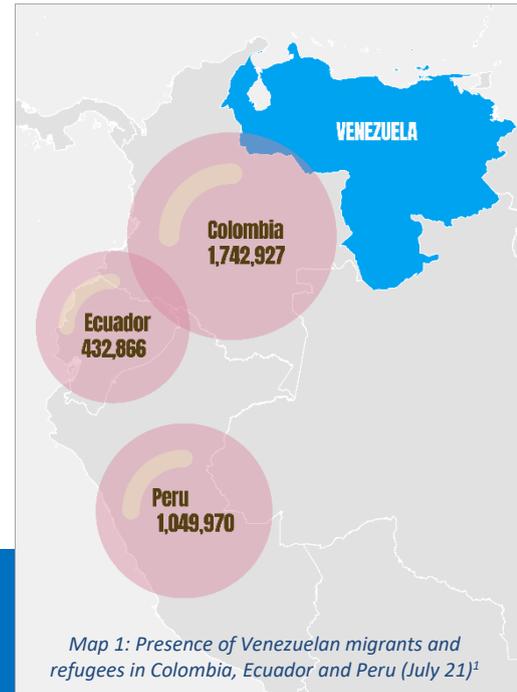


## BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an unprecedented health and socio-economic emergency that exacerbated existing vulnerabilities among more than 3 million<sup>1</sup> Venezuelan migrants<sup>2</sup> in Colombia, Peru and Ecuador (Figure 1), fleeing their country following the political and economic crisis.

The barriers to access income-generating activities, the lack of a regular status and the inability to satisfy their essential needs, aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, are only few factors impacting migrants' ability to cope with this emergency and a growing inequality is likely to exacerbate, pushing millions of migrants towards a continuous cycle of poverty and food insecurity.

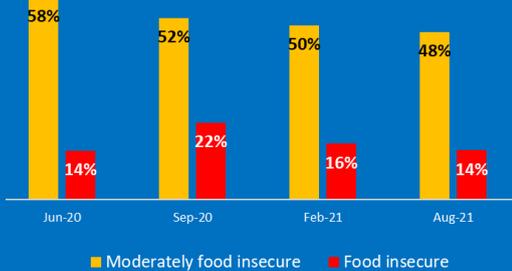
This study is part of an ongoing study<sup>3</sup> conducted with the objective to monitor trends overtime and assess the impact of COVID-19 on migrants' ability to meet their food and other essential needs.



## FOOD SECURITY

Despite a slight decrease of severe food insecurity levels compared to February 2021 (-2%), the food security situation continues to be critical, with **2 million Venezuelan migrants being moderately/severely food insecure in Ecuador, Colombia and Peru (63% of the total migrant population).**

Figure 1: Food Security situation trend (Jun-20 – Aug-21)



N. FOOD INSECURE	Colombia	Ecuador	Peru
Moderate	873,206 (50%)	213,836 (49%)	459,887 (44%)
Severe	238,781 (14%)	70,557 (16%)	136,496 (13%)

Migrants reported significantly higher levels of food insecurity (62%) compared to resident population (51%), as a result of lower levels of food consumption, higher use of food-related coping strategies and less stable income sources.

## FOOD CONSUMPTION

**One migrant out of four (24%) either consumed only one meal (15%) or spent the previous day without eating (9%)** at the time of the interview. This represents a slight decrease compared to the previous round (27%) and it still two times higher compared to June 2020 (12%).

Figure 2: Perceived Food Security situation



Food-related coping strategies remain a common practice among migrants.

Nearly seven out of ten migrants (68%) are still resorting to coping strategies affecting food consumption.

Figure 2 shows that 37% are still regularly spending whole days without eating or reducing the quantity of food consumed.

Overall, **the number of migrants (68%) having difficulties in food consumption is the same as the beginning of 2021 and almost in line with June 2020 (72%),** meaning that the situation remains critical. This percentage is significantly higher compared to residents (55%). The highest share is found among migrants in Colombia (71%) and Ecuador (68%), followed by Peru (61%).

At the same time, the **worry about not having enough food to eat** registers an important decrease, passing from 71% in Sep 2020 to 63% in August 2021. The reopening of economic activities and a higher access to income generating activities opportunities may partially explain this perception.

<sup>1</sup> R4V Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (July 2021)

<sup>2</sup> The term "migrant" used in this note includes regular, undocumented, asylum seekers, refugees and in transit migrants. Refer to [IOM: https://www.iom.int/migration](https://www.iom.int/migration)

<sup>3</sup> Information regarding previous rounds of the study is accessible at [WFP COVID-19 Information Hub: https://rbp-covid-unwfp.hub.arcgis.com/pages/impact-assessments](https://rbp-covid-unwfp.hub.arcgis.com/pages/impact-assessments)

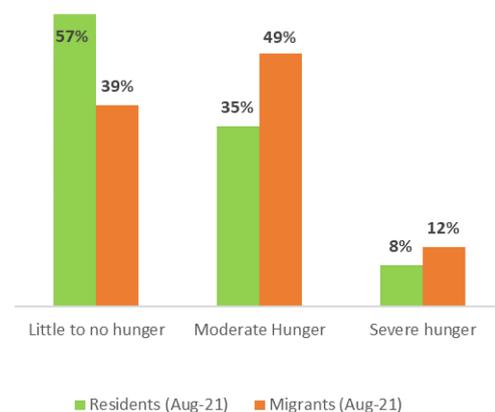
The **Household Hunger Scale** is an experience-based indicator, used in this context to corroborate and measure complementary aspects of food insecurity.

