

IMPACT OF REGULAR TEMPORARY MIGRATION TO CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES ON THE LIVING CONDITIONS AND MIGRATION INTENTIONS OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES IN GUATEMALA

Analysis of barriers and opportunities to scale-up the regular migration strategy

FINAL REPORT, July 2023

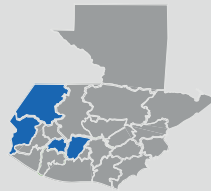


METHODOLOGY

85 INTERVIEWS with key informants (in Guatemala, United States and Canada)

1,533 SURVEYS:

- Migrant worker employers
- Guatemalan communities (including 448 households of regular migrants)



4 DEPARTAMENTOS IN GUATEMALA

Surveys included 11 COMMUNITIES with HIGH percentage of regular migrants matched with 11 comparable communities with a LOW percentage of regular migrants.

TYPE OF VISA ANALYZED:

U.S. (H-2 A y H-2B); Canada (TFWP Ag-Stream and TFWP Low-Wage)

- Chimaltenango
- Huehuetenango
- San Marcos
- Sololá

ANALYSIS IN 2 PARTS

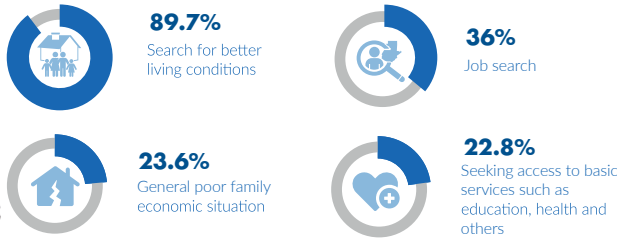
1 Analysis of the differentiated impacts of the three primary types of migratory experiences: circular, irregular and non-migrants

2 Identification of barriers and opportunities for improving temporary visa programs: perspectives from different stakeholders in Guatemala, the United States and Canada

1 Analysis of the differentiated impacts of the three primary types of migratory experiences: circular, irregular and non-migrants

REASONS THAT LED PEOPLE TO MIGRATE

There is consensus that upward social mobility is not possible through in-country work; and migration is the **only option** for progress within their control.



TYPES OF MIGRATION

CIRCULAR MIGRATION

The economic resources generated by nearly 13,000 Guatemalans participating in circular migration programs in CA and the USA exceeded US\$100 million in 2019. Only 2,6% of H-2s visas were Guatemalans in 2022.

ASSOCIATED COSTS:

free – 5,000 USD
Visa processing fees, travel, personal expenses, illegal charges
DURATION: 3 months – 1 year
• Families stay in touch
• Regular flow of remittances
• Generates greater rootedness

ASSOCIATED RISKS:

- Financial risk - low but debts are common
- Uncertainty about the visa application process
- High uncertainty about being re-employed

MIGRACIÓN IRREGULAR

An estimated 1.3 million Guatemalans were living in the United States in 2022, which represents a 44% increase since 2013

ASSOCIATED COSTS:

10,000 – 20,000 USD - Coyotes (human traffickers)

DURATION:

- Averages 13 or more years
- Disruption of family ties
 - Impact on children's health and well-being
 - Interruption of sending remittances;

ASSOCIATED RISKS:

- High financial risk (borrowing money and mortgaging land/houses)
- Dangerous journey
- Uncertainty in finding employment

IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON:

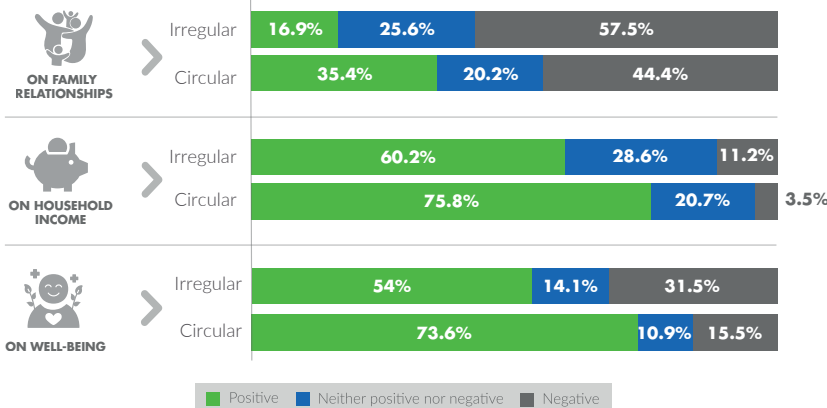
THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF HOUSEHOLDS ACCORDING TO MIGRATORY STATUS

	Poverty level (Simple Poverty Scorecard)	Food Consumption Score (FCS)	Food Security Scale (FIES)	Perception of the family's economic situation	Improvements or extensions to the home in the last 12 months	Perceived 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

Circular migration has a positive impact on the household economy: This may generate less pressure to migrate irregularly

WELL-BEING, FAMILY INCOME, AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS



Circular migration has a positive impact on families, which generates greater rootedness.

