


Different ways to get to the north, different ways to live in the south

*Circular migration and its potential to promote development and belonging
in Western Guatemala.*




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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The effects analysis on migration in the territories of origin of the migrants often yields inconclusive results or, at least, enormously variable ones. Although the receipt of remittances seems to alleviate the most severe poverty situations, being associated quite clearly, for example, with the reduction of food insecurity in numerous international contexts, including Guatemala, the relationship between migration and remittances reception seems more uncertain, and the possible socioeconomic development of the communities and municipalities from which the migrants come. Different factors, some of a structural nature and others more related to specific migratory experiences, would be facilitating or limiting the potential of migration to promote a type of local development that would gradually make the alternative of remaining in the country of origin more attractive instead of embarking on the uncertain migratory journey, which has now become the preferred option to improve living conditions of a significant number of Central American households.

An essential differentiating element among different migratory experiences is the regular or irregular nature of the process followed. Thus, a distinction is made between circular and regularized migration that links the country of origin and destination, through which a very limited number of Central Americans have access to a temporary employment contract in the US or Canada, or the alternative that is mostly adopted by those from Guatemala, Honduras or El Salvador who embark on their way north through a hazardous journey that, if they manage to reach their destination, will imply a long stay, more than 10 years on average without returning home, and that will be marked by the absence of rights. These two ways of undertaking emigration entail very different consequences; costs and risks of the trip, access to jobs in the place of destination, the associated salaries, the characteristics and amount of remittances, or the relations with the family and the community of origin, among many other factors, will be drastically modified depending on the condition of regularity or irregularity of the migratory experience. These two itineraries are completed with a third alternative; not emigrate, remain in the Central American community or municipality of residence.

The findings of this study are result of comparing the socioeconomic conditions of rural households in the western region of Guatemala, according to their migratory experiences, distinguishing among households in which at least one of its members has emigrated to the US irregularly, families in which at least one of its members has emigrated regularly through temporary employment programs with the United States, or households in which all its members remain in the rural community of origin or in another Guatemalan municipality. For this purpose, a survey was conducted of 433 randomly selected household heads who were in the house at the time of the

interview, which was carried out in 5 rural communities in the department of Huehuetenango, one of those with the highest international emigration rates in Guatemala. Next, different indicators on the characteristic living conditions of each of the three types of household considered were analyzed and compared.

Among the main findings of this study are the following:

1. All households with regular migrants had Spanish as their mother tongue, unlike households without migrants or with irregular migrants where 11% and 20% spoke some Mayan language, respectively. These differences could be explained by the possible greater **difficulties of access to regular temporary work programs by the indigenous population** in the rural communities analyzed.



2. Both, irregular and regular migration would have facilitated the remodeling and improvement of housing, but **only through regular migration these investments are translated into a significant improvement** in the quality of housing and reduction in overcrowding.



3. The irregular migration of some member of the domestic unit would not be influencing poverty conditions of households in global terms; only regular migration would be alleviating the severity of poverty measured by the Simple Poverty Scorecard (SPS) among the rural households analyzed. Consequently, **households with regular migratory experiences** also perceive that their **economic situation is more positive** compared to the assessment made by families in which none of their members has emigrated. However, irregular migration would not manage to improve the feeling of economic pressure of families.



4. Migration would affect the occupation of household members in the communities of origin, exclusively the case of women, and only in households with members who had migrated regularly. In these households, women are dedicated to a greater extent to commerce and a lesser extent to day labor. **Therefore, regular migration would entail a change in the women's productive activities that would potentially allow them to increase their income, unlike irregular migration.**



5. **The regular migratory experience** would be related to a greater feeling of trust towards the people of the community, above households with irregular migrants and households without migrant members, which could be **positively related to feelings of attachment and rootedness towards the communities of residence.** These results would also hold for the specific case of women despite their lower levels of general self-confidence.



6. While irregular migration does not significantly improve the dietary conditions of households compared to households without migrant members, **regular migration is associated with a strong reduction in food insecurity, improves dietary diversity and food consumption patterns of families** and, although to a lesser extent, also facilitates access to water for domestic use.



7. **Households in which at least one of their members has access to temporary work visas** in the US have a prevalence of **chronic child malnutrition of 20%, compared to the average 60%** measured among children under 5 years of age in households in which at least one person has emigrated irregularly, and 67% among those families in which no one had emigrated. The difference is remarkable, also considering that Guatemala is the country with the highest percentage of children with chronic malnutrition in Latin America.



8. Regular **migratory experiences are considered fairer in terms of salary and treatment** received and are associated in greater proportion with remittances sending and increased amount of them. Regular migration also requires a much lower investment in relation to migratory trips made through coyotes, which would imply lower levels of indebtedness and burden for families and migrants.



9. The regularity or irregularity of the migratory experiences of the household does not strongly modify the migratory intention of the people surveyed; **households with regular migrants value migration more positively, but also show higher levels of satisfaction with life in their communities of residence.** In this case, the greater tendency to want to leave Guatemala to work abroad would also translate into regular migrations within the household.



Findings of this study allow us to conclude that regular migration, mainly represented by temporary work programs to the United States, would significantly improve the living conditions of households; while irregular migration, much more frequent in the communities analyzed, would not involve a substantial improvement compared to households without migrant members.

These findings, which need to be confirmed with a broader sample of Guatemalan households and territories, contribute to the existing debate on the international migratory flows management, and specifically in the Central American region; while offering guidelines for public policies aimed at promoting the positive aspects of emigration, by minimizing its negative impacts.

INTRODUCTION



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01

INTRODUCTION

The migratory flow of Guatemalans to the northern countries, especially to the United States, has not stopped increasing in recent years (MPI, 2019; NTMI-IOM, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic with the consequent mobility restrictions imposed at global level have not had a declining effect on migration either since 2020, judging by the significant increase in deportations of Guatemalans registered from Mexico and the United States in 2021, compared to the previous year (Guatemalan Migration Institute, 2021). In total, it is estimated that around 3,060,000 Guatemalans live in the United States at this time, a good part of them irregularly (FLACSO, 2020).

The analyzes on the effects that this migratory flow has on the migrant-sending communities are numerous and often yield inconsistent and even contradictory results depending on the specific local context that is evaluated, since the dimensions and variables that influence are multiple, complex and interdependent on each other. For this reason, it is extremely useful to carry out comparative exercises on the effects that different migratory forms and experiences have in different territories, since this type of analysis will lighten the direction that intervention policies and projects can take to strengthen the positive aspects of migration while minimizing its negative impacts.

The research that supports this report aims to compare the effects of different migratory experiences on the living conditions of families residing in rural communities in the department of Huehuetenango (Guatemala), one of the areas of the country with the highest number of international emigrants. For this purpose, household heads who were at home at the time of the interview were surveyed. The surveys obtained made it possible to differentiate between three groups of households; i) those in which there was no direct family member who had emigrated abroad; ii) those that have members who had migrated irregularly, as most migrations occur in such communities, and iii) those where migration occurred regularly through the temporary H visa programs H-2A and H-2B with the United States.

This report will present results on the way in which different migratory experiences, and specifically the dimension of regular vs. irregular migration, determines and transforms the impacts of such migration on families and communities of origin of the migrants.

For this purpose, the recent debate on the migration impacts in the territories of origin will be reviewed, specifically for the Guatemalan case, including

socioeconomic, nutritional, environmental and cultural dimensions. The circular migration and temporary employment programs that currently operate in the United States and Canada are described below, and then the methodology used in the research is shared, to end the report with the findings and conclusions of the study.

1.1 Impact of migration in territories of origin: the case of Guatemala

The most visible effect, and also the most studied of the migratory flows of Guatemalans, mainly to the United States, is the arrival of remittances. Remittances to low- and middle-income countries reached a record of \$529 billion in 2018, three times more than official development assistance¹. In Guatemala, remittances received in 2021 exceeded USD 15,000 million in 2021, representing 17.8% of GDP, an amount higher than the total budget of the Guatemalan Government for the same year (Banco de Guatemala, 2021). In 2021, remittances received by Guatemala grew 35% compared to the previous year, exceeding 15 billion dollars despite the economic crisis and mobility restrictions due to the health emergency caused by Covid-19, or partially, since solidarity of migrants abroad with their families and relatives in the territories of origin tends to increase in times of crisis (Banco de Guatemala, 2021; ASIES, 2020).

The importance of remittances in preventing families in socioeconomic vulnerability situations from suffering the consequences of poverty is undeniable (Cohen, 2011). Poverty incidence among households receiving remittances is, in fact, significantly lower than among all Guatemalan households (IOM, 2017).

However, a greater debate exists regarding the potential of these remittances to influence the socioeconomic development in the medium and long term, not only of the receiving families, but also of the communities of origin as a whole and the country itself. Different studies have shown that households receiving remittances invest more in housing and education, investments in physical and human capital that could have positive consequences in the development of the territories of origin (Adams and Cuecuecha, 2010; Housen et al., 2013). Nevertheless, if the evolution in using remittances in Guatemala between 2010 and 2016 is compared, it will be seen that, although the percentage of remittances destined for consumption to satisfy the basic needs of the household (food, clothing, transportation...), so has social investment in health and education (IOM, 2017). On the other hand, the percentage of remittances destined for the construction, purchase and improvement of housing would have increased; and the productive use, destined for the start-up or improvement of a business, would have decreased considerably.

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/labormarkets/brief/migration-and-remittances>

Several authors seem to agree that remittances in Guatemala would be alleviating the severity of poverty but not reversing the global poverty rate or inequality relations in the country; in part due to the high level of general poverty of families, the deficient and /or abusive coverage of financial services and, mainly, to the **absence of public policies that promote, facilitate and guide local development in the territories.**

(Barre, 2011; Bornschein, 2016)



However, the analysis of the use of remittances is not enough to infer, for example, that greater spending on basic consumption products such as food expenses will necessarily result in an immediate improvement in the nutritional and health conditions of the household members. On one hand, in the international sphere, according to data from the Gallup World Poll (GWP), in which 68,463 people in more than 60 countries were interviewed, there would be a clear association between receiving remittances and food safety. In this way, regardless of the geographical context, severe food insecurity would be related to not receiving remittances (Ebadi et al. 2018; FAO, 2019), which is also confirmed by some studies for the Guatemalan case (CRS, 2020) and for the case of the Dry Corridor of the Central American Northern Triangle (MPI-WFP, 2021).

Though, in some local scenarios and specific migratory situations, this relationship does not have to be so evident. A study carried out by the World Food Program (WFP) shows how, in fact, food insecurity (from moderate to severe) would have increased in households in which recent migration of one of its members occurred in the regions of the Dry Corridor of the Central American Northern Triangle (WFP, 2017). This study also indicates that

parallel to the increase in food products purchased in the market by households receiving remittances, there has also been a significant decrease in the self-production of food products by these same households. In this way, the vulnerability of households with respect to prices fluctuations of the basic food basket could be increasing, mainly among the most impoverished households that dedicate a higher percentage of their income to food supply, as well as dependence of remittances for the minimum supply of domestic units.

Therefore, in some cases and despite that one of the typical uses of remittances in Guatemala is the purchase of land for agriculture (Moran-Taylor, M, 2010; Angelsen, A. et al., 2020), and although the migration of a household member is a family strategy for staying in rural communities (Carte, L. et al., 2019), migration from rural areas could be having negative implications for agricultural production due to the shortage of labor and could also be substantially affecting the distribution of tasks within the domestic units, overloading some of the members who remain, especially women (FAO, 2019).

Another investigation focused on Guatemala reveals, in effect, that the irregular migration to the US of one of the parents would lead to a significant decrease in height and weight, considered healthy among children under three years of age. On the contrary, receipt of remittances in these families does not seem to influence the height and weight of the children, which seems to indicate that the parents of younger children would not achieve economic success quickly enough to offset the negative effects, in terms of health and nutrition, caused by their absence, especially during the 1000-days window, that is, the first two years of life (Davis and Brazil, 2016).

In both investigations, the time elapsed between the beginning of the migratory journey of the migrant member or members, and the arrival of the first remittances would be decisive; therefore, the migratory experience itself, its times and forms would be determining the development of the youngest members of the families.

The effects analysis of migration on the nutrition, diet and food safety indices of households should incorporate, as shown by several researches (World Bank Group, 2015; Teye et al., 2017; Deere and Alvarado, 2016). ; Taylor et al, 2006) the gender component in decision-making processes both in the domestic and productive spheres. Although the migratory flow of Guatemalans to the United States in recent times shows a gradual process of feminization, the high percentage of female household heads that remain in the migrant-sending regions also allows us to speak of a feminization process in the rural Guatemala; 69% of individual recipients of remittances would indeed be women (IOM, 2017).

In fact, a study by the World Bank Group has shown that contrary to the opinion of many local institutions, the majority of households in which the migrant is the male partner of the nuclear adult couple, continue to dedicate themselves, even partially, to agriculture. In these households, decisions about production management, as well as the private management of the domestic unit, fall to a greater extent on women, which has the consequence not only of greater female agency, but also higher levels of food safety and diversity, which seems to reinforce the conclusions of other studies that affirm that the resources managed by women are destined, with greater probability, to nutrition (World Bank Group, 2015).

The effect of remittances on nutrition is also related to other dimensions of migration, such as the transformation of attitudes, knowledge and preferences, the effect of the migrant's absence in relation to childcare and self-production of food, gender and generations understandings in control the family income and intra-family distribution of food, among others. For example, some research seems to find a relationship between the receipt of remittances and the consumption of less healthy (non-traditional) foods, as well as a worsening of the diet in rural areas (Thow et al., 2016).



The importance of analyzing the transformations of ideas, values, preferences, attitudes and knowledge when evaluating the effects of migration in the territories of origin is also evident in relation to health and education management. A qualitative study carried out in a rural area in the North of Guatemala indicated, for example, that returned migrants, their families and, to a lesser extent, the community as a whole, **gave greater importance to education as a tool for personal and community development, as consequence of the migratory experience.**

(Barret et al., 2014)

Structural problems and limitations are determining factors in the effective impact that migration can have on the territories of origin, as can be inferred, for example, since decisions about investment in education among households receiving remittances are influenced by the perceptions of employability in the local labor market (Chaaban and Mansour, 2012). However, the potentialities for the development of social remittances, understood not as a unidirectional transfer of values, attitudes and knowledge from migrants abroad towards their communities of origin, but as a mutual circulation and transformation, could be more diverse and profound than many studies would have supposed (Barrett et al., 2014).

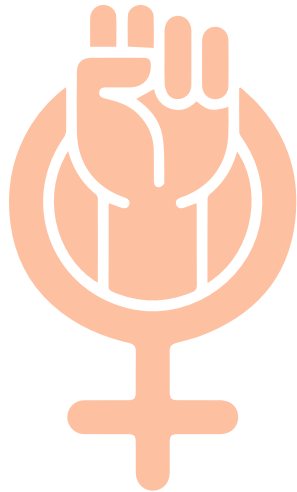
Although the transformation of sociocultural values and practices can become conflictive or contradictory and even be perceived, in certain cases, as negative by the community of origin (Ortiz and Rivera, 2010; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2010), in fact, various studies have focused on showing the possibilities of social transformation that social remittances can entail.

In addition to the greater commitment related to health and education, especially of children, Guatemalan transnational families and also returned migrants often reconfigure pre-migration gender roles, showing greater concern for gender equity and progressive women's empowerment, both those who migrated and those who remained in their places of origin, often in charge of managing family income (Taylor et al., 2006). As noted above, Guatemalan families headed by women are more common among households with a member abroad; of the total number of household heads and recipients of remittances in Guatemala, 41.4% are women, while only 22.7% of the national total of household heads is female (IOM, 2017). Despite that numerous studies on the impact of gender roles reconfiguration motivated by international migration have often underlined the greater autonomy and independence acquired by women (Deere and Alvarado, 2016), it cannot be assumed that migration necessarily entails a process for women's empowerment, since this will be strongly influenced by the social and normative context of the particular community under study and the capacity for agency, experiences and values of social, individual and collective subjects involved (Teye et al., 2017).



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This process of female empowerment and acquisition of greater independence and autonomy can materialize, in turn, in a lesser exclusion of women in the exercise of their political, legal and economic rights and reverse the worrying rates of violence against women in the country. It will also necessarily depend on public policies and institutional and political commitment in this regard (Ogrodnik and Borzutzky, 2011).



As fundamentally qualitative studies affirm that happens for the Guatemalan and Central American case, migration can also transform perceptions and visions about ethnicity and interethnic coexistence, foster a greater critical awareness about the exercise of citizenship and increase the capacity for social and political participation, not only of migrants, but also of domestic units and communities of origin as a whole (Orjuela et al., 2011; Barret et al., 2014). The Guatemalan case is no exception, as there is also evidence in the international influencing context of transnational social networks in the emergence of different social movements, in electoral processes, protests and demands for reform and greater transparency in the sociopolitical contexts of the migrant-sending regions and nations (Lacroix et al., 2016).

It is also important to incorporate the environmental dimension in the effects analysis of migration in the territories of origin, which is especially relevant

in the case of Guatemala due to the recurrence of extreme weather events in recent times, serious agricultural losses, increased food insecurity, and as a consequence, growing migratory flows (WFP, 2017). Investment in livestock by households receiving remittances seems to be a growing trend in Central America along with the purchase of arable land, at least among higher-income households that already have their basic consumption needs covered (Davis and Lopez-Carr, 2014). In Guatemala, some studies have also shown the trend of increasing livestock and grazing activities and agricultural activities with the consequent reduction of forest area (Taylor et al., 2006; Angelsen, A. et al., 2020); Others have highlighted the increase in land dedicated to non-traditional crops in western mountainous regions, with the consequent overuse of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, causing contamination of important water bodies (Moran-Taylor and Taylor, 2010). A research carried out in the Ixcán region shows how livestock activities have been unsuccessful by producing a forest recovery in some cases, but in others, a worrying increase in the monoculture of African palm at expense of the ecosystem and traditional food production (Taylor et al., 2016).

The transformations study in the productive use of land and the natural resources management as result of migration is inseparable, as it has been seen, from the study of cultural changes, as well as the analysis of the socioeconomic effects that migration can contribute to a more equitable distribution of land in sending territories (Aguilar-Stoen, 2012) or, on the contrary, to exacerbate the social inequities prior to the migratory experience (Cohen, 2011; Mata-Codesal, 2017).

Finally, the influence that migration has on the migratory intention of the inhabitants of the communities that expel migrants could be incorporated into the analysis. On one hand, numerous studies often talk about the migratory culture fueled in the territories of origin by the arrival of remittances; from this perspective, the migration of people from a locality would be favoring the migration of new members, since the social success obtained through the housing construction or remodeling could only be achieved by working abroad (Domínguez et al., 2018; Freddi et al., 2020).

For years, the transnational social networks of households with their relatives and friends abroad have been **considered a determining element in the maintenance of international migratory flows, especially in contexts where migration occurs irregularly.** This acquires enormous importance in the face of the hardening of migratory policies within the countries of destination, as the recent case of the United States in the face of Central American migration has been

(Corona, 2018).



Simultaneously, converting migration, and especially remittances, into a local development engine that offers employment alternatives and life projects to the local population in the medium term, in order to curb outward migratory flows has been and continues to be the objective both of international development cooperation agencies and innumerable national and local institutions in the countries from which the migrants depart, as the case of Guatemala is. The idea that underlies this type of initiative would be the absence of development, fundamentally economic; but not only that one, but the fundamental causes of international migration. However, the analysis of international migratory flows has led many analysts to reject this argument, since they have shown that migration tends to increase when development level increases, especially in the most impoverished countries (Flahaux and de Haas, 2016; Clemens, 2017). From this point of view, migration could be considered a development mean, but development, far from necessarily and in the short or medium term, means improvements in life quality of local communities and specific subjects in the territories of origin, also imply an increase in inequality and pernicious changes and transformations for the subjects and groups involved (Clemens, 2017).

