

# FEMIG WORKSHOP REPORT: COLOMBIA

Building Feminist Migration  
Policy for Gender Equality  
from Grassroots to Global

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# INTRODUCTION AND WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

FeMig (Building a Feminist Migration Policy for Gender Equality, from Grassroots to Global) is an initiative led by the [Gender+Migration Hub](#) at the International Migration Research Centre, Wilfrid Laurier University, in partnership with the [Women in Migration Network](#) and the [International Detention Coalition \(IDC\)](#) and funded by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

The FeMig initiative responds to the reality that migration, when shaped by structural inequality, gendered labor markets, racial hierarchies, and restrictive governance regimes, does not automatically lead to empowerment or gender equality. Instead, women, gender-diverse, and racialized migrants, particularly those concentrated in feminized, undervalued, and informal sectors such as domestic and care work, are systematically exposed to precarity, violence, and rights violations across the migration cycle. These harms are not incidental, but are produced through policy choices, labor recruitment systems, border regimes, and social norms that devalue women's labor and constrain their mobility.

FeMig seeks to disrupt these dynamics by grounding migration governance in feminist, rights-based, and intersectional approaches developed from the lived experiences, organizing practices, and policy expertise of grassroots civil society organizations (CSOs). Central to FeMig is the recognition that civil society actors are not merely service providers or policy stakeholders, but key agents of migration governance. Working directly with migrant communities, CSOs document gender-based violence (GBV), labor exploitation, and systemic exclusion; provide legal, psychosocial, and humanitarian support; and advance advocacy and accountability efforts at local, national, regional, and global levels.

As part of this initiative, participatory workshops are being conducted in multiple countries, including Thailand, Mexico, Ethiopia, Colombia, Ecuador, Nepal and Albania.



# COUNTRY CONTEXT: GENDER AND MIGRATION


One of these workshops was held in Bogotá, Colombia, on July 9–10, 2025, bringing together 35 participants from 25 Colombian civil society organizations.

Colombia has recently played a prominent role in global migration governance: it is a "champion" country of the **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)** and hosted the **Fifteenth Summit of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)** in Riohacha, La Guajira, between September 2 and 4, 2025. Colombia has a migration policy centered on the rights of migrants; in this sense, one of its most notable measures has been the regularization of 2.4 million Venezuelans, who were granted a **Temporary Protection Status (ETPV)**, allowing access to health, education, and the labor market.

Furthermore, the country has a **Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP)** carried out by the government of Gustavo Petro (2022). The fundamental principles of the FFP are:

1. **Intersectional Approach:** Recognizes multiple forms of discrimination (gender, race, class, ethnicity) and promotes special attention to Afro-descendant, Indigenous, peasant, and LGBTQ+ women.
2. **Depatriarchalization of International Relations:** Involves questioning traditional power structures and promoting female leadership in multilateral organizations.
3. **Feminist Care Economy:** Recognizes unpaid care work and promotes the incorporation of care into development and cooperation agendas.

Migration and borders are among the priority areas of action for the FFP, alongside international peace and security, South-South cooperation, and climate change. Regarding migration and borders, a gender approach to migration policy is promoted, with special protection for migrant women and girls and the prevention of sexual violence in migratory contexts.



Colombian civil society is very active in migration related issues. It is organized according to different migratory flows. Traditionally, it was a country of origin (sending population), with 3.7 million Colombians living abroad, including nearly 500,000 refugees. In the last decade, Colombia also became a receiving country, leading to the creation of many organizations for Venezuelan migrants—a group that reaches 2.9 million people in the country. Colombia is also a transit country for international migrants moving North toward the United States; several humanitarian organizations deal with this population, significantly in the Darien Gap on the border with Panama, one of the most dangerous borders in the world.

The participating organizations analyzed how gender impacts all stages of the migratory process, including the root causes of migration, difficulties in transit, and access to rights in the destination country.



# WORKSHOP DESIGN AND PARTICIPANTS

The workshop participants came from **25 Colombian civil society organizations** with very diverse profiles, including organizations led by migrant women, Venezuelan organizations, organizations of Colombians abroad, humanitarian organizations, organizations working with the LGBTQ+ population, human rights organizations, academic networks, and trade unions.

