

## RESEARCH REPORT

Intraregional Labour  
Migration Flows: Current  
situation, challenges and  
opportunities in Central  
America and the  
Dominican Republic



# COUNTRY REPORT BELIZE



Ministry of Labour, Local Government,  
Rural Development, National Emergency  
Management and Immigration and Nationality

RESEARCH REPORT  
Intraregional Labour Migration Flows: Current  
situation, challenges and opportunities in Central  
America and the Dominican Republic

COUNTRY REPORT **BELIZE**



International Organization for Migration; ILO; Belize, Ministry of Labour.  
Acuña González, Guillermo, ...[et. al]

Intraregional Labour Migration Flows: Current situation, challenges and opportunities in Central America and the Dominican Republic. Belize report. IOM, ILO, CECC/SICA, Network of Labour Market Observatories of Central America and the Dominican Republic, 2012. 94 p., illustrations, diagrams, graphs, charts.

Classification: OCDE: 14.07.01 // DEWEY: 331.544 // OIT: 14.09.2

IMMIGRATION; MIGRATION; DEVELOPMENT MODELS; BUSINESS SECTOR; LABOUR MARKET; IMPACT; LABOUR MIGRATION; MIGRANT WORKERS ; WORK; MIGRANTS; MIGRATORY FLOW; FAMILY; SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS; REMITTANCES; JOB PLACEMENT; WORKING CONDITIONS; LEISURE; LEGAL FRAMEWORK; INTERNATIONAL REGULATION; INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK; TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS; LEGISLATION; PUBLIC POLICIES; AGRICULTURE; CONSTRUCTION; SECTOR CONSTRUCTION; DOMESTIC SERVICE; TOURISM; EDUCATION; HOUSING; GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION; STATISTICAL DATA

## RESEARCH REPORT

### Intraregional Labour Migration Flows: Current situation, challenges and opportunities in Central America and the Dominican Republic

#### COUNTRY REPORT BELIZE

**Technical coordinating team:**

Belén López, Lilliana Rojas, Juan Carlos Obando, Mariana Pineda (ILO) Salvador Gutiérrez (IOM)

**Consultant:**

Melanie C. Smith Santiago

**Text editing:**

Clayton Arévalo

**Fieldwork:**

CID-GALLUP

**Photographs:**

ILO and IOM

**Researcher:**

Guillermo Acuña

**Design:**

Clayton Arévalo



Ministry of Labour, Local Government,  
Rural Development, National Emergency  
Management and Immigration and Nationality

Under the auspices of



And the support of



The designations employed, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the manner in which the data are presented in ILO and IOM publications, do not imply any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labor Office and/or the International Organization for Migration concerning the legal status of any country, area, or territory cited or of its authorities, or regarding the delimitation of its boundaries. The responsibility for opinions expressed in articles, studies, and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the ILO and/or IOM thereof.

## Acronyms

CECC/SICA	Central American Education and Cultural Coordination
ECLAC	Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean
FLASCO	Latin American Faculty of Social Science
FOIL	Job Placement and Skills Training Project
IND	Immigration and Nationality Department
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ILO	International Labour Organization
NTUCB	National Trade Union Congress of Belize
OLACD	Labour Market Observatory of Central America and the Dominican Republic
SIB	Statistical Institute of Belize. Formerly, Central Statistical Office (CSO)
SICA	Central American Integration System
SISCA	Central American Social Integration Secretariat
SPEAR	The Social Policy Evaluation and Research Committee
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

# Index

6	<b>1. Introduction</b>
6	1.1 Justification
9	1.2 Objectives
10	1.3 Methodology
14	<b>2. Labour Migration in Belize</b>
14	2.1 Migration from Developed Countries: Investors, professionals and retirees
14	2.2 Extra-Continental Immigrants
14	2.3 Central American Immigrants
15	2.4 The situation of immigrants in Belize
19	2.5 Labour Migration
23	<b>3. General Characteristics of the Belizean Labour Market</b>
23	3.1 Population characteristics
24	3.2 Migration Scenario
25	3.3 Ethnic origin of the population
27	3.4 Geographic location of immigrant population
28	3.5 The migration processes for migrant workers
29	<b>4. Socioeconomic characteristics of immigrants</b>
35	4.1 Socioeconomic situation of the migrant worker and their family unit in the country of destination
42	4.2 Migration process
48	4.3 Remittances: trends and use
52	<b>5. Labour conditions of migrant workers</b>
52	5.1 Job placement of labour immigrants- General characteristics
56	5.2 Working conditions
60	5.3 Leisure time and relationships
63	<b>6. Institutional and legal framework</b>
69	<b>7. Final considerations and recommendations on public policies' drafting</b>
76	<b>8. Bibliography</b>
79	<b>Annexes</b>

# 1 Introduction

Over the last decades, Central America and The Dominican Republic have experienced dynamic migratory flows, facilitated by factors such as integration into the global economy, free movement of people and the establishment of different policies and instruments between one or more territories in a region such as the CA-4<sup>1</sup> Agreement. A major issue has been the formation of transnational communities between societies of origin and destination, especially in border areas. These migratory flows were enhanced by the emergence of economic markets, characterized by high levels of foreign workforce participation. This workforce is often supplied by countries within the same region.

