



# 4Mi Cities Montevideo

## Diagnosis of integration experiences in Montevideo

September 2025



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

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Architectural view of Montevideo city square.



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## About the MMC

MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America, and a global team based across Copenhagen, Geneva and Brussels.

MMC is a leading source for independent and high-quality data, research, analysis and expertise. MMC aims to increase understanding of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based mixed migration responses for people on the move and to stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration. MMC's overarching focus is on human rights and protection for all people on the move.

MMC is part of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). While its institutional link to DRC ensures MMC's work is grounded in operational reality, it acts as an independent source of data, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration for policy makers, practitioners, journalists, and the broader humanitarian sector.

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**Understanding Mixed Migration for MMC:** “Mixed migration” refers to cross-border movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking, and individuals seeking better lives and opportunities, as well as those driven to move by a multiplicity of factors. People involved in mixed migration have a range of legal statuses and face various vulnerabilities. Although they are entitled to the protection afforded by international human rights standards, they are frequently exposed to multiple violations of their rights throughout their journey. Mixed migration describes migrants who travel along similar routes, often using the same means of transport, frequently in an irregular manner and, wholly or partially, with the assistance of migrant smugglers.

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# List of Acronyms

ASSE	Administración de Servicios de Salud del Estado State Health Services Administration
CAIF	Centros de Atención Integral a la Infancia y a las Familias Child and Family Care
CAPI	Centros de Atención a la Primera Infancia Early Childhood Care Centre
CCAM	Consejo Consultativo Asesor de Migración Advisory Consultative Council on Migration
CRM	Centro de Referencia Migrante Migrant Reference Centre
DNE	Dirección Nacional de Educación National Directorate for Education
DNM	Dirección Nacional de Migración National Directorate of Migration
IMPO	Dirección Nacional de Impresiones y Publicaciones Oficiales National Directorate of Official Printing and Publications
INAU	Instituto del Niño y Adolescente del Uruguay Uruguayan Institute for Children and Adolescents
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estadística National Institute of Statistics
INEFOP	Instituto Nacional de Empleo y Formación Profesional National Institute of Employment and Vocational Training
JNM	Junta Nacional de Migración National Migration Council
MEC	Ministerio de Educación y Cultura Ministry of Education and Culture
Mercosur	Mercado Común del Sur Southern Common Market
MIDES	Ministerio de Desarrollo Social Ministry of Social Development
MMC	Mixed Migration Centre
MSP	Ministerio de Salud Pública Ministry of Public Health
MTSS	Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social Ministry of Labour and Social Security
MVOT	Ministerio de Vivienda y Ordenamiento Territorial Ministry of Housing and Territorial Planning
IOM	International Organization for Migration

NGO	Non-governmental organization
PNI	Plan Nacional de Integración National Integration Plan
SEDHU	Servicio Ecuménico para la Dignidad Humana Ecumenical Service for Human Dignity
SEERPM	Secretaría de Equidad Étnico Racial y Poblaciones Migrantes Secretariat for Ethnic-Racial Equity and Migrant Populations
SJM	Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes Jesuit Migrant Service
SNIS	Sistema Nacional Integrado de Salud National Integrated Health System
SOGIESC	Sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics
Udelar	Universidad de la República Oriental del Uruguay University of the Republic
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	The United Nations Refugee Agency

# Key terminology

**Migrants:** All individuals involved in mixed migration, including refugees and asylum seekers, unless reference is made to a specific group with a defined status within mixed migration.

**Household:** A group of individuals, whether related or not, who live under the same roof and who, at least for their food needs, rely on a shared budget.<sup>1</sup>

- **Children:** All individuals under the age of 18, under Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>2</sup>
- **Adolescents:** Children aged 13 to 17.

**Assistance:** Support that migrants may receive from a wide range of actors, and that is free of charge. This includes assistance provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), government agencies or offices, as well as informal help offered by other migrants in Uruguay, friends or family, or the migrant community/online networks. The types of assistance vary depending on the thematic area. They may include food, shelter, general guidance/information, legal advice and rights awareness, transport, support with registration procedures, psychological or emotional support, training, among others.

## About this document

This report explores the integration experiences of migrants in Montevideo. The study is based on information gathered between November 2024 and March 2025 through 4Mi surveys, interviews with key informants and focus groups.

This report presents findings on how migrants live in Montevideo, the obstacles they face in their integration process, and the strategies they deploy to adapt to their new place of residence. Its main objective is to produce evidence to guide public policy decisions, using a participatory approach focused on the lived experiences of migrants.

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1 Instituto Nacional de Estadística (s.f.) [Ficha técnica](#).

2 United Nations (1989) [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).



# Key findings

- **The National Integration Plan represents a milestone in inter-institutional collaboration**, which has enabled progress in the integration of migrants in Montevideo in 2023 and 2024, especially in terms of migration regularisation. However, as it is a one-year pilot plan, its impact is limited by its temporary nature.
- Survey respondents in Montevideo mainly mention **economic drivers as the main reason for leaving** their country of nationality or previous host country. The most frequently mentioned reason for choosing Montevideo as a destination was the opportunity to reunite with friends and family. In addition, migrants positively valued Uruguay's stability and security.
- **Employment and housing are among the biggest problems for migrants** in Montevideo. Difficulties in accessing formal employment, lack of recognition or validation of professional qualifications, and obstacles to obtaining a rental guarantee limit socio-economic integration and expose migrants to informal work.
- Despite mostly positive relationships with the local population, **many migrants do not feel fully included in Uruguayan society**, and nationality appears to be a factor that limits their opportunities. Even so, most value their quality of life in Montevideo and express their intention to remain in the short and medium term.
- **There are reports of discrimination based on nationality, racialisation, and gender identity.** The experiences of cisgender migrants also vary according to gender: men mention more discrimination in public spaces and transport; women, in the workplace and education. Xenophobia in schools is a problem that is more prevalent among adolescents than among children.
- On the other hand, migrants reported **fewer barriers to accessing services related to documentation, health care, and education**. Free medical care, initial access to public education, and the opening of new avenues for regularisation are valued. Despite progress in access to documentation, obstacles remain, such as delays in procedures—including registration in the foreigner registry—and difficulty in regularising immigration status with expired documents, especially in the case of Venezuelans.
- Healthwise, **specific needs related to mental health** have been identified, especially among migrant women. Difficulties are also reported in waiting times to obtain documentation that enables access to the health system, especially for gender-affirming hormone therapy for transgender migrants, as well as for voluntary termination of pregnancy, which also requires one year of habitual residence.
- **Government offices, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and support networks, including friends, family members, and other migrants, are the main actors providing assistance**, yet their importance varies across thematic areas. The State plays a prominent role for education-related assistance, assistance regarding documentation and regularisation as well as employment. NGOs support documentation and regularisation and employment-related assistance. They also support the migrant population by providing information, guidance and personalised support in all areas of life, as do friends, family members, and other migrants. Friends and family also complement the housing-related assistance offered by government entities.

# 1. About the 4Mi Cities project in Montevideo

The availability of localised data and specific analysis on urban migration is limited in many contexts. This lack of information is an obstacle to local authorities designing informed and appropriate public policies. In response to this challenge, in 2022, the MMC developed the 4Mi Cities initiative<sup>3</sup> to generate evidence on the experiences of migrants in urban environments, thereby contributing to the strengthening of public policies and services for their integration at the municipal level. This report presents the findings of the implementation of 4Mi Cities in Montevideo during 2024 and 2025. The Uruguayan capital was selected for its growing migrant diversity, the challenges and opportunities posed by intercultural coexistence in the city, and the commitment of national and local authorities to develop a study that can guide public policy. This study takes a participatory approach focused on the lived experiences of migrants.

The project combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies to understand how migrants live in the city, what obstacles they face in their integration process, and what strategies they deploy to adapt to their new environment.

By gathering information on the current state of migrant integration in Montevideo, the project seeks to provide concrete inputs to improve institutional response, promote the urban inclusion of migrants, and strengthen local governance frameworks. The study was designed around the thematic areas proposed by the National Integration Plan (*Plan Nacional de Integración*, PNI) 2023–2024,<sup>4</sup> to inform the next steps to be taken in integration policy. For each of the topics addressed in the report —documentation and regularisation, health, education and childcare, employment and income, housing, protection and access to justice, and participation in city life and social cohesion— three key dimensions were analysed: the extent to which migrants can access these services and rights, the availability of assistance, and the main unmet needs. These areas of analysis were prioritised by national and local authorities during the study's design phase to ensure the findings would be directly relevant for guiding national and local migration governance and supporting migrant integration in Montevideo.

This report, therefore, contributes to the formulation and updating of public policy tools, promoting coordination between state and non-governmental actors and highlighting emerging needs, especially those of the most vulnerable groups.

## A note on the definition of integration

The National Integration Plan (*Plan Nacional de Integración*, PNI) defines integration as follows, highlighting the role of migrants in integrating into society and the responsibility of the state [quote translated by the authors]:

“The integration of people on the move can be broadly understood as a dynamic process of incorporation and social, financial, cultural, and political inclusion into the society and territory where they arrive to live on a temporary or permanent basis.

For the State, this entails the responsibility to promote the well-being of immigrants and to create conditions for their full incorporation and inclusion, within a framework of equal rights and duties for all residents of the country. This means removing any obstacles that may arise and reducing the gaps between migrants and non-migrants across the various dimensions or areas of integration.

The effective integration of migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees arriving in Uruguay is essential for social cohesion, sustainable human development, and a more just and inclusive society.”<sup>5</sup>

However, for this research, integration – supported by the State and other actors – is understood not only as a process that spans multiple spheres, but also a mutual process involving responsibilities on the part of both migrants and host communities.<sup>6</sup>

3 Established in 2014, 4Mi is a unique network of field interviewers located along frequently used routes and in major migration hubs. *4Mi Cities* is an adaptation of the 4Mi tool to the urban context to specifically understand the urban experiences of migrants in a way that can support policy improvement and service provision at the city level. To date, 4Mi Cities has been implemented in six cities: Arua, Kampala, and Nairobi in East Africa, and Medellín, Barranquilla, and Mexico City in Latin America.

4 The “National Integration Plan for Migrants, Asylum Seekers, and Refugees, Uruguay 2023-2024” is an initiative by the Government of Uruguay to promote the integration of migrants, their contribution to the country's development and inter-institutional coordination. More on this in section 3.2. – National Integration Plan; see also: Junta Nacional de Migración (JNM) (2023) [Plan Nacional de Integración para personas migrantes, solicitantes de refugio y refugiadas, Uruguay 2023-2024](#).

5 Ibid., p. 37.

6 International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2019) [Glossary on Migration](#).

## 2. Methodology

4Mi Cities uses a mixed methodology, combining quantitative and qualitative data.

For the 4Mi Cities project in Montevideo, MMC adapted the methodology and tools to the specific context of the city. The co-creation with local authorities and civil society enabled the project to be adjusted to the priorities of these actors. As part of this process, the following activities were conducted:

- Identification of interests and priorities by national and local authorities.
- Analysis of the urban context, based on secondary sources and complemented by interviews with key informants
- Definition of priorities and information gaps through workshops and interviews with national and local authorities and civil society.
- Co-development of the survey through workshops and validation by national and local authorities and civil society.
- Implementation of the survey and focus groups, with a local implementing partner and in collaboration with organisations that aid the migrant population in Montevideo.
- Validation of results by key stakeholders.

### 2.1. Quantitative data collection

Quantitative data were collected through face-to-face and phone surveys with migrants over the age of 18, who had been living in Montevideo for more than three months and less than five years at the time of the interview.<sup>7</sup> A total of 459 surveys<sup>8</sup> were conducted between 7th February and 31st March 2025 through the Ecumenical Service for Human Dignity (*Servicio Ecuménico para la Dignidad Humana*, SEDHU) as an implementing partner.

The quantitative data provided information on the profiles of migrants in Montevideo and the composition of their households, as well as on their needs and barriers to accessing services, and on their experience of integration in the city through eight themes: i) documentation and migration regularisation; ii) health; iii) education and childcare; iv) employment and income; v) housing; vi) transport;<sup>9</sup> vii) protection and access to justice; and viii) participation in city life and social cohesion.

In the case that respondents were part of a household, they were asked to provide information on each household member's profile, including age, gender, identity documents, migration status and their relationship with the household member.

### 2.2. Qualitative information gathering

Qualitative information was collected through 15 semi-structured in-depth interviews<sup>10</sup> with:

- Seven key informants from national and local government entities that provide services to the migrant population, which are included in the PNI or are responsible for the formulation and evaluation of public policies for the migrant population.

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7 Criteria were defined in coordination with authorities and members of civil society during a workshop to consolidate the research methodology and data collection tools.

8 343 surveys were carried out by phone and 116 in person in municipalities B (n=103), CH (n=11), and G (n=2) of Montevideo.

9 The document does not include an analysis of data on the thematic area of transport, as no relevant findings emerged.

10 In alphabetical order, we would like to thank and acknowledge the contributions of the following key reporting entities and organisations: [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Uruguay](#), [Asociación de Ecuatorianos en Uruguay](#), [comunidad de bolivianos residentes en Uruguay](#), [Dirección Nacional de Migración](#), [Manos Cubanas](#), [Manos Venecuayanas](#), [Ministerio de Desarrollo Social](#), [Ministerio de Educación y Cultura](#), [Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores](#), [Ministerio del Trabajo y de Seguridad Social](#), [OIM Uruguay](#), [Secretaría de Equidad Étnico Racial y Poblaciones Migrantes](#), and [SEDHU](#). We would also like to thank university lecturer Victoria Prieto.

- Five key informants from civil society organisations and social leaders working with migrant populations in Montevideo.
- Two key informants from international non-governmental organisations that provide assistance to migrants in Uruguay.
- One key informant from academia.

Additional qualitative information was gathered through three focus groups with 15 migrants (see Table 1). All participants were over the age of 18 and had been residing in Montevideo for at least three months, even though some focus group participants had lived in the city for over five years at the time of the interview. The qualitative information allowed for a better understanding of migrants' specific integration experiences as well as the differentiated experiences of men and women, and migrants with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), complementing the survey results.

**Table 1 . Focus group participants**

# of focus group	Number of participants	Gender of participants		
		Women	Men	Non-binary
1	5	5	-	-
2	6	1	5	-
3	4	-	2	2
Total	15	6	7	2

## 2.3. Limitations

- The sampling for the 4Mi Cities survey was not random, and the survey responses cannot be considered representative of the entire migrant population in Montevideo.
- Contact for the phone surveys was established using a database of SEDHU beneficiaries. A recruitment campaign on WhatsApp complemented this. The face-to-face surveys were conducted mainly at SEDHU's offices and the offices of other organisations that provide assistance to migrants.<sup>11</sup> This led to an overrepresentation of women, asylum seekers, and migrants who arrived in Montevideo in 2023 and 2024. This is because SEDHU offers advice on immigration regularisation processes and access to shelter, and mainly assists women.
- Seventy-five per cent of the surveys were conducted by phone. Funding cuts by the United States in 2025 affected civil society programmes serving migrants in Montevideo, making it more challenging to reach the target population in person.
- The research took the information needs of local authorities into account. Specifically, this meant paying special attention to the Cuban population, for whom less data is available compared to other migrant groups in Montevideo. That is why Cuban migrants were prioritised in the data collection, leading to a higher representation of this nationality in the sample than in the overall migrant population.

11 This included the The Jesuit Migrant Service (Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, SJM), Departmental Government of Montevideo (Intendencia de Montevideo) – the Secretariat for Ethnic-Racial Equity and Migrant Populations (Secretaría de Equidad Étnico Racial y Poblaciones Migrantes, SEERPM), and the Resonate (Resuena) Project at the Metropolitan Civic Centre (Centro Cívico Metropolitano), the Migrant Reference Centre (Centro de Referencia Migrante, CRM), the National Directorate of Migration (Dirección Nacional de Migración, DNM), the National Directorate of Official Printing and Publications (Dirección Nacional de Impresiones y Publicaciones Oficiales, IMPO), the UN House, and the SEDHU local annex.

## 3. Context

Montevideo is both a department of Uruguay and its capital city. With a population of 1,302,950 in 2023, Montevideo is home to 37% of the country's total population.<sup>12</sup> The city is divided into eight municipalities. Municipality A is the most populous, with 203,088 inhabitants.<sup>13</sup>

### 3.1. Migration dynamics

Over the last decade, Uruguay has shifted from being mainly a country of emigration to becoming both a final destination and key transit point for migration in the region.<sup>14</sup> This change has diversified the composition of its migrant population: whereas Argentines and Brazilians once dominated, there is now a more diverse profile of migrants of South American and Caribbean origin, with a growing presence of Venezuelans, Cubans, and Dominicans.<sup>15</sup>

Data from the 2023 census confirm that approximately 3.5% of the population (122,151 inhabitants) in Uruguay was born abroad,<sup>16</sup> compared to 2.4% in 2011.<sup>17</sup> Half of those born abroad (53%) arrived in Uruguay between 2012 and 2023.<sup>18</sup> Regardless of the year of arrival, the most common nationalities among foreigners in Uruguay are currently Venezuelan (27%), Argentine (22%), Cuban (20%), and nationals of other Latin American and Caribbean countries (15%).<sup>19</sup>

According to data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for June 2023, the number of asylum seekers rose from 2,106 in 2017 to 21,174 in mid-2023, while the number of refugees grew from 344 to 1,245 in the same period.<sup>20</sup> Almost two-thirds of refugees in June 2023 were from Venezuela (720; 58%), followed, to a lesser extent, by Colombians (173; 14%). Most asylum seekers were from Cuba (16,128; 76%), while 15% were Venezuelans (3,139).<sup>21</sup>

Montevideo, as the capital and main economic, political and cultural centre of the country, hosts the highest share of migrants: 56% of the foreign-born population in Uruguay lives in the city, equivalent to 5% of Montevideo's inhabitants (68,082 people).<sup>22</sup> The capital's work and educational opportunities are attractive for migrants, as is its relatively easy access to services. However, this concentration of the migrant population in the capital also poses challenges for the real estate market, employment and social cohesion.<sup>23</sup>

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12 Instituto Nacional de Estadística Uruguay – INE - (2024) [Censo 2023. Población estimada, crecimiento intercensal y estructura por sexo y edad de Uruguay. Total país y por departamento. Resultados definitivos diciembre 2024](#); INE (2025) [Perfil departamental Montevideo](#). Version 28/03/2025.

13 Ibid.

14 Bengochea, J., Fernández Soto, M., Grande, R., Márquez, C. (2023) [Patrones de migración familiar de personas migrantes nacidas en Venezuela, Cuba, Perú y República Dominicana que llegan a Uruguay](#). RELAP – Revista Latinoamericana de Población, Vol. 17; Prieto Rosas, V., Bengochea, J., Fernández Soto, M., Márquez Scotti, C. & Montiel, C. (2022) [Informe de resultados de la Etnoencuesta de Inmigración Reciente en Montevideo](#). Wang, Z., Prieto Rosas, V., Márquez Scotti, C. & Bengochea S. (2023) [The Social Inclusion of Migrants Between Policy and Practice: Lessons from Uruguay](#). International Migration Review, 1-11.

15 Bengochea et al. (2023) [Op. Cit.](#); Correa, A., Cedrés, E. and Fleitas, M. (n.d.) [El Proceso de inclusión social de las personas migrantes en Uruguay en relación al acceso al mercado laboral](#). Instituto Humanista Cristiano Juan Pablo Terra; Prieto Rosas et al (2022) [Op. Cit.](#)

16 INE (n.d.) [Visualizador censo 2023](#).

17 JNM (2023) [Op. Cit.](#), p. 19.

18 INE (n.d.) [Op. Cit.](#)

19 Ibid.

20 In addition, 29,080 people needed international protection. UNHCR (2023). [Uruguay – Hoja informativa estadística](#).

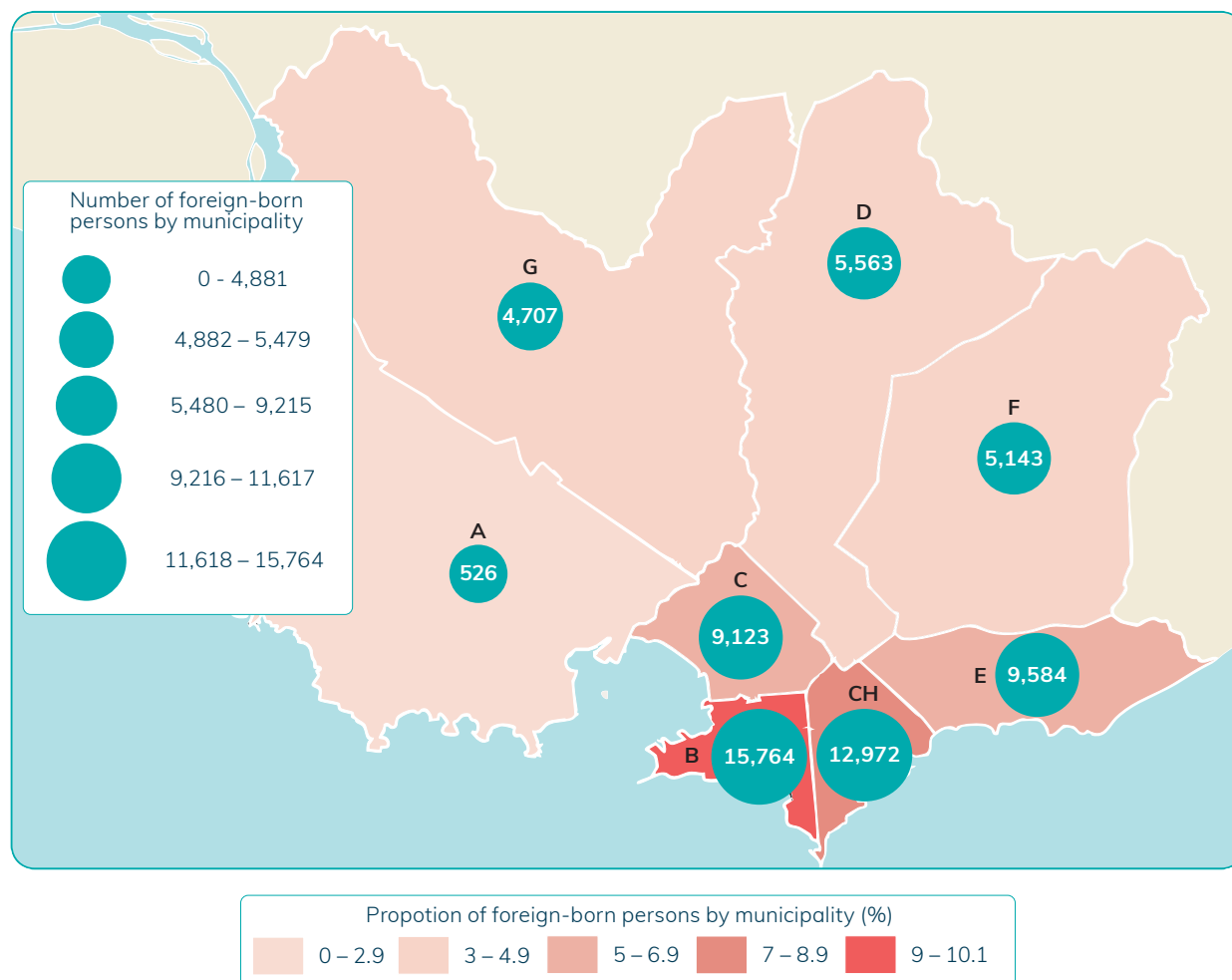
21 Ibid.

22 INE (n.d.) [Op. Cit.](#)

23 Prieto Rosas et al. (2022) [Op. Cit.](#)



**Map 1. Number of people born abroad per municipality in Montevideo, according to the 2023 census**



Own elaboration. Source: National Institute of Statistics - Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE - (2024). [Op. Cit.](#)

## 3.2. Responses to migration

The integration of migrants in Montevideo is driven by national policies and local initiatives, often implemented in collaboration with international organisations and Uruguayan civil society.

### National governance

Migration management at the national level is a key pillar for the integration of migrants in Montevideo.

#### Legal and political framework

Uruguay has a solid regulatory framework that establishes the fundamental rights of migrants<sup>24</sup> and refugees,<sup>25</sup> facilitating their regularisation, ensuring their access to labour and social rights, and guaranteeing the right to refuge and protection for refugees.<sup>26</sup> The inclusive approach of these policies and their robust implementation have been

24 Uruguay (2008) [Ley N°18.250. Ley de migraciones](#). This law was supplemented by several regulatory updates including: [Ley N°19.254](#) (Uruguay, 2014), [Decreto 118/018](#) (Uruguay, 2018a), regulation of article 162 of law [No°19.355](#) (Uruguay, 2015), y el [Decreto 356/018](#) (Uruguay, 2018b).

25 Uruguay (2006) [Ley N° 18076. Derecho al refugio y a los refugiados. Ley de refugiados](#).

26 In addition, Law No. 17,817 against Racism, Xenophobia, and Discrimination (2004) consolidates the prohibition of any form of discrimination based on national or ethnic origin, ensuring equal treatment for all migrants and refugees; see: Uruguay (2004) [Ley N° 17817. Declaración de interés nacional. Lucha contra el racismo la xenofobia y toda otra forma de discriminación](#). Furthermore, Law No. 19,682, adopted in 2018, determines the right to family reunification for all stateless people; see: Uruguay (2018) [Ley N° 19682. Aprobación de normas para el reconocimiento y protección al apátrida](#). Uruguay has also ratified most international and inter-american regulations, see: JNM (2023) Op.Cit, p. 30 and 31. For a list of international and regional instruments ratified up to 2020 and Uruguayan legislation on migration and the socio-economic inclusion of migrants and refugees in Uruguay, see: Gómez, M., Pizzarulli, L., Vizcaíno, A. (2020) [Repositorio normativo sobre la movilidad e inclusión socioeconómica de la población migrante y refugiada en Uruguay](#). UNICEF, República, Observatorio de Movilidad, Infancia y Familia en Uruguay, IOM.

highlighted in the literature as “progressive and open,”<sup>27</sup> especially compared to other countries in the region.<sup>28</sup> This has been considered a factor that makes Uruguay an attractive destination for migration in the region. However, gaps remain, especially in the social inclusion of migrants.<sup>29</sup>

### National Integration Plan

Given the increase in immigration that Uruguay has experienced in recent years, the “National Integration Plan (*Plan Nacional de Integración*, PNI) for Migrants, Asylum Seekers, and Refugees, Uruguay 2023-2024” was approved in 2023<sup>30</sup> to promote the integration of migrants and implement the provisions of the legal framework.<sup>31</sup> The plan was developed by the National Migration Council (*Junta Nacional de Migración*, JNM) through a participatory consultation process. It promotes the integration of migrants, their contribution to the country’s development and inter-institutional coordination. The PNI covers eight strategic areas (see Table 2) and establishes general objectives, specific objectives, and actions for each of them.<sup>32</sup> The PNI was implemented in 2023 and 2024, and by mid-2025, its continuation or adaptation based on the experience gained was being considered by the national government and the JNM, who were assessing their next steps.