According to these studies, innovative policies to regulate migration at international level would be necessary to enhance the positive effects of migratory flows, both for sending and receiving countries and for the migrants themselves; and one of these policies would consist of establishing of bilateral agreements among countries that would establish safe and legal channels for international migration.

1.2 Temporary employment programs; a circular migration alternative

For decades, the Governments of the United States and Canada have promoted temporary agricultural employment programs to meet the needs of workers at fields and farms of both countries, as well as in other employment-demanding sectors (hospitality industry, forestry work or agri-food processing). These programs imply the existence of agreements between the countries of destination (USA and Canada) and the countries of origin such as

Mexico, Honduras or Guatemala, through which the conditions of hiring at origin, travel, work stay and return are regulated (MPI, 2021). This is a way of regular migration, like the one promoted by the UN in objective 5 of its Global Compact for Migration.

Temporary foreign workers are essential to the agricultural sector and have increased steadily in Canada and USA over the last twenty years. Almost 55,000 jobs were held by temporary foreign workers in the Canadian agricultural industry in 2018, representing 20% of the total in this sector, with their main origin in Mexico (51%); Guatemala (20%) and Jamaica (18%)². In the Guatemalan case, around 10,000 people were hired under this Canadian program.

In the USA, H-2A visa applications and approvals have quintupled in the last 14 years³; through the H-2A (agricultural sector) and H-2B (covering other sectors, including forestry), employers can hire foreign workers for seasonal work. As the Canadian case is, companies must formalize and justify before the Department of Labor (DOL) and State Workforce Agencies (SWAs), their demand for foreign workers in absence of national labor. The number of temporary agricultural workers employed in 2019 on an H-2A visa was 442,822. Most of those hired were Mexicans, 419,052, while Guatemalans reached 2,681 agricultural workers⁴.

These temporary hiring programs in the territories of origin are not new, but rather they were proposed as much more humane versions of the programs of this type that were carried out at the beginning of the 20th century, for example in Mexico to the United States through the Bracero program. These new programs were driven by the recommendation made in 2005 by the World Commission on

International Migration (CMMI) to promote this type of contracting that would meet the economic needs of both parties, the countries of origin and destination (García and Decosse, 2014).

In fact, the organizations and lobbies of agricultural and forestry employers in Canada and the United States⁵ have identified the difficulties of hiring temporary foreign workers as one of the greatest risks of their activity (Charlton and Castillo, 2021). The Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council⁶ estimated CAD 2.9 billion⁷ of losses in 2020, due to the lower arrival of temporary workers because of the international movement restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These losses are a clear brake on the processes of socioeconomic improvement both for farmers, ranchers and their families in rural communities in North America (Jagow, 2019), as well as for temporary agricultural workers and their territories of origin in Guatemala or Mexico.

Both defenders and detractors of this type of programs can be found in the academic and institutional literature; defenders argue that these programs generate beneficial impacts for the receiving countries, as well as for the territories of origin and the migrants themselves (triple win).

2 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00002-eng.htm>

3 <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/farm-labor/#h2a>

4 <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2019/table32>

5 <http://www.ncaonline.org/>

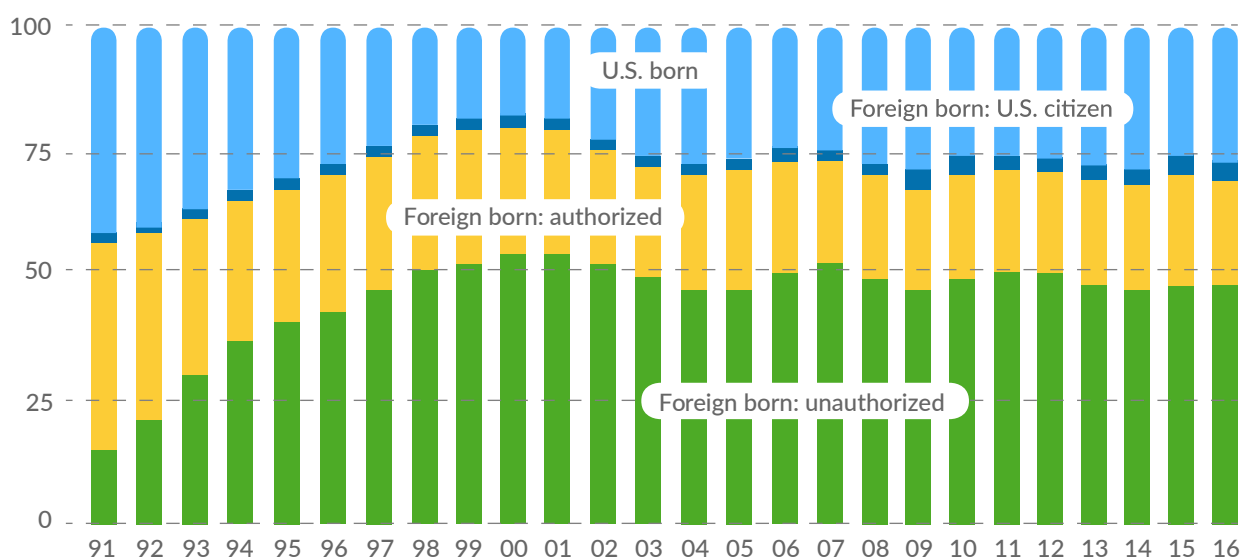
6 <https://cahrc-ccrha.ca/>

7 <https://cahrc-ccrha.ca/sites/default/files/CAHRC%20LMI%20TFWs%20Apr2020%20v2.pdf>

On one hand, the receiving countries would satisfy their need for labor in certain productive sectors, such as agriculture, without having to address the possible costs, both economic and political, related to the permanent migration of the foreign population. The countries of origin of migrants would benefit from the arrival of remittances and skills and knowledge transfer brought by the migrants, which would reduce the pernicious consequences related to the brain drain, that is, with the permanent migration of youth and more prepared people than has been recorded in recent decades from countries

such as Guatemala (ECLAC, 2019). Finally, migrants could access employment opportunities that are absent in their origin communities through legal channels, avoiding the risks and costs of irregular migration and having a legal protection framework and more favorable working conditions than those of irregular migrants employed in the same productive sectors that represent 50% of the agricultural labor force in the US⁸.

FIGURE 1. Legal status of hired agricultural in the U.S.



Note: Values for each year are 3-year moving averages to smooth fluctuations due to small sample sizes: e.g. data reported for fiscal 2016 are the average over fiscal 2014-16. U.S. born includes those born in Puerto Rico.
 Source: USDA Economic Research Service using U.S. Department of Labor, National Agricultural Workers Survey.

Defenders of these forms of international contracting, as well as the World Commission on International Migration (WCMI), concluded that well-designed temporary work programs for migrants in countries like the United States would provide a win-win scenario for all parties involved (Ruhs, M., 2006), critics would argue that the implementation of these programs would systematically lead to situations of social and labor vulnerability for migrants (Castles, S., 2006; Tazreiter, C. 2019; García, M. and Décosse, 2014). Costs and/or sanctions associated with changing employers, abandoning the program or denouncing and claiming their labor rights would allow migrants to be imposed abusive conditions by employers, de facto, and also subject them to excessive control within and outside the workplace (Zou, M., 2018).

⁸ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/farm-labor/#h2a>

Temporary employment programs effectively face important problems and challenges throughout the different phases of the cycle made up of selection and hiring at origin, displacement and work stay in the USA, concluding with the periodic return to their communities of origin in Mexico or Guatemala. A first challenge is associated with the design of these programs, in which public administrations and different legislations are linked, ranging from labor issues to those of a migratory nature. In the Canadian case, the Federal Parliament promoted a commission in 2016 aimed at analyzing the weaknesses of the program and establishing recommendations for improvement, but it did not consider the impact on families and communities of origin, so that measures could be considered to enhance the positive aspects of development, while mitigating the risks and problems identified by a wide variety of actors (workers and their families, trade unions, employers' organizations, academics). The same absence is identified in the reform proposals and/or analysis of the temporary H-2A and H-2B visa programs in the USA, in which the impact of such programs on the socioeconomic development processes of the countries of origin of workers is not considered, as evidenced in the recent publication H-2A and H-2B Temporary Worker Visas: Policy and Related Issues prepared by the Congressional Research Service (June 2020)⁹.

Among the problems identified in the selection and hiring stage in the country of origin, the difficulty of accessing the program for those who are not part of the contact networks that link a potential candidate with the intermediary company that carries out the selection of candidates in Guatemala stands out. The selection process and hiring of employees at origin is carried out through intermediary companies, then, the State of the country from which the workers come is limited to the normal migratory procedures of common use for other nationals (MPI, 2021). In this way, workers come from very specific places. **In the Canadian case, more than 50% of those hired reside in the Department of Chimaltenango**, close to the capital city, while only 0.5% come from the Department of Huehuetenango, one of those with higher levels of poverty, food insecurity and irregular migration to the USA (ACH, 2019).

The arbitrariness with which the selection of workers occurs has led to abuses by intermediaries who charge commissions between USD 1,500 and 10,000 to include candidates in the program, with no guarantee that they will finally be hired (Gesualdi-Fecteau, et al. 2017).

⁹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/labormarkets/brief/migration-and-remittances>



Despite all above, the cost of migrating regularly is considerably lower than the investment required to migrate irregularly. Coyotes (smugglers) usually offer three attempts to reach the USA from Guatemala to potential migrants from USD 5,000 up to USD 10,000. While traffickers have a vested economic interest in ensuring first-time arrival, this does not prevent irregular migration from attacks, injuries, kidnappings, rapes, robberies by cartels, police, smugglers or other migrants (Heidbrink, 2019). The indebtedness to migrate irregularly reinforces the need to try again and again for those who are apprehended at the border and returned, since the only way to break the cycle of irregular migration and indebtedness is to reach the USA and get a job under any condition that allows them to begin to have income and pay the debt (Johnson and Woodhouse, 2018).

The hiring companies, or their local intermediaries, also charge fees to the people they select, which forces those workers with fewer resources to go into debt in some cases. In the American program, the average investment that the worker must assume is USD 1,200 (Brodbeck et al. 2018), while those selected in the Canadian program must

assume approximately USD 1,000 before leaving (Gesualdi-Fecteau, et al. 2017). This supposes another access gap that harms those who are in a more adverse economic situation. The selection and administrative management is carried out in Guatemala City, which requires workers to make an additional investment in travel and stay, which especially affects those who live in rural communities in the most remote departments, as Huehuetenango and San Marcos.

Workers must demonstrate previous farming experience and pass basic strength tests and basic writing and numeracy skills to be selected. Currently, there is no prior training to prepare workers for the tasks they will have to carry out at their destination. Additionally, contrary to the regulations established by the USA and Canada for these programs, some field studies have identified that up to 56% of the surveyed workers stated that they had not received a copy of the contract they signed; only 48% of workers signed a Spanish version of the document, and many workers had only an English or French version of the contract (Gesualdi-Fecteau, et al. 2017).

Although the Government of Guatemala must promote and facilitate the inclusion of its citizens in temporary employment programs, through the General Directorate of Consular and Migratory Affairs and the Directorate of International Economic Policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINEX), its contribution is very limited, largely due to the lack of stable resources allocated for this purpose and the absence of an adequate regulatory framework. This situation contrasts with the capacity of the Mexican Ministry of Labor, as a public entity responsible for the selection and hiring of temporary employees, together with the deployment carried out by the Mexican Foreign Ministry in the destination States (Gesualdi-Fecteau, 2014).

Both, the Canadian and the USA programs have evolved towards full coverage of travel and stay costs at the destination, which includes provision of housing. However, a greater number of problems or abuses have been identified during the stay and work performance, which tarnish the image of



these programs in the destination societies. There is also a large volume of academic and trade union research on labor conditions at destination (Binford, 2019; Brooks, 2018; Carrasco, 2017; Heidbrink, 2019; Hughes, 2014; Moorefield, 2019; Muir, 2015; Robillard, 2018; Wallis, 2019; Weiler, 2020; CDM, 2020), while those dedicated to investigating the effects of these programs on families and communities of origin, are notably fewer.

Another challenge of these temporary employment programs is to reverse the significant gender gap in access to them, that is currently presented (Brooks, 2018; Weiler, 2020). In the case of Canada, 82% of contract workers are men, compared to 18% of women. In the USA H-2A program, the difference is even more marked since women represent only 6% of contracted workers¹⁰, despite that the female workforce constitutes 20% of the total number of workers in agriculture in the United States as a whole, (Hernandez and Gabbard, 2019). However, there are agricultural sectors in which employers express a preference in hiring women, justified by their alleged greater skill, as the red fruit harvest is (Gesualdi-Fecteau, 2014). In a 2020 CDC field investigation¹¹, 86% of H-2A visa surveyed farmworkers stated that systemic gender-based discrimination of employees occurs in the program, dramatically reducing the number of hired women, while often being offered a lower wage, which has also been identified in academic research (Gabriel and McDonald, 2011; Muir, 2015). Highly unbalanced power relations, such as those found in seasonal agricultural work, can also amplify women's vulnerability, leading to cases of sexual violence (Robillard et al. 2018; Weiler and Cohen, 2018).



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10 Nonimmigrant Admissions by Selected Classes of Admission and Sex and Age, Department of Homeland Security, (June 3, 2021), <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/readingroom/NI/NonimmigrantCOAsexage>

11 Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, INC. (CDM). (2020). RIPE FOR REFORM: Abuses of Agricultural Workers in the H-2A Visa Program. <https://cdmigrante.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Ripe-for-Reform.pdf>

These problems and challenges in the design and, above all, in the implementation of temporary work programs for migrants in northern countries such as the United States or Canada could be limiting the positive effects of this form of regular migration in communities of origin of migrants (MPI, 2021). Despite these limitations, these programs present, as we will see, many advantages over other options and opportunities available in rural communities that traditionally expel migrants, as the case of Western Highlands of Guatemala is.

1.3 Impacts of temporary employment programs in the communities of origin of migrants

The economic resources mobilized by the nearly

13,000

Guatemalans who participated in 2019 in temporary agricultural employment programs in USA and Canada exceeded

USD 100 million.



In the field investigation carried out by Brodbeck et al. (2018) in communities in the department of Huehuetenango with temporary workers posted an average of 7 months to the USA to carry out forestry work (under the H-2B visa), an average monthly remittance of USD 982 was found. This capital (USD 6,874/year) was preferably invested in increasing the family's daily consumption, home improvement, purchase of agricultural land, start-up of small businesses and education of children. According to the evidence review recently carried out by IICA¹² (Budworth and Mann, 2017) about the impact on conditions and livelihoods at origin of temporary workers who participate in the Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), it was found that these gradually improved, with more years they participate in these regular circular migration programs; since continuity in these programs would allow them to move from basic consumption to productive investment in land, equipment and businesses.

Repeated participation over the years in these programs could also be crucial in terms of food safety; the effects analysis of remittances sent by temporary migrants also shows results that are difficult to analyze, as the case for migration as a whole was. Remittances could be improving food safety temporarily, without truly influencing the food sovereignty of migrants and their families (Weiler, A. et al., 2017), mainly for those migrants who had less years of participation in this type of programs. To a greater extent, migrants from more impoverished regions would also need more years of participation in the program, in order to begin allocating a greater part of the remittances to productive investments. In this sense, participation in these programs would transform situations of extreme poverty and precariousness into more moderate forms of precariousness, although there is a lack of evidence to ensure that. In the past, these programs have transformed the productive matrix of the territories of origin, by generating new work opportunities in the communities. However, in some contexts, it has been possible to relate participation

¹² <https://repositorio.iica.int/bitstream/handle/11324/2679/BVE17038753i.pdf?sequence=1>

in the programs with an increased income derived from agricultural activities and, to a lesser extent, from other productive activities in the territories of origin thanks to the investments made (Carvajal, L. and Johnson, T., 2016).

Greater evidence seems to exist when linking participation in these programs with greater chances of schooling for children and youth from migrant families (Budworth and Mann, 2017).

As we have seen, despite the costs that must be assumed by migrants who wish to access temporary work programs, academic research (Sittig and González, 2016; Dudley, 2012) and official statistics (DHS, 2020) in which it is investigated the cost of irregularly emigrating through coyotes, they identify investments that range between USD 2,000 and USD 12,000, with an average close to USD 7,000, which entails debts that can require up to ten times more to work in the USA to pay, in case the migrant has achieved to cross the border, which does not always happen. A study conducted with 5,000 households in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador estimated that migrants who enter the United States through a coyote represent 78% of recent Guatemalan migrants (MPI-WFP, 2021). This same study found that regular migrants would have to commit to a lesser extent the assets and savings of their family and friends in the territories of origin, since they could use their own savings to a greater extent to finance the trip (MPI-WFP, 2021).

Temporary employment programs, by implying less indebtedness for both the migrant and their relatives in origin, could potentially reduce the pressure on other members of the family when assessing the decision to migrate abroad. In this way, the dependence of the migrant's social network in relation to his/her migratory success would also be limited, freeing the migrant from certain pressure, and thus facilitating the affective and interpersonal relationships of the families and, finally, being able to increase productive investments in origin by having to allocate a smaller percentage of remittances to pay debts.



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More research such as the one presented in this report, as well as qualitative comparative exercises, would be necessary to confirm, deny or qualify the differential effects of temporary migration in territories of origin.

Undoubtedly, regular temporary migration avoids the risks that migrating irregularly entails, which requires greater investment and indebtedness, taking on an uncertain journey subject to multiple abuses, violating the migratory regulations at the destination and the impossibility of seeing the family that remains in Guatemala for a long time, which often ends up causing the breakdown of the family and loss or deterioration of affective ties. On average, irregular migrants in the USA stay 13.6 years before returning to their country of origin (Passel and Cohn 2016).