THERE IS UNCERTAINTY AND RISK IN BOTH MIGRATORY PROCESSES

CIRCULAR MIGRATION:

Uncertainty about the visa application process; High uncertainty about being re-employed

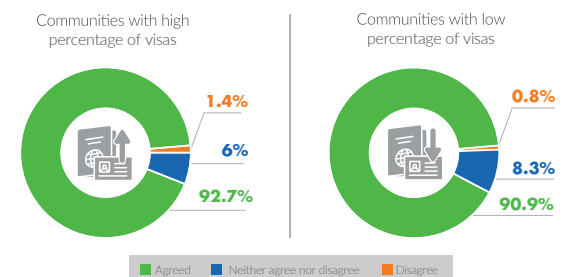
IRREGULAR MIGRATION:

Dangerous journey; Uncertainty in finding employment



GIVEN A CHOICE, PEOPLE WOULD MIGRATE USING **TEMPORARY WORK VISAS**

PEOPLE'S DESIRE FOR UNDOCUMENTED MIGRATION DIMINISHES WHEN LEARNING THAT WORK VISAS ARE AVAILABLE



"There was a marked drop in undocumented migration when recruiters came into the community offering travel with visas"

HOW REMITTANCES ARE INVESTED

- Families of regular migrants receive remittances more frequently than irregular (96% vs 88%).
- Average monthly remittances are higher in regular migrant families

TYPE OF EXPENSE	CIRCULAR MIGRATION	IRREGULAR MIGRATION
Purchase of food	96.4%	90.5%
Health expenses	70.9%	56.8%
Education expenses	41.1%	25%
Utility expenses (water, electricity...)	52.3%	43.9%
Payment of emigrant's debt	33%	39.9%
Agricultural inputs: seeds, fertilizers, others	19.8%	8.1%



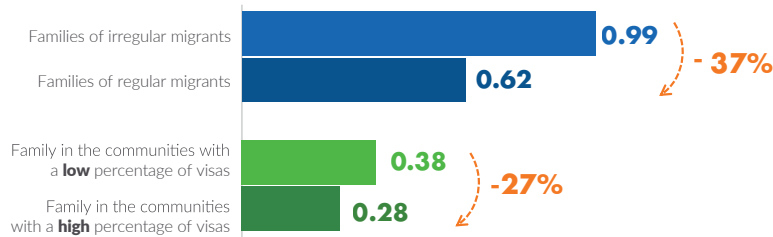
TYPE OF INVESTMENT	CIRCULAR MIGRATION	IRREGULAR MIGRATION
Home improvements	69.8%	42.7%
Purchase of agricultural land	47.9%	33.8%
Purchase of agricultural equipment	27.6%	7.1%
Microenterprise	9.9%	3.1%
Purchase of animals or livestock	8.3%	2.3%
Acquisition of commercial or business premises	5.8%	3.2%



Once immediate needs are met, regular migrants have greater investment capacity to improve livelihoods in the mid and long term: regular migration can contribute to local development.



HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE ABROAD PER FAMILY

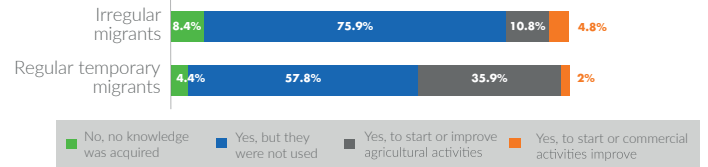


Average number of migrants per family living abroad is 37% LOWER in regular migrant families

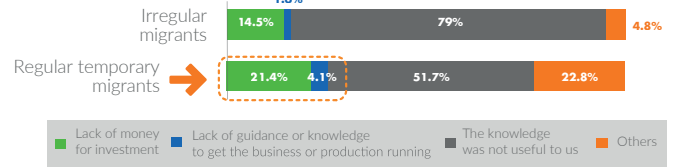
The average number of migrants per family is 27% LOWER in communities with high % of visas.

HOW ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE IS USED

ACQUISITION AND USE OF KNOWLEDGE ABROAD



REASONS FOR NON-USE OF KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED ABROAD



KNOWLEDGE GAINED CAN BE BETTER EXPLOITED TO PROMOTE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT



Develop **FINANCIAL EDUCATION** actions to facilitate more effective investment of remittances.



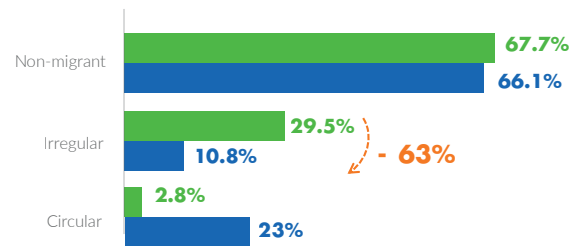
Provide personalised **AGRICULTURAL AND BUSINESS ADVISORY** services.