**Table 2 . General objectives of the PNI 2023-2024, by strategic pillar**

Strategic area	General objective (GO)
Documentation and regularisation	GO. Strengthen migration regularisation, asylum, and identity documentation as fundamental tools for integrating migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees.
Employment	GO. Create conditions that favour the labour market integration of migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees through inter-institutional actions, within the framework of equal opportunity policies, with a focus on human rights and intersectionality.
Education	GO 1. Ensure access to education for migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, and promote successful learning pathways at all levels and throughout life. GO 2. Promote intercultural educational environments free from discrimination.
Health	GO. Guarantee universal access to comprehensive health care for migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees nationwide.
Housing	GO. Enhance access to housing alternatives for migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees across the country, taking into account their specific needs.
Violations	GO. Guarantee the inclusion and integration of migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees in vulnerable situations, using a human rights-, gender-, and age-sensitive approach.
Discrimination, racism and xenophobia	GO. Promote coexistence, diversity and social cohesion through inter-institutional and intersectoral efforts, combating racism, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination.
Highly skilled migration	GO. Promote the integration and inclusion of highly skilled migrant workers, asylum seekers, and refugees residing in the country, strengthening the positive link between mobility and development.

Own elaboration. Source: JNM (2023) [Op.Cit.](#), pp. 43-46. [translated by the authors]

Preliminary results from the pilot phase of the PNI highlight progress in migration regularisation and a simplification of procedures. In response to pending asylum applications and in line with requests from actors such as UNHCR, Uruguay introduced the “Prima Facie” programme in 2024,<sup>33</sup> simplifying access to asylum for Venezuelans. The mechanism is open to Venezuelan asylum seekers who submitted their application before 29 May 2024, have a document proving

27 Prieto Rosas et al. (2022) [Op.Cit.](#), p. 22

28 Wang et al. (2023) [Op.Cit.](#)

29 Prieto Rosas et al. (2022) [Op.Cit.](#)

30 JNM (2023) [Op.Cit.](#)

31 La Diaria Política (2023) [Gobierno presentó el Plan Nacional de Integración para personas migrantes, solicitantes de refugio y refugiados.](#)

32 JNM (2023) [Op.Cit.](#)

33 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Uruguay (2024) [Gobierno establece procedimiento abreviado para solicitantes de refugio venezolanos](#); Tristant, P. (2024) [Uruguay aprobó un plan para agilizar la solicitud de refugio de venezolanos](#). Infobae.; UNHCR Argentina (2024) [ACNUR celebra nueva decisión de Uruguay que lo posiciona como país modelo en la protección de personas refugiadas.](#)

their nationality and have no criminal record or other residence permit granted in Uruguay.<sup>34</sup>

In addition, the government created the “Residencia por Arraigo” (Residence permit based on ties to the country) programme, providing an additional mechanism for migrants of any nationality who entered the country legally but do not have access to permanent or temporary residence and wish to settle in the country permanently. This programme grants access to residence based on work, family ties, or studies.<sup>35</sup> According to UNHCR estimates, 20,000 migrants could benefit from this programme,<sup>36</sup> especially Cubans.

Despite the progress made by the PNI, the key actors interviewed pointed out some gaps that limit its effectiveness. Current programmes do not always communicate with each other or with key offices. There is a lack of coordination between agencies, which creates bottlenecks, even when progress is being made in one area. In addition, it was mentioned that the participation of migrant and refugee communities in the plan’s workshops and activities was limited:

*“[It would be valuable] to bring greater plurality to these spaces for participation by the organised refugee and migrant community, to open them up more and invite other communities which, although they often face the same challenges, may have some particularities that are not evident because they do not participate in these spaces.”*

**Durable Solutions Officer, UNHCR Regional Office for South America**

The interviewees also pointed out that the PNI has yet to fully incorporate an intersectional approach. Concrete obstacles persist in access to housing, health, justice, and employment, where existing policies do not always address the real needs of migrants or have requirements that are difficult to meet, such as permanent residence or job stability.

In addition, key informants mentioned that Uruguay does not have a unified system for registering and collecting detailed information on migrants. This leads to isolated or duplicated exercises, data that do not communicate with each other, gaps in specific information – such as access to employment, municipalities where migrants have tried to settle, access to services, among others –, which hinder a detailed analysis of this population. Building a unified information-gathering system is an opportunity for the next steps in integration policy.

In this regard, the key actors interviewed identified several opportunities to improve the plan, including strengthening inter-institutional coordination, territorialising actions, expanding the participation of migrant communities, ensuring a comprehensive labour strategy, and developing a unified information management system.

*“The actions defined in the Plan must be deepened because they also respond to lines of action. New lines of action must be incorporated, for example, improving access to justice, which has to do with the training of judicial operators, the territorial reach of the services available, and the migrant population’s knowledge of these resources. Territorial coverage is already part of the evaluation of the plan. Although the territory is being reached, it needs to be deepened. There have been attempts with some actors who are considered key to giving it true territorial coverage, but it was more limited than expected. Evaluating additional budget depends on what is determined.”*

**Anonymous key informant**

### *Institutional and operational structure*

The JNM is the main body responsible for coordinating migration policies at the national level, including the implementation of the PNI. It is composed of representatives from the Office of the President of the Republic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, MTSS), and the Ministry of Social Development (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, MIDES). The Advisory Consultative Council on Migration (Consejo Consultativo Asesor de Migración, CCAM) also participates on behalf of civil society.<sup>37</sup>

34 UNHCR Uruguay (n.d.) [Prima Facie Programme for the Venezuelan population](#).

35 Presidencia de Uruguay (2024) [Decreto N° 138/024 Se crea el Programa de Residencia por Arraigo](#).

36 UNHCR (2024) [Uruguay: ACNUR celebra nuevo programa de residencia por arraigo que podría beneficiar a más de 20 mil personas](#).

37 Uruguay (2024) [Junta Nacional de Migración \(JNM\)](#).

Migration and the asylum application process are centralised in the National Directorate of Migration (*Dirección Nacional de Migración*, DNM) of the Ministry of Interior. This includes procedures such as legal residence, migration certificates and re-entry permit. Many procedures can be initiated online through the official website.<sup>38</sup> This centralisation is a recent change as part of measures to facilitate access to documentation:

*"[...] the documentation process has been centralised at the DNM. We believe that this, at least, provides some clarity on where people can process their documentation, whether they have initiated an asylum application, or whether they have initiated an intra- or extra-Mercosur residence, and that certain software has been designed to improve the agendas, which in Uruguay have always been quite rudimentary."*

**Deputy Coordinator, SEDHU**

MIDES plays a central role in assisting migrants. Its Department of Migrants (*Departamento de Migrantes*) promotes the inclusion and access to rights of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers through counselling, institutional coordination, and support for migration regularisation.<sup>39</sup> Other ministries also support the integration of migrants per their specific mandates, such as the MTSS and the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Ministerio de Educación y Cultura*, MEC).<sup>40</sup>

### About the Migrant Reference Centre (*Centro de Referencia Migrante*, CRM)

In March 2024, the CRM was inaugurated in Montevideo.<sup>41</sup> Located in Ciudad Vieja (part of Municipality B), the centre provides guidance, support and a meeting place for migrants. In addition to the MIDES, which leads the initiative, a variety of government organisations (Ministry of Housing and Territorial Planning – *Ministerio de Vivienda y Ordenamiento Territorial*, MVOT –, the DNM, the State Health Services Administration – *Administración de Servicios de Salud del Estado*, ASSE–, and the MEC) and non-governmental organisations (UNICEF and the Family Reunification Programme of the Uruguayan Red Cross) are also part of the initiative, providing services and information in areas such as regularisation, social benefits, access to health, education, housing, work, and training for migrants. The centre is open Monday to Friday from 10:00 to 14:00 and is aimed at people on the move and foreign citizens.<sup>42</sup>

## Local governance

In Uruguay, local authorities carry out actions within their department, mainly in urban areas, such as the maintenance of public spaces and transport. The formulation of migration policy is the responsibility of the national government. Departmental administrations do not participate in its development, and Montevideo does not have a policy document establishing a local migration strategy. However, local authorities, such as the Departmental Government of Montevideo, have taken an active role in local and inter-municipal migration governance initiatives and participated in the workshops held to formulate the PNI.<sup>43</sup>

In the department of Montevideo, the Secretariat for Ethnic-Racial Equity and Migrant Populations (*Secretaría de Equidad Étnico Racial y Poblaciones Migrantes*, SEERPM) implements public policies at the local level and provides primary care to migrants using an intersectional approach. It focuses on groups potentially exposed to multiple forms of discrimination, including women, people with diverse SOGIESC, people of African descent, and migrants with disabilities.<sup>44</sup>

38 Ministerio del Interior (n.d.) [Dirección Nacional de Migración](#).

39 MIDES (2025) [Departamento de Migrantes](#).

40 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (2022) [Informe Nacional de Revisión Voluntaria de Implementación del Pacto Mundial para una Migración Segura, Ordenada y Regular – República Oriental del Uruguay](#). Migration Review Forum (IMRF) – United Migration Network on Migration.

41 Presidencia de Uruguay (2024) [Centro de Referencia para Personas Migrantes comenzó a funcionar en Montevideo](#).

42 MIDES (n.d.) [Centro de Referencia Migrantes](#).

43 IOM (2023) [Local Migration Governance Indicators Profile 2023 – Department of Montevideo \(Uruguay\)](#).

44 Ibid.

## Departmental programmes and partnerships

The Montevideo Departmental Government - through the SEERPM - promotes the integration of migrants via a series of projects:

- The Project “Resuena” (Resonate)<sup>45</sup> is a comprehensive support centre for migrant and displaced families. It was launched in 2023 with funding from the Global Cities Fund.<sup>46</sup>
- Since 2023, through an agreement with the Methodist Church of Uruguay, it has also been providing temporary accommodation for newly arrived migrants through the Guadalupe Project (*Proyecto Guadalupe*).<sup>47</sup>
- SEERPM also offers free Spanish courses for non-Spanish-speaking foreigners and conversation spaces to exchange experiences on integration in the city and cultural issues.<sup>48</sup>

The Departmental Government of Montevideo also leads metropolitan initiatives that seek to improve coordination between institutions and social actors, strengthening support networks in the capital and assistance to migrants. In 2023, Montevideo implemented<sup>49</sup> the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) at the local level, a set of indicators for evaluating migration policies established by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).<sup>50</sup> Montevideo is part of the “Ciudades Solidarias” (Cities of Solidarity) initiative, which promotes the creation of networks between municipalities to cooperate and exchange good practices to protect migrants and encourage their inclusion in society.<sup>51</sup> Since late 2024, as part of another project with the departments of San José and Canelones, the capital has been helping design a strategy to promote migrant employment and social inclusion in Montevideo and the metropolitan area.<sup>52</sup>

In 2006, the Departmental Government developed an action plan to combat racism, discrimination and xenophobia within the framework of the International Coalition of Cities against Racism.<sup>53</sup> However, the 2023 MGI assessment identified a lack of implementation of concrete actions targeting migrants.<sup>54</sup>

Other initiatives, although aimed at the general public, are available to migrants. For example, the Office of the Residents Ombudsperson (*Defensoría de Vecinas y Vecinos*) in Montevideo has been offering community mediation to resolve conflicts and promote coexistence and human rights, using honorary volunteers since 2016.<sup>55</sup> The “Fortalecidas Emprande” (Empowered Women Entrepreneurs) programme promotes the autonomy and empowerment of women and gender-diverse people, including migrant women, through training and support funds for projects and enterprises.<sup>56</sup>

## Municipal projects

In addition to department-level initiatives, there have also been efforts at the municipal level. In 2021, the Municipality B carried out a project supported by the IOM that aimed to promote the integration of migrants through a consultation and community design process that resulted in the “Casa Azul” (Blue House) as “a multipurpose space to provide various reception and support services to the migrant population,” and the launch of the “B de Bienvenida” (W for Welcome) campaign.<sup>57</sup> In February 2023, the “Centro de Referencia y Orientación para Personas Migrantes” (Reference and Orientation Centre for Migrants) was inaugurated, the result of an implementation agreement between the IOM, Municipality B, and *Club Atlético Peñarol* – a Montevideo-based football club. The centre provides migrants with information on their rights, obligations and local public services.<sup>58</sup>

45 Intendencia de Montevideo (n.d.) [Proyecto Resuena](#).

46 Intendencia de Montevideo (2023a) [Montevideo ganó el Global Cities Fund para proyectos dirigidos a poblaciones migrantes y refugiados](#).

47 Intendencia de Montevideo (2023b) [Respuesta habitacional transitoria para Personas Migrantes](#).

48 Intendencia de Montevideo (2025a) [Cursos de español para personas migrantes](#). Intendencia de Montevideo (2025b) Conversation space for migrants.

49 Intendencia de Montevideo (2023c). [Montevideo avanza en la implementación de indicadores de gobernanza migratoria](#).

50 See: Global Migration Data Portal (2025) [Local migration governance indicators](#).

51 UNHCR (2025) [Ciudades solidarias](#).

52 Intendencia de Montevideo (2024) [Se presentó proyecto para la inserción laboral y social de población migrante en el área metropolitana](#).

53 Intendencia de Montevideo, Latin American and Caribbean Coalition & United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2006) [Plan de Acción de 10 Puntos](#).

54 IOM (2023a) [Op.Cit.](#)

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Municipio B (2021) [B de bienvenida](#).

58 Municipio B (2025) [Servicios de orientación para personas migrantes](#). IOM (2023b) [La OIM Uruguay, el Municipio B y Peñarol inauguraron el primer CRO de Uruguay](#).



## 4. Profile of research participants

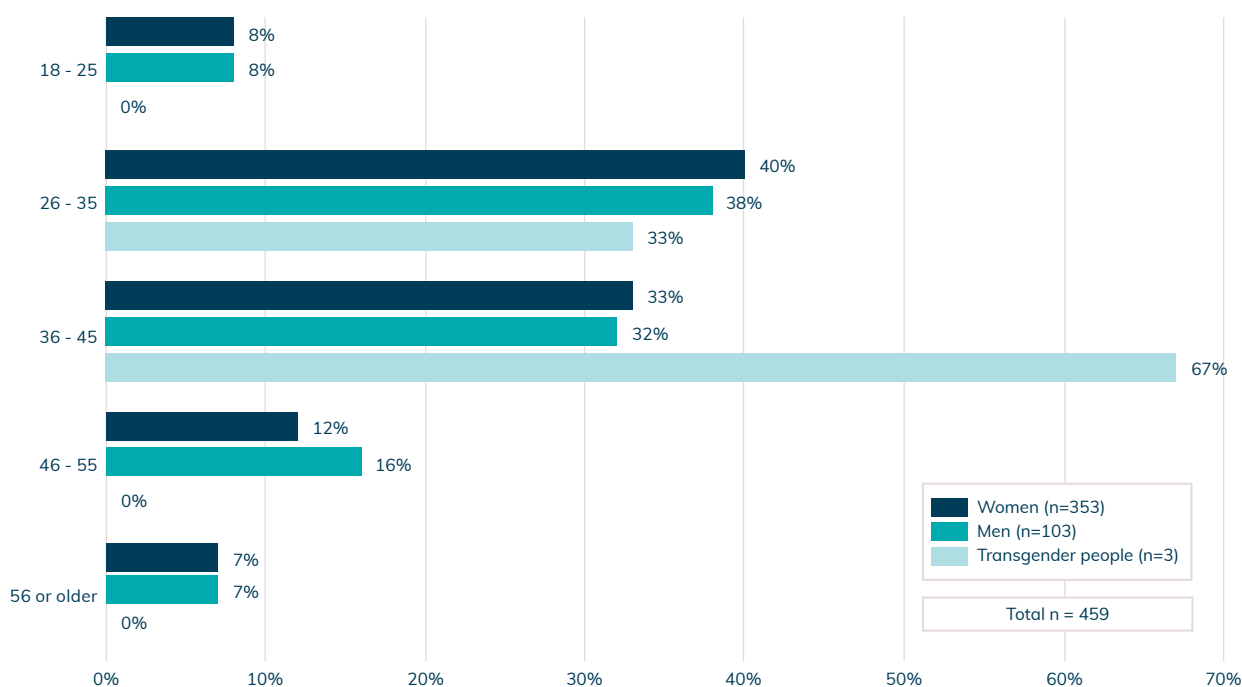
The survey gathered detailed information on migrants, including their gender, age, nationality, educational background, and year of arrival in Montevideo. It also profiled their households, collecting data on the number of household members, their ages, gender, and relationship with the respondent.

### 4.1. Profiles of survey respondents

Most of the respondents were women (77%), with men making up (22%).<sup>59</sup> Both groups showed a similar age distribution. Eight per cent of respondents were between 18 and 25 years old, 31% were between 26 and 35 years old, 33% were between 36 and 45 years old, 13% were between 46 and 55 years old, and 7% were 56 years old or older.

**Figure 1 . Age and gender distribution of survey respondents**

Answers to the 4Mi questions: How old are you? And which of the following options best describes your gender identity?



Almost two-thirds of respondents were Cuban (57%), followed by Venezuelans (32%), and to a lesser extent, Dominicans (6%), Colombians (2%), and Argentines (2%).<sup>60</sup>

In terms of educational attainment, 6% of respondents had only completed primary school, 42% had completed secondary education, 12% had technical or vocational training, and 39% had a university degree.<sup>61</sup> Among Cubans (n=260), there was a higher percentage of university degrees (46%), while Venezuelans (n=147) mostly had secondary education (46%).

In terms of the length of time they had been in Montevideo, 36% of respondents had arrived in 2024, 33% in 2023, 20% in 2022, 8% between 2021 and 2% in 2020.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> 1% were transgender people.

<sup>60</sup> The remaining 1% corresponds to people of Peruvian (n=4), Ecuadorian (n=2), Paraguayan, Bolivian, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Chilean, and Honduran nationality (n=1 for each nationality).

<sup>61</sup> The remaining 1% corresponds to respondents with postgraduate degrees (n=6) and one respondent who had not completed any level of schooling.

<sup>62</sup> The overrepresentation of migrants who moved to Montevideo in 2024 and 2023 is due to the fact that contact with migrants was largely made through SEDHU care databases.

## 4.2. Profiles of household members covered by the survey

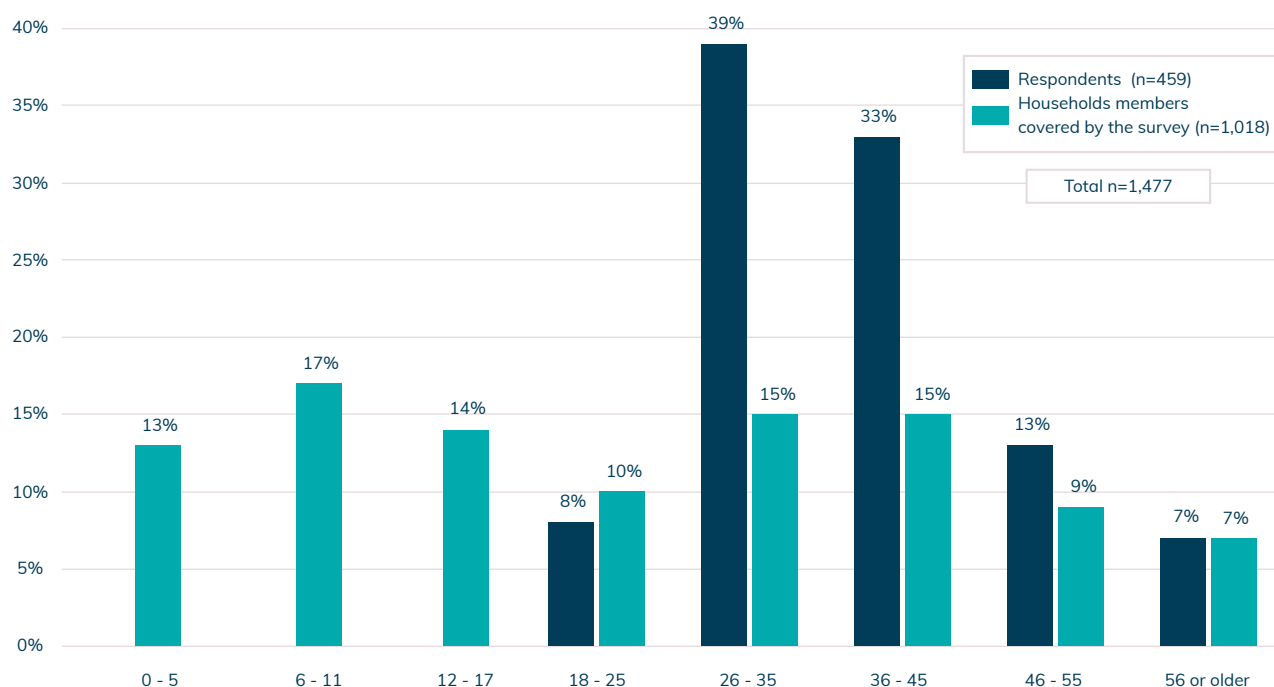
Respondents provided information about the members of their households. In total, the survey covered 1,477 people — 459 direct respondents and 1,018 household members reported by them.

Of the 459 households, 41% had between two and three members, 40% had between four and six, and 3% had seven or more members. Sixteen per cent were single-person households. In households with at least two members (n=387) – in addition to the respondent – the other person(s) were mainly their children (71%), spouse or partner (69%) and, to a lesser extent, mother/father (12%) or sibling (9%).

In 59% of households, there was at least one child or adolescent. The survey reached a total of 449 children and adolescents: 30% were children between 0 and 5 years old, 39% were between 6 and 11 years old, and 31% were between 12 and 17 years old.

**Figure 2. Distribution by age of survey respondents and members of households reached by the surveys**

Answers to the 4Mi questions: *How old are you? And how old is this person?*



## 5. Findings

### Reasons for leaving the countries of nationality and host countries, and selecting Montevideo as a destination

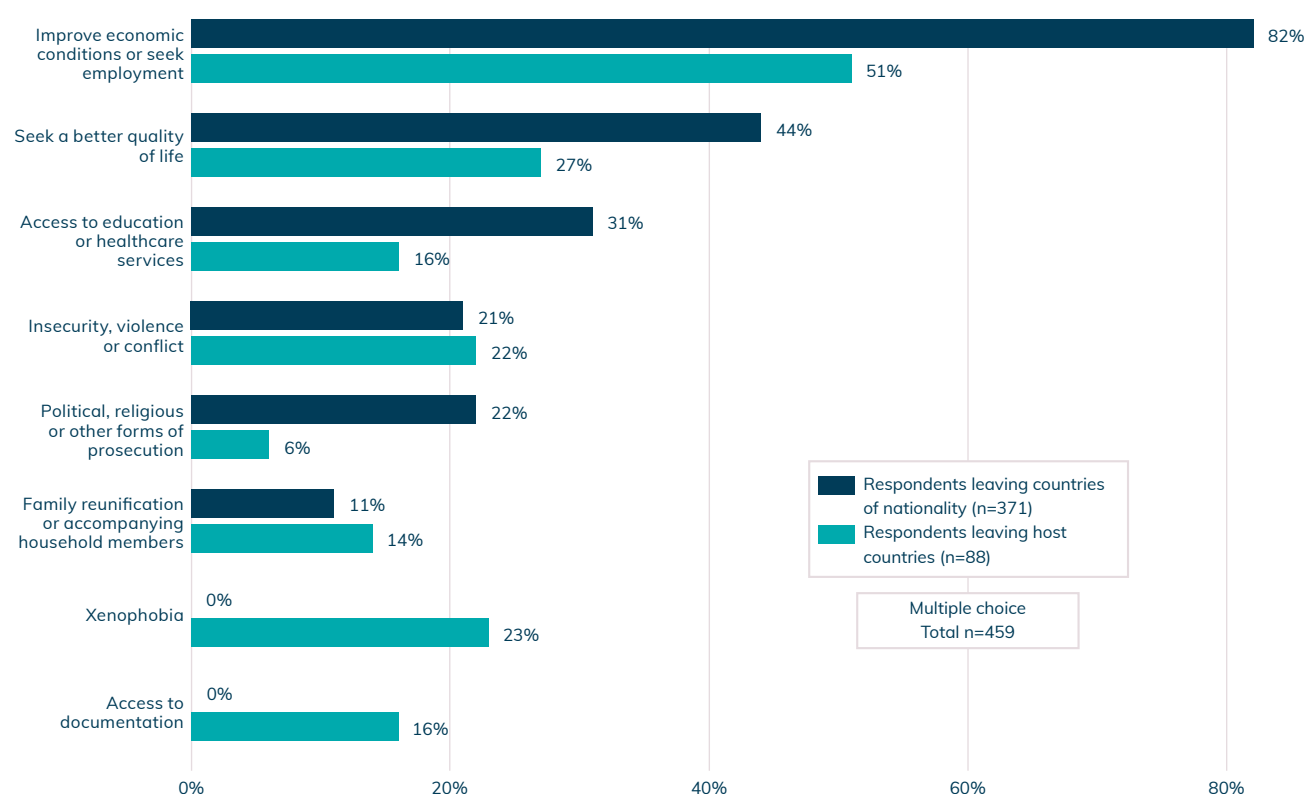
This section covers the reasons why migrants left their countries of nationality and host countries, as well as the reasons why they chose Montevideo as their destination.

Most of the respondents (81% or n=371) began their migration journey to Uruguay from their country of nationality. Nineteen per cent (n=88) left a host country —that is, a country other than their country of nationality, where they had stayed for at least three months, intending to remain. A large proportion of these respondents were Venezuelan (66 out of 88), and more than half of them had re-migrated from Peru (37 out of 66), which is in line with recent remigration patterns observed in South America among Venezuelan migrants.<sup>63</sup>

Respondents cited the search for better economic or employment conditions as the main reason for leaving their country of nationality or host country. This motive was prevalent across origins but was more common among those who departed from their country of nationality (82%) than from a host country (51%). Reasons for leaving host countries were more varied, including xenophobia and difficulties in obtaining documentation. These factors highlight the challenges migrants face when trying to integrate into third countries in the region.<sup>64</sup>

**Figure 3. Main reasons for leaving the country of nationality and host country\***

Answers to the 4Mi question: What were the main reasons for leaving the country of nationality or host country?



