



Rights Based Social Work Accompaniment and Migrant Inclusion: Evidence from an Intermediate Ecuadorian Territory

*Acompañamiento en Trabajo Social basado en derechos e inclusión de migrantes:
evidencia de un territorio intermedio ecuatoriano*

Autores:



Paola Andrea Pérez Bravo¹

| pperez2358@utm.edu.ec



Felix Fernando Toala Barahona¹

| felix.toala@utm.edu.ec

¹Universidad Técnica de Manabí, Portoviejo, Ecuador

Recepción: 20 de junio de 2026 | **Aceptación:** 18 de julio de 2026 | **Publicación:** 04 de agosto de 2026

Resumen

Este estudio analizó la relación entre el acompañamiento profesional del Trabajo Social basado en derechos y la inclusión social de migrantes en un territorio intermedio de recepción migratoria en Ecuador. El diseño fue cuantitativo, no experimental, correlacional y transversal. La población accesible estuvo compuesta por 50 personas migrantes vinculadas a procesos de orientación, documentación, regularización o apoyo en una institución pública anonimizada. De este grupo, 48 personas aceptaron participar voluntariamente y completaron la encuesta, mientras que dos personas decidieron no participar. Los datos se recopilaron utilizando un cuestionario tipo Likert de 18 ítems que fue validado por juicio experto y probado previamente en un piloto. Se usó el coeficiente de correlación de rangos de Spearman porque los datos son ordinales. Los resultados mostraron una asociación positiva, moderadamente fuerte y estadísticamente significativa entre el acompañamiento profesional del Trabajo Social basado en derechos e inclusión social migrante ($p = 0.590$; $p < .001$). Los resultados descriptivos indicaron que la media más alta se encontró en el acceso a derechos y servicios para la inclusión social de migrantes, en tanto que la media más baja correspondía a la mediación y articulación institucional en el apoyo profesional. Los hallazgos indican que el respaldo a los migrantes mediante el Trabajo Social, con una perspectiva basada en derechos, podría funcionar como un puente entre los derechos formales y las verdaderas oportunidades para acceder a servicios. Esto puede reforzar tanto las redes de apoyo como la sensación de reconocimiento social en los contextos locales de acogida.

Palabras clave: Trabajo Social; derechos humanos; migración; acompañamiento profesional; inclusión social

Abstract

This study analysed the relationship between rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment and the social inclusion of migrants in an intermediate migration-receiving territory in Ecuador. The design was quantitative, non-experimental, correlational and cross-sectional. The accessible population consisted of 50 migrant persons linked to migrant-related guidance, documentation, regularization or support processes in an anonymised public institution, of whom 48 agreed to participate and completed the survey. Two persons declined to participate voluntarily. Data were collected using an 18-item Likert-type questionnaire that was validated by expert judgement and pilot tested previously. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used because the data are ordinal. The results showed a positive, moderately strong, and statistically significant association between professional Social Work support based on rights and migrant social inclusion ($p = 0.590$; $p < .001$). The descriptive results indicated that the highest mean was found in access to rights and services for the social inclusion of migrants, while the lowest mean corresponded to mediation and institutional articulation in professional support. The findings indicate that support for migrants through Social Work, with a rights-based perspective, could serve as a bridge between formal rights and real opportunities to access services. This can strengthen both support networks and the sense of social recognition in local host contexts.

Keywords: Social Work; human rights; migration; professional accompaniment; social inclusion



Introducción

Contemporary migration constitutes a complex social process that goes beyond territorial displacement and reshapes the relationships between rights, access to services, support networks and community integration (Albarracín et al., 2024; Célleri, 2024). In this context, the social inclusion of migrants has become a priority issue for Social Work, particularly in Latin American settings where recent migratory flows have intensified the tension between the formal recognition of rights and the real conditions of social integration.

From a rights-based Social Work perspective, migrant inclusion cannot be reduced to individual adaptation or access to isolated services. It involves the effective exercise of rights, institutional recognition, protection from discrimination and the creation of social conditions that allow migrant persons to participate with dignity in the receiving community. Recent literature has emphasised that human rights underpin Social Work theory, ethics and professional practice, although their implementation is shaped by specific social, political and institutional contexts (Carvalho & Albuquerque, 2025). Likewise, rights-based Social Work practice with immigrants and asylum seekers shows that professional intervention can connect legal protection, institutional access, psychosocial intervention and dignity-oriented practice (Androff & Mathis, 2022). In this sense, Social Work accompaniment is not only an administrative or psychosocial practice, but also a rights-oriented intervention that mediates between migrant needs, institutional responses and broader principles of social justice.

At the international level, several countries have made notable progress in the inclusion of migrants through policies and interventions aimed at social integration. In Europe, countries such as Germany and Sweden have implemented comprehensive models to



strengthen dimensions of psychosocial accompaniment (Namata et al., 2025). Sweden has implemented actions related to health, social care, education, employment and housing within institutional and community processes of reception and inclusion (Emilsson & Öberg, 2021).

