



San Francisco Church, Cuenca, Ecuador

Creating a Resource Guidebook for Venezuelan Refugees in Cuenca, Ecuador

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Abstract

By March 2019, roughly 221,000 Venezuelans sought refuge in major cities throughout Ecuador. In Cuenca, new and existing organizations increased their capacities to meet this need, yet most refugees are unaware of these support options. This project addressed the information gap by creating a resource guidebook for Venezuelan refugees. Through a parallel set of interviews with 26 Venezuelan refugees and 18 support organizations, we identified refugee's most pressing needs and the support available to them. The completed guidebook features contact information for eight organizations that provide food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, and legal support as well as a guide to obtain a visa. Printed and digital versions of the guidebook were distributed in locations refugees frequently visit and stand to better meet their immediate needs in Cuenca.

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Authorship

Emma Burleson designed and edited the guidebook. She also took notes on and transcribed both Spanish and English meetings. Alongside her teammates, she completed extensive drafting and editing of the final report, focusing especially on the introduction and conclusion sections.

Joshua Hoy contributed to writing and extensive editing of the background section. He also provided writing and editing on other sections of the final paper alongside his teammates. He met with and interviewed organizations whose representatives spoke English.

Yosief Naim co-authored the acknowledgments, background, and methods while extensively editing the paper. He also created charts for the findings portion. He was able to take notes when meetings were in English.

Quillyn Smith contributed to writing the findings and edited all sections of the report extensively. She led meetings with organizations when in Spanish and analyzed the data collected from the interviews with Venezuelan refugees.

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Executive Summary

From 2015 to 2019, the Venezuelan refugee crisis displaced 4.5 million Venezuelans from their home country. Once the richest country in South America, Venezuela is now one of the most unstable due to a combination of over reliance on oil revenue, government mismanagement, and economic instability. Citizens now live in fear of violence and are unable to afford basic necessities such as food, household needs, and medical attention. The intolerable living conditions and bleak future in Venezuela led to millions fleeing the country.

Ecuador is one of the main destinations for Venezuelan refugees, receiving around 6.6% of the migrants. Like many other Ecuadorian cities, Cuenca lacks the capacity and funds to support the arrival of thousands of migrants within a short period. Both governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are working to assist the large number of Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca. In addition to established international organizations, several local organizations have recently formed to help alleviate the stress. Unfortunately, most refugees are unaware of them and do not know the full extent of services they provide. Without knowledge of support services and resources available to them, Venezuelan refugees find it difficult to obtain basic amenities, such as food and shelter, as well as complete important processes like obtaining a visa.

The goal of this project was to spread knowledge of resources and services available to Venezuelan refugees. The outcome was a guidebook, which informs refugees of organizations and their services, as well as the visa process. The following three objectives guided our project:

1. Understand and prioritize the needs of Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca
2. Learn about the available support organizations and visa processes for Venezuelan refugees
3. Compile acquired knowledge into an accessible guidebook for Venezuelan refugees

Methods

The core method of our project was interviews, both with Venezuelan refugees and the organizations supporting them. We interviewed 26 Venezuelan refugees at Cuenca Soup Kitchen, our sponsor organization which provides meals and clothes to refugees. This enabled us to better understand their needs, what resources they would find useful and which, if any, they had already accessed. We also contacted and interviewed 18 organizations and individuals that provide resources and services for Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca. We identified what support they offer, obtained permission to include their organization in our guidebook, and asked if they knew other relevant organizations to include in our guidebook.

We compiled this data into an accessible guidebook intended for Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca. This guidebook listed available resources, basic information on local organizations and the visa process, guidance on adapting to Cuenca, and a map of the city. The guidebook featured lists and simple graphics to improve comprehension. Keeping accessibility in mind, we made a digital version of the guidebook that could be sent electronically, edited, printed, and distributed. In order to reach as many people as possible, we gave copies of the guidebook to all organizations featured in it.

Results

The Venezuelan refugees' needs and knowledge of resources shaped the design and content of our guidebook. Interviews with Venezuelan refugees revealed that they are in desperate situations, looking for better lives. We learned about different types of organizations and that they lack structured connections between them. Finally, we found that all our data reinforces the need for a guidebook. The main findings from our interviews included:

Demographics of interviewed Venezuelan refugees. Venezuelan refugees we interviewed in Cuenca tend to be young and have children. From our sample set, 56% were in their 20's and 67% had children. With this demographic data we could determine which populations and areas of need to focus on.

Priorities of Venezuelan refugees. Most Venezuelan refugees lack even the most basic necessities. Of the interviewees, 37% and 26% said that shelter and work, respectively, were their top priority. They have encountered xenophobia when trying to obtain both and are doing their best to survive. Many refugees lived in cramped apartments with large families. Several interviewees held advanced degrees, but worked jobs far below their qualifications, such as an engineer working as a dishwasher.

A variety of organizations offered support. We identified three categories of organizations that support Venezuelan refugees. These include:

- 1) Individuals with small programs that help migrants one at a time (e.g. finding jobs for refugees)
- 2) Organizations that donate funds and supplies to other groups, but do not directly work with refugees
- 3) Organizations that provide direct services to large amounts of refugees

The third type was the most common and the focus of the guidebook.

Support organizations lacked a structured connection with their peers. True connections and partnerships between organizations were sparse. During our meetings, organization representatives were often unaware of other organizations that also support Venezuelan refugees. Our sponsor organization initially provided us with a list of nine organizations working with Venezuelan refugees. This list was incomplete and by the end of the project, we had found and contacted 18 organizations. Cohesion between local organizations would allow them to support each other, which would better equip them to help Venezuelan refugees.

Most refugees were unaware of available resources. Few refugees were aware of the many resources available to them in Cuenca. Out of the 18 organizations we contacted, only three were mentioned by refugees during the interviews, all of which were the larger organizations we met. This reiterates the need for an accessible source of knowledge with all the resources available to Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca.

The visa process. Interviews with Venezuelan refugees revealed that the visa process can be challenging to navigate and complete. The requirements include:

1. An original passport, biographical data, and a stamp of entry into Ecuador
2. A clean criminal record from Venezuela
3. For minors: a copy of birth certificate
4. \$50

We found conflicting accounts of the visa process during interviews with refugees and support organizations. One Venezuelan woman said that the visa process was simple, taking only 15 days while another told us that she had been waiting over a year. We were unable to determine a reason for this discrepancy. Such conflicting stories speak to the variability of obtaining a visa.

Guidebooks existed however lacked information and were poorly distributed. We found two preexisting guidebooks, one created by an NGO, Rafalex, and the other by Casa del Migrante, a branch of the municipal government. However, both guidebooks lacked information on several organizations and were poorly distributed.

Recommendations

The results of our research offer a unique perspective to recommend ways support organizations can better collaborate to shoulder the crisis through information and resource exchanges. We recognize that some of our recommendations require creativity and sustained effort, however, our suggestions aim to initiate a conversation amongst organizations. We recommend the following:

Collect demographic data on refugees in Cuenca. Currently, there is no database accessible to NGOs that tracks the number and demographics of Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca. We recommend that support organizations collaborate to compile demographic data of who they serve. While Ecuadorian laws prohibit sharing information of individuals, anonymous demographic data (e.g. age, gender, number of dependents, needs, how long they are staying etc.) could help support organizations better tailor their resources and services to meet the needs of Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca.

Increase knowledge transfer through a network of support organizations. Organizations would reach additional people more effectively by working closer together. By sharing general information and being able to refer refugees to other organizations, they could better plan and help people find what they need faster. Organizations could also learn from each other's mistakes and discuss what they have found to work well. There is a lack of communication between organizations but strengthening relationships between them will help them share the workload.

Host regular events that provide support and resources for Venezuelan refugees. Occasionally, organizations converge to host events that offer multiple services to Venezuelan refugees in one location. They typically include medical care, clothes, food, and legal help, however, they are usually sporadic and poorly advertised. We recommend that organizations host such events regularly and provide all their usual services at them. Additionally, we found that most Venezuelan refugees had internet access, so we recommend that organizations advertise their events on social media.

Regularly update the guidebook to maintain reliability. For our guidebook to continue being useful, the information must be updated. Requirements of the visa process are susceptible to change, new organizations may emerge, or contact information of existing organizations might change. We recommend that Cuenca Soup Kitchen updates the guidebook annually.

Venezuelans are pressured to leave their homes in search of sanctuary as a result of poor living conditions and Cuenca is a popular destination. They arrive with nothing, requiring the most basic human needs, such as food and shelter. Cuenca has many organizations working to help Venezuelan refugees, providing invaluable services. However, finding them is not always simple. Our guidebook provided Venezuelans refugees with knowledge they will need upon arrival in Cuenca and details on the available resources. Such a source of information proves invaluable at a time when new people enter the city every day, lacking the knowledge to survive in the new environment. The Venezuelan refugee crisis has created a diaspora of migrants throughout the continent and even the world; many cities will experience the same issues of people starving on the streets without realizing they could be receiving free hot meals just a few blocks away. The Venezuelan refugee crisis may not be ending, and resources may be low, but information is easily shared and can make the difference between a refugee making a futile journey and finding a new home.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Imagine making an 800-mile journey because your home country is too dangerous to reside in for even one more day. Also imagine that you're in your late 60s, nearly blind, diabetic, in a broken wheelchair, and penniless. To worsen the situation, you are starving and separated from family members. While it may seem unimaginable, this situation was a reality for Maritsa, a Venezuelan refugee who arrived in Cuenca, Ecuador in August 2019. Being an extreme example, her story is emblematic of many Venezuelan refugees who left their home country in search of a safer place to live (Winter, 2019). A variety of factors, including fear of violence and economic collapse, led millions of Venezuelans to flee their homes in search of refuge. Unfortunately, often the end of the journey is only a small improvement compared to previous living conditions (UNHCR, 2019).

Aggressive inflation and increased violence in recent years led to a mass exodus of Venezuelans to neighboring countries. Between 2015 and spring 2019, approximately 4.5 million Venezuelans left their country. This is the largest refugee crisis Latin America has ever experienced and the second largest globally, with only the Syrian refugee crisis affecting more people (Arnson, 2019). Venezuelan refugees hope to find a better life, yet neighboring countries are experiencing stress with such a large influx of people in need of support services. They lack resources, job openings, and housing to support so many refugees (UNHCR, 2019).

Ecuador is one of the nearby countries that has accepted numerous Venezuelan refugees. Consequently, the Ecuadorian government initiated and led meetings with other Latin American countries over the past two years to address the crisis. In these meetings, leaders created plans to allocate money to the crisis and formed policies to make it easier for refugees to cross borders (R4V, 2019). While these meetings helped, the continuous migration of people across the border into Ecuador has caused tension in the government and a reluctance from those in power to support refugees due to the limited economic resources. This created a need for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide additional assistance. This includes well-known international groups, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations, as well as smaller, local organizations. In Cuenca, there are many smaller organizations working to support refugees, including our sponsor organization, Cuenca Soup Kitchen which provides free food and clothing to refugees.

While there are many organizations helping in Cuenca, there is no collective list of who and where they are, what they do, and how to contact them. Because of this, Venezuelan refugees struggle to find the available resources offered by support organizations. Additionally, some of these organizations are unaware of each other, which limits collaboration between them. For example, Rafalex, a local NGO, created a small booklet containing some, but not all, support organizations in Cuenca as well as advice on how to adjust to life in Cuenca (see Figure 1). However, discussions with other local NGOs revealed most had never heard of Rafalex, let alone their booklet.



Figure 1: Page from the Rafalex booklet

The project addressed this pressing need by creating a comprehensive guidebook for Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca. We first interviewed refugees at Cuenca Soup Kitchen to understand what their greatest needs were and what organizations helped them in the past. Next, we interviewed organizations and individuals in Cuenca that support Venezuelan refugees to learn what resources and services they provided, how to contact them, and if they knew of other local organizations supporting Venezuelan refugees. We compiled information from these two sets of interviews to create a guidebook that informs refugees of resources and services available, which can help assimilate them into the city and improve upon their quality of life. Copies of this guidebook were given to refugees at Cuenca Soup Kitchen and to the organizations we interviewed to distribute on their own, in order to reach as many people as possible.

Chapter 2: Background

By October 2019, over 4,400,000 Venezuelans had fled their country (R4V, 2019). To put this in perspective, imagine if the entire population of New Zealand, around 4,500,000 people, were forced out of their homes (CIA, 2018). Consider not only the effects on the refugees themselves, but also on the countries and cities accepting them. Numbers like these could drain resources, introduce xenophobia, and ultimately cripple a country's political system. Refugee crises vary in effects and are usually caused by a complex combination of factors, such as violence, economic problems, and political unrest. The Venezuelan refugee crisis is no different and has spelled devastation for those affected. This section covers the causes and effects of the Venezuelan refugee crisis and information about refugees in Ecuador.