\*The results for respondents who left a host country (n=88) should be treated with caution, given the sample size.

<sup>63</sup> Wang et al. (2023) [Op.Cit.](#)

<sup>64</sup> New migration movements – driven by integration challenges – have also been observed in 4Mi General data collected in South America; see: MMC (2024) [Impulsores de la migración, nuevos movimientos migratorios y elecciones de destino entre migrantes en América del Sur.](#)

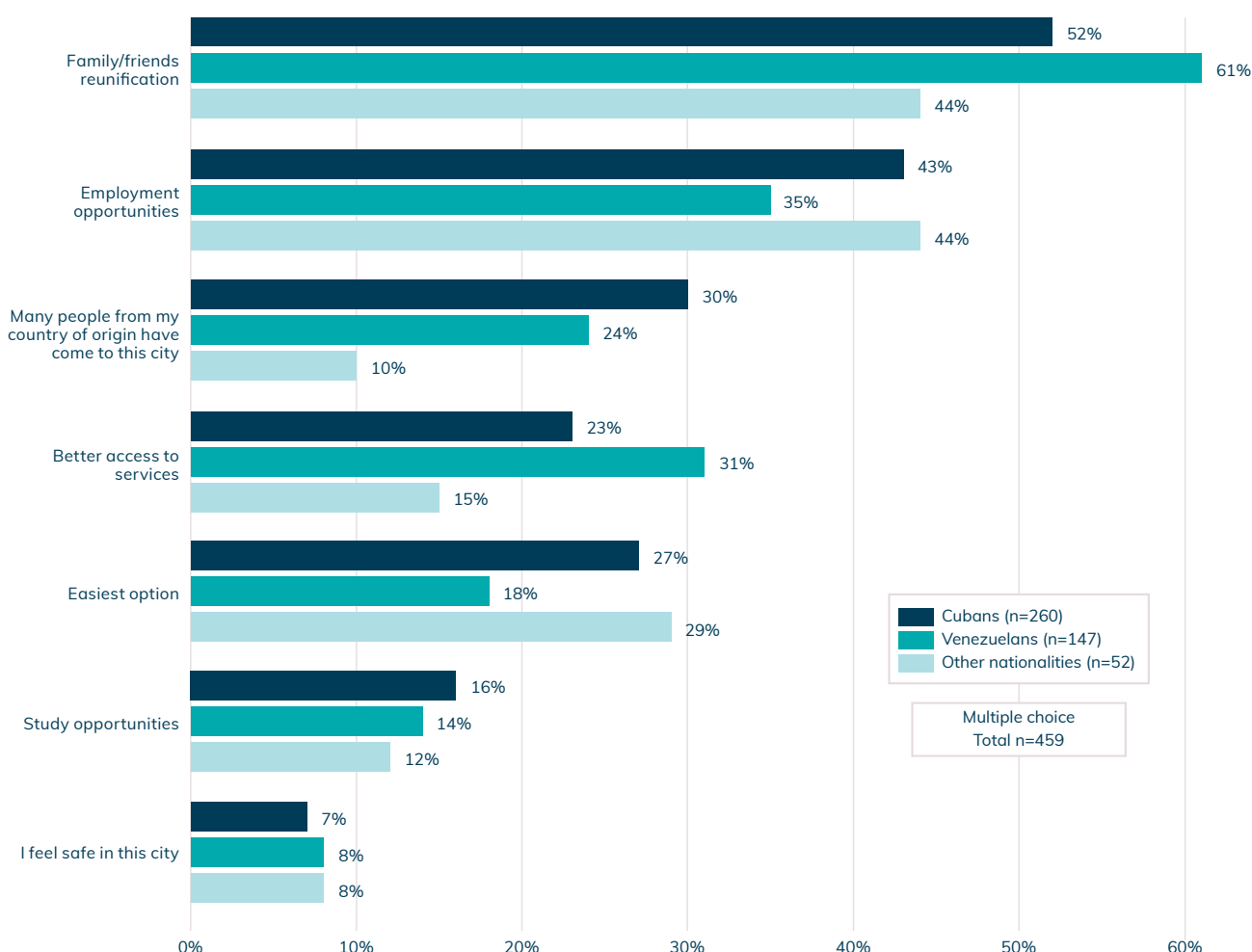
According to several key informants, migrants choose Uruguay as a destination because it is perceived as a stable and safe country. At the same time, the choice of city is based on personal motivations or the search for better life opportunities. Of all survey respondents, 65% arrived directly in Montevideo, while 35% tried to settle in at least one other city in Uruguay. The survey did not collect information on the town in which respondents attempted to settle before arriving in Montevideo. However, outside the capital, migrants mainly live in Canelones and Maldonado. Smaller numbers are found in Colonia, San José, and border departments such as Rivera, Rocha, and Cerro Largo.<sup>65</sup>

Survey respondents mainly chose Montevideo as a destination to reunite with friends or family (54%), reflecting the importance of family reunification processes and the existence of support networks that drive migration. The second most cited reason was the search for job opportunities (41%); several key informants indicated that migrants perceive that Montevideo offers employment opportunities because it is the country's capital.

The third most common reason for choosing Montevideo differed by respondents' nationality. For Venezuelans (n=147), better access to services (31%) was a key factor, consistent with the reasons that motivated many of them to leave their country. For Cubans (n=260), it was the city's large Cuban community (30%), underscoring the importance of community networks in migration decisions. According to the 2023 census, Cubans made up 23% of Montevideo's foreign population.<sup>66</sup>

#### Figure 4. Main reasons for choosing Montevideo by nationality of survey respondents\*

Answers to the 4Mi questions: Why did you and your household decide to come to Montevideo? And what is your country of nationality?



\*The results for respondents of other nationalities (n=52) should be treated with caution, given the sample size.

65 According to the 2023 Census, Canelones has a foreign-born population of 17,879 (15% of the total foreign population in Uruguay); the foreign population in Maldonado was 12,225 (10% of the total). Other departments (in order of representation): Rivera (3,998; 3%), Colonia (3,816; 3%), Rocha (2,593; 2%), San José (1,847; 2%), Cerro Largo (1,837; 2%). See: INE (n.d.) [Op. Cit.](#)

66 INE (n.d.) [Op. Cit.](#)

## Integration experiences in Montevideo

This section presents the main findings on the integration experience of migrants in Montevideo, organised according to the central themes of the PNI. Key aspects such as documentation and regularisation, health, education and childcare, employment and income, housing, protection and access to justice, as well as participation in city life and social cohesion are addressed.

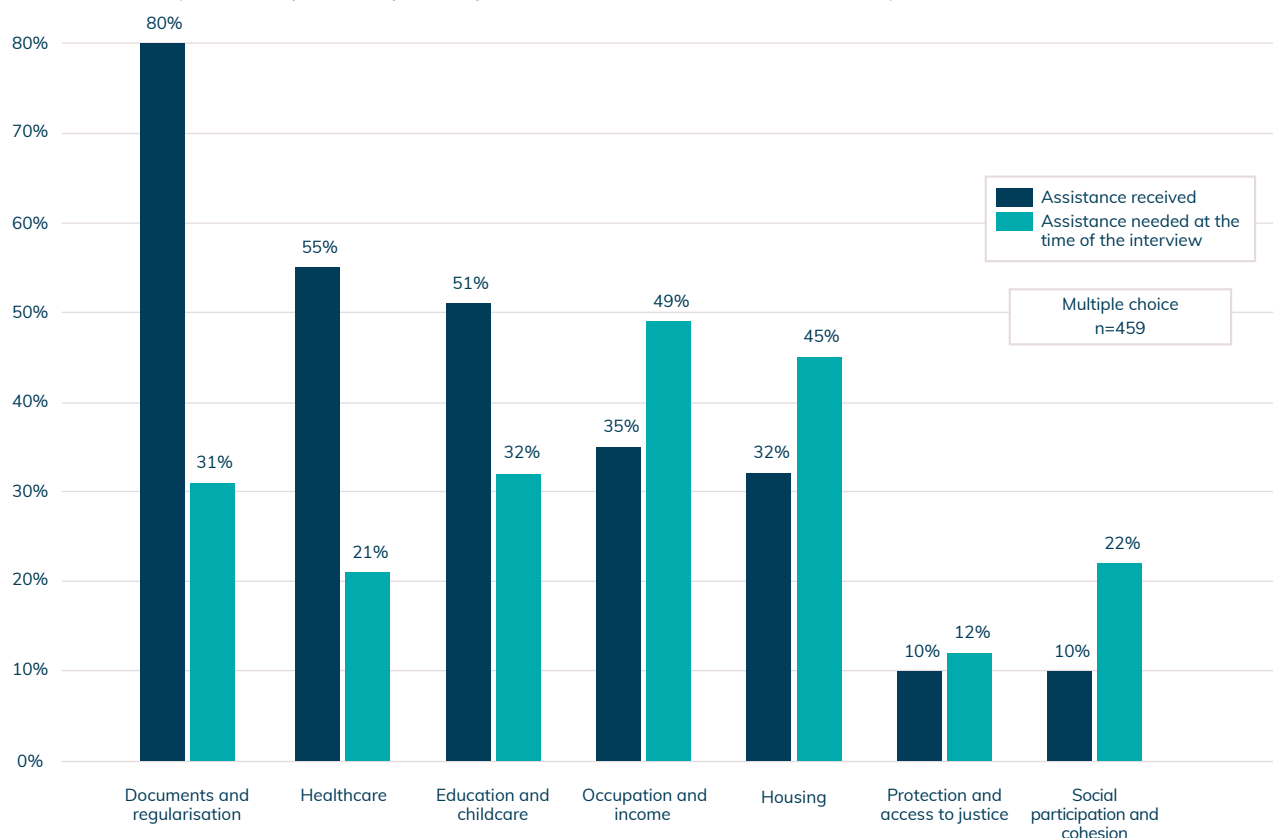
Each thematic area covers three aspects: (1) the level of access of the migrant population to the respective services or rights, (2) the availability of assistance, and (3) the main unmet assistance needs.

Below graph provides a comparative overview of access to assistance and needs for assistance among survey respondents across the seven thematic areas. More detail on access and needs is provided in each section.

In terms of access to services, respondents reported higher levels of access in the areas of documentation, health, and education, and greater barriers to accessing housing and employment. With regard to access to assistance, respondents most often reported support with documentation and regularisation (80%). At the time of the survey, the greatest needs among respondents were in employment and income (49%) and housing (45%). On the issue of protection and access to justice, survey respondents reported low levels of access to assistance (10%) and needs (12%) (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Access to and needs for assistance among survey respondents\***

Answers to the 4Mi questions in each thematic area: Have you or anyone in your household received any type of assistance or help? And do you or anyone in your household need assistance or help at this time?



\*For the theme of education and childcare, only the responses of respondents with at least one child or adolescent in their household are presented, so the sample for both questions is smaller (n=271).

## Documents and regularisation

The increase in the arrival of migrants and asylum seekers in Uruguay since 2014 has posed challenges for public policy, highlighting the importance of migration regularisation to support integration and access to rights and comply with international commitments.<sup>67</sup> In this context, the regularisation of migrants has been a priority for national and

67 Bengochea et al (2023) [Op. Cit.](#); Prieto Rosas et al (2022) [Op. Cit.](#); Wang et al (2023) [Op. Cit.](#)



local authorities, and the PNI has considered measures to streamline procedures and facilitate access to services through the creation of a one-stop shop.<sup>68</sup>

Recent advances include “Prima Facie” and “Residencia por Arraigo”. Despite the progress, the introduction of new requirements, such as the migration certificate necessary to obtain a citizenship card,<sup>69</sup> has added complexity and delays to other procedures.

It is noteworthy that, concerning documents linked to migration regularisation, the asylum seeker certificate was the most frequently mentioned by survey respondents. In contrast, access to residence was rarely reported. Furthermore, although Venezuelans can access the Southern Common Market (Mercado Común del Sur, Mercosur) residence regime, this mechanism was rarely reported among survey respondents, which could indicate low utilisation or difficulties in processing applications.

### Identity documents from the country of nationality

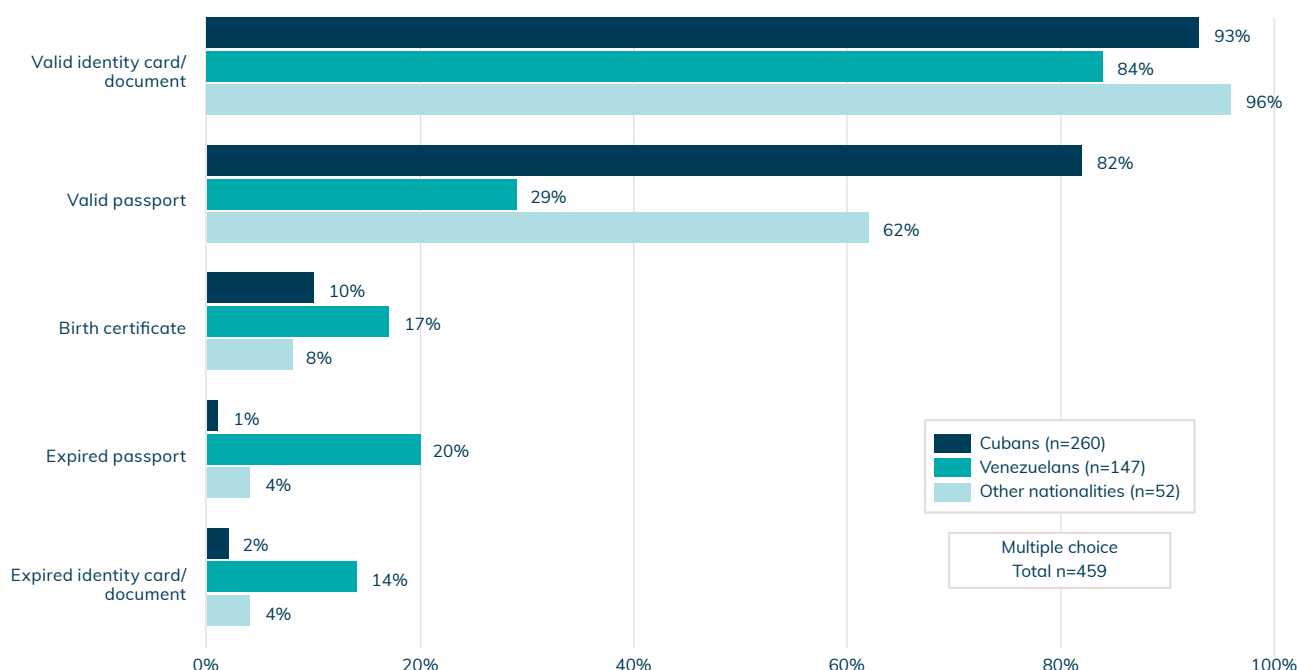
Identity documents from the country of nationality guarantee the full identification of individuals in other countries and are the starting point for accessing migration regularisation mechanisms. Therefore, the absence of documents limits options to regularise. Additional barriers exist for those who cannot access identity documents outside their country of nationality.

A valid citizenship card or identity document from the country of nationality was the type of document most commonly held by respondents (91% of 459) and by members of households (88% of 1,018), regardless of nationality.

Among Venezuelans (n=147), expired identity documents were more common – 20% had expired passports and 14% had expired citizenship cards – compared to other nationalities. This reflects barriers to renewing documents inside and outside their country. The breakdown of consular relations between Venezuela and Uruguay, which lasted for almost a year, starting in July 2024, further complicated matters for those needing to obtain Venezuelan identity documents, leaving the embassy in Bolivia as the closest option.<sup>70</sup>

**Figure 6. Identity documents of the country of nationality of the survey respondents, by nationality\***

Answers to the 4Mi questions: What identity documents of your country of nationality do you currently have? And what is your country of nationality?



\*Results for respondents of other nationalities (n=52) should be treated with caution, given the sample size.

In the households surveyed, two children —a 3-year-old boy and a 15-year-old girl— had no identity documents, which could put them at risk of statelessness or of facing barriers to proving their identity. According to key informants, the migration of families and the formation of mixed-nationality family groups create barriers for children to access identity documents.

68 JNM (2023) [Op. Cit.](#)

69 Ministerio del Interior - DNM (2025) [Certificado migratorio para renovación de documento de identidad.](#)

70 CNN (2025) [Gobiernos de Panamá y Venezuela acuerdan reactivar relaciones consulares suspendidas hace casi un año.](#)

## Regularisation documents

Uruguayan law grants migrants' access to justice, health care, and education (for children and adolescents), regardless of whether they have a regular migration status or not.<sup>71</sup> However, regularisation documents are necessary for migrants to access employment and housing.

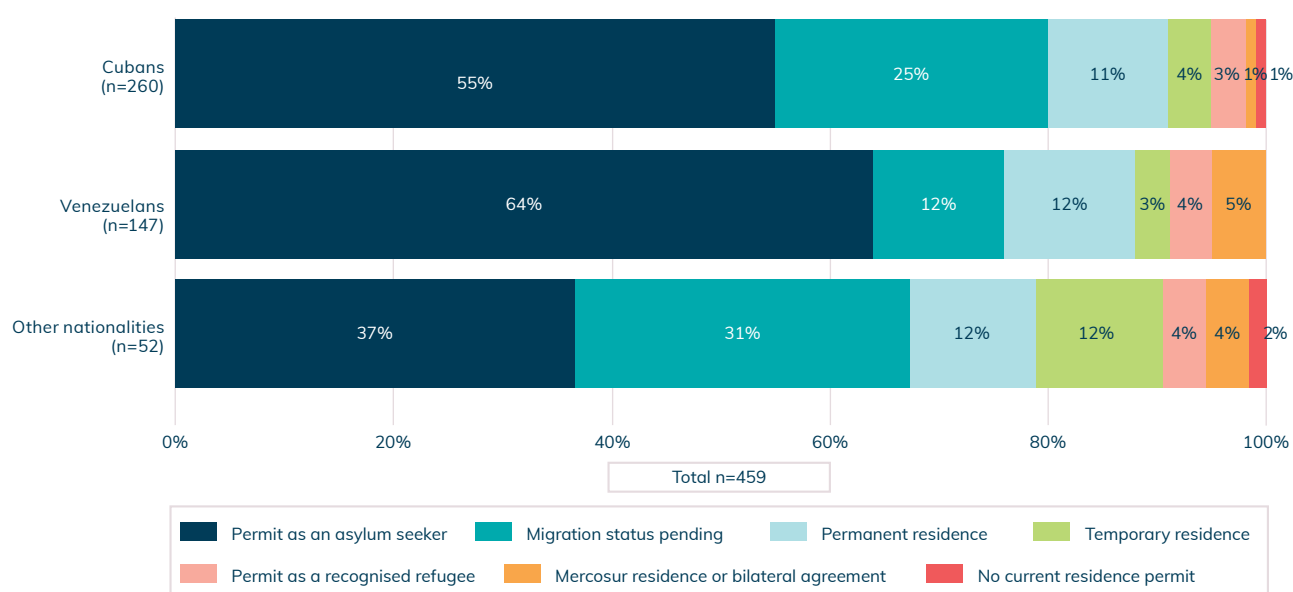
Asylum seeker certificates are the most common type of regularisation document among respondents (56% of 459) and household members (53% of 1,018), regardless of nationality.<sup>72</sup> Only 1% (16 respondents of 1,477) of all respondents and household members did not have any residence permits.

While none of the respondents had Uruguayan citizenship, 6% (n=63) of household members had. This included 42 children under the age of five, who may have acquired Uruguayan nationality at birth. Any child born in Uruguay automatically acquires Uruguayan nationality, regardless of the nationality of their parents.<sup>73</sup>

Among Venezuelans, the asylum seekers certificates were higher (64% of 147) than among other nationalities. Although Uruguay allows Venezuelans to apply for Mercosur residence,<sup>74</sup> only 5% (of 147) had used this mechanism. This may be due to a lack of awareness or an inability to apply due to expired identity documents. Several key informants noted that Venezuelans are more aware of the asylum application process than other regularisation mechanisms, leading them to apply for asylum even when they meet the requirements for different mechanisms. In addition, the requirement to present valid identity documents to begin the residence application process,<sup>75</sup> together with the costs associated with the process - which ceased to be free in 2023<sup>76</sup> and currently costs \$90 USD<sup>77</sup> - limits access to Mercosur residence for Venezuelans.<sup>78</sup>

**Figure 7. Migration status of survey respondents by nationality\***

Answers to the 4Mi questions: What is your current immigration status in Uruguay? And what is your country of nationality?



\*Results for respondents of other nationalities (n=52) should be treated with caution, given the sample size.

71 IMPO (2023). [En Uruguay existe una ley que reconoce la igualdad de derechos de los extranjeros migrantes con los uruguayos.](#)

72 Refugee application permits are overrepresented in the data as regularisation documents because respondents were identified through SEDHU, an organisation providing advice on migration regularisation and access to refuge (see 2.3. Limitations).

73 Uruguay (1989) [Ley N° 16.021- Nacionalidad uruguaya.](#)

74 Uruguay offers temporary and permanent Mercosur residence to migrants from member states (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela). Although Venezuela was permanently suspended from Mercosur in 2017, Uruguay has maintained access to Mercosur residence for Venezuelan nationals. See: Uruguay (2025) [Residencial Legal](#) and Mercosur (2017) [Suspensión de Venezuela en el MERCOSUR.](#)

75 In addition to a valid identity document, the other requirements for Mercosur residency are a passport photo, a criminal record certificate from the country where the applicant has resided for the last five years, and a valid vaccination certificate. See: Uruguay (2025) [Residencial Legal.](#)

76 El Observador (2023) [Uruguay cobrará la residencia Mercosur y temen que afecte a "miles" de venezolanos.](#)

77 The Mercosur permanent residence application process in Uruguay costs 557.30 Indexed Units (UI), a value that is adjusted daily. Uruguay (2025). [Op. Cit.](#)

78 Migrants who do not have the financial resources to cover the costs associated with migration regularisation may apply for exemption from payment at the MIDES Territorial Offices. See: Ministerio del Interior (n.d.) [Insuficiencia de recursos.](#)

Migrants from countries outside Mercosur, such as Cubans and Dominicans, face stricter requirements and higher costs to access other types of residence.<sup>79</sup> Hence, only 20% (of 260) of Cubans and 6 of 26 Dominican survey respondents held permanent or temporary residence.

The asylum system has seen an increase in applications in recent years, which, according to several key informants, is due to two factors: an increase in arrivals and Uruguay's decision not to suspend entry for asylum seekers, despite the closure of borders due to COVID-19.<sup>80</sup> However, the recognition of refugee status does not seem to be progressing at the same rate as the increase in applications. Only 4% of respondents had already been recognised as refugees. According to secondary sources, by early 2024 (before the implementation of the "Prima Facie" and "Residencia por Arraigo" programmes), the average waiting time for an interview after submitting an asylum application was two years.<sup>81</sup>

Despite efforts to streamline the process of obtaining documents, delays in processing were the most frequently cited barrier by respondents. Twenty-five per cent of respondents (n=115) said that they or a member of their household had encountered barriers to accessing documentation, mainly due to delays in processing (70%). Several key informants said delays occur because document-issuing systems have not kept pace with growing demand. Newer mechanisms ("Prima Facie" and "Residencia por Arraigo") could help reduce these barriers. However, their impact was not visible in this study, as data collection ended in March 2025, shortly after the initiatives were introduced.

Focus group participants also identified the process of registering birth certificates from their country of nationality in the foreign nationals' register as one of the most time-consuming processes. Given that this procedure is a prerequisite for obtaining a residence permit, delays in this process cause delays in obtaining other rights. At the beginning of 2024, 16,000 cases of foreigners with backlogged files were reported, of which 12,800 corresponded to birth certificates.<sup>82</sup> This number grew to 28,000, according to reports in mid-2025. However, in recent months, this total backlog has been reduced by 20% thanks to the digitisation of the process and an internal restructuring of the Civil Registry.<sup>83</sup>

The second most cited barrier was a lack of documents (37% of 115). This is linked to the issue of expired citizenship cards or passports, which hinders access to regularisation beyond asylum. Online automation of processes such as apostilles and legalisations would improve access to documents outside the country of origin.

The Administrative Coordinator of the DNM acknowledged that coordinating efforts to process identity documents from the country of origin in Uruguay has been a major challenge:

*"This is perhaps the greatest difficulty we have faced. There are instruments in place to coordinate this, [for example] Decree 118, and it is also a matter of coordinating with consulates abroad so that they can work with the agencies in the countries of origin. This has led to great progress in documentation and other areas. What we are trying to do is to ensure that all countries can move forward with the processing of digital documentation, as this solves all these problems."*

However, the presence of consular offices in Uruguay does not guarantee access to identity documents. Although only 3% of respondents indicated that they needed consular assistance at the time of the interview, key informants from civil society organisations and focus group participants pointed out that limited support and poor treatment by embassies or consulates hinder the completion of migrants' requests.

In the specific case of the Cuban doctors, a key informant pointed out that those who desert medical missions<sup>84</sup> face discrimination by consular representatives in Uruguay, which results in long delays in processing their passports.

Although only eight survey respondents mentioned the lack of information as a barrier to accessing documents, focus group participants felt that the lack of information about the different regularisation options and their requirements

79 Prieto Rosas, V. and Márquez Scotti, C. (2019) [Inclusión social de inmigrantes recientes que residen en viviendas particulares de Uruguay](#).

80 Sistema Nacional de Emergencias (2021) [Protocolo de actuación para solicitantes de refugio](#).

81 El Observador (2024). [Esperas de dos años y más de 24.000 recién llegados sin respuesta: la odisea para conseguir refugio en Uruguay](#).

82 Piñeyro, P. (2023) [Hay 16.000 expedientes de extranjeros atrasados en el Registro Civil por falta de personal](#). La Diaria.

83 El Observador (2025) [Unos 28.000 expedientes de extranjeros trancados: la herencia que recibió el Registro Civil y redujo un 20% en solo cuatro meses](#).

