

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TEMPORARY REGULAR MIGRATION OF GUATEMALANS TO CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES:
Analysis of the impact on living conditions, migration intentions, barriers, and opportunities

JULY 2023



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TEMPORARY REGULAR MIGRATION OF GUATEMALANS TO CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES: Analysis of the impact on living conditions, migration intentions, barriers, and opportunities

Executive summary for authorities and technicians of International Development Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations for Development (NGDO)

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PRESENTATION, BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY



International migration is an extremely complex reality, linked in many ways to the living conditions of communities and populations of origin, and it is of interest to both sending and receiving countries. At the same time, as it involves flows of funds via remittances that constantly reach countless vulnerable households, it offers opportunities for alternative and creative ways for promoting development.

In this summary¹, we deal with a type of migration that has generated recent growing interest: circular migration. This refers to the movement of migrants from a country of origin to a destination country for the purpose of working in a given activity for a limited period (usually between 3 and 10 months).

The study had two primary objectives:



- **To evaluate the impact of temporary regular migration programs** between Guatemala and Canada and the U.S. on migration intentions, and on improving the living conditions of migrants, their families, and their communities.
- **Identify bottlenecks limiting the demand and participation** of Guatemalan workers in migrant labor programs.

Study results show that circular migration has the significant potential to both reduce irregular migration and improve the living conditions of migrants and their families. At the same time, they have the potential to articulate different actors to promote development processes supported by the dynamics of circular migration. In particular, institutions interested in addressing irregular migration flows and organizations aimed at strengthening vulnerable populations' livelihoods and economic opportunities. This report offers evidence of these assertions, along with proposals to strengthen family and community impact of temporary regular migration.

¹ This research brief is part of a broader study on migrant labor conducted in Guatemala, the U.S. and Canada. The full report can be found at: www.accioncontraelhambre.org.gt/migracion-circular-2023/

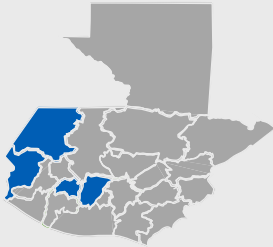
METHODOLOGY



Qualitative and quantitative study



Between October and December 2022



4 DEPARTMENTS
IN GUATEMALA



- Chimaltenango
- Huehuetenango
- San Marcos
- Sololá

These departments were chosen for their high percentage of regular and irregular migration.



60
INTERVIEWS



with key stakeholders and members of selected communities



1,367
SURVEYS

- 11 communities with a high percentage of regular migrants were selected, and matched with an equal number of communities comparable in population, proximity to roads, agriculture and geographical area, but with a low percentage of regular migrants (1,110 random surveys)
- To these were added 257 surveys of families of regular migrants using a snowball methodology.

In addition:



25
INTERVIEWS

with employers and key stakeholders in Canada and the U.S.



166
SURVEYS

of employers of migrant workers or those interested in hiring migrants on temporary visas



10
CANADA



156
U.S.

We classified families into 'regular migrant' (one or more members migrated regularly and none irregularly), 'irregular migrant' (one or more members migrated irregularly and none regularly), 'non-migrant' (no members migrated) and 'mixed' (with at least one regular and one irregular migrant) families, to compare between matched communities and between **family types**.

28.5%

Regular migrant

1.4%

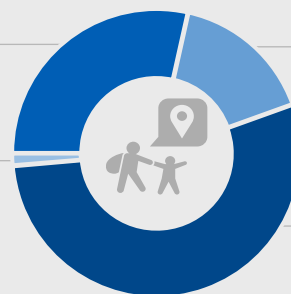
Mixed

16%

Irregular migrant

54.1%

Non-migrant



The results of this study are not generalizable to all of Guatemala, as communities throughout the country were not included, nor were all employers in Canada and the U.S. included as only a limited number of interviews and survey responses were obtained. Nevertheless, results are based on sound methodology, are particularly compelling, and offer clues for considering temporary regular migration processes in Latin America and worldwide.