Another country that has developed and promoted sustainable integration strategies is Canada, which actively involves the third sector and universities with solid links between public policy and direct care (Moreno-Tallón & Guasp, 2025). These experiences, supported by recent studies, show that it is possible to build more humane and efficient systems capable of transforming migration into a process of mutual inclusion and joint development.

Therefore, it is important to emphasise that the Social Work professional (SWP) not only provides emotional support and guidance but also acts as a mediator between migrant persons and institutional services. From the theory of social support, the accompaniment that people receive from formal and informal networks can operate as a protective resource against stress, social vulnerability and adaptation challenges. Such support may take emotional, informational, instrumental and relational forms, contributing to psychological and social well-being and strengthening people's capacity to cope with adverse contexts (House, 1981). This perspective is pertinent because it allows us to understand professional accompaniment as a relational and functional resource that contributes to responding to the needs of the migrant population.

From a conceptual perspective, social inclusion should not be understood only as the absence of exclusion, but as a multidimensional and contextual process. It involves effective access to resources, participation in social life and a sense of belonging within the community. In other words, social inclusion depends on the interaction between economic, social, political, institutional and cultural dimensions; therefore, its analysis

requires conceptual clarity and an adequate delimitation of its components (Brik & Brown, 2025).

Recent studies on migration and Social Work have also shown that trust-building, recognition, institutional navigation and psychosocial intervention are central to professional intervention with migrant and refugee populations in contexts marked by exclusion, racism or restrictive policies (Chuang et al., 2023). This perspective is pertinent because it allows Social Work accompaniment to be understood as a relational and functional resource that helps connect migrant needs with institutional and community responses.

Likewise, the social capital approach applied to migration allows social inclusion to be operationalised in measurable terms, such as participation in local networks, access to public services, institutional links and perception of trust. In this sense, social capital is linked to aspects of social organisation and a sense of community that facilitate cooperation, civic engagement and solidarity (Putnam, 2003). Recent migration research has also demonstrated that diverse social networks, trust and support links can enable access to resources, institutional engagement and everyday integration in migrant populations (Saadi et al., 2023). These elements are important for the understanding of the processes of inclusion of migrant populations in receiving environments.

In Latin America, although migration-related challenges are more pronounced, relevant institutional and professional responses have emerged. An example is Chile, a country that has been the scene of multiple migratory flows; especially of Venezuelan, Cuban and Colombian origin (Colmenares & Abarca, 2024; Eche-Enríquez & Vivas-Vivas, 2022). Faced with this, various institutions have adopted SWP intervention strategies. These are oriented or focused on intercultural mediation, legal accompaniment and the consolidation of territorial support networks (Akkan et al., 2024).

These interventions have been aimed at reducing the effects of exclusion through institutional articulation logics, generating valuable experiences, although still fragile, in complex environments (Abifandi-Cedeño et al., 2022). Such initiatives demonstrate that, even in adverse conditions, Social Work can position itself as an active agent in the guarantee of human rights and in the promotion of social inclusion (Fernández et al., 2021).

However, the Ecuadorian case reveals structural tension and persistent contradictions in the relationship between migration policy, institutional response and migrant social inclusion. Although the country has ratified international commitments that recognise migrants rights, state responses continue to be intermittent, fragmented and difficult to sustain over time, particularly in local territories where migration intersects with previous structural inequalities (Torres et al., 2024).

The growing presence of migrants from Venezuela, Cuba and Colombia has overwhelmed institutional capacity. As a result, an intense gap persists between normative discourse and the lived experience of those who arrive in the hope of rebuilding their lives. Barriers to access to health, employment, education, and legal regularisation not only persist, but are sometimes deepened by prejudice, ignorance, and administrative slowness (Garzozzi-Pincay & Garzozzi-Pincay, 2023; Oviedo, 2023). Despite the efforts of some public institutions, social organisations and related professionals involved in migration-related care, there is still limited empirical systematisation of how Social Work accompaniment contributes to migrant inclusion in intermediate local contexts outside major urban centres. If this gap persists, dynamics of exclusion and institutional abandonment may continue to weaken the social fabrics required for effective integration processes (Caiche Beltrán & Guerrero Velástegui, 2024). In view of this, it was necessary to analyse the scope and limits of the inclusion strategies applied by SWP from a

professional, ethical, and institutional logic (Brannelly et al., 2024).