84 Medical missions are part of Cuba's labour export programme. Foreign governments can request the deployment of Cuban health professionals to reinforce or cover medical care in their territory. Workers who abandon medical missions are classified as "deserters" and are therefore banned from returning to the country for eight years. See: DW (2020) ["Misiones médicas" cubanas: ¿cuántas, dónde y por qué?](#)

prevented migrants from accessing them. In addition, they indicated that documentation procedures are complex, involving multiple requirements and visits to various offices, which can be confusing for migrants without sufficient information.

The lack of documents to access rights in Uruguay creates uncertainty and prevents migrants from fully implementing their migration plans. Among respondents who reported barriers to obtaining documents (n=115), 52% said that these barriers caused them stress, anxiety, or constant worry. Fifty-one per cent stated that the lack of documents caused them problems in accessing formal employment, and, although to a lesser extent, 16% had issues renting housing.

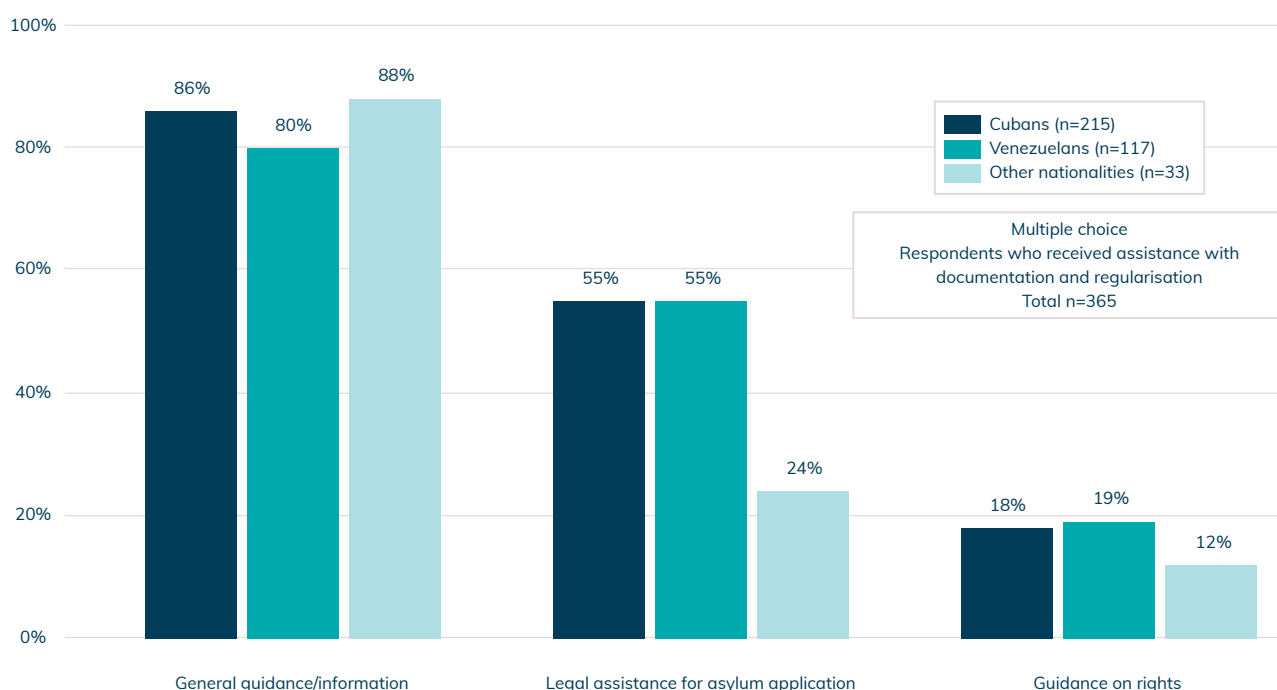
### Access to assistance with documentation and regularisation

Survey respondents reported high levels of assistance with documentation and immigration regularisation (80% or n=365) – compared to the other thematic areas. Cubans (n=260) and Venezuelans (n=147) had higher levels of access to assistance in this area (83% and 80%, respectively) than respondents of other nationalities (63% or 33 out of 52).

Regardless of nationality, survey respondents mostly received guidance or general information (84%) and, to a lesser extent, legal advice on applying for asylum (52%).

**Figure 8. Main types of assistance with documentation and regularisation received by nationality of survey respondents\***

Answers to the 4Mi questions: What type of assistance or help related to obtaining immigration documentation have you or someone in your household received? And what is your country of nationality?



\*Results for respondents of other nationalities (n=33) should be treated with caution, given the sample size.

Assistance was provided mainly by NGOs (51% of 365) and government offices (49%), including the CRM, among others.

Key informants from government entities highlighted the progress made possible by the CRM, a space that unites different actors and improves timely access to information:

“The importance of the Migrant Reference Centre located in Ciudad Vieja is recognised, as it provides access to information from different actors (MEC, ASSE, MIDES, among others) that directly influence the integration of these people and facilitates the streamlining of procedures, since it is no longer necessary to go to different places as in previous years, which involved not only time, other resources to move forward with these procedures.”

**Key informant, MEC**

However, only two focus group participants mentioned the CRM, pointing out that its opening hours (10:00 to 14:00) limit access to its services. The few mentions of the CRM in the qualitative information may be due to its recent nature. Still, they highlight the need to disseminate information about its services among migrants and to make access more flexible.

In addition to the CRM, key informants highlighted various initiatives to assist migrants with documentation and regularisation: MIDES was mentioned as a frequent point of reference, primarily through its regional offices, where migrants go to seek information; the legal advice provided by civil society organisations such as SEDHU and the legal aid offered by the University of the Republic (*Universidad de la República*, Udelar) were also highlighted; in addition, they highlighted the key role played by civil society in disseminating information through social networks such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and TikTok, which serve as channels for guidance, referral, and support in the procedures.

### Needs for assistance with documents and regularisation

Although most of the assistance received by respondents consisted of guidance or general information, this was also the category with the highest levels of unmet needs at the time of the interview.

Thirty-one per cent of respondents (n=141) reported needing assistance with documents and regularisation at the time of the interview, with a higher prevalence among respondents of nationalities other than Cuban and Venezuelan (20 out of 52). Independent of respondents' nationality, the most needed type of assistance with documents and regularisation was general guidance or information (76%).

Even among the 308 respondents who had received assistance on general guidance or information, 25% (n=78) still reported additional needs on the same topic at the time of the interview, suggesting a persistent gap in this type of assistance.

However, according to focus group participants, there are still significant gaps in the assistance provided. For example, they highlighted the lack of clear information on the different types of residence and their differences from asylum applications, making it difficult for migrants to make informed decisions. They also pointed out the need to expand regularisation options for migrants with expired documents, especially those whose asylum applications have been rejected, as they currently have no access to other regularisation mechanisms.

## Health

In Uruguay, everyone has the right to universal health and medical care, including migrants, regardless of their immigration status. Access is provided through the National Administration of Public Health Services (*Administración de Servicios de Salud del Estado*, ASSE). It is free for residents, migrants with pending residency status, and migrants in vulnerable situations, subject to an assessment of their socioeconomic status.<sup>85</sup> Others can access ASSE's services by paying a membership fee.<sup>86</sup> ASSE members have access to general and specialised health services in hospitals, specialised units, health centres, and polyclinics.<sup>87</sup>

The surveys revealed high levels of access to health care and enrolment in service providers – especially in the public system, as well as a positive perception of services, demonstrating that accessing health care is not considered a problem for migrants in Montevideo.

Among respondents from whom information on health is available (n=237),<sup>88</sup> 57% (n=135) stated that they or a household member had experienced health problems that required medical attention, of whom 96% (n=130) were affiliated with a health care provider, mainly the ASSE (81%).

More than two-thirds of those who sought medical care (67% of 135) reported no difficulties in receiving it. Of those who reported problems (n=45), most mentioned delays in the process (31 of 45). Focus group participants rated

85 ASSE (n.d.) [Trámites afiliatorios](#).

86 Bonapelch, S. and Reolon, C. (2021) [La salud de las personas migrantes en Montevideo](#). Serie de Informes temáticos con base en la Etnoencuesta de Inmigración Reciente. UNICEF Uruguay Programa de Población, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de la República Observatorio de Movilidad, Infancia y Familia en Uruguay; OIM (2023) [Op.Cit.](#)

87 Sitio oficial de la República Oriental del Uruguay (n.d.) [Centros de salud y policlínicas](#).

88 Due to an error in the application of the form, the data presented in parts of the sections on health are lower than those of the total survey sample. The data cover the period from 7 to 31 March 2025 (n=237). For the subsection on mental health and access to and needs for health care, the total sample corresponds to 459 participants.



access to health services in Uruguay positively, recognising the free nature of primary care and the ease of enrolment. However, they identified long waiting times for medical appointments, particularly with specialists, as an issue impacting both migrants and Uruguayans.

*“Everyone has problems with the healthcare system, not just us, because you go to any “Mutualista” [referring to a health service provider] and people say they’ve been waiting for three or four hours. (...) Appointments are two or three months away, they [Uruguayans] also face that problem.”*

**Venezuelan male focus group participant**

Although only six respondents mentioned a lack of documentation as a barrier to accessing healthcare, focus group participants highlighted the need to obtain a Uruguayan citizenship card. Possessing this card guarantees full, free healthcare coverage—including medical treatment—through membership in ASSE.

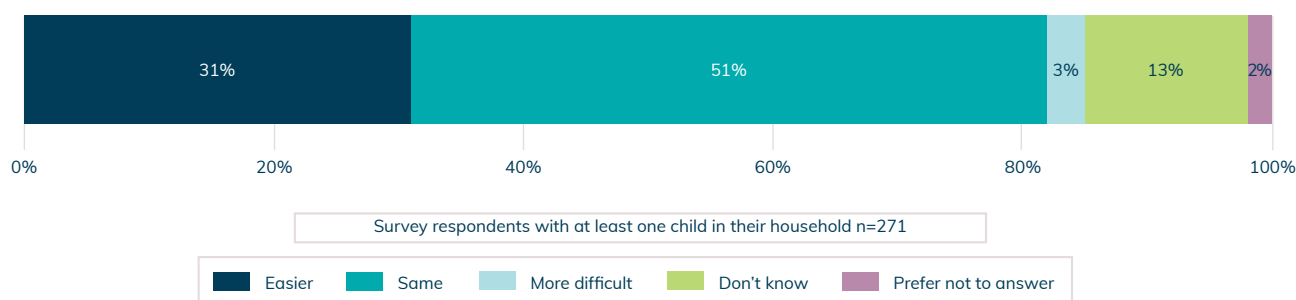
Focus group participants also pointed out that, for voluntary termination of pregnancy, it is required to have been a habitual resident of Uruguay for at least one year.<sup>89</sup> This constitutes a barrier for new arrivals or those without the means to prove their stay in the country. The need to eliminate this requirement has already been identified by actors such as the JNM, and the Ministry of Public Health (Ministerio de Salud Pública, MSP) has even introduced a legislative proposal to this effect.<sup>90</sup>

Lack of information was not identified as a barrier to health care access in the surveys. However, focus group participants mentioned that gaps in information about how the healthcare system operates, what services are available, and the requirements for membership—particularly among newly arrived migrants—often prevent migrants from seeking medical care, even when they are entitled to it.

Positive views of the health system about medical care for children and adolescents. Of the 271 households with at least one child or adolescent, 82% said that it is easier or just as easy for children to access health care as it is for the adults in the household.

### Figure 9. Perception of access to health care for children compared to adults in the household

Answers to the 4Mi question: Compared to adults in the household, do you consider access to healthcare for children to be?



### Access to assistance related to health care<sup>91</sup>

More than half of survey respondents (55% or n=251) reported receiving some form of health care-related assistance. The most common type of support —regardless of nationality— was general guidance or information (69%). Assistance with medical check-ups and medication was less frequent (25% or n=63) and appeared more often among Venezuelan respondents (28 out of 63). Psychological or emotional support was rare, with only 2% of respondents (out of 251) reporting it.

89 MIDES (n.d.) [Interrupción Voluntaria del Embarazo \(IVE\). Guía para Mujeres](#); MSP (2012) [Decreto 375 de 2012 de Reglamentación de la Ley de Interrupción Voluntaria del Embarazo](#).

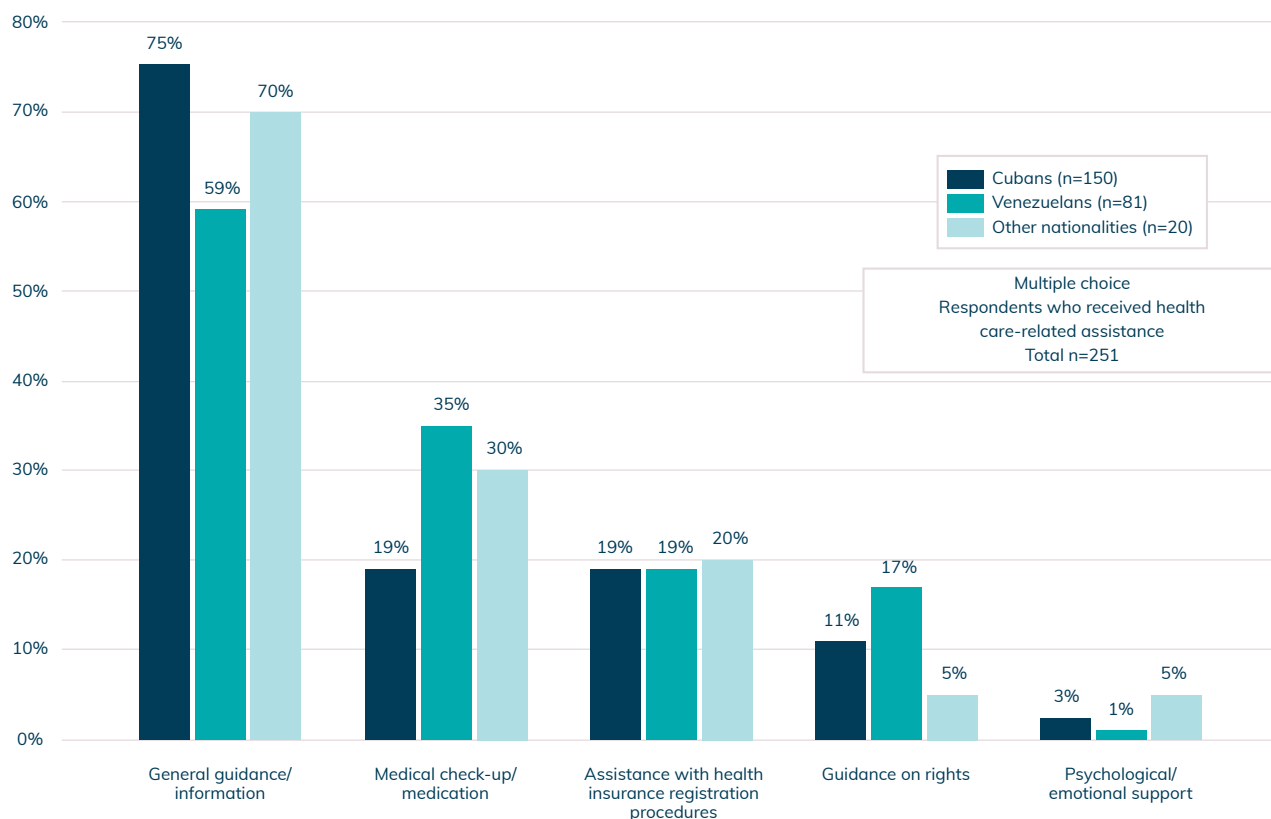
90 Portal de los Medios Públicos de Uruguay (2025) [MSP: ley de aborto incluirá a mujeres migrantes](#).

91 Health care services are understood as those provided by Uruguay's health system (under the National Integrated Health System), which individuals can access through public or private providers. Health care-related assistance, by contrast, refers to free support services available to migrants, provided by a broad range of actors. While such assistance may encompass access to certain health services (e.g. medical check-ups), it also extends to the provision of medication, general information, rights-based guidance, support with administrative procedures, and legal assistance.

As with assistance for documentation and regularisation, Cuban (58% of 260) and Venezuelan (55% of 147) respondents reported higher rates of healthcare-related assistance compared to respondents of other nationalities (38%, or 20 out of 52).

**Figure 10. Main types of health care-related assistance received by nationality of survey respondents**

Answers to the 4Mi questions: What type of health care-related assistance or help did you receive? And what is your country of nationality?



\*Results for Venezuelans (n=81) and other nationalities (n=20) should be treated with caution, given the sample size.

Most of the assistance received was provided by government offices (32% of 251). Focus group participants emphasised the role of MIDES in facilitating special care certificates for medical treatment when migrants lack Uruguayan documentation, as well as the ease of obtaining ASSE membership for free medical care. To a lesser extent, respondents also mentioned friends or family members (23%) and NGOs (22%) as actors assisting them with health care.

### Health care assistance needs

Twenty-one per cent of respondents (n=95) had health care-related assistance needs at the time of the interview. Respondents mostly needed medical check-ups or medication (60 of 95).

This need was common even among those who had already received some form of healthcare-related assistance: of the 251 respondents who had obtained healthcare-related support, 20% (n=49) still reported unmet needs, most often for medical check-ups or medication (31 of 49). Such recurring needs point to the barriers to specialised medical care described in previous sections.

“Every person you have, whom you love very much, who is a priority in your life —like your children and your mum and dad, who are the closest relatives you have— can be the ones who activate your emotional health [=affect your emotional and psychological well-being]. One of the things I learned to value a lot when I came [to Uruguay] was family, because I spent two years alone. I started crying at night, missing my children, especially my youngest, who I left behind when she was two and a half years old.”

**Dominican woman participating in a focus group**

The uncertainty that accompanies migration processes —such as lack of information, legal instability, or economic precariousness— can have a substantial impact on the mental health of migrants.<sup>93</sup> Migration generates distress, anxiety, and feelings of rootlessness, especially in contexts where there are no support networks or access to psychosocial services.<sup>94</sup> In this context, mental health care becomes a priority, although it is often neglected.

Uruguay has made efforts to create institutional responses to mental health care needs, such as the Mental Health Law.<sup>95</sup> However, initiatives such as the National Plan for Addressing Mental Health and Addiction (*Plan Nacional para el Abordaje de la Salud Mental y Adicciones*)<sup>96</sup> do not include a specific focus on migrants. At the departmental level, the Departmental Government of Montevideo has a Mental Health Board to coordinate actions between different actors<sup>97</sup> and provide a variety of services available to the general population, including migrants.<sup>98</sup>

Survey respondents identified emotional support needs, but most of them had not accessed this type of care despite the availability of services in Montevideo. Thirty-five per cent of respondents felt they needed emotional support or help to manage their feelings and/or concerns. In the interviews and focus groups, barriers to accessing work and the pressure of not being able to fulfil their migration plans were the most commonly cited causes of stress and emotional distress.

The need for psychological support was higher among women respondents (37% of 353) compared to men (29% of 103). This greater demand for mental health support among women may be linked to the double burden they carry—shouldering a disproportionate share of caregiving responsibilities while also participating in paid work.<sup>99</sup>

Among respondents with mental health needs (n=161), 68% (n=109) did not have access to such services, mainly because they lacked information (57%), like where to go or how to ask for help. Focus group participants and key informants noted that support networks and the migrant community act as the main sources of emotional support. This creates specific challenges for those who migrate alone (16% of respondents) or come from countries with a small presence in Uruguay, as they often lack these essential networks.

To a lesser extent, delays in receiving care and obtaining appointments (18% of 109) and lack of money (10%) were other factors identified as hindering access to mental health care. This relates to the barriers outlined in the previous section on general delays in health care and the need for payment for specialised services if migrants do not have free access.

Several key informants pointed out that one of the main challenges for the public administration is ensuring that mental health care is available at the same level as general medical care for both migrants and Uruguayans. At the end of June 2025, the MSP launched the National Mental Health Strategy 2025-2030 (*Estrategia Nacional de Salud Mental 2025-2030*), which seeks to transform the mental health care model in Uruguay towards a community-based and rights-based approach, strengthening prevention, primary care, and social participation to ensure quality and accessible mental health for all.<sup>100</sup>

92 For the purposes of this report, the following WHO definition of mental health is used: “A state of mental well-being in which every individual realises his or her abilities, can face the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make contribution to her or his community. Mental health is an integral component of health and well-being and is more than the absence of mental disorder.” See: Pan American Health Organisation (2023) [World Mental Health Report: Transform mental health for all](#).

93 Salud Mental 360 (2025) [TEl desafío de la salud mental en personas migrantes](#).

94 World Health Organisation (2025) [Salud mental de refugiados y migrantes](#).

95 IMPO (2017) [Ley de Salud Mental](#).

96 Presidencia de Uruguay (n.d.) [Resumen ejecutivo. Plan nacional para el abordaje de la salud mental y adicciones](#).

97 Intendencia de Montevideo (n.d.) [Mesa de Salud Mental de Montevideo](#).

98 Among the mental health services available in Montevideo are the [Centro Comunitario de Salud Mental](#) and the [Centro Montevideo Oeste](#), the [Red de Policlínicas de la Intendencia de Montevideo](#), the [Casa Comunitaria de Promoción de Salud Mental](#), [Espacio Contás](#), and the [Centro Psicosocial de Montevideo](#).

99 Idas & Vueltas, SEDHU and UNHCR (2023) [Diagnósticos Participativos](#).

100 MSP (2025) [Salud mental como prioridad de gestión](#).

## Education and childcare

Of the households surveyed, 59% (n=271) included at least one child or adolescent. Among these, 82% (n=220) had at least one child or adolescent between the ages of 6 and 17, and 43% (n=116) had at least one child aged 0 to 5. In total, 449 children were identified—an average of 1.7 per household with children.

In Uruguay, migrant children have access to education and care through an inclusive approach that guarantees the right to education regardless of migration status.<sup>101</sup> In the country, formal education is compulsory from the age of four or five.<sup>102</sup> Migrant children can enrol in public schools with incomplete documentation through provisional enrolment for one year.<sup>103</sup> However, provisional enrolment may vary between schools and depends on the knowledge of the educational staff regarding these procedures.

The data showed high levels of access to care and education for migrant children, along with positive views of educational opportunities in Uruguay. In contrast, access to extracurricular activities was lower, and many reported needing more information about them.

### Early childhood

Respondents showed strong awareness of early childhood public care services, with migrants rating childcare opportunities for children positively and reporting few barriers. Among the 116 households with at least one child aged 0 to 5, 71% (n=82) had one or all children in care, mainly nurseries or public kindergarten, including Child and Family Care Centres (*Centros de Atención a la Infancia y la Familia*, CAIF) or centres by the Uruguayan Institute for Children and Adolescents (*Instituto del Niño y Adolescente del Uruguay*, INAU) (71 out of 82). Access to these services supports migrants' integration and participation in the city's labour market.

Eight households mentioned private nurseries or kindergartens; only two mentioned the Early Childhood Care Centre (*Centro de Atención a la Primera Infancia*, CAPI), which contrasts with the care, support and feeding services that these spaces offer to vulnerable children.<sup>104</sup>

In 31 households, at least one child lacked access to childcare, and in most of these cases (28 of 31), care was provided by other household members. The main reasons—each cited nine times—were lack of places, no available spaces, and the child's age. For migrants raising children alone or without support networks and the lack of help makes it difficult to balance childcare with other activities essential for integration into the city, such as seeking work or housing. A focus group participant highlighted the need for care facilities with flexible hours so that work and childcare schedules can align.

### Children and adolescents

Access to schooling for children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 was even higher. Of the 220 households with at least one child or adolescent aged 6 or older, 97% stated that one or all of their children attended an educational centre; only in 2% of households all children were out of school.<sup>105</sup>

*"In terms of education, I think there are quite a few benefits [referring to Uruguay], since, for example, it was easy to enrol my son in school. There were no major complications. From the first month he started, he already had his enrolment and also the BPS [referring the Social Security Bank]<sup>106</sup> benefit."*

**Ecuadorian woman participating in a focus group**

101 Presidencia de Uruguay (2018) [Niños inmigrantes acceden a la escuela ni bien llegan al país y lo hacen en el grado correspondiente a su edad](#).

102 Comisión de Educación y Migrantes (2024) [Guía: Inscripción de personas migrantes al sistema educativo uruguayo](#).

103 Uruguay (2009a) [Ley N° 18.437 - Ley General de Educación](#); Uruguay (2009b) [Decreto 394/009](#).

104 MIDES (2021) [Centros de Atención a la Primera Infancia \(CAPI\)](#).

105 The remaining 1% corresponds to respondents who did not answer the question.

106 The Social Security Bank (Banco de Previsión Social, BPS) is the entity responsible for coordinating state social security services. Among its subsidies is a family allowance for vulnerable families with school-age children and adolescents. See: BPS (2025) [Asignación familiar](#).

Among households with at least one child enrolled in school (n=214), 61% reported no difficulties. In the remaining 83 households (39%), the most common problem was accessing the same level of education as before (29 out of 83), which can result in over-age<sup>107</sup> children in school. In 2023, an estimated 24.6% of migrant children in public primary education in Uruguay were over-age, compared with 16.2% of Uruguayan children.<sup>108</sup>

Several key informants noted that the absence of documents certifying the last year of schooling, such as report cards, hinders the placement of children and adolescents at the same level as they were in their countries of nationality or host country. This barrier is exacerbated in cases where educational cycles have been interrupted by migration through several countries.

Key informants acknowledged the progress made by the MEC and the National Directorate for Education (*Dirección Nacional de Educación*, DNE) in developing a procedure for accrediting the most recent level of education that migrant children and adolescents completed in another country, and for which they do not have supporting documentation. This action was included in the education pillar of the PNI and is currently being implemented through a biannual school accreditation process.

The second and third most frequently cited difficulties by survey respondents were mistreatment or bullying (25 out of 83 households that faced challenges in education) and discrimination based on nationality (20 out of 83). According to several key informants, these acts become more frequent during adolescence (13 years and older), a stage in which feelings of rejection can hinder both the insertion of children and adolescents into the education system and their integration into the host community.

The surveys did not identify a lack of information as a barrier. Yet, several key informants highlighted the need to ensure that educational centres and civil servants, both in Montevideo and in the interior of the country, have up-to-date information on current regulations relating to access to education for migrant children and adolescents.

*"Some of the barriers encountered in the implementation of policies or programmes related to the right to education are access to information for people working on the front line in educational centres with this target group [changes in educational requirements, changes in revalidation, etc.]; sometimes officials working in institutions are not aware of the changes made by resolution, which creates various difficulties and limitations in administrative processes when reporting, registering or following up on different cases."*

**Key informant, MEC**

Regardless of the barriers reported, 90% of households with at least one child aged 6 or older (n=220) valued the educational opportunities for children in their households positively: 54% of households considered that children have better opportunities, and 36% found that they have equal opportunities, compared to children in the host community.