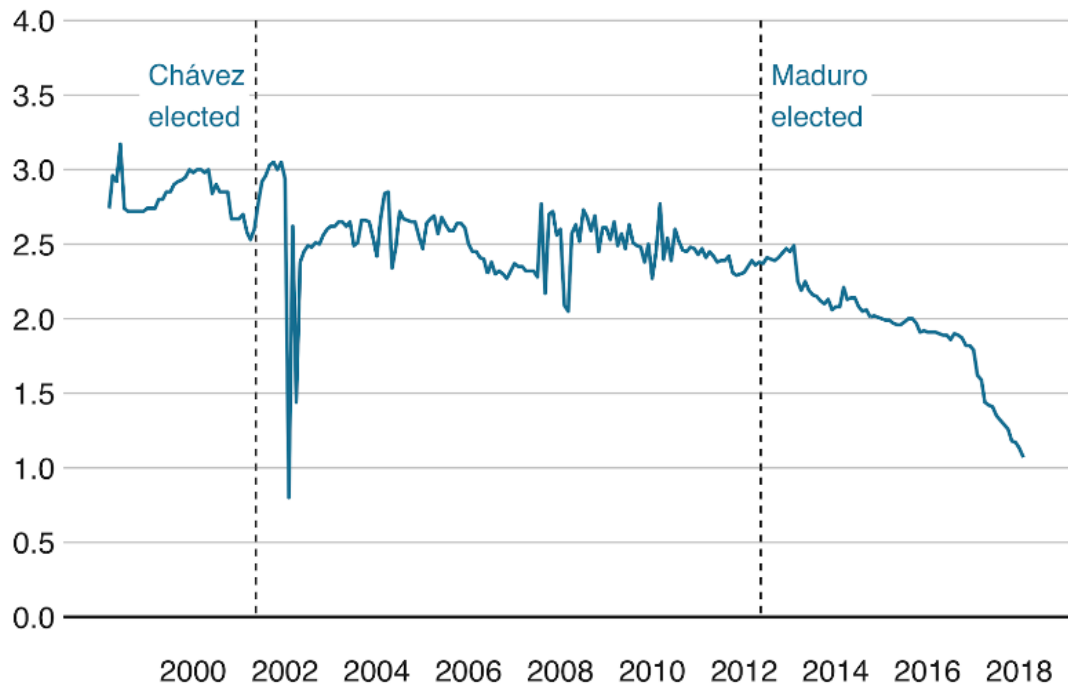
2.1 Causes and effects of the Venezuelan refugee crisis

The Venezuelans have experienced political discontent and instability for many years, culminating in their current refugee crisis. The country changed government structures multiple times during the 20th century and experienced several failed coup attempts (BBC, 2019). Throughout the century, Venezuela relied on its abundance of oil and became the wealthiest country in South America. In 1976, Venezuela's president, Carlos Andrés Pérez, nationalized the oil industry, converting it into a cash generator for the government. Mismanagement along with lack of worker motivation caused the industry to suffer, producing less than it had before nationalization (Weisbrot & Sandoval, 2007).

Hugo Chavez became president in 1999 and worked to improve the oil industry, cracking down on workers to produce enough to support the country's economy (Weisbrot & Sandoval, 2007). The increased oil output paralleled a rise in international oil prices from 2004 to 2008, bringing a substantial increase in government revenue (José Antonio Ocampo, 2009). This newfound wealth led Chavez to increase government spending and begin many socialist programs along with tax cuts. While popular with the lower class, Venezuela was in debt even with their booming oil industry due to a combination of short sightedness, overspending, and government corruption (Venezuelan & Ausman, 2019). According to Oscar Garcia, chairman and chief executive of Banco Venezolano de Credito, "You cannot imagine the amount of corruption. Capital flight last year was \$9 billion. A lot of it was theft by government people." (Down and Out of Fuel, 2002). Chavez attempted to nationalize nearly all of Venezuela's utilities, even creating government-run banks. This put many local companies out of business, since government operations could offer lower prices due to their oil revenue. Hugo Chavez passed away in early 2013 and was replaced by Nicolás Maduro, who continued the socialist policies that were detrimental to the country due to their mismanagement and short sightedness (Naím & Toro, 2018; Venezuelan & Ausman, 2019). When oil prices dropped in 2014, (see Figure 2) the detrimental consequences of the government's extravagance became apparent (Venezuelan & Ausman, 2019). Extreme inflation and poverty ensued, and as the economy continued to plummet, the Venezuelan government responded by printing more money, which further exacerbated inflation (Di Martino, 2019).

Oil production is falling

Millions of barrels per day



Source: OPEC

BBC

Figure 2: Oil production in Venezuela from 2000 to 2018 (BBC, 2019).

Nicolás Maduro's political stability began to erode once he came into power. Rather than attempting to mend the failing economy and poor living conditions, Maduro took an authoritarian approach. In 2017, he attempted to create a one-party government by dissolving the National Assembly, which sparked mass protests and a military response. His decisions while in power crippled the Venezuelan economy. Following the abolition of government subsidized exchange rates of 10 bolivars to the US dollar, the value of the bolivar plummeted to 228,000 bolivars to the dollar (Ellsworth & Gupta, 2018). Inflation skyrocketed and consumer prices increased over 800,000% from May 2018 to May 2019. This made it impossible for residents to buy common items such as groceries (Ellsworth & Pons, 2019). A dying economy coupled with government corruption sparked violence as people grew furious with the situation. Along with increased violence, the economic depression in Venezuela caused a drop in the quality of healthcare. Many public healthcare professionals were unable to treat patients as they lacked medicine and electricity. Approximately 85% of medicines are either rare to find or unavailable in Venezuela, while the amount of people who require them constantly rises (Venezuelan & Ausman, 2019). Malaria, a disease that modern medicine has eradicated in most regions, made a resurgence in Venezuela, as the lack of food and proper resources contribute to poor health conditions. In 2017, Venezuelans accounted for over half of the malaria cases within the Americas and the amount of deaths from malaria increased (see Figure 3), (Jaramillo-Ochoa et al., 2018; Prodavinci, 2019). Venezuela has ultimately become an unsafe and unprofitable place to live.

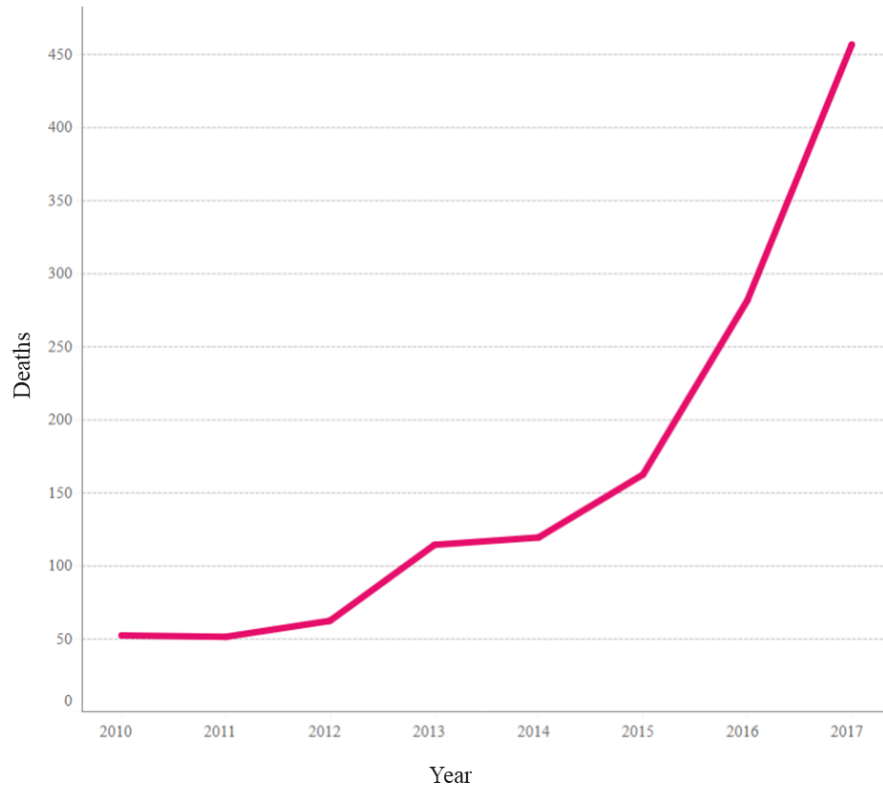


Figure 3: Deaths from malaria per year in Venezuela from 2010-2017 (Prodavinci, 2019).

In January 2019 Juan Guaidó, head of the Venezuelan National Assembly, declared himself president. He claimed that the 2018 election was illegitimate (Neuman & Casey, 2018). While Maduro and his administration do not recognize Guaidó as president, many other countries do, especially those who do not approve of socialism, including the United States and members of the European Union (Kiger, 2019). The dispute over presidency remains unresolved.

The effects of the crisis and South America's response

The effects of the political upheaval and economic crisis in Venezuela are widespread and have been catastrophic to Venezuela. The combination of violence, economic desperation, poor healthcare, and an overall bleak future has driven millions of Venezuelans out of their country in search of a better life. Between 2015 and spring 2019, around 4.5 million Venezuelans left their home country and the number continues to grow (UNHCR, 2019).

Neighboring countries are working to support the influx of refugees; however, the vast number makes it challenging. Figure 4 depicts the distribution of Venezuelan refugees across the continent. As shown on the map, Latin American countries have accepted the most refugees, with Columbia receiving 1.2 million as of March 2019. This accounts for 2.65% of Colombia's population and nearly a third of the total number of Venezuelan refugees (Corrales et al., 2019). Refugee counts rising in Columbian cities marked as hotbeds for crime and gang activity caused immediate concern. Exposure to such things meant it was likely that Venezuelans would either be victims of violence or could be recruited to gangs or cartels, given the history of contraband,

including drugs and arms, that are smuggled across the Venezuela-Colombia border (Ellis, 2017; Waldmann, 2007). Even with these possible threats the Colombian government accepted the Venezuelans with an “open arms” approach and many citizens followed suit. Colombians near the border offered shelter in their own homes and some even claimed that immigration is a chance for growth in Colombia (Daniels, 2018).



Figure 4: Distribution of Venezuelan refugees (Operational Portal, 2019)

However, as the number Venezuelans entering Columbia increased, xenophobic attitudes did as well, with Colombians complaining about confrontations with refugees on the street leading to violent outcomes (Murphy & Acosta, 2018).

Several countries have aided those affected by the refugee crisis. In 2018, leaders from surrounding countries met to discuss the Venezuelan refugee crisis and decided to ask for financial and logistical aid from international organizations such as the ICRC and the United Nations (Bristow, M & Quigley, J, 2018). The political situation in Venezuela was also a topic of discussion, as Maduro was making it more difficult to help. Maduro has turned away tens of millions of dollars in aid from foreign governments, claiming they were coup attempts and that the Venezuelans did not need the assistance. Given his socialist policies, he was suspicious that the US was trying to convert Venezuela from a socialist to a capitalist state (Morello, 2019). Meanwhile, he accepted aid from Russia, which is also a socialist state and has formed a stronger influence in Venezuela than even other South American countries (Stuenkel, 2017). Today, Guaidó continues to request help and has tried to find ways to bring it into the country against Maduro's will (Morello, 2019).

Seeing a need for improvement, Ecuador began hosting regional and international powers to create a more structured plan of action. This became a series of meetings held in Quito and were named Quito I, which took place on September 4th, 2018, Quito II, on November 22nd, 2018, and Quito III, on April 18th, 2019. During the first meetings discussing the "Quito Process" many regional leaders drafted and signed the Declaration of Quito on Human Mobility of Venezuelan Citizens in the Region. This plan emphasized the importance of combating discrimination and xenophobia while simultaneously maintaining the safety of the refugees from gangs and other criminal organizations. They also agreed that borders would not require refugees to have a passport to allow for ease of passage. The latter meetings in Quito, Quito II and Quito III, included other organizations such as the UN and focused on creating a plan of action for following through on their process and gaining international support. Finally, Quito IV took place in July 2019, but was hosted in Buenos Aires, Argentina. These meetings re-ensured plans that focus on the safe integration of refugees as well as the creation of a technical working group to focus on specific aspects of the process. Quito V is scheduled to take place in December of 2019 in Bogotá, Colombia because the constantly changing crisis requires constant monitoring by those looking to help (R4V, 2019).

There are also many NGOs providing aid to Venezuelan refugees. On the global level, most efforts are concentrated on raising funds to provide resources for the displaced population. This includes large organizations, such as the United Nations Refugees Agency, World Vision, and the ICRC. These funds primarily go towards alleviating hunger and providing medical care. Like aid from other countries, Maduro denied there was a need and would not allow humanitarian NGOs into the country. However, in April 2019, he finally allowed the Red Cross to send 24 tons of medical equipment into Caracas, the capital. This included generators and other medical aid for hospitals (Kurmanaev & Herrero, 2019). While helpful, Venezuelans need much more to recover from the crisis.

2.2 Venezuelan refugees in Ecuador

Ecuador has played a substantial role in the response to the Venezuelan crisis, hosting meetings with regional powers and accepting hundreds of thousands of immigrants into the country. In many ways, Ecuador has been a regional leader offering humanitarian support for

refugees, but the increased strain on the country and changing government regimes has led to inconsistencies in their policy responses.

During the refugee crisis, Ecuador became an appealing location due to its inclusive laws. In its 2008 constitution, Ecuador implemented a unique law that “commits Ecuador to the principle of non-refoulement, non-discrimination, and integration.” This law holds Ecuador accountable to document, accept, and integrate any asylum seeker into the country, while not discriminating against them (Miller & Panayotatos, 2019). Ecuadorian policies and NGOs reflect this law and show attempts to make the country a safe haven for refugees.

Roughly 6.6% of the total Venezuelan immigrants have crossed through Ecuador’s border; while not as many as some other countries, this is still a significant number of people (see Figure 5). These immigrants make up 1.6% of Ecuador's population, causing noticeable change within the country (Ellis, 2017). These changes include increased xenophobic attitudes, obvious population increases, and a decrease in available jobs and housing. The Venezuelan refugee crisis has also challenged the institutional capacity of the main cities in Ecuador. Even though the country has hosted many refugees throughout its history, the number of refugees that have arrived in such a short period of time has strained a country that has recently gone through an economic crisis of its own (Jokisch & Pribilsky, 2002). These refugees often leave Ecuador and travel to other countries, however, about 221,000 refugees appear to be staying in Ecuador long-term (Miller & Panayotatos, 2019).



Figure 5: Venezuelans waiting at the border between Colombia and Ecuador (Vargas, 2019)

The dramatic increase in the number of refugees in Ecuador and the consequences of overcrowding have caused xenophobia against refugees (Miller & Panayotatos, 2019). Jobs are already scarce due to Ecuador’s depressed economy, even without the influx of Venezuelans searching for income. The country holds a meager minimum wage of \$380 a month but some Venezuelans are forced to accept jobs that pay less than the minimum. This helps to further xenophobic attitudes directed towards Venezuelans because Ecuadorians see that jobs are disappearing to Venezuelans who are willing to take lower pay out of desperation.