Likewise, it is important to consider that the processes of social inclusion of migrants are not experienced in a homogeneous way. Rather, they are crossed by factors such as gender, age, migratory status; which can deepen conditions of vulnerability or exclusion. From this point of view, professional support becomes more important because it has the capacity to address diverse needs associated with gender, age, migratory status, and the possibility of receiving institutional support. Thus, despite significant contributions in terms of inclusion, access to rights, and migration, a research gap persists on the relationship between rights-based Social Work support and the social inclusion of migrants in intermediate territories. This is especially true in Latin American scenarios where institutional barriers and fragmented access to services coexist with formal rights. Thus, the local setting was not approached as an isolated case, but as an empirical entry point for examining a broader Social Work problem: the relationship between professional accompaniment, access to rights, support networks and the social inclusion of migrant populations. In response to this gap, the study was guided by the following question: What is the relationship between rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment and the social inclusion of migrants in an intermediate migration-receiving territory in Ecuador? Accordingly, the objective was to analyse the relationship between rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment and the social inclusion of migrants in an intermediate migration-receiving territory in Ecuador. Likewise, the following research hypotheses were proposed:

H₁: There is a statistically significant relationship between rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment and the social inclusion of migrants in an intermediate migration-receiving territory in Ecuador.

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between rights-based Social Work

professional accompaniment and the social inclusion of migrants in an intermediate migration-receiving territory in Ecuador.

By focusing on an intermediate territory, this study contributes empirical evidence to the global discussion on how social workers may help translate nominal rights into practical inclusionary practices for immigrant communities.

Methods

The study was framed in the positivist paradigm, from which rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment and migrant social inclusion were approached as observable and measurable phenomena suitable for statistical analysis (Beltrán & Bernal, 2020). A quantitative approach and a non-experimental, correlational, cross-sectional design were adopted; aimed at identifying the relationship between both variables without intentional manipulation (Arias et al., 2022; Lim, 2025).

Context

The research was conducted in the canton of Azogues, Cañar province, Ecuador, in an anonymised public institution linked to care and guidance services for migration-related processes. This local setting was selected because it represents an intermediate migration-receiving context where access to rights, institutional mediation and social supports constitute relevant dimensions of migrant inclusion. For ethical, administrative, and institutional confidentiality reasons, the name of the institution was anonymised. In this way, the identity data was safeguarded according to the study protocol, the database, and the scientific manuscript.

The institution was not analysed as an organisational case study. Rather, it served as a point of access to approach the involved migrants. All these people come for guidance, documentation, regularisation, or support. This delimitation allowed the study to examine the relationship between professional support and social inclusion without evaluating

institutional performance. A prior field approach was carried out in April 2026 to socialise the study objectives, observe the dynamics of user flow and estimate the feasibility of data collection. This preliminary phase made it possible to recognise the real conditions of the context, estimate participant accessibility and organise the fieldwork without interfering with institutional procedures or requesting official administrative information (Organic Law on Personal Data Protection, 2021).

Population, sample and criteria

The accessible population was composed of 50 migrant persons linked to migration-related guidance, documentation, transit, regularisation or support processes in the canton of Azogues. From this population, the final sample consisted of 48 migrant persons, selected through non-probabilistic convenience sampling with consecutive inclusion according to participant accessibility, voluntary participation and compliance with the inclusion criteria (Carranza et al., 2024).

Although the sample was selected through non-probabilistic convenience sampling, it represented 96% of the accessible population identified during the fieldwork period. The difference between the accessible population and the final sample was due exclusively to the voluntary refusal of two persons to participate in the survey. No participant was excluded after completing the questionnaire. The inclusion criteria were: being an adult migrant, being linked to care or guidance processes in an anonymised public institution related to migration services, voluntarily agreeing to participate, and completing the questionnaire in full. The exclusion criteria were being under 18 years old; not being related to migration-related processes; not agreeing to participate voluntarily; and submitting incomplete or inconsistent questionnaires.

Instrument

The technique used was the survey. The instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire of 18 items with a Likert-type scale of five response options (Koo & Yang, 2025). The choices were 5= always (as the highest value), 4= almost always, 3= sometimes (as the intermediate or neutral value), 2= almost never, 1= never (as the lowest value). The independent variable, professional accompaniment in Social Work based on rights, was operationalised through the dimensions of guidance, information, mediation and institutional articulation, and psychosocial intervention. The dependent variable, the social inclusion of migrants, was structured into the following dimensions: access to rights and services, support networks, social integration, and participation and perception of inclusion. Each dimension was composed of three items, for a total of 18 items (see table 1).

Table 1. *Questionnaire applied to migrant participants in a local Ecuadorian context*

Independent variable (X): Rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment		Options				
Dimensions	Items	5	4	3	2	1
1. Guidance and information	The Social Worker clearly explained to me the legal requirements for my regularisation in Ecuador.					
	I received detailed information about the health care and education routes in Azogues.					
	My duties and rights as citizens were explained to me in an understandable way.					
2. Mediation and institutional articulation	The social worker helped me to be treated in public institutions.					
	I felt the support of Social Work to mediate in the face of difficulties with institutional procedures.					
	The follow-up carried out on my case by the professional has been constant and orderly.					