In contrast to the high school enrolment rate, participation in extracurricular activities<sup>109</sup> paints a different picture. Of the households with at least one child aged 6 or older (n=220), 62% (n=137) stated that their children did not participate in extracurricular activities. This is despite the availability of free arts, sports and cultural activities organised by the Departmental Government of Montevideo.<sup>110</sup> Cuban households reported the lowest participation rate (31% of 116 households with children aged 6 years or older) compared to other nationalities.

The main reasons why children did not attend these types of activities were a lack of information about available activities (42% of 137), a lack of time or availability of an adult to accompany them (33%), and the cost of registration or materials (28%).

107 Over-age refers to the condition in which children and adolescents are enrolled in a grade below the one appropriate for their age.

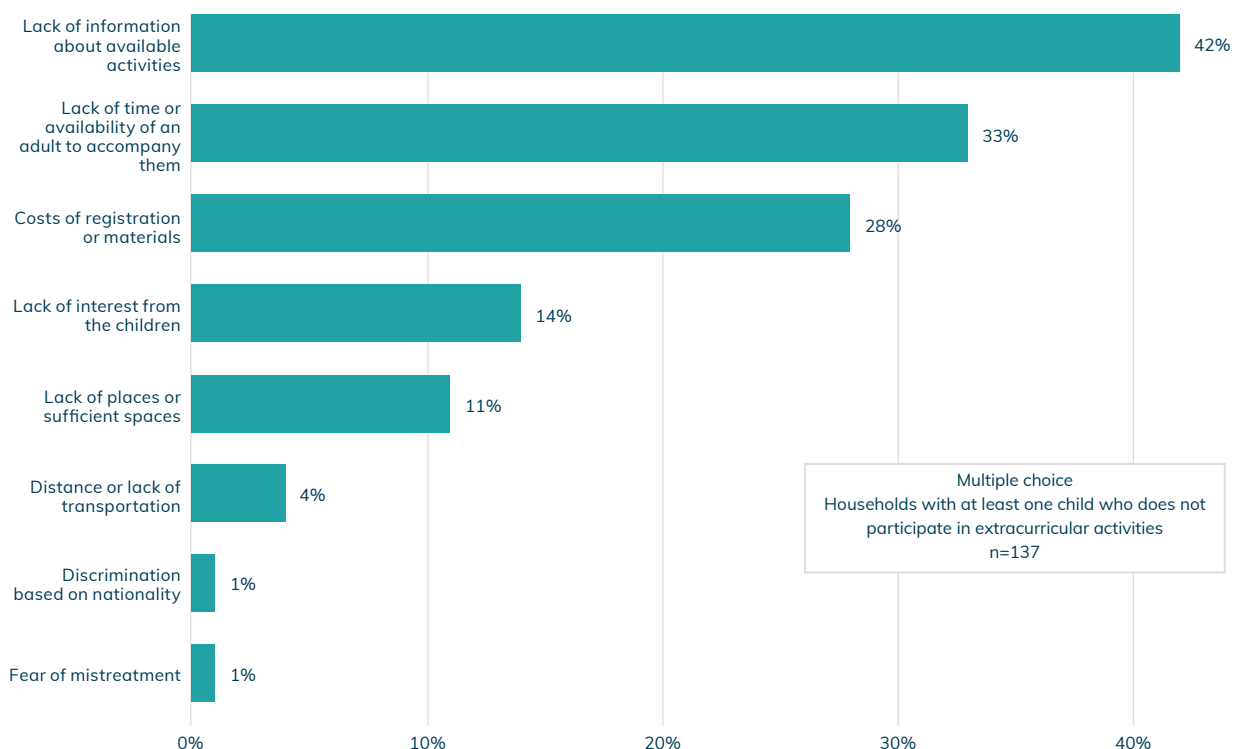
108 Administración Nacional de Educación Pública (2024) [Informe Inmigrantes en la educación inicial y primaria pública uruguaya](#).

109 For the purposes of this report, extracurricular activities are understood to be all types of recreational, sporting, and cultural activities in public spaces that are free of charge.

110 More information on available extracurricular activities can be found on the Montevideo City Council website: <https://montevideo.gub.uy/tipo/area-tematica/cultura-y-tiempo-libre>.

**Figure 11. Reasons why children in the household did not participate in extracurricular activities**

Answers to the 4Mi question: Why do children and adolescents in your household not participate in extracurricular activities in Montevideo?



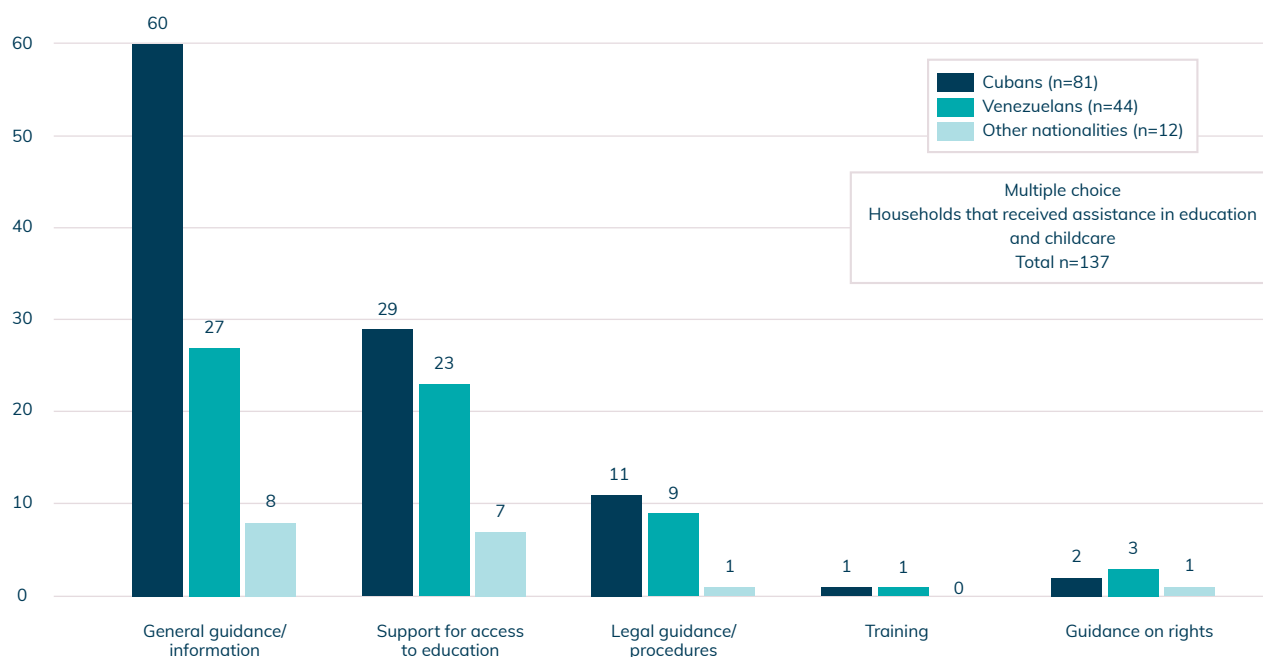
Of households with at least one child aged 6 or older who attended extracurricular activities (n=83), the majority attended sports or other physical activities (66 out of 83). Although to a lesser extent, educational workshops (20) and music or art classes (17) were also mentioned.

Beyond current participation, respondents expressed interest in more extracurricular options in sports or other physical activities (34 out of 83) and music or art (33) for children in their households.

### Access to education and childcare-related assistance

Fifty-one per cent (n=137 out of 271) of households with at least one child or adolescent had received assistance in education and childcare since arriving in Montevideo. Guidance or general information was the most common form of assistance (69%), regardless of nationality. This was followed by support in accessing education (43%), which was mentioned more often among respondents of nationalities other than Cuban and Venezuelan (7 out of 12).

**Figure 12. Main types of assistance in education and childcare received by nationality of survey respondents\***  
 Answers to the 4Mi questions: What type of assistance or support related to education did you receive? And what is your country of nationality?



\*Results should be treated with caution, given the sample size.

Assistance was provided mainly by government offices (64%); some respondents also received it from NGOs (18%), and friends and family (18%). Key informants mentioned initiatives led by the MEC, such as the Intercultural and Migrant Programme, “Muros que Unen” (Walls that Unite) and “Punto Móvil” (Mobile Point), which seek to provide decentralised information on education issues for the migrant population and promote their educational inclusion.

Other advances to improve the educational trajectory of migrants have been made through the Commission on Education and Migrants. The creation of the guide for enrolling migrants in the Uruguayan education system<sup>111</sup> is also a step towards achieving the actions proposed by the PNI in education.

### Assistance needs in education and childcare

At the time of the interview, the main need in education and childcare was support to access education. Among households with at least one child or adolescent (n=271), 32% (n=86) required assistance with education and childcare, primarily for accessing education (50 of 86) and for general guidance or information (31).

## Employment and income

Access to employment is perhaps the main priority for migrants; decent employment provides guarantees for meeting basic needs and accessing rights. The MTSS allows migrants with foreign documents to be hired while their residence or residence application is being processed.<sup>112</sup> However, several previous studies have shown that the lack of regularisation documents and overqualification prevent migrants in Uruguay from accessing formal jobs, social benefits, good wages, and jobs corresponding to their actual skills and competences.<sup>113</sup>

Seventy-two per cent of all survey respondents (n=331) were employed at the time of the interview, either in private companies, as civil servants, or self-employed. However, 16% of these jobs were informal. For focus group participants,

111 MEC (2024) [Guía: Inscripción de personas migrantes al sistema educativo uruguayo](#).

112 MTSS (2021) [Contratación de trabajadores extranjeros bajo régimen de dependencia laboral](#).

113 See, for example: Méndez, L. (2018) [Sobrecualificación de los inmigrantes y personalización en el salario. Evidencia para Uruguay](#); Prieto Rosas, V., Robaina, S., Koolhaas, M. (2016) [Acceso y calidad del empleo de la inmigración reciente en Uruguay](#); Revista Interdisciplinar da Mobilidade Humana, 24(48), pp. 121–144; Prieto Rosas et al (2022) [Op.Cit.](#)

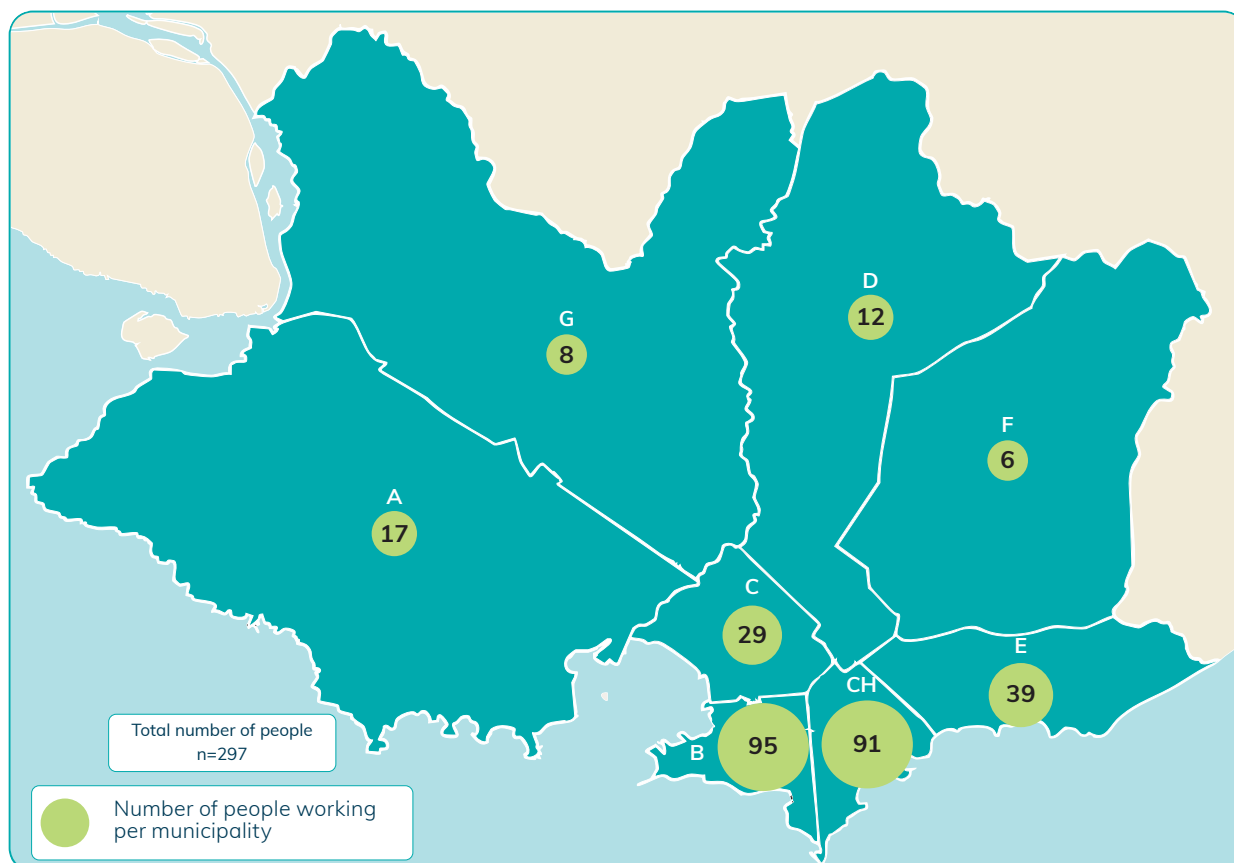


the need to survive in the city leads many migrants to accept informal, insecure, or low-paid jobs, even when they have academic training and previous professional experience. In addition, focus group participants mentioned gendered patterns in this informal labour market: Women tend to be employed in domestic or care work, while men tend to work in the construction sector.

Most survey respondents worked in the central area of Montevideo, which has a higher concentration of services and businesses. Among those employed (n=331), most worked in municipalities B (29%) and CH (27%), and, to a lesser extent, in municipalities E (12%) and C (9%). Municipality B is Montevideo's main employment hub, with the highest activity and employment rates among all municipalities.<sup>114</sup> In addition, 20 respondents worked in rotating jobs across municipalities, and nine travelled to other departments.

## Map 2. Municipality where survey respondents worked (employed respondents)\*

Answers to the 4Mi questions: What is your main occupation at present? And in which municipality do you work?



\* This geographical distribution may be partly biased by the sampling methodology used in the study. It was not possible to collect information on the municipality of work for three respondents. The remaining 31 responses correspond to respondents with rotating jobs (20), who worked in other departments (9), who teleworked (1), or who did not know the municipality (1).

Regarding the type of valid work document, several key informants suggested that migrants could enter the labour market even without a Uruguayan citizenship card, marking a step forward. However, according to focus group participants, employers continue to require a Uruguayan citizenship card as the only valid document to access formal employment.

The move to Montevideo often brought greater unpaid care responsibilities and more difficulty securing employment. While only 1% of respondents were unemployed in their country of nationality, 17% were unemployed at the time of the interview. The share of respondents whose main activity was domestic work rose from 3% in their country of nationality to 9% in Montevideo. Unemployment rates were similar for men and women (15% and 17%, respectively). However, all those engaged in domestic work or unpaid care were women with at least one child in their household (43 respondents), highlighting the greater barriers to labour market entry faced by women who shoulder most domestic

114 INE (2025) [Mercado de trabajo por área geográfica de residencia. Actividad, Empleo y Desempleo. Trimestre móvil: Febrero-abril 2025](#).

and care responsibilities.<sup>115</sup>

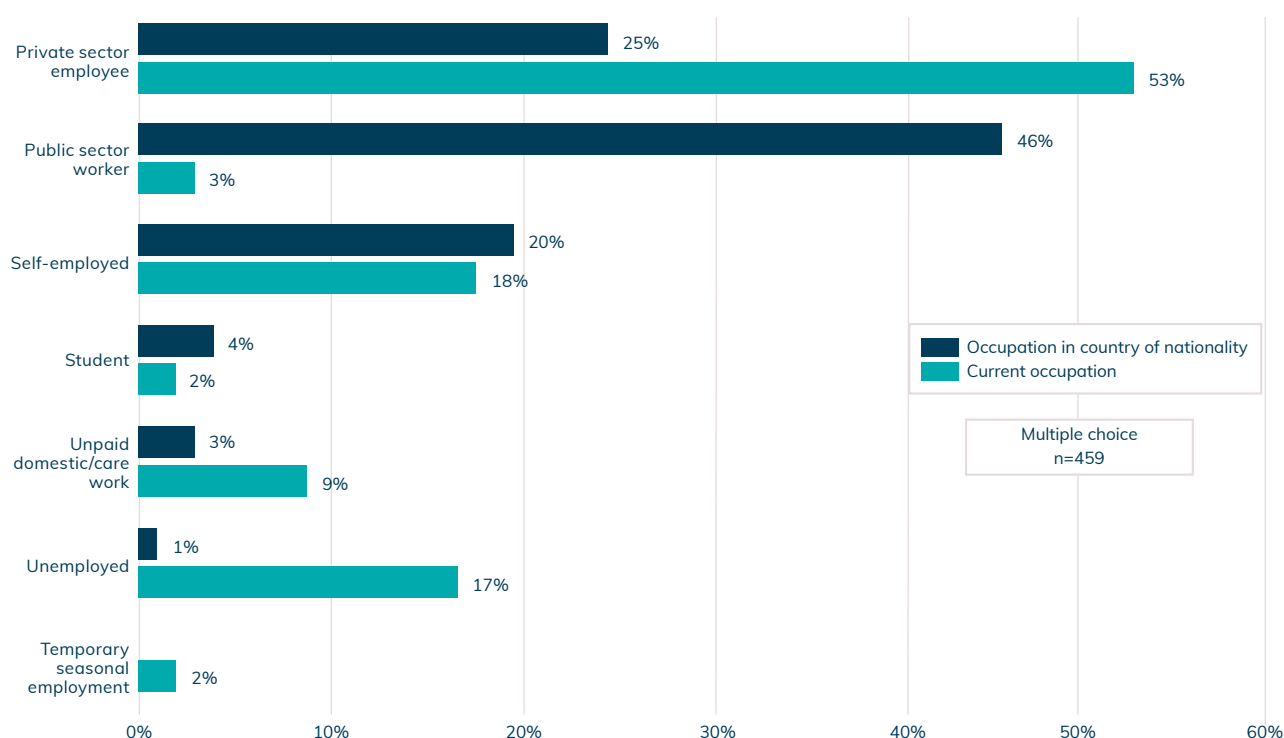
Forty-six per cent of total respondents were civil servants in their country of nationality, compared with only 3% who were in Montevideo—a drop partly explained by the requirement of Uruguayan citizenship to hold public office, which demands three to five years of habitual residence.<sup>116</sup> Although none of the respondents had citizenship, those working in the public sector in Montevideo did so through independent contracting, including freelance, fixed-term, or subcontracted arrangements.

Due to the citizenship requirement for public office, former civil servants primarily found employment in the private sector in Montevideo. Of the 211 respondents who had worked as public servants in their countries of nationality, 60% were employed in private companies, 15% were self-employed, and 14% were unemployed.<sup>117</sup>

Nevertheless, according to focus group participants, barriers to accessing public employment in Uruguay persist even after obtaining the required documentation. Migrants mentioned feeling excluded from public hiring due to their immigration status, lack of previous experience in the country, and lack of employment references in Uruguay, even when they meet the requirements.

### Figure 13. Occupation of survey respondents in their country of nationality and in Montevideo

Answers to the 4Mi questions: What was your main occupation in your country of nationality? And what is your main occupation at present?



Note: For this report, the definition of self-employment or independent work is taken from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which defines it as work in which individuals do not employ any employees to work for them.<sup>118</sup> Self-employment includes self-initiated entrepreneurship, odd jobs, street vending, and other forms.

The lack of documents proving professional training and work experience in countries of nationality or host countries leads to overqualification and unemployment among migrants. Seventeen percent of respondents were unemployed at the time of the interview (n=76), including 31 with professional training: 25 with university degrees, 5 with technical training, and 1 with postgraduate training—highlighting barriers to entering the labour market even with qualifications. Among those engaged in domestic or unpaid care work (n=43), 16 respondents held university degrees and 5 had completed technical training.

115 IOM and UN Women (2023) [Género, migración y tareas del cuidado: Desafíos en América del Sur](#).

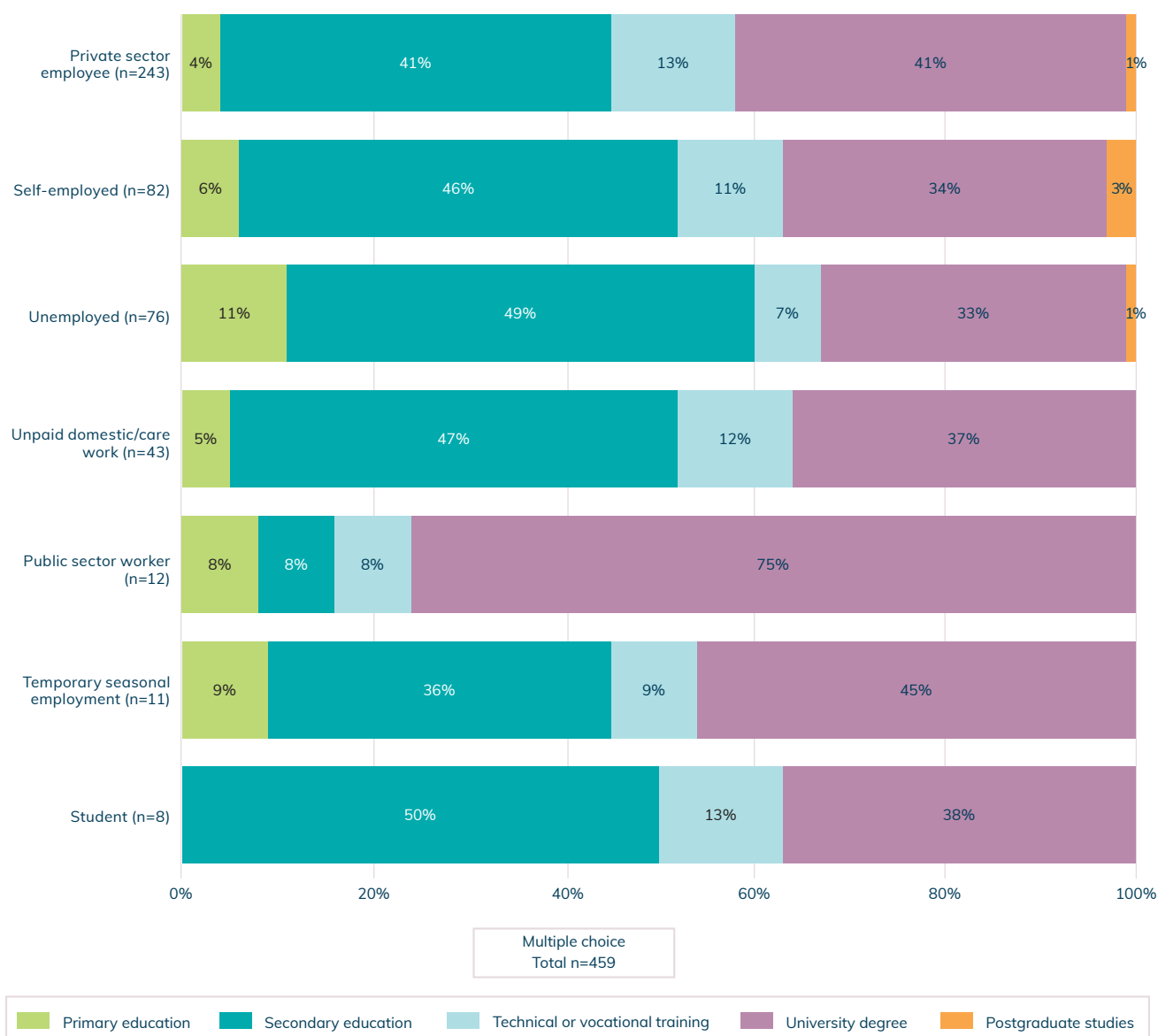
116 Uruguay (2013) [Ley N° 19121. Regulación del estatuto del funcionario público de la administración central](#).

117 The remaining 11% correspond to respondents who were engaged in unpaid domestic work or care (8%) or as public servants (3%).

118 ILO (n.d.) [Trabajadores independiente – definiciones](#).

**Figure 14. Occupation in Montevideo by highest level of education completed\***

Answers to the 4Mi questions: What is your main occupation at present? And what is the highest level of education you have completed?



\*Results for self-employed workers (n=82), unemployed respondents (n=76), unpaid domestic or care work (n=43), public servants (n=12), seasonal workers (n=11), and students (n=8) should be treated with caution, given the sample size.

Lack of documentation and lack of information were the main obstacles identified by focus group participants in their search for employment in Uruguay. Several key informants noted progress in reducing the time for revalidating or recognising qualifications<sup>119</sup> since the MEC took over in 2020. However, this procedure remained the main barrier to skilled employment, with long waiting times and unmet requirements cited as the primary complaints.

Focus group participants mentioned barriers to obtaining documents for the revalidation of qualifications, similar to the difficulties in accessing identity documents from outside the country of nationality. Given the lack of support networks in their country of nationality and the impossibility of returning to obtain this documentation, many migrants choose not to initiate the process. This situation limits their employment opportunities: Among the 331 survey respondents who were employed at the time of the interview, 39% said they would like to work in their area of training.

<sup>119</sup> The MEC defines revalidation as the "administrative act by which academic and professional recognition is granted to a degree or postgraduate qualification issued outside Uruguay, thereby enabling the holder to practise the profession in the country, without prejudice to other requirements stipulated by the regulations". See: [Solicitud de reconocimientos y reválidas de títulos terciarios](#).

*"I haven't worked [in Uruguay] (...) I hold a technical degree in Child Development, and I want to have my degree recognised, but they ask me to provide my school reports, and the institution where I studied doesn't give them to family members, you have to go in person. I would have to go back to Ecuador to bring my documents here to have them validated."*

**Ecuadorian woman participating in a focus group**

Even when migrants have all the necessary documentation regarding their training and experience, the revalidation of qualifications can take several months (some focus group participants even mentioned more than a year). During this time, it is crucial to have a support network, savings, or a temporary job to cover the high cost of living in the city. For those who arrive alone or lack support networks, getting through this waiting period becomes considerably more difficult, limiting their opportunities for professional integration.