As a consequence of the change in labour market requirements and the informal sector, combined with the relatively limited capacity of migration and labour institutions to promote orderly and regulated migratory flows, the region experienced a phenomenon that has caught little attention from relevant agents, including the academic and political ones: the impact that irregular and disorderly intraregional labour migration has on the socioeconomic and labour market structures of both origin and destination countries, as well as on the labour migrant themselves.

The following report presents the findings of a country study conducted in Belize. The first objective was to examine the impact

and characteristics of labour migration, as well as its implications for the parties involved. The report further analyzes Central American migratory flows into Belize with particular emphasis on the social and labour conditions. It also looks into the impact on the society of origin, as well as the challenges faced by the Belizean society and the Belizean government concerning migration management and provision of services. This report reveals information about the specific situation and conditions of Central American labour migrants living in Belize and working in the construction, agriculture, domestic service and tourism sectors.

## 1.1 Justification

Recently, the impact of the intraregional migratory dynamics has been a matter of governmental concern. In 2009, the Ministries of Labour, through the Council of Ministers of Labour in Central America and The Dominican Republic, highlighted the need for reliable and updated information about this phenomenon, understanding that a better knowledge of migratory dynamics would help to improve migration flows management.

Ergo, in order to determine the characteristics and challenges of labour

---

1. The Central America (CA-4) Border Control Agreement was a treaty signed in June 2006 between the Central American nations of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, establishing the free movement across borders between the four signatory states of their citizens without any restrictions or checks.



migration in the region, research on intraregional migration labour flows, its current situation and challenges and opportunities in Central America and the Dominican Republic was deemed necessary.

Thus it was established by the third agreement adopted during the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Labour of Central America and the Dominican Republic, held in San Pedro Sula, Honduras on May 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of 2009 stating:

*“To approve the project entitled Intraregional Labour Migration Flows: current situation, challenges and opportunities in Central America and Dominican Republic, presented by Francisco Morales, Minister of Labour and Social Security of the Republic of Costa Rica taking into account the priority of this issue for the subregion. In this manner, we acknowledge the inputs of the Network of Labour Market Observatories of Central America and the Dominican Republic and the Forum of Regional Labour Directors, considering that their tasks are related to the management, analysis and generation of information regarding the labour market of the subregion<sup>2</sup>, for this particular proposal as well as others that may emerge from the Council of Ministers.”*

Both the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Central American Education and Cultural Coordination (CECC/SICA), as part of the cooperation project “Job Placement and Skills Training” (Formación Ocupacional e Inserción Laboral, FOIL) responded to the demand for support from the Council of Ministers of Labour, acknowledging the need to join efforts to generate useful and updated information on labour migration flows and to promote

public policies to tackle the integration and protection of migrant workers and their families.

For the International Labour Organization (ILO), this research represents an opportunity to strengthen its knowledge on labour migration, issue that ILO had addressed through the Migration for Employment Convention (revised) 1949 (No. 97) and the Migrant Workers Convention (supplementary provisions), 1975 (No. 143). It also expects to improve migrant workers protection on a human rights and gender approach, on the basis of the “Resolution concerning a fair deal for migrant workers in the global economy”, adopted at the 92<sup>nd</sup> session of the International Labour Conference, Geneva, 2004, the “Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration” (2006) and the document “Decent Work in the Americas: An Agenda for the Hemisphere 2006-2015”. For this reason, after the conclusion of the FOIL Project, ILO continued to follow up and support this process through the technical cooperation project “Strengthening the Labour Market Observatory of Central America and Dominican Republic”, financed by the Ministry of Employment and Social Security of Spain and implemented by the Decent Work Team and ILO Office for Central America, Haiti, Panama and Dominican Republic.

