

Special *Advisor* Report

Poll: One in Four Latin Americans Would Migrate if They Could

by Elisabeth Burgess

WASHINGTON, DC -- One in four Latin Americans would migrate to another country if they had the means to do so, according to a report published last month by **The Gallup Organization**.

“In a region where the incidence of poverty is 42%, economic inequality the highest in the world, and social exclusion an endemic problem, international migration is seen as one of the few available ways to ‘race to the top,’” wrote the report’s authors, Gallup Chairman and CEO Jim Clifton and Latin America Executive Director Marlene Fernandez.

“Latin America will register one of the highest levels of human mobility in the coming years, especially among younger residents,” Clifton and Fernandez wrote. “In some Latin American nations, the percentage of people who plan to leave is alarming.”

In Haiti, the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, 55% of respondents said they have plans to move to another country, the highest percentage in the region. Saying they plan to move doesn’t mean a person actually will migrate, but the response underscores a person’s hopes of doing so, Fernandez told the *Advisor*.

13% of Latin Americans said they have plans to move to another country.

25% said they would migrate if they had the means to do so.

35% of people aged 15-24 said they would migrate if they had the means.

Immigration intentions are even higher among youth; 35% of Latin Americans aged 15 to 24 surveyed said they would migrate if they had the means. Youth in the Dominican Republic were most likely to want to move with 82% responding that, with the right means, they would migrate. Mexico and Venezuela generated the lowest immigration intentions among youth, at 15% and 18%, respectively.

“Young people usually feel they can risk more,” Fernandez told the *Advisor*. Indeed, immigration intentions drop lower among older age groups, with just 8% and 4% of Mexicans and Venezuelans, respectively, responding that they would move if they could.

The report said that if 70% of those Latin Americans who said they would migrate actually did and came to the United States, the U.S. would add nearly 50 million new immigrants.

However, global migration is not just from countries in the south to more developed places in the north. “People are moving from one southern country to other southern countries in percentages that almost equal the south-north migration,” the report stated.

But most Latin Americans who want to migrate still name the U.S. as their preferred destination, according to the report.