POLICY BRIEF

Vulnerable Populations and Support Networks in Mexico and the United States
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STATEMENT OF ISSUE

The COVID-19 pandemic has displayed the extreme vulnerability and inequality that thousands of migrants experience without acknowledgement of their citizen rights throughout the world. The disproportionate effect that the pandemic has on marginalized populations, such as people of color in the U.S., uncover economic, political, and social structures that determine the vulnerability of these groups.

KEY FINDINGS

- Precarious health before beginning their journey, failing health in transit and caused by unsuitable places like detention centers, and limited access to health and information while in transit and at destination place people in mobility at a disadvantage during the pandemic.
- Immigrants were identified as "essential workers" indispensable for sustaining Americans and the U.S. economy. However, Mexican migrants are one of the populations with high risk factors due.
- Among increased deportations, the Mexican State's capacities to support and protect deported populations can be seen as insufficient.
- Migrant children who depend on cross-border education experience educational challenges due to their struggle to receive documentation to obtain their "Learn at Home" supplies, lack of familiarity with technology, and confinement in government shelters.
- In Mexico, 26,000 persons have been acknowledged as refugees since 2016, with the Mexican Commission for Refugees receiving the largest number of applications ever in the past two years.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Design and operate health and social policies geared towards attention to the most vulnerable groups, among which migrants and migrant families are particularly important.
- Include refugees and other people who need international protection in general health safety measures in addition to specific policy initiatives.
- Generate data in academia and the public sector to allow analyses of the migration phenomenon to inform programs and policies for populations in mobility.
- Establish an international cooperation system which proposes a new citizenship paradigm in which States act in accordance with the global interdependence evidenced during the pandemic, incorporating measures under which free human mobility is seen as a resource to overcome crisis.
- Promote real-time, virtual educational interactions with interactive tools to motivate students while following up with migrant families.
- Create comprehensive return policies and redistribute the budget to support community organizations and virtual education.
- Follow the example of communities which exhibit ongoing efforts to create a culture, policies, and practices that enable migrants and long-term residents to thrive and belong together.

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