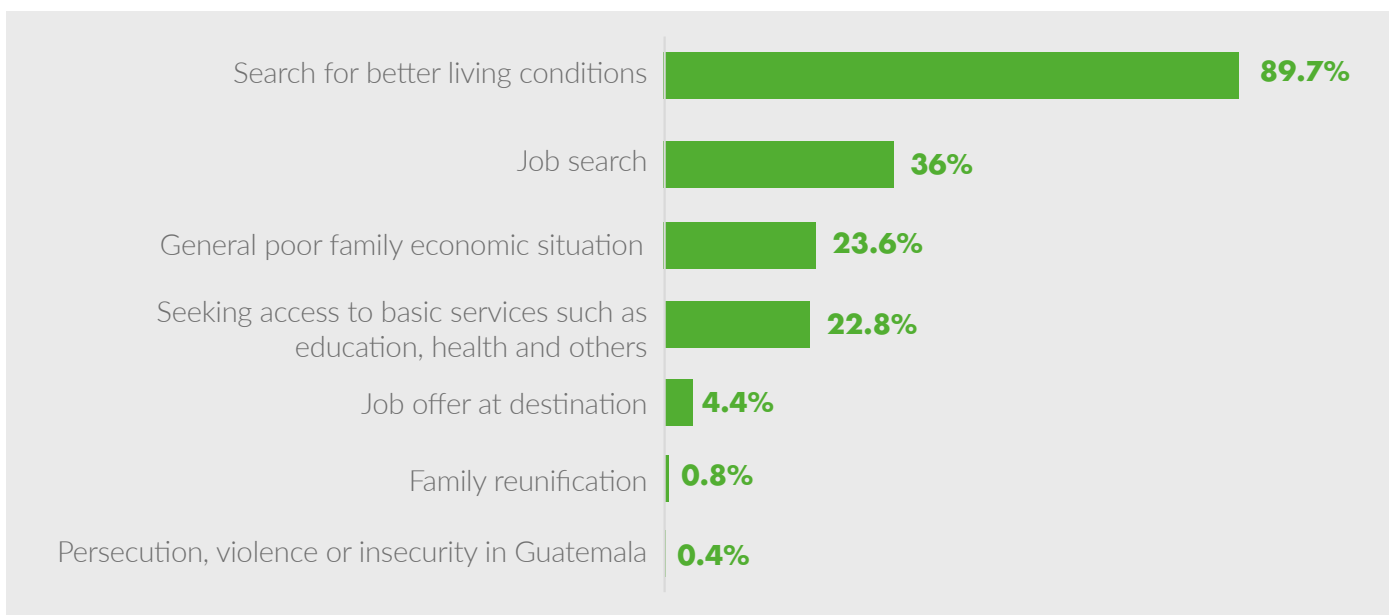
KEY RESULTS



1. Why do members of the selected Guatemalan communities migrate?

Individuals and families may migrate for very different reasons. Identifying these reasons helps to generate appropriate understandings.

Reasons that led people to migrate



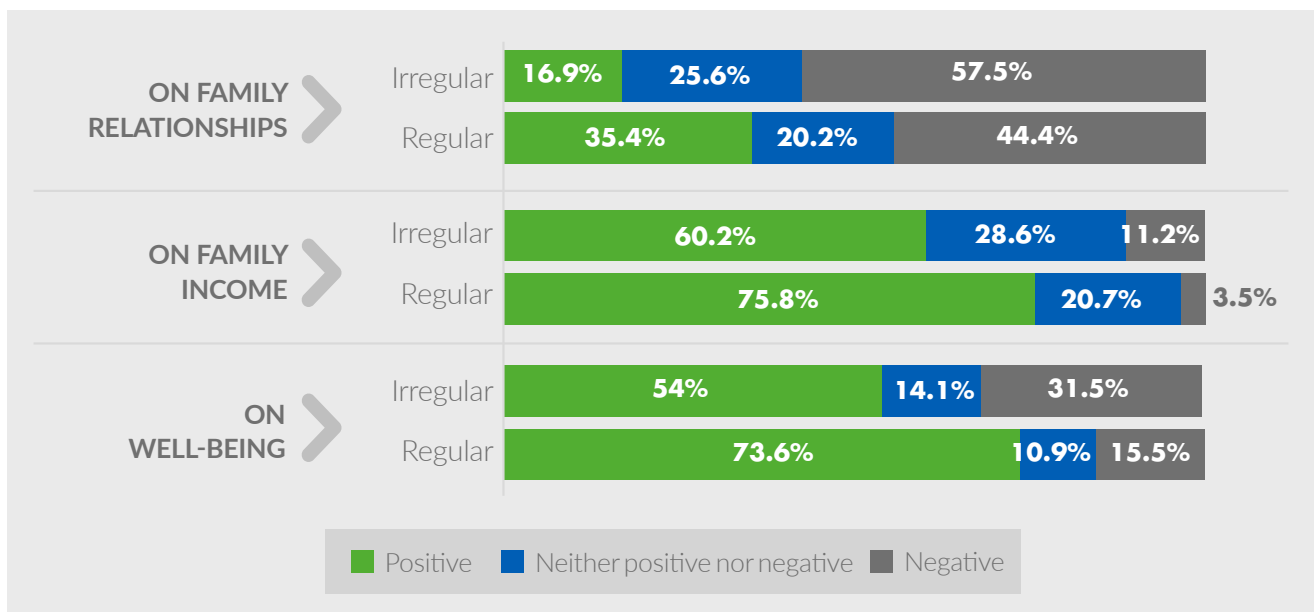


2. Comparison between irregular and temporary regular migration from the point of view of migrants and their families

Why do people prefer temporary regular migration over irregular migration?

- It requires a lower investment (\$1,000 vs. \$15,000 U.S. dollars, considering approximate values).
- It allows you to travel by plane quickly and smoothly, instead of taking the risky and difficult trip through Mexico, crossing the U.S. border irregularly, and dealing with 'coyotes' (actually human traffickers).
- It implies a secure and known job waiting for you and allows you to earn and send money home to family quickly.
- It makes it easier to maintain family ties and return after a work season instead of staying on average for 13.6 years in the U.S.
- It has a greater positive impact on family welfare and income and fewer negative impacts on family relationships than irregular migration.

Impact of migration by well-being, family income, and family relationships



Perception of employer treatment by migrant type

How they were treated	Regular migrants	Irregular migrants
Poorly	6%	10.3%
Neither good nor bad	14%	15.7%
Good	80%	74%



3. Sending and use of remittances: Differences between regular temporary migrants and irregular migrants

Migrant remittances are a key source of income, not only for the families that receive it, but also for the communities and the country as a whole.

Key differences in remittances between households of circular migrants and irregular migrants

- A higher percentage of regular migrants send remittances to their families compared to irregular migrants (96.5% versus 87.5%, respectively).
- Households of regular migrants are 26% more likely to have received remittances in the last 5 years than those of irregular migrants.
- The average monthly remittances received is higher for regular migrant households.
- Remittances received by households of regular migrants are more frequently used to make investments and are more decisive in their financing.
- Investments in the purchase of tools or equipment for agriculture are much more frequent in the households of regular migrants.
- The use of remittances for investment purposes tends to increase with the number of years remittances were received. This is more pronounced in regular migrant families.



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Use of remittances to cover living expenses

Type of expense	Families of regular migrants	Families of irregular migrants	General random sample
Purchase of food	96.4%	90.5%	91.1%
Health expenses	70.9%	56.8%	65.3%
Education expenses	41.1%	25%	30%
Utility expenses (water, electricity...)	52.3%	43.9%	39.8%
Rent or installments for home purchase	7.5%	4.7%	5.9%
Payment of emigrant's debt	33%	39.9%	32.9%
Agricultural inputs: seeds, fertilizers, others	19.8%	8.1%	8.3%
Average	45.9%	38.4%	39%

Use of remittances for investments

Type of investment	Families of regular migrants	Families of irregular migrants	General random sample
Home improvements	69.80%	42.70%	50.7%
Purchase of agricultural land	47.90%	33.80%	36%
Purchase of agricultural equipment	27.60%	7.10%	11.10%
Microenterprise	9.90%	3.10%	-
Purchase of animals or livestock	8.30%	2.30%	5.5%
Acquisition of commercial or business premises	5.80%	3.20%	3.6%

In summary, circular migration has a higher potential to improve the quality of life of families than irregular migration and a greater capacity for long-term impact on families and communities through investments of remittances.