These xenophobic tendencies came to a head following the murder of a pregnant Ecuadorian woman by her boyfriend, a Venezuelan immigrant, in January 2019 in the city of Ibarra. While this was the only major incident among hundreds of thousands of Venezuelan refugees in Ecuador, it still sparked mass protests. Xenophobic acts became more common and

locals have threatened and even assaulted Venezuelan refugees. This led the Ecuadorian government to require criminal records at the border for entry; Vice President Otto Sonnenholzner defended this requirement as an effort to “differentiate between Venezuelans who are fleeing Maduro’s government and others who take advantage of the situation to commit crimes” (Valencia, 2019).

Currently, Ecuador requires migrants to present a passport or official ID card and a criminal record certificate to enter the country (Ellis, 2017). This prevents 90% of Venezuelans from entering and causes families to separate at the border. While the previously described meetings in Quito established that countries should lower entry requirements, the agreement was not legally binding, and Ecuador has not complied. As the bottleneck of people at the border worsens, Columbian officials asked that Ecuador lower their requirements, however, Ecuador has not fulfilled the request (CuencaHighLife, 2019). In June 2019, Ecuador’s courts challenged the restrictive policies claiming that the requirements are “unconstitutional, violating the principles of equality and non-discrimination enshrined in Ecuadorian law and regional legal frameworks” (Miller & Panayotatos, 2019). The case has moved through various courts and a decisive ruling is still pending.

While many of Ecuador’s laws do not support refugees as hoped, the country still provides a better environment currently than it has in previous years. Before May 2017, Ecuador’s president, Rafael Correa, was allied with Venezuela and Maduro. He denied there was a crisis in Venezuela and thus did little to help the situation. A change of power in 2017 put Lenin Moreno in power, a president who recognized the humanitarian crisis and provided assistance (Miller & Panayotatos, 2019). While well-meaning, the Ecuadorian government itself faces an extraordinary number of refugees and a lack of resources.

While the government made entry into the country more difficult, it still does what it can to help through various national programs. One of these is Minga Migratoria, which works to simplify regularization procedures for immigrants. This program is sponsored by the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, a governmental department that focuses on external relationships and human mobility. The program included the addition of technology to streamline the entry process, initiating the use of electronic visas, which decreased the wait time for refugees trying to enter the country (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2019). Aside from this program, Ecuador took on a leadership role by holding the initial meetings of the Quito process previously mentioned. On a municipal level, government organizations and NGOs alike are working to help the refugees by offering resources and services.

An example of this is Casa del Migrante, a municipal office in Cuenca, which deals with nearly all the Venezuelans that enter the city. They work with the municipality of Cuenca as well as other organizations to improve the lives of Venezuelans entering the city. Casa del Migrante offers many services including legal advice and social services to people in need despite their small number of employees (Casa del Migrante, n.d.). This organization serves as an example of the municipal government's efforts to assist refugees within their locality. However, the government lacks the human and financial resources to adequately address the growing number of refugees.

To fill governmental gaps and support refugees in Ecuador, NGOs, including the ICRC, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), and smaller NGOs based in Cuenca have contributed a significant amount. The ICRC assists refugees when they first arrive in Ecuador. Volunteers hand out water bottles, provide basic medication, and help separated families find

each other. The ICRC also installed water purification points with bathrooms and information stops at the Ecuador-Colombia border (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2019). Within Cuenca, the ICRC works with the Department of Human Mobility as well as local organizations to support refugees and provide their basic needs.

In addition, HIAS, a Jewish-American NGO, provides psychosocial services, legal services, and emergency care for refugees in Ecuador. For example, many refugees need assistance understanding their legal refugee status, and HIAS educates individuals about their rights in Ecuador (HIAS, 2019). Lastly, local NGOs in Cuenca, such as Cuenca Soup Kitchen, provide free and nutritious meals for refugees (ACR, 2019). Unfortunately, while smaller organizations, such as these, do what they can to help migrants, refugees entering the city rarely know of these resources.

Cuenca Soup Kitchen, our sponsor organization (Appendix A), serves as an example of why our guidebook is necessary. While their many programs and meal service do much to help, Cuenca Soup Kitchen believes they could do more with the resources and personnel they have.

Many Venezuelans refugees in Cuenca do not know about Cuenca Soup Kitchen or other local NGOs. To address this pressing need, we learned what Venezuelan refugees needed most and what the organizations within Cuenca had to offer. Compiling our information, we developed a guide for incoming Venezuelanos to make them aware of organizations in Cuenca and the services they offer as well as making recommendations to the organizations on how they could better support the refugees. Specifically, this project investigated the following questions:

1. What are the most pressing needs of Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca?
2. What resources and organizations exist in Cuenca to serve the Venezuelans?
3. What information should be put in the guidebook and how should it be presented?

Chapter 3: Methods

The purpose of this project was to help Venezuelan refugees discover local organizations that offer resources and support services in Cuenca. Through semi-structured interviews, we identified which needs were most important to Venezuelan refugees and gained in-depth knowledge of their lives. We also contacted and met with support organizations to learn what resources and services they offer. This included interviewing representatives at NGOs as well as learning about information that would help new migrants, such as how to obtain a visa. Information from both sets of interviews was compiled to create an accessible guidebook that succinctly displays local organizations and the support they offer. Taken together, the following objectives drove our research methods:

Objective 1: Understand and prioritize the needs of Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca.

Objective 2: Learn about available support organizations and visa processes for Venezuelan refugees.

Objective 3: Compile acquired knowledge into an accessible guidebook for Venezuelan refugees.

3.1 Understand the needs of Venezuelan refugees

The group conducted semi-structured interviews with Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca to understand and prioritize their needs. We also asked Venezuelans what resources they require and what resources they have used throughout their time in Cuenca.

We conducted interviews in pairs at Cuenca Soup Kitchen, at the San Francisco Church, each Thursday from November 7th to 21st, 2019. During that time span, we interviewed 26 Venezuelans. Availability and willingness to participate determined who we selected. Cuenca Soup Kitchen serves two rounds of meals, so we asked patrons of the soup kitchen if they were willing to answer some questions at the end of each service. The interviewers gave a short introduction that explained the purpose of the interviews and obtained consent. We used a prepared set of questions which focused on understanding the interviewees needs and where they may have found support in the past (Appendices B and C). While this information was our priority, we encouraged unplanned discussions, especially during the first few interviews. Such discussions shed light upon topics that we had not considered prior to the interview and allowed the team to alter the survey based on these conversations. For example, during our first round of interviews we discovered that people had trouble understanding the questions about ranking needs, so in future interviews we altered the wording.

We conducted all interviews in Spanish, as most interviewees did not speak English. As none of us are completely fluent in Spanish, we used a translator. She was able to connect with the interviewees in a way that would have been impossible without her, given our limited vocabulary and comfort level. Immediately after each interview, the pair of interviewers conferred with the translator to review the interview and confirm their understanding of the conversation. Later in the same day, we typed a report for each interview to have all the data organized and documented.

At Cuenca Soup Kitchen, we conducted both individual and group interviews; seven individual interviews and eight group interviews. The group interviews were mostly pairs and groups of three. Doing group interviews may have introduced bias because typically only one person answered most questions while the rest nodded along, interjecting occasionally. If we had done solely individual interviews their responses would most likely have varied more. One

benefit of doing group interviews is that people may have been more comfortable answering questions when with their friends or family.

The process to gain access to Cuenca Soup Kitchen is structured so the most vulnerable Venezuelans have priority. We were curious to see if responses differed amongst other Venezuelans who were not patrons. Through our sponsors and advisors, we connected with two other Venezuelan refugees and interviewed them. We used the same interview questions and format as we did at Cuenca Soup Kitchen. These two individuals had been in Cuenca for more than a year and were in a different stage in their lives than patrons at Cuenca Soup Kitchen. However, their answers were very similar to those of the other interviews, so we combined them with the others when analyzing the final data.

3.2 Learn about support organizations for Venezuelan refugees

We interviewed individuals at agencies that were working with incoming Venezuelans in Cuenca with the goal of gaining knowledge about local organizations and visa processes. We discovered and contacted representatives using several methods. Our sponsors at Cuenca Soup Kitchen, Desmion Dizney and Bill O'Brien, helped us make connections by giving us contact information for nine individuals and organizations. Throughout our meetings with organizations, many interviewees connected us with their peers at other organizations. If they did not offer contact information of their own accord, we made sure to ask if they knew of any other organizations that support Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca.

We contacted a total of 18 groups in an effort to best understand the resources available to Venezuelans (see Appendix D). Depending on the interviewee's language capabilities, the interview was either conducted in Spanish or English to reduce the language barrier as much as possible. Because Spanish is our second, non-fluent, language, we split into pairs based on speaking ability to conduct the interviews and use time effectively. Given permission, we also recorded the audio on a cell phone and returned to it when clarification was needed. After the interview, we created a document containing all our notes from the interview.

We scheduled interviews with contacts at locations convenient for the interviewees, which was usually at their office. These interviews followed a semi-structured format; we asked each interviewee the same questions and branched out depending on their responses (Appendices E and F). The questions we asked in the interview started as general questions to learn about the organization. They then shifted to more specific questions based on the services they provide. Finally, we ensured that we asked for permission to include the organization in our guidebook and asked them if they knew of other agencies that we should consider contacting.

The interviews generated a list of resources and services available to refugees, detailing what each organization does, and how to find or contact them (Appendix D). Additionally, information on the legal system obtained during these interviews aided in the creation of a section in the guidebook on navigating the visa process. Much of this information was not available online, so interviews were essential to determine what resources were available in Cuenca.

3.3 Compile data into an accessible guidebook

After conducting both sets of interviews, we compiled this information to create a guidebook for Venezuelan refugees. This guidebook listed common needs, available resources,

organization contact information, and guidance on adapting to Cuenca. The guidebook is in Spanish and uses bullets and lists as much as possible, in order to be straightforward. We used Microsoft Publisher to make the guidebook, as this program is available on all computers with Microsoft Office and makes it easy to organize information and infographics in a guidebook format. The editable version of the guidebook was made available to Cuenca Soup Kitchen.

We also considered accessibility and the cost to produce the guidebook. One limitation was that while we wanted the guidebook to be visually appealing, it was essential to keep costs to a minimum. We compiled the information succinctly to minimize the number of pages needed. To increase accessibility, we put an online version of the guidebook on Cuenca Soup Kitchen's website. We created a QR code to easily access the online version. Finally, we created flyers with just the QR code and a small description of the guidebook. These flyers were distributed more widely than the books themselves because they were much cheaper to print and could be shared amongst many people. We gave the flyer to each support organization so that they can continue sharing the guidebook without spending money to print additional copies.

3.4 Limitations

The interviews we conducted, both with the Venezuelan refugees and local organizations, had several limitations. The language barrier proved to be the most difficult challenge to overcome, which we anticipated. During the interviews with Venezuelans, we used a translator who is a native Spanish speaker. Prior to the interviews, our translator helped us choose appropriate wording for questions, and during the interviews we found the interviewees trusted her and were more comfortable sharing details of their lives with her than us. While she was invaluable, we chose to record audio during the interviews with support organizations rather than use a translator. We were able to return to the audio after the interview and slow it down when needed. We found the interviews with organizations easier to understand than the interviews with Venezuelan refugees. The environment was much quieter and less distracting, making it easier to focus. The support organizations were also willing to spend more time with us, as we had scheduled meetings with them in advance.

Time constraints presented another limitation. Contacting and scheduling a meeting with the representatives in our restricted time was difficult, as they had limited availability. We addressed this by shaping our schedule around theirs and by requesting assistance from our sponsors to press the need for a meeting. The group also split into pairs when conducting these meetings based on Spanish ability. This allowed us to use our time efficiently and be more productive than if we stayed together as a group.

The main limitation to the guidebook was that the refugee situation in Cuenca is inconsistent. Laws can change quickly, making our provided information irrelevant. We combated the issue by emphasizing the organizations and their services, rather than the processes. For example, the requirements for obtaining a visa could change at any time and the information regarding the process in the guidebook would become irrelevant, however the organizations that provide free legal services would have the updated information and continue to be useful. Additional organizations will likely appear in the future as the refugee crisis continues and the guidebook will need to feature them. These factors require Cuenca Soup Kitchen or other knowledgeable volunteers to update the guidebook in the future. Fortunately, other agencies in Cuenca can utilize the guidebook so multiple informed individuals or groups could keep it updated after our departure.

Chapter 4: Findings

The goal of this project was to create a guidebook for Venezuelan refugees entering Cuenca, Ecuador. In order to achieve this, we completed two sets of interviews; one with Venezuelan refugees to learn about their most pressing needs and another with support organizations to learn about their services. We discovered that there are three main types of refugee support and that while many organizations were in contact with each other, none of them were aware of all their peers. This supported the need for a guidebook containing all essential support services for Venezuelan refugees. Finally, we utilized the information acquired during both sets of interviews to guide the creation of our guidebook (see Appendices H and I). In what follows, we describe and analyze our findings through raw data that we collected through interviews with Venezuelan refugees and organizations that assist them.

4.1 Interviews with Venezuelan refugees

Over three days, we interviewed 26 patrons of the Cuenca Soup Kitchen, along with two non-patrons that we met through other connections. While we were initially unsure of how many interviews we would do, we found that by the second day answers were repetitive and we had already reached material saturation, which was our goal. In interviews with the non-patrons of the Cuenca Soup Kitchen, we found that answers between them and users of the soup kitchen did not vary. Out of the 28 interviews we conducted, we only found one outlier. We talked to a man who was backpacking around South America who had many different answers than the other refugees. For example, when asked about employment, he responded that he does not want a job at all because they are boring, whereas nearly every other refugee said they would do any job that would pay. Due to his unusual answers, his responses were not included when analyzing the interview data. Through analysis of these interviews, we compiled the following demographic information as well as data explaining how they rank their needs.