Migrants with professional training that does not exist in Uruguay (or whose knowledge is not applicable in the country) – such as environmental engineering, petroleum engineering, and law (careers mentioned by focus group participants) – face additional barriers, even when they meet the documentation requirements for revalidation.

Reversing the cycle of overqualification and employment in poor working conditions due to the need to earn a living is the most challenging thing, according to focus group participants. Even when they manage to get their qualifications recognised, the time gap during which they do not gain experience in their field or stop practising their profession represents a significant obstacle to their reintegration into the skilled labour market.

*"The problem of overqualification persists. People who have been in Uruguay for a long time, even five years or more, are unable to reverse the educational mismatch in five years. (...) They may be able to earn a higher salary, they may be able to overcome informality, they may be able to move from a boarding house to private accommodation (as we have seen), but this is not the case. It is a problem of strong segmentation in the labour market, and it is persistent."*

**Victoria Prieto, university lecturer**

Concerning the lack of information —the second barrier mentioned in the focus groups— migrants, especially new arrivals, need information on where to look for and how to access employment in the city. However, this need for information is not being met by state services or actors; according to the surveys, only 2% (of 331) of employed respondents indicated that they had found their current job with the help of a public or private institution.

Given the lack of access to official information, support networks, and word of mouth within the migrant community become essential for accessing employment. For those who were employed (n=331), personal networks – friends, family, and acquaintances – were the most commonly used sources for finding employment (61%).

Although to a lesser extent, 41% (of 331) of employed respondents indicated that they found employment through direct search (advertisements on the internet, in the press, or direct contact with the company). For migrants who are alone or without a support network, the search for employment is more difficult. They need to find work to survive, and they must divide their time between working and searching for and applying to better opportunities.

Despite the gaps mentioned above, migrants value the opportunities that Uruguay offers in terms of employment. Sixty-one per cent of all respondents found that job opportunities in Montevideo were better than those in their country of nationality, and 53 out of 88 consider them better than those in their last host country.

### **Labour rights and employment conditions**

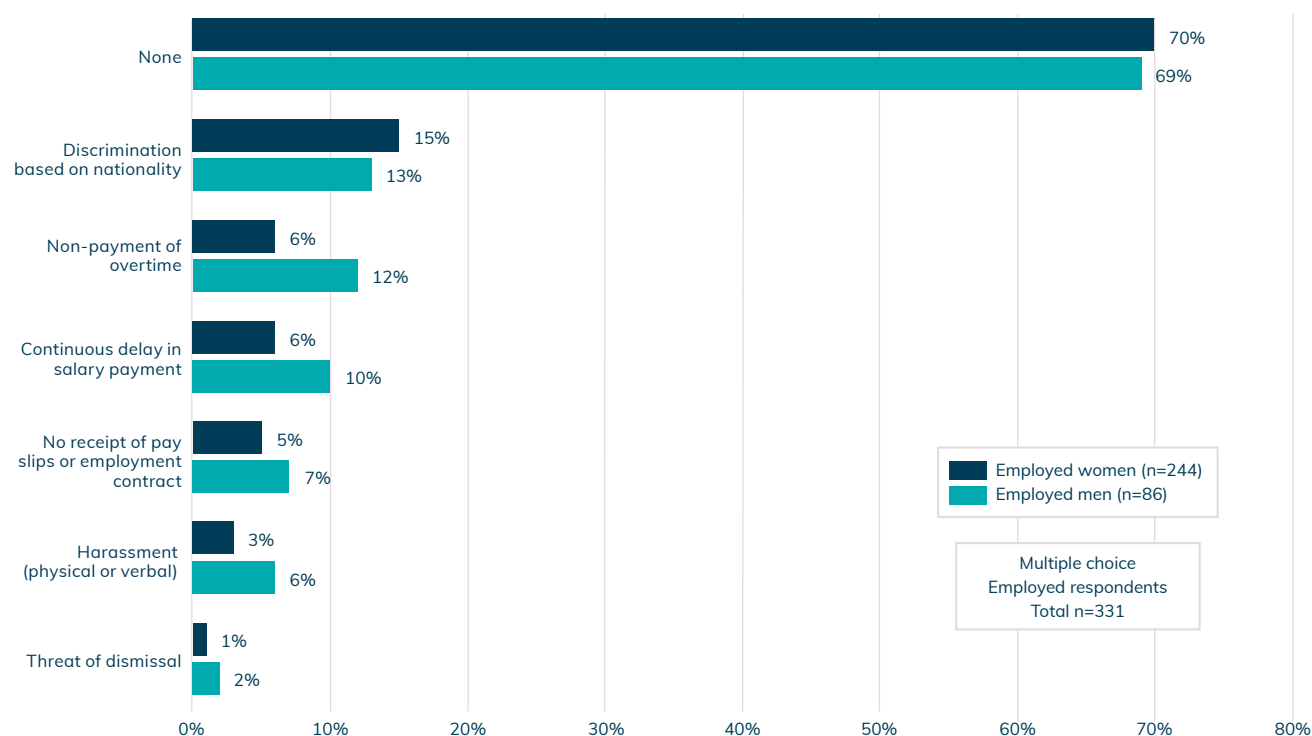
Informal employment scenarios pose risks for migrants, either because they are unaware of their rights or because they need to keep their jobs despite poor conditions to survive in the city.

Of those who were employed at the time of the interview (n=331), 31% (n=101) reported at least one problem with their employment, with discrimination based on nationality (48%) being the most common. To a lesser extent, delays in wage payments (24%) and non-payment of overtime (24%) were also identified as problems in the surveys. Focus group participants noted that being a migrant often leads to discrimination and labour exploitation in informal jobs, particularly in their first jobs in the city, and that nationality affects the types of jobs they can access.

Male employees (n=86) reported more difficulties related to overtime pay (10 out of 86) and continuous delays in wage payments (9) compared to women (6% of 244 for each category).

**Figure 15. Problems or obstacles with current employment reported by gender of employed survey respondents\* \*\***

Answers to the 4Mi questions: Have you had (or do you currently have) any problems/obstacles in your current job or previous jobs in Uruguay? And which of the following options best describes your gender identity?



\*The remaining person is a transgender woman who did not report any problems in her current job.

\*\* Results for men (n=86) should be treated with caution, given the sample size.

In the absence of job security, keeping their current job – despite its conditions – is a priority for migrants. Of the 101 survey respondents who reported at least one problem with their job, 69% (n=70) had not filed a complaint or report, mainly for fear of losing their job (24 out of 70).

Informal jobs put migrants at greater risk, as they often feel unable to claim their rights. Although the General Labour and Social Security Inspectorate (*Inspección General del Trabajo y Seguridad Social*) protects workers' rights, currently, being regularly employed is required to file a complaint, and the violations must be occurring at the time of filing.<sup>120</sup> This constitutes a barrier for migrants in informal jobs who are dismissed or who resign. Fourteen survey respondents stated that they had not filed a complaint or report because they did not have a formal employment contract. In addition, focus group participants mentioned non-payment, late payment of wages, and unfair dismissal.

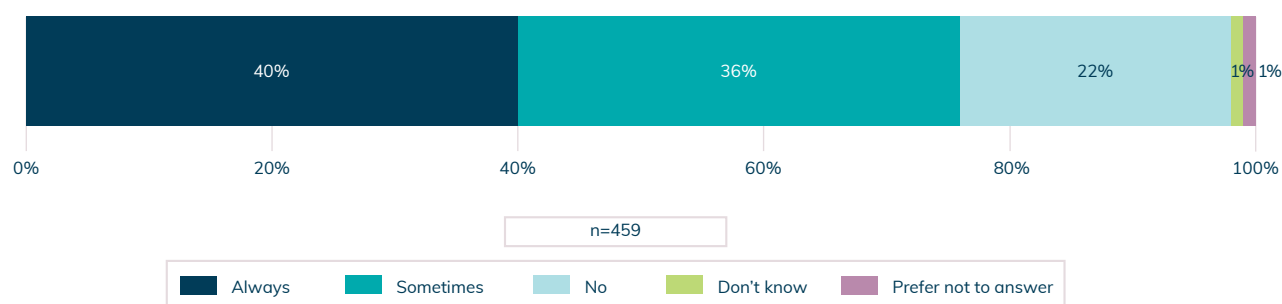
### Savings opportunities

Households with multiple income earners can improve the quality of life of their members and increase their ability to save after covering basic needs. However, the city's high living costs and difficulty finding good jobs make it hard for households to cover all expenses and save. Sixty-seven per cent of all households surveyed had more than one income earner; yet, in 58% (n=267) of all households surveyed, the household income was not always enough to meet all needs, so 67% of these households reduced their expenses.

120 MTSS (2025) [Denuncias y asesoramiento en la Inspección General del Trabajo](#).

**Figure 16. Sufficiency of income to cover household needs**

Answers to the 4Mi question: *Is your income sufficient to cover household needs?*



After covering all expenses, 69% of all households are unable to save. Focus group participants confirmed that Montevideo's high cost of living, along with limited access to formal, well-paying jobs, restricts households' ability to save.

### Continuing education and entrepreneurship

Because they must work to survive in the city, migrants often put education on hold. Long hours, multiple jobs, lack of documents, and limited support for household and childcare duties make continuing education difficult.

Of the 331 respondents employed at the time of the interview, 91% (n=301) would like to complement their current job with at least one other option, such as studying or receiving training (54%) or finding a better-paying job (52%). To achieve this, 21% (of 301) consider that they need financial capital, and 15% training in entrepreneurial skills.

Focus group participants identified barriers to continuing education for adults—both for those wishing to complete studies they began in other countries and for those seeking to start a new educational programme in Uruguay. One barrier is the requirement to present legalised documents certifying previous qualifications or studies, which is difficult for migrants who cannot return to the country where they studied or who lack support networks to complete the process on their behalf. Another barrier mentioned was the conflict between class schedules and working hours.

Given these challenges, entrepreneurship is seen as an opportunity to earn additional income. Among those employed (n=331), 34% (n=101) said they would like to have their own business or venture but would need access to financial capital (61%) and training in entrepreneurial skills (44%) to do so.

Thirteen per cent of survey respondents (n=57) had previous entrepreneurial experience in Uruguay, either through running an active venture at the time of the interview or having managed one in the past. Of these, the majority (31 out of 57) reported no problems during their entrepreneurial experience.

### Access to employment and income-related assistance

Thirty-five per cent of respondents (n=162) had received employment and income-related assistance, mostly general guidance or information (85%). Only 5% of respondents had received advice on rights, despite the need—described in previous sections—for access to complaint and reporting mechanisms in cases of discrimination and labour exploitation.

Interviewees highlighted specific training and basic entrepreneurship workshops, which migrants value as practical ways to generate income and strengthen their economic autonomy. Focus group participants highlighted initiatives to help organise the curriculum and the role of the National Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (*Instituto Nacional de Empleo y Formación Profesional*, INEFOP) in offering vocational training courses. However, they also pointed to the need for greater dissemination of information about INEFOP's offerings so that more migrants can access them.

Respondents mainly received assistance from government offices (46% of 162) and NGOs (31%). As in other topics, Cubans (40% of 260) and Venezuelans (31% of 147) reported greater access to assistance than respondents of other nationalities (13 out of 52), though the type of assistance received was similar across groups.

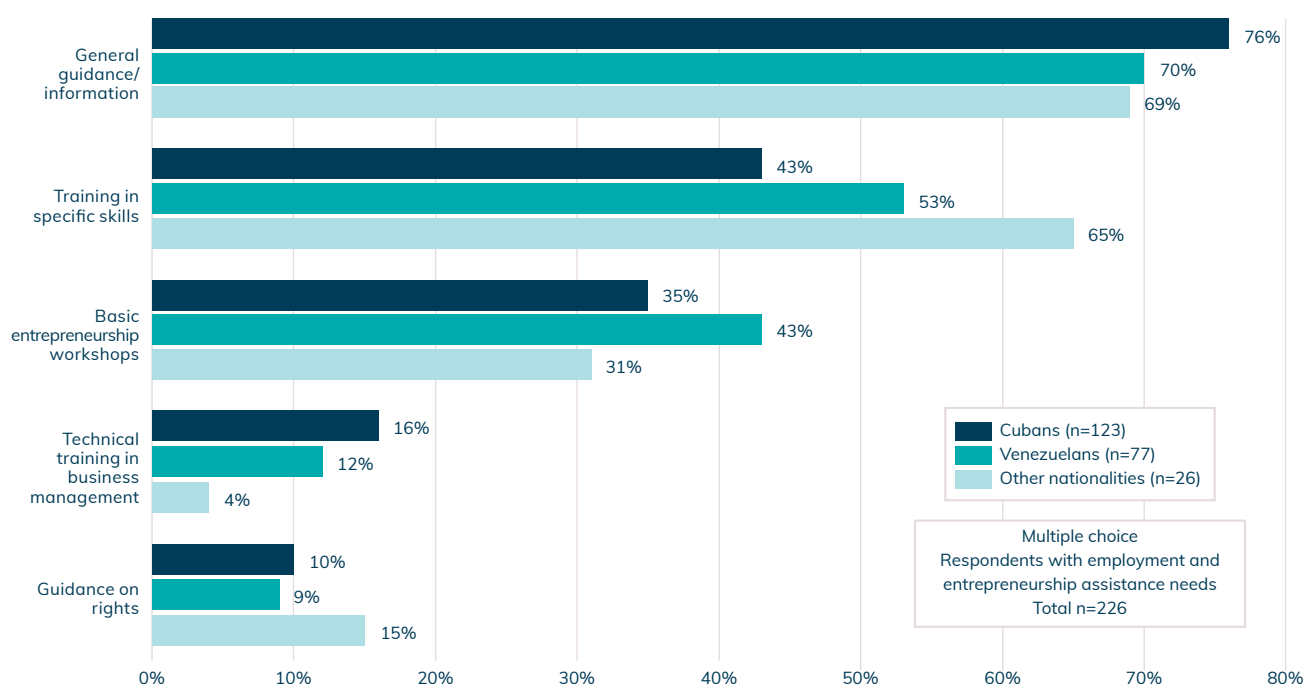
## Employment and income assistance needs

Nearly half of respondents (49%, n= 226) needed employment and income assistance at the time of the interview, regardless of nationality. Guidance and general information were the most common forms of assistance needed (73%).

Respondents also needed assistance in the form of specific skills training (49% of 226), which was more common among respondents of nationalities other than Cuban and Venezuelan (17 of 26), and with basic entrepreneurship workshops (37%). Training in these areas offers alternatives to employment barriers. Key informants noted that initiatives like entrepreneurship fairs, organised by civil society and migrant groups, give migrants opportunities to promote their businesses and receive community support.

**Figure 17. Employment and entrepreneurship assistance needs at the time of the interview, by nationality of survey respondents\***

Answers to the 4Mi questions: What type of assistance related to access to employment and entrepreneurship do you need at this time? And what is your country of nationality?



\*Results for Venezuelans (n=77) and other nationalities (n=26) should be treated with caution, given the sample size.

Focus group participants pointed out that employment guidance services should be accompanied by other related topics, such as access to documentation, labour rights, information on the institutions responsible for regulating, monitoring and promoting work in Uruguay, and information on the labour market, to ensure that migrants have access to decent employment.



## Experiences of integrating people with diverse SOGIESC in Montevideo

Uruguay is widely seen as a regional pioneer in respecting the human rights of diverse populations, thanks to legislative advances such as the National Plan for Sexual Diversity (*Plan Nacional de Diversidad Sexual*)<sup>121</sup> and the Trans Law (*Ley Trans*).<sup>122</sup> However, gender expression still influences the integration of migrants with diverse SOGIESC in Montevideo.

While only 4% of respondents reported discrimination based on gender identity and 2% based on sexual orientation, focus group participants described experiencing discriminatory treatment in public spaces, at work, and even when looking for housing.<sup>123</sup>

In the workplace, focus group participants reported facing discrimination. They felt the need to hide their sexual orientation, gender identity, and marital status during job interviews for fear of being rejected. When seeking housing, they also reported discrimination based on their sexual orientation, especially if they were in a relationship.

*"When it comes to work, I choose not even to mention my sexuality, unless I am asked about my marital status and who my spouse is. Then I do mention it, but I don't say it because I had an experience of harassment at work because of it, so I prefer not to mention it."*

**Venezuelan man, focus group participant**

Beyond discrimination, participants stressed the need for information about specialised services and free treatments, such as antiretroviral therapy, so that more migrants in need can access them.

In the specific case of gender-affirming hormone therapy for transgender people, migrants can access it free of charge through the National Integrated Health System (*Sistema Nacional Integrado de Salud*, SNIS).<sup>124</sup> However, focus group participants pointed out that obtaining the necessary documentation for enrolment involves at least several months of waiting time and the possible interruption of treatment if it has already begun.

There was also a need to promote safe spaces within existing ones (e.g., the CRM) to receive information tailored to their needs and encourage their participation in city life.

*"On the issue of LGBT, it is important to highlight that in the Migrant Reference Centre and other government offices (...) there is no safe space where you can raise your concerns or talk about your life as a sexually diverse person. It does not exist. And there isn't anyone trained to provide this type of appropriate counselling."*

**Ecuadorian man, focus group participant**

121 Consejo Nacional de Diversidad Sexual (2018) [Plan Nacional de Diversidad Sexual](#).

122 IMPO (2018) [En Uruguay existe una ley integral para personas trans](#).

123 In part, this difference can be attributed to the fact that the survey only included three transgender people and did not ask about sexual orientation, whereas a focus group was conducted with migrants with diverse SOGIESC, with four participants (see 2.2. Qualitative data collection and 4.1 Profiles of survey respondents).

124 Uruguay (1996) [Ley N° 19.684 - Ley integral para personas trans](#). Uruguay (2009) [Decreto N° 394/009](#).

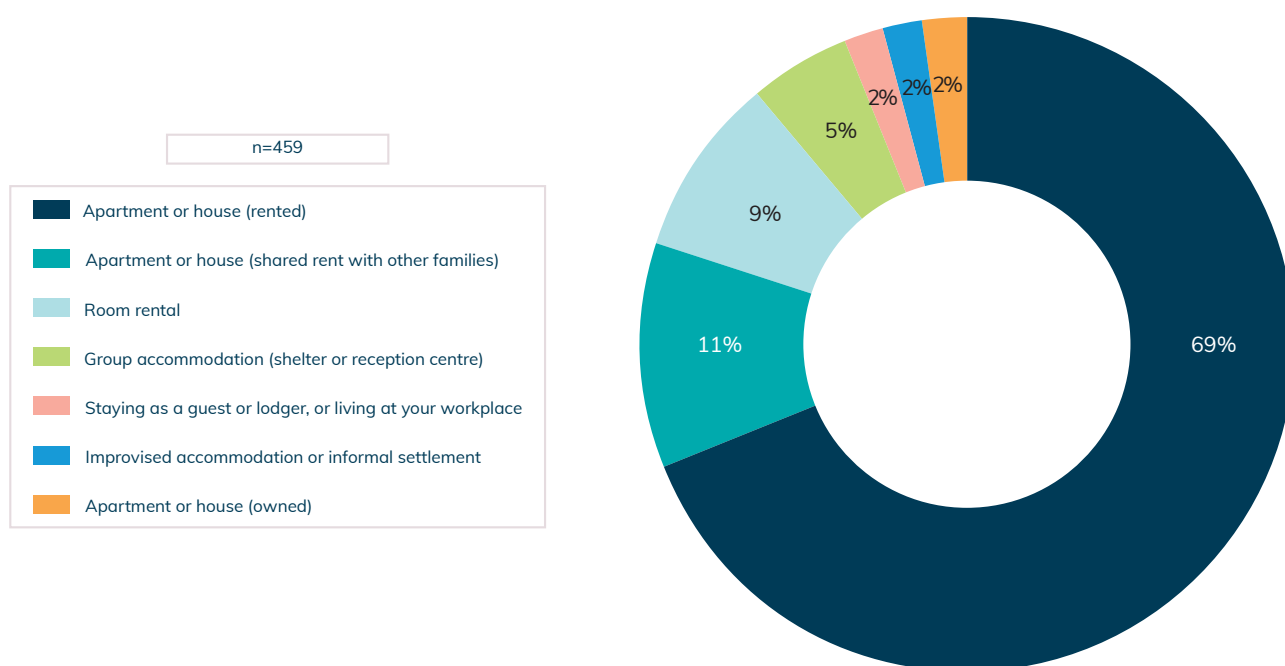
## Housing

Montevideo has the highest housing costs among cities in Latin America.<sup>125</sup> High rents and the requirement for rental guarantees<sup>126</sup> limit the options, types, and quality of housing available to migrants. Many opt for informal rentals and shared spaces with other families to save money.

Rented housing was the most common type of housing among all respondents (89%, n = 409), with 77% living in a single dwelling for their household, 12% sharing with other families, and 11% in a single room.

**Figure 18. Type of housing at the time of the interview**

Answers to the 4Mi question: What type of housing do you currently live in?



Of those who lived in rented accommodation (n=409), 55% had a formal rental contract (written with a rental guarantee), 36% had an informal (verbal) contract, and 5% had paid a deposit or advance payment.<sup>127</sup> Illegal subletting without a formal lease agreement offers no guarantees, may violate migrants' rights and expose them to the risk of unjustified eviction.

While in 2024, 48.4% of households in Montevideo owned their own homes,<sup>128</sup> only 2% of respondents lived in their own homes, with no difference observed based on year of arrival, highlighting the difficulties migrants face in accessing home ownership. Requirements such as stable income, credit history, and even having an initial deposit<sup>129</sup> limit the opportunities for migrants to access home ownership.

Sixty per cent of respondents (n=277) reported at least one problem or obstacle in finding housing in Montevideo, with a lack of access to rental guarantees being the most cited issue (77%), regardless of their nationality. In addition to having the money to cover the rental guarantee, a Uruguayan citizenship card is required to complete the process,<sup>130</sup> which is an obstacle for newly arrived migrants or those with documentation in process.

125 La Diaria Política (2024) [Montevideo es la ciudad con el precio de apartamentos más alto de América Latina](#).

126 A rental guarantee is a payment commitment required by most property owners, which can be requested from the Ministry of Housing and Territorial Planning (Ministerio de Vivienda y Ordenamiento Territorial, MVOT) or from a private company. See: [Guía de acceso al alojamiento para personas migrantes y refugiadas en Uruguay](#).

127 The 4% corresponds to other types of rentals and to people who did not answer the question.

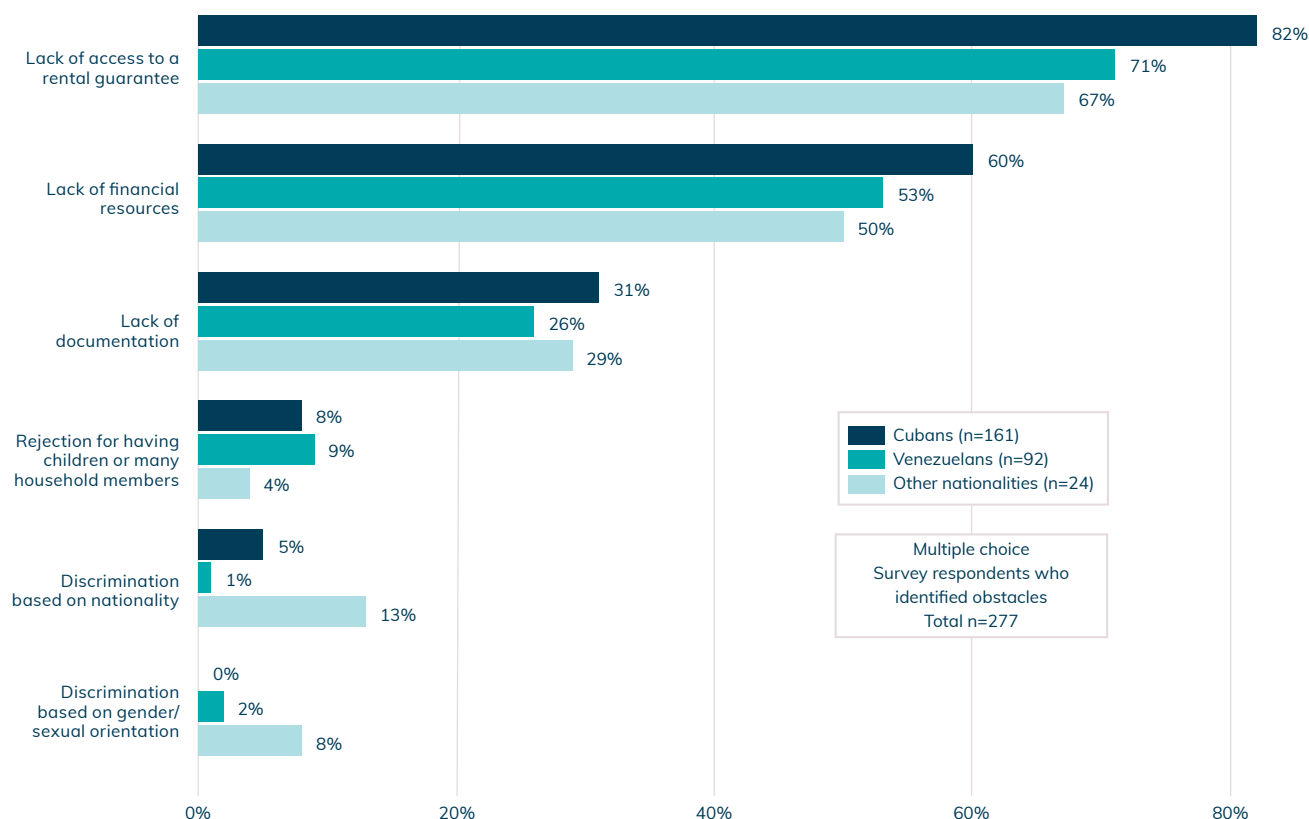
128 Intendencia de Montevideo (2024) [Información Física y Sociodemográfica por Municipio](#).

129 ALDA Group (2025) [Cómo financiar la compra de una vivienda en Uruguay siendo extranjero](#).

130 Ibid.

**Figure 19. Problems or obstacles in finding housing in Montevideo by nationality of survey respondents\***

Answers to the 4Mi questions: Did you have (or have you had) any problems/obstacles when looking for housing in Montevideo? And what is your country of nationality?



\*Results for Venezuelans (n=92) and other nationalities (n=24) should be treated with caution, given the sample size.