	The social worker demonstrated active and empathetic listening during the care sessions.	
3. Psychosocial Intervention	I received support from the social workers to better adapt to my migration process.	
	The treatment received by the professional was dignified and free of any form of discrimination.	
Dependent variable (Y): Migrant social inclusion		Options
	I currently regularly use public health or education services in Azogues.	5 4 3 2 1
4. Access to rights and services	I have the right basic conditions for my life in Azogues.	
	I exercise my citizenship rights in Azogues without fear of being sanctioned or excluded because of my origin.	
	I actively participate in groups, associations or cultural events in the local community.	
5. Support networks and social integration	I have established bonds of trust and support with people living in Azogues (neighbors, friends)	
	I feel that I have someone to turn to in the city in the event of an economic or family emergency.	
	I feel recognized as a respected member in the community where I reside.	
6. Participation and perception of inclusion	I consider that the canton of Azogues offers a safe and welcoming environment for my development and that of my family.	
	My general living situation in the social environment of Azogues is better today than when I arrived in the canton.	

Source: Own creation

Expert Validation

Prior to the pilot test, the instrument was subjected to a content validation process through expert judgement. In which five specialists participated, of whom three were Social

Workers specialised in the research line, one Social Worker who has worked with the migrant population at the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), an NGO that operates in Ecuador and provides care to migrants; and an expert in research methodology. The judges evaluated the relevance, clarity, coherence and pertinence of the items. Based on their observations, drafting and conceptual precision adjustments were made that strengthened the consistency of the questionnaire before its preliminary application.

Pilot test

Subsequently, between the third and fourth weeks of the field process, a pilot test was conducted with 15 migrants cared for in an anonymised public institution in Azogues. The purpose of this phase was to evaluate the consistency of the items, understanding of the instrument, response time, and the feasibility of the application procedure (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Reliability coefficients obtained in the pilot test*

Scale Reliability Statistics		
	Cronbach's Alpha	McDonald's ω
Scale	0.873	0.879

Source: Own creation

The preliminary internal consistency of the instrument was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega coefficients, obtaining values of 0.873 and 0.879, which are considered very good and evidenced satisfactory reliability in the pilot phase (Mendoza et al., 2024). Based on the results, minor editorial adjustments were made to improve the understanding of some items. Pilot participants were not included in the final study analysis.

Ethics

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki, the Ecuadorian Organic Law on Personal Data Protection (2021) and the ethical regulations governing research involving human participants in Ecuador. The study was classified as minimal risk because it did not involve experimental intervention, manipulation of variables, clinical procedures, biological samples or the collection of identifiable personal data. Voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed throughout the research process. No names, national identification numbers, addresses, telephone numbers or any other identifiable personal data were collected.

Institutional anonymisation was applied; therefore, the manuscript does not disclose the name of the public institution where participants were approached. The research did not access institutional files, administrative records or official databases belonging to the participating institution.

All participants were invited to give electronic informed consent prior to accessing the questionnaire. The consent form outlined the study's objectives, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality and anonymity, no collection of identifiable data, and the participants' right to refuse to participate without consequences. This procedure complied with the principles of confidentiality, data minimisation and protection of personal data established in the Ecuadorian legislation. Ethical approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Technical University of Manabí (CEISH-UTM), Ecuador, prior to the commencement of the study (Approval Code: CEISH-UTM-INT_26-05-11_PAPB).



Application of the instrument

Once the pilot phase was concluded, the information collection process was carried out one month after the pilot test. The application of the questionnaire was carried out virtually through Google Forms, guaranteeing voluntary, anonymous and confidential participation. Where necessary, support was provided during the response process to facilitate the participation of people with limitations in the use of technological tools, visual difficulties, or support needs during the understanding of the questionnaire.

Data analysis

The data obtained were encoded in a digital matrix and analysed with the statistical software Jamovi version 2.7.17. Since the data came from a questionnaire with a Likert-type scale and were treated as ordinal variables, the inferential analysis was developed from a non-parametric approach. This decision was also appropriate considering the non-probabilistic nature of the sample and the aim of examining the direction and strength of association between the two composite scores. To do this, the Spearman correlation coefficient (ρ) was used, with the purpose of identifying the strength and direction of the relationship between rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment and migrant social inclusion.

Composite scores were calculated for each main variable by summing the nine items corresponding to each construct. Dimension-level scores were also calculated by summing the three items included in each dimension. Therefore, the total score for each main variable ranged from 9 to 45, while each dimension score ranged from 3 to 15. Higher scores indicated higher perceived levels of Social Work professional accompaniment or migrant social inclusion.

Results

The results of the statistical analysis carried out on the study sample are presented below.

Descriptive statistics

In descriptive terms, rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment had a mean of 25.7 and a standard deviation of 11.8, with values between 9 and 45. Migrant social inclusion reached a mean of 26.6 and a standard deviation of 11.4, with a range also between 9 and 45. The medians were 25.5 for Social Work professional accompaniment and 27.0 for social inclusion; which shows a similar central distribution in both variables (see Table 3).