Demographics of the Venezuelan refugees interviewed

In order to obtain a range of demographic data, we asked a variety of prepared questions concerning each interviewees' experiences and their greatest needs. All our compiled data can be found in Appendix G. We interviewed 14 females and 13 males, the majority of whom were under 30 years old, as seen in Figure 6. This may have been in part because the journey from Venezuela to Cuenca is long and difficult, as demonstrated by Maritsa's 800-mile journey as described in the introduction. An older person may struggle while traveling or find it more challenging to find a job. Knowing the ages of the Venezuelans was valuable because different age groups require different support services. For example, young adults may be more concerned with education while an older adult may require more healthcare services.

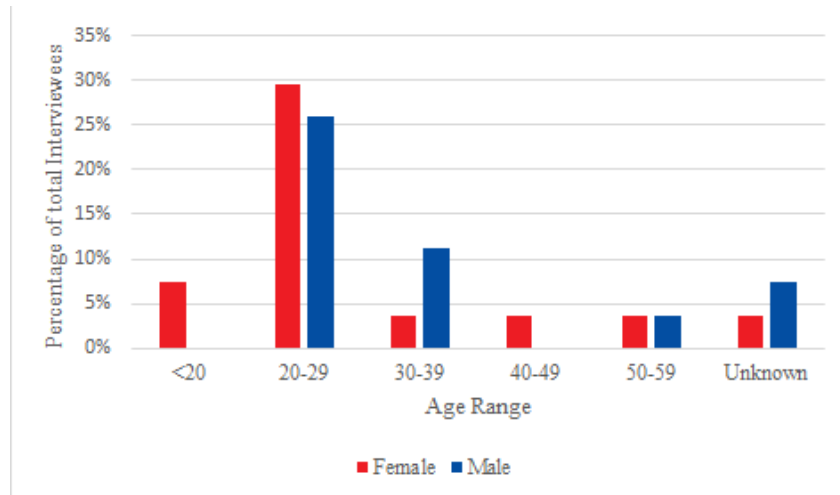


Figure 6: Age distributions of all Venezuelan refugees interviewed

We also asked individuals about their marital status and if they had kids. 41% of interviewees were married, either in a common law or licensed marriage while the rest were single. All the spouses were in Cuenca with the interviewee, although they may not have been at Cuenca Soup Kitchen together. We noted that those numbers were relatively consistent after separating by gender, with 43% and 38% of females and males married, respectively. While there was not a large discrepancy between the amount of married and single people, there was a large difference in whether they had children (see Figure 7). For example, 39.5% more women had children than men. Even when breaking down categories by marital status, more women had kids than not. It is worth noting that the data concerning men with children may be skewed. If a man has a child, but is not affiliated with the mother or child, he may deny that he has children because he is no longer in a relationship with either the mother or child. We are unaware of whether this is a common situation. If so, we would still be unaware of what the typical response would be. This could affect the uses of different organizations presented in our guidebook because of its audience demographic.

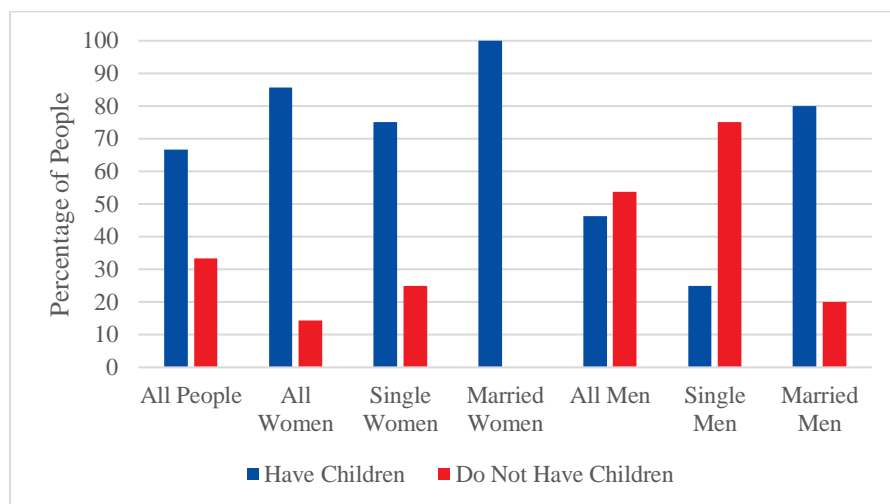
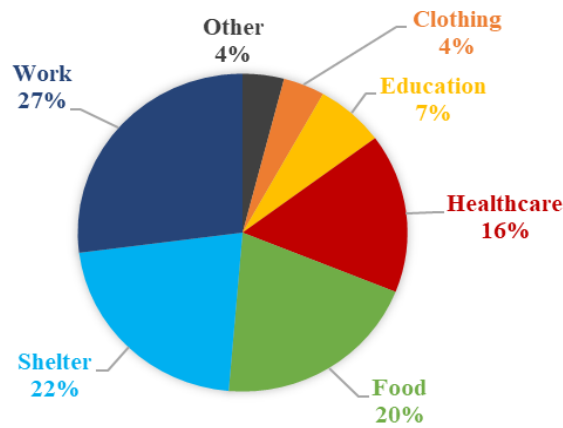


Figure 7: Percentage of Interviewed Venezuelan Refugees with and without Children

Top priorities of Venezuelan refugees

We asked each interviewee to rank what necessities were most important to them. As seen below, Figure 8 represents only the top priority that the Venezuelan refugees mentioned. Figure 9 represents all the mentioned priorities of each Venezuelan refugee interviewed. Most interviewees mentioned two or three necessities. The “other” category in each chart represents infant and general household supplies. As shown in Figure 9, 37% of refugees stated shelter was most important, 26% work, and 19% food. These responses convey that Venezuelan refugees lack some of the most basic human necessities, such as food and shelter. It also shows that finding a job is a top priority for one quarter of refugees. This combats the idea that immigrants are people that look to take advantage of the system, which is a common argument for xenophobia..



Figures 8: All needs mentioned by Venezuelan refugees

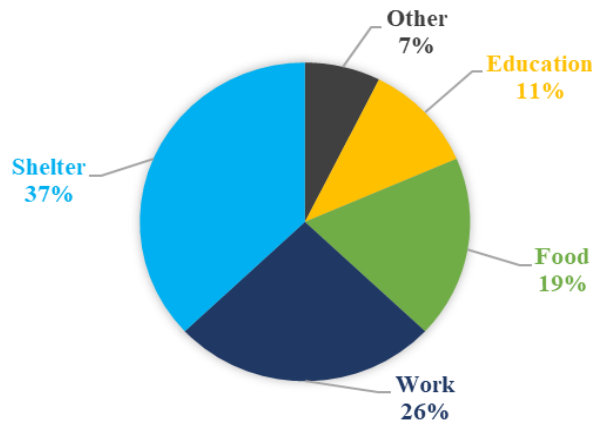
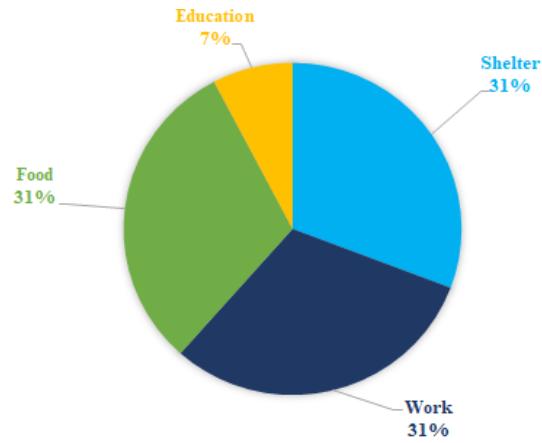


Figure 9: Most important priority of Venezuelan refugees interviewed

In addition to looking at overall necessities, we broke down the demographic groups during analysis. The responses from each group can be seen below in Figures 10 through 13. We found that no married interviewees identified work as their top priority. The differences in responses demonstrate that different demographic groups have different necessities.



Figures 10: Top priority of male Venezuelan refugees

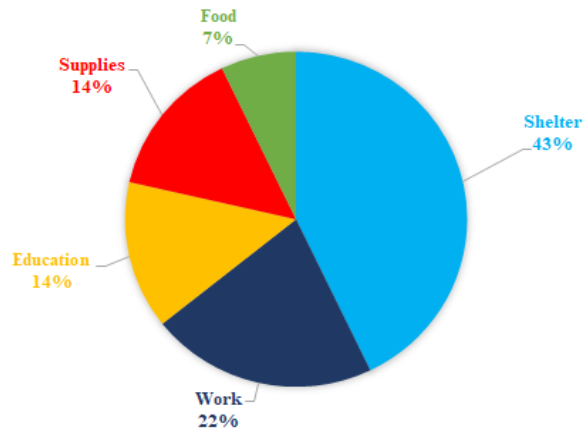
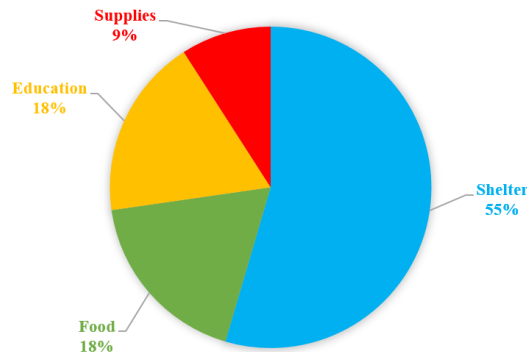


Figure 11: Top priority of female Venezuelan refugees interviewed



Figures 12: Top priority of single Venezuelan refugees interviewed

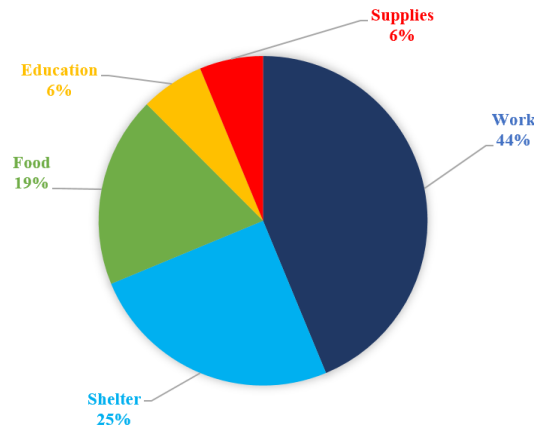


Figure 13: Top priority of married Venezuelan refugees interviewed

Housing and work were considered top priorities by most interviewees, which was most likely because these two things are difficult to find in Cuenca. Furthermore, several Venezuelans shared that xenophobia is growing and some Cuencanos are reluctant to house or hire them. One woman said she tried to rent a room, however, the owner refused to rent to her because in the past other Venezuelans failed to pay for the housing. Several others mentioned discrimination, particularly when discussing employment. 64% of respondents were completely jobless and 20% worked on the streets as vendors or musicians. Even the “lucky” Venezuelans who have found a job are working any job they can find, for which they were always overqualified. We talked with two men who both had degrees in engineering but were working as a dishwasher and construction worker. This situation was common; through more anecdotal interviews, we found one man, previously a lawyer, was working as a waiter while another had his master’s in music education and was working as a gym trainer. The type of work these immigrants accept demonstrated their desperation and willingness to do what is needed to make sure that their decision to leave Venezuela was not in vain. These people understand that a source of steady income helps many areas, such as shelter and food, become less of a struggle.

4.2 Interviews with support organizations in Cuenca

We contacted 18 individuals and representatives from organizations working to support Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca. These organizations ranged widely in how they operate and their level of direct contact with the Venezuelans. From many of our meetings we gained contact information for other organizations in Cuenca, allowing us to meet with all the major NGOs. Through learning of their services and resources we came to find the following.

Different types of organizations

The types of organizations that support Venezuelan refugees are diverse in terms of the type of services they offer and size. Of those that did help Venezuelans in Cuenca we identified three main categories of support organizations: individuals working on their own, organizations providing support or funds to other organizations working directly with refugees, and organizations working directly with refugees. All three types of organizations provide important assistance to refugees, however, it was imperative that we used organizations that we felt were most valuable to Venezuelan refugees. This made the guidebook a less cluttered source of information.

The first group was individuals that have a specific niche that will help Venezuelan refugees. While we only connected with one of such individuals, we heard of others doing similar work. We met with the founder of Abriendo Oportunidades (Opening Opportunities), who is trying to find jobs for Venezuelans in Cuenca. He assists one person at a time; however, he hopes to grow the program and increase his impact. While valuable, this program is currently unable to serve many people. As a result, we chose to not pursue meetings with these individuals as they are unable to help large amounts of people and thus would not be useful in our guidebook. One benefit of this structure is the ability to work closely with a single Venezuelan refugee and make sure their needs are truly being met. There is not a complex system where they could accidentally get lost or ignored. The ability to help the refugee crisis even just one person at a time, while not an effective way to address such a large issue or useful for a guidebook, makes all the difference for that individual.

The second category of organization provided support for other organizations; however, they did not work directly with Venezuelan refugees. They tended to be influential groups and primarily donate funds and supplies to other organizations that work directly with refugees. This group includes:

- Cruz Roja (Red Cross)
- Tomebamba Rotary Club
- ACNUR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)
- Fundación Corazón Vino Tinto (Red Wine Heart Foundation)

These organizations tend to be large and have more funds and access to resources than the other types of organizations. The diverse types of organizations provide a wide net of support for Venezuelan refugees.

The third and most common type of organization worked directly with Venezuelan refugees. They provided services and resources, usually for free. Generally, they have more funds than individuals working on their own. We focused our guidebook on this group because they can help the most people and they work directly with Venezuelans refugees. This category includes the following organizations, all of which we included in the guide:

- Casa del Migrante (House of Migrants)

- Crea tu Espacio (Create your Space)
- Cuenca Soup Kitchen
- GRACE: Give Refugees a Chance
- HIAS: Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
- Posada San Francisco
- Rafalex
- Uniendo Voluntades

These organizations, for the most part, have their own location that refugees can visit to access services. They provide a variety of free services including food, legal care, and medical attention. The main benefit of these organizations is that they reach the largest amount of people. Unfortunately, many lack the necessary funds and manpower to accomplish all that they would like to.