Develop employer-sponsored **TRAINING** or **BUSINESS INCUBATION** programs

IMPACT ON MIGRATION DYNAMICS AND MIGRATORY INTENTION

FAMILIES WITH DIFFERENT MIGRATORY STATUS IN COMMUNITIES WITH HIGH AND LOW PERCENTAGE OF TEMPORARY WORK VISA



Communities: ■ Low percentage of visa ■ High percentage of visa

54.7% WITH A LOW PERCENTAGE OF VISAS



EXPRESSED SOME DEGREE OF INTEREST IN MIGRATING

WITH A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF VISAS

50.2%

- Numbers of families with migrants is similar in both types of communities. This implies that **VISA AVAILABILITY DOES NOT INCREASE MIGRATORY INTENTIONS.**
- The **AVAILABILITY OF VISAS DETERMINES HOW MIGRATION IS CHANNLED:** Communities with a high % of families with regular migrants have fewer families with irregular migrants abroad (11% vs. 29%)
- According to our study regular migration does not increase migratory intention and **REDUCES THE NUMBER OF FAMILIES WITH IRREGULAR MIGRANTS BY 63%**

MAIN FINDINGS ON THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF MIGRATION



People will continue to migrate if family and community economic conditions don't improve.



More work visas decrease the number of migrants abroad and migrants need less time to reach income goals



People who have decided to migrate will do so, regardless if temporary work visas are or are-not available.



Circular migration generates wealth, well-being and rootedness



Availability of work visas determines if migration is channeled through legal or irregular routes.



Circular migration can boost local economic development





2 Identification of barriers and opportunities for improving temporary visa programs: Perspectives from different stakeholders in Guatemala, the United States and Canada

HOW RECRUITMENT WORKS



FORMALIZED PRIVATE RECRUITERS

Operate according to Guatemalan and international regulations. They charge employers for their services and support workers in the visa process.



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.



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). Compliance with regulations is not always clear.



LOCAL FACILITATORS

They act at the community or municipal level and assist selected workers in completing their visa procedures by offering advice.

MODALITY USED FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND HIRING OF EMPLOYEES (USA)

59% Ourselves, through employee contacts

26% Recruiter company in the country of workers

25% Recruiter in USA

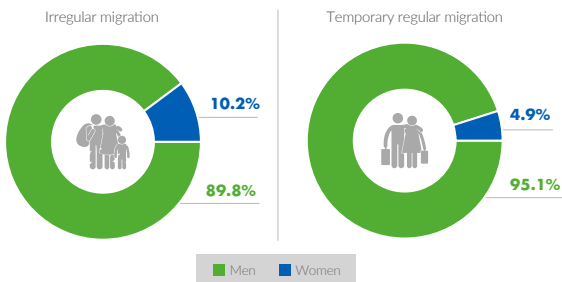


WHAT EMPLOYERS NEED

- Strong work ethic
- Positive attitude
- Reliable
- Gets along with other workers
- Physical strength and general experience in agriculture (although no specific training required)
- Confidence they will remain until the end of the contract
- Previous work experience with the same employer is valued



DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRATION BY GENDER



THE GENDER BARRIER CAN BE OVERCOME:



- 50% of respondents from Canada and 22% from the US felt that women have **SKILLS** that men do not have.
- 32% of US respondents argued that hiring women does not pose any particular **PROBLEM** or challenge.

HOW RECRUITMENT WORKS

The US system is MORE DECENTRALISED and LESS TRANSPARENT, with large numbers of small informal recruiters working with individual employers (usually former employees). Irregular migration is perceived as more transparent.

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT REGULAR AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMMUNITIES



Low % regular



High % regular



Low % regular



High % regular



Legend: Nothing (orange), Bit (dark blue), Something (grey), Quite (medium blue), A lot (green)

OPINION REGARDING WHETHER THERE ARE PAYMENTS TO BE MADE TO GET TEMPORARY WORK VISAS

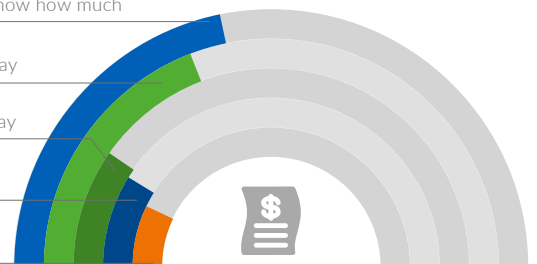
40,7% Need to pay, but I don't know how much