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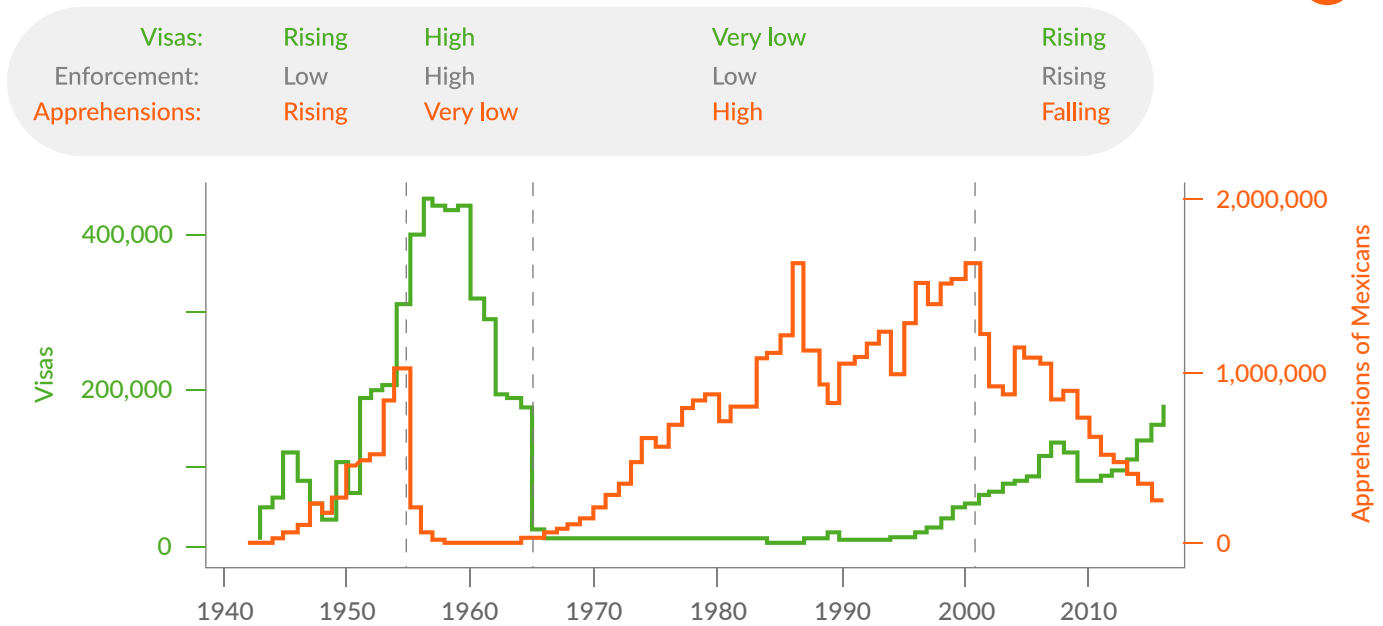
From the point of view of the transformation of attitudes and values in the communities of origin of migrants, there are also very varied results as consequence of temporary migration, despite the potential of social remittances to transform the communities, as we have already seen. On one hand, for example, despite that some research found that Mexican migrants employed in temporary agricultural employment programs in Canada acquired new skills, technologies and knowledge related to agricultural production; however, these technologies and new knowledge is hardly applicable in the rural context of origin of the migrants (Budworth and Mann, 2017). Similar results were obtained in a qualitative study carried out in Guatemala in 2019; farmers who participated in temporary employment programs in the United States and Canada stated that they were unable to apply the agricultural knowledge acquired abroad in their communities of origin, since the techniques used in Guatemala were fundamentally manual and they did not have the machinery, irrigation systems, inputs and necessary products (ACH, 2019).

In a qualitative research carried out by Hughes (2014) in households where male members participated in temporary employment programs in Canada, it was found that during the stay in Canada and in the subsequent stage of return, the traditional gender roles remained unchanged. Although there were occasional signs of change in the way of thinking regarding gender patterns and patriarchal dominance, in general terms the relationships of authority and submission remained. While the male

partner was in Canada, the household responsibilities increased for those women who remained. On the other hand, men continued to exercise full control over the use to be given to the remittances sent. Additionally, the community exerted greater pressure or surveillance on women who were left alone (Hughes 2014; Robillard et al. 2018). The transformation of gender roles and the greater women's empowerment in managing resources and in the organization of productive and reproductive work in their communities of origin would seem to be more pronounced when women are those who participate in temporary work programs abroad; however, women represented a small percentage among the participants in temporary employment programs, as we have already seen (ACH, 2019).

Finally, in relation to the effects that temporary regular migration can have on migratory flows as a whole, there are several considerations to consider; on one hand, as we have seen, the increase of development level in low-income territories, as the case of Guatemala is, could lead to a greater desire and possibility of leaving the country. However, recent studies seem to point to the potential of regular temporary migration channels to curb irregular migration flows as long as regular channels for hiring migrants in sectors such as agriculture, highly dependent on foreign labor, are combined with strong policies to control irregular migration (Clemens and Gough, 2018).

Figure 2: Regular and irregular migration and migratory control on the US-Mexico border



Source: Clemens, M. and Gough, K. (2018). Can regular migration channels reduce irregular migration? Lessons for Europe from the United States.

The time of greatest reduction in the flow of irregular Mexican migrants in the United States, between 1954 and 1964, would coincide with the fewest arrests at the border and with the greatest control, both at the border and in workplaces in the United States, as well as with the opening and intensification of regular channels for migration, as the Bracero project was. Since 2001, the strengthening of border control and the facilitation of procedures to access H2-A and H2-B visas resulted in the lowest rates of irregular migration of Mexicans in the United States in half a century (Clemens and Gough, 2018). The decrease in irregular migration from Mexico to the USA in the last decade, until reaching a zero net balance between the two countries, would be partially attributed, in fact, to the greater recruitment in temporary employment programs under the H-2A and H-2A visas. 2B (Moorefield, 2019).

Not only border controls but also incentives for hiring through regular channels would be essential in this regard, as shown by qualitative research carried out with Mexican migrant smugglers employed by US agricultural entrepreneurs, due to the availability of undocumented immigrants and the absence of government control in agricultural companies, the employers' preference is to hire irregular migrants. According to this study, agricultural employers would hire "guest" workers, that is, Mexican workers who would have entered the United States with temporary H2-A visas, when they did not have enough undocumented day laborers, or to justify the use of illegal labor under an appearance of legality (Izcara-Palacios, 2014).



Additionally, by avoiding the prolonged separation of the migrant and his/her family, temporary employment programs could reduce the incentives for additional members of the family to migrate, provided that the receipt of remittances is sufficient; not only the need to increase family income, but also the desire to reunite with the previously migrated family member is, in fact, one of the main drivers of Central Americans migration to northern countries (IOM, 2019).

Based on the reviewed literature, it seems evident that the different migratory experiences, and specifically the regularity or irregularity of channels through which migration occurs, constitute a key factor in the impacts that such migration triggers in the territories of origin of migrants.

Therefore, the research presented in this report is of special interest as it represents a comparative exercise of the differential impact of regular or irregular migration of Guatemalan migrants in the same communities in the department of Huehuetenango in Guatemala.

METHODOLOGY



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02

METHODOLOGY

The number of temporary Guatemalan workers who moved to the USA and Canada in 2020 amounted to 15,300 people, distributed throughout most of the country's departments, although close to 50% of those destined for Canada were concentrated in the Chimaltenango area. (5,000 people). This high dispersion makes traditional random sampling unfeasible, given the low probability of finding families in which some member participates in circular migration programs.

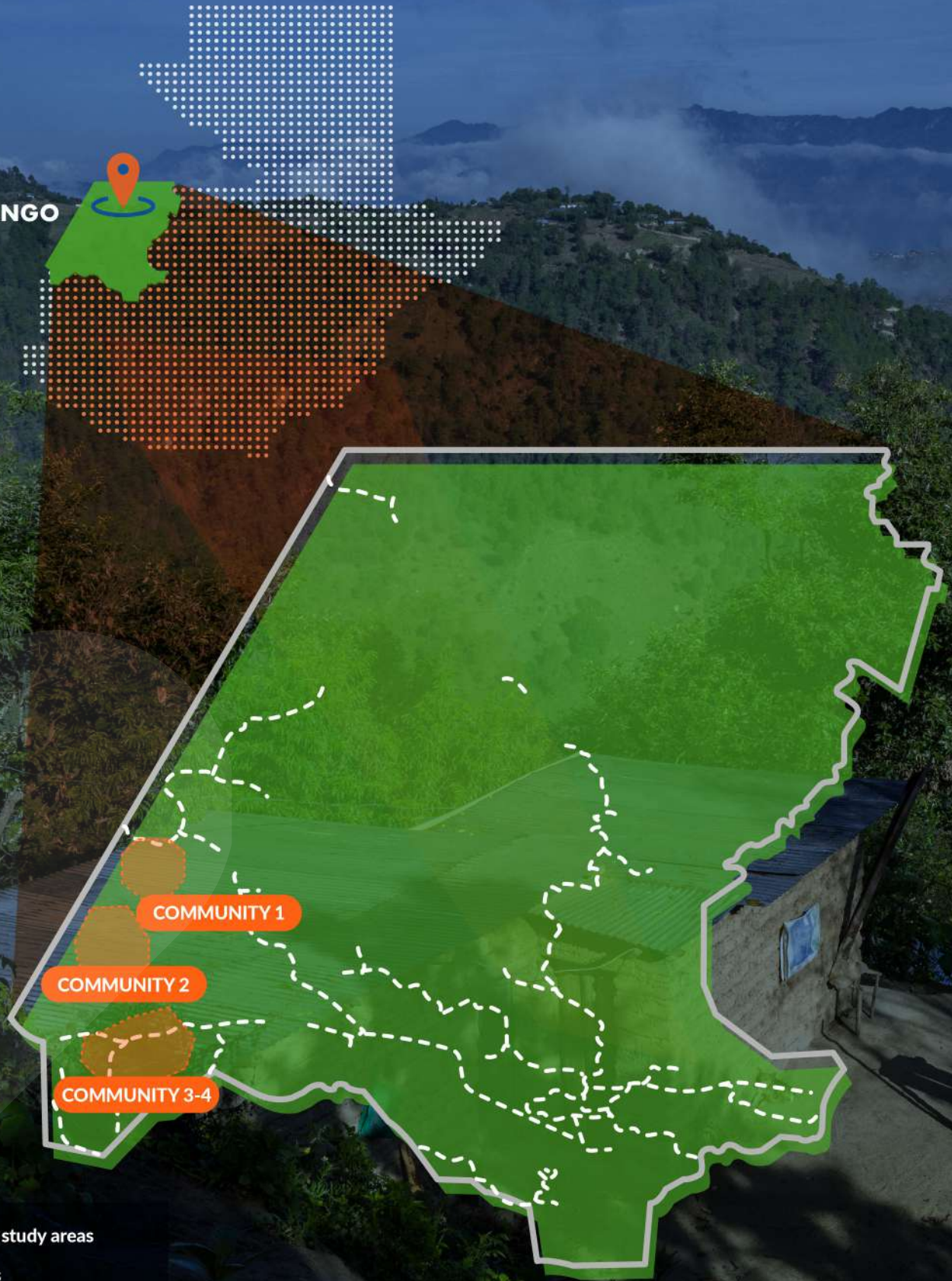
On the other hand, the selection of these workers is mediated by contact networks and the social capital established with relatives, neighbors and friends, so that the participants in the temporary visa programs are concentrated in a limited number of municipalities and communities. In accordance with these characteristics that define temporary migration in Guatemala, a community was identified in the south-west area of the Department of Guatemala in which a significant number of its inhabitants have been traveling to the United States to carry out forestry work for periods of between 6 and 9 months, through H2B visa.

The community in question, to which the Community 1 code was assigned, is made up of 251 households, of which, it was later verified with the survey carried out within the framework of this investigation, that 28% had some member who was or had been associated with the H2B visa program. In order to compare the effect of different migratory experiences on the living conditions of families and their belonging feeling, four other nearby communities were chosen, whose codes and number of families are summarized in Table 1, forming a set of 1,139 households. Map XX shows the general location of the communities studied.



MAP 1. Location of the surveyed communities

HUEHUETENANGO



● Community study areas

⋯ Paved roads

For the calculation of the sample size, the **Epidat** statistical software version 4.2, was used, considering the following values for the estimation of the population proportion:

TOTAL POPULATION:



1,139
families.

EXPECTED PROPORTION:

50%

(As the value of the proportions to be calculated is unknown a priori, as these also correspond to different variables, 50% is taken as the most unfavorable value that will cause a larger sample size, which ensures to be sufficient without exceeding the minimum established error)

DESIRED PRECISION:



5%
(Recommended value for prevalences above 20%)

EFFECT OF THE DESIGN:

It is not considered

as it is a simple design in which conglomerates within the strata are not considered, so this datum is taken

equal to 1.

CONFIDENCE LEVEL:



95%
(Standard Confidence Level)

NON-RESPONSE RATE:



Although interviews were conducted until reaching the minimum sample size necessary, the non-response rate is estimated at 10% to make up for possible inconsistent or erroneous responses that cannot be used.

With these parameters and rounding the resulting sample size reached the theoretical figure of:

320 families

This minimum necessary sample size was exceeded by producing the distribution among the different communities with unequal probabilities according to the community and our knowledge of these communities and interest. Since Com.1 was the only one in which there was evidence of families linked to the H2B program, it was decided to increase the number of surveys to be carried out in such community until reaching 59.36% of all households which were selected through systematic sampling.

TABLE 1. Total number of households and sample distribution in the communities in which the survey was carried out

Cod.	Total number of households (approx)	Number of households surveyed	% households surveyed	(X) House selection interval
Com. 1	251	149	59.36	1
Com. 2	286	111	38.81	2
Com. 3	262	71	27.10	3
Com. 4	47	30	63.83	1
Com. 5	293	63	21.50	4

The study's unit of analysis is the household, understood as the person or group of people, relatives or not, who live under the same roof and share food expenses. During the survey, it was asked for the members who lived in the household at that time, as well as those members who migrated but who at some point were part of the household or continue to be linked to it.

The observation unit, that is, the person to be interviewed, was always an adult, who was the household head if present, or as close as possible to such position. For random selection of households, the following steps were followed:

1. Its central point was identified in each community

2. Community leaders were asked for updated information on the number of existing houses

3. The range of households to be considered was calculated, so that **X = Total number of households / Number of households (homes) required in the sample design**

4. A first household is randomly chosen to carry out the survey, after that, a new household is selected every X interval.

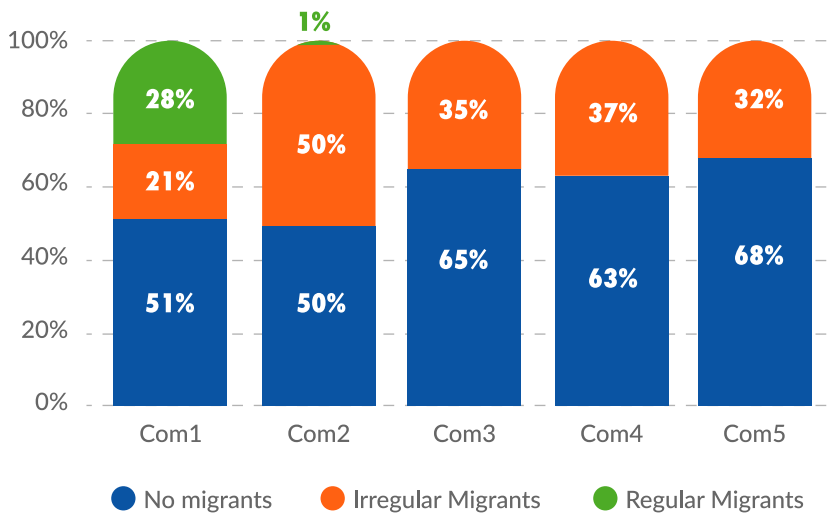
The field team was made up of six household interviewers and a supervisor. Additionally, there were 4 anthropometrists who made a standardized measurement of weight and height of all children under 5 years of age who were at the household at the time of the survey. The information gathering was carried out between December 12 and 22, 2021.

The results analysis and interpretation of the generated database has been carried out through descriptive analyzes that highlight the differences among the three types of households, whose comparison is sought with the research (households without international migratory experience, with irregular migration and with regular-circular migration), to which is added the calculation of synthesis measures such as the mean and standard deviation, as well as the construction of frequency tables and graphic representations. Graph 1 shows how the three types of households were distributed according to their migratory experience, among the five communities that were surveyed.



En el **gráfico 1** se muestra cómo se distribuían los tres tipos de hogares de acuerdo a su experiencia migratoria, entre las cinco comunidades que fueron encuestadas.

GRAPH 1. Sample distribution by type of migration



Once a division has been established in the database on the three types of migratory experience, analyzes are carried out in order to establish whether there are significant differences between the types of migration considered, considering the rest of the socio-economic, demographic, food safety and migratory intention variables, which make up the DB.

For numerical type variables that are normally distributed, this relationship is studied through the analysis of variance of one factor (ANOVA). This test checks whether the mean of the variable at issue can be considered the same regardless of the migratory group in which the person is. However, this test is not appropriate in cases of non-normality, in which case the Kruskal-Wallis test was used, for which the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was previously performed.

When the Kruskal-Wallis test indicated that there were significant differences between the groups, the Tukey test was performed, which makes it possible to establish which groups can be considered the

same and which are different, which can also be observed through comparative graphs of the “box and whiskers” type. ” In those cases where the number of groups to be compared was only two, the Mann-Whitney U test was used as an alternative to Kruskal-Wallis.

For qualitative variables, Pearson’s Chi-square test of independence was used. For those cases in which there was an expected frequency equal to 0 or in which the number of frequencies below 5 exceeded 20%, the value of the correction factor for continuity or the Verisimilitude Ratio was used for such test, since it is not adequate for the Chi-square statistic.

RESULTS



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03

RESULTS

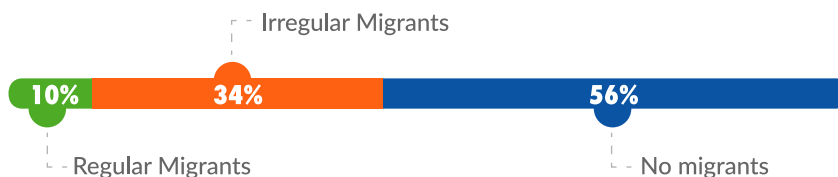
The results included in this report reflect the different living conditions of the households based on the different migratory experiences of its members in the aforementioned rural communities of the department of Huehuetenango. For this, the interviewed households have been divided into three groups according to their connection with the migratory phenomenon: “**regular migrants**”, “**irregular migrants**” and “**non-migrants**”.

The group of “**regular migrants**” includes all those households where at least one of its members had migrated regularly both in the past and at the time of the survey, mainly to the United States through H2-A or H2-B visas and, to a lesser extent, to Mexico. On the other hand, within the group of “**irregular migrants**” are included all those households with exclusively irregular migratory experiences, with Mexico and the United States as main migratory destinations. Finally, through the inclusion of households without any migratory experience, the “**non-migrants**”, it will be possible to reflect on how the two ways of undertaking migration, whether regular or irregular, affect the improvement of the living conditions of families that remain in origin.



Of all the households surveyed, slightly more than half had no migratory experience and, among the households in which at least one member had emigrated internationally, around 77% had done irregularly, while 23% had done so at least on some occasion, on a regular basis. Of the total of surveyed households, 10% had at least one member who had regularly migrated to the northern countries.

