular migrants in mobility through the Americas entered Costa Rica. The migratory flow is composed mostly of men (75% men and 25% women), and the average age is 34 years old, with a majority of people (76%) belonging to the 26 to 45 age range (see Graph 3).

Figure 3. Percentage of people in mobility situations in the Americas according to age and gender



B) Country of nationality



Cuba
1,000
people



Bolivarian Republic of
Venezuela
857
people



Haiti
643
people



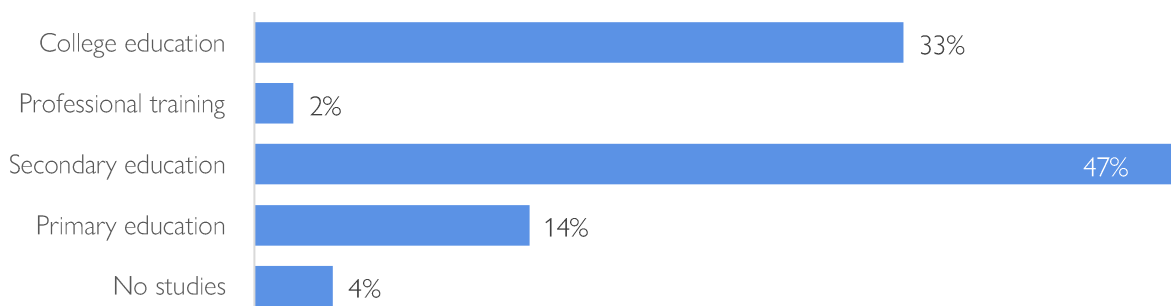
Other
1,070
people

Angola, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Mauritania, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Syrian Arab Republic, Somalia, Togo, Uzbekistan.

C) Educational level

The level of education varies according to nationality; people from Cuba and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have higher percentages of completed secondary education (93% and 88% respectively), compared to people of Haitian nationality (60%).

Figure 4. Percentage of people in mobility in the Americas by level of education completed

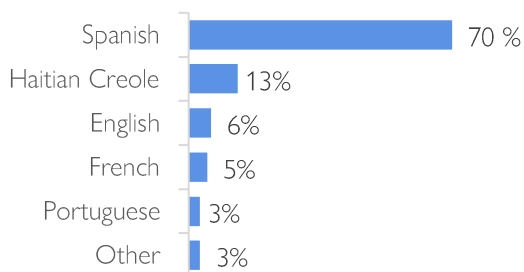


D) Language

The main languages in which the population communicates are Spanish (70%) and Haitian Creole (13%); other languages are also identified in smaller proportions, such as English, French, Portuguese, Bengali, Wolof, Hausa and Uzbek (Figure 5). It was found that 2,499 people indicated that they normally communicate in Spanish, 75 percent of whom are from Cuba (39%) or the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (34%), while the remaining 27 percent are mainly from other countries in the Americas.

A total of 393 people indicated that they were originally from a country on the African continent (Angola, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Togo), of whom 50 percent normally communicate in English, 17 percent in French, another 17 percent in Portuguese, 6 percent in Spanish, among others.

Figure 5. Percentage of people in mobility in the Americas by language in which they usually communicate



Ninety-three percent of Haitians indicated that their mother tongue is Haitian Creole, followed by Portuguese (7%). Of the 18% of people of Haitian origin, 73% indicated that they normally communicate in Haitian Creole, 20% in French, 5% in Spanish and 3% in Portuguese.

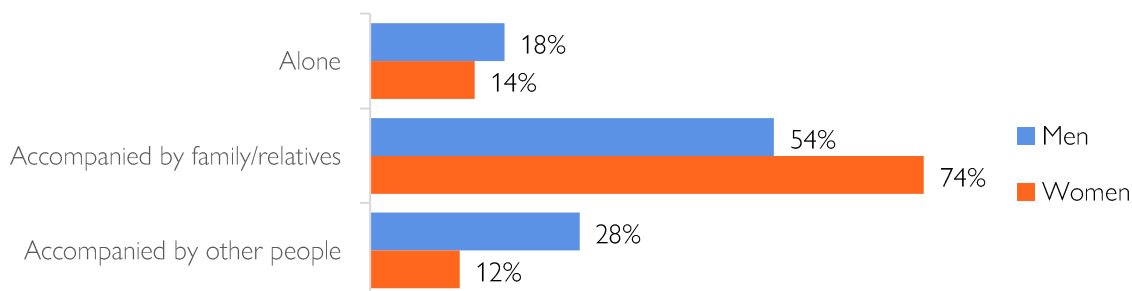
MIGRATORY STATUS

E) Accompaniment during the trip

The study compiles information on the groups with whom people travel, and the travel group is understood to be the people who accompany the migrant during his or her migratory journey. A total of 716 people were counted, of which 67 percent are men and 33 percent are women, and it was also identified that 3 percent of the accompanying persons are adults over 60 years of age, and 16 percent are under 18 years of age.

