# SOCIAL COHESION

## Ecuador 2023

**Community perception of social cohesion between the migrant population and host communities**

# THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES
# OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

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The **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 14 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard-to-reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives and have opportunities to thrive.

This research was conducted jointly by the Community Engagement and Accountability Unit (CEA) of the IFRC Americas Regional Office and the Ecuadorian Red Cross.

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# INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

## Introduction:

The goal of this research is to strengthen **evidence-based decision making aimed at improving the living conditions of both migrant populations and host communities**, as well as promote the implementation of **assistance programmes associated with migration flows**. This exercise centres on **understanding the challenges and opportunities related to fostering social cohesion between migrant populations and host communities in targeted territories in Ecuador**, exploring strategies that include greater mutual interest in their respective cultures and traditions.

The findings included in this report highlight the importance of safe cultural dialogue, active engagement, and creation of inclusive spaces as essential pillars for fostering social cohesion between the groups. The preliminary conclusions highlight the groups' convergence in: i) considering entrepreneurship as a cohesion catalyst; ii) migrant populations' specific interest in cultural fairs; and iii) the need to prioritize physical interaction over exclusive use of digital communities.

In conclusion, the operational recommendations contained in this document provide a framework for the implementation of **effective strategies proposed by the communities themselves**, thus establishing participatory bases for effective strengthening of social cohesion between the migrant population and host communities as part of the migration programmes being conducted.

## Methodology:

Developing this research initially involved tracking previous studies conducted in the Americas on social cohesion of migrant populations and host communities; however, it was found that the majority of these studies were aimed at assessing the needs of migrant populations with a view to designing emergency responses and that few focused on their inclusion in and social cohesion with host communities.

Therefore, with essential support from Ecuadorian Red Cross, the regional Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) team designed, based on academic and technical documents, a methodology and instruments to collect and analyze the voices of these two communities.

The methodology included: i) analysis of previous experiences and studies; ii) a contextual approach through which Ecuadorian Red Cross, with support from the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), detected territories with high presence and incidence of both groups as well as interaction between them; iii) the methodological and technical design of instruments; iv) data collection in the following neighborhoods: San Sebastián (Canton: Cuenca – Province: Azuay), 9 de Mayo (Canton: Machala – Province: El Oro), Chongón (Canton: Guayaquil – Province: Guayas), San Francisco (Canton: Ibarra – Province: Imbabura), and Calderón (Canton: Quito – Province: Pichincha); v) systematization, processing and analysis of data; and vi) joint review and submission of results.

This report is particularly useful for making evidence-based decisions around social cohesion in Ecuador, as the **recommendations and action strategies proposed were formulated directly by each of the targeted groups, which enhances their efficiency, applicability, and engagement.**

# Main findings

- ✓ Differential treatment based on individuals' country of origin highlights the **urgency of anti-discrimination measures**, proposing the implementation of awareness-raising programmes to promote diversity and combat stereotypes.

- ✓ Despite the low levels of stigma detected, **addressing negative perceptions is still critical**. Communication strategies that highlight the positive contributions of the migrant population can counteract stereotypes and promote inclusive coexistence.

- ✓ **Encouraging host communities to get to know migrants personally and promoting open dialogue** are essential for demystifying negative perceptions and building bridges towards harmonious coexistence.

- ✓ The **recognized importance of cultural awareness campaigns** highlights the need for comprehensive strategies and effective dissemination through various channels, including social networks and media.

- ✓ The **unanimous appeal for open and safe spaces for dialogue** emphasizes the need to create inclusive environments that foster mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

- ✓ **Migrant populations' greater willingness for community engagement** has significant potential. Programmes that encourage engagement and leadership in community activities can strengthen social cohesion.

- ✓ The identification of entrepreneurship as a key opportunity for social cohesion highlights the importance of collaborative programmes that promote livelihoods development and cultural exchanges. In addition, **it is recommended not to use digital approaches (exclusively), prioritizing a combination of digital and in-person means** and face to face events to reach both communities and foster social cohesion.

- ✓ **Articulation with local authorities and other humanitarian actors is highly valuable for promoting effective and sustainable social cohesion programmes.**

# Recommendations for fostering social cohesion.

- ✓ Implement **programmes that address differential treatment based on individuals' country of origin**. These programmes will not only seek to promote diversity, but also combat ingrained stereotypes. The aim is to promote a more inclusive coexistence through awareness-raising and education initiatives, creating an environment that celebrates and respects cultural differences.

Articulation with local authorities and other humanitarian actors is extremely valuable for these programmes. *(Articulation with the Risk Management and Emergency and Disaster Response (GRED) programme, Community Health programme and Volunteers)*
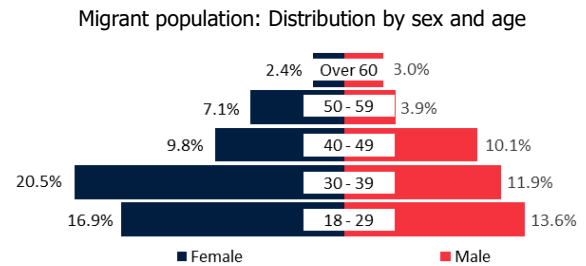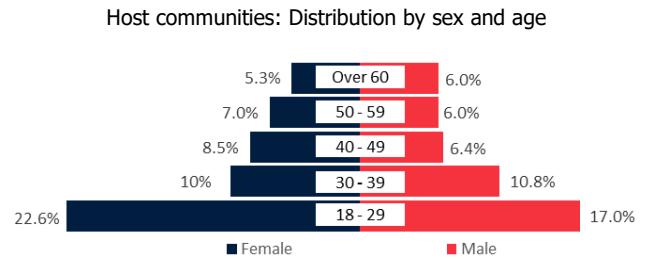
✓ **Strengthen and scale-up cultural awareness campaigns** through dissemination strategies tailored to different channels, seeking to ensure extensive reach but also to foster mutual understanding between both communities. These campaigns will serve as a vehicle to dismantle ingrained negative perceptions and build a foundation of mutual respect. *(Articulation with the GRED programme, Community Health programme and Communication Department)*

