

# **Latin American Refugees and Immigrants in New Zealand: The Impact of Migration Status on Quality of Life**

## **Summary**

This study explores the definitions and perceptions that Latin American refugees and immigrants have about their quality of life in New Zealand. In addition, this research explores how the immigration status of Latin Americans impacts their quality of life in New Zealand and what factors affect their well-being. Likewise, the study investigates the perceptions that New Zealanders have about refugees and immigrants. Although there has been some research on Latin American immigrants and refugees in New Zealand, no research has been published about the quality of life of these groups in New Zealand.

This research uses a mixed-method approach with both, qualitative and quantitative research methods. Although a quantitative method using an online survey was employed, the core of the study remained qualitative, with the adoption of ethnography and autoethnography as research methodologies. The study includes three data collection methods, semi-structured interviews, digital ethnography (which includes observation of the participants through Facebook), and an anonymous online survey. The participants recruited for the interviews were nine refugees and 11 immigrants from Argentina, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. The online survey included 100 New Zealanders.

The qualitative data revealed that Latin American immigrants and refugees in New Zealand define the quality of life as living in peace, happiness, being surrounded by their families and friends, and having sufficient financial resources to have a dignified, comfortable and pleasant life. The findings of this study show seven main factors that impact the quality of life of immigrants and refugees in New Zealand. These factors are 1) discrimination, 2) language barriers, 3) unemployment, 4) low income, 5) mental health problems, 6) isolation and lack of friends, and 7) family problems. Although these factors negatively impact the quality of life for immigrants and refugees, participants in this study state that these factors have not prevented them from having a satisfactory quality of life in New Zealand. In fact, despite facing these obstacles, participants report feeling satisfied with their quality of life in New Zealand. The data from the survey, conducted with 100 New Zealanders, shows that 55% of New Zealanders gave a neutral response to the question "what is your perception about migrants?". In contrast, 47% of the respondents provided a negative response to the question "what is your perception of refugees?".

This study contributes new knowledge on the concept of quality of life for refugees and immigrants in New Zealand. This study also presents valuable recommendations that could be implemented when conducting further studies with immigrants and refugees in New Zealand and worldwide.