4. Use of knowledge acquired abroad

Most migrants acquired knowledge abroad from their contracted occupations, although many do not use these skills when they return. Understanding what they learned and why they do not apply these skills can be useful for designing development support strategies to promote new ventures that generate value and employment in Guatemala.

Type of work performed abroad

Type of work	Regular temporary migrants	Irregular migrants
Agricultural activities	79.9%	17.4%
Construction	3.5%	35.4%
Catering and restaurants	1.3%	20.6%
Cleaning	0.4%	5.1%
Forestry work	5.6%	1.6%
Others	9.3%	19.9%
Total	100%	100%

Acquisition and use of knowledge abroad

Did you acquire knowledge abroad and use it?	Regular temporary migrants	Irregular migrants
No, no knowledge was acquired	4.4%	8.4%
Yes, but they were not used	57.8%	75.9%
Yes, to start or improve agricultural activities	35.9%	10.8%
Yes, to start or improve commercial activities	2%	4.8%
Total	100%	100%

Reasons for non-use of knowledge acquired abroad

Reasons	Temporary regular migrants	Irregular migrants
Lack of money for investment	21.4%	14.5%
Lack of guidance or knowledge to get the business or production running	4.1%	1.6%
The knowledge was not useful to us	51.7%	79%
Another reason	22.8%	4.8%
Total	100%	100%



5. Impact of the availability of temporary work visas on migration intentions and migration patterns

The interview results show that the availability of temporary work visas affects migration intentions and patterns in a complex and non-linear way. Initially, the existence of visa opportunities (when they are perceived as real and not as scams), cause people to postpone irregular migration while waiting for a visa. However, those who do not obtain a visa within a non-specific waiting period decide to migrate irregularly. Finally, the presence of temporary work visas contributes to increased local employment as remittances are invested in local projects (more frequently than irregular migrants) that generates employment and reduces migratory intentions of neighbors.

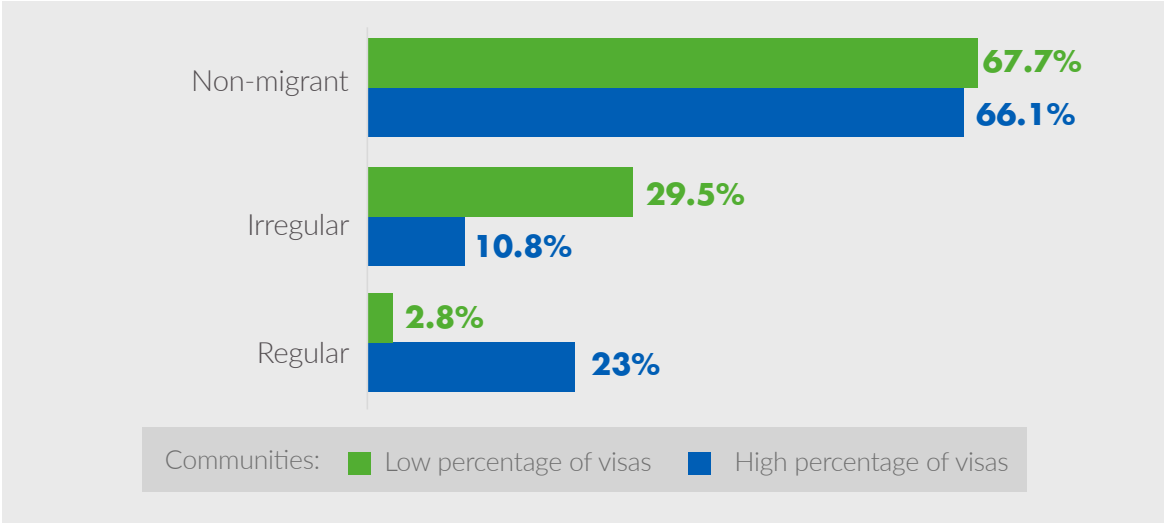
The quantitative analysis shows no statistically significant differences in the migratory intention in communities with a high and low percentage of visas. Presenting the variable dichotomously:



The most interesting results arise from comparing the distribution of families according to their migratory status (regular, irregular and non-migrant) in communities with high and low percentages of temporary work visas. The results show that the percentage of migrant families is similar (33.8% in communities with a high percentage of visas versus 32.3% in those with a low percentage, which is not statistically significant). However, it is important to compare how migration is distributed.