✓ **Encouraging personal interaction between host communities and the migrant population** is a key strategy. Through promotion of mutual knowledge and open dialogue, the aim is to demystify negative perceptions and build solid bridges for harmonious coexistence. This approach aims to achieve a profound cultural change at the level of everyday relationships. *(Articulation with Youth programme, Community Health programme, Volunteers and Communication Department)*

✓ Develop **communication strategies that highlight the positive contributions of the migrant population**, even in the absence of evident stigmas. This approach seeks to counteract any existing negative perceptions and promote a more collaborative image. A positive narrative will become an essential component for a shared community identity. *(Articulation with Communication Department, Community Health programme, Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values programme and Volunteers)*

✓ Addressing the **unanimous appeal for open and safe spaces for dialogue** is crucial for strengthening social cohesion. Creating inclusive environments is an essential platform for promoting deeper understanding and peaceful coexistence. *(Articulation with GRED programme, Youth programme and Volunteers)*

✓ Developing **programmes that harness on the migrant population's greater willingness to engage with the community is a strategy with a long-term vision**. Encouraging the migrant population's engagement and leadership in community activities will strengthen ties and social cohesion, thus building a more integrated and collaborative community. *(Articulation with GRED programme, Community Health programme, Youth programme and Volunteers)*

✓ **It is essential to continue to promote both groups' participation in programme design and evaluation**. This not only strengthens social cohesion, but also ensures that programmes are culturally sensitive and relevant to both communities. It builds diverse solutions that address the specific needs of each group. *(Articulation with GRED programme, Community Health programme, Youth programme and Volunteers)*

# 1. DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The sample is composed of **530** individuals belonging to host communities, accounting for **61.1**% of the sample, and **337** individuals belonging to the migrant population, accounting for **38.9**% of the sample.
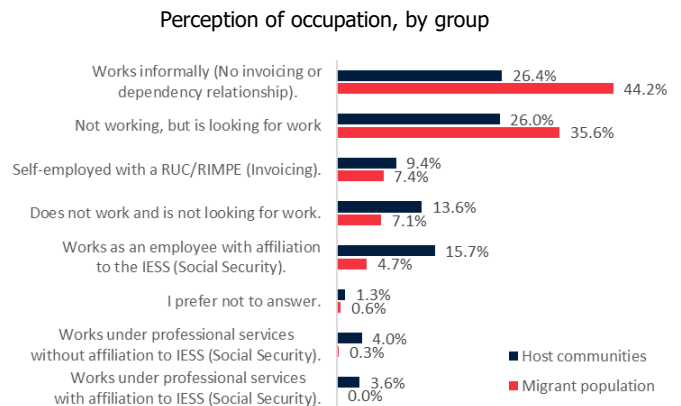
**Distribution of participants, by age and sex:** Most respondents from **host communities** belong to the 18 to 29 age group, which account for 39.6% of the group total. This reflects an age distribution consistent with the National Institute for Statistics 2010 data for these communities. Consequently, as age increases the percentage of responses decreases down to 11.3% for the 60+ group. In all age groups, the number of female respondents is slightly higher than the number of male respondents, 53.4% and 46.2%, respectively, plus a small percentage of individuals (0.4%) who chose not to respond.

Host communities: Distribution by sex and age

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5.3% | Over 60 | 6.0% |
| 7.0% | 50 - 59 | 6.0% |
| 8.5% | 40 - 49 | 6.4% |
| 10% | 30 - 39 | 10.8% |
| 22.6% | 18 - 29 | 17.0% |

■ Female   ■ Male

Migrant population: Distribution by sex and age

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2.4% | Over 60 | 3.0% |
| 7.1% | 50 - 59 | 3.9% |
| 9.8% | 40 - 49 | 10.1% |
| 20.5% | 30 - 39 | 11.9% |
| 16.9% | 18 - 29 | 13.6% |

■ Female   ■ Male

Similarly, most respondents from the **migrant population** belong to the 18-29 age group, accounting for 31.2 per cent of the total, and the percentage of respondents decreases as age increases, down to 5.3 per cent for the 60+ age group. Once again, the number of female respondents is higher than the number of male respondents across all age groups, 56.7 per cent and 42.4 per cent, respectively. A small percentage A small percentage (0.6%) chose to answer "Other" and 0.3% preferred not to respond at all.

**Occupation, by group:** There are **disparities between host communities' and the migrant population's perception in terms of occupation, particularly in areas such as affiliation to the Ecuadorian Social Security Institute (IESS), job search, and labor informality**.

The migrant population has a higher proportion of people seeking employment compared to host communities, as well as a higher proportion of informal employment.

Perception of occupation, by group

| | Host communities | Migrant population |
|---|---|---|
| Works informally (No invoicing or dependency relationship). | 26.4% | 44.2% |
| Not working, but is looking for work | 26.0% | 35.6% |
| Self-employed with a RUC/RIMPE (Invoicing). | 9.4% | 7.4% |
| Does not work and is not looking for work. | 13.6% | 7.1% |
| Works as an employee with affiliation to the IESS (Social Security). | 15.7% | 4.7% |
| I prefer not to answer. | 1.3% | 0.6% |
| Works under professional services without affiliation to IESS (Social Security). | 4.0% | 0.3% |
| Works under professional services with affiliation to IESS (Social Security). | 3.6% | 0.0% |

Although affiliation to the IESS for professional services is more frequent in host communities, the number of individuals collaborating autonomously with the Single Taxpayer Registry (RUC) and/or the Simplified Scheme for Entrepreneurs and Businesses (RIMPE) is similar in both groups.

Transmitting **messages aimed at each group, listing job opportunities or job fairs,** could reduce the tension that could potentially be created between the two groups over livelihoods and facilitate social cohesion.