As the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is concerned, this study contributes to the fulfillment of one of the main objectives as an organization, which is to facilitate an orderly and human management of international migration. This is in line with their Constitution and Strategy approved during the 94<sup>th</sup> session of IOM Council in 2007. To achieve this goal, IOM, through its participation in this study and their current work, strengthens the capacity of the governments of the

---

2. Subregion, from the ILO perspective, refers to Central American and Dominican Republic.



region by proposing practical solutions in order to manage and approach migration and labour related issues. It responds to the intraregional labour migration flows through:

1. Generation of updated and relevant information from direct sources related to south-south migratory flows in the studied countries.
2. Interdisciplinary analysis of this information. This will be the basis to formulate relevant and specific recommendations with a gender and youth approach. This information will promote improved management of migratory and labour flows.
3. The dissemination of the results of this study among relevant authorities and key stakeholders in each beneficiary country will inevitably raise awareness of labour migration issues and will promote adequate institutional response.

Belize was included in the research because of the interest expressed by the Ministry of Labour to improve the understanding of labour migration in the country.

Previous studies (Smith, 2008) put on the research agenda the issue of the presence of a Central American workforce in key economical activities in Belize, such as the agricultural sector and, particularly, the banana and citrus production.

Migration in Central American countries has taken three different forms:

- Internal migration: occurring within geographical regions inside the territory of one country.
- Cross-border and intraregional labour movements, which have increased since the 1990's.
- Extra-regional migrations: resulting from important socio-political events which occurred within the region during the 1980's, having the United States of America as the main and final destination.

The Belizean scenario embodies an interaction of several migratory processes: the departure of local population towards the United States of America and England, primarily for educational and employment purposes; migratory movements of both intraregional and extra-regional migrant population heading to the north of the continent; and finally, the reception of a migrant population from countries within the region, especially from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. The socio-political conflicts that occurred in those countries during the 1980's were the triggering element of these intraregional migrations.

This study intends to examine the social and labour characteristics and conditions of regional labour migrants in Belize, its impact on the destination countries and the challenges faced by the country towards articulating national management policies. The study aims to generate specific information about the situation and working conditions of the Central American migrants in the construction, agriculture and services sectors.

The study provides important information that will impact the way labour migration flows are managed in the country. Currently, the proper management of migration flows is constrained by the lack of information, being an obstacle for ensuring the exercise of the Central American migrants' rights and impeding the formulation of public policies on the issue.

This document presents the main results of the information gathered through fieldwork carried out between April and August 2010 in Belize. It consisted in the implementation of a survey which targeted working immigrants and focus groups. In the focus groups participated labour migrants, employers and representatives of institutions and organizations responsible for migration issues. It also included interviewing key informants, such as those working in institutions and organizations involved in migration management.



This report represents the integrated efforts of several stakeholders participating in the process.

In the first place, the coordination technical team was integrated by the staff of the project “Strengthening the Labour Market Observatory of Central America and Dominican Republic”, active member of the Network of Labour Market Observatories of Central America and Dominican Republic: Belén López, Technical Coordinator, Liliana Rojas, Juan Carlos Obando y Mariana Pineda; the IOM Regional Liaison and Policy Officer for Central America, North America and the Caribbean, Salvador Gutierrez, who together with Guillermo Acuña, academic consultant of the study, led the processes of designing, implementation, organizing fieldwork, data analysis and revision of the report. The duties also included coordination with several participants and professionals from various organizations for further revision and validation.

In the second place, the work of national researcher Melanie Smith who conducted interviews with key participants, analyzed the data collected and compiled the present report is acknowledged.

Fieldwork was entrusted to the company CID-GALLUP, with experience in designing and applying surveys and focus groups at the regional level and also in identifying key informants and conducting surveys with a population not always easy to locate or approach.

## 1.2 Objectives

The purpose of this research was to characterize the main features of the intraregional migration systems and their social, economic, institutional, cultural and labour implications, both for the origin and destination countries and also for the stakeholders in the migratory flows.

In this regard, the following objectives, at national and regional levels, were the stated:

### General Objective

To determine and describe the socio-economic and labour situation and characteristics of the intraregional labour migration flows in Central America and Dominican Republic, aimed to generate recommendations that will influence the formulation of actions or proposal of policies to properly approach and manage intraregional labour migrations, on the basis of an analysis of the policies related to this issue.

### Specific Objectives

- To analyze ‘push and pull factors’ affecting labour migrants in the participating countries, within the framework of the current intraregional labour migration systems.
- To study work relationships, quality of employment and quality of life (in areas such as access to public and social services) of migrant workers in the origin and destination countries.
- To examine available information regarding labour migrants’ access to social security, education and professional training in each country.
- To characterize the current working conditions of labour migrants and the job placement process.
- To analyze legislation, regulations, and bilateral and multilateral agreements related to labour migration.
- To analyze standard operating procedures established by governmental agencies in each country to ensure orderly and controlled labour migration flows.
- To generate recommendations which will impact the formulation of actions or proposals of policies aiming at the improvement of the management of labour migration flows and, consequently, the living and working conditions of the migrant population

from Central America and the Dominican Republic.

