



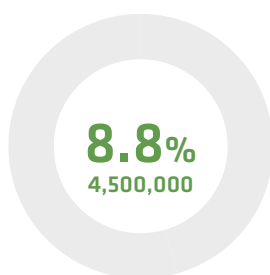
# Diaspora engagement mapping

## VENEZUELA

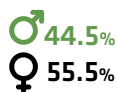
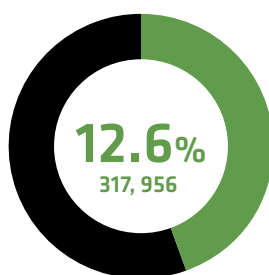
### Facts & figures

#### Emigration<sup>1</sup>

% of emigrants in total population<sup>2</sup>



% of which in the EU<sup>3</sup>



Remittances as a share of GDP<sup>4</sup>: 0.6%  
Remittances inflow (USD million): 279



#### Top countries of destination

Colombia	1,048,714
Peru	602,595
U.S.	255,141
Spain	202,859
Chile	109,798



#### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>5</sup>



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad<sup>6</sup>



Voting from abroad<sup>7</sup>:

At embassies/consulates



### Venezuela does not have a diaspora engagement policy.

There is effectively no government-diaspora engagement in the country's policy and legislative framework. Given the ongoing crisis, none of the organisations have direct ties or engagement with the government.

1 Source: <https://www.acnur.org/situacion-en-venezuela.html>; RMRP, Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/72254.pdf>.

2 Source: <https://r4v.info/es/situations/platform>, and RMRP, Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela. No disaggregated data available.

3 Source UNDESA

4 Source: Manuel Orozco, 'Remittances to Latin America and the Caribbean in 2019: Emerging Challenges', The Dialogue March 2020.

5 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ve.html>

6 Around 60% of Venezuelans abroad have irregular status, meaning they cannot vote.

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/63088>;

[http://www.cne.gob.ve/web/normativa\\_electoral/ley\\_organica\\_procesos\\_electorales/titulo9.php](http://www.cne.gob.ve/web/normativa_electoral/ley_organica_procesos_electorales/titulo9.php)

7 At the discretion of the Consejo Nacional Electoral



### Trends:

There is little engagement between the government and the diaspora. Due to the socio-political crisis, many diaspora groups are forming outside of Venezuela and many within the diaspora would like to help Venezuela achieve stability. Most Venezuelans interviewed in different surveys reflect the syndrome of “far but not absent.”<sup>8</sup>

There are opportunities for mobilising the Venezuelan diaspora, including to support return to democratic and constitutional order in Venezuela and provide humanitarian assistance and post-conflict recovery, including rebuilding institutions and transitional justice.<sup>9</sup>

Engagement with diaspora groups to raise finance for refugee projects is challenging. Nonetheless, the use of online donation platforms is paving the way to developing a comprehensive framework for Venezuelans overseas to be involved in refugee assistance.<sup>10</sup>

There is also significant potential to boost financial flows from the Venezuelan diaspora. Particularly, sending remittances. After the changes in currency creating a new parity and devaluation system through the *Bolívar soberano* in 2018, remittance transfers have been seen as an opportunity to attract funds and to capture foreign exchange from Europe in particular.

David Smolansky, the exiled former mayor of El Hatillo municipality in Caracas, and part of the Organization of American States, OAS’ taskforce on the Venezuelan crisis, has proposed the creation of a regional ID card that allows Venezuelans to travel across Latin America without the need for passports, making it easier for receiving countries to register and monitor their activities.<sup>11</sup>



### Achievements:

To date, there are more than 100 Venezuelan diaspora groups within the US sending humanitarian aid to Venezuela. There are many positive cases of cooperation, such as the work by Plan Pais.<sup>12</sup> They provide education programs for children in Venezuela as an effort to increase school retention, but also focus on forming the opinion of Venezuela’s diaspora youth to increase their engagement in Venezuela.

Remittance transfer companies have entered into the Venezuelan market attempting to offer competitive exchange rates (at 10% differentials instead of 1000% rates during the *Bolívar fuerte* period).

## Obstacles



- **No institutional ties:** Institutionalisation of emigration policy is weak given the ongoing socio-political crisis. Many of the emigrants fleeing lack governmental support structures. There are no official figures on the diaspora, and it is considered non-existent by the government.<sup>13</sup>

8 Vivas Peñalver, Leonardo & Paez, Tomas. (2017). The Venezuelan Diaspora, Another Impending Crisis?. 10.13140/RG.2.2.17819.87843.