**Level of schooling:** **Host communities have greater proportion of individuals with college educations and master's degrees, while most in the migrant population have a high school education.** This could be attributed to various external factors, such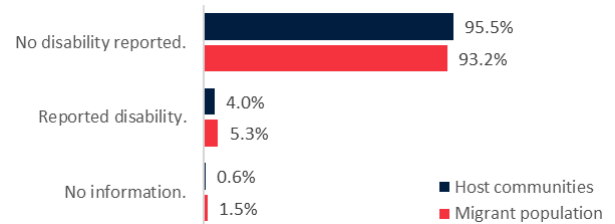 as access to education and opportunities, or to specific socioeconomic aspects. These differences in education can significantly affect aspects such as access to employment, quality of life and even social cohesion.

Level of schooling, by group

| Category | Host communities | Migrant population |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Master's or postgraduate degree | 5.1% | 0.6% |
| 2. University | 34.7% | 21.7% |
| 3. Secondary school | 40.0% | 57.6% |
| 4. Primary school | 15.7% | 15.4% |
| 5. No formal education | 3.6% | 4.2% |
| 6. I don't know; not sure | 0.8% | 0.3% |
| 7. I prefer not to answer | 0.2% | 0.3% |
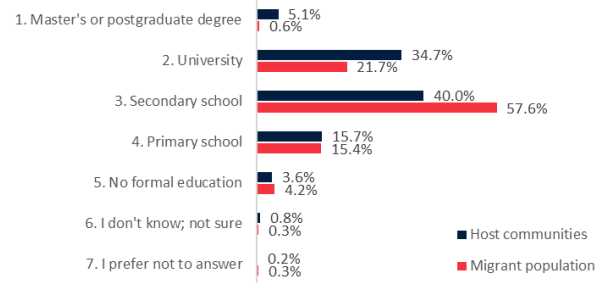
**People with diverse abilities:** Designing inclusive programmes that effectively address individual needs and foster social cohesion requires understanding the presence and distribution of disability cases.

While the proportion of disability cases is relatively low in both groups, the percentage of people with disabilities is slightly higher in the migrant population than in host communities. **Disabilities among the migrant population are mostly of the physical and sensory kind, while a wider range is seen in host communities,** which could reflect greater knowledge and treatment that possibly derives from national public policies in this regard.

Disability cases reported, by group.

| Category | Host communities | Migrant population |
|---|---|---|
| No disability reported. | 95.5% | 93.2% |
| Reported disability. | 4.0% | 5.3% |
| No information. | 0.6% | 1.5% |

**Individual motivations for migration:** **Understanding such motivations and how they relate to length of stay, which will be explored in depth in the following sections, allows adapting programmes and messages to achieve more efficient outcomes in terms of social cohesion.**
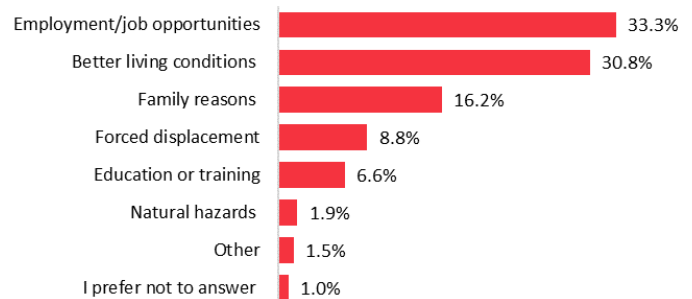
The main motivations identified are linked to livelihoods [(*employment opportunities (33,3%) and better living conditions (30,8%)], followed by family reasons, forced displacement, and education or training*. This information is important not only for designing activities and messages aimed at the migrant population, but also for articulating them with the work conducted by programmatic areas such as Livelihoods or Protection, Gender, and Inclusion.

Individual motivations for migration

| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Employment/job opportunities | 33.3% |
| Better living conditions | 30.8% |
| Family reasons | 16.2% |
| Forced displacement | 8.8% |
| Education or training | 6.6% |
| Natural hazards | 1.9% |
| Other | 1.5% |
| I prefer not to answer | 1.0% |

**Length of stay and adaptation of messages:** **The length of a migrant's stay is determined by the individual processes they face. This information can be used to develop strategies aimed at strengthening social cohesion based on the needs of the migrant population during their stay.** Research found that most of the surveyed population had been residing in the neighborhood for less than six months (38.3%), and that the longer the stay, the lower the number of people surveyed; however, this trend was broken with the population that has resided locally for more than three years (14.8%). These data make it possible to adapt actions and messages according to critical issues based on length of stay.

For example, individuals who have stayed for less than six months (38.3%) could benefit from welcoming messages and cultural exchange activities. Those who have stayed between six months and one year (23.7%) could receive messages highlighting humanitarian services and opportunities to strengthen livelihoods and well-being, while those who have stayed between one and two years (13.1%) could benefit from messages that promote the continuity of their connection to the community and civic engagement. Messages for those who have stayed between two and three years (9.8%) could celebrate their local contributions and encourage civic engagement, while messages aimed at those who have stayed for more than

Length of stay of participating migrant population.