Focus group participants confirmed that the lack of financial resources to cover the rental deposit forces migrants to live in unsafe neighbourhoods or poor housing conditions. This risk is greater for newly arrived migrants, who, until they find work, may have to stay in cramped sublet rooms and share bathroom facilities with non-family members.

The president of the organisation Manos Venecuayyas pointed out that guest houses and subletting are housing strategies that migrants resort to when they are unable to meet the requirements for formal rental:

*"In the case of housing, this continues to be a permanent problem that has not improved at all, because Uruguay is a very formalised country. And in order to rent a home, if you are a family, the ideal solution is not to go to a guest house because they are in poor condition, because you are a group, you don't want to take your children to a guest house, and sometimes they don't accept children either. So, the possibility of a [migrant], even with a small amount of savings, being able to rent a home is very low, because they cannot provide a rental guarantee, which is practically an essential requirement for renting anything in Uruguay."*

Forty-three per cent of survey respondents (n=198) reported at least one problem or obstacle with their housing at the time of the interview, mainly a lack of exclusive sleeping spaces (40%) and the general condition of the housing (40%).

Respondents living in shared flats/houses with other families (n=51) and in rented rooms (n=43) mostly mentioned that the lack of a private bathroom was a problem (11 out of 51, and 13 out of 43, respectively). Focus group participants explained that, due to high housing costs, many migrants—especially those with companions or support networks—choose to share rent with other families, limiting their access to private space. Such arrangements pose particular risks for women, children, adolescents, and single-parent households, who may have to leave children alone at home while they work.

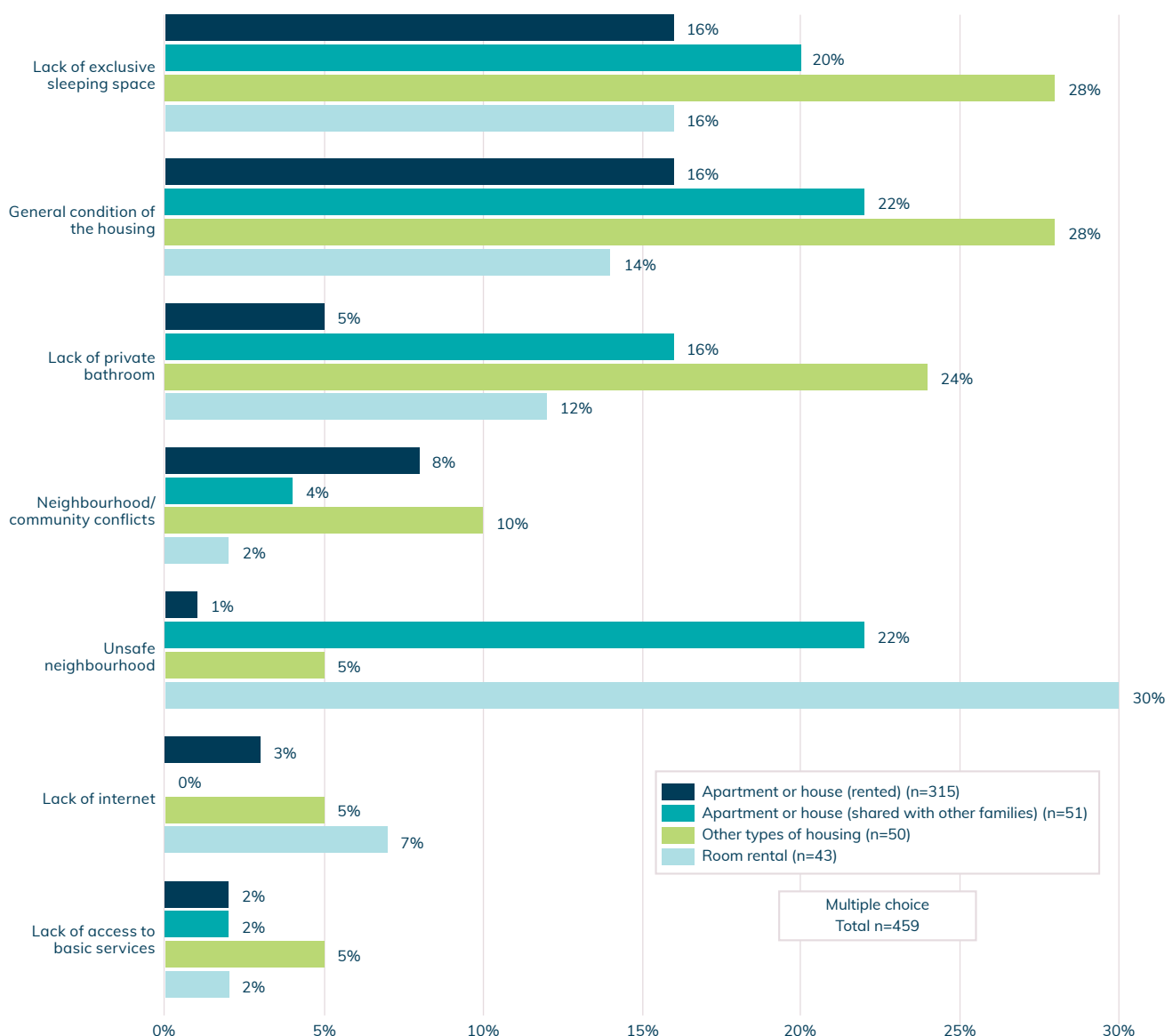
For those who lived in other types of housing (n=50), the general condition of the housing and the lack of private sleeping spaces were the most frequently reported problems (14 out of 50 for each).

*"In terms of housing, there have been some improvements, especially in the transition from collective housing to private housing, which is achieved in two years, but it is not optimal. It is achieved by moving to neighbourhoods that may not be the neighbourhoods where you would like to live, it is achieved with private housing, but it has humidity problems, it does not have the number of rooms you would like, although overcrowding is also being corrected. I never hear Venezuelans say, for example, 'I'm happy with my housing.' I've heard 'I managed to improve my housing, but we're in a 2x2 flat' or 'we managed to get this place on our own, but...'"*

**Victoria Prieto, university lecturer**

**Figure 20. Main problems or obstacles with current housing by type of housing\***

Answers to the 4Mi questions: Have you had (or do you currently have) any problems/obstacles with your current housing? And what type of housing do you currently live in?



\*Results for flats or houses shared with other families (n=51), other types of housing (n=50), and room rentals (n=43) should be treated with caution, given the size of the samples.

Although migrants manage to move out of shared housing and obtain a single dwelling for their families (69% or n=315 respondents lived in an apartment or house rented solely by their family), the cost of housing limits the neighbourhoods, areas, and housing conditions they can afford to rent. Therefore, access to private housing does not

guarantee decent. Of those in single-family rental housing (n=315), 16% reported problems due to a lack of exclusive sleeping space and poor housing conditions.

### Access to housing-related assistance

Thirty-two per cent of respondents (n=145) had received housing-related assistance since their arrival in Montevideo, with greater access among Venezuelans (37% of 147) compared to Cubans (29% of 260) and other nationalities (14 of 52). Support in accessing housing was the most commonly received type of assistance, regardless of nationality (57%), followed by accommodation (39%) and general guidance or information (31%). Friends or family members (34%) and government offices (28%) were the most commonly cited sources of this type of assistance.

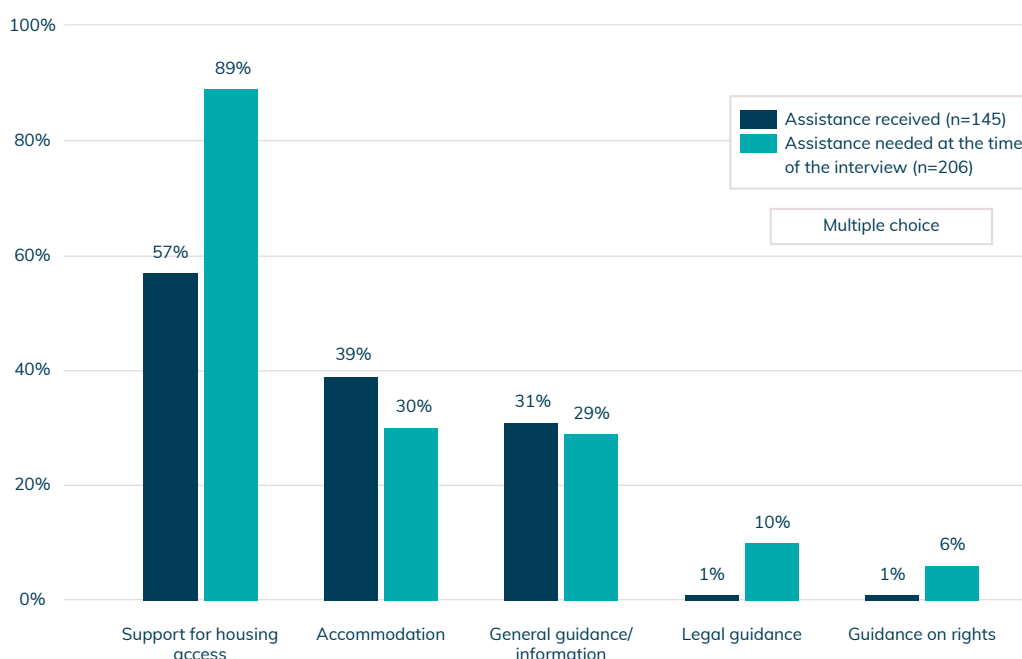
### Housing-related assistance needs

After employment and income, housing was the area with the highest levels of assistance needs, with 45% (n=206) of respondents needing assistance at the time of the interview (see Figure 5). Of those who had received housing-related assistance (n=184), 41% still had needs at the time of the interview.

Although support to access housing was the most commonly received type of assistance, it was also the most needed at the time of interview (89%), independent of nationality. This highlights the persistent difficulties in accessing decent housing in the city.

**Figure 21. Housing assistance received and needed by participants**

Answers to the 4Mi questions: What type of housing-related assistance or support did you receive? And what type of housing-related assistance do you need at this time?



Along the same lines, focus group participants recognised initiatives by MIDES and the Departmental Government of Montevideo to cover rent guarantees and access formal rental contracts. However, several key informants said that these subsidies and support programmes have limited capacity to serve the number of migrants who need them.

Key informants also highlighted the need to promote housing transition programmes that enable migrants to move from shared housing to private housing —and even their own homes— while ensuring decent conditions, formal leases, and safe spaces.

“However, those of us who work with the population know that many of the programmes are ultimately not easily accessible. They are not directly accessible to people who do not have prior savings, permanent documentation, or job stability. Therefore, we believe that it would also be quite important for the authorities to really work at a higher level, in this case at the ministerial level. There should be programmes that are tailored to the needs of the migrant and refugee population. Because sometimes there is a disconnect between the needs of the people, which we who work with them identify, and the programmes proposed by the State.”

**General Coordinator, SEDHU**

Among those needing housing assistance (n=206), 30% required accommodation and 29% sought guidance or general information. Key informants noted that newly arrived migrants, as well as families with children, have the greatest need for support to prevent homelessness or exposure to unsafe spaces such as illegal guest houses.

## Protection and access to justice

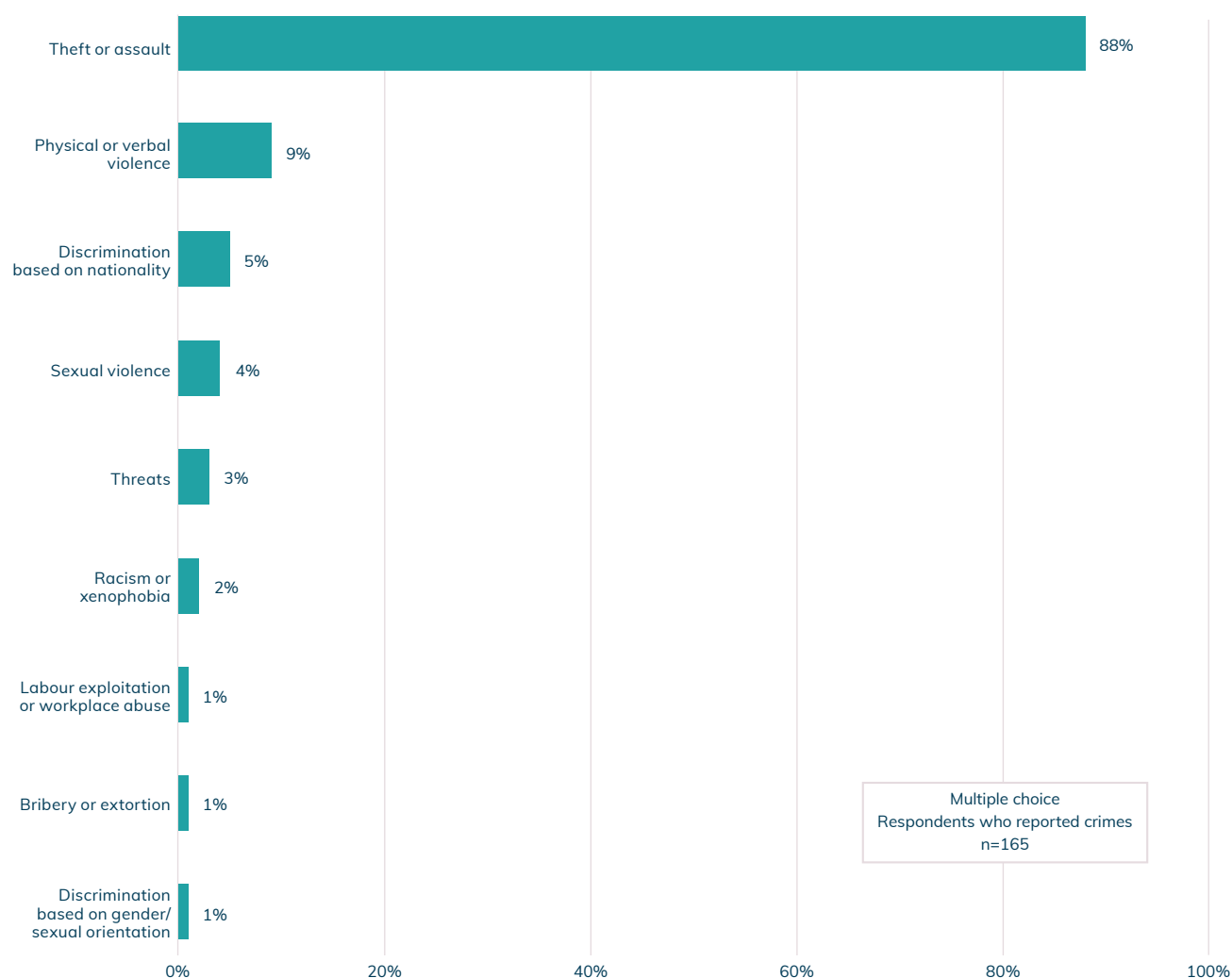
Uruguayan law grants migrants the same rights as nationals and prohibits all forms of discrimination based on national or ethnic origin.<sup>131</sup> However, access to protection and justice mechanisms is mediated by the level of trust that migrants have in the entities in charge. Focus group participants reported mistrust of the police and other justice institutions, which leads them not to report crimes, even when they know how to do so.

Thirty-six per cent of survey respondents (n=165) stated that they or someone in their household had been the victim of a crime or attempted crime in Montevideo, mainly robbery or assault (88%).

Although only 5% of respondents reported discrimination based on nationality and 2% reported racism or xenophobia,<sup>132</sup> these types of incidents were mentioned in the focus groups (see the section on social participation and cohesion for more details).

**Figure 22. Crimes or attempted crimes experienced by survey respondents in Montevideo**

Answers to the 4Mi question: *What type of crime or attempted crime did you experience?*



<sup>131</sup> Uruguay (2008) *Op.Cit.*; Uruguay (2006) *Op.Cit.*

<sup>132</sup> Discrimination refers to "any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference" based on factors such as race, sex, religion, language, national or social origin, among others, which has the purpose or result of limiting the recognition or exercise of human rights on an equal footing. Xenophobia, on the other hand, involves "attitudes, prejudices, and behaviours" that involve the rejection or exclusion of people perceived as foreign or alien to the community, society, or national identity; see: IOM (2025) *Términos fundamentales sobre migración*. Both concepts are closely related. However, in the survey they were presented as two different responses: Discrimination on the basis of nationality was understood as a specific act of exclusion, while the option of racism and xenophobia was addressed as a more general and persistent attitude.

Of those who had experienced crime (n=165), slightly more than half (57% or n=94) had filed a complaint or report, mainly at the police station (91 out of 94), which was the most recognised actor, consistent with theft being the most commonly experienced crime. Only two respondents said they had filed a complaint or report with the Public Prosecutor's Office. The surveys did not identify any references to the National Human Rights Institute or the Ombudsperson's office (*Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos y Defensoría del Pueblo*), or to other services available for these procedures.<sup>133</sup>

Focus group participants felt that the complaints or reports they filed had no consequences – a sentiment also reflected in the surveys – and noted that these processes require migrants to take time off work to complete them. Among the 94 survey respondents who had filed a complaint, 49 said the responsible entity provided assistance but did not resolve the issue; eight reported being treated inappropriately, and another eight said they received no help or guidance.

Mistrust of the entities responsible for processing complaints or reports prevents migrants from turning to them. Of the 68 respondents who did not file a complaint, 19 cited mistrust of the police or other institutions. Lack of information was another key barrier: 19 did not know how to file a complaint, and 15 did not know where to go.

### Access to protection and justice-related assistance

Access to protection and justice had the lowest levels of assistance among all topics studied. Only 10% (n=45) of respondents had received protection and justice assistance since arriving in Montevideo, mainly in the form of guidance or general information (22 out of 45) and legal aid (19). Despite the low percentage of assistance received, government offices were the main actor providing assistance (25 out of 45).

### Needs for assistance in protection and access to justice

Even though a few respondents accessed protection and justice-related assistance, respondents' need for assistance at the time of the interview was also relatively low (see Figure 5). Twelve per cent of respondents (n=54) reported assistance needs at the time of the interview, mainly needing general guidance or information (42 out of 54) and guidance on rights (37).

Access to information on rights —both for migrants and for the officials responsible for their care— is essential to build trust in institutions and promote the effective use of available services. Likewise, flexible service hours and mechanisms can encourage the use of protection and justice services by migrants who do not have time available.

## Participation in city life and social cohesion

The PNI promotes the inclusion of migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees in vulnerable situations through a human rights and gender-based approach, fostering inter-institutional governance to strengthen social cohesion and combat racism, xenophobia, and discrimination.<sup>134</sup> Participation in public spaces and city activities is key to migrant integration, as is building relationships with Uruguayans to create social ties and support networks.

Ninety-seven per cent of respondents (n=441) had attended public spaces or city initiatives, mainly parks or squares (90%) and neighbourhood fairs (89%).

*"I also like the culture here because they have many holidays, activities in the streets, I've seen that they have a lot of fun. And I've participated, for example, in Heritage Day, there is an incredible joy in the streets. I participated without any violence at any time, no arguments or anything, and I had a great time."*

**Cuban woman, focus group participant**

Migrant community activities encourage migrants to find support networks in the city, feel a sense of belonging and help them cope with migration-related grief. Nineteen per cent of respondents (out of 441) who had attended public spaces or city initiatives said they had participated in cultural activities, such as celebrations of national holidays in

<sup>133</sup> Among the services available for processing complaints or reports in Montevideo are the [Línea Azul](#) for reports of violations of children's rights; public defenders, legal clinics, and mediation centres which provide [free legal advice and/or representation](#), and the [Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos y Defensoría del Pueblo](#), which receives reports of possible human rights violations.

<sup>134</sup> JNM (2023) [Op.Cit.](#)



their countries of origin and food fairs, organised by migrant communities.

Migrants' closest networks play a key role in their participation in those spaces. Of those who attended public spaces or city initiatives (n=441), 81% participated thanks to information received from members of their household, and 34% from neighbours or friends. Only 1% of respondents said they turned to state or local institutions.

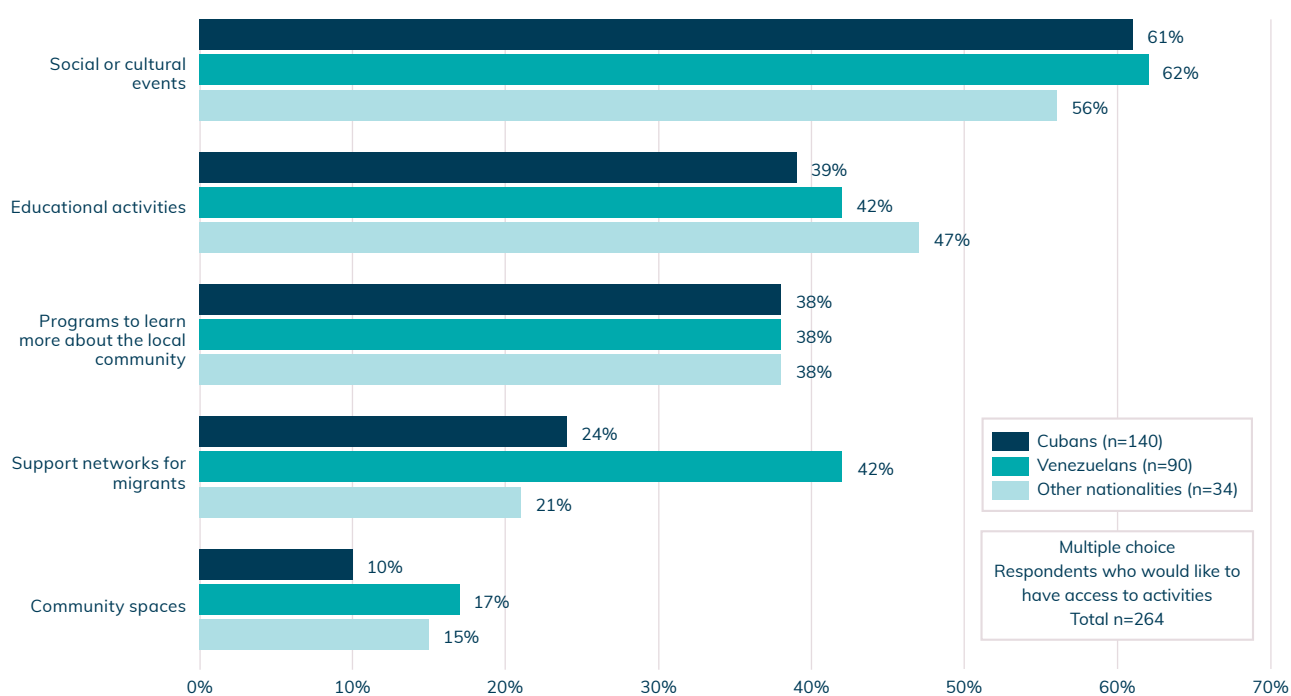
Survey respondents acknowledged several local spaces and initiatives they can attend, but the main barrier to doing so is a lack of time due to work. Only 18 respondents (4% of 441) said they did not have access to local spaces or initiatives, mainly due to a lack of time because of their work (14 out of 18).

Local spaces and initiatives also provide opportunities for migrants to interact and integrate with the host community. Among survey respondents, 58% (n=264) would like to have access to activities to feel welcome in the city, specifically social or cultural events (61%). Thirty-eight per cent of respondents wanted to access programmes to learn more about the local community. Building relationships and social ties with the host community facilitates the integration of migrants. Several key informants emphasised the need for activities involving both the migrant and Uruguayan populations to foster a stronger relationship.

Venezuelan respondents reported greater interest in participating in activities to feel welcome (61% of 147), compared to Cubans (54% of 260) and respondents of other nationalities (34 of 52), highlighting their interest in support networks for migrants.

**Figure 23. Activities that respondents would like to have access to in order to feel more welcome in Montevideo, by nationality\***

Answers to the 4Mi questions: Are there activities you would like to have access to in order to feel more welcome? And what is your country of nationality?



\*Results for Venezuelans (n=90) and Other nationalities (n=34) should be treated with caution, given the size of the samples.

"The State should work harder to achieve integration, not so much with migrants, because it already has several tools, but rather with the host population. I think that for the message to be complete, work also needs to be done with the national population to raise awareness and gradually build ties between the two communities so that rejection does not occur."

**President of Manos Venecuayas**

## Relationship with the community and discrimination

Discrimination based on nationality, skin colour, gender identity, or sexual orientation hinders migrants' integration, leaving them feeling excluded from the host community and struggling to build social relationships. Although 76% of survey respondents considered their relationship with Uruguayans in their neighbourhood to be good, 37% (n=171) said they had experienced discrimination in Montevideo, mainly due to their nationality (88%). These findings reveal a gap between perceptions of coexistence and experiences of exclusion, which hinder full integration.

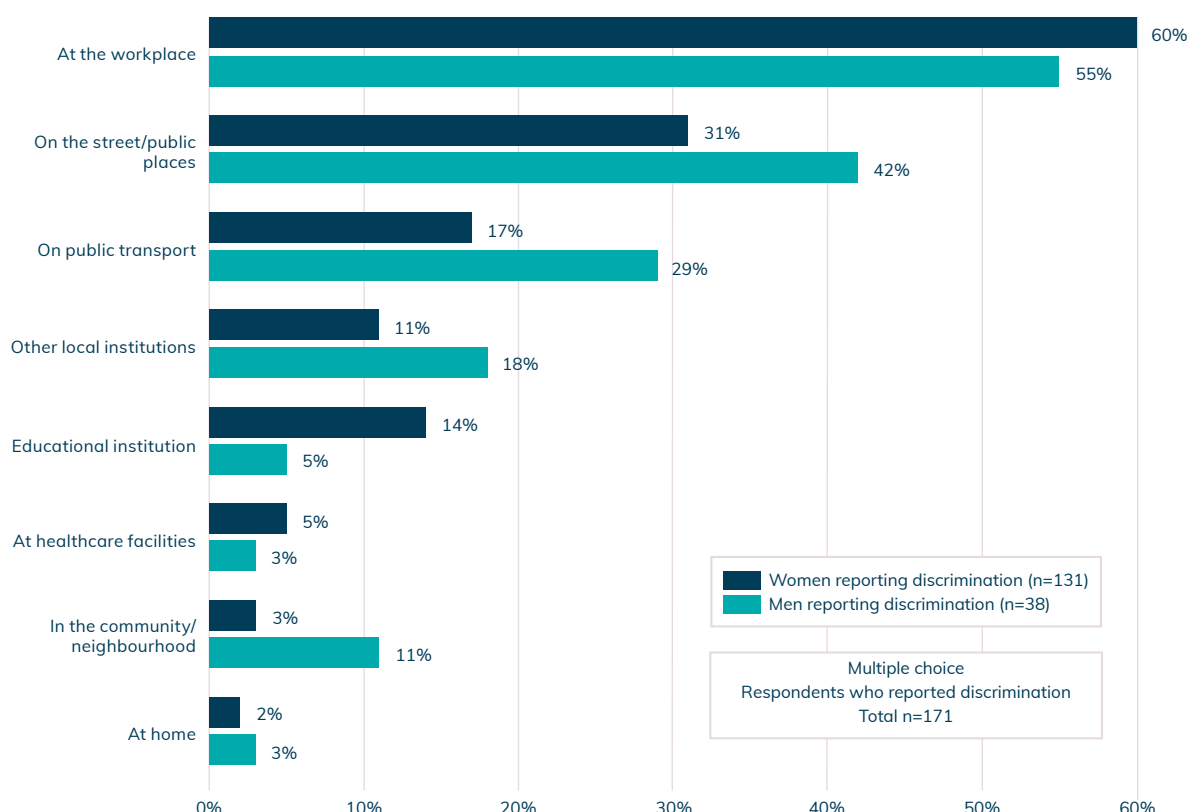
Afro-descendant survey respondents —particularly Dominicans— reported facing discrimination based on skin colour, undermining their sense of inclusion. Racist remarks in workplaces and public spaces were reported as recurring experiences, creating a stronger perception of exclusion than among the migrant population overall. Among those who reported discrimination (n=171), 22% said it was because of their ethnic group or skin colour.