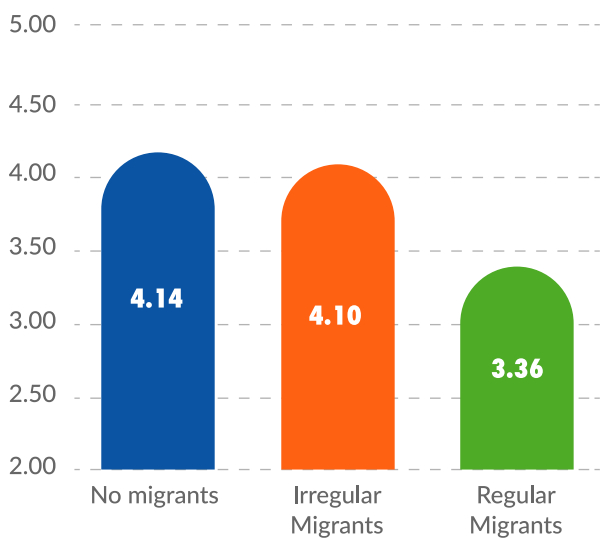
GRAPH 2. Migratory profiles in the households surveyed



3.1 Sociodemographic characteristics

Although there are no significant differences in relation to the age of the household head among the three groups analyzed, there are in relation to the number of household members, with households with regular migrants being the smallest, having on average around 3 members compared to the 4 that make up households with irregular migrants and non-migrants. **In the department of Huehuetenango as a whole, the average number of household members was 3.76 according to data from the 2018 census¹³.**

GRAPH 3. Average number of household members, by type of migration

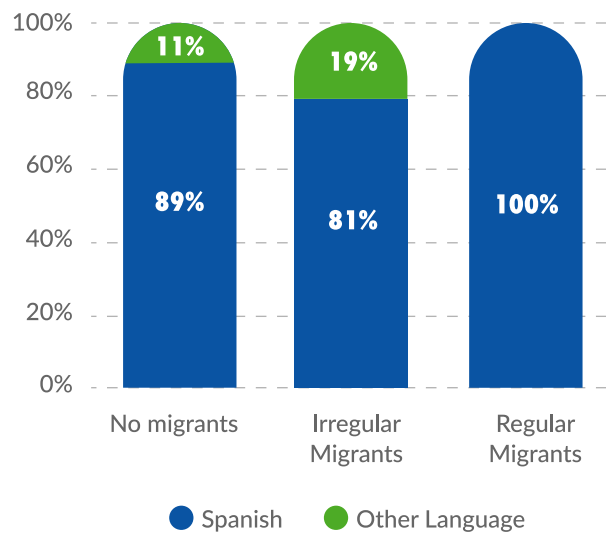


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13 <https://www.censopoblacion.gt/>

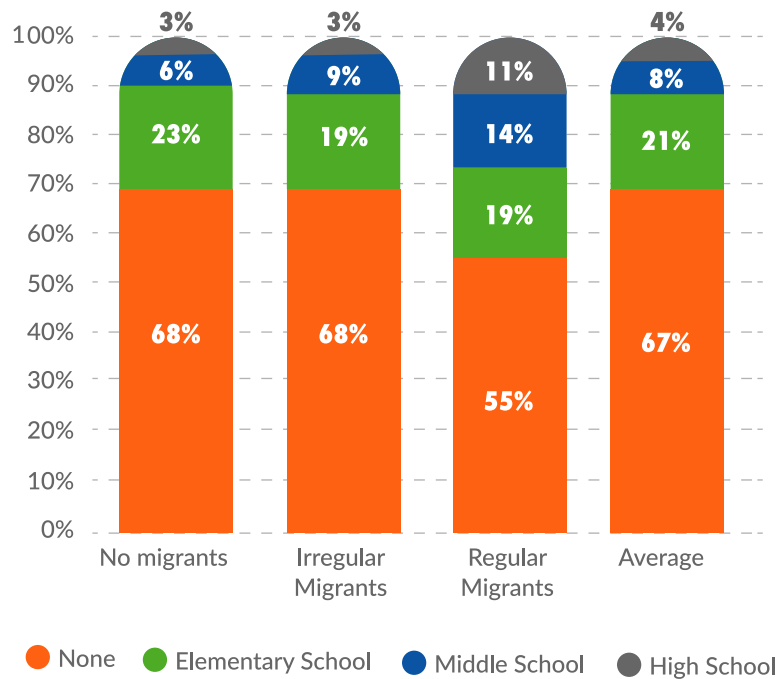
In addition, all **households with members who migrated regularly have Spanish as their mother tongue**, compared to 80% in the irregular migration group and 89.1% in the non-migrant group. These statistically significant differences could be explained by possible greater difficulties in accessing regular temporary work programs by the indigenous population in the rural communities analyzed.

GRAPH 4. Mother tongue of the interviewee, by type of migration



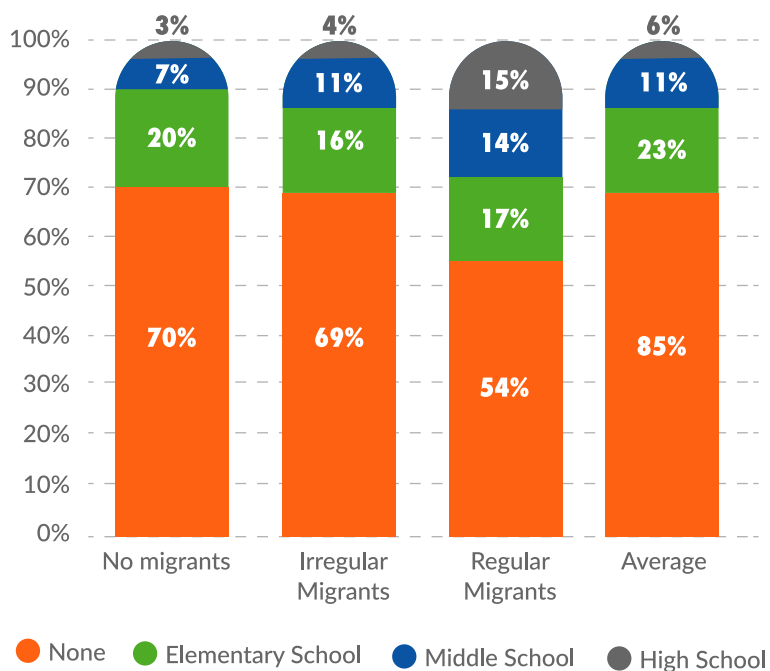
The **schooling level achieved** by the members of the domestic unit **is significantly higher in the case of households with regular migratory experiences**, and these differences are maintained in the specific case of women.

GRAPH 5. Highest schooling level, by type of migration.



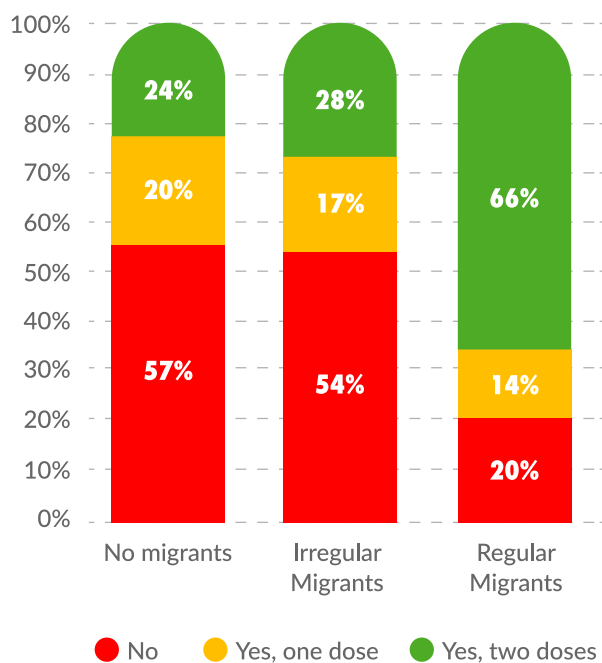
As can be seen, both in the case of the population analyzed as a whole and in the case of women, households where none of its members had finished elementary school decreased by around 15 percentage points in households with regular migratory experiences compared to the rest of the domestic units.

GRAPH 6. Highest schooling level in women, by type of migration



Finally, as expected, in households with **regular migrants** it is much more likely that the person surveyed would have received the **double vaccination schedule against Covid-19** in relation to the other two groups; requirements related to international travel from 2020 would force temporary workers who want to take advantage of temporary work programs to complete the vaccination.

GRAPH 7. COVID-19 vaccination, by type of migration



As can be seen, about 66% of households with regular migrants, the person interviewed would have received both doses of the vaccine, compared to less than 30% in households with irregular migrants and households without any migrant member.

3.2 Information on housing and poverty

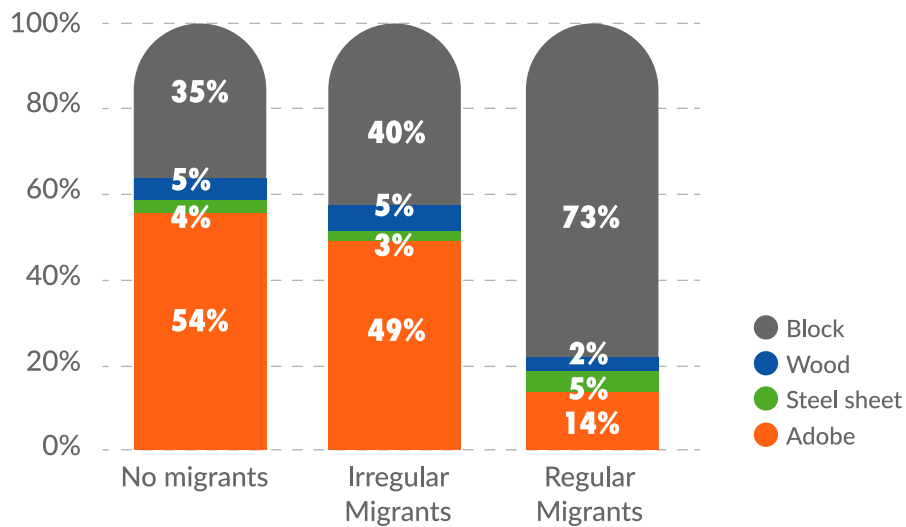
Investment in the family home is, as we have seen, one of the main uses of remittances in Guatemala; households with international migrants that received remittances showed a lower index of precariousness in the quality of housing¹⁴ in a characterization of international migration in Guatemala carried out by the International Organization for Migration in 2018 (IOM and UNFPA, 2021).

This is confirmed in the households analyzed exclusively for the case of regular migration in communities of Huehuetenango, these households

present precariousness levels in the materials used in walls, ceilings and floors notably lower compared to the rest of the homes.

In the case of the material for walls, while irregular migration is not significantly associated with improvement in the quality of household, regular migration would suppose a considerable improvement, the most common material of walls is block among households with regular migratory experience, unlike the rest of households where adobe would predominates¹⁵.

GRAPH 8. Predominant material of household's exterior walls, by type of migration



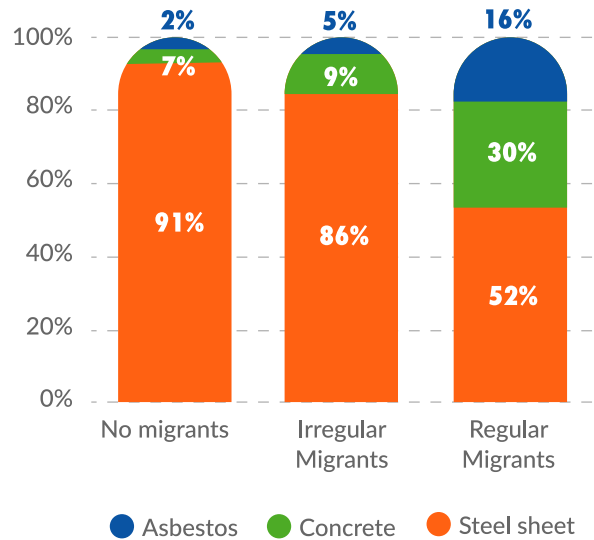
Something similar occurs with the roof material since, as we can see, in households with regular migratory experience the use of metal sheets is greatly reduced and replaced by concrete and to a lesser extent, by asbestos cement.

14 The materials used in walls and floor of the house determine its precariousness level in the IOM and UNFPA study (2021).

15 According to the method of Unsatisfied Basic Needs incorporated by the Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean - ECLAC - since the 1970s, Unsatisfied Basic Need in rural areas is considered in terms of housing quality, while the walls are made of sheet metal, bajareque, lepa, palo, cane or other and also have a dirt floor.

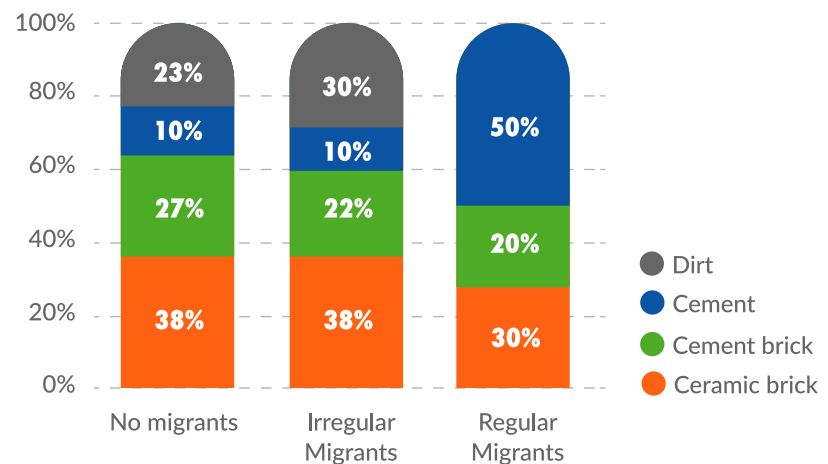


GRAPH 9. Predominant material on household's roof, by type of migration



Related to the material of floor, crucial to determine households with precarious qualities according to the index of unsatisfied basic needs used by ECLAC¹⁶, the significant improvement of households with regular migrants is confirmed, since none of them registered having the floors of land, unlike the rest of homes where more than 1 of every 3 had this type of material on the floors. In households with regular migrants, as can be seen, floors were more likely to be brick.

GRAPH 10. Predominant material in the household's floor, by type of migration

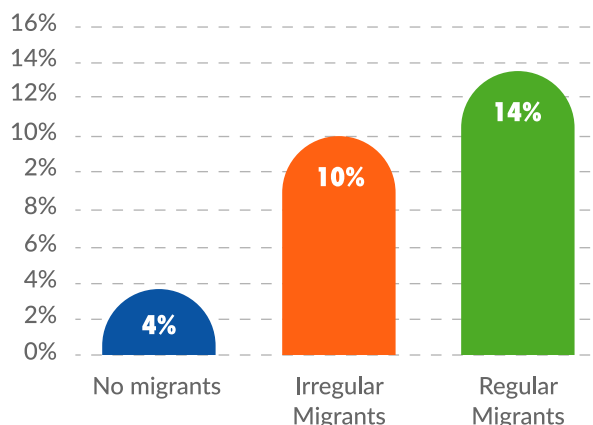


However, no significant differences are recorded related to home ownership among the groups of households analyzed; therefore, it cannot be affirmed that migration, both regular and irregular, has contributed to the purchase of houses while regular migration would have contributed significantly to their improvement.

16 https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/4784/S0102117_es.pdf?sequence

Both irregular and regular migration would have facilitated home remodeling and improvement due to a significantly higher percentage of households in these two groups had carried out renovations in the last year compared to households without migrant members; however, the qualities of housing resulting from these improvements only stood out in the case of regular migration.

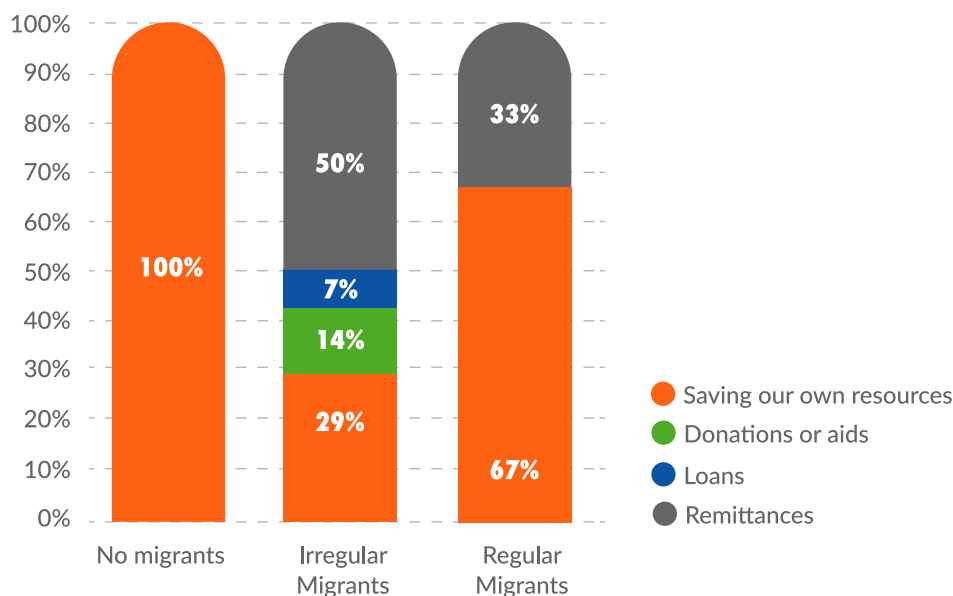
GRAPH 11. Percentage of households that made improvements to their home in the last year, by type of migration



Around **14% of households with regular migrants had made improvements or extensions to their home in the last year** and, of these, 2 of 3 had financed the reforms with savings or their own resources; 1 in 3 households had financed them through the use of remittances. In the case of households with irregular migration experiences that had made improvements to their homes, half had depended on remittances to finance them.

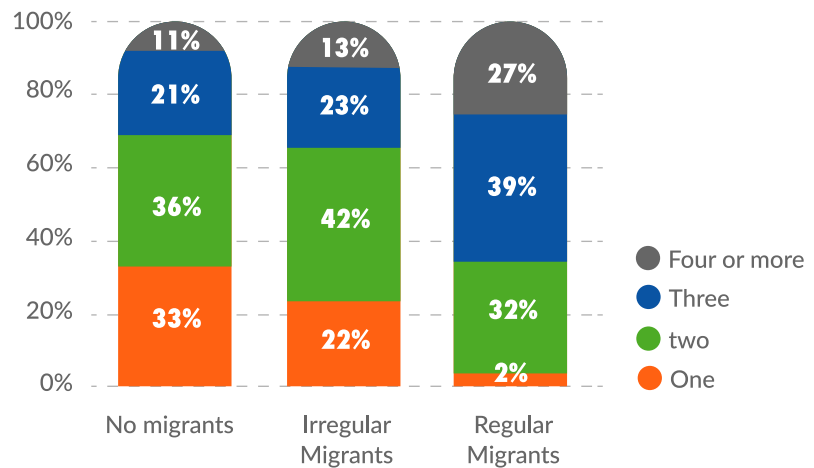
Although these differences between households with regular and irregular migrant members are not statistically significant, there seems to be a tendency for households with regular migrants to have a greater capacity to make investments in physical capital, such as housing; at the same time, they seem to have a greater capacity to save or generate income outside of remittances to face such investments.

GRAPH 12. Origin of money to carry out home improvements, by type of migration



Additionally, households with regular migratory experiences would face less overcrowding, compared to the other two groups, since the lower number of members in the household would also be accompanied by a greater number of rooms available for the members of the domestic unit. Most of these households have 3 bedrooms, while in non-migrant households and households with irregular migrants, most of the houses have only 2 bedrooms.

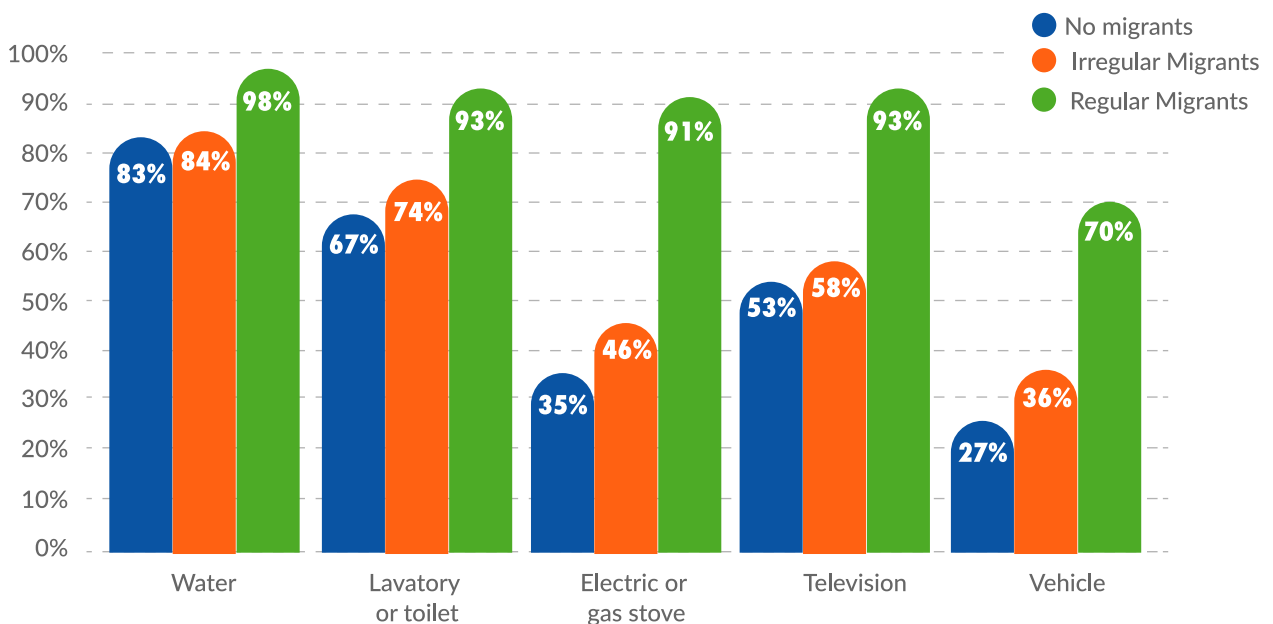
GRAPH 13. Number of rooms in houses (excluding kitchen, bathroom, hallway, garage, or rooms used for business), by type of migration



Regarding the endowment in services, appliances and vehicles of the surveyed households, the best conditions of the households with members who had migrated on a regular basis are confirmed; these would have more often a home connection to the water supply network, toilets or lavatories as sanitary service, electric stoves, television and a car. Most of the households without migrant members

and also the majority of those where their members migrated only irregularly do not have a stove to cook or any type of vehicle, about half do not have a television, and to a greater extent they use latrines or cesspit as a form of health service and around 17% would not have a water supply network in the house.