three years (14.8%) could recognize their role in social cohesion, highlight the value of cultural diversity, and invite them to engage in multicultural mentoring activities and social impact projects.
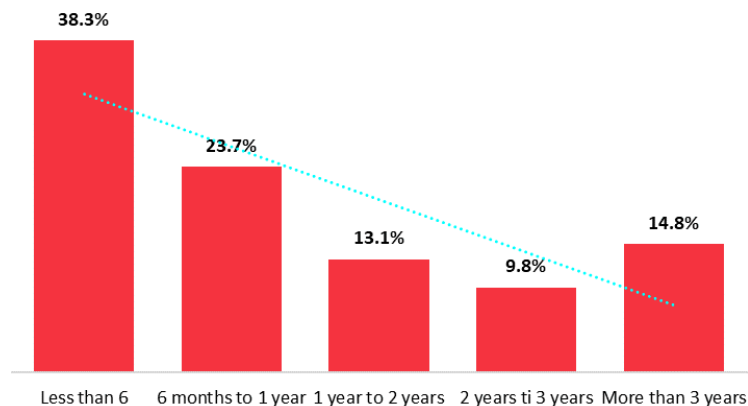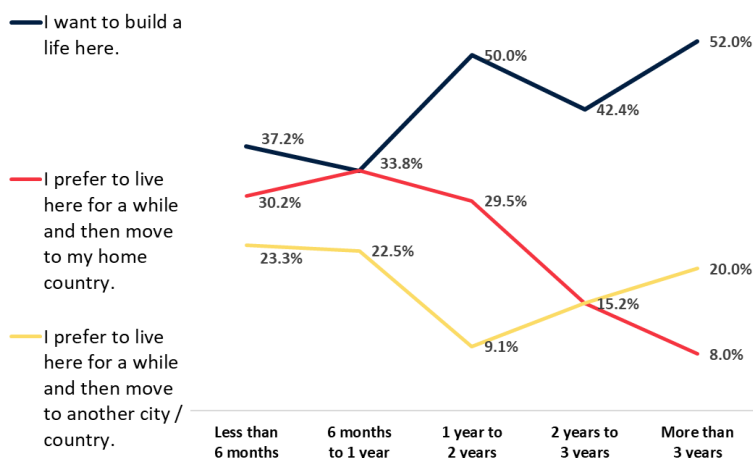
**Personal expectations and length of stay:** The longer an individual stays, the greater the probability that he or she will want to settle locally and the lower the probability that he or she "will like to live here for a while and then return to the country of origin."

These data's analysis suggests a relationship between the motivations for migration, the length of stay and personal expectations. The reason is that **meeting the main motivations related to livelihoods require prolonged periods of stay, and, the more time passes, the higher the expectation of staying and residing in these neighborhoods -and links with host communities increase - which justifies work in social cohesion.** In contrast, specific reasons such as disasters or education, the occurrence of which may cease in the medium term, are linked to expectations of returning home, which could explain the decrease in number of individuals within the ranges from six months to three years of stay.

Personal expectations based on length of stay.

- ✓ **Length of stay could reveal stages of adaptation, highlighting the need for adaptable strategies and messages.**
- ✓ **Programmatic adaptation based on the preferences and needs of both communities, along with awareness campaigns and constant collection of community feedback, is essential.**
- ✓ **Engaging both groups in programme design and evaluation is essential for strengthening their social cohesion.**
- ✓ **Motivations related to livelihoods take longer to meet; in turn, the longer the stay, the greater the interest in settling.**

# 2. PERCEPTION OF DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT BASED ON NATIONALITY

A total of **57.3%** of the migrant population surveyed has experienced **differential treatment due to their nationality**, highlighting the need to address and mitigate these events through awareness-raising, education, and promotion of social cohesion. According to findings, **women are more likely to report discrimination in their neighborhood, suggesting the importance of territory and gender-based interventions to promote non-discrimination, inclusion, and social cohesion. In contrast, men report greater perception of differential treatment in public transport (35%), highlighting the importance of inclusive policies in this space to promote their well-being in the community**.

Perception of differential treatment based on nationality, by sex and length of stay.
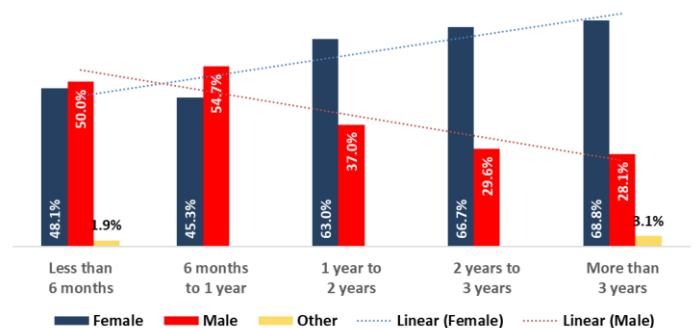


Women that fall within the "Between two and three years" (66.7%) and "More than three years" (68.8%) time segments show a more marked perception of differential treatment. This pattern highlights **possible differentiation based on gender and length of residence, emphasizing the need for gender-specific approaches and anti-discrimination measures to promote a more inclusive coexistence.** The research highlights that this perception increases over time among women but decreases among men, possibly due to changes in interaction and mobility dynamics. However, additional studies are required to validate these hypotheses.

**The migrant population's perception regarding the reasons behind this differential treatment:** People who experience differential treatment based on their nationality identify these behaviors as common practices at the local level, suggesting the local presence of prejudices and stigmas, aspects that rank second among their perceptions. While answers are generally homogeneous, **the gender analysis indicates that women link this treatment to local people's fear of migrants. In contrast, men perceive lack of law enforcement as the main underlying cause**. This analysis informs the design of messages and programmes that promote social cohesion.

# 3. COMMON CHALLENGES, WELL-BEING OUTLOOK, AND CULTURAL DIALOGUE AMONG POPULATIONS

**Daily challenges common to both groups:** Both groups - migrants and locals - face shared challenges that can affect social cohesion levels. **Access to stable and well-paid jobs, access to food, paying rent, health services and housing are shared challenges.** The graph shows that employment is the main concern for both groups, although more marked among the migrant population. The research shows that **female migrants face greater challenges to rent a home, which is possibly linked to the perception of differential treatment in the neighborhood expressed in the previous section.** Furthermore, 75% of the migrant population surveyed links these challenges to the fact that they are not in their country of origin.