33,3% I don't know if I have to pay

10% I know how much I have to pay

8,7% No need to pay

7,3% No answer

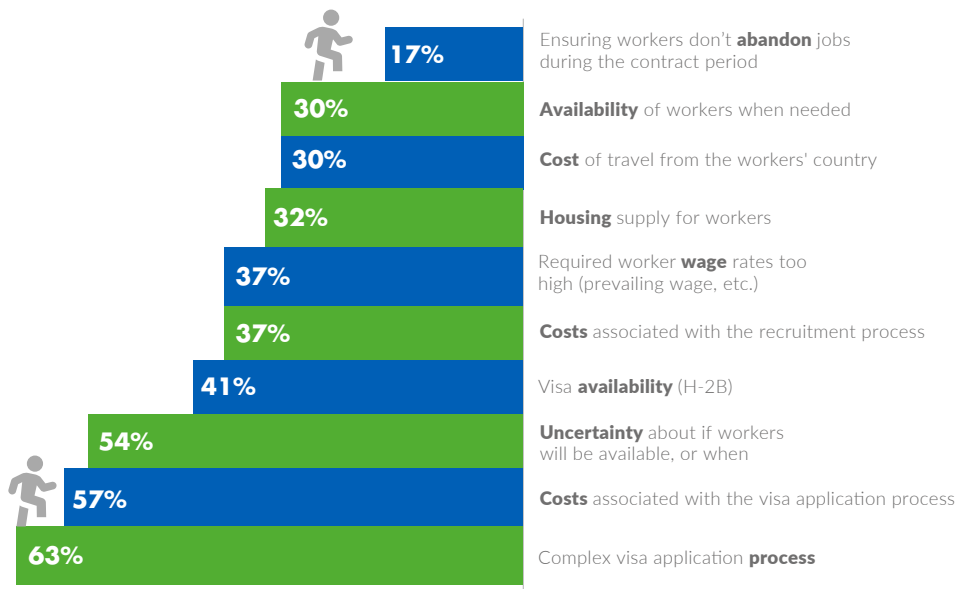


- CLOSED SYSTEM limits knowledge of how to access or how programs function
- This system causes INEQUALITIES at the community level.



- The system leads to ILLEGAL CHARGES (from Q2,000 to Q30,000) and scams.
- Fear and reluctance of workers to DENOUNCE illegal charges.
- UNCERTAINTY about continuity of visas.

WHAT CHALLENGES U.S. EMPLOYERS ARE FACING



PROBLEMS WITH OVERSTAYING WORK VISAS. MAIN CAUSES:



- Lower **WAGES** than other industries + limited working hours
- Payment of high **ILLEGAL VISA ACCESS FEES** + short visa periods
- Belief attaining a visa in subsequent years is **UNLIKELY**
- Work is considered especially **HARD** or difficult
- **MISTREATMENT** or poor relationship with supervisors

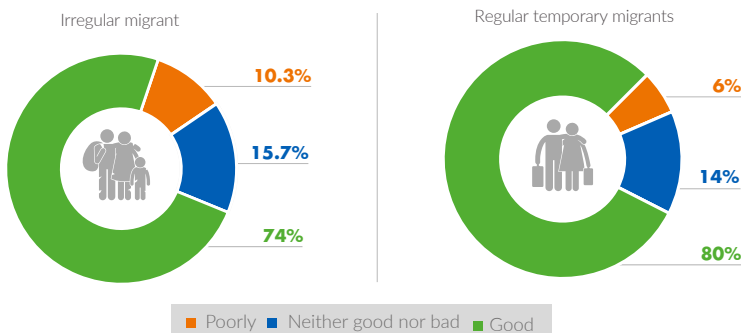
98-93% OF TEMPORARY WORKERS RETURN HOME AFTER THE VISA EXPIRES. REASONS AND ELEMENTS TO BE STRENGTHENED:



- **FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND ROOTS:** the desire to return to see family and children
- **ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES:** the expectation of traveling again and recognizing it is necessary to return to do it.
- **ETHICAL DIMENSION:** they returned because staying is illegal, and they want to be honest people.



PERCEPTION OF EMPLOYER TREATMENT BY MIGRANT TYPE



MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE TEMPORARY VISA PROGRAMMES AND ENCOURAGE WORKER RECRUITMENT IN GUATEMALA



Work with local and national stakeholders to improve awareness of temporary visa programs (avoid scams, ensure workers are prepared)



Bringing recruiters and employers closer to the Guatemalan market



Implement financial education programs and employment incubators to leverage investment of worker remittances



Create a public-private roundtable to promote dialogue on improving recruitment in Guatemala



Facilitate improvements to temporary work visa programs to improve utilization by employers (reduce time/costs) and workers (reduce abandonment).



Support and strengthen formal recruiters



FIND THE FULL STUDY AND THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES [HERE](#)