Table 3. *Descriptive statistics of the main study variables*

Variable	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment	48	25.7	25.5	11.8	9	45
Migrant social inclusion	48	26.6	27.0	11.4	9	45

Source: Own creation

To delve into the behavior of the main variables, descriptive statistics were calculated by dimensions of SWP accompaniment and the social inclusion of migrants. The results showed means between 8.38 and 9.02 on a scale of 3 to 15, which evidenced an intermediate descriptive trend in all the dimensions analyzed (see Table 4). In Social Work professional accompaniment, the dimension with the lowest mean was mediation and institutional articulation ($M = 8.38$); while guidance and information and psychosocial intervention presented identical means ($M = 8.65$). In the social inclusion variable, the dimension with the highest mean corresponded to access to rights and services ($M = 9.02$). This was followed by support networks and social integration ($M = 8.92$) and participation and perception of inclusion ($M = 8.67$).

Table 4. *Descriptive statistics by dimensions of rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment and migrant social inclusion*

Dimension	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
-----------	---	------	--------	----	---------	---------



Guidance and information	48	8.65	9.00	3.81	3	15
Mediation and institutional articulation	48	8.38	8.00	4.11	3	15
Psychosocial intervention	48	8.65	9.00	4.20	3	15
Access to rights and services	48	9.02	9.50	3.89	3	15
Support networks and social integration	48	8.92	9.00	3.98	3	15
Participation and perception of inclusion	48	8.67	8.00	3.94	3	15

Source: Own creation

Correlation analysis

Spearman's correlation analysis showed a positive, moderately strong and statistically significant relationship between rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment and migrant social inclusion ($\rho = 0.590$, $p < .001$) (see Table 5). This finding suggests that higher perceived levels of rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment were associated with higher levels of migrant social inclusion in the analysed sample.

Table 5. *Spearman correlation between the main variables*

Variable	Spearman's ρ	p
Rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment – Migrant social inclusion	0.590	<.001

Source: Own creation

Discussion

From a descriptive perspective, the dimension-level analysis showed a relatively homogeneous pattern in rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment, although mediation and institutional articulation obtained the lowest mean. In migrant social inclusion, access to rights and services obtained the highest mean. This pattern suggests that, although professional accompaniment was perceived across different dimensions, institutional articulation remains a complex area in the migrant experience. At the same



time, the higher score for access to rights and services indicates that this dimension occupied a central place in participants' perception of social inclusion.

This result could also be interpreted from the perspective of social inclusion, which conceives it as a multidimensional and contextual process that implies effective access to resources, participation in social life, and a sense of belonging within the community (Brik & Brown, 2025). From another theoretical perspective, this relationship was also consistent with the approach that social support is a protective resource against stress and vulnerability (Appleton et al., 2023). Likewise, it is articulated with the logic of the Social Capital Theory that highlights that trust, participation, and social bonds are central bases of cohesion and inclusion (Saadi et al., 2023).

The results were also consistent with recent evidence on migration in Ecuador. Various studies have shown that inclusion does not depend only on the formal recognition of rights; but of effective access to services, opportunities and mediation mechanisms. The inclusion of young Venezuelan migrants in Ecuador occurs under differential and unequal logics (Abifandi-Cedeño et al., 2022; Célleri, 2024). In addition, institutional policies and restrictions directly affect the exercise of the right to health (Córdova et al., 2023; Garzozi-Pincay & Garzozi-Pincay, 2023). Likewise, relevant barriers in access to public services are documented (Valdivieso et al., 2021). This allows the findings to be interpreted as evidence that professional accompaniment can play a liaison role between migrant populations and institutional structures.

The results converge with research that underlines the weight of psychosocial and community interventions in improving well-being and a sense of belonging. Studies carried out in Ecuador and Panama show that participatory support mechanisms can strengthen resilience, coping, and psychosocial well-being in migratory contexts (Emilsson & Öberg, 2021; Greene et al., 2022). From another line of analysis, the

relevance of social support in Ecuadorian rural communities was evidenced. This reinforces the idea that supportive relationships play a key role in adjustment and integration processes (Miles et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2025). For this reason, rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment should not be reduced to administrative management, since it is also associated with relational and subjective dimensions that favour inclusion.

Another important aspect is the role of social and community networks, because social integration improves when migrants manage to consolidate bonds of trust and support in the receiving environment. In addition, different areas of community and educational participation have also been identified as relevant spaces for the inclusion of the migrant population in Ecuador (Albarracín et al., 2024; Culque et al., 2025). In other words, dense and heterogeneous networks facilitate access to resources and integration (Wang et al., 2025). In addition, social, labour and cultural integration requires both structural conditions and sustained relationships with the community (Garzozi-Pincay & Garzozi-Pincay, 2023; Medina et al., 2023). In this intermediate Ecuadorian receiving territory, the correlation found suggests that professional accompaniment may contribute not only to institutional articulation but also to the strengthening of social networks that make inclusion in everyday life more viable.