Daily challenges, by group

| | Host communities | Migrant population |
|---|---|---|
| Finding a well-paying and/or stable job. | 24.8% | 33.2% |
| Accessing health services. | 18.8% | 13.1% |
| Paying rent. | 11.6% | 15.2% |
| Access to food. | 11.4% | 16.5% |
| Renting a place to live. | 10.7% | 12.3% |
| Access to education and training. | 8.8% | 5.8% |
| I do not face any challenges. | 8.3% | |
| Access to cultural and/or recreational opportunities. | 5.1% | 2.7% |
| Others. | 0.5% | 0.4% |
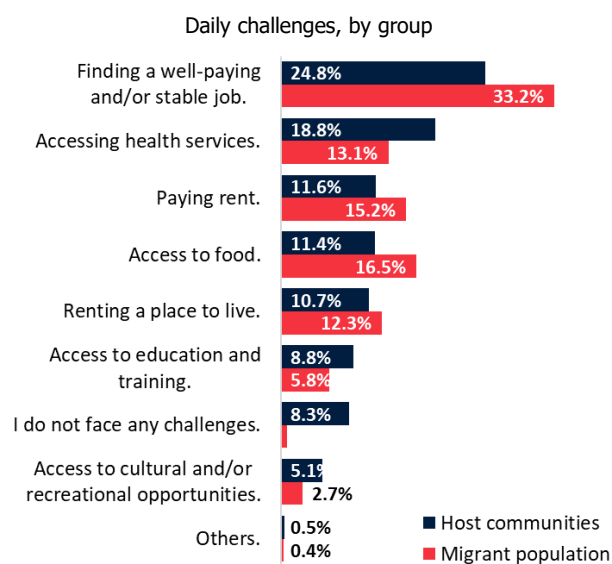
**Perception of general well-being dimensions:** In general, both groups express mostly positive views regarding perception of common improvement in dimensions linked to their well-being (job access and economic resilience; social services and social well-being; and dialogue and multiculturalism). **Worth noting is that the dialogue and multiculturalism dimension can be a promising way for implementing social cohesion programmes, while access to employment and economic resilience is more complex and shows possible tensions derived from the competition between the two groups, which represents potential challenges for programme design and implementation.**

The **greatest gap between the two groups is found in perception of job access and economic resilience**. While 61.7% of host communities and 68.3% of the migrant population agree that common improvements in this dimension
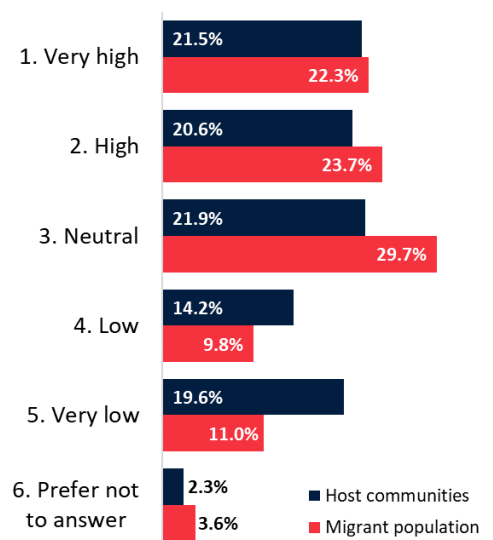
mean local economic strengthening, **13% and 3.6%, respectively, do not see these improvements as a strengthening agent for local economies. Addressing this dimension requires strong technical support and effective and measurable communication strategies, to prevent harmful effects to implementation of livelihood programmes.**

A similar but less marked behavior is seen in terms of social services and social well-being, as 67% of host communities surveyed and 76.6% of participating migrant population agree that common improvements in this dimension prevent future social problems; however, 9.4% and 2.1%, respectively, do not believe so. Conducting qualitative studies can provide better knowledge to better understand these trends.

**While both groups are open to dialogue and multiculturalism, the migrant population (74.2%) shows greater willingness in this regard than host communities (68.1%). This creates an opportunity to implement cultural programmes at the neighborhood level, especially raising awareness among women from both groups as it is in these spaces where female migrants perceive the most differential treatment based on their country of origin.**

**Mutual engagement in community activities:** While both groups show a medium to high level of engagement in the other group's activities, **the migrant population (46%) exhibits a slightly greater willingness to do so than the local population (42.1%).** Likewise, the presence of intermediate levels of engagement (neutral) in both groups suggests a potential basis for programmes that promote social cohesion. It is important to note that **local communities (33.8%) have lower levels of engagement than the migrant population (20.8%), which justifies directing efforts and messages towards the local population to energize engagement programmes.**

Engagement in other group's community activities

| | Host communities | Migrant population |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Very high | 21.5% | 22.3% |
| 2. High | 20.6% | 23.7% |
| 3. Neutral | 21.9% | 29.7% |
| 4. Low | 14.2% | 9.8% |
| 5. Very low | 19.6% | 11.0% |
| 6. Prefer not to answer | 2.3% | 3.6% |

**Actions to stimulate host communities' engagement in migrant population's community activities:** When host communities with low or very low levels of engagement in activities of the migrant population were asked what needed to happen to increase their engagement in said activities, they expressed interest in cultural events that include awareness-raising dialogues that contribute to overcoming stigmas. Below are the main trends detected:

☑ **Facilitate more spaces for interaction, workshops, and recreational activities, to promote mutual knowledge and multiculturalism.**
☑ **Promote entrepreneurial initiatives led by the migrant population, through cultural fairs.**
☑ **Develop information campaigns to raise awareness about human mobility and demystify stigmas.**
☑ **Promote dialogue through invitations to cultural events.**

While most respondents exhibit positive attitudes, the qualitative analysis detected some members of host communities who not only refuse to participate in this engagement, but also show indications of possible stigma or negative perceptions

regarding the migrant population. **Below are some examples of such answers. It is worth noting that these do not represent the position or views of IFRC or Ecuadorian Red Cross, and only constitute answers compiled and mentioned for research purposes:**

- ✓ *"Because migrants are dangerous":* Reflects a stigma towards the migrant population that suggests a threat, highlighting the need to address prejudices to promote positive understanding.
- ✓ *"I do not consider it important to engage because most are not good people":* Reveals a negative, discriminatory, and prejudiced vision that affects community safety and inclusion.
- ✓ *"They don't pay attention to us in the neighborhood, they are not united":* Denotes the need to simultaneously foster and connect host communities' interest with the migrant population's willingness for cultural exchange.