The complete list of organizations is as follows: Somos Network Corporation; Women for Rights; Naguara with a Voice Corporation; Network of United Women for Gender Equality; OBC Maschis Entrelazadas; Observatory of Human Mobility and International Protection; Venezuelans in Barranquilla; Ideas for Peace Foundation; Somos Network Corporation; United Refugees; DRC; The Barometer; Public Services International; CJ Women; Jesuit Network with Migrants Latin America and the Caribbean (RJM LAC); Women: Diaspora and Return; General Confederation of Labor (CGT); Collective of Refugee, Exiled and Migrant Women; Dejusticia; Empodérame Foundation; Comparte Foundation; Christian Aid; ALAS Network (Network of Latin American Law Academics); Feminist Diplomacy Network for Peace; Unidas Foundation: Women Building Social Fabric.



# KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

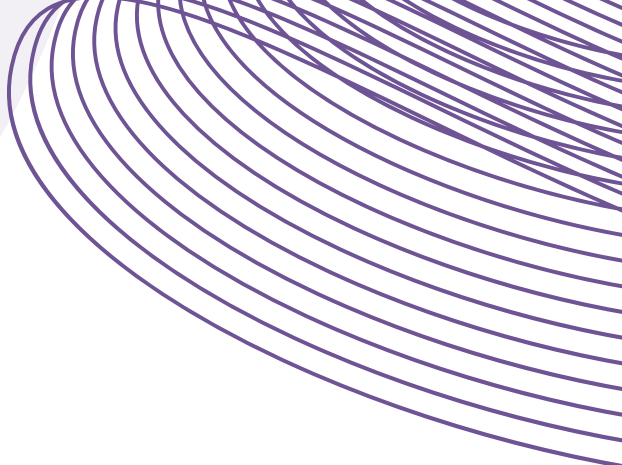
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- **Root causes for migration:** Gender-based violence, lack of opportunities for women (including the impact of a heavier care burden), and persecution of LGBTQ+ individuals are specific causes of migration.
- **Transit Difficulties:** Participants detailed the increased risk of becoming victims of trafficking, suffering sexual violence, and even forced disappearance or death in transit.
- **Destination Country:** Differentiated access to rights and gender discrimination were highlighted. In terms of access to health, difficulties accessing sexual and reproductive health persist. Regarding socio-economic inclusion, gender impacts access to employment and social security, considering wage gaps, underemployment of women, trafficking networks, and time dedicated to care work. It was also noted that there are migration related care tasks falling on migrant women including navigating regularization, health, and education for their children.

## Characteristics of a Feminist Migration Policy

The workshop debated how migration policies can be feminist and contribute to gender equality. Proposed characteristics include:

- **Differential Approach:** Recognizing that women, trans people, and gender diverse persons face specific inequalities throughout the migratory process.
- **Core Principles:** policies should be based on intersectionality, non-discrimination, and a life free from violence.
- **Agency:** Policies must be co-created with women in migration, taking their experiences and recommendations into account.
- **Diversity of Experience:** Recognizing there is no single experience of being a woman; affirmative and situated actions are necessary based on territory, age, and nationality.

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- **Care Work:** Promoting policies for the recognition and redistribution of both paid and unpaid work.
  - **Feminist Citizen Diplomacy:** Making "bottom-up" daily work visible to position needs and experiences on public agendas.

### **Civil Society Actions**

Participants identified what civil society currently does to guarantee gender equality:

- **Visibility and reporting:** Reporting human rights violations against women and LGBTQ+ people.
- **Advocacy:** Using national and international networks, strategic litigation, and citizen diplomacy to push states from the bottom up.
- **Comprehensive Services:** Providing psychosocial support, humanitarian aid, and legal accompaniment with a gender-sensitive approach.
- **Training and Education:** Creating safe spaces for rights education, employment training, and the prevention of gender-based violence.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve a Feminist Migration Policy, the following recommendations were made:

## **1. Participation in Public Policy Design**

- Actively link women's and LGBTQ+ organizations in the design, implementation, and monitoring of public policy.
- Consult community-based feminist organizations that have direct contact with migrants.
- Guarantee participation spaces for migrant women, feminist collectives, and civil society.

## **2. Intersectional Approach**

- Integrate an intersectional approach into migration policies to guarantee equitable access to rights and services.
- Make the real needs of women and LGBTQ+ individuals visible.

## **3. Human Rights Standards**

- Adopt international standards already established in conventions, treaties, and resolutions regarding gender equality.

## **4. Monitoring**

- Civil society must play a fundamental role in monitoring as well as in the evaluation and follow-up of feminist migration policies.



## Contact Us

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