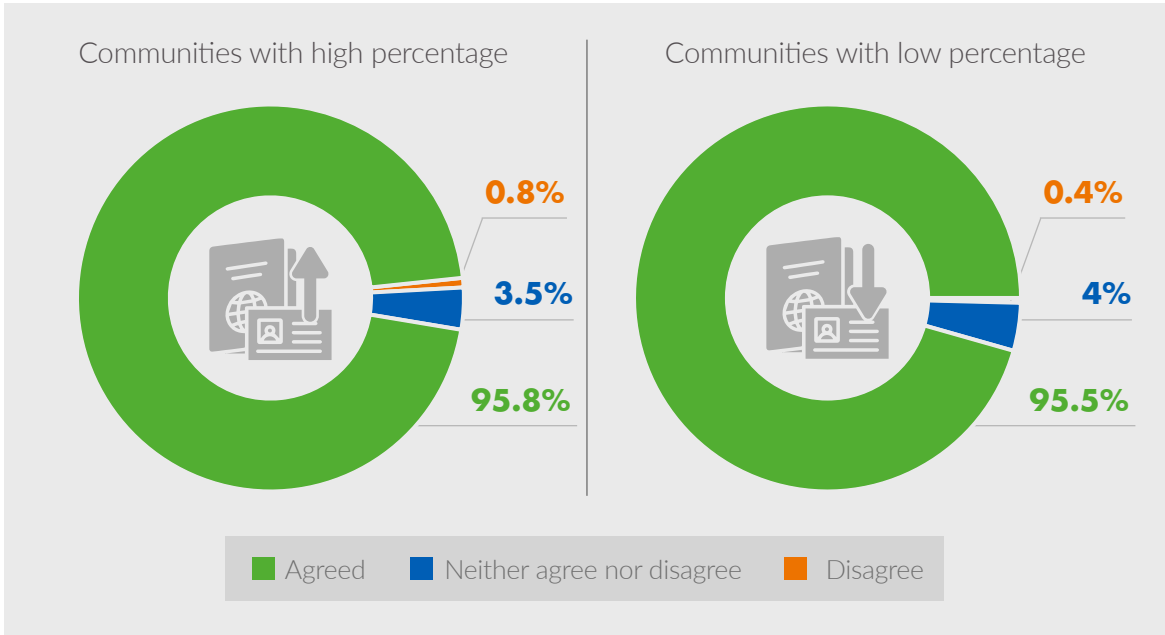
As it can be seen in the figure, in communities with a high percentage of temporary work visas, the number of families with irregular migrants drops drastically to 10.8%, when compared to 29.5% in communities with a low percentage of visas. Thus, **it is concluded that the availability of visas does not increase migration intention or the percentage of families with migrants, but it does drastically reduce irregular migration** (in percentage terms and under the conditions of this study, it **reduces irregular migration by 63.4%**).

Families with different migratory status in communities with high and low percentages of temporary work visa

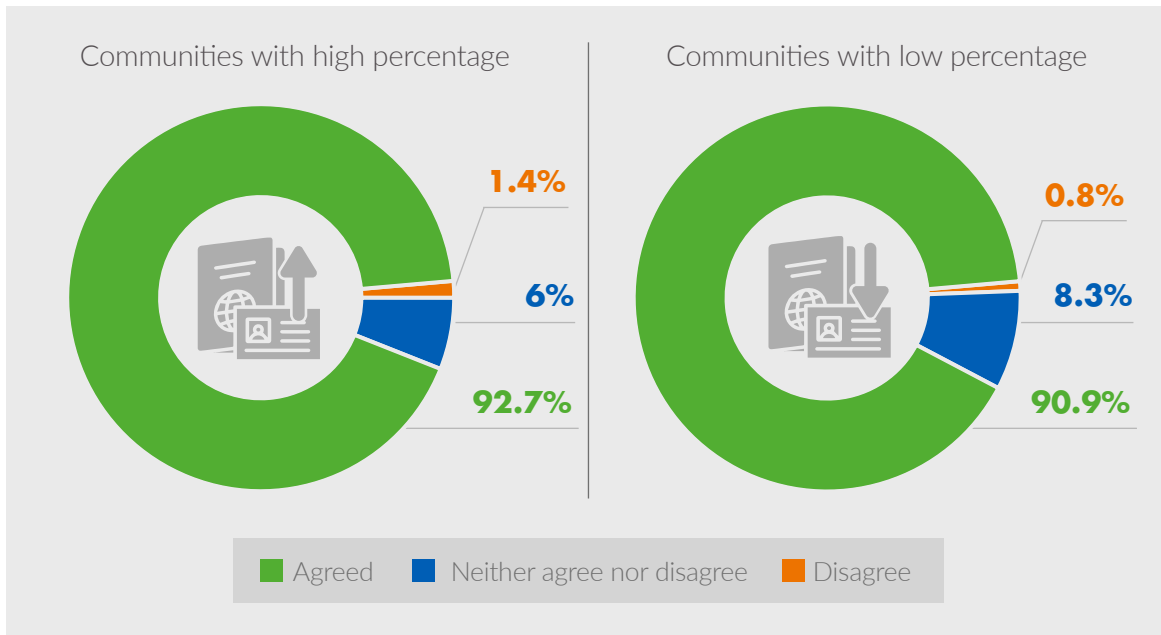


These results are consistent with the respondent opinions in both types of communities, who argue that migrating with a visa is better than migrating irregularly and that the availability of visas reduces the willingness for undocumented migration.

Are visas a better way to migrate than undocumented migration?

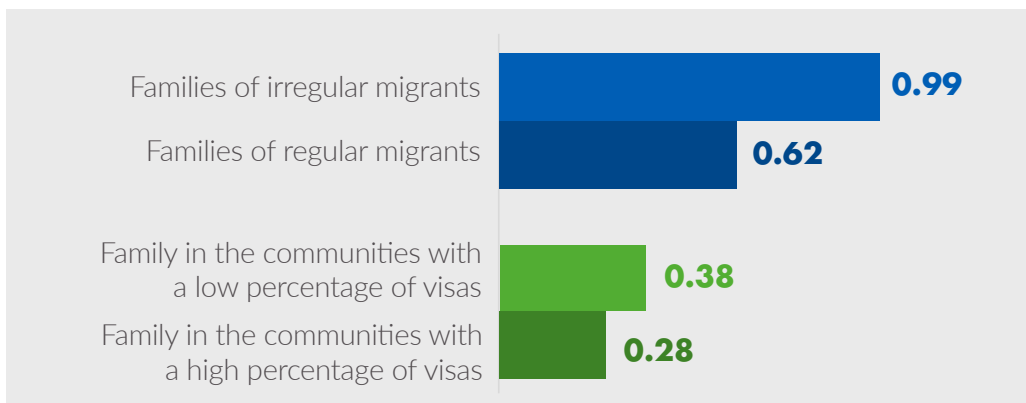


When people learn that visas are available, does their desire for undocumented migration diminish, because they realize there are more convenient options?