The main contribution of the study lies in showing how rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment can be empirically linked to migrant social inclusion in an intermediate receiving territory. Rather than presenting the setting as an isolated or institutional case, the study provides situated empirical evidence on how professional guidance, institutional mediation and psychosocial intervention may help translate formal rights into concrete inclusion practices. This contribution is relevant because much of the

literature has focused on national analyses or large urban contexts, while intermediate territories remain underrepresented in migration, human rights and Social Work research. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment could favour more consistent inclusion processes in similar local migration-receiving contexts. This implies consolidating strategies for information, mediation, referral, follow-up and psychosocial intervention (Chuang et al., 2023). It also requires strengthening articulation with institutional and community actors, since inclusion and social justice demand broader community responses (Fernández et al., 2021; Medina et al., 2023; Moncayo, 2025). Likewise, inclusion is understood as a collective and institutional commitment (Miles et al., 2022; Moreno-Tallón & Guasp, 2025). Therefore, social intervention strategies have greater scope when resilience, support and vulnerability reduction are linked, which is consistent with the meaning of the findings obtained in the study (Mendoza et al., 2024).

However, the results should also be read within a broader political and institutional framework. In this context, the Ecuadorian migration regime presents features of inconsistency and restriction that can limit the effectiveness of professional responses; even when these are significantly at the local level (Moncayo, 2025). Consequently, although professional accompaniment constituted a relevant dimension for social inclusion, its scope cannot be interpreted apart from the normative, administrative and political conditions that structure effective access to rights, services and social recognition (Akkan et al., 2024).

Conclusions

The study found a positive and statistically significant relationship between rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment and migrant social inclusion in an intermediate migration-receiving territory in Ecuador. In line with the proposed objective, the findings

showed that professional accompaniment expressed through guidance, institutional mediation and psychosocial intervention was associated with better perceived conditions of access to rights and services, stronger support and integration networks, and a more favourable perception of participation and inclusion in the receiving environment.

The findings also support the argument that migrant social inclusion does not depend exclusively on the formal recognition of rights. Rather, it is linked to the real possibility of accessing resources, institutional responses and social networks that facilitate participation in the host community. In this sense, rights-based Social Work professional accompaniment may operate as a bridge between formal rights and everyday inclusion practices.

The descriptive analysis by dimensions showed a relatively homogeneous pattern between the components of both variables. However, access to rights and services was the highest mean in migrant social inclusion, while mediation and institutional articulation was the lowest mean in professional accompaniment. This indicates institutional articulation as a key dimension for the strengthening of Social Work intervention with migrant populations. In sum, the study lends support to the importance of understanding migrant inclusion as a multidimensional and contextual process in which material, relational and institutional dimensions intersect.

Limitations and future research

This study has several limitations. The sample was non-probabilistic and drawn from one intermediate receiving territory; therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to all migrant populations in Ecuador or Latin America. However, the value of the study lies not in national representativeness, but in its situated empirical contribution to understanding rights-based Social Work accompaniment among a hard-to-reach migrant group in an intermediate receiving territory. The study has value as situated empirical

proof of a hard-to-reach group because the final sample included 96% of the accessible population identified during the fieldwork. Comparisons with different geographical and institutional contexts are limited because the study was carried out in a receiving intermediate territory and in connection to an anonymous public institution that served merely as a point of access for the participants. Response bias may have been introduced by using a self-report questionnaire, particularly as the items dealt with views of professional help and inclusion. The cross-sectional design allows identification of association, but not causality. Future studies should use larger, multi-site samples, mixed methods and longitudinal designs to examine how rights-based Social Work accompaniment influences migrant inclusion over time.

Funding

This research received no external funding.

Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare that there are no competing financial, personal, institutional or intellectual interests that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

The authors declare the use of artificial intelligence ChatGPT, current version, for English linguistics and grammar adjustments. The use of artificial intelligence was not applied for statistical analysis, methodology, texts and interpretation of the results.