“On the street, on the bus [referring to public transport], they have called me a damn black woman, saying that we come here to take jobs away from them.”  
 “Damn black woman, they’ve called me. Idiot.”  
**Dominican women participating in focus groups**

Discrimination was reported equally by women and men. However, men more often cited discrimination on the street, in public spaces, and on public transport, while women reported it more frequently in workplaces and educational institutions.

**Figure 24. Places where survey respondents experienced discrimination, by gender of respondents\* \*\***

Answers to the 4Mi questions: Where have you felt discriminated against? And which of the following options best describes your gender identity?



\*The two remaining respondents are transgender people, one of whom reported feeling discriminated against in the workplace, on the street or in public places, on public transport, in health facilities and other local institutions, respectively.

\*\* Data from men who reported discrimination (n=38) should be treated with caution, given the sample size.

In addition to discrimination, focus group participants report not feeling included in spaces, activities, and relationships with Uruguayans, so social ties and support networks are built solely among the migrant population. Focus group participants noted that Uruguayans interact almost exclusively with fellow nationals, leaving little room for building social relationships with the migrant population.

*"I have four Uruguayan friends and none of them has ever invited me to their house to drink mate. We do great things, we work, we live, we go out, but no [native]<sup>135</sup> Uruguayan has ever said to me, 'Come to my house, to my neighbourhood, to drink mate [...].' Because it's not in their nature. Everyone [...] talks about migrants and migration, but if you ask them how many of those migrants have had [...] your mate, the number drops significantly, doesn't it? [...]"*

**Non-binary Argentine, focus group participant**

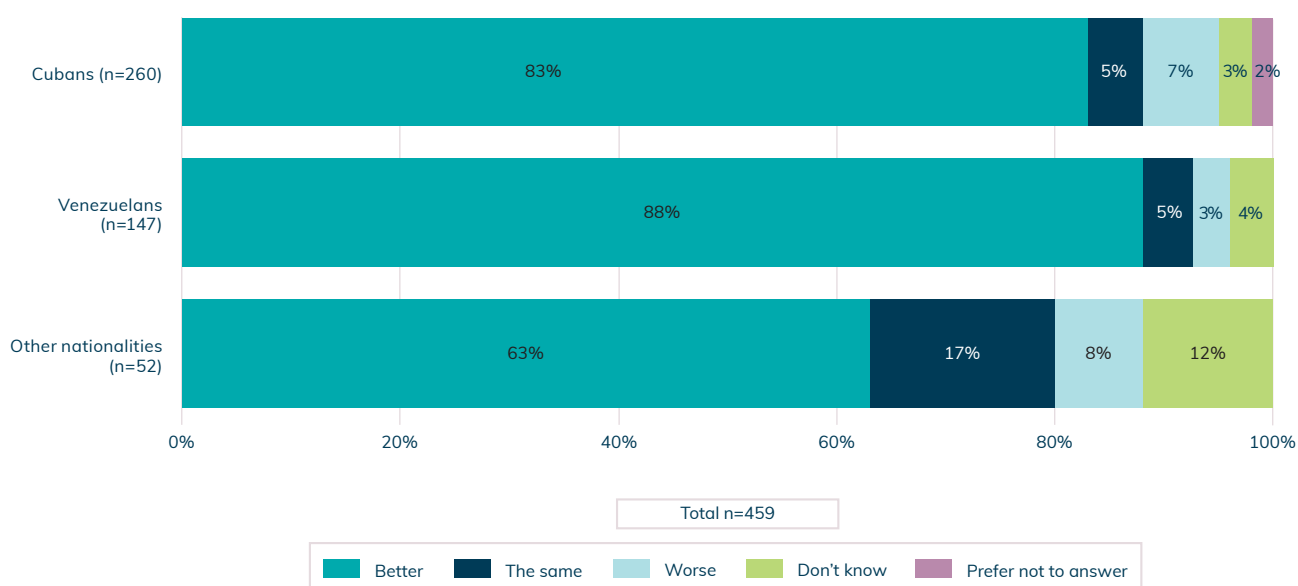
### Quality of life in Montevideo

Despite the difficulties in relating to the host community, the information collected made it possible to identify positive stories of integration and experiences of coexistence between the migrants and Uruguayans, which help migrants feel included. Despite the barriers described in previous sections, migrants value the opportunities and quality of life in Montevideo and plan to stay in the short and medium term.

Most respondents valued the quality of life in Montevideo positively compared to their countries of nationality and host countries. Eighty-three per cent consider their quality of life in Montevideo to be better than in their country of nationality, and 68 out of 88 consider it to be better than in their host country.

**Figure 25. Perception of quality of life in Montevideo, compared to country of nationality\***

Answers to the 4Mi question: Compared to your life in your country of nationality, how would you describe your current quality of life in Montevideo?



\*Results for respondents of other nationalities (n=52) should be treated with caution, given the sample size.

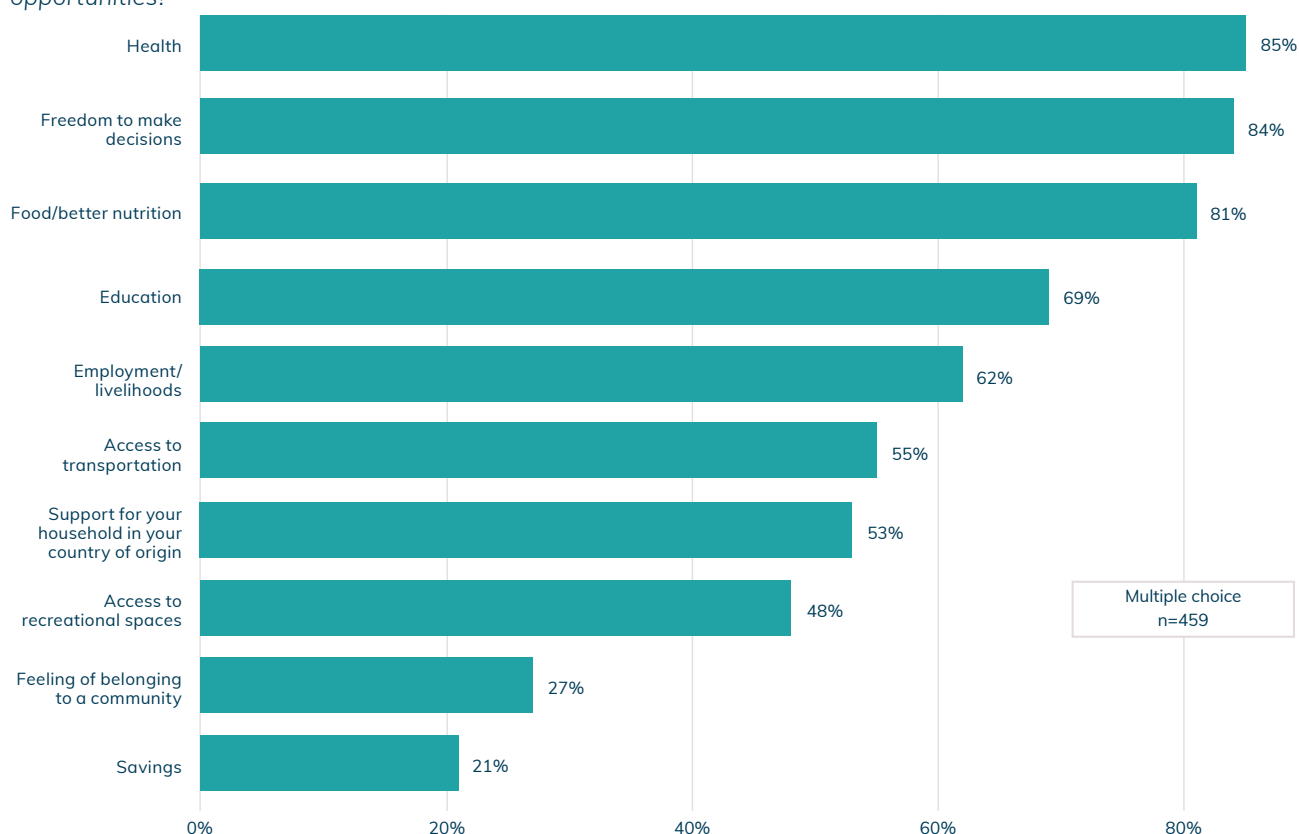
Respondents identified the city's major opportunities as access to healthcare, freedom to make decisions, and food/better nutrition. The latter was only mentioned by Cuban and Venezuelan participants, which is related to difficulties in accessing food in both countries.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>135</sup> The original wording was "born in the east", referring to people born in Uruguay.

<sup>136</sup> Angel, S. (2022) [Cuba, Venezuela y los puntos críticos de hambre en América Latina](#). Food Monitor Programme.

**Figure 26. Issues in which survey respondents feel Montevideo has provided them with opportunities**

Answers to the 4Mi question: *From the following list, do you consider that this city has given you any of these opportunities?*



Most of the survey respondents (93%) plan to stay in the city in the short or medium term due to their positive perception of opportunities and quality of life compared to their country of nationality. Three per cent considered changing their country of residence without returning to their country of nationality, 2% considered moving to a different city in Uruguay, and 1% intended to return to their country of nationality.<sup>137</sup>

The opportunities they find in the city are the main reasons migrants want to stay. Among those who planned to stay in Montevideo (n = 427), 73% cited the quality of life as the reason.

Twenty-five survey respondents said they had plans to move to another city in Uruguay, mainly motivated by the search for better employment (15 out of 25) and better housing (11 out of 25). The decision to move to the interior of the country may be motivated by lower living costs compared to those in Montevideo.

### Access to assistance in participation in city life and social cohesion

Survey respondents reported receiving little assistance with social participation and cohesion, with only 10% (n=44) having received assistance in these areas, mainly in the form of guidance or general information (39 out of 44). Assistance was mostly obtained from NGOs (19 out of 44), government offices (13), and religious organisations (13).

### Needs for assistance in participation in city life and social cohesion

Twenty-two per cent of survey respondents (n=100) needed assistance related to participation in city life and social cohesion, primarily guidance or general information (87 out of 100). Focus group participants identified access to information about service availability, responsible entities and spaces for participation as essential to ensuring migrants' participation in city life, especially for newcomers without support networks and for those who do not speak Spanish.

To promote and guarantee access to social participation, several key informants stressed the importance of involving migrants in the design and implementation of assistance programmes. This participation helps them feel represented and provides a platform to express their needs for integration and connection with the city.

<sup>137</sup> The remaining 1% corresponds to people who had not decided on their plans in the short or medium term.

## 6. Conclusions

The findings of this study highlight the importance of collecting data at the local level and working in coordination with local actors to support the implementation of evidence-based public policies and strengthen decision-making on issues related to the integration of the migrant population.

In Montevideo, the data collected reveal both progress and challenges in the integration of the migrant population, allowing for the identification of the main needs, barriers, and priorities from their own perspective. These inputs can serve as a basis for developing more effective and equitable urban policies aimed at long-term inclusion and improving the quality of life for the entire population.

Although there are positive experiences regarding access to education, health care, and documentation — free medical care, initial access to public education, and the opening of new avenues for regularisation - significant barriers remain in access to formal employment, housing, and regularisation for those with expired documents.

Difficulties in meeting rental guarantees for housing and the lack of regularisation documents to access formal employment jeopardise the integration process of migrants and expose them to informality and related potential abuses. Furthermore, the lack of validation of qualifications and documents proving professional experience leads to overqualification and unemployment. In addition, there are specific needs and barriers in the area of health, such as access to mental health services, voluntary termination of pregnancy, and gender-affirming hormone therapy for transgender migrants.

Migrants face discrimination based on nationality, racialisation, and gender identity, which shapes their daily experiences and limits their opportunities. Although relations with Uruguayans are reported to be mostly positive, migrants do not feel fully included in society, and nationality appears to be a factor that restricts their educational, professional, and personal aspirations.

Assistance to migrants in Montevideo is provided through the combined efforts of government institutions, NGOs, and personal support networks, though their roles differ. The State plays a central role in education, documentation and regularisation, as well as employment-related assistance. NGOs contribute particularly in the areas of documentation and employment, while also providing migrants with information, guidance, and personalised support across all aspects of life. Friends, family members, and fellow migrants similarly offer crucial informal assistance, particularly in housing, where they often complement the support provided by government entities.

The data also show that the PNI is a crucial institutional effort, but one that is limited by its pilot and temporary nature.

# 7. Recommendations

To strengthen the integration of migrants in Montevideo, this study proposes the following recommendations, building on progress already made.

## General recommendations




Below are the general recommendations that apply across all areas:

- **Strengthen inter-institutional coordination, territorialise actions, and actively involve migrant communities** in policy design in case of future iterations of the PNI or similar initiatives.
- **Create a unified system for collecting information on migrants in Uruguay**, avoiding duplication of databases and ensuring that information is available to authorities at all administrative levels.
- **Consolidate the CRM**, increasing the range and accessibility of services and entities present there. This should be done in collaboration with local authorities, as well as by encouraging the participation of civil society organisations and migrant networks.
- **Develop complementary initiatives to the CRM and face-to-face appointments**, using flexible and innovative mechanisms to support migrants' access to information—on subjects such as health, education, employment, and migration regularisation, among others—through tools such as AI-powered chatbots or mass communication via social media.
- **Encourage the establishment of additional spaces**—similar to the CRM—in municipalities with a higher presence of migrants, to facilitate access to information and migration regularisation procedures.

## Specific recommendations

Specific recommendations for each thematic area are outlined below.

**Table 3. Legend**

Actor	Colour
National authorities	
Local authorities	
Civil society	

## Documents and regularisation

**Maintain and promote existing migration regularisation mechanisms**, reducing waiting times and adjusting requirements so that migrants with expired identity documents from their country of nationality can access them.

Specific recommendations	Actor
<b>Promote initiatives to disseminate information</b> on the migration regularisation mechanisms available in Uruguay, as well as on the asylum application process, its differences, and requirements, so that migrants can make informed decisions based on their needs.	▲ ● ■
<b>Expand information channels regarding Mercosur residency</b> , with particular emphasis on Venezuelans, to encourage its uptake.	▲ ● ■
<b>Expand legal advice and representation services</b> related to migration regularisation and access to asylum, focusing on reaching migrants of less common nationalities or those who do not speak Spanish.	● ■
<b>Maintain migration regularisation initiatives for specific populations</b> —such as “Prima Facie” and “Residencia por Arraigo”—and evaluate the creation or expansion of these mechanisms for other nationalities and/or profiles that may require them.	▲
<b>Adjust the requirements of regularisation mechanisms</b> so that individuals with expired identity documents from their country of nationality—such as ID cards or passports—can regularise their stay in Uruguay.	▲
<b>Continue strengthening the operational capacity of the Civil Registry</b> and the digitalisation of procedures to expedite the registration of birth certificates from the country of origin in the foreign nationals’ registry.	▲
<b>Encourage diplomatic relations with countries in the region</b> —especially Venezuela— and promote their consular representation in Uruguay, to facilitate access to identity documents outside the country of nationality.	▲
<b>Promote the implementation of online consular services</b> —such as legalisation and apostille—in countries in the region to facilitate virtual access to documents from the country of nationality.	▲

## Health






















**Maintain the currently high levels of access and enrolment in the health system for most migrants.** At the same time, reduce persistent barriers in mental health and specialised care, increase access for undocumented migrants, and enable access to specific therapies such as hormone therapy.

Specific recommendations	Actor
<b>Ensure equitable access to mental health services for migrants</b> , in line with the general expansion of these services, explicitly including migrants in the National Plan for Mental Health and Addictions. Incorporate specific actions to guarantee practical, culturally appropriate, and non-discriminatory access to mental health services, and provide financial support to local projects offering psychosocial care to migrants with potential for national scaling.	▲
<b>Expand the existing provision of psychosocial and mental health services</b> —such as the Community Mental Health Centre, Montevideo West Centre, the Montevideo Municipal Polyclinic Network, the Community House for Mental Health Promotion, “Espacio Contás”, and the Montevideo Psychosocial Centre—ensuring these spaces are accessible to migrants, tailored to their needs, and that information about the services is effectively communicated.	▲ ● ■
<b>Ensure effective access to gender-affirming hormone therapy</b> by removing administrative barriers related to migration status.	▲
<b>Increase information for undocumented migrants</b> about existing care mechanisms and pathways, including access to State health services through the ASSE.	▲ ● ■
<b>Launch community mental health campaigns</b> explaining symptoms, care pathways, and free services available to migrants, with special attention to migrant women.	● ■
<b>Create forums for community dialogue</b> and map barriers to mental health and specialised care to inform local and national policies.	● ■
<b>Provide legal and psychosocial support</b> to migrants without access to healthcare, including help navigating affiliation and claims processes.	● ■















## Education and childcare

**Maintain an inclusive approach to access to education and care for migrant children and adolescents**, while expanding their access to extracurricular activities (art, sports, music) and promoting continuing education and vocational training for adult migrants, with an emphasis on the recognition of prior qualifications.

Specific recommendations	Actor
<b>Maintain and expand the coverage of CAIF, CAPI, and INAU centres</b> as key childcare spaces, prioritising areas with a high migrant population, and ensuring information about these services reaches all migrant children.	 
<b>Consolidate the educational accreditation process</b> for migrant children without school documentation, initiated by MEC and DNE.	
<b>Ensure periodic updates for teachers and educational staff on regulations</b> regarding access to education for migrant children, both in Montevideo and other departments of Uruguay	 
<b>Strengthen and expand guidance or general information services on access to education</b> for migrant children—such as MEC programmes, “Muros que Unen,” and the “Punto Móvil”—providing clear and decentralised information.	  
<b>Continue providing educational guidance and school support</b> for migrant children, particularly to help regularise their schooling and access necessary documentation.	 
<b>Implement awareness campaigns against mistreatment and bullying in schools</b> , with a particular focus on promoting intercultural coexistence in primary and secondary schools.	  
<b>Expand the offer of free extracurricular activities</b> (arts, sports and music) in areas where many migrants live and ensure their promotion through accessible channels.	  
<b>Reduce barriers to extracurricular activities</b> by offering scholarships for materials, flexible schedules, and support strategies tailored to migrant children with caregivers who have limited availability.	  
<b>Promote community networks</b> to encourage the participation of migrant children in extracurricular activities, with support from local volunteers.	 

## Employment and income














**Promote the employment of migrants in formal jobs**, based on their academic training and previous work experience, speeding up the process of recognising qualifications and guaranteeing formal employment for migrants with migration regularisation documents in progress.

Specific recommendations	Actor
<b>Continue efforts led by MEC and DNE to facilitate and accelerate the processes of degree validation and recognition</b> , reducing waiting times and creating a flexible equivalency system for those who do not have the required documents.	
<b>Create a flexible system for recognising skills and practical experience</b> that uses technical assessments, trade knowledge tests, and experience-based certifications.	
<b>Map services and sectors with needs for skilled labour</b> to promote the hiring of migrants based on their work experience and academic training through networks connecting local employers and migrant communities.	  
<b>Establish partnerships with the private sector</b> to promote employability and entrepreneurship for migrants, with particular focus on women with unpaid care responsibilities, youth, and those working informally..	  
<b>Promote information campaigns for employers on valid documents</b> for formal employment and the option to hire migrants under labour dependency while their residency is being processed.	 
<b>Strengthen loan programmes for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises</b> in Montevideo, offering credit lines and entrepreneurship mentoring for migrants.	 

Specific recommendations	Actor
<b>Continue supporting professional training for migrants</b> through coordination with programmes offered by INEFOP and the General Directorate of Technical Professional Education.	 
<b>Establish agreements with University of Labour of Uruguay–INEFOP–SEERPM</b> to open specific slots (ages 17–24) in high-demand trades (e.g., technology, logistics, gastronomy) and provide socio-labour mentoring during the first six months of practice.	 
<b>Develop legal guidance and employment training programmes for migrants</b> , with emphasis on newly arrived migrants, those without support networks, or from less common nationalities in Uruguay, offering services on job information, CV preparation, interview training, labour rights, and responsible institutions.	  
<b>Support ongoing training and entrepreneurship development</b> within local communities, taking into account previous entrepreneurial experience and providing mentoring and financial capital to foster growth.	 
<b>Disseminate information about existing mechanisms to report</b> labour conditions and rights violations, including enabling reporting for individuals in informal employment.	 
<b>Accompany reports and visibility of labour discrimination and exploitation</b> , offering legal assistance services and promoting awareness campaigns on labour rights.	 







## Housing

**Expand access to decent, formal and safe housing options** for migrants in Montevideo, removing economic and regularisation-related obstacles.

Specific recommendations	Actor
<b>Review and relax the requirements for rental guarantees</b> , allowing migrants to access formal contracts while regularising their status or lacking full documentation, without requiring high deposits.	
<b>Expand the availability and capacity of rental guarantee and subsidy programmes</b> currently offered by MIDES and the Departmental Government of Montevideo, with special attention to newly arrived migrants, families with children, and migrants without support networks.	 
<b>Design programmes to transition to home ownership</b> through subsidies or credit lines adapted to the conditions and trajectories of migrants, prioritising habitability and safety.	 
<b>Ensure that migrants, independent of nationality, have equitable access to housing assistance</b> , without arbitrary distinctions and with monitoring mechanisms in place.	 
<b>Develop cooperative housing options for migrant households</b> under the Uruguayan Federation of Mutual Aid Cooperatives, with lower initial savings requirements and financial mentoring to support compliance.	
<b>Provide support and guidance in the search for housing to migrants who are alone</b> or without support networks, including assistance in communicating with landlords or real estate agencies.	 
<b>Continue disseminating clear, updated, and accessible information</b> on housing options and rental requirements, and promote spaces for direct advice.	  
























## Protection and access to justice

**Maintain the existing high level of protection and justice**, while increasing the information on migrants' rights disseminated by national and local actors and fostering migrants' trust in state and departmental institutions.

Specific recommendations	Actor
<b>Fully assume the guidance and support functions</b> currently provided by civil society, expanding the capacities of the MIDES Migrant Reference Centre.	 
<b>Continue providing legal guidance and personalised support to migrants</b> , while strengthening coordination with public entities.	
<b>Adjust service hours and modalities in protection and justice services</b> , incorporating digital channels and consultations outside standard working hours.	 
<b>Provide clear, multilingual, and culturally appropriate public information materials</b> and campaigns on rights, reporting channels, and institutional pathways, tailored to different migrant profiles, with emphasis on women, adolescents, migrants with diverse SOGIESC, and Afro-descendants.	  
<b>Promote community spaces for information on rights and protection</b> , in collaboration with migrant associations, to build trust and raise awareness of available channels.	 
<b>Monitor and support migrants in accessing complaint mechanisms</b> , documenting rights violations, and contributing to the generation of evidence to improve services.	

## Participation in social life and cohesion

**Promote the active and meaningful participation of migrants in life in Montevideo**, ensuring safe spaces, inclusive mechanisms, and strategies to prevent and address structural and everyday discrimination.

Specific recommendations	Actor
<b>Encourage the participation of migrants in institutional mechanisms</b> (councils, forums, and plans, particularly next steps in integration policies), ensuring representation of different nationalities, genders, migration statuses, and socio-economic profiles.	 
<b>Establish partnerships with migrant associations</b> to design and implement joint community activities and include migrant representatives in local dialogue tables and councils, promoting their active role in urban life.	 
<b>Provide differentiated support to migrants who are victims of discrimination</b> , considering the various contexts of violence and exclusion according to gender, nationality, age, and space (transport, schools, employment, etc.).	 
<b>Create safe spaces within existing services</b> —such as the MIDES Migrant Reference Centre—for migrants with diverse SOGIESC, where they can receive guidance and assistance tailored to their specific needs.	  
<b>Ensure access to clear, multilingual information</b> about services, programmes, and participation spaces, especially for newly arrived migrants or non-Spanish speakers, through accessible and decentralised campaigns, maintaining existing spaces such as Spanish courses and exchange sessions offered by SEERPM.	  
<b>Incorporate migrant cultural content</b> (food, music, languages) in departmental and municipal activities, festivals, and community events to promote recognition and intercultural exchange.	 
<b>Facilitate migrant access to programmes introducing local life</b> , such as guided visits to public services, workshops on rights, community networks, city history, and civic participation.	 
<b>Expand an intersectional, intercultural, and anti-discrimination approach</b> in existing local programmes through community-centred projects and initiatives that promote exchange, active coexistence, and relationship-building between migrants and Uruguayans via cultural, sports, and educational activities.	 
<b>Expand the organisation and promotion of cultural and intercultural activities</b> (food fairs, national celebrations, neighbourhood gatherings), also fostering interaction between migrants and Uruguayans.	 
<b>Offer guidance and psychosocial support</b> , especially for migrants arriving alone, strengthening their social connections during the first months.	  





MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America, and a global team based across Copenhagen, Geneva and Brussels.

MMC is a leading source for independent and high-quality data, research, analysis and expertise. MMC aims to increase understanding of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based mixed migration responses for people on the move and to stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration. MMC's overarching focus is on human rights and protection for all people on the move.

MMC is part of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

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