In addition, results suggest that the availability of temporary work visas has the potential to significantly reduce the number of people residing abroad at any given moment in time. Indeed, at the time of the study, families of regular migrants had, on average, 0.62 members abroad, while families of irregular migrants had 0.99 members. In parallel, the average number of people abroad per family in the communities with a high percentage of visas was 0.28, while in those with a low percentage, it was 0.38. While these results may be variable depending on the time of year of the survey, the data suggest that increasing the availability of visas in low-access communities could reduce the number of migrants by 27.4%.

Average number of people abroad per family





6. Impact of temporary work visas on families: Comparison between families with different immigration statuses

Multiple welfare indicators were analyzed to differentiate among regular, irregular and non-migrant temporary migrant families. Six variables that showed statistically significant differences are presented. The results indicate that the economic condition of regular temporary migrant families is better. It should be noted that these differences are not the result of a family's better economic condition prior to migration. In fact, if one considers that migrating irregularly requires larger economic investments than migrating regularly, it would be reasonable to conclude that families of irregular migrants were in a similar or likely a better initial economic condition than those who migrated regularly.

Differences between families according to migratory status

	Poverty level (Simple Poverty Scorecard)	Food Consumption Score (FCS)	Food Security (FIES scale)	Perception of the family's economic situation	Realization of improvements or extensions to the home in the last 12 months	Perception of improvement in family financial situation in the last 12 months
Regular migrants	Lower	Higher	Better	Better	More frequent	More frequent
Irregular migrants	Intermediate	Lower	Intermediate	Worst	Less frequent	Less frequent
Non-migrants	Higher	Lower	Worst	Worst	Less frequent	Less frequent

■ Better situation
 ■ Intermediate situation
 ■ Worst situation





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7. General operation of the temporary work visas

The following figure summarizes the different temporary work visas of particular interest to Guatemala, available in Canada and the U.S.

Country	Types of visas	Outstanding features
 Canada	<i>SWAP</i>	Refers to bilateral agreements between Canada and Caribbean countries and Mexico, it is not available for Guatemala. It involves governments in the selection of workers and has more agile migration procedures.
	<i>TFWP Ag-Stream</i>	Corresponds to temporary agricultural workers within a specific list of crops. It allows permits of up to 2 years and does not require working with government recruiters.
	<i>TFWP low-wage</i>	Work permits are designated for occupations outside of government-defined agricultural commodities or other industries. Low-wage designation are for jobs that pay hourly wages lower than the provincial average (hence 'low-wage'). It allows permits of up to 2 years and does not require working with government recruiters. There are caps on the number of foreign workers that can be hired.
	<i>TFWP high-wage</i>	Designated for skilled workers who earn hourly wages higher than the provincial average and are awarded for periods up to 3 years.
 United States	<i>H-2A</i>	Allows the hiring of temporary foreign workers for agricultural work. Although it allows hiring for up to three years, periods of less than one year are usually authorized. In 2022 it involved more than 300,000 workers and represented 10% of the U.S. farm labor force. Only 1% of them originated in Guatemala.
	<i>H-2B</i>	Allows temporary foreign workers to be hired for non-agricultural work, including hospitality, seafood processing, landscaping, restaurants, construction and forestry, usually approved for 10 months or less. It has a cap of 66,000 workers per year, although the limit tends to increase irregularly depending on the year. In 2023, 5% of these workers came from Guatemala.

Notes: SWAP = Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program; TFWP = Temporary Foreign Worker Program; H-2A = H-2A Guest Worker Program; H-2B = H-2B Guest Worker Program. In 2021 the TFWP recruited 82,150 workers, of which more than 13,000 were from Guatemala.

The administrative procedures for visa management are complex and must be initiated by employers. In most cases, employers hire companies (often called 'recruiters') to handle one or more parts of the process. Many hire companies in their own country to process application paperwork, sometimes with the support of recruiters in their home countries. Other employers directly hire recruiters in the workers' country and have their own staff carry out the procedures in the destination country. In addition, a significant but undetermined number of U.S. employers dispense with recruiters and coordinate directly with workers through prior contacts or informal local intermediaries.

There are different types of recruiters:

- 1 Formalized private recruiters**

Operate according to Guatemalan and international regulations. They charge employers for their services and support workers in the visa process. They make up the vast majority of those working with Canadian employers, although there are similar emerging recruiters working with the U.S. employers.
- 2 Public recruiter**

Were recently created within the Labor Migration Program of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security of Guatemala. The program offers services free of charge. In 2022 the program processed approximately one-third of temporary work visas to the U.S.
- 3 Informal recruiters or informal local intermediaries**

They are usually linked to a single employer or a few employers (sometimes former employees). Their scope is mainly local (community or municipal), and sometimes they are not even recognized as intermediaries in the recruitment process. In these cases, compliance with regulations is not always clear, and the charging of illegal fees to workers as a requirement to obtain visas has been reported. This type of recruiter, which works primarily with U.S. employers, generates a much more fragmented process.
- 4 Local facilitators**

They are not recruiters, although they may sometimes overlap in interviewees' accounts. They act at the community or municipal level and assist selected workers in completing their visa procedures by offering advice on obtaining documentation and managing travel logistics.



While most employers hire recruiting companies to handle the paperwork, most select new workers based on recommendations from their migrant employees or those working on neighboring farms.

We call this the **'worker-to-worker recruitment model'**. Through this scheme, employers seek to:

- (1) Reward their most productive and reliable workers.
- (2) Obtain highly productive labor with characteristics similar to those of the workers from whom they seek referrals.