Referencias

Abifandi-Cedeño, J. D., Herrera-Ortíz, J. J., Carrión-Ramírez, B. M., & Murillo-Párraga, M. V. (2022). Inclusión social, discriminación e inserción laboral en Ecuador: Más de una página pendiente. *Revista de la Universidad del Zulia*, 13(38), Article 38. <https://doi.org/10.46925//rdluz.38.25>



- Akkan, B., Hahmann, J., Hunner-Kreisel, C., & Kuhn, M. (Eds). (2024). Overlapping Inequalities in the Welfare State: Strengths and Challenges of Intersectionality Framework. Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-52227-7>
- Albarracín, J., Guillén, M., Estrella, M. E., & Jerves, E. (2024). Social Protection of Ecuadorian Immigrants in the United States and Spain. *Migraciones Internacionales*, 15. <https://doi.org/10.33679/rmi.v1i1.2766>
- Androff, D., & Mathis, C. (2022). Human Rights–Based Social Work Practice with Immigrants and Asylum Seekers in a Legal Service Organization. *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work*, 7(2), 178–188. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-021-00197-7>
- Appleton, R., Barnett, P., Chipp, B., Clark, M., Goldblatt, P., Jeffreys, S., Machin, K., Needle, J. J., Shah, P., Thompson, G., Trevillion, K., Webber, M., Worden, M., Johnson, S., & Lloyd-Evans, B. (2023). Development of a conceptual framework to guide description and evaluation of social interventions for people with serious mental health conditions. *SSM - Mental Health*, 4, 100271. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmmh.2023.100271>
- Arias, J., Holgado, J., Tafur, T., & Vasquez, M. (2022). Metodología de la investigación: El método ARIAS para desarrollar un proyecto de tesis. In Instituto Universitario de Innovación Ciencia y Tecnología Inudi Perú. Instituto Universitario de Innovación Ciencia y Tecnología Inudi Perú. <https://doi.org/10.35622/inudi.b.016>
- Beltrán, S. M., & Bernal, J. A. O. (2020). Los paradigmas de la investigación: Un acercamiento teórico para reflexionar desde el campo de la investigación

- educativa. RIDE Revista Iberoamericana para la Investigación y el Desarrollo Educativo, 11(21). <https://doi.org/10.23913/ride.v11i21.717>
- Brannelly, T., Bhatia, A., Malihi, A. Z., Vanderpyl, L., Brennan, B., Gonzalez Perez, L., Saeid, F., Holroyd, E., & Charania, N. (2024). Refugees and mental wellbeing. A call for community approaches in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*, 29(7), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MHSI-04-2024-0049>
- Brik, A. B., & Brown, C. T. (2025). A Critical Review of Conceptualisation and Measurement of Social Inclusion: Directions for Conceptual Clarity. *Social Policy and Society*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746425000302>
- Caiche Beltrán, G. L., & Guerrero Velástegui, C. A. (2024). Public policy and labor inclusion: Employment strategies for people with disabilities in Ecuador. *Sapienza*, 5(3). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.51798/sijis.v5i3.781>
- Carranza, M. S., Urdánigo, J. P., & González, B. B. (2024). Metodología de la investigación y análisis cuantitativo. Quedo: UTEQ. <https://doi.org/https://www.uteq.edu.ec/es/investigacion/libro/361>
- Carvalho, M. I., & Albuquerque, C. (2025). Human Rights-Based Social Work Perspective, Ethics, and Practice: An Exploratory Literature Review. *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work*, 10(3), 647–661. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-025-00393-9>
- Célleri, D. (2024). Access to Labour and “Differential Inclusion” for Young Venezuelan Migrants in Ecuador. *Social Inclusion*, 12. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.7762>
- Chuang, D.-M., Leung, V. W. Y., Lung, Y., & Fang, L. (2023). Negative Social Interactions at the Intersection of Gender, Race and Immigration Status in

- Canada. *British Journal of Social Work*, 53(4), 2057–2078.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcac224>
- Colmenares, N., & Abarca, K. (2024). La migración a nivel local en Chile. Desafíos, demandas y políticas en tiempos de pandemia | Si Somos americanos.
<https://sisomosamericanos.cl/index.php/sisomosamericanos/article/view/1025>
- Córdova, C. S., Torres, I., & López-Cevallos, D. (2023). Exploring the impact of Ecuador's policies on the right to health of Venezuelan migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic: A scoping review. *Health Policy and Planning*, 38(9), 1099–1112. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czad071>
- Culque, C. A., Muñoz, D. M., Quinga, D. S., & Mendoza, C. E. (2025). Physical Education in the inclusion of immigrant students in Ecuador. *Retos*, 67, 1301–1307. <https://doi.org/10.47197/retos.v67.114727>
- Eche-Enríquez, D., & Vivas-Vivas, R. (2022). Farming, Education and Migration: Understanding Rural Youth in Northern Ecuador. *Migraciones*, (54).
<https://doi.org/10.14422/mig.i54y2022.008>
- Emilsson, H., & Öberg, K. (2021). Housing for Refugees in Sweden: Top-Down Governance and its Local Reactions. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 23(2), 613–631. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-021-00864-8>
- Fernández, A. R., Rodríguez-Marrín, A., & Forteza, D. F. (2021). Inclusión, Justicia Social y Desarrollo Comunitario: Desafíos y dilemas para la intervención socioeducativa avanzada en la era postcoronavirus. *Revista Prisma Social*, (33), Article 33. <https://revistaprismasocial.es/article/view/4342>
- Garzosi-Pincay, R. F., & Garzosi-Pincay, Y. S. (2023). Situation of residential migration in the labor field in Ecuador, period 2016-2021. *Human Review. International*

Humanities Review / Revista Internacional de Humanidades, 20(1).