Respondents were asked how frequently they had experienced three food insecurity situations over the previous month, namely:

- Was there ever no food to eat of any kind in the house?
- Did they go to sleep at night hungry because there was not enough food?
- Did they go a whole day and night without eating anything at all?

Results show that **12% of migrants are classified in a situation of severe hunger**, same value than previous round (12%) and with no major difference between countries. Migrants show significantly higher levels of moderate and severe hunger compared to residents as shown in figure 3.

Figure 3: Household Hunger Scale (HHS)



## LIVELIHOOD COPING

In a scenario of an acute and prolonged socio-economic crisis that the pandemic is entailing, people are resorting to a variety of coping mechanisms affecting their livelihoods and ability to meet their food and other essential needs.

During the previous month, **7 out of 3 migrants adopted at least one coping strategy** to meet food and other essential needs

They range from **selling assets** (51%) to **borrowing money** (59%) and **accepting informal, low-paid, and high-risk jobs** (44%), with the fist coping strategy (sell of assets) registering the highest increase compared to the previous round (49%), particularly in Colombia (from 45% to 50%) and Ecuador and Peru with 52% and 53% respectively.



**33%** ADOPTED ALL COPING STRATEGIES

**69%** ADOPTED AT LEAST ONE STRATEGY

This suggests that following the release of lockdown measures and the re-opening of the economy, migrants continue to rely to a greater extent on the informal economy and unsustainable incomes to make their living.

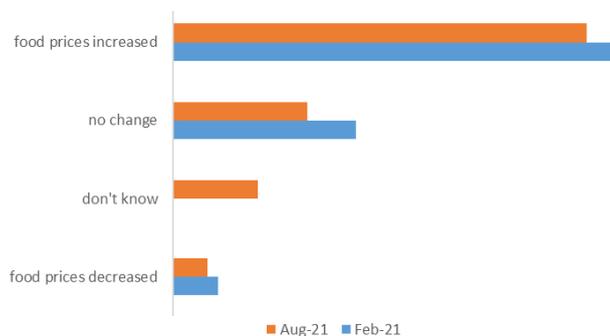
*"In the long-run, migrants could further exhaust the possibility to adopt coping strategies to limit the consequences of the pandemic and to keep food consumption to an acceptable level".*



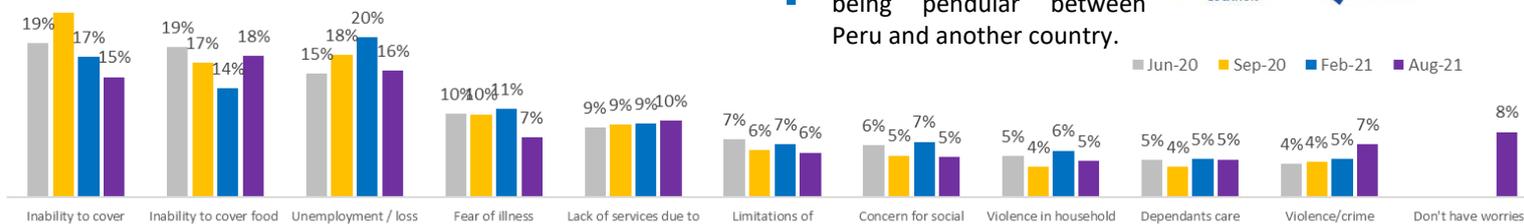
## MARKETS

As a result of lower restrictions aimed at stimulating the economy, **people are finding less limitations to access markets**. In August 2021, **the number of people reporting food availability** is 79%, including 53% who claims that food is always available, and 15% that don't have a specific opinion. According to Figure 4, the perception of an increase in prices because of the crises remains high (62%, albeit less intense compared to the start of the pandemic (76%).

Figure 4: Food prices change



## MAIN CONCERNS



## INCOME SOURCES

A total of **68%** respondents reported **reduction or loss of income** due the COVID-19 and social tensions. In line with previous findings, **migrants continue to find their main source of income in the informal sector (40%)**. Only 30% can rely on more stable, formal sources of income. Lifting restrictions certainly entailed a positive effect on access to income-generating opportunities. However, although lower compared to the previous round (17%), **14% remains unemployed**. Remittances flows also register a significant reduction compared to the first round, passing from 11% to 7%. Finally, **a migrant out of ten (10%) continue to rely on assistance** from Government or other humanitarian actors.



## INTENTIONS TO MOVE

When asked about their future intentions to migrate, less people report their intention to stay (-2%), with more willing to go back to Venezuela (+3%). One third declare wanting to move or being pendular between Peru and another country.

