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**Timeline**

2024

**Study Status**

In Progress

**Study Type**

Randomized Evaluation

**Sample Size**

1,561 participants

**Research Implemented by IPA**

Yes

# Elevating Positive Narratives: WhatsApp Campaign Effects on Migrant-Host Relations in Colombia



Woman using Whatsapp on her phone. ©2024, Tatiana Diuvbanova on Shutterstock

**Abstract: In collaboration with IPA Colombia and El Barómetro, researchers are conducting a randomized evaluation to assess whether a WhatsApp video campaign promoting positive interactions between Venezuelan migrants and Colombians can influence intergroup attitudes for both groups and improve socio-psychological integration for Venezuelans.**

Colombia hosts nearly three million Venezuelan migrants, which is the highest number in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>1</sup> Despite efforts to integrate migrants, about 21 percent of migrants in Colombia feel discriminated against based on their nationality. Existing data suggests that Colombians' most common feelings toward Venezuelans include 44 percent expressing distrust, 32 percent feeling sadness, and 24 percent experiencing fear.<sup>2</sup> The highest rate of violence against Venezuelan migrants occurred in 2023.<sup>3</sup> In an effort to strengthen social cohesion, IPA Colombia and El Barómetro developed videos showing positive experiences between Venezuelans and Colombians.

In collaboration with IPA Colombia, researchers conducted a randomized evaluation to assess whether exposure to videos relaying positive narratives reduces Colombians' biases against Venezuelan immigrants and increases socio-psychological integration and in-group satisfaction for Venezuelans. The intervention included 1,561 individuals from 13 major cities registered in the government of Colombia's Sisbén database, which assesses and identifies eligible recipients of social protection programs in Colombia. Participants were randomly

assigned to receive the videos through WhatsApp individually, to receive the videos within a WhatsApp group for co-viewing, or to serve as a comparison group. The participants in the comparison group received videos with no explicit reference to migration and social cohesion.

Researchers measured outcomes including whether and how social viewing helps reduce prejudice and increase openness to more inclusive social norms, how different social groups watch the videos together, and the impact of potential spillover effects from people leveraging digital technology to share information. Researchers also assessed the participants' reactions and interactions while co-viewing through the WhatsApp group chats. As a complement to the feedback gathering, researchers will follow-up with one-on-one interviews with 20 participants to understand their motivations for engaging with the study, as well as their reactions to the videos and the co-viewing experience.

Results will be available in 2024.

## Sources

<sup>1</sup> “Colombia’s Refugee Crisis and Integration Approach Explained.” n.d. [www.unrefugees.org](https://www.unrefugees.org/news/colombia-s-refugee-crisis-and-integration-approach-explained/).  
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<sup>2</sup> Cifras y Conceptos, “Panel de Opinión 2022”,  
<https://www.cifrasyconceptos.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Panel2022-2.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Barreto Jové, Andreína. 2024. “Barómetro de Xenofobia: 2023 Fue El Año Con Mayor Tasa de Violencia Para Migrantes Venezolanas.” *El Diario*, February 16, 2024,  
<https://eldiario.com/2024/02/16/barometro-de-xenofobia-2023-migrantes-venezolanas/>

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## Implementing Partner



**El Barómetro**