9 <https://www.csis.org/programs/americas-program/future-venezuela-initiative-fvi>

10 <https://www.ft.com/content/20e7e77a-1d6b-4c20-ad61-e8f854fa5f5b>

11 <https://www.caracaschronicles.com/2019/07/02/an-explosive-venezuelan-diaspora-threatens-latin-america/>

12 <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/01/how-the-diaspora-is-helping-venezuela-migration-crisis/>

13 Vivas Peñalver, Leonardo & Paez, Tomas. (2017). The Venezuelan Diaspora, Another Impending Crisis?. 10.13140/RG.2.2.17819.87843.

- **Financial infrastructure:** Remittances are largely informal and there is no official governmental program to facilitate remittances.<sup>14</sup> More than 3 million households are receiving over USD3bn dollars in funds from the diaspora.<sup>15</sup> It has become a pattern among Venezuelans in the diaspora to help their relatives at home, although it is done under very difficult conditions due to the strict foreign exchange controls, which until 2019, criminalized any free exchange of currencies. These conditions make it extremely hard to have a freely established remittances marketplace.
- **Inadequate legal & policy framework:** The regime disrespects political and civil rights in its most basic forms, including those of the diaspora seeking passports and ID documents.<sup>16</sup> Venezuelans needing such documents must return and sometimes wait several months under poor conditions, including risks of extortion, to obtain the documents. It is not possible to obtain an ID card abroad, placing many Venezuelans in limbo, neither citizens of the host country, nor legally Venezuelans. The same can be said of the difficulties to register to vote.

## SPOTLIGHT: effective practices



### Voice of the Diaspora (La Voz de la Diáspora) - Research Project

Developed by a team at Universidad Central de Venezuela, the project aims to characterise and quantify the global distribution of the Venezuelan diaspora and give them voice and encourage their participation in networks. The information collected from online surveys, focus groups, or face-to-face interviews with nearly 4,000 people, allows for the characterisation by sociodemographic, professional, academic, and family characteristics; degree of integration into the host country; desire (or lack thereof) to return; and their willingness to participate in the reconstruction process.<sup>17</sup>

NETWORKS

### Una Medicina Para Venezuela<sup>18</sup>

Implemented by Asociación Española Venezolana por la Democracia, “the project which collects medicines and medical supplies in Spain and sends them to Venezuela.

HUMANITARIAN AID

### Dame tu Pastillita<sup>19</sup>

A communication campaign by Asociación LEAN Ayuda Humanitaria to collect and send medicine to Venezuela.

HUMANITARIAN AID

### Vuelve a Casa<sup>20</sup> - Return initiative (inactive)

This programme, promoted by the National Assembly (AN) and various organisations, is designed to “connect all Venezuelans living abroad and generates the conditions for their return.” However, the initiative is not in place due to the internal conflict between Guaido followers and the Maduro regime.

RETURN

14 *Latin American and Caribbean Migration from Weak and Failing States*, 2019. Washington, DC, IAD.

15 Orozco, Manuel. Money Transfers to Venezuela, a brief overview. 2020, Washington, DC, IAD, forthcoming.

16 Vivas Peñalver, Leonardo & Paez, Tomas. (2017). The Venezuelan Diaspora, Another Impending Crisis?. 10.13140/RG.2.2.17819.87843.

17 <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/amid-economic-crisis-and-political-turmoil-venezuelans-form-new-exodus>

18 [twitter.com/asevedemocracia?lang=es](https://twitter.com/asevedemocracia?lang=es) ; [aseved.com](https://aseved.com)

19 [facebook.com/LeanAyudaHumanitaria](https://facebook.com/LeanAyudaHumanitaria); [leanemergente.org](https://leanemergente.org)

20 <https://venepress.com/Pol%C3%ADtica/Guaido-lanza-el-programa-Vuelve-a-Casa1561391446747>

## Annex: List of actors

### Diaspora related institutions



There is no diaspora engagement within the government due to the socio-political crisis. Therefore, no institution is in charge of this issue.

### Diaspora organisations in Europe



**Un Mundo Sin Mordaza** 2009 <https://sinmordaza.org/historia/>

Un Mundo Sin Mordaza is an international organisation formed after the global protest No Más Cierres, in which more than 20 countries participated. The organisation was founded to institutionalise the “global solidarity” movement without borders.

**Veneeuropa Belgium**, Greece, Italy, Spain, Sweden, UK [http://www.veneueuropa.eu/index\\_en.htm](http://www.veneueuropa.eu/index_en.htm)

Headquartered in Brussels, with delegations in six European countries and a youth delegation, Veneeuropa promotes analysis and debate about the reality of Venezuela from the perspective of the socio-cultural ties that unite it with Europe. It provides platforms and spaces facilitating the search for viable solutions to the conflict.

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