<https://doi.org/10.37467/revhuman.v20.4935>

Greene, M. C., Bonz, A., Cristobal, M., Vega, C., Andersen, L. S., Angulo, A., Armijos, A., Guevara, M. E., Benavides, L., de la Cruz, A., Lopez, M. J., Moyano, A., Murcia, A., Noboa, M. J., Rodriguez, A., Solis, J., Vergara, D., Scharf, J., Dutt, P., ... Tol, W. A. (2022). Evaluating the feasibility of a group psychosocial intervention for migrant and host community women in Ecuador and Panamá: Protocol for a multi-site feasibility cluster trial. *Pilot and Feasibility Studies*, 8(1). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40814-022-01085-1>

House, J. S. (1981). *Work Stress and Social Support*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Koo, M., & Yang, S.-W. (2025). Likert-Type Scale. *Encyclopedia*, 5(1), 18. <https://doi.org/10.3390/encyclopedia5010018>

Lim, W. M. (2025). What Is Quantitative Research? An Overview and Guidelines. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 33(3), 325–348. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14413582241264622>

Medina, C., Tapia, N., Velásquez, M., & Zanzzi, F. (2023). Social, Labor and Cultural Integration of Immigrants: A Quali-Quantitative Approach to the Venezuelan-Ecuadorian Case. In Robles-Bykbaev V., Mula J., & Reynoso-Meza G. (Eds), *Lect. Notes Networks Syst.: 607 LNNS* (pp. 96–112). Springer Science and Business Media Deutschland GmbH. Scopus. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-24327-1_9

Mendoza, D., Barreiro, L. M. A., Chica, T. K. M., Medranda, E. M. A., & Chávez, S. A. R. (2024). Resilience in vulnerable university groups: An analysis of social work intervention strategies from the perspective of social inclusion. *The*

- Education and Science Journal, 26(1), 82–102. <https://doi.org/10.17853/1994-5639-2024-1-82-102>
- Miles, C. I. M., Bates, B. R., Casapulla, S. L., & Grijalva, M. J. (2022). Social support in rural communities in Manabi province, Ecuador. *Rural and Remote Health*, 22(4). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.22605/RRH6957>
- Moncayo, B. V. (2025). Consistently inconsistent: The crimmigration facets of the Ecuadorian migration regime. In *Border Criminologies from the Periphery: Cross-national Conversations on Bordered Penalty* (pp. 177–198). Taylor and Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003333166-12>
- Moreno-Tallón, F., & Guasp, J. J. M. (2025). Educación inclusiva e inclusión social: Un compromiso comunitario. *Teoría de la Educación. Revista Interuniversitaria*, 37(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.14201/teri.32395>
- Namata, C., Hatzidimitriadou, E., & McCallum, E. (2025). Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Europe: A Scoping Review of Interventions. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 26(1), 513–541. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-025-01244-2>
- Organic Law on Personal Data Protection, Asamblea Nacional del Ecuador, Registro Oficial No. 459, Quinto Suplemento (2021). <https://www.registropublicos.gob.ec/programas-servicios/servicios/proyecto-de-ley-de-proteccion-de-datos/>
- Oviedo, A. O. (2023). Inclusión, exclusión, justicia social. *Revista Andina de Educación*, 6(1), 006101–006101. <https://doi.org/10.32719/26312816.2022.6.1.01>
- Putnam, R. D. (2003). *El declive del capital social: Un estudio internacional sobre las sociedades y el sentido comunitario*. Galaxia Gutenberg.

- Saadi, A., Morales, B., Chen, L., & Sudhinaraset, M. (2023). Understanding the function of social capital among Mexican and Chinese immigrants in Southern California: A qualitative study. *SSM - Qualitative Research in Health*, 3, 100247. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmqr.2023.100247>
- Torres, I., Pinto-Alvarez, M., & López-Cevallos, D. F. (2024). Protecting migrant children's well-being in Ecuador's public schools. *Journal of Migration and Health*, 10, 100247. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmh.2024.100247>
- Valdivieso, W. V., Rodriguez, J. A. V., Villa, M. F. V., Reyes, E. R. R., & Montero, J. S. N. (2021). Assessment of Barriers to Access Public Services for Immigrants in Ecuador using a NeutroAlgebra-based Model. *Neutrosophic Sets and Systems*, 44, 53–60. <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85118807766&partnerID=40&md5=ea8a10b2a56b7ded2360a03b46671393>
- Wang, H., Aziz, N., & Zhao, Q. (2025). Bridging “isolated islands”: Heterogeneous social networks facilitate the social integration of Chinese migrant workers. *BMC Psychology*, 13(1). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-025-03438-w>