Seventeen percent of people made their trip unaccompanied (Figure 6), however, the percentage of people traveling alone is higher among men: 18 percent compared to 14 percent of women. On the other hand, of the 82 percent of people who reported traveling in groups, 71 percent do so accompanied by their family and/or relatives, and on average, travel groups are composed of 5 people.

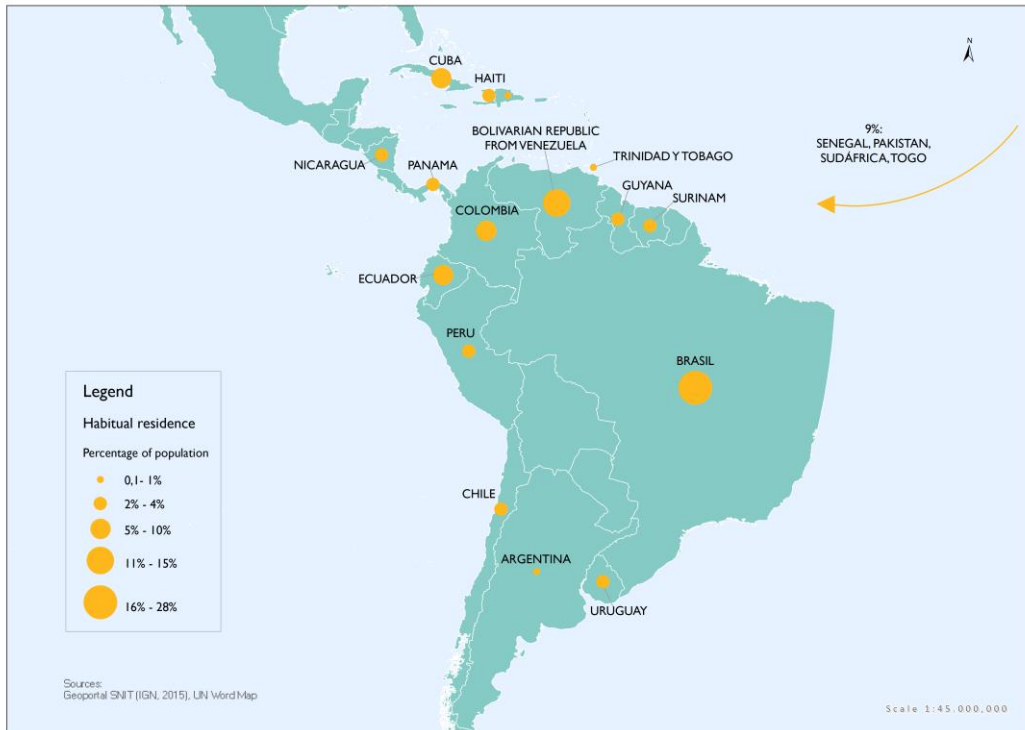
Figure 6. Percentage of travel companionship of people in mobility situations in the Americas, by gender



MIGRATORY ROUTE

The main country of habitual residence of people moving through the Americas (countries where people lived for a year or more before starting their trip) is Brazil, and other countries in South America, Africa and Asia were also identified: 28 percent pointed to Brazil, followed by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (12%), Ecuador (10%), Colombia (9%), Cuba (5%), Chile (4%), Nicaragua (4%), Panama (4%), Peru (4%), Suriname (4%), Uruguay (4%), and 16 percent among 15 other countries (Map 2).

Map 2. Country of usual residence of persons in a mobility situation in the Americas



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Of the 28 percent of people who indicated that they were originally from Cuba, only 17 percent indicated that they lived in Cuba before starting their trip, with the main countries of residence being Brazil (19%), Uruguay (13%), Suriname (13%), Venezuela (11%), Chile (11%) and 19 percent in 3 other countries.



Of the 24 percent of persons who indicated that they were originally from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 38 percent were living in their country of origin before starting their trip, 20 percent in Ecuador, 18 percent in Colombia and 24 percent in 4 other countries in the Americas. Likewise, 96 percent indicated that they had crossed the Darien jungle, while the remaining 4 percent did not know if they crossed it or definitely did not cross it.



Of the 18 percent of people who indicated that they were originally from Haiti, 87 percent indicated Brazil as their country of usual residence and only 10 percent indicated residing in Haiti before starting their trip, the remaining 3 percent indicated Chile.

Regarding the countries of destination of the population, the United States of America was identified as the main destination (65%), followed by Mexico (17%), Costa Rica (8%), among others (Map 3). However, there is variation in the destination country depending on the nationalities of the individuals: of those who indicated that they were originally from Haiti, 57 percent indicated Mexico as their final destination country, followed by the United States of America (37%). Likewise, 85 percent of persons originating from Cuba indicated the United States as their final destination country, followed by Mexico (6%), Costa Rica (4%) and Nicaragua (4%). On the other hand, 83 percent of persons from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela indicated the United States as their final destination country, followed by Mexico (10%) and Canada (8%).