However, this scheme seems to have two major problems:

-  **1** An unspecified, but possibly a high percentage of the workers who recommend neighbors, acquaintances, and even relatives charge for these recommendations. **Amounts charged range from US\$250 to US\$3,000 or more.**
-  **2** When referrals are concentrated in kinship and friendship networks, specific groups or networks within communities are economically strengthened, while the rest do not have access to the same opportunities, **which generates higher perceptions of inequity, distrust and even community conflicts.**

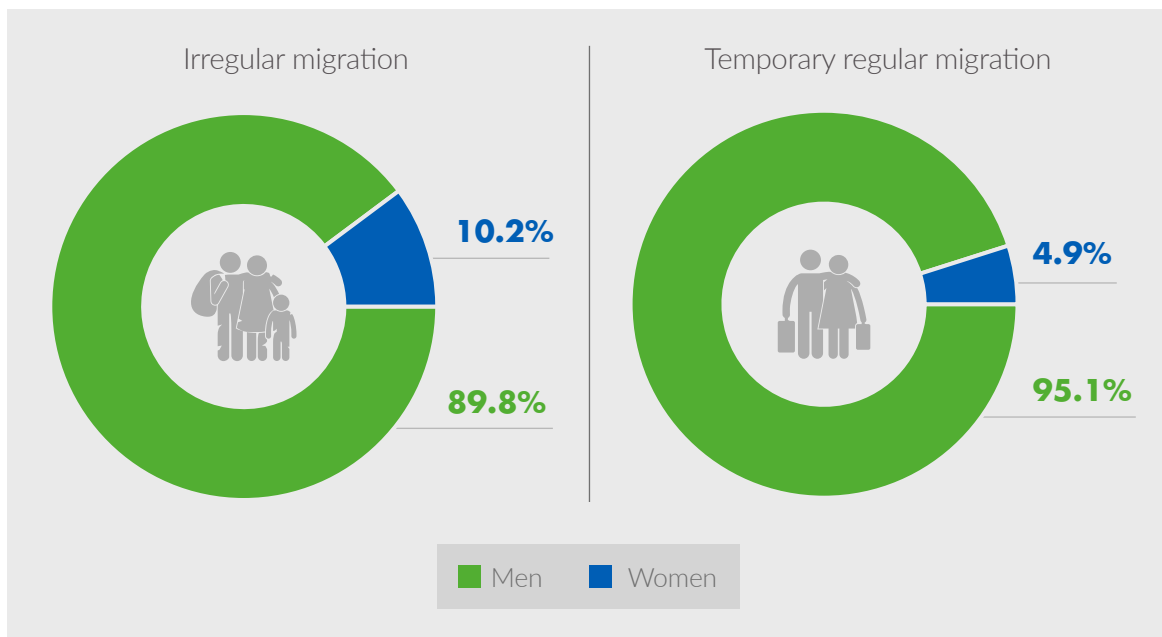
Both issues are key, so they must be considered when employing development actions utilizing circular migration.



8. Circular migration and gender

Migration is distributed equally by gender. Results show that the percentage of women who migrate irregularly is much lower than that of men, and this is even more marked in the case of circular migration.

Distribution of migration by gender



Two primary reasons are usually given to justify this high male predominance in the case of temporary work visas:



1) *Low demand for women by employers*



- Most jobs require physical strength associated with men.
- Women tend to have less experience in agricultural work, which makes up the majority of temporary work visas.
- Due to local regulations, the need to house men and women in different facilities increases costs.

2) *Traditional gender roles in home communities*

- The role of 'provider' is traditionally associated with men, who are expected to perform paid work to support the family.

Only in the case of harvesting fruits such as blueberries or strawberries was there a preference for women, since women are associated with greater manual dexterity.

Employers' views on hiring women

Opinions	 Canada	 United States
Hiring women requires additional investment in housing	60%	38.7%
Women have less physical strength	60%	30.7%
Hiring women can lead to lower productivity due to pregnancy and/or motherhood	10%	12%
Women do not have the skills we need	10%	11.3%
Hiring women brings risks of violence against women	0%	10.7%
There are no specific strengths or problems associated with hiring women	0%	32%

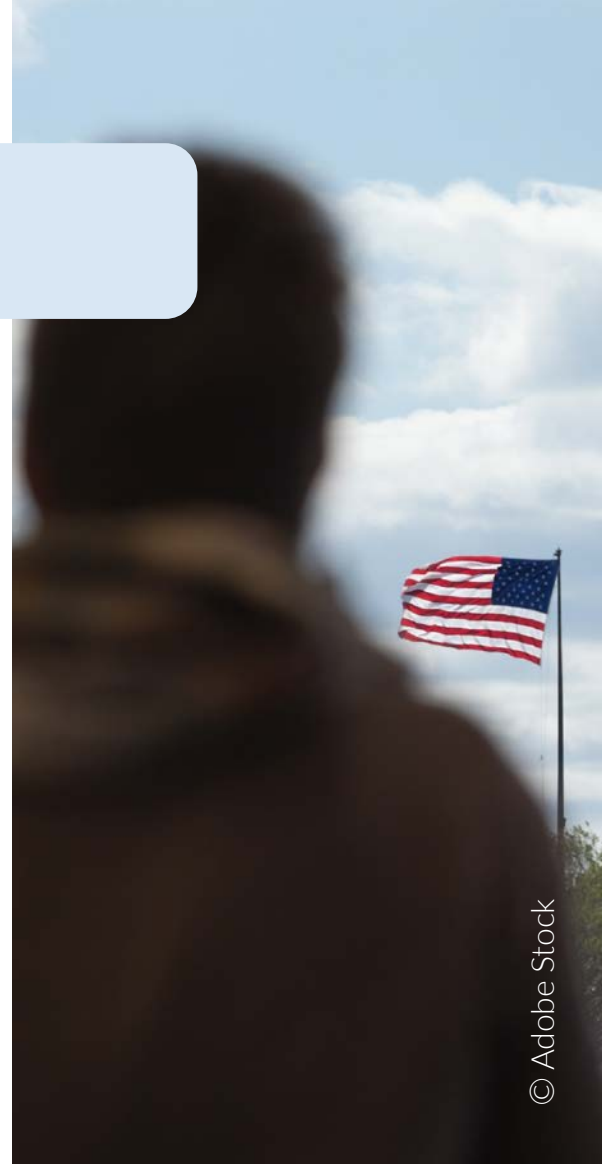




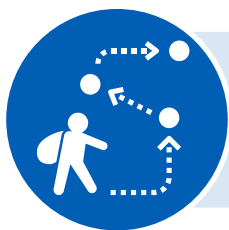
9. Temporary work visa scams and deceptions

In the interviews, we heard multiple accounts of deceptions and scams related to access to temporary work visas. All of these cases had the same structure: requesting a variable payment for access to a work visa in Canada or the U.S. Those who approach municipalities and communities to make these offers usually do so, supposedly, on behalf of recognized entities, such as recruiting companies, the International Organization for Migration or embassies, or based on alleged direct contacts with employers. In any case, these are claims that cannot be corroborated by those who hear them.