Support organizations lacked a structured connection with their peers

Our interviews with organizations revealed that representatives of these organizations had connections to other organizations, however, no collective network or database exists. We first began contacting organizations using a list that our sponsors gave us. It contained three individuals and six organizations. We met with them and found many other organizations along the way. It was a common occurrence during our interviews for people to give us a helpful contact. Some even called the contact for us or introduced us to them during our meetings. The full list and descriptions of each group we contacted is in Appendix D. These connections between organizations were helpful, but unorganized. We were also surprised to find that some organizations were unaware of each other. This is partially because the influx of Venezuelan refugees is still new to Cuenca, so several organizations are also new. For example, Give Refugees a Chance (Grace) became an official NGO during our time in Cuenca and thus many other organizations in the city are not yet aware of them. Grace, however, provides clothes, legal assistance, medical care, and has plans for a food service. It is a useful resource that many are unaware of because it is still growing. While some organizations are aware of each other to an extent there is no structure among them, and connections are somewhat random. As a result of the lack of formal connections between organizations, resources have not been utilized to their maximum potential. Furthermore, these organizations do not have access to vital information, like what worked and what did not for their counterparts. This creates many inefficiencies for the future of the organizations when deciding how to grow and better assist their clients.

4.3 Creating the guidebook for migrants new to Cuenca

Our final deliverable was a guidebook for Venezuelan refugees new to Cuenca (see Appendices H and I). It includes organizations in Cuenca, a map identifying points of interest, and details on the visa process. We shaped our book using the following findings:

Many of the refugees new to Cuenca are unaware of available resources in the city

In our interviews at Cuenca Soup Kitchen, we asked a variety of questions concerning the various services that the interviewee may have used since they arrived in Cuenca. Out of our sample size of 27 valid interviewees, 18 Venezuelan refugees had used resources from an organization besides Cuenca Soup Kitchen. As seen in Figure 14, fourteen people mentioned

utilizing HIAS, making it the most frequently named organization. This is likely because HIAS is an international organization that also has offices in Venezuela, so some of the interviewees could have possibly received aid from other branches of the organization, not just the Cuenca location. We were unaware of this until after completing the interviews, so we did not ask the interviewees where they received assistance from HIAS.

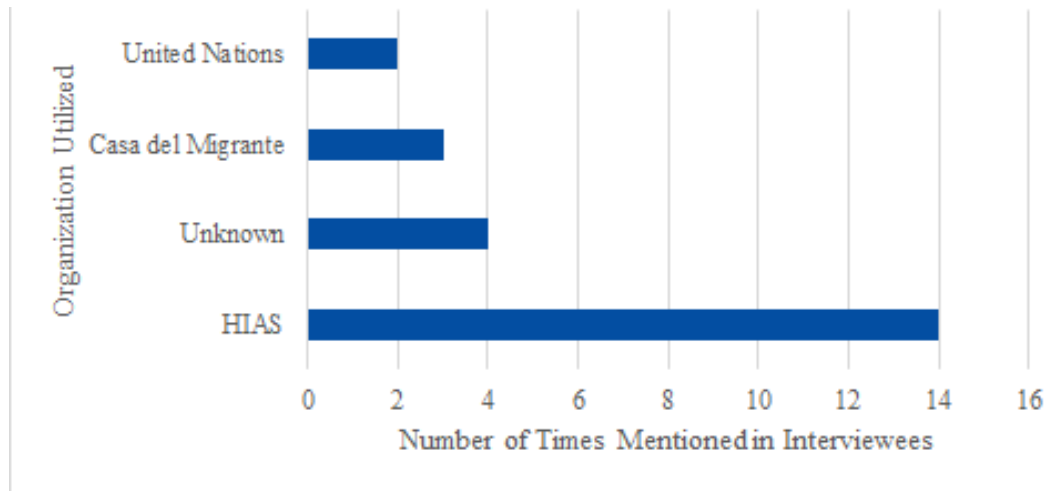


Figure 14: Number of Venezuelan refugees that mentioned utilizing each NGO

Throughout our project, we discovered and learned about many organizations that interviewees at Cuenca Soup Kitchen did not mention. Only three organizations were mentioned, and four people did not remember the name of the support organization they utilized. Not one interviewee mentioned Grace, Posada San Francisco, Rafalex, Crea tu Espacio, or Uniendo Voluntades, all organizations that we talked to and ultimately listed in our guidebook. This shows that the refugees, specifically clientele of Cuenca Soup Kitchen, are unaware of the many resources available to them. The lack of knowledge of available resources demonstrated a need for a better way to distribute this information, reinforcing the need for a guidebook.

The visa process

Several Venezuelans refugees shared varying recounts of their experience obtaining a refugee or humanitarian visa. 69% of interviewees were in the process of applying for a visa, while the other 31% already had their visa. 70% of the respondents said the process was difficult or expensive while 30% said it was easy. The majority of people who said the process was easy already had their visa; no one who already had their visa said the process was difficult. Based on this, it seems as though the experiences were either one of two opposites: quick and easy or drawn out and difficult. There are numerous factors that affect the visa process for each individual. Some of the challenges include:

- Traveling over 30km to the visa office in Azogues
- Missing documentation
- Skipped steps in the process
- Complications due to illegal entry into the country
- Lack of knowledge of overall process
- Money

We heard from one refugee that it took her only 15 days to obtain her visa, while another had been waiting for over a year. Another man had left his passport in Venezuela and he would need to pay \$150 to have it sent to him. We did not go into full detail for each interviewee's experiences, as we did not ask questions about finances or other factors that would affect the strength of the application. These factors could be a reason why there were so many discrepancies in the wait time. However, the inconsistencies in experiences and responses overall demonstrated that learning about the process and including it in the guidebook was necessary.

Guidebooks for Venezuelan refugees exist; however, they lack information and have been poorly distributed

During our project we found two guidebooks describing a variety of resources in Cuenca, targeted at different groups. One of the first organizations we met was Casa del Migrante. They gave us a guide containing all the government organizations and programs that could help refugees. As this book only consisted of governmental organizations, it did not provide any insight as to which NGOs are helping Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca. We found a second guide at Rafalex, an organization that provides a variety of services to refugees in Cuenca. While the pamphlet was useful in that it gave us an idea of what our guidebook could include, it did not feature all the organizations we had met with, nor did it provide guidance on the visa process. Both the Casa del Migrante and the Rafalex guides were useful resources to reference while designing our guidebook. Our guidebook differs in that in addition to the governmental organizations and large NGOs, our project also included the local and lesser known organizations that were not in either booklets.

These existing guidebooks have also been poorly distributed. None of the organizations we met with or Venezuelans we interviewed were aware of them. The Rafalex guide was only available in their headquarters, which makes it challenging for someone to get the information unless they are already at Rafalex. It would be more effective to keep the guides readily available within multiple organizations throughout Cuenca.

Chapter 5: The Future for Refugees in Cuenca

At the beginning of this paper we discussed Maritsa, an elderly woman pressed to leave Venezuela and traveled to Cuenca in a wheelchair. When she arrived, she found Cuenca Soup Kitchen through Casa del Migrante. During her time at the soup kitchen, the volunteers noticed the poor condition of her wheelchair and sought to help. They worked with another organization in Cuenca, the Tomebamba Rotary Club, and together bought Maritsa a new wheelchair. Since our arrival in Cuenca, Maritsa's wheelchair broke and another one was bought for her by the same organizations. We were fortunate to be there when she received this new wheelchair and to witness the collaboration between the Tomebamba Rotary Club and Cuenca Soup Kitchen. This story highlights what organizations can do when they work together and share resources. Thanks to these combined efforts, Maritsa is doing much better than if she had been left on the streets of Cuenca on her own. This idea of unification between organizations and our findings on the greatest areas of need for refugees in Cuenca informed our recommendations.

Our findings on the demographics and priorities of refugees in Cuenca and our interviews with organizations allowed us to see which areas we should focus on while making the guidebook. Additionally, we saw that some needs were not fully being met and that some organizations were not using their resources as effectively as possible. These findings were the motivation and reasoning behind our recommendations.

5.1 Recommendations for non-governmental organizations in Cuenca

We developed four recommendations for NGOs helping Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca:

Collect demographic data on refugees in Cuenca

We recommend that an organization that has connections with many people, such as Casa del Migrante, collect and share data on the Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca with other NGOs. Casa del Migrante is ideal because it is a large info center that has access to many people and serves as an entry point to many NGOs in Cuenca. While we realize that there are privacy laws prohibiting the transfer of information on individuals, there is a lack of even general information available on how many refugees are in Cuenca, how many are arriving each day, and how long they are staying. If organizations in Cuenca had access to this information, they could have a strategic approach to the crisis by knowing what type and how many resources refugees need. Additionally, this data would enable the city to see trends in the numbers and demographics of refugees arriving over time and be able to plan for periods of increased migration.

Increase knowledge transfer through a network of support organizations.

While interviewing organization representatives, we found that there was a lack of knowledge transfer across organizations. During our meeting with the organization Rafalex, we were given a guidebook that contained information on several resources that would benefit Venezuelans. At the time, the guidebook was only being distributed at the Rafalex building. A network or coalition of organizations could help circulate the guidebook and increase its availability. Having organizations informed of other available services would help increase resource availability for refugees. Furthermore, these organizations would be able to spread information about different events that they host through the increase in distribution of their resources. Because of this, we recommend that organizations form a network and share what

information they have. We recommend that one of the organizations, such as Hearts of Gold, leads in establishing and running a coalition of organizations working to support the Venezuelan refugees. Hearts of Gold is a good option since they are well connected and have access to many resources. They could start with small, helpful ways of connecting with each other, such as with an email alias or Facebook page. We recommend that representatives from each organization meet monthly to discuss any new developments in their organizations and the community and identify collaborative opportunities and ways they can support each other. Additionally, this would be an opportunity to discuss knowledge gaps and organizational needs. While we recognize challenges coordinating meetings, it would provide invaluable information and enable organizations to reach and serve as many refugees as possible.

Host regular events that provide support and resources for Venezuelan refugees

We recommend that organizations host regularly occurring events with supplies and workshops to support Venezuelan refugees. Additionally, we recommend that they advertise these events on social media and with cross-advertisement in the form of posters at high-volume locations such as HIAS, Cuenca Soup Kitchen, and Casa del Migrante. Currently, some organizations hold sporadic events, however, people are often unaware of them. Events typically include employment workshops, first-aid kits from the Cruz Roja (Red Cross), and free food, among other services. If organizations standardized the times and publicized such events it would be easier for those in need to know when and where to go. Organizations could also easily notify migrants of the next events to increase attendance in the future. Having multiple resources in one place on a regular schedule would ease the stress of advertising and make the transition into Cuenca easier for Venezuelan refugees.

We recommend that organizations work together to host events or take turns leading them. This recommendation goes hand in hand with the prior advice to create a network. All members of such a coalition could participate or rotate participation in these regular events. The organizations would oversee determining frequency, services, and other details of the events. Since a large group of organizations would be involved, advertisements could be easily spread to reach many people. Each organization could advertise at their location and on their social media or website. In having regular events, the support network for Venezuelan refugees new to Cuenca would grow stronger and more reliable, while simultaneously maximizing the available resources and funds.

Regularly update guidebook to maintain reliability

We recommend that our guidebook is updated as information changes to preserve its integrity. While creating our guidebook we were cognizant of factors such as distribution locations and the program used to make the guidebook to make it accessible and easy to update. The refugee crisis is constantly changing, especially regarding rules and regulations set by the Ecuadorian government for incoming Venezuelan refugees, making it essential to keep the guidebook up to date.

We also recommend that Cuenca Soup Kitchen updates the guidebook annually or whenever they are aware that content within the guide is out of date, however, each individual organization remain responsible for their own section. For example, Uniendo Voluntades would be responsible for reaching out to Cuenca Soup Kitchen if they experience any changes to their services or contact information. This method alleviates responsibility on the lead organization to be constantly searching for new information and ensures that the information remains current. Additionally, we recommend that all organizations regularly update their websites and Facebook

pages. Many sites had outdated information, such as incorrect phone numbers, or just never post information about services. Having information available and easy to search for would benefit refugees looking for their services, even if they did not have access to an up-to-date guidebook.

5.2 Limitations

The availability of our interviewees limited the scope of our project. Patrons of Cuenca Soup Kitchen were readily available as the organization was our sponsor. While helpful to have easy access to interviewees, the demographic using Cuenca Soup Kitchen is by nature a vulnerable population. This is because Casa del Migrante (Cuenca's migrant office) receives the Venezuelan refugees before they can go to the soup kitchen. The amount of meals Cuenca Soup Kitchen offers is limited, and the most vulnerable refugees are prioritized. It should also be noted that the Venezuelan refugees at the Cuenca Soup Kitchen have access to food which may temporarily put food lower on their list of needs. These factors may have made the demographic unrepresentative of the population of Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca. We interviewed two Venezuelans that were not currently using Cuenca Soup Kitchen and found similar stories to that of the Cuenca Soup Kitchen patrons. We only interviewed two non-patrons so we do not truly know if they were representative of the population, however, we decided that we would accept any discrepancies as those most vulnerable in Cuenca are also the ones who need the most assistance.

Our interviews may have been skewed by a combination of the language barrier and the comfort of the interviewees. We attempted to lessen this by using a translator who was able to speak fluently to the interviewees and ease their nerves, however it is possible that some interviewees did not feel comfortable sharing their life stories with a group of strangers from the United States. This could have caused some to hold back answers or possibly answer untruthfully.

5.3 Conclusion

Interviews with refugees at Cuenca Soup Kitchen were heartbreaking. People told stories of how they could not afford diapers for their babies or what it was like having advanced degrees while not being able to find even minimum wage jobs in Ecuador. These troubling stories demonstrated the desperation and serious need of Venezuelan refugees in Cuenca. At the same time, our interviews with organizations helping refugees offered hope as many volunteers and support services have alleviated some of the suffering. Our project connected these organizations not only with those in need, but, also, with each other.