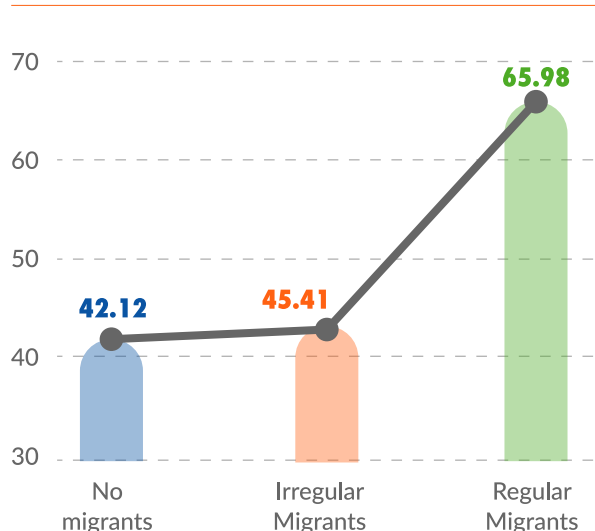
GRAPH 14. Provision of services, home appliances and vehicles, by type of migration



Irregular migration, compared to households without migrant members, would only contribute to generating improvements in terms of ownership of a vehicle, electric or gas stoves, by the domestic unit.

The Simple Poverty Scorecard (SPS) index is calculated based on the number of members of the household, the bedrooms of the house, as well as its equipment¹⁷, resulting in a value from 0 to 100, where 0 would correspond to an extreme poverty situation, which would soften as the index increases in value. If the average poverty indices are analyzed for the three groups studied, it is verified that the households with regular migration present significantly higher values of SPS compared to the rest of the households and, therefore, situations of less poverty and precariousness.

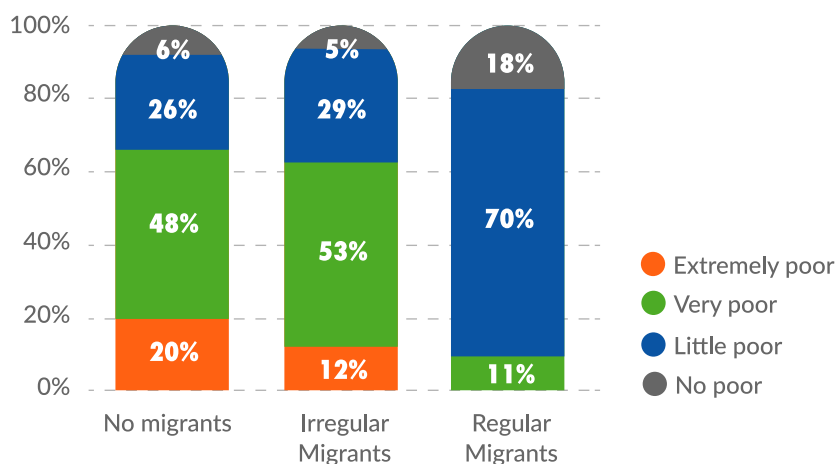
GRAPH 15. Simple Poverty Scorecard (SPS), by type of migration



Therefore, and according to the Simple Poverty Scorecard, only regular migration would contribute significantly to alleviating household poverty conditions, since there are no significant differences between non-migrant households and those with irregular migration.

Depending on the SPS value, households can also be classified into four categories depending on the severity of poverty they suffer: extremely poor, very poor, slightly poor and non-poor households. As can be seen in graph 16, **households with regular migrants present, once again, poverty rates that are significantly lower than the rest of the groups**; 70.5% of the regular migration group are considered “a little poor” according to this classification and only 11.4% would be “very poor” compared to 53.4% and 48.1% who would be considered “little poor” in the irregular migration and non-migrant groups, respectively.

GRAPH 16. Household’s poverty level, by type of migration



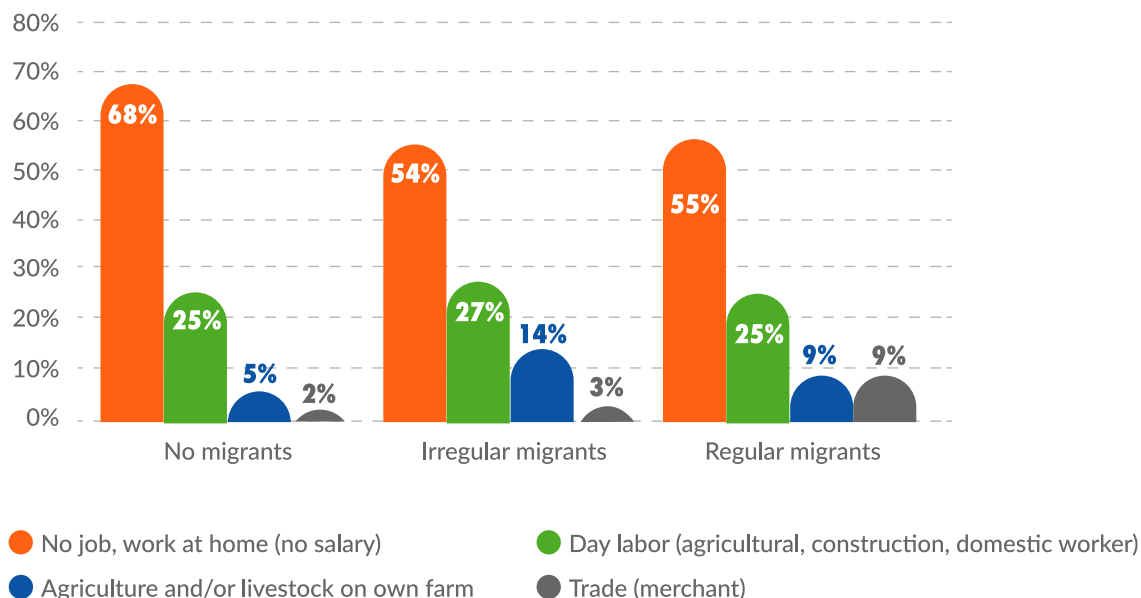
17 Type of sanitary service, presence of electric or gas stove, refrigerator, iron, blender, cell phone, television and car or other type of vehicle.

The irregular migration of some member of the domestic unit would not be influencing in global terms the poverty conditions of households, only regular migration; therefore, it would be alleviating the severity of poverty among the rural households analyzed, helping to eradicate situations of extreme poverty and lifting a considerable percentage of households out of poverty, calculated according to the characteristics and endowment in housing equipment.

3.3 Socioeconomic characteristics and social networks

Analyzing the occupation of the total number of people interviewed (households heads present in household at the time of the survey, 79% of them were women and 21% men), we verified that migration, both regular and irregular, significantly modifies significant productive activities carried out compared to households without migrant members. In the latter, the percentage of people who either do not work or only work at home without receiving any salary is significantly higher, while a smaller number of people work in commerce. Therefore, migration would be favoring the performance of productive activities by household members who, prior to migration, did not generate income.

GRAPH 17. Main occupation, by type of migration

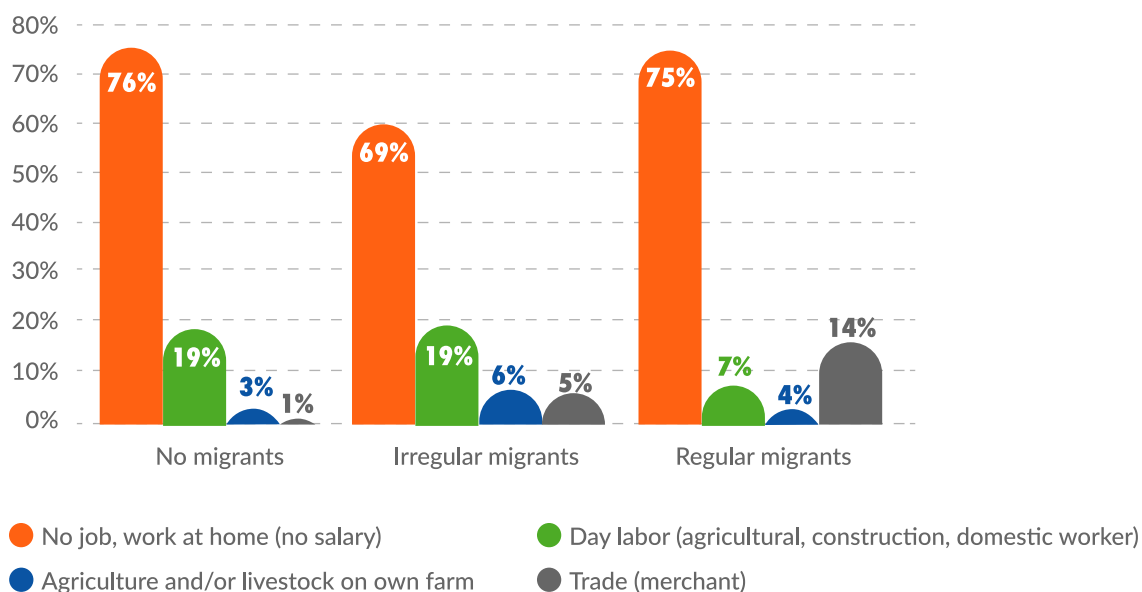




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However, it is interesting to verify that if these differences by gender are analyzed, migration would affect the occupation of household members exclusively in the case of women and only in households with members who had migrated regularly.

GRAPH 18. Main occupation of women, by type of migration



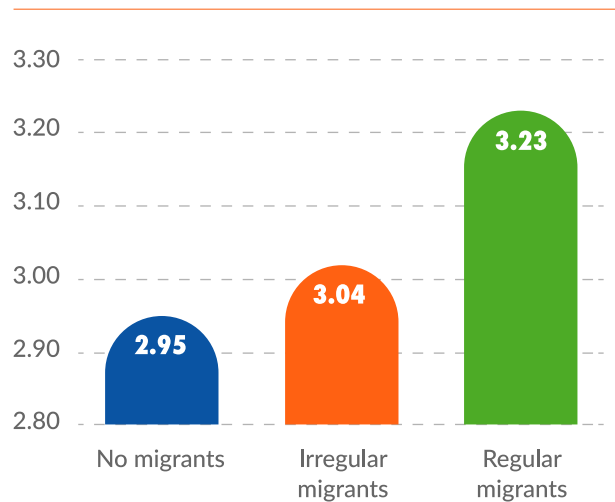
As can be seen, in households with regular migrants, women dedicate to a greater extent to commerce and to a lesser extent to day labor¹⁸; regular migration unlike irregular migration, would imply a change in the productive activities of women that would potentially allow them to increase their income¹⁹.

¹⁸ These differences are statistically significant in relation to households without migrant members, but not those with irregular migrants.

¹⁹ It is necessary to consider that the people who responded the survey were 79% women, which would possibly be increasing the total percentage of people who appear dedicated to the home and decreasing that represented by day laborers.

Households with regular migratory experiences also perceive that their economic situation is more positive compared to the assessment made by families in which none of their members has emigrated. However, irregular migration fails to improve families' sense of economic hardship²⁰. As can be seen, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 corresponds to a family economic situation perceived as “very bad” and 5 as “very good”, most households perceive their economic situation as “intermediate” despite of the high levels of general poverty of the analyzed communities.

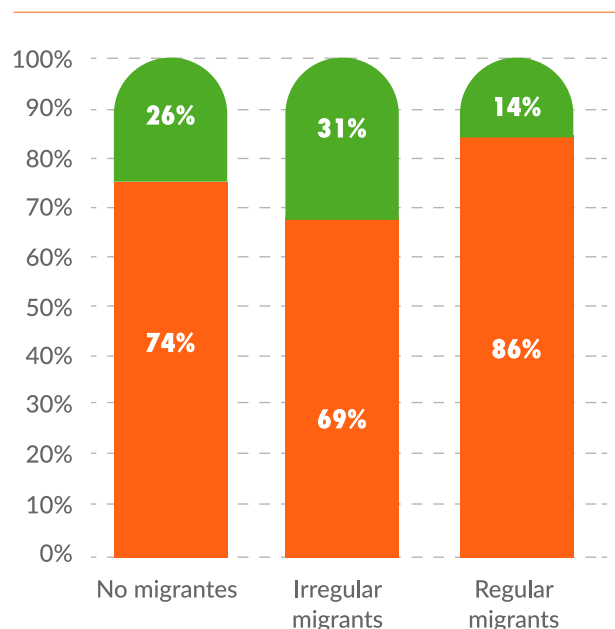
GRAPH 19. Perception of family economic situation (scale 1-5), by type of migration



Regardless of the migratory situation, a majority also considers that this situation would not have changed since 2020, so we can conclude that the economic impact of the health emergency situation caused by the pandemic would have been largely reversed at the time of carrying out the survey.

The different migratory experiences do not seem to have an impact neither on the percentage of families that received some type of assistance or social aid, be it food, education or health, nor training for job search or productivity improvement regardless of whether the aid came from the Guatemalan Government, churches or NGO projects. The families that had received some type of assistance in the last year were relatively few and less than 5% had received any type of training; none, in fact, within the regular migration group.

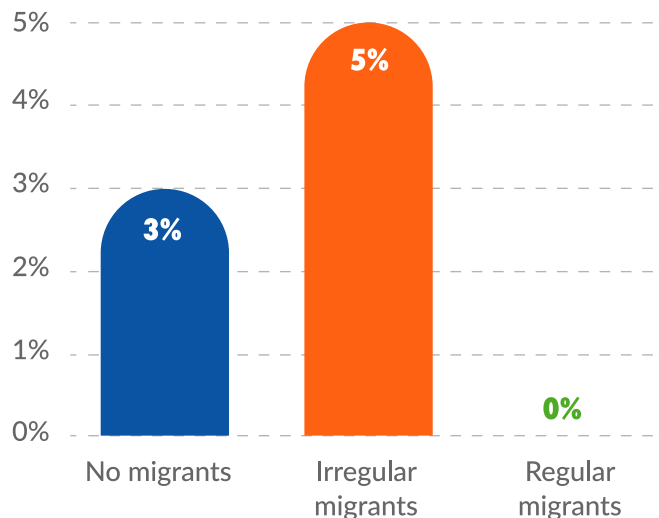
GRAPH 20. Assistance received in the last year, by type of migration



²⁰ No significant differences are found between households with irregular and regular migration.

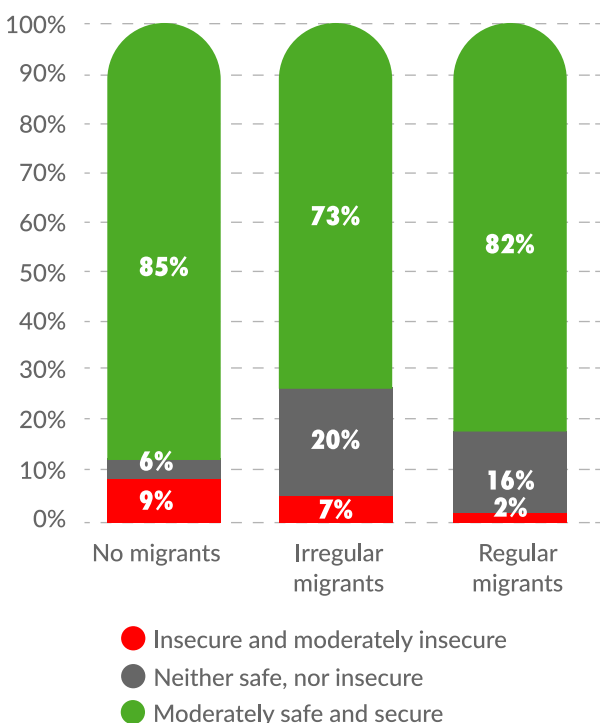
● No ● Yes

GRAPH 21. Percentage of the population that received training in the last year, by type of migration



Despite that being a victim of different forms of violence or the fear before a possibility of suffering them are among the main motivations and expelling factors in the Central American region (Clemens and Gough, 2017; IDB-USAID, 2019; Tesfaye, 2019), rural communities in western Guatemala tend to be self-perceived as safe and quiet, especially when compared to urban neighborhoods and communities in the country (CRS, 2020). As expected, a majority of the people surveyed, 73%, perceived their communities of residence as very quiet and barely 5% had been victim of some type of crime in the last year.

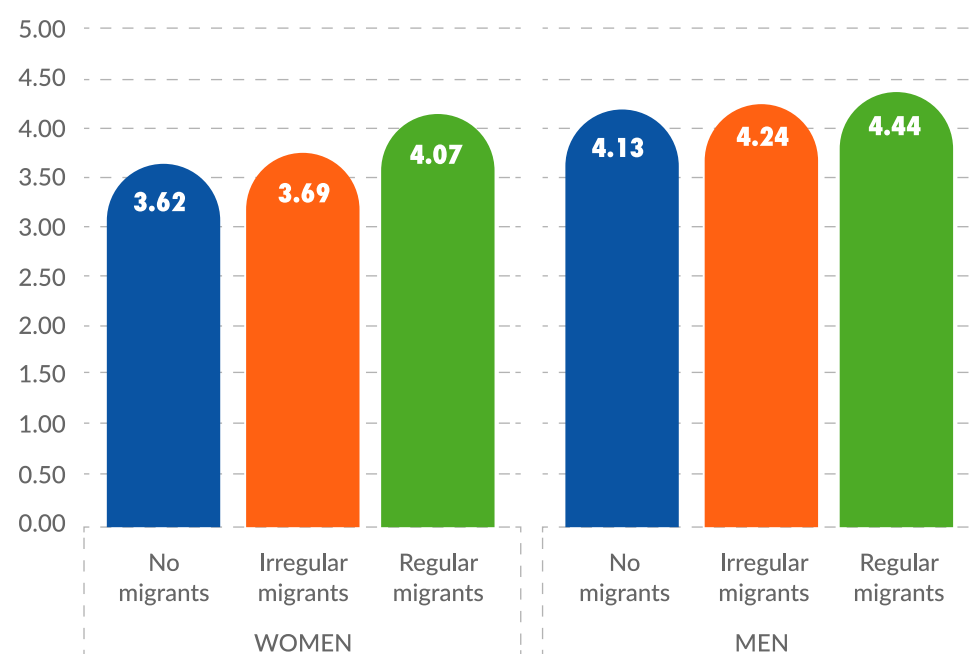
GRAPH 22. Security perception in the community, by type of migration



However, the experience of irregular migration of some member of the domestic unit is significantly associated with a lower sense of security in the communities of residence compared to the rest of the households, despite not reporting of having suffered violent events such as robberies or aggression to a greater extent than households without migrant members or with experiences of regular migration. Prolonged family separations, the heavy indebtedness necessary to meet the costs of hiring a coyote and the risks associated with this type of migratory experience could be harming people's perception of their communities, which could have negative effects on feelings of attachment and roots towards these territories.