These testimonials highlight the importance of addressing stigmatization in order to build a more positive coexistence. In designing programmes that promote social cohesion, it is essential to address these stigmas through awareness-raising, open dialogue, and exchange of positive experiences, to promote inclusive coexistence.

**Actions to stimulate migrant population's engagement in host communities' activities:** The migrant population with low levels of engagement was asked what would need to happen to increase their attendance to local community activities. Their answers focused on multiculturalism and community engagement. The qualitative analysis lists the following suggestions.

- ✓ **Foster host communities' openness towards the migrant population through harmonious communication in neighborhood meetings, to promote inclusion and reduce stigmas.**
- ✓ **Formally establish cultural events and workshops that include the migrant population's participation, from design to evaluation of outcomes.**
- ✓ **Combat discrimination, fear, and isolation through greater community engagement, advocating for a positive perception of "the other" that fosters inclusion.**

**PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS FOR THE SECTION:**

- ✓ **Both populations share challenges in accessing employment, which can create tension between them. Livelihoods-related communication strategies and technical support are essential for addressing these gaps and avoiding adverse impacts on programmes.**
- ✓ **The migrant population shows greater willingness for community engagement, suggesting a potential for social cohesion programmes; however, it is necessary to encourage their engagement at the local level.**
- ✓ **Promoting engagement involves facilitating spaces for face-to-face interaction and cultural events that include both groups, as well as combating stigmas through harmonious dialogue.**
- ✓ **Active integration of both the migrant population and host communities in programme design will strengthen social cohesion.**
- ✓ **Encouraging personal contact and creating community and individual ties between both groups is essential for overcoming fear and promoting coexistence.**

# 4. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING MUTUAL INTEREST IN CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

An exchange of opinions between the migrant population and host communities was conducted to develop strategies to promote cultural interest. **The exercise consisted of two moments**, the first asking **how much interest in my culture and traditions <u>I perceive from</u> the other group**; and the second moment **asking each group how much interest <u>they have in</u> the culture and traditions of the other group**.

These perceptions inform concrete actions that can relate to mission programmes, the press room, and Ecuadorian Red Cross volunteers in order to promote social cohesion. For example:

1. Because of its ability to intervene effectively in emergency and disaster situations, the **Risk Management and Emergency and Disaster Response (GRED)** plays a crucial role in implementation of programmes that address differential treatment based on country of origin as well as in promoting diversity and fostering social cohesion. From this area, Ecuadorian Red Cross could be included in early recovery, also supporting livelihood programmes and awareness-raising to promote inclusive coexistence.

2. The **Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values area** plays an essential role in facilitating implementation of inclusive programmes around human mobility. Therefore, activities can be generated within this space that contribute to coexistence, encourage community engagement as well as the restoring of family links based on mutual respect.

3. The **Community Health** area supports fostering and promoting mental health and psychosocial support, which can be implemented as part of actions on the ground aimed at counteracting negative perceptions, promoting harmonious coexistence, and making social cohesion more effective.

4. Through its social innovation abilities, the **Youth** area can promote a culture of peace with recreational techniques and community awareness talks, as well as link both communities through fairs and public events of a cultural nature.

5. Through its press room, the **Communication Department** plays a critical role in ensuring coverage and visibility of events related to diversity and peaceful coexistence, in external and internal dissemination, in developing strategies for digital media that contribute to community engagement, and in disseminating positive messages.

6. **Volunteer** support is essential, as the more than 7,000 Ecuadorian Red Cross volunteers can implement these activities nationwide. Furthermore, Ecuadorian Red Cross' credibility in the communities allows it to involve and articulate the migrant population and the host communities, as well as promote their engagement in community activities. Volunteers are effective links in building dialogue and promoting social cohesion between the migrant population and host communities.

| How to increase migrant populations' interest in local culture and traditions | |
|---|---|
| **Answers from host communities** | **Answers from migrant population** |
| Upon consulting 34.2% of the **host communities surveyed - who perceive that the migrant population has no interest in their culture or traditions** - regarding strategies to stimulate this kind of interest, research detected the importance of a safe cultural dialogue based on i) strengthening interaction and two-way communication; and ii) encouraging the migrant population's engagement in cultural activities. Below are examples of concrete actions to this end, from the perspective of host communities:<br><br>&#10003; Strategies to disseminate Ecuadorian cultural information and events.<br>&#10003; Safe dialogue to design cultural activities in a tailored manner.<br>&#10003; Cultural meetings with various interest groups, including host communities and migrants.<br>&#10003; Spaces for dialogue regarding Ecuadorian culture, designed in a friendly way and with an age and gender focus.<br>&#10003; Cultural dialogues in accessible and safe physical or interactive spaces.<br>&#10003; Participatory events that include music, dance, and traditional local cuisine, designed with the migrant population. | The **migrant population who is not familiar with local traditions** (39.8%) mentioned the following key actions to stimulate their interest, among which they stress the need to implement cultural events to encourage interaction and dialogue between the local and migrant population.<br><br>&#10003; **Active engagement:** Increase spaces for the migrant population to become closer and build intercultural ties.<br>&#10003; **Cultural and recreational events:** Participate in local cultural events, to generate interest and promote interaction.<br>&#10003; **Educational approach:** Strengthen cultural awareness.<br>&#10003; **Living and coexisting:** Promote integration through shared experiences and daily coexistence, such as "living from afar in Ecuador" and "coexisting with them".<br>&#10003; **Direct communication:** Encourage direct conversations and frequent outreach to host communities, to build positive relationships.<br>&#10003; **Respect for diversity of interests:** Recognize diversity of perspectives and respect for the various levels of interest in local culture. |
| **PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS FOR THE SECTION:**<br><br>Both groups highlight the importance of the migrant population's active engagement in cultural activities, considering it essential for encouraging social cohesion. This includes holding local cultural and recreational events with a focus on cultural awareness. Finally, both groups recognize the importance of direct communication and frequent approaches between the migrant population and host communities. | **Actions to increase the migrant population's interest in local culture and traditions:**<br><br>&#10003; Organize cultural events with participation by the migrant population.<br>&#10003; Promote spaces for both populations to become closer and bond.<br>&#10003; Strengthen cultural awareness through understandable information and educational activities that address local traditions.<br>&#10003; Emphasize the importance of direct conversations and frequent physical approaches to build positive relationships.<br>&#10003; Design spaces for dialogue about local culture in a friendly way, considering gender and age approaches. |