Our guidebook does not create any more services for refugees; however, it does provide them with a powerful source of information. If refugees do not know about the organizations available to help them, then the organizations are not fulfilling their purpose. This guidebook provides a connection between the organizations to share their resources and information as well as making sure refugees know the options that they have. This collaboration strategy goes beyond Cuenca and can be useful anywhere refugees are arriving to new cities. Cuenca is one of hundreds of cities harboring Venezuelan refugees, but similar approaches as the one we have established could be used elsewhere to alleviate the effects of refugee situations.

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Appendix A: Our Sponsor Organization: Cuenca Soup Kitchen

In 2017, American expat Bob Higgins founded what is now known as Cuenca Soup Kitchen (previously Sustainable Cuenca) to help those in need in Cuenca. Although this initially started as a small soup kitchen for the working poor in Cuenca, with the rise in the number of Venezuelan refugees, the kitchen soon began to serve hundreds of meals a day, costing 71 cents per meal to make. In addition to the kitchen, which serves meals five days a week, Cuenca Soup Kitchen provides refugees with one \$30 voucher to purchase household goods and clothes from their collection. Cuenca Soup Kitchen is completely reliant on donations and volunteer labor from generous community members. Volunteers and donors are comprised of expats and local Cuencans, some of which can be seen in Figure 15, while the Cuenca Rotary club helps with the organization and the city council provides the soup kitchen venue (Cuenca Soup Kitchen, 2019).



Figure 15: Volunteers cooking lunch at Cuenca Soup Kitchen (eltiempocuenca, 2019)

In addition to the daily meals and clothing vouchers, which compromise most of Cuenca Soup Kitchen's work, the organization also has a few side projects. One recent project initiated by Cuenca Soup Kitchen, known as the Ricaurte Project, helps women in the Ricaurte area of Cuenca earn a living by cooking at local restaurants. The project involves six women and many donations from local expats. Additional, smaller projects, at Cuenca Soup Kitchen include classes to start businesses (Keeble, 2017) and lunches being brought to people on the streets (Cuenca Soup Kitchen, 2019). Cuenca Soup Kitchen also focuses on helping children. Every Thursday, families with infants receive a pack of diapers (Hearts of Gold, 2019). Another project provides meals to families staying with sick children at Vicente Corral Moscoso Hospital in Cuenca (CuencaHighLife, 2019).

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview with Venezuelan Refugees (English)

We are students from the United States working to create a guidebook for Venezuelan refugees entering Cuenca. We would like to ask you questions about your time here. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw whenever you wish. If you at any time feel the need to end the interview early, please do not hesitate to let us know. Further participation in this interview will constitute as consent to continue.

Questions

Demographics/Background info:

1. How old are you?
 - a. Also note male or female
2. What is your level of education?
3. Do you live with anyone?
4. Do you have any children? Any dependents (people who are economically dependent)?
 - a. How old are they? Do they depend on you (this might be obvious)?
 - b. Are they with you in Cuenca?
5. When did you get to Cuenca?
 - a. Why Cuenca?
 - b. Do you plan to stay in the city?

Services/Resources Needed

6. What services do you need the most in order to get properly settled into Cuenca? (note what they think is most important)

Prompt: Housing

7. Where are you currently living?
 - a. How has that changed?
 - b. Are you comfortable in this situation?
 - c. Have any resources helped you find housing? If so which?

Prompt: Employment

8. Do you have a job? If so, what is it?
9. What was your profession before coming here?
10. Are you looking for other employment?
11. Have any organizations helped you find employment?

Prompt: Health Care

12. Do you have access to health care?
13. Have you needed healthcare?
14. Have any organizations helped you find healthcare?

Prompt: Education

15. Are your children/you in school?

- a. Have you had any issues registering for education?
- 16. Have any organizations helped you with your children's'/your education?

Prompt: Legal Status

- 17. Do you have a visa?
 - a. If so, what was the process like?
 - b. If not, have you tried?
- 18. What would make it easier for you to understand the visa process?
- 19. Have any organizations helped you navigate the visa process?

Prompt: Food

- 20. Before you knew about the soup kitchen, how did you find food?
 - a. Are you getting food anywhere else?
- 21. Have any organizations helped you find food?

Ending

- 22. We are making a guide to help Venezuelan migrants in Cuenca navigate the process. What would be your recommendations for this?

Appendix C: Entrevistas Semi-Estructurado con Refugiados Venezolanos (Español)

Somos estudiantes de los Estados Unidos que trabajamos para crear una guía para los venezolanos que ingresan a Cuenca. Nos gustaría preguntarle sobre su tiempo aquí. Su participación es voluntaria y puede retirarse cuando lo desee. Nos gustaría grabar esta entrevista para que podamos volver a ella en el futuro. Si en algún momento siente la necesidad de finalizar la entrevista antes de tiempo, no dude en hacérselo saber. La participación adicional en esta entrevista constituirá como consentimiento para continuar.

Preguntas

Demográfico

1. ¿Cuántos años tiene?
 - a. ¿Hombre o mujer? (no le pregunta)
2. ¿Qué nivel de educación ha completado?
3. ¿Cuál es tu estado civil? ¿Tiene un marido o mujer?
4. ¿Tiene hijos o hijas? ¿Otras personas que se depende económicamente?
 - a. Si tiene, ¿cuántos años tienen? ¿Se depende en usted?
5. ¿Cuándo llegó a Cuenca?
 - a. ¿Porque eligió Cuenca?
 - b. ¿Se queda en Cuenca?

Recursos

6. ¿Qué servicios necesita la más para vivir en Cuenca? ¿O que necesidades básicas son la más importante? (Ranking)

Entrada: Viviendo

7. ¿Dónde estás viviendo?
 - a. ¿Ha cambiado hasta su llegada?
 - b. ¿Estás cómodo?
 - c. ¿Ha usado recursos para encontrar sus habitaciones?

Entrada: Empleo

8. ¿Tienes un trabajo? Si hay, ¿qué es?
9. ¿Cuál era tu profesión antes de venir en Cuenca?
10. ¿Está buscando por otro trabajo?
11. ¿Ha usado organizaciones o recursos para encontrarla?

Entrada: Asistencia Médica

12. ¿Tiene acceso a atención médica?
13. ¿Ha necesitado atención médica durante su tiempo en cuenca?
14. ¿Ha usado organizaciones para encontrar atención médica?

Entrada: Educación

15. ¿Sus niños asisten escuela?
d. ¿Tiene problemas se inscriben?
16. ¿Ha usado organizaciones para ayudar?

Entrada: Proceso Legal

17. ¿Tiene una visa?
e. ¿Si no, ha tratado a obtenerla?
f. ¿Puede describir el proceso?
18. ¿Qué necesita para hacer el proceso más fácil?
19. ¿Ha usado organizaciones para ayudar?

Entrada: Comida

20. ¿Antes del usado de soup kitchen, qué hizo para encontrar comida?
g. ¿Usa otros lugares para encontrarla?
21. ¿Ha usado otras organizaciones?

En fin

22. ¿Tiene recomendaciones para nuestra guía? Puede mostrar la guía de Rafalex para ayudar
h. ¿Qué le gusta?
i. ¿Que no le gusta?

Appendix D: Interviewed Organizations

Bolded= included in guidebook

***Included on initial contact list**

Organization or Contact's Name	Services	Notes
*Abriendo Oportunidades	Finding jobs for individual Venezuelan refugees	In the process of growing to reach more people. Currently too small to include in guidebook
ACNUR: El Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados	Branch of the United Nations. Usually only provide funding and support for other organizations	Gave us many other contacts
Asociación Rafalex	Legal services, workshops, events	Have their own building and guidebook
*Carmen Garcia	N/A	Venezuelan refugee who has settled and knew about many resources and the preschool process
* Casa del Migrante	Governmental info center for migrants in Cuenca. Offers a wide variety of services and redirects people to other organizations when needed	Learned about governmental services and got a booklet detailing their organization. Received a spreadsheet of contact info
* Crea tu Espacio	Focus on education for Venezuelan migrants. Learned about kids' programs and workshops	Learned about the schooling process and received advice on our guidebook
Cruz Roja (Red Cross)	Provide hygiene kits and other first aid medical relief	Don't have their own location; always work in partnership with other organizations at events
Cuenca Soup Kitchen	Serves meals to Venezuelans and has free clothing available. Must go through Casa del Migrante to access services	Our sponsor organization
District of Education	Location of all school related businesses and processes	Told us we needed explicit permission from someone to access information
* Grace: Give Refugees a Chance	Free medical services, legal help, food, and clothes	In the process of opening their own building

*HIAS: Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society	International organization providing information, psychological services, and humanitarian assistance	Have their own building and are well known
Posada San Francisco	Church that offers housing for \$2.50/night	Emphasis that they must go through Casa del Migrante, HIAS, or ACNUR for access
*Rotary Tomebamba	Support a variety of organizations in the area	Met with president to discuss project and gain connections
Uniendo Voluntades	Free legal services, food, and clothes	Explained the basics of the visa process to us
*United Nations	N/A	Contacted them and were told they do the same as ACNUR
Universidad de Cuenca	N/A	Professor at a local university who gave us contacts to learn more about school enrollment and visa processes
Vidal Barrerra & Coello Law Office	Local law office	Wanted to learn about visa process but had communication problems
Fundación Corazón Vino Tinto	Currently only support other organizations	In the process of restructuring and aren't currently doing their own work

Appendix E: Resource Representative Interview (English)

We are students from the United States working to create a guidebook for Venezuelans entering Cuenca. We are trying to learn more about what other organizations in the area are doing for Venezuelans so we can point people in the right direction.

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. We would like to record this discussion so that we can return back to it in the future. If you at any time feel the need to leave early, please do not hesitate to let us know. This interview will take around one hour. Thank you for taking the time to meet with us!

1. Where are you located?
2. What is the mission of your organization?
3. What resources does this organization provide for Venezuelan refugees?
4. Are there any plans for the future of the organization? (is anything changing, new programs)
5. How many people are you able to help? How many have you helped?
 - a. Is there a specific demographic you see the most?
6. How would a Venezuelan refugee gain access your organization's resources?
7. How do people find out about your organization?
8. What have you seen as some of the biggest needs of these refugees?
9. What other organizations or group are you aware of in Cuenca that are helping Venezuelan refugees? (will share who we are already in contact with)
 - a. Do you know of anyone else we should contact?
10. Do you know if a list exists of information such as what to do if you are a refugee in Cuenca, where to find housing as a refugee, etc?
11. Do you have any recommendations for the information packet that we will be creating?
12. May we include your organization in the guidebook?

Appendix F: Entrevista de Representantes de Recursos (Español)

Somos estudiantes de los estados unidos estamos trabajando para hacer un paquete de información que enumera los recursos disponibles para los refugiados venezolanos en Cuenca. Estamos tratando de aprender más sobre lo que otras organizaciones de la zona están haciendo para que podamos apuntar a las personas en la dirección correcta.

Su participación en esta entrevista es completamente voluntaria y usted puede retirarse en cualquier momento. Nos gustaría grabar esta discusión para poder volver a ella en el futuro. Si en algún momento siente la necesidad de salir temprano, por favor no dude en hacernos lo. Esta entrevista durará una hora. Gracias por tomarse el tiempo para reunirse con nosotros.

1. ¿Dónde está la organización?
2. ¿Qué es la misión de su organización?
3. ¿Qué recursos tiene para los refugiados venezolanos?
4. ¿Hay planes para el futuro del organización?
5. ¿A cuántas personas puede ayudar? ¿A cuántos ha ayudado?
 - a. ¿Hay un sector demográfico específica que sirve?
6. ¿Cómo podría un refugiado venezolano acceder a los recursos de su organización?
7. ¿Cómo se enteran las personas de su organización?
8. ¿Cuáles han visto como algunas de las mayores necesidades de estos refugiados?
9. ¿Qué organizaciones o grupos conoces en Cuenca que están ayudando a los refugiados venezolanos?
 - b. ¿Conoces a alguien más con quien debemos contactar?
10. ¿Conoces si existe una lista de información como qué hacer si eres un refugiado en Cuenca, dónde encontrar vivienda como refugiado, etc?
11. ¿Tiene algunas recomendaciones para el paquete de información?
12. ¿Podemos incluir su organización en nuestra guía?

Appendix G: Compiled Data from Interviews with Venezuelan Refugees

We interviewed 28 people total; 26 patrons of Cuenca Soup Kitchen and 2 non-patrons who we met through outside connections. 1 of the interviewees at Cuenca Soup Kitchen was a backpacker whose answers were outliers and this was removed from our analysis. The following data excludes him.