On the contrary, the regular migratory experience would be related to a greater feeling of trust towards the people of the community, above both households with irregular migrants and households without migrant members; these differences would also be maintained if the results are analyzed by gender, despite the lower degree of general confidence perceived by women²⁰.

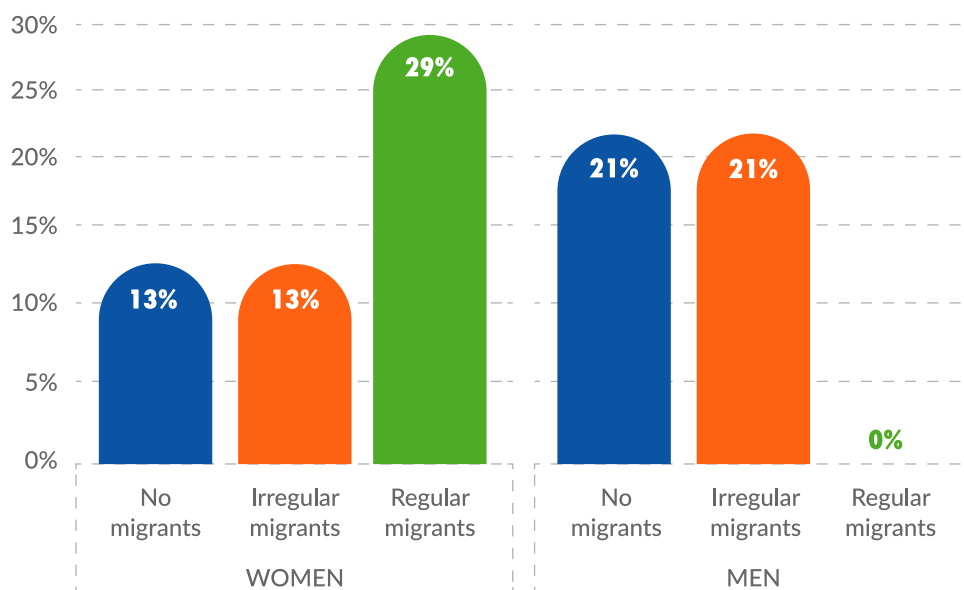
GRAPH 23. Trust level in community members (scale 1-5), by gender and type of migration



This greater confidence would not translate into greater participation in associations by this group of households, whether in community committees or associations of a productive, cultural, religious or political nature, since it has not been found that the migratory experiences of families affect the participation, more or less active, of the respondents in the existing associations of the communities. In any case, participation in organizations and associations is relatively low in the communities analyzed since only 15% of the interviewed people participated, even if only as a non-active member, in any type of organization or association at the time of the survey. As can be seen in the following graph, there does seem to be a trend towards greater social participation of women among households with regular migratory experiences; however, these differences do not become significant.

21 Trust level is represented numerically, where 1 means "total mistrust" and 5 "total trust."

GRAPH 24. Participation in associations, by gender and type of migration

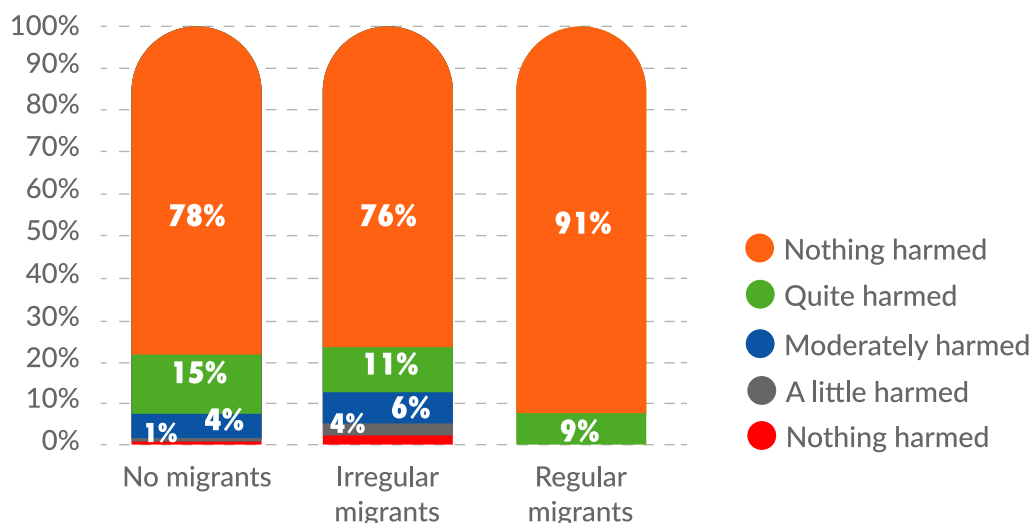


It should not be forgotten that people who are better connected within the communities, those with broader and more effective social networks, would be more likely to join temporary work programs since, as we have seen, access to these programs depends on the contact networks that allow a potential candidate to be linked with the intermediary company that selects temporary migrant workers in Guatemala, which commonly gives rise to abuses and undue charges. Therefore, the people selected in these programs would tend to be people with good social relationships within the community who would probably show higher levels of trust in their neighbors.

Finally, no significant relationship is found between the different migratory experiences and the impact of natural disasters in previous months, despite

that Guatemala is among the 10 countries in the world most threatened by climate change and that there is evidence that demonstrates that migrants flows from the country to the United States come increasingly from rural areas, mainly those that are part of the Dry Corridor (Tesfaye, 2019). The affectation level by recent natural disasters perceived by the people surveyed was very low, as can be seen in graph 25; indeed, most of the people surveyed believed they had not been harmed at all by natural disasters in the last year. This is especially relevant in the case of households with regular migratory experience, which have homes in better condition, less economic vulnerability, and therefore, are more resilient while facing different types of disasters, and the consequences of climate change.

GRAPH 25. Affection by disasters in the last 12 months, by type of migration.

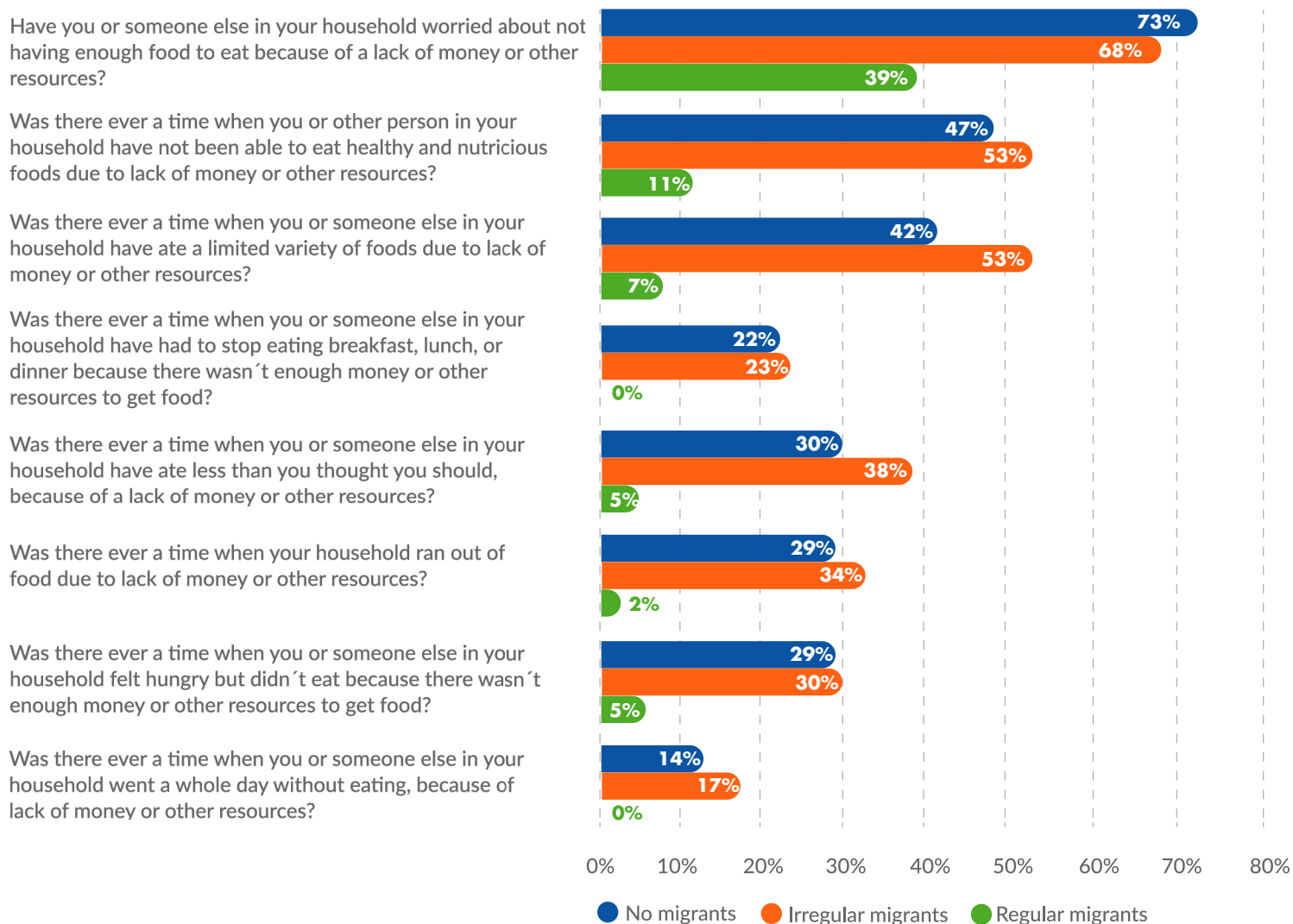


3.4 Food safety and water

Regarding household food safety, the impact analysis of the different migratory experiences yields convincing results. As we will see, while irregular migration does not significantly improve the food conditions of households compared to households without migrant members, regular migration greatly reduces food insecurity, improves dietary diversity and food consumption patterns of families, and to a lesser extent, it facilitates access to water for domestic use. The first indicator analyzed is the type of coping strategies related to food used in the last 12 months by the households surveyed.



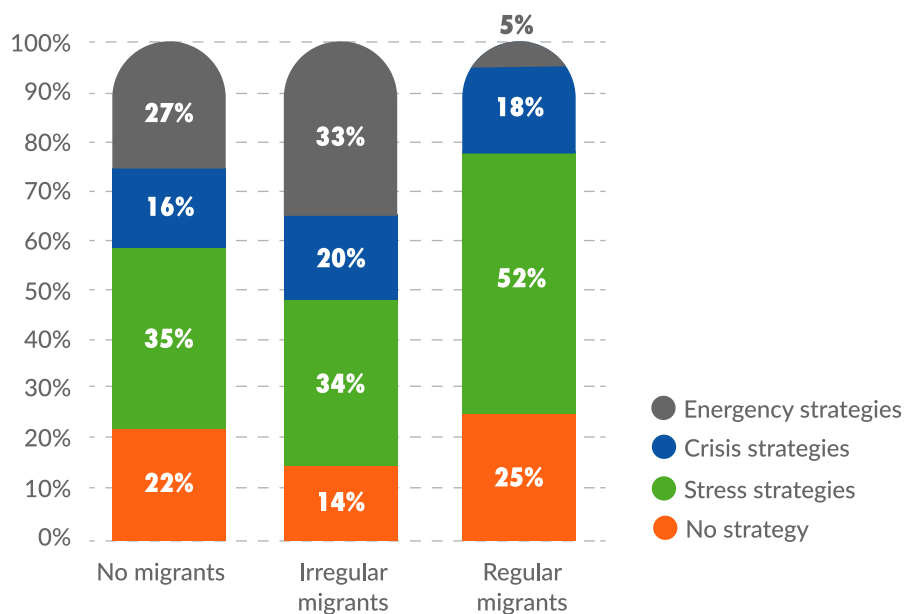
GRAPH 26. Coping strategies related to food consumption implemented in households in the last year, by type of migration



As can be seen, **regular migration significantly reduces the need to implement strategies to deal with food shortages or resources to access food**, such as reducing the consumption of healthy and nutritious foods and the variety of foods consumed, skipping some of the meals during the day, reduce portions or even not eat for a whole day or go hungry. On the contrary, irregular migration would not imply an improvement in terms of access to food in the households surveyed, but would even tend to increase the coping strategies that would be necessary to be implemented by the households; in fact, households with irregular migrants would have been forced, to reduce the variety of foods consumed more likely than households without migrant members.

Grouping the coping strategies according to their severity into stress strategies - the least severe -, crisis strategies - intermediate severity-, and emergency strategies, the aforementioned results are confirmed. There would be no significant differences between households without migrants and those with irregular migratory experiences, while regular migration would represent a significant improvement regarding the lower need to adopt survival strategies compared to the rest of the households surveyed.

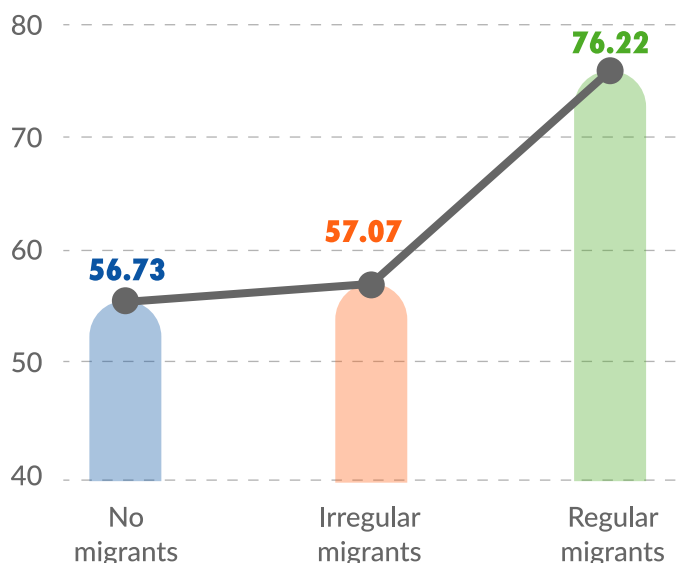
GRAPH 27. Livelihood-based coping strategies grouped, by type of migration



It is interesting to remember with regards to food safety and access to food, the time elapsed between the departure of the migrant member and the migratory success represented by remittances sending could be crucial (Davis and Brazil, 2016). In the rural communities analyzed in this research, households with irregular migratory experiences would not have been able to counteract the negative effects related to access to food caused by the absence of migrants.

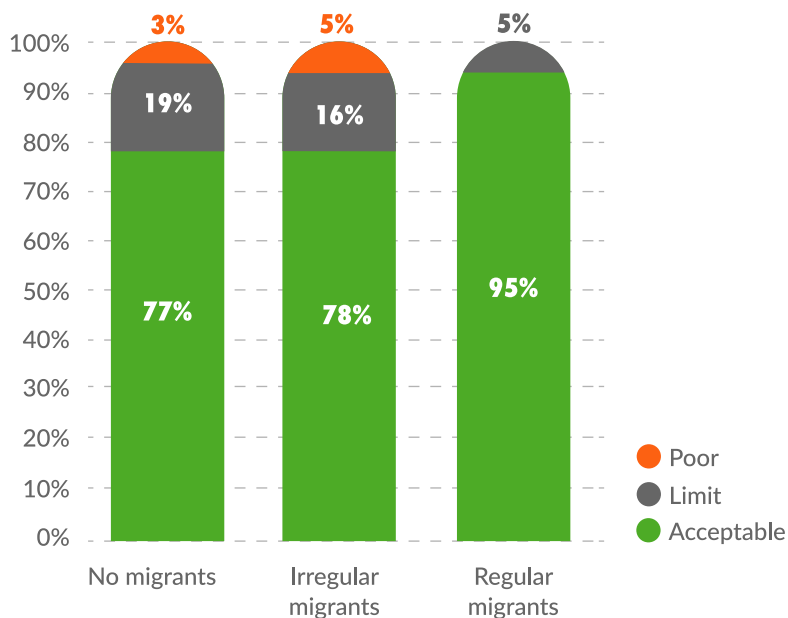
The next indicator used to measure food safety is the **Food Consumption Score (FCS)** which is calculated using the frequency of consumption of different food groups per household during the 7 days prior to the survey. Once again, households with regular migratory experiences show a significant improvement compared to the rest of the households²².

GRAPH 28. Food Consumption Score (FCS), by type of migration



Depending on the score obtained by the households, they can be grouped into households with poor food consumption, borderline or acceptable consumption.

GRAPH 29. Food Consumption Score (FCS) by category and type of migration



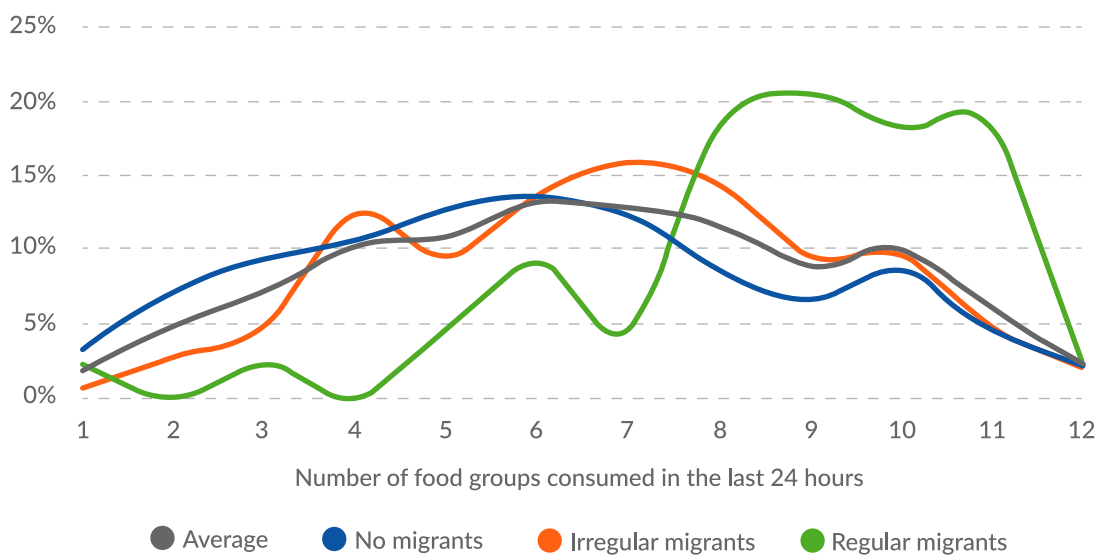
²² A higher score is associated with greater food safety.

Most of the surveyed households showed an acceptable food consumption in the last week; there is also evidence of a better diet in households with regular migratory experiences compared to households with irregular migrants. In fact, none of the households with regular migrants, had a poor food consumption during the week prior to the survey and practically all of them had an acceptable consumption.

The **Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS)** is a proxy indicator of food safety that measures the number of different food groups consumed during

the 24 hours prior to the survey²³. On average, households with regular migrants consumed 8.5 different food groups compared to 6.1 and 6.8 consumed by non-migrant and irregular migrant households, respectively; this would correspond to a significantly more varied diet than the rest of the households where 59% of the households would consume more than 9 food groups daily. Irregular migration would not improve the quality of diet in relation to households without any migratory experience in a statistically significant way, despite the tendency to increase the number of food groups consumed.

