



Leveraging academic expertise for migrant protection in Ecuador and Peru

Ecuador and Peru | Duration: August 2022 - July 2024 | ChildFund International, Instituto De Democracia Y Derechos Humanos PUCP, Universidad Del Azuay, UNESCO Perú, We World ONLUS

The Challenge

In Peru and Ecuador, displaced Venezuelans face interconnected challenges including poverty, limited access to work, social security, healthcare, and education. They are vulnerable to exploitation, discrimination, and human trafficking. Public authorities often lack resources, knowledge, and capacity to effectively protect migrants' rights, with systemic gaps in applying regulatory measures.

The Solution

This practice reinforced a multi-stakeholder project through collaborative cross-country qualitative research conducted jointly by universities and civil society organizations. The research explored barriers to migrants' socio-economic inclusion, particularly in education and decent work, as well as trafficking dynamics, focusing on local-level public policy implementation challenges and opportunities.

What Made This a Promising Practice?

This practice excelled by leveraging university-affiliated research teams to lend significant academic credibility to findings, enhancing advocacy efforts with authorities. The complementary partnership model allowed NGOs to contribute practical experience and local connections while universities provided academic rigor and methodological expertise. Using parallel investigations with consistent methodology across both countries highlighted needs for better transnational coordination, creating valuable cross-border insights. The research had direct practical outcomes, informing training programs and facilitating connections between migrants and officials. This innovative approach of combining academic research with practical advocacy created multiple pathways for impact, maximizing the project's effectiveness.

The Response

- **Access to research participants:** In Peru, university researchers were not located in implementation areas. This was resolved by partnering with WeWorld, which had established a presence and connections in research localities.
- **Security concerns:** Deteriorating security in Ecuador required adjusting the study focus to analyze regulations and institutional capacities rather than direct field research. ChildFund implemented security risk assessment protocols for all field activities.

Lessons Learned

The project demonstrated that creating win-win partnerships between universities and NGOs brings complementary strengths to migration research and advocacy, enhancing outcomes for all stakeholders. Teams learned to adapt to changing conditions by implementing comprehensive security risk assessment protocols, which proved essential even in seemingly stable contexts. For effective multi-country projects, implementing dual-meeting structures (cross-country coordination plus national meetings) allowed teams to address country-specific issues while maintaining cohesive implementation across borders. The experience underscored the importance of transforming academic findings into accessible formats for advocacy and training to maximize impact with different audiences. Finally, the project revealed that engaging authorities directly through research discussions can itself activate officials' capacities for human rights protection, creating immediate pathways for improvement.

Key Results

Research Implementation:

- Collaborated on a consistent research methodology across both countries
- Conducted stakeholder mapping to identify key informants
- Performed risk analysis to determine safe approaches to data collection
- Gathered migrant and displaced persons' voices for advocacy purposes
- Focused on particularly vulnerable groups (trafficking victims, LGBTQIA+ community)

Knowledge Application:

- Developed advocacy strategies targeting authorities
- Created training and capacity-building programs based on findings
- Engaged authorities in focus groups about challenges and improvement opportunities
- Presented findings at regional migration roundtables
- Published peer-reviewed research in both countries
- Facilitated direct connections between migrant organizations and authorities

Project Integration:

- Reinforced other project components including education access, skills certification, and economic initiative incubation
- Leveraged university resources (infrastructure, knowledge, staff) alongside NGO networks

Del desplazamiento a la integración: TRUYENDO COMUNIDADES PRODUCTIVAS Y PROTECTORAS



LiD Lives in Dignity GRANT FACILITY

The Lives in Dignity (LiD) Grant Facility was an EU-funded initiative managed by UNOPS that promoted development-oriented approaches in forced displacement settings. With €24 million allocated between 2021–2025, the Facility supported 14 innovative, multi-stakeholder projects across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Its flexible funding model empowered local actors, strengthened partnerships, and fostered integrated programming across five key areas: livelihoods, service delivery, housing and spatial planning, protection, and disaster- and climate-related mobility. The Facility prioritized community-led solutions, localization, and social cohesion, advancing sustainable development for both displaced populations and host communities. Find out more at https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/programming/programmes/lives-dignity-grant-facility_en