**Note:** While most answers from the 34.2% of host communities surveyed denote an intention to stimulate the migrant population's interest in local culture, research found negative perceptions that could affect the proposed activities. **Below are some examples of such answers, noting that these do not represent the position or views of IFRC or Ecuadorian Red Cross, and only constitute answers compiled and mentioned for research purposes:**

- "There is no engagement": Lack of interest or negative attitude towards participating in cultural activities.
- "I don't have migrant friends": Lack of interest in establishing relationships with the migrant population, possibly based on prejudices.
- "They only care about the economic side": Stereotype that the migrant population is focused on economic aspects.
- "They wouldn't accept": Negative anticipation about migrants' receptivity.

| How to increase host communities' interest in the migrant population's culture and traditions | |
|---|---|
| **Answers from host communities** | **Answers from migrant population** |
| **41.3% of host communities surveyed are not familiar with the migrant population's culture and traditions** but believe that their interest could increase through i) dialogue and communication; ii) events close to their traditions; and iii) awareness campaigns. Below are concrete examples given by the host communities themselves:<br><br>**Dialogue and communication:**<br>Establish open and effective dialogue.<br>Involve local people in joint activities.<br>Look for safe spaces for interaction.<br>Promote two-way understanding.<br>**Events and fairs:**<br>Create shared cultural spaces.<br>Participate in inter-institutional events.<br>Promote intercultural open houses.<br>Promote multiculturalism in fairs and campaigns.<br>**Communication and cultural awareness campaigns:**<br>Implement broad awareness strategies.<br>Create cultural exchange campaigns.<br>Reach out to and respect all cultures.<br>Use social networks and media. | **36.2% of the migrant population surveyed perceives that host communities are not interested in their culture and traditions**. To stimulate this interest, actions such as cultural and gastronomy fairs are proposed, showing a positive trend towards integration and exposure to migrant traditions. Furthermore, expressions such as "make migrants' customs more widely known" reflect efforts to raise awareness and transform negative perceptions, promoting mutual understanding. Below are concrete activities proposed by the migrant population to encourage host communities' interest in their culture and traditions:<br><br>✓ Organize **gastronomy and cultural fairs** to introduce the traditions of the migrant population.<br>✓ Facilitate **integration events and community meetings** that allow experiencing the traditions of the migrant population.<br>✓ Promote **entrepreneurship fairs** to highlight the skills and contributions of the migrant population.<br>✓ Create **workshops that allow sharing experiences, stories,** and cultural knowledge.<br>✓ Develop cultural promotion campaigns to **raise communities' awareness regarding the importance of diversity** and social cohesion. |
| **Preliminary conclusions for the section:**<br><br>According to local and migrant communities, dialogue and communication constitute essential pillars for strengthening interest in culture. The creation of open and respectful spaces is unanimously proposed. Regarding cultural events and fairs, both groups agree on their ability to foster interaction and understanding. Likewise, both recognize the importance of cultural awareness, highlighting broad dissemination strategies through campaigns on social networks and the media. | **Concrete actions to foster host communities' interest in the migrant population's culture and traditions:**<br><br>✓ Organize gastronomy and cultural fairs to introduce the traditions of the migrant population.<br>✓ Conduct cultural exchange campaigns to share experiences, stories, and cultural knowledge.<br>✓ Develop cultural promotion campaigns to raise communities' awareness regarding the importance of diversity and social cohesion.<br>✓ Promote entrepreneurship fairs to highlight the skills and contributions of the migrant population.<br>✓ Create workshops that allow sharing experiences, stories, and cultural knowledge, highlighting the cultural wealth of the migrant population. |

**Note:** The qualitative analysis of the migrant population's answers identified expressions that reveal negative attitudes or resistance towards cultural exchange, such as "They judge us"; "They do not accept us"; "They do not take us into account"; or "They are not interested in our customs". These perceptions require specific strategies to address stereotypes, fears, or previous unfavorable experiences, to promote cohesion between both groups.

# 5. PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION, FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF COMMUNITIES

Upon consulting local and migrant communities about concrete actions to promote social cohesion, **the main trend is the willingness of both the local population (28.5%) and the migrant population (24.8%) to engage in entrepreneurship promotion**. In fact, options related to productive units ranked first and third in both populations, indicating a **shared interest in collaborative projects that strengthen individual economic aspects**. This reinforces the previously mentioned finding associated with the **job access and economic resilience dimension, which highlights that this issue is highly relevant for both communities and is linked to the perception of social cohesion**.

Secondly, the interest in participating in cultural promotion fairs is greater among the migrant population (24.8%) than in the local population (17.7%). This points to a **particular enthusiasm for cultural events among the migrant population, which in turn speaks of a key opportunity for programmatic design** associated with social cohesion promotion.

Furthermore, both the local population (15.4%) and the migrant population (15.7%) were **equally interested in traditional knowledge exchanges**, and both populations showed a similar willingness to set up information points on humanitarian services, with participation rates around 11.1% for the local population and 10.9% for the migrant population.