GRAPH 30. Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS), by type of migration

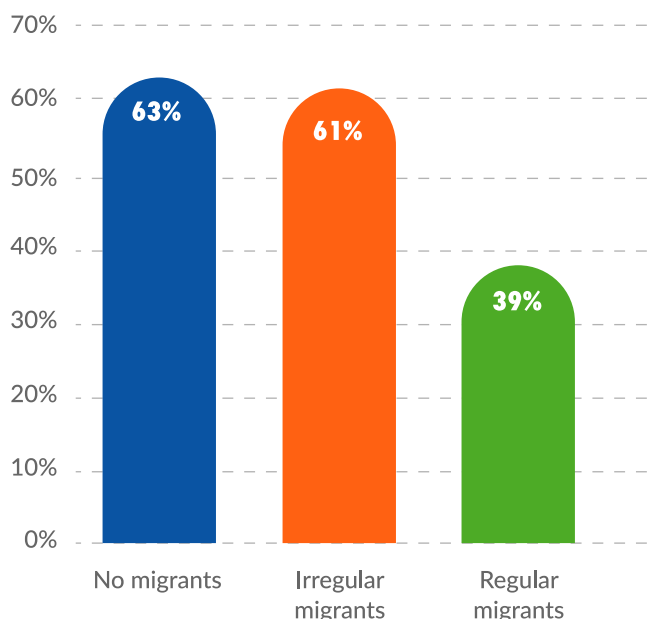


As has been shown in other international migration contexts, the scarcity of food and the worsening of the nutritional conditions of its members urge families to consider the option of migration; however, those families with more precarious, vulnerable situations and more severe food insecurity conditions, despite wishing to use migration to face the shock in their livelihoods, would not have the possibility of materializing such wish. Due to this lack of resources, households with the greatest food insecurity, to a lesser extent, could undertake preparations and specific migration plans (Saddidin, 2019). Therefore, the differences found regarding the impact of regular and irregular migration on food safety could not be attributed to the starting situation of families before the migratory experience. Domestic units would face higher expenses to finance the irregular migration of one of their members and would therefore not correspond to the most vulnerable households from the food point of view, but to intermediate food safety situations (CRS, 2020).

23 A family that consumes less than 4 food groups is considered to be in a critical situation.

In relation to the availability of water for domestic use, the better situation of households with regular migrants is also confirmed, since they would be those with less insecurity in access to water.

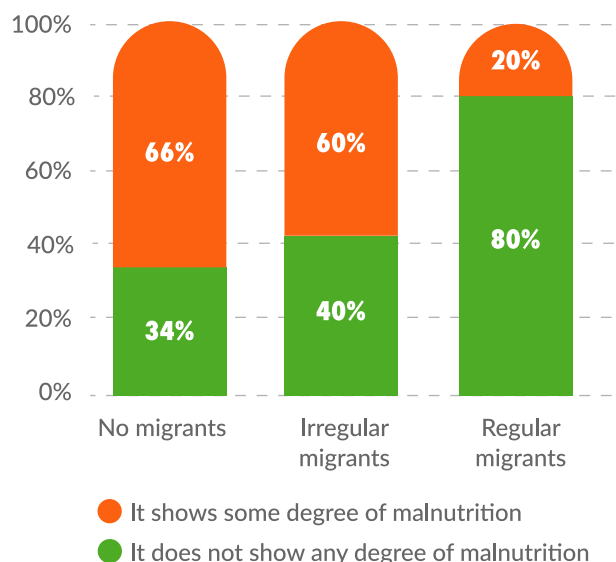
GRAPH 31. Percentage of households with water insecurity (HWISE), by type of migration



Households with regular migrants would be those less concerned about not being able to have water for general household needs, as well as for washing clothes or personal hygiene for family members²⁴.

Finally, child malnutrition in children under 5 years of age was evaluated based on anthropometric measurements to determine the percentage of boys and girls who presented some degree of chronic malnutrition. The results obtained allow a resounding conclusion that in households with regular migration experience, child malnutrition rates are significantly alleviated, while no statistically significant differences were found between households without migrants and with irregular migrants.

GRAPH 32. Chronic malnutrition in boys and girls under five years of age, by type of migration



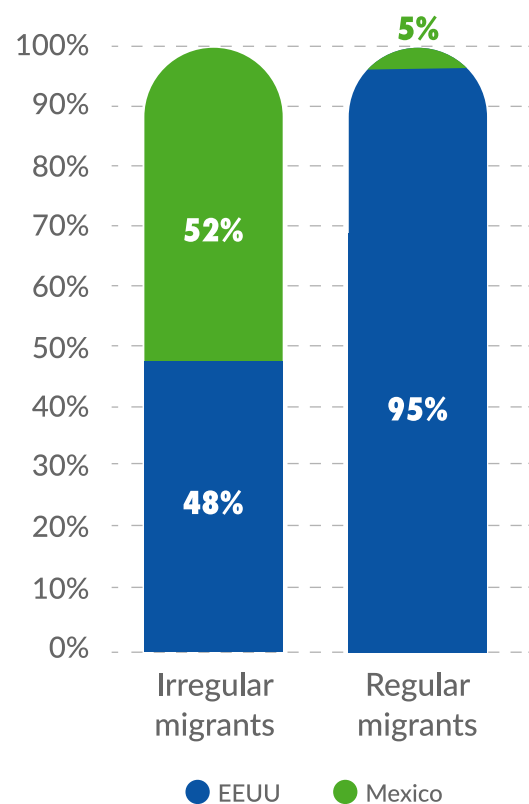
²⁴ Perceptions of household water insecurity refer to the month prior to conducting the survey.

These results complement those obtained in an investigation, already mentioned, carried out in Guatemala that found that the irregular migration of one of the parents would have negative effects on the height and weight measurements of children while the remittances received would not achieve reverse the negative impact of parental absence in time (Davis and Brazil, 2016). As noted above, the time elapsed between the departure of the family member that emigrates (in most cases acquiring a debt to pay the trip and coyotes), and the moment in which the household of origin begins to receive remittances, is essential for the living conditions and food of those who remain. The longer you wait to obtain a “return on investment”, the higher incidence can be expected of food insecurity and child malnutrition.

3.5 Emigration with migratory intention

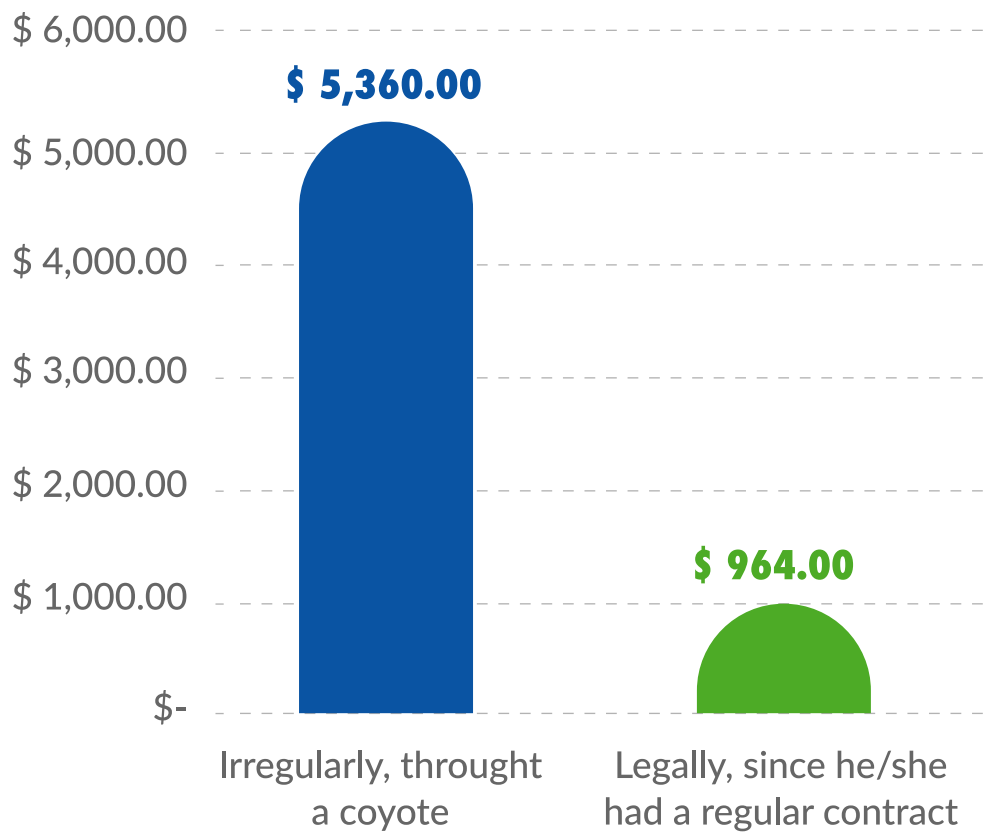
15% of the total number of surveyed people had worked in a foreign country in the past; more than half, 62%, had done it in the United States, and around 72% stays less than 5 years. If we exclusively compare the households that have had migratory experiences, both regular and irregular, it can be seen that practically all of the regular migrations among the households surveyed, 95%, had occurred towards the United States, while in the case of irregular migration About half of the migratory experiences had occurred with Mexico as a destination and the remaining half with the United States.

GRAPH 33. Migratory destination, by type of migration



Among the surveyed people who had migrated irregularly in the past, almost half, 46%, had done so by hiring the services of a coyote. Whether he/she had used the services of a coyote or undertaken the migration journey, the costs of such journey were much higher than the costs required to migrate regularly, especially in cases where the migration destination was the United States.

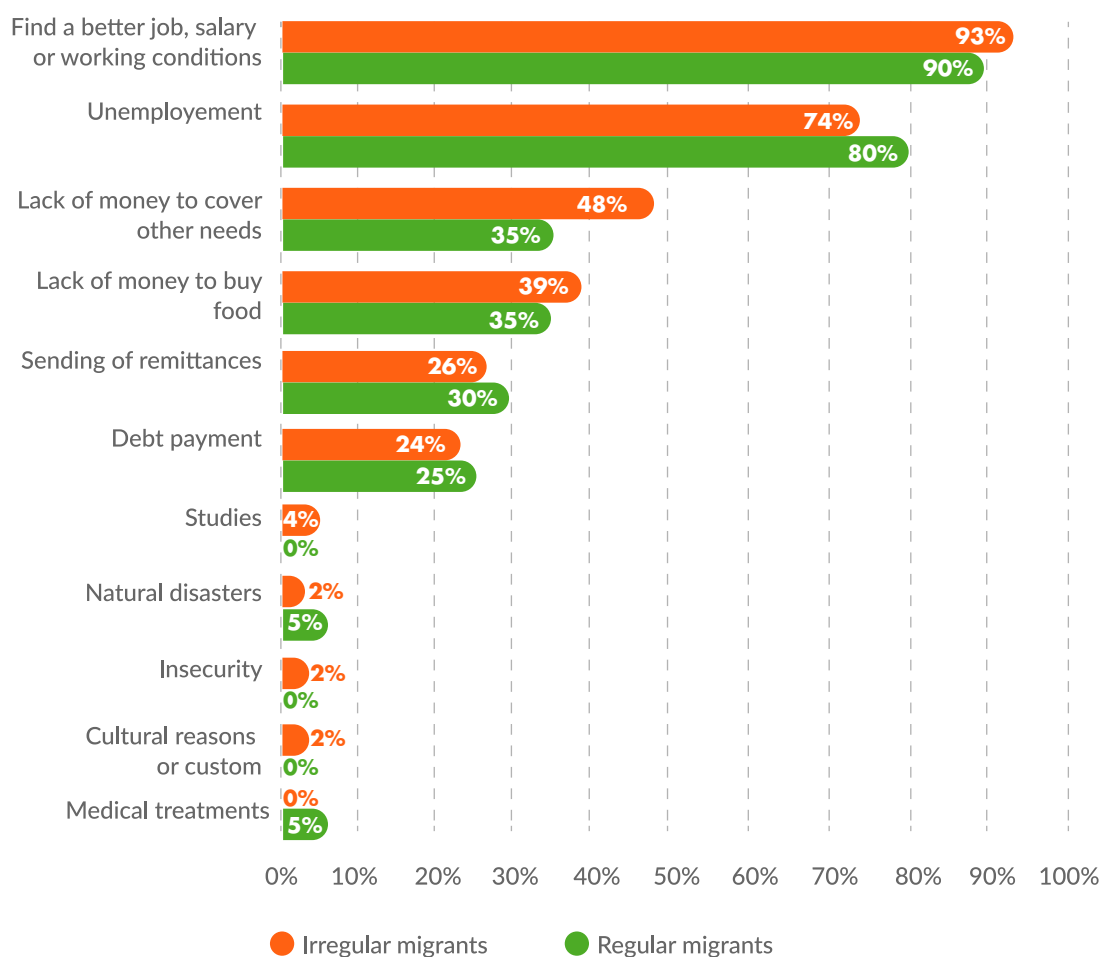
GRAPH 34. Average cost of migration to the USA, by type of migration



The cost of irregular migration was around 6 times higher than that of regular migration, assuming with greater probability a notably greater effort for families, higher levels of indebtedness for the migrant's social network in the territories of origin, greater pressure for the migrant and their migratory process due to the urgent need to start paying the debt incurred and, also, a lower availability of remittances for uses other than those related to paying the debt (Johnson and Woodhouse, 2018; MPI- WFP, 2021).

Regarding the motivations to undertake the migratory journey, no significant differences were found between those who migrated regularly and irregularly, the main reasons for emigration expressed by the respondents were the search for employment and improvement of working conditions, the scarcity of resources to cover basic needs such as the purchase of food, health and education, the desire to send remittances to the family and the need to pay the debts contracted.

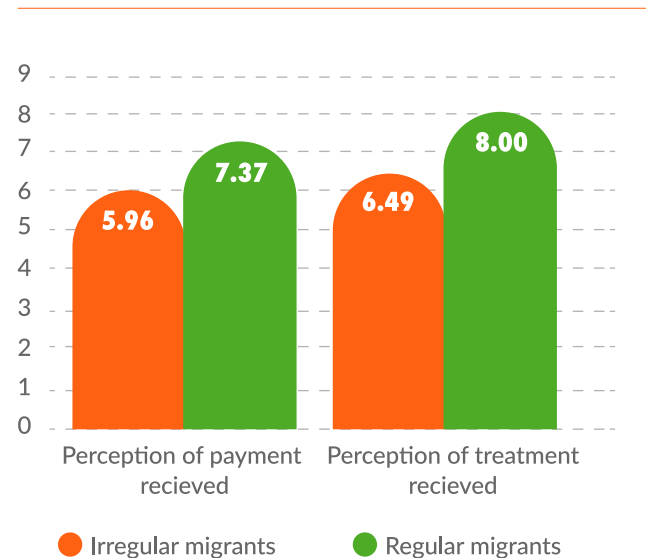
GRAPH 35. Motivations to migrate, by type of migration



The causes that motivated migration are thus consistent with the motivations to migrate found in other studies of this type carried out in the Guatemalan context in recent years (FLACSO, 2020; IOM, 2017; CRS, 2020; ECLAC, 2019).

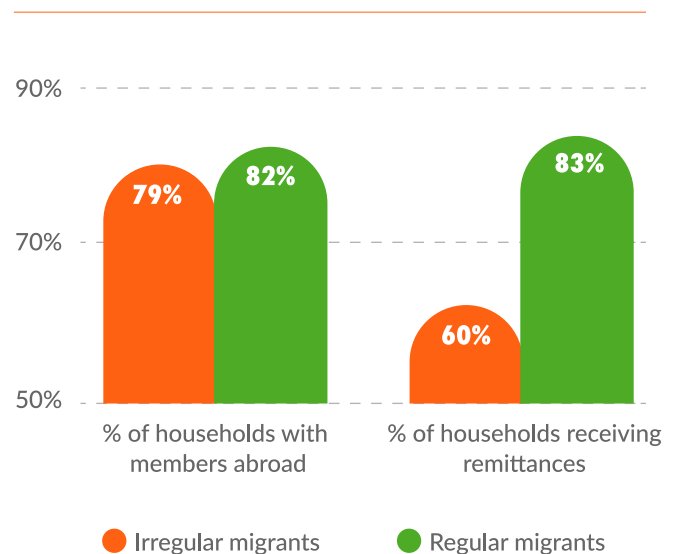
However, there are significant differences related to the perception of salary and the treatment received while working abroad; **people who had migrated on a regular basis felt more satisfied**, both with the payment and treatment received in the workplace²⁵.

GRAPH 36. Level of payment perception and treatment received (scale 1-10), by type of migration



Regular temporary work programs also allow, as the results of this study show, **to increase the remittances received by families in the migrants' territories of origin**. Indeed, despite the fact that in both households with regular and irregular migratory experiences around 80% had members residing abroad at the time of the survey, the percentage of households that received remittances in the first case was 83% compared to only 60% of households receiving remittances among those with migratory experiences exclusively of an irregular type.

GRAPH 37. Reception of remittances at the time of the survey, by type of migration

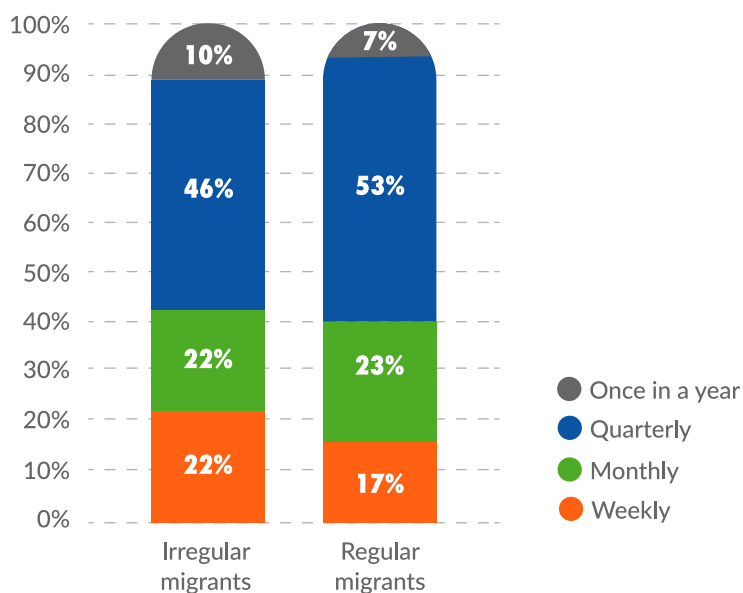


²⁵ Perception was measured on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 would correspond to "extremely bad" and 10 to "extremely good".



In both cases, remittances were usually received monthly and had been received between 4 and 5 years.

GRAPH 38. Frequency of receiving remittances, by type of migration



The amount received did vary significantly depending on the regularity or irregularity of the migratory experience of households, being much higher in the case of households with regular migratory experiences; in fact, these tripled the average monthly remittances received by households with exclusively irregular migrations. On the other hand, when regular migrants return to their homes in Guatemala, they do so with money saved during their stay in the USA or Canada, which is a significantly higher amount than that sent to their families through remittances during their stay in North America. This saving or capital is key for the decisions of productive investment, education and housing improvement that families whose members participate in temporary employment programs will later make.