Demographic Data

Age

Age Range (years old)	Total	Females	Males
<20	2	2	0
20-29	15	8	7
30-39	4	1	3
40-49	1	1	0
50-59	2	1	1
Unknown	3	1	2
Total		14	13

Marital Status

Status	Total	Females	Males
Single	16 (59%)	8 (57%)	8 (62%)
Married*	11 (41%)	6 (43%)	5 (38%)

*Married includes both common law marriages and formal

Dependents

	Number of People
No Children	9
1 Child	11
2 Children	0
3 Children	7

Groups of people with dependents

Group of People	With Children	No Children
All People	18	9
All Women	12	2
Single Women	6	2
Married Women	6	0
All Men	6	7
Single Men	2	6
Married Men	4	1

4 couples with their kids

Age of children (22 children total)

- Less than 2: 7
- 2-5: 4
- 6-10: 3
- 11-15: 5
- Older than 16: 3

Education

- Less than high school unfinished high school: 4
- HS: 9
- University (both unfinished and finished): 10
- Post university: 2
- Unknown: 2

Cuenca

Arrival Year

- 2019: 21
- 2018: 4
- 2017: 1
- 2015: 1

23 people plan to stay, 3 want to go to other country

Necessities Data

All total (out of 74)

- Food: 15
- Shelter: 16
- Work: 20
- Education: 5

- Healthcare: 12
- Clothing: 3
- Other: 3 (baby supplies 2, supplies in general 1)

Only Top Necessity Mentioned

	All People	Female	Male	Single	Married
Shelter	10	6	4	4	6
Work	7	3	4	7	0
Food	5	1	4	3	2
Education	3	2	1	1	2
Other	2	2	0	1	1

Other includes baby supplies, supplies in general

Looking at the top necessity mentioned when asked to rank basic necessities

- Work as top priority: 4 unemployed, 2 musicians, 1 dishwasher
- Shelter as top: 4 room, 3 apartment, 3 refuge
- Food as top: 2 soup kitchen, 1 HIAS, 2 unknowns

Help Utilized

Shelter/housing help: 1 UN, 4 HIAS, 2 friends, 1 unknown, 9 none

Job help: 4 HIAS, 12 none

Medical help: 6 none

School help: 2 unknown, 2 none

Food help: 8 HIAS, 11 SK

Visa help: 5 HIAS, 2 Casa del Migrante, 3 unknown, 7 none

Employment

16 have no job

5 have street jobs (musician, selling things)

2 didn't answer the question

16 people said job they want- 10 said they would take anything

Visa Process

Status

- Have it: 8
- In the process: 18

Comments

- Difficult: 15

- Easy: 8
- Expensive: 4

Of the 8 people with visas: 6 said it was easy (others did not comment on difficulty)

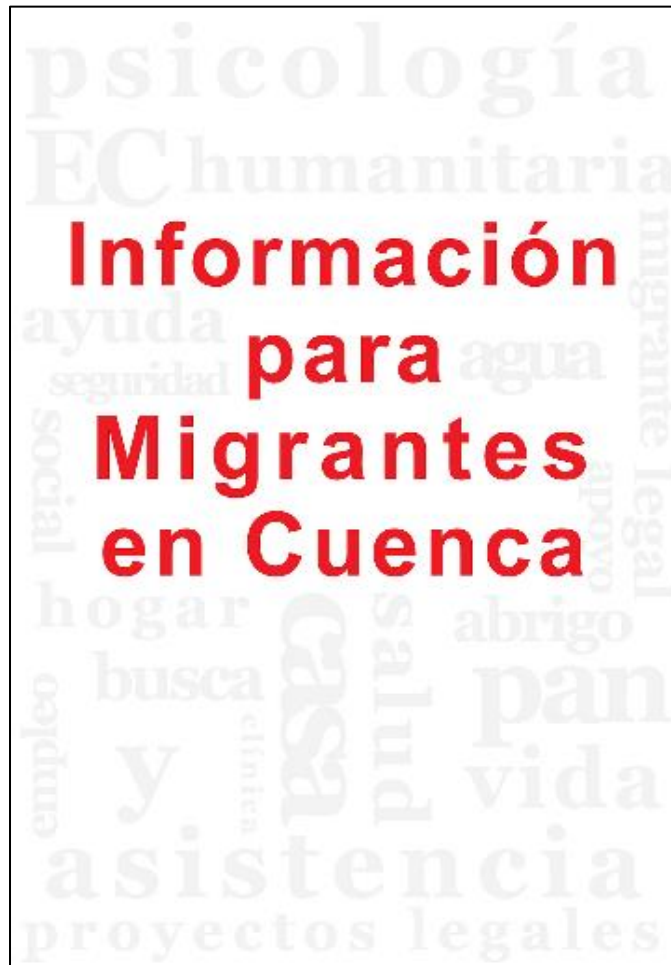
- None used an organization for help
- 4 had young children/families with them in Cuenca

Organizations Utilized

Overall: 18 people mentioned organization any organization

Total # of mentions	Living Help	Employment Help	Medical Help
HIAS: 14	6 people	4 people	0 people
Casa del Migrante: 3	HIAS: 4	HIAS: 4	
UN: 2	UN: 1		
Unknown: 4	Unknown: 1		
School Help	Visa Help	Food Help	
2 people	9 people	(other than SK)	
1 unknown	HIAS: 5	8 people used HIAS	
1 Centro de Desarrollo	Casa del Migrante: 2		
	Unknown: 2		

Appendix H: La Guía (Español)



Introducción

La legislación ecuatoriana garantiza la protección de los derechos de las personas en situación de movilidad humana (CRE* 2008) y no considera ilegal a ninguna persona debido a su estatus migratorio (CRE Art. 40).



Como alguien de otro país que ahora vive en Ecuador, ahora tiene los mismos derechos y responsabilidades que el pueblo ecuatoriano. No puede ser discriminado debido a su estatus migratorio de acuerdo con la ley ecuatoriana (CRE Art. 9 y 11).

*CRE es la Constitución de la República del Ecuador

Este libro tiene como objetivo ayudar a las personas en situación de movilidad humana. En esta guía podrás encontrar una lista de organizaciones en Cuenca que puedan ayudar, cómo pueden ayudar y cómo contactar con ellas. Un mapa de Cuenca que muestra estas organizaciones también se incluye como un desplegable para su comodidad.

¡Bienvenido a Cuenca!

Descargo de Responsabilidad

Esta información es exacta a nuestro mejor conocimiento y a partir del 10 de diciembre de 2019. Esta información puede cambiar.

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Cuenca Soup Kitchen
Uniendo Voluntades



Posada San Francisco



Asociación Rafalex
Crea tu Espacio
Uniendo Voluntades



Asociación Rafalex
Casa del Migrante
Grace
Uniendo Voluntades



Grace



Cuenca Soup Kitchen
Uniendo Voluntades



Crea tu Espacio
Casa del Migrante
HIAS



1

Asociación Rafalex



Rafalex es una organización sin fines de lucro que trabaja con grupos vulnerables. La organización tiene muchas iniciativas para apoyar los derechos humanos. Rafalex ofrece ayuda legal, servicios psicológicos, y talleres de sensibilización de forma gratuita.

Horarios de Atención: Lunes a Viernes 8:00 a 17:00

Dir: Calle San Cristóbal y Calle Española
Teléfono: 098 337 0997

Crea tu Espacio



Crea tu Espacio es una organización sin fines de lucro en Cuenca que tiene como objetivo ayudar a las personas en situación migratoria. Ellos construye espacios de integración, reconocimiento e involucramiento ciudadano de estas poblaciones, con el objetivo de construir sociedades más proactivas e integradoras. Tienen sesiones informativas gratuitas para aquellos en situaciones de migrantes que quieren aprender sobre sus derechos. También hay clases para niños, adolescentes, y jóvenes.

Horarios de Atención: Lunes a viernes, 09:00 a 13:00 / 15:00 a 18:00. Sábados 10:00 a 13:00

Dir: Calles de Vaticano y Juan XXIII esquina
Teléfono: 0998988904 / 0989667097

Casa del Migrante



La Casa del Migrante es un Programa Municipal del GAD Municipal de Cuenca; Promueve la inclusión y la cohesión social. Articula con entidades públicas, privadas, ONGs y la sociedad civil. Tiene servicios del info-centro, trabajo social, asesoría legal, capacitación para medios de vida. Regístrese para los servicios de Cuenca Soup Kitchen y Posada San Francisco aquí.

Horarios de Atención: Lunes a viernes, 08:00 a 13:00 / 15:00 a 18:00

Dir: Luis Cordero 5-43, entre Honorato Vásquez y Juan Jaramillo
Teléfono: 4134900 Ext. 2172

Cuenca Soup Kitchen



Cuenca Soup Kitchen es una organización sin fines de lucro que proporciona alimentos a los migrantes en Cuenca. Debe registrarse en la Casa del Migrante para recibir sus servicios. Esto le dará acceso a tres semanas de comida, 5 días a la semana.

Horarios de Atención: Lunes a viernes, a 11:45 y a 12:45

Dir: Iglesia San Francisco, Calle Pdte Córdova
Email: info@cuencaSoupKitchen.org

Grace



GRACE es una organización sin fines de lucro que ofrece ayuda gratuita a los migrantes en condición de vulnerabilidad. GRACE proporciona asistencia médica y medicinas, asesoría legal y otros servicios según cada caso particular.

Horarios de Atención: Lunes a viernes 8:30-13:00 / 14:30-18:00
Dir: Calle Mariscal Lamar 25-01 y Calle Guillermo Medina
Teléfono: 0998318113

Posada San Francisco



Posada San Francisco es un refugio de bajo costo. Cuenca 2,50 USD por un noche por un máximo de tres noches. Debe registrarse para quedarse aquí con Casa del Migrante, HIAS, o ACNUR para quedarse aquí.

Dir: Calles General Torres y Presidente Cordova
Nota: Debes registrarte con Casa del Migrante.

HIAS



HIAS es la Organización Global que protege al refugiado cuya vida se encuentra en peligro. Servicios incluyen información y orientación, apoyo psicosocial individual, familiar y comunitario, apoyo psicosocial para víctimas de VBG, protección a la infancia, y asistencia humanitaria para familias en situación de vulnerabilidad.

Horarios de Atención: Lunes a viernes 8:00-13:00 / 14:00-17:00
Dir: Agustín Cueva 3-23 entre Honorato Loyola y Aurelio Aguilar
Teléfono: 0998318113

Uniendo Voluntades

Uniendo Voluntades es una organización sin fines en Cuenca que trabaja con Grace para ayudar a las personas en situaciones de movilidad humana. La organización proporciona asistencia social con capacitación laboral, servicios especiales para mujeres y niños, consultas legales y asistencia de visas, y ayuda para encontrar alimentos y ropa.

Horarios de Atención:
Dir: 24-01 Guillermo Medina y Mariscal Lamar
Teléfono: 0998179455

Existen muchos tipos de visas en Ecuador, pero la Visa de Excepción por Razones Humanitarias es mas común para los refugiados venezolanos.

Visa de Excepción por Razones Humanitarias (VERHU)

- Dos años
- 50 USD
- Requisitos:
 - i. Ser nacional de Venezuela
 - ii. Pasaporte original y copia donde aparezca la foto, datos biográficos y sello migratorio de ingreso al país
 - iii. Certificado de antecedentes penales del país de origen apostillado
 - iv. Hijos menores de edad: se deberá presentar las partidas de nacimiento debidamente apostilladas, legalizadas o validadas por las entidades autorizadas para el efecto por el Gobierno de Venezuela

VERHU es solo por los venezolanos que hayan ingreso Ecuador hasta el 26 de julio de 2019. Las solicitudes se receptaran hasta el 31 de marzo de 2020. Las solicitudes enviadas después de este día no serán procesadas.



Complete el Registro Migratorio

→ Registro: registro.migracion.gob.ec/ (para cada miembro de la familia) y audir una registro biométrico cita



Ingrese: consuladovirtual.gob.ec

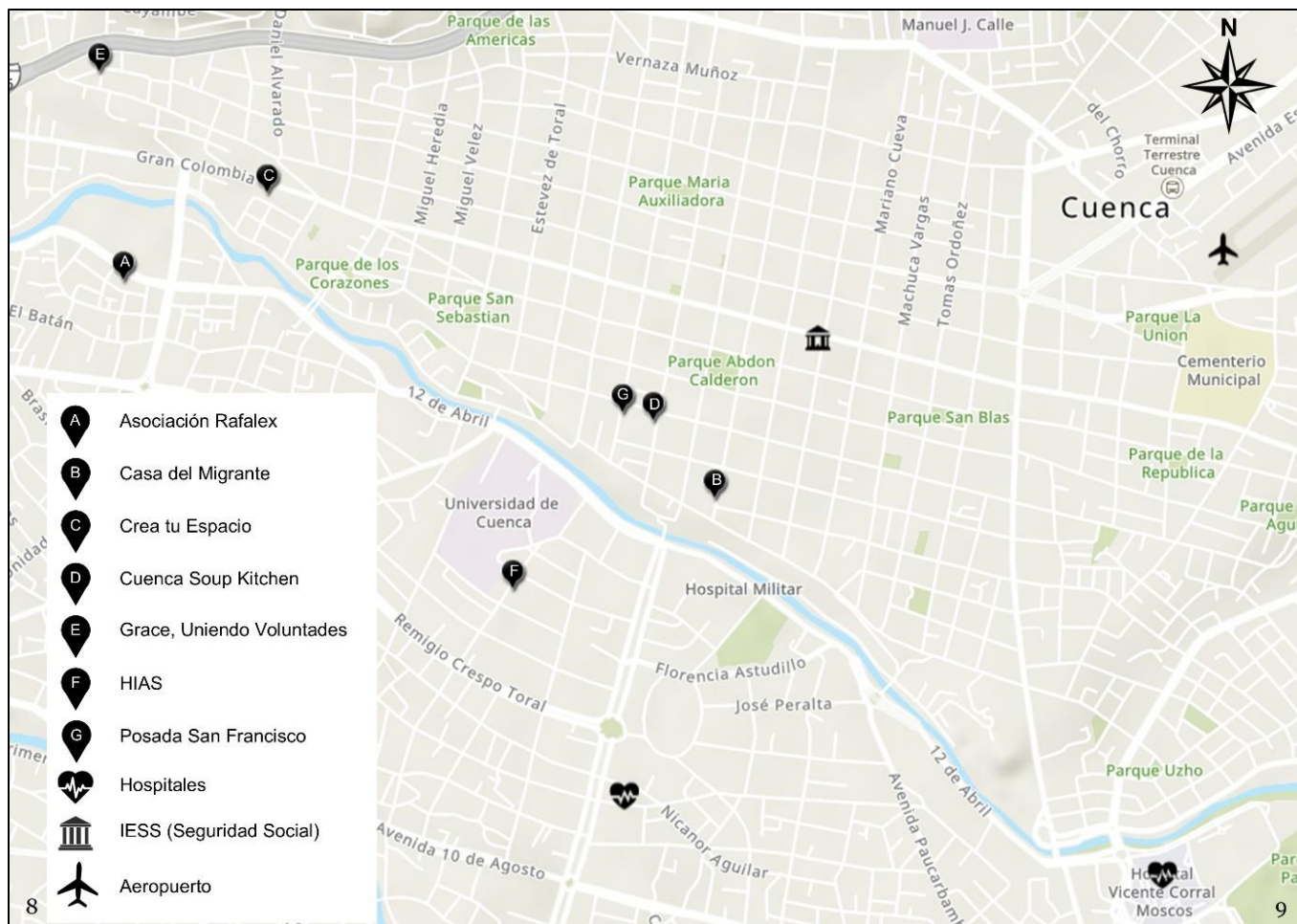
→ Cree un usuario. Necesitará # de registro de migración (del registro migratorio).