Worth noting **is the low interest that both populations show in focusing on digital communities, which suggests that these could constitute an effective channel to encourage participation in cultural events but cannot be the only or main tool to promote social cohesion.** The recommendation is to encourage this cohesion through community events and face-to-face interactions in which various instruments are used, including digital communities. This finding is highly relevant for programmatic design.

**PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS FOR THE SECTION:**

- ✓ **Both communities (local - 28.5% and migrant - 24.8%) see entrepreneurship and livelihood programmes as key opportunities for social cohesion, highlighting economic collaboration.**
- ✓ **The migrant population (24.8%) shows great interest in cultural fairs, suggesting an excellent opportunity for social cohesion programmes focused on cultural events.**
- ✓ **The low interest in digital communities emphasizes the need to promote in-person interaction and community events for successful programmatic design**

# 6. ANNEXES

## 6.1. ANNEX - Preferred communication channels, by group

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3"><strong>Analysis of preferred communication channels, by age range, and population</strong></td></tr>
<tr>
<td>Range / Group</td>
<td><strong>Host communities:</strong> <em>While a transition towards digital platforms exists, the diversification of preferences highlights the need for communication strategies that combine traditional and digital media based on the preferences of each age range.</em></td>
<td><strong>Migrant population:</strong> <em>A convergence towards social networks is observed in all generations, but loyalty to traditional media persists in people over 60 years of age.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29 years</td>
<td rowspan="2">They connect via <strong>WhatsApp</strong> and <strong>Facebook</strong>, but <strong>TikTok</strong> and <strong>Instagram</strong> are also information channels, suggesting short, visual messages on social networks.</td>
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</tr>
<tr><td>30-39 years</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td rowspan="2">Likewise, they look for social connectivity and informational content on <strong>Facebook</strong> and <strong>WhatsApp</strong>, but their information channels are <strong>Instagram</strong> and <strong>TV</strong>. Strategies must integrate social networks with friendly information.</td>
<td>Likewise, they look for social connectivity and informational content on <strong>Facebook</strong> and <strong>WhatsApp</strong>, but their information channels are <strong>Instagram</strong> and <strong>TV</strong>. Strategies must integrate social networks with friendly information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 years</td>
<td>Social connectivity and informational comes via <strong>Facebook, WhatsApp,</strong> and <strong>TV</strong>. Strategies must integrate social networks and traditional media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+ years</td>
<td>Prefer <strong>traditional media (radio, TV, and newspapers</strong>) and maintain social connectivity via WhatsApp. Low participation in social networks</td>
<td>Prefer traditional media (TV, newspapers, and radio) and few social networks (Facebook and WhatsApp). Suggest strategies transmitted via traditional media and social networks.</td>
</tr>
</table>

| Data - Preferred communication channels, by age range and population | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Host communities** | | | | | |
| **Channel / Age range** | **18 − 29** | **30 − 39** | **40 − 49** | **50 − 59** | **60+** |
| I prefer not to answer | 0.6% | 0.7% | 1.5% | 1.0% | 1.5% |
| Text message | 0.9% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 4.0% | 0.8% |
| Internet news portals | 2.2% | 2.0% | 2.4% | 3.0% | 2.3% |
| X (Twitter) | 6.1% | 4.1% | 3.9% | 1.0% | 0.8% |
| Newspaper | 1.8% | 3.7% | 6.8% | 7.5% | **17.7%** |
| Radio | 0.7% | 5.8% | 3.9% | 5.5% | <span style="color:red">**25.4%**</span> |
| TikTok | **13.1%** | 9.2% | 6.3% | 4.0% | 0.0% |
| Instagram | **16.2%** | **12.2%** | **12.1%** | **13.5%** | 3.1% |
| TV | 8.8% | **12.2%** | **17.0%** | **18.5%** | <span style="color:red">**23.1%**</span> |
| Facebook | <span style="color:red">**24.5%**</span> | <span style="color:red">**24.1%**</span> | <span style="color:red">**22.3%**</span> | <span style="color:red">**21.0%**</span> | 9.2% |
| WhatsApp | <span style="color:red">**25.0%**</span> | <span style="color:red">**25.1%**</span> | <span style="color:red">**22.8%**</span> | <span style="color:red">**21.0%**</span> | **16.2%** |
| **Migrant population** | | | | | |
| **Channel / Age range** | **18 − 29** | **30 − 39** | **40 − 49** | **50 − 59** | **60+** |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I prefer not to answer | 0.7% | 0.4% | 0.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Text message | 1.1% | 1.4% | 1.8% | 1.1% | 0.0% |
| Internet news portals | 1.1% | 1.1% | 3.6% | 5.3% | 7.7% |
| Radio | 1.4% | 1.8% | 3.6% | 2.1% | **12.8%** |
| X (Twitter) | 4.7% | 1.1% | 4.8% | 3.2% | 2.6% |
| Newspaper | 3.6% | 2.9% | 3.6% | 4.3% | **15.4%** |
| TV | 8.2% | 9.3% | **10.7%** | **13.8%** | **23.1%** |
| TikTok | **16.8%** | **11.1%** | 6.5% | 7.4% | 5.1% |
| Instagram | **15.8%** | **15.8%** | **10.1%** | 9.6% | 2.6% |
| Facebook | **24.7%** | **25.1%** | **26.8%** | **28.7%** | **17.9%** |
| WhatsApp | **21.9%** | **30.1%** | **28.0%** | **24.5%** | **12.8%** |

## 6.2. ANNEX - Perception: When designing programmes, how much do humanitarian actors take my views into account?

**The majority of the local (67.4%) and migrant (80.4%) population perceive that their views are considered in humanitarian programmes' design, although a significant 22.6% and 15.7%, respectively, perceive that that is not the case.** Adapting programmes based on expressed preferences and needs is essential for increasing their effectiveness and acceptance. Addressing areas for improvement requires implementing awareness campaigns, active consultations, and accessible feedback mechanisms. Inviting representatives from both communities to participate in design and evaluation will strengthen linkages and collaboration, highlighting the importance of community engagement in humanitarian planning.