The existence of deception and scams related to obtaining temporary work visas is a central concern for the different actors interviewed. At the same time, it **is highly problematic and harmful, as it generates distrust in the communities even concerning legitimate employment proposals and diminishes the value of temporary work visas as an alternative to irregular migration for those considering migrating. Addressing this issue is critical to realizing the potential of these visas.** Unfortunately, local officials in the municipalities do not have sufficient knowledge or capacity to help their neighbors in their communities and towns to differentiate what is real and what is not.



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10. Permanence of temporary workers after their visa has expired




The overstay of migrant workers in Canada or the U.S. after the end of their visa period is a matter of concern for different stakeholders. At the same time, it is a somewhat opaque issue, both because of limited available information and because of the uneasiness or discomfort it generates in certain interlocutors to discuss it. The interviews suggest that the percentage of permanence is between 2 and 7 percent.

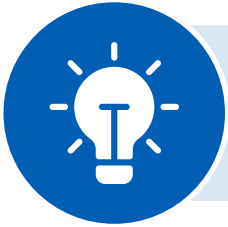
Under the umbrella of the migrants overstaying their visa period, two situations were identified:

- (1) Workers who do not show up to work in the destination country or who abandon their position after starting.**
- (2) Cases in which the contract ends, but the workers do not return.**

Although both situations share the decision not to return, they affect employers differently. This report has classified the causes of permanence according to different areas to facilitate information organization.

Analysis of the causes of visa workers' stay in destination countries

	Causes	Key Aspects
 <p>Relationship between incentives and family needs</p>	<p>Lower wages than in other industries. Limited working hours due to compliance with labor laws.</p>	<p>Availability of alternative jobs in the area that offer better income. The number of hours offered can be key.</p>
	<p>High visa fees or family needs due to debt or other family situations, combined with short-term visas that do not allow for significant surplus.</p>	<p>Degree of generalization and size of illegal payments to access visas. Possibility of real control over these practices. Duration of visas. Use given to remittances by families: superfluous consumption versus perceptible improvements.</p>
	<p>Belief that obtaining a visa again in subsequent years is unlikely.</p>	<p>Relationship between the employee and his or her boss or employer. Compliance or non-compliance with productivity goals. Existence of excessively high productivity goals. Selection of workers without the necessary skills.</p>
 <p>Characteristics of the work and treatment received</p>	<p>The worker considers the work performed as excessively difficult or hard, even as a risk to his or her health or life.</p>	<p>Selection of unsuitable workers for the job. Lack of clarity in reporting on working conditions. Excessive pressure from employers or group leaders.</p>
	<p>Mistreatment of workers or poor relationship with employers or bosses.</p>	<p>Frequency of mistreatment of workers. Excessive expectations or pressure to increase productivity.</p>
 <p>Other causes</p>	<p>Informal or false recruiters or labor intermediaries.</p>	<p>Government control over local recruiters and labor intermediaries. Scarcity, non-existence or difficulty of access to certified or recognized intermediaries. Degree of fragmentation of recruiters.</p>



11. Proposals to expand and strengthen the positive impact of circular migration in Guatemala

Below is a set of proposals divided by areas that different actors can implement or promote, from governmental entities to private companies and NGOs. While some of these may be more within the control or interest of one actor than another, it is clear that coordinated action can generate broader and more synergistic impacts.



STRENGTHENING THE WORKER RECRUITMENT SYSTEM IN GUATEMALA

This is a fundamental action, as it will increase the number of workers traveling, extending the positive impact identified in this study to more families and communities. At the same time, considering that circular migration tends to replace irregular migration, the conditions are in place so that the increase in circular migration of Guatemalans does not reduce migration from other countries.

1

Consolidate the government-implemented registration process for recruiters in Guatemala and publish useful information for employers. Published information may include contact information, certifications and experience with different work permit/visa programs. This can help employers select the most appropriate recruiters for their needs and workers to verify the legitimacy of recruiters.

2

Support external certification of the quality of registered recruiters. This may include certification to the International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS) of the International Organization for Migration and ISO 9001. These certifications will help to increase the quality of recruiters and the service offered to employers, strengthening Guatemala internationally as a source of reliable workers and serious and ethical recruiters.

3

Promote the creation of a national coordination table or panel of registered recruiters and other key actors in Guatemala. Establishing a national coordination table, which assumes the shared interests among different actors, to help diagnose and coordinate actions to strengthen the recruitment system and the impact of circular migration in Guatemala.

4

Create a public entity to regulate, strengthen and promote temporary labor migration. This avoids conflicts of interest and allows for differentiation from the control function and the recruitment function of the Labor Migration program (currently they do both which creates possible distrust from private recruiters).

5

Train registered recruiters on the procedures of all available visa programs.

6

Collaboratively develop strategies to overcome the worker-to-worker recruitment model and the problem of visa abandonment. This could be done in the framework of the national coordination table and could include providing information to employers on the problems of selecting workers through peer-to-peer recommendations, promoting recruitment protocols that increase employers' satisfaction with workers, and identifying key factors that allow for predicting cases of a high probability of job abandonment or non-return. Along these lines, it would be advisable to generate unified worker abandonment records, making it possible to follow up on the problem and identify profiles of workers with higher dropout rates.