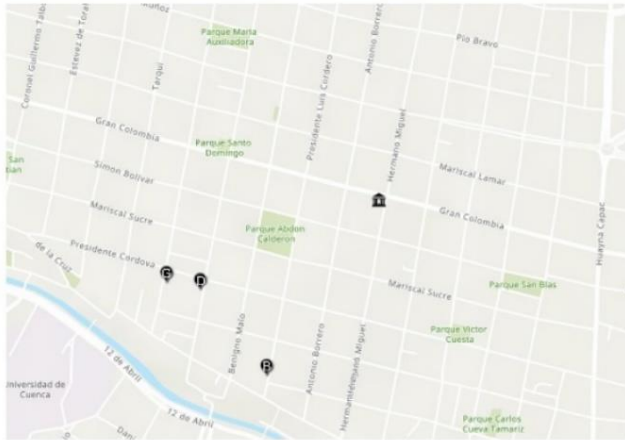
Reciba la confirmación de registro

→ Por correo electrónico. Los pasos futuros están en este correo electrónico. Esto incluirá información sobre cómo hacer el depósito de 50 USD.

Para obtener ayuda con el proceso de visa, comuníquese con la *Asociación Rafalex* (p.6) o *Grace* (p.8)



El Centro Histórico



Notas:

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Información Adicional



Tarjetas de Autobús (MOVILIZATE):

- Para comprar: 1,75
- Por viaje: 0,30
- Necesita una copia de identificación para comprar
- › Moovit aplicación para horarios



Servicios Médicos:

- Gratuitos para todos
- Para hacer una cita, llamar al 171 opción 1
- Medicina general, odontología, obstetricia, psicología o calificación para personas con discapacidad



Emergencias:

- Si eres víctima de violencia, puedes acercarte a la Defensoría del Pueblo sin costo
- Llamar al 911

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HIAS
Acoger al extranjero.
Proteger al refugiado.

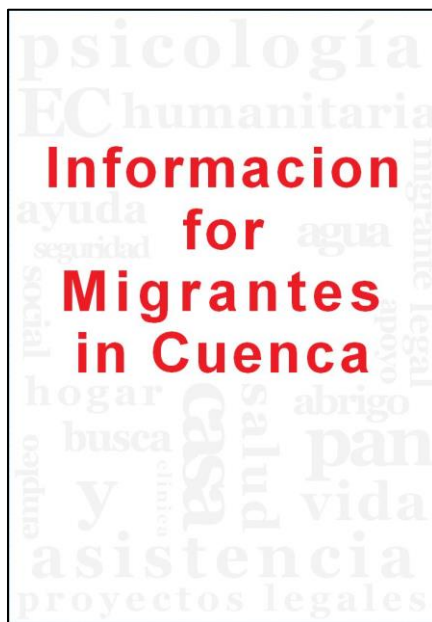


GRACE



Para obtener una guía en línea,
escanee el código QR o visite:
<http://bit.ly/migrantesencuenca>

Appendix I: The Guidebook (English)



Introduction

Ecuadorian legislation guarantees the protection of the rights of people in a situation of human mobility (CRE 2008) and does not consider any person illegal due to their immigration status (CRE Art. 40).



As someone from another country who now lives in Ecuador, you have the same rights and responsibilities as the Ecuadorian people. You cannot be discriminated against due to your immigration status in accordance with Ecuadorian law (ART. 9 and 11).

i

This book aims to help people in situations of human mobility. In this guide you will find a list of organizations in Cuenca that can help, how they can help and how to contact them. A map of Cuenca showing these organizations is also included for your convenience.

Welcome to Cuenca!

Disclaimer

This information is accurate to our best knowledge and as of December 10, 2019. This information may change.

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Asociación Rafalex Casa del Migrante Grace	
Grace	
Cuenca Soup Kitchen Uniando Voluntades	
Crea tu Espacio Casa del Migrante HIAS	

1

Asociación Rafalex



Rafalex is a non-profit organization that works with vulnerable groups. The organization has many initiatives to support human rights. Rafalex offers legal help, psychological services, and awareness workshops for free.

Hours of Operation: Monday to Friday 8:00-17:00

Address: Calle San Cristóbal y Calle Española
Phone Number: 098 337 0997

Casa del Migrante



The Migrant House is a Municipal Program of the Municipal GAD of Cuenca; Promotes inclusion and social cohesion. Article with public, private entities, NGOs and civil society. It has infocenter services, social work, legal advice, livelihood training. Register for the services of Cuenca Soup Kitchen and Posada San Francisco here.

Hours of Operation: Monday to Friday, 08:00-13:00 / 15:00 to 18:00

Address: Luis Cordero 5-43, entre Honorato Vásquez y Juan Jaramillo
Phone Number: 4134900 Ext. 2172

2

Crea tu Espacio



Create your Space is a non-profit organization in Cuenca that aims to help people in immigration status. They build spaces of integration, recognition and citizen involvement of these populations, with the aim of building more proactive and inclusive societies. They have free information sessions for those in migrant situations who want to learn about their rights. There are also classes for children, teenagers, and youth.

Hours of Operation: Monday to Friday, 09:00 - 13:00 / 15:00 - 18:00, Saturday 10:00 - 13:00

Address: Calles de Vaticano y Juan XXIII esquina
Phone Number: 0998988904 / 0989667097

Cuenca Soup Kitchen



Cuenca Soup Kitchen is a non-profit organization that provides food to migrants in Cuenca. You must register at Casa del Migrante to receive their services. This will give you access to three weeks of food, 5 days a week.

Hours of Operation: Monday to Friday, at 11:45 and 12:45

Address: Iglesia San Francisco, Calle Pdte Córdova
Email: info@cuencaoupkitchen.org

3

Grace



GRACE is a non-profit organization that offers free help to vulnerable migrants. GRACE provides medical assistance and medicines, legal advice and other services according to each particular case.

Hours of Operation: Monday to Friday 8:30-13:00 / 14:30-18:00

Address: Calle Mariscal Lamar 25-01 y Calle Guillermo Medina

Phone Number: 0998318113

Posada San Francisco



Posada San Francisco is a low cost refuge. It costs USD 2.50 for one night for a maximum of three nights. You must register to stay here with Casa del Migrante, HIAS, or UNHCR.

Address: Calles General Torres y Presidente Cordova

Note: You should register at Casa del Migrante.

HIAS



HIAS is the Global Organization that protects the refugee whose life is in danger. Services include information and guidance, individual, family and community psychosocial support, psychosocial support for GBV victims, child protection, and humanitarian assistance for vulnerable families.

Support in integration and strengthening of livelihoods for refugees.

Hours of Operation: Monday to Friday 8:00-13:00 / 14:00-17:00

Address: Agustin Cueva 3-23 entre Honorato Loyola y Aurelio Aguilar

Phone Number: 0998318113

Uniendo Voluntades

Uniendo Voluntades is a non-profit organization in Cuenca that works with Grace to help people in situations of human mobility. The organization provides social assistance with job training, special services for women and children, legal consultations and visa assistance, and help finding food and clothing.

Hours of Operation: Monday to Friday 8:30-13:00 / 14:30-18:00

Address: 24-01 Guillermo Medina y Mariscal Lamar

Phone Number: 0998179455

There are many kinds of visas in Ecuador, however, the Visa of Exception for Humanitarian Reasons is the most common for Venezuelan Refugees.

Visa of Exception for Humanitarian Reasons

- 2 years
- 50 USD
- Requirements:
 - i. Be from Venezuela
 - ii. Original Passport and copy where the photo appears, biographical data and immigration stamp of entry to the country
 - iii. Criminal record from country of origin
 - iv. Children who are minors: legalized birth certificates from Venezuela

VERHU is only for Venezuelans who have entered Ecuador until July 26, 2019. Applications will be received until March 31, 2020. Applications sent after this day will not be processed.



Complete the Migratory Registry

→ Registry: registro.migracion.gob.ec/ (for each member of the family) and obtain a meeting



Enter: consuladovirtual.gob.ec

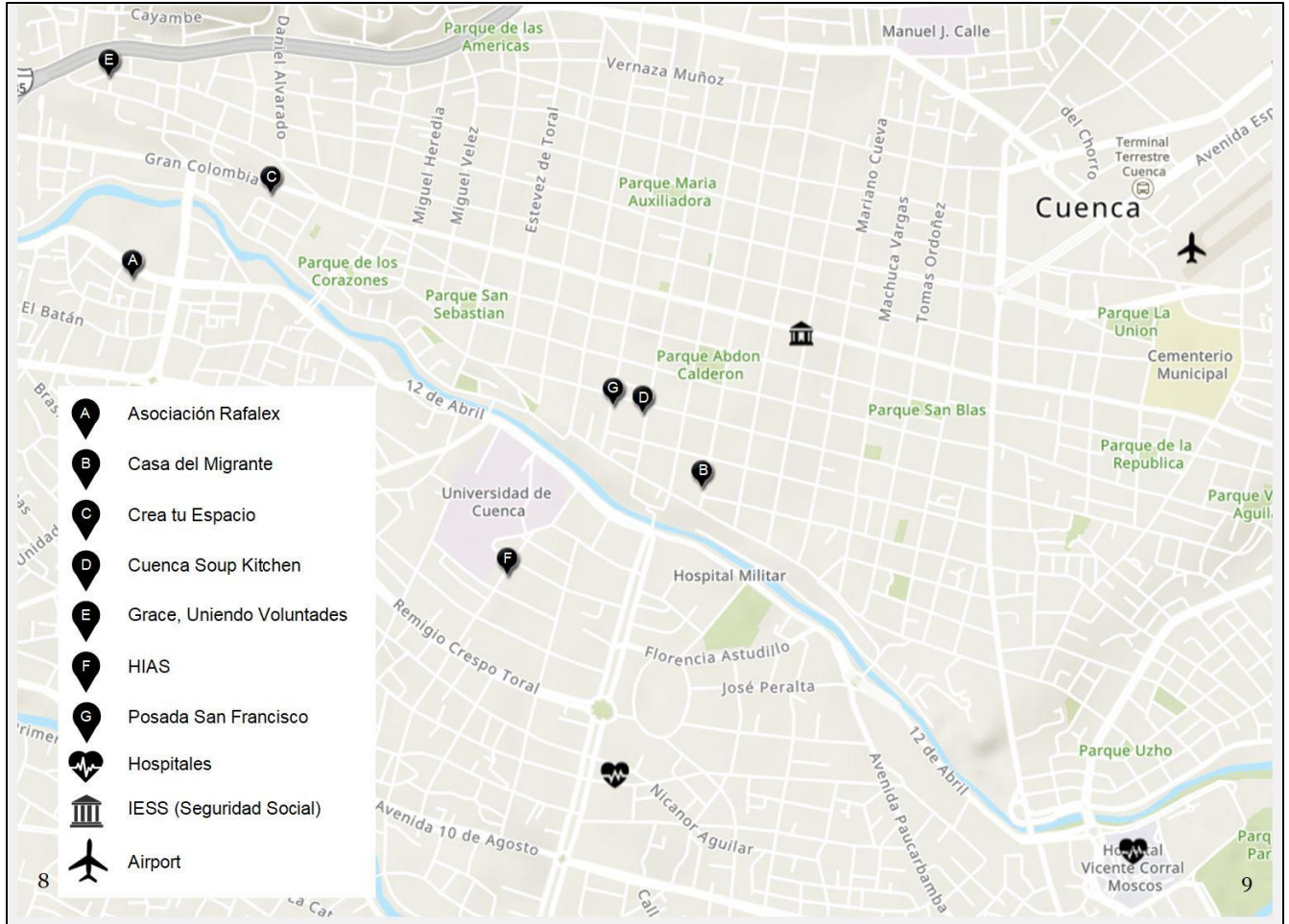
→ Create an account. You Will need your registration number(of migratory registry).



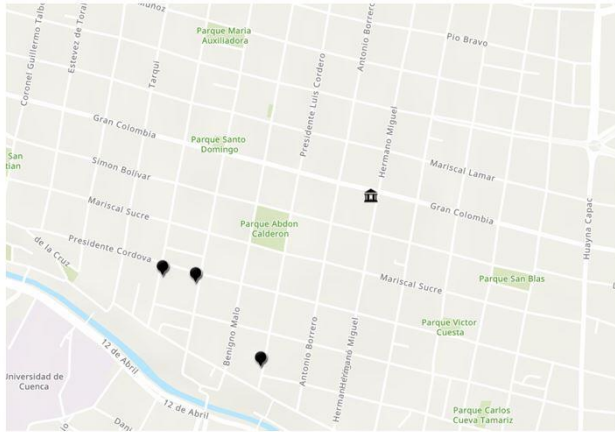
Receive confirmation of registry

→ Through email. The future steps will be through email. This will include information about how to pay the \$50 USD.

You can obtain help with the process through *Asociación Rafalex* (p.6), *Grace* (p.8), or *Uniendo Voluntades* (p.8)



Historial Center



Notes:

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Additional Information



Bus Cards (MOVILIZATE):

- To Buy: \$1,75
- Per trip: \$0,30
- Need a copy of your identification to buy
- Download the Moovit app for schedules



Medical Services:

- Free for all
- To make an appointment, call 171 option 1
- General medicine, odontology, obstetricians, psychology or disability services



Emergencies:

- If you are a victim of violence, you can use the Public Defense without cost
- Call 911

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To obtain the guide online, scane
the QR code or visit:
<http://bit.ly/migrantesencuenca>