Map 3. Country of final destination of persons in mobility through the Americas

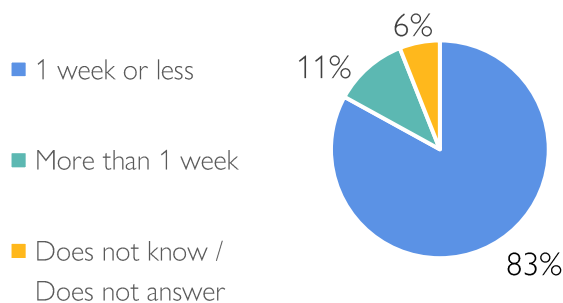


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The population was asked about the approximate length of time they plan to stay in Costa Rica: only 11 percent indicated that they intend to stay more than 1 week in the country, 6 percent indicated they did not know or did not answer, and the remaining 83 percent indicated 1 week or less (Figure 7).

In addition, the population was asked about the main needs during their stay in Costa Rica, related to access to basic resources, documentation and access to economic resources, among others (Figure 8). In this regard, 48 percent indicated having some need and the remaining 56 percent indicated not having any need.

Figure 7. Percentage of people moving through the Americas by approximate length of time they plan to stay in Costa Rica



F) Difficulties during the trip

MAIN DIFFICULTIES DURING THE TRIP



Lack of financial resources

22%



Lack of food/water

16%



Insecurity/theft

13%

With respect to the main needs identified by individuals, differences by gender have been identified, specifically outstanding differences in insecurity/theft (14% of men and 10% of women) and health problems (8% of men and 14% of women). Differences in the difficulties identified between the main countries of origin have also been identified.



The three main difficulties identified for the population from Cuba are lack of economic resources (20%), lack of information (17%) and lack of transportation (16%).

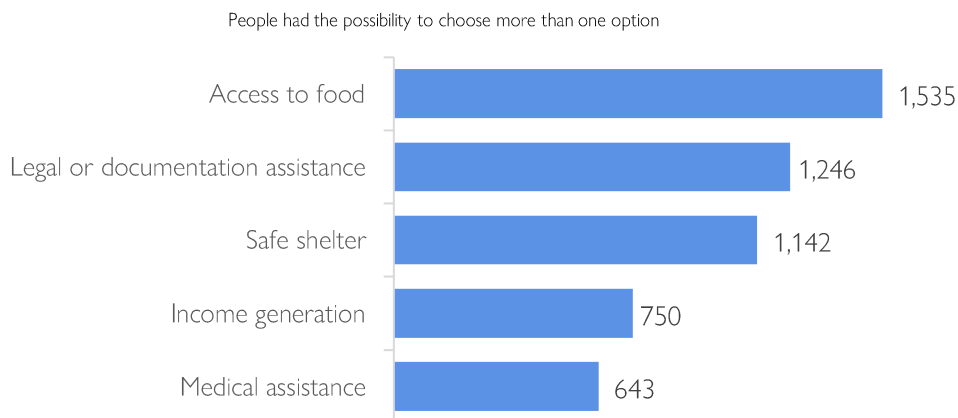


Regarding the population from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the three main difficulties are lack of economic resources (20%), insecurity/theft (16%) and lack of food/water (15%).



The main difficulties of the population from Haiti are lack of economic resources (28%), lack of food/water (19%) and lack of transportation (14%).

Figure 8. Persons in a mobility situation in the Americas with needs during their stay in Costa Rica, according to main needs



CONCLUSIONS



While the flow of migrants through the Americas remains steady, during December 2021 it reduced significantly: between the first and last week of December, departures from the MRS Los Planes went from 1,507 to 638, respectively. Nevertheless, 2021 records continue to remain high, compared to previous years. According to data from DGME Costa Rica, in December 2019, 1,038 migrant arrivals were recorded as part of the Controlled Flow of migrants in mobility through the Americas, representing a 71 percent reduction compared to December 2021 arrivals.



Most persons (82%) indicated having completed high school or higher educational levels (university, vocational training), however, these proportions vary according to nationality. People from Haiti had lower levels of educational attainment compared to other people; 60 percent reported having completed secondary education and/or higher education.



A high percentage of the population began their journey in countries other than their countries of origin, indicating that the population moving through the Americas had previously migrated, mainly to countries in South America, such as Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Uruguay (among others).



The majority of the population (83%) indicated that they do not plan to stay more than 1 week in Costa Rica, and then head mainly to the United States and Mexico. The United States emerged as the main destination of the flow of migrants; however, it was identified that, for the population of Haitian origin, Mexico is the main country of destination.



Lack of economic resources and access to food were the main difficulties identified by the migrant population moving through the Americas, while during their stay in Costa Rica, legal assistance and access to documentation, together with access to safe shelter, became important.



Migrants moving through the Americas, Ciudad Neily, Corredores, Costa Rica.
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