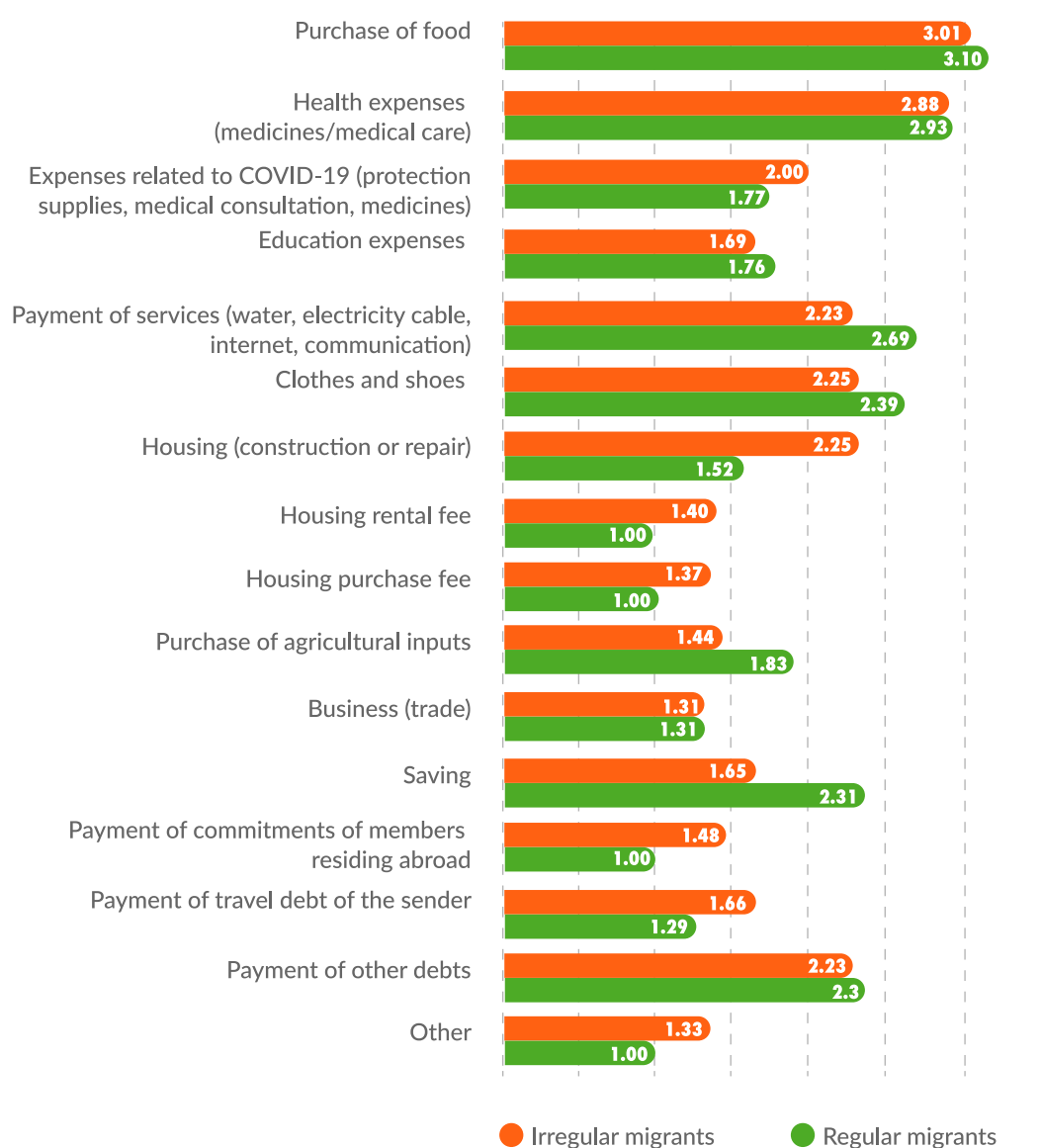
Type of migration experience of the household	Remittances received-Monthly average (\$USD)
Regular migration	625
Irregular migration	203

The greater availability of remittances in households with regular migrants, together with the capital saved and the lower initial investment necessary to carry out the migratory journey, would imply a greater potential for remittances in these households to be used to improve the living conditions of the members of the domestic unit. As we have already seen, this is reflected in a better quality of houses, better endowment in equipment of these homes, lower poverty rates, greater dedication to

commercial activities by women and better food situation of the members of the family.

In the case of households with exclusively irregular migrations, remittances, in addition to being smaller in amount, are used to a greater extent to pay the debt contracted by the migrant to finance the trip and to pay other commitments acquired by the migrant who is residing abroad²⁶.

GRAPH 39. Main household expenses paid with remittances, by type of migration



26 The graph values from 1 to 5 the percentage of each specific household expense that was covered with remittances. 1 corresponds to "remittances did not pay any of this expense" and 5 to "remittances paid 100% of this expense".

These households also pay with money from remittances a significantly higher percentage of the expenses associated with their homes, either to build or remodel their homes or to pay rent or purchase fees. However, they do not manage to differ notably from households without migrant members in relation to the quality of the house, the overcrowding level or its endowment, which is why their greater dependence on remittances to meet this type of expenses. In this sense, it would not translate into an improvement in the living conditions of the family.

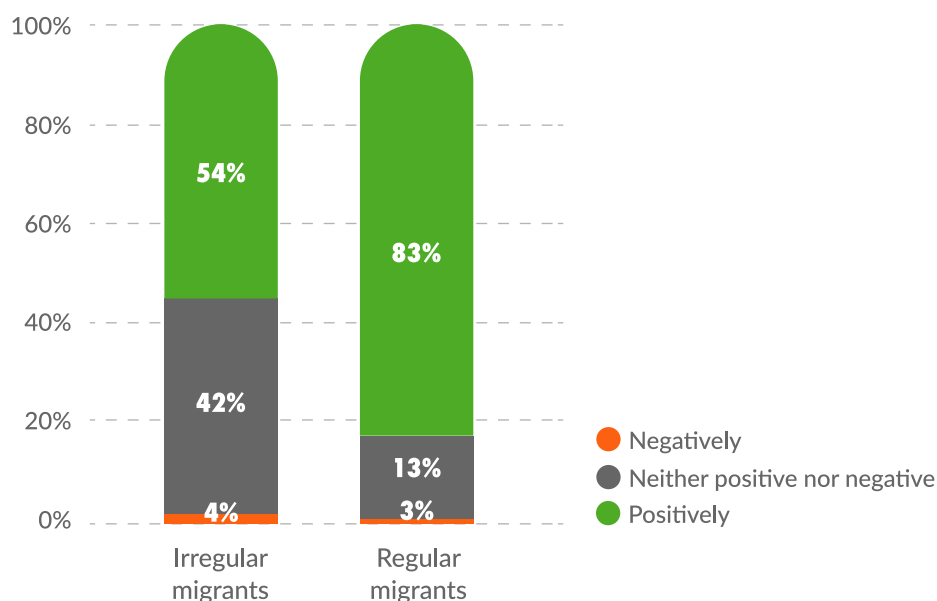
On the contrary, households with regular migratory experiences could face the expenses related to housing as well as the payment of travel costs and the migrant's commitments in greater proportion with their own resources and income despite as shows in

a qualitative study carried out in eight Guatemalan communities with temporary workers displaced to the United States to work in the forestry sector, the improvement and construction of housing is one of the main uses of the income generated through these employment programs also among the regular migrants (Brodbeck et al. 2018).

The apparent greater tendency of households with regular migrants to use remittances for savings or the purchase of agricultural inputs that can be seen in the GRAPH does not reach statistical significance.

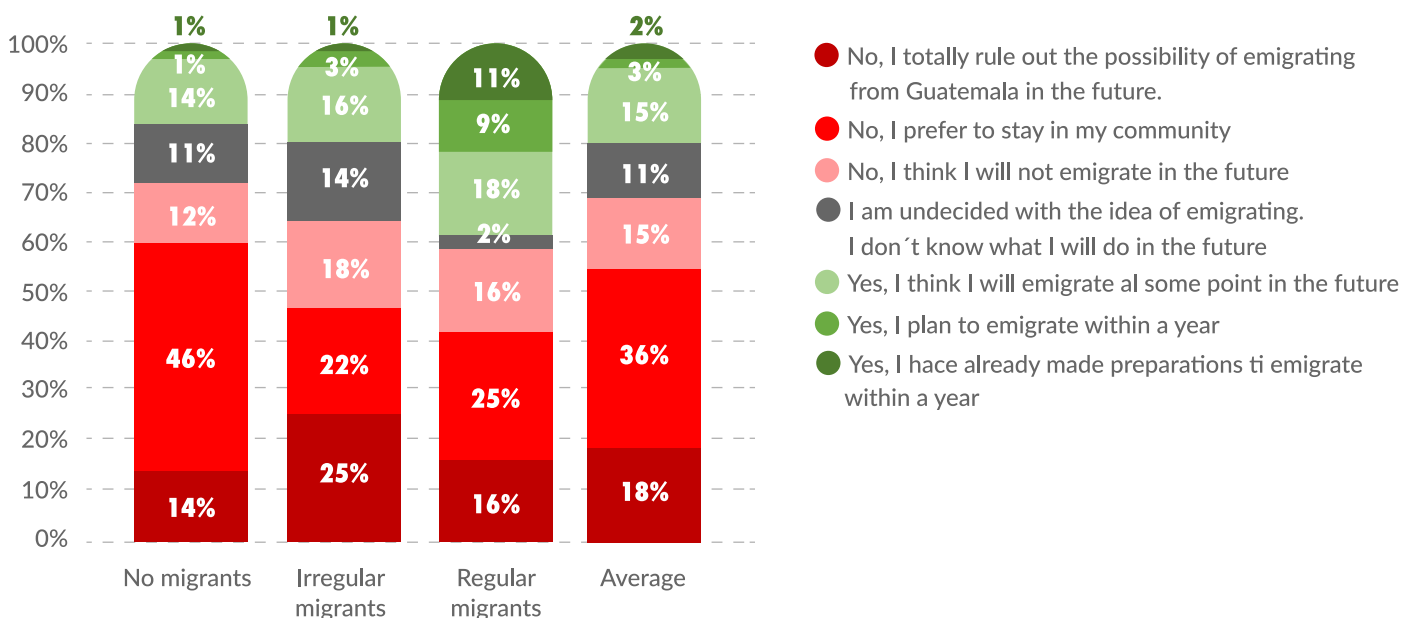
As expected, respondents with family members residing abroad rated emigration significantly more positively in the case of households with regular migratory experiences.

GRAPH 40. Perception of family members with emigration abroad, by type of migration



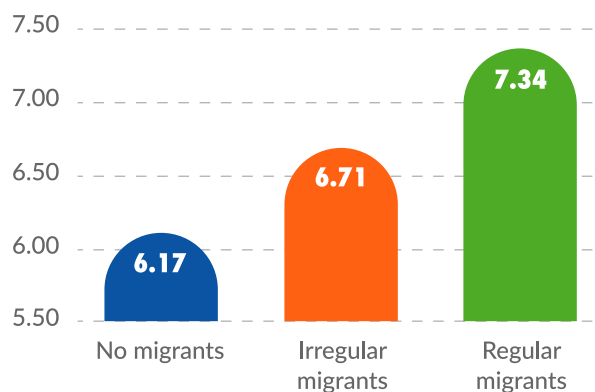
However, this would not translate into a clear increase in the intention to migrate abroad by those surveyed with regular migratory experiences at home, despite evaluating the migratory experience of family members residing abroad as positive in 83% of the cases. If the migratory intention is analyzed as a degree of probability of migrating abroad with 7 levels or degrees from the people who totally rule out the migratory option to those who have already made preparations to migrate in the next year, no statistically significant differences are found between the households with regular and irregular migratory experiences²⁷.

GRAPH 41. Migratory intention, by type of migration



This could be explained, at least partially, although people who lived in households that have had regular migratory experiences valued emigration more positively, they also felt significantly more satisfied with their life in the territories of origin in comparison with the rest of the households²⁸.

GRAPH 42. Level of satisfaction with life (scale 1-10), by type of migration



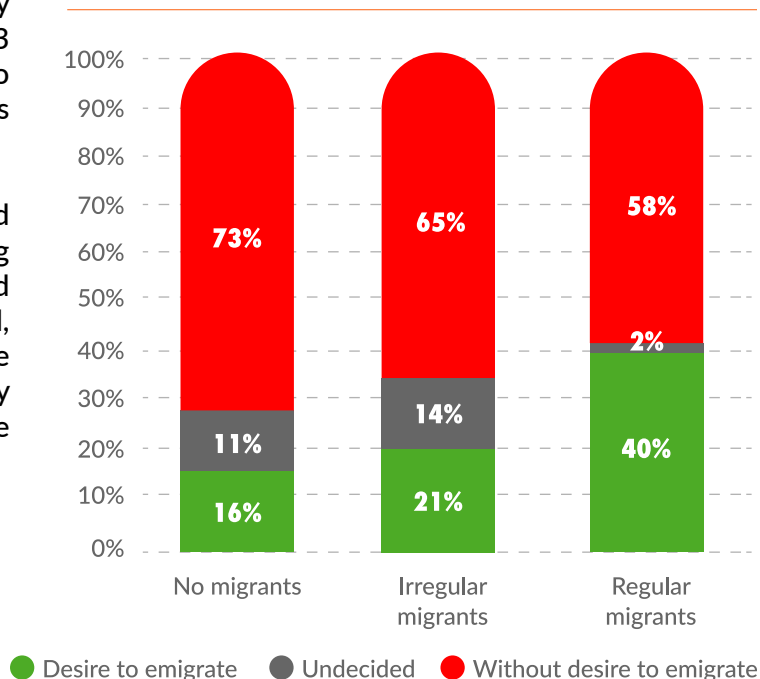
²⁷ In this case, the migratory intention was analyzed as a numerical variable on a scale from 1 to 7.

²⁸ The satisfaction with life index ranges from 1 to 10, with 1 as a life considered "very bad" and 10 as a "satisfying and happy" life.

Indeed, on a scale of 1 to 10, the respondents belonging to households with regular migratory experiences showed satisfaction levels with 0.63 and 1.17 points higher than those belonging to households with irregular migratory experiences or households without migrants respectively.

However, if the migratory intention is analyzed qualitatively, distinguishing exclusively among those who intend to migrate, the undecided, and those who reject the idea of migrating abroad, significant differences are found, showing people belonging to households with regular migratory experiences with a greater desire to migrate abroad in the future²⁹.

GRAPH 43. Migratory intention, by type of migration



If we consider the total population surveyed, around 20% showed the intention of migrating abroad in the future³⁰; this migratory intention is somewhat lower than that estimated for the country as a whole by the Gallup survey³¹ in 2016, which can be explained in part by the greater intention to leave the country by urban residents, but it is higher than that found in a study carried out in rural communities in Guatemala in 2020 (CRS, 2020) where the migratory intention did not exceed 12%, which would allow us to conclude that the dissuasive effect of the health emergency situation due to Covid-19 would have already disappeared by the end of 2021. In a recent study carried out by the World Food Program with households in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, the desire to emigrate was much higher, at 43%, which could be explained, at least partially, by differences - national and regional - in migratory intent (MPI-WFP, 2021).

29 In this case, people with intention of migrating are those who responded that they intend to do it, regardless the certainty they have on that decision (I think I will emigrate, I plan to do so or I have already made preparations for it); the same occurs for those who declared they had no intention of migrating abroad (I think I will not emigrate, I prefer to remain in my community or I totally rule out leaving Guatemala in the future).

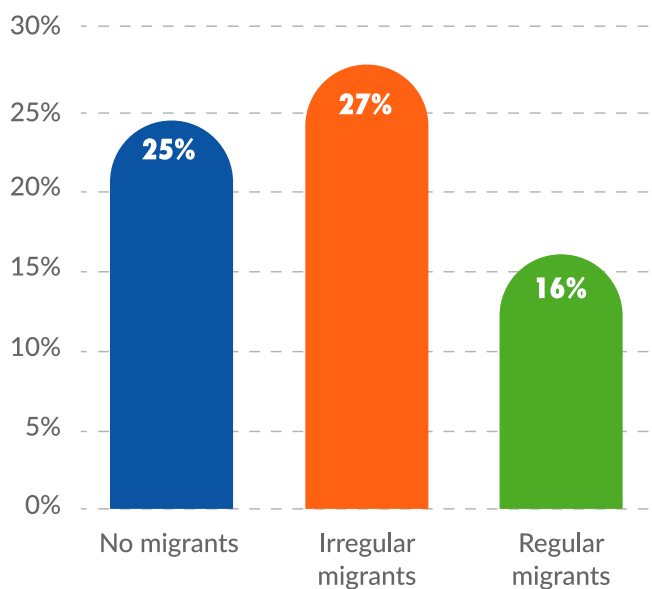
30 This includes both people who had made preparations or plans to migrate within a year and those who only believed that they would migrate at some point in the future but had not made any specific plans or preparations for it.

31The Gallup World Poll is a survey that is conducted continuously to residents in more than 140 countries representing 95% of the adult population through random and representative samples that allow comparisons to be made in relation to key issues collected in the survey globally <https://www.gallup.com/analytics/318875/global-research.aspx>



Finally, the regularity or irregularity of migratory experiences did not show a statistically significant impact on the intention to migrate within Guatemala, both permanently and seasonally, among the people interviewed.

GRAPH 44. Internal migration intention, by type of migration



CONCLUSIONS



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04

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study convincingly show the differential impacts produced by the different migratory experiences, specifically due to their regularity or irregularity, on the living conditions of households in the migrants' territories of origin. Regular migration, fundamentally represented by temporary work programs to the United States, would significantly improve the living conditions of households; while irregular migration, much more frequent, would not represent a substantial improvement compared to households without migrant members.

On one hand, the irregular migration of some member of the domestic unit would not be influencing in global terms the poverty conditions of households in relation to the characteristics of the house, level of overcrowding and provision of services and equipment; only regular migration would be alleviating the severity of poverty among the rural households analyzed, helping to eradicate situations of extreme poverty and also lifting a considerable percentage of households out of poverty.

Additionally, regular migration, unlike irregular migration, would be related to a better perception of the economic situation of the household, with a greater involvement of women in commercial activities, generating greater trust towards the people of the community and a higher level of general satisfaction with life, which could potentially increase the rootedness and attachment of people to their communities of origin.

Regarding with household food security, the analysis of the impact of the different migratory experiences yields particularly relevant results. While irregular migration does not significantly improve the food conditions of families compared to households without members who have migrated, regular migration greatly reduces food insecurity, improves dietary diversity and food consumption patterns of families, it reduces child malnutrition and, although to a lesser extent, it also facilitates access to water for domestic use.

Therefore, it seems evident that the debate on the potentialities of migration to transform the living conditions in the migrants' territories of origin and to enrich their livelihoods, being able to suppose a motor of development in the sending communities, it should incorporate as a factor key in the analysis of the differential impacts of the different migratory experiences. In fact, regular temporary migration programs have clearly positive effects on living conditions in the migrants' territories of origin, despite the limitations and labor problems that these programs have had in their application in contexts such as the United States. Some of these problems,

such as the apparent greater difficulty of access to the program by the indigenous population, as well as the costs associated with travel, have become evident in the case of the rural communities analyzed in this study.

Despite these drawbacks, the temporary migration programs with the United States have a much lower cost than the irregular migratory trip from the communities of the Huehuetenango department analyzed, as expected. They also allow remittances to be sent to a greater extent, increase the amount of remittances, increase family savings and capitalization, and improve the perception of emigration, considering that the treatment and salary received abroad are much fairer than in the case of irregular migration experiences.

The perception of emigration as more positive by households with regular migratory experiences would not be translated; however, into a clear increase in the intention to migrate to the northern countries. On the other hand, the interest in emigrating in households that have a regular or circular experience would fundamentally materialize in also regular migratory experiences, as it is the model already known by the family.



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Different ways to get to the north, different ways to live in the south

Circular migration and its potential to promote development
and belonging in Western Guatemala