The Impact of Temporary Working and Residence Permits for Migrants in Colombia

As migration patterns change, further evidence of the impact of regulatory programs in developing countries is needed. In Colombia, researchers are evaluating the impact of a temporary working and residence permit program for Venezuelan migrants. Outcomes to be studied include labor indicators, health and integration measures.

Policy Issue
Increased humanitarian crises, violence, poverty, political dysfunction, and environmental disasters have increased the scale and complexity of migration around the world. The number of international migrants globally reached an estimated 272 million in 2019, an increase of 51 million since 2010. In the past, regularization programs have been a response to the mass influx of migrants. Traditionally implemented by developed countries, some of them had a positive impact on wages, mobility, and integration of migrants. However, there is little research on the impact of regularization programs in developing countries where informal labor markets are common. This research will shed light on the impact that temporary work and residence permits for Venezuelan migrants in Colombia have on labor, health and integration measures.

Evaluation Context
At least 1.8 million people have migrated from Venezuela to Colombia in an effort to flee the social, economic and political crisis in their country. This migratory inflow has put pressure on the local labor markets as a large share of the population is of working age, very often more qualified than the local workers, and is willing to downgrade in occupation and wage to get hold of an income to fulfill their basic needs. To meet this challenge, the Colombian government has issued temporary work and residence permits (Permiso Especial de Permanencia, or PEP), guaranteeing labor rights, access to health, education, child care, and other social services for up to two years.

Details of the Intervention

Note: This study is not a randomized trial
Researchers are evaluating the impact of granting working permits to Venezuelan migrants living in Colombia. Outcomes to be studied include labor, health and integration. To identify eligible migrants, researchers will use the RAMV (Registro Administrativo de Migrantes Venezolanos), an administrative record collected by the National Government with the original aim of characterizing the undocumented migrant population that were in Colombia by June of 2018. When the RAMV was collected, there were no plans for a permanent residence and work program for migrants. However, the record served as a basis for obtaining PEP3, as the program stipulated the following conditions: i) to be registered with the RAMV; ii) to be in Colombia at the time of the decree’s adoption; and iii) to have no criminal record or deportation orders.

To measure the program impact, researchers will compare migrants who were registered in the RAMV, and thus were eligible to receive PEP3 with undocumented migrants that are not registered in RAMV and arrived in Colombia between January of 2017 and December of 2018. In the absence of an initial survey, researchers will use the information gathered in the RAMV and include recall questions in the final survey. These questions aim to collect data related to migration status, time of arrival to Colombia, job history in both Colombia and Venezuela, among other issues. The sample will cover 4,000 households located in Bogota, Medellin, Barranquilla, and other 10 additional municipalities. Moreover, the research team will conduct 42 interviews with both documented and undocumented migrants.

**Results and Policy Lessons**

Project ongoing. Results forthcoming.

**Sources**

1. United Nations, “Increase in global number of international migrants continues to outpace growth of the world’s population”.

2. Amuedo-Dorantes and Antman, 2017; Cobb-Clark et al., 1995; Amuedo-Dorantes et al., 2007; Chassam-boulli and Peri, 2015; Devillanova et al., 2018; Monras et al., 2018.

3. The World Bank, “Migración desde venezuela a colombia: impactos y estrategia de respuesta en el corto y mediano plazo”.