7

Develop and validate tools, procedures or protocols to select workers who are more responsive to the needs of employers and less likely not to return after visas end.



DEVELOPMENT OF INCENTIVES TO FACILITATE THE HIRING OF WORKERS FROM GUATEMALA

8

Train first-time visa travelers to anticipate working and living conditions in Canada and the U.S. so that they can function more effectively abroad. This mainly includes interpersonal skills for working and living with other employees, conflict management, labor rights and access to health services, for qualifying Guatemalan workers for employers.

9

Generate tools and implement actions to reduce recruitment costs in Guatemala. This may include tax reductions, negotiation of wholesale ticket purchases, decentralization of passport delivery, and facilitation of virtual paperwork with embassies.

10

Support efforts to reduce passport and visa processing times. Possible actions are numerous and include expediting passport processing, facilitating virtual processing, at decentralized locations and/or by secure mail, and inviting the Canadian embassy to issue visas in the country.

Develop linkages between U.S. employers and Guatemalan recruiters and workers.

Implement a stakeholder-funded project to bring U.S. employers and recruiters to Guatemala to encourage future hiring. This may include:

- (1) Promoting Guatemalan workers with visa processing companies, U.S. recruiters, and relevant organizations representing farmers or employers.
- (2) Inviting employers to Guatemala to meet recruiters and visit communities.
- (3) Subsidizing recruitment fees with certified recruiters.
- (4) Subsidizing in-country visa processing travel expenses of first-time workers.
- (5) Offering incentives for the hiring of women.

11

12

Generate links between labor-demanding cooperatives in Canada and the U.S. and cooperatives in Guatemala. This will help develop contacts for hiring workers, foster inter-cooperative ties and promote initiatives interested in improving the quality of life of families and communities of origin through worker employment.

Encourage changes in the structure of visa program. This action includes encouraging policymakers to consider the following suggestions:

- (1) Approve exemptions of H-2B visa caps for Northern Triangle countries (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras).
- (2) Expand H-2B caps by approving returning worker exemptions in Northern Triangle countries.
- (3) Allow expedited application process for employers and workers in good standing.
- (4) Award employers and workers in good standing access to longer visa periods, thus reducing application procedures.

13

Identify and promote worker profiles and selection strategies that have the greatest potential to strengthen equity and impacts on families and communities of origin. This includes analyzing both worker and family characteristics, promoting opportunities that include women, and evaluating strategies to ensure that worker-to-worker recommendations do not concentrate migrants in certain community networks to the detriment of others. It is even possible to develop rotation or distribution protocols for selected migrants by family, to distribute the benefits of temporary regular migration socially (and not just familywise).

14



IMPROVING WORKERS' ACCESS TO TEMPORARY WORK VISA PROGRAMS

15

Develop educational outreach materials to educate and raise awareness among interested workers about available visa programs. This would increase awareness of the visa programs and reduce deception and scams experienced by workers.

16

Publish and maintain a web page at a reliable web address providing information on temporary work visas.

17

Train personnel in selected municipalities to advise and disseminate information on temporary work visas. This is based on the lack of knowledge about temporary work visas observed in many municipalities with a high percentage of regular migrants.

18

Develop mechanisms for workers to file anonymous or protected complaints related to scams, improper charges and mistreatment by employers, among others. At present, filing complaints is very difficult, as it usually means workers lose access to future visas.

19

Develop financial products available to visa workers to cover up-front visa costs and avoid often abusive debts. While the cost of migrating regularly is much lower than migrating irregularly, it still represents a significant investment for the families of workers who obtain visas.



STRENGTHENING THE IMPACT OF REMITTANCES ON THE HOUSEHOLDS OF REGULAR MIGRANTS

20

Develop financial education actions to facilitate more effective investment of remittances. There is clear evidence that families have little experience managing larger sums of money, discouraging savings and longer-term investment strategies and increasing immediate non-productive spending. This proposal is interested in supporting all families receiving remittances, including both irregular and regular migrants.

21

Provide personalized agricultural and/or business advisory services for migrants and their families. These services will contribute to increasing the percentage of remittances oriented to commercial or productive investment by removing barriers and facilitating the start-up of profitable businesses. This proposal is also of interest for all families receiving remittances.

22

Develop training or incubation programs for entrepreneurship sponsored by employers, particularly for those with corporate social responsibility programs or from the cooperative sector.



CONCLUSIONS

This study has shown that circular migration has a significant potential to reduce irregular migration and improve the living conditions of migrants and their families. Thus, the existence of coinciding interests among different actors is evident, which can enhance coordinated actions among governments, businesses and civil society actors. In this context, the role that International Development Agencies and Non-Governmental Development Organizations (NGDOs) can play is central.

This paper has also presented a set of proposals. In general, these include three distinct but interconnected ideas:

- (1) Strengthening the institutional recruitment system to expand the availability and access to visas and promote ethical practices following regulations.
- (2) Dissemination of information, training of actors and development of procedures to minimize the incidence of fraud, abuse and deception.
- (3) Direct enhancement of the impact of circular migration through the design of strategies to optimize the selection of workers and to expand the benefits of remittances.

Here, although the international cooperation sector could focus on the third point, it should remember that to broaden the scope and impact of its work, it will need to include all three areas.

On the other hand, in cross-cutting terms, it is considered vital to take into account the following axes:

- Equity and gender roles.
- Articulation between the international cooperation sector and the public and private commercial sectors.
- Inter-cooperative links and links with employers that have corporate social responsibility programs.
- Focusing on increasing the community impact of temporary regular migration.
- Use of remittances and development of productive investments.

In any case, putting these actions into practice requires a great deal of effort and creativity to design proposals that generate real impacts.

TEMPORARY REGULAR MIGRATION OF GUATEMALANS TO CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES: Analysis of the impact on living conditions, migration intentions, barriers, and opportunities

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