### 1.3 Methodology

To meet the objectives proposed, a comprehensive methodology was developed around a theoretical framework which focused on the relationship between current regional labour markets in specific territories and the structure that migratory flows acquire inside these markets (push and pull factors).

A methodology combining both qualitative and quantitative research techniques was implemented, in order to achieve the linkage between those two dimensions. These techniques allow a relevant, updated, first-hand information that will guide the decision-making process and the development of programs that will ensure better living conditions for migrant workers and their families.

The research process was divided into two phases:

#### **Phase I. Literature review and Data gathering**

The study required an in-depth analysis of the migration dynamics in Belize through a review of primary and secondary information. This task was performed by Belizean researcher, Melanie Smith, who directed the study and coordinated with the relevant governmental agencies. The involvement and commitment of the Ministry of Labour was essential for the development of the study.

The analysis of secondary information allowed for a greater understanding of the

topic of migration in Belize, acknowledging the current scenario and the processes shaped since 1980. Current projects, laws, acts and conventions related to migration in Belize were also reviewed to provide an understanding of the existing legal framework.

Reviewing primary information such as the population census provided some general elements regarding the inclusion of the migrant population into the Belizean labour market.

#### **Phase II. Applying Surveys and Focus Groups**

This stage was divided into two parts: a quantitative research using structured surveys applied to immigrant persons; and a qualitative research technique using focus groups, addressed to Central American immigrants and employers<sup>3</sup>.

##### **Creating and applying the surveys**

Surveys were conducted in order to obtain information about the conditions of the migrant workers in Belize, as well as a general characterization of their integration to the country and into the labour market. The research adopted the case study pattern, with the implementation of the personal interview technique. The company CID-GALLUP Latin America undertook these specific tasks.

The general objective of the surveys applied by CID- GALLUP (2010) was to obtain quantitative information from the opinions, perceptions and conditions of the migrant workers in the following issues (Annex 1):

- a. A comparative analysis of the composition of the family unit and socio-economic conditions of the

---

3. All fieldwork (qualitative and quantitative) was charged to CID-GALLUP. The surveys, focus groups guides and interviews to key informants were elaborated by the research coordinating group with the support of CID-GALLUP, the labour market observatories and the IOM staff at each country.

immigrants, both in their origin and destination country.

- b. The migration process and the immigrant experiences, starting from the decision to migrate as the arrival at the country of destination.
- c. Reasons for the migration.
- d. A comparison between the working conditions of the immigrant both at the origin and destination country, including aspects related to occupation, training, labour laws, among others.

A total of 300 surveys were applied to male and female migrants in Belize. Even though a statistically significant sample of all intraregional immigrants in Belize was difficult to determine, these information gathered from the selected sample provides enough information to obtain a profile of the population and tendencies. The information generated will assist in outlining possible actions for the present and research to be undertaken in the future that will contribute to an understanding of the labour migration phenomenon in the country. Therefore, it must be reiterated that these findings refer to the sampled population and cannot be generalized to all immigrant population in Belize.

Considering that migration is a very wide topic, it is necessary to identify geographical areas that attract a large number of labour migrants. The Ministry of Labour, the country consultant and CID-GALLUP were in charge of this task.

With that in mind, the following criteria were used to select participants:

- Participants must be labour migrants, natives of the Central American region, who were currently working in the construction, agriculture, housekeeping or tourism sectors.
- Participants must have reached, at the minimum, a primary education level.
- The age range of participants had to be between 16 and 55 years of age.
- The participants would have been engaged in paid employment in the country for over 3 months. Self-employed

people and small entrepreneurs were not included.

Several areas of the country were identified as having a high concentration of immigrant population. These include peripheral communities of Belmopan (San Martín, Las Flores, Maya Mopan, Salvapan, Armenia and Valley of Peace), San Ignacio and San Antonio in the Cayo District, Dangriga and Maya King in the Stann Creek District, among others. As a result of several limitations experienced by the fieldwork team, such as accessing labour migrants at their workplaces, they were interviewed instead at homes, or meeting points such as stores, bars and parks at different dates and times of the day.

During the process of identifying the sample, several issues arose. The first was that the quota in each location had to be adjusted due to insufficient number of participants to complete the surveys in the established time. Therefore, it was necessary to define, along with the technical team, other places where it was feasible to find more immigrants. It was also necessary to ensure that the target populations were living in areas with differing socio-economic structures. Secondly, the travelling distance to reach the places where the study was to be conducted, made the task of fulfilling the established cases more difficult since it wasn't always possible to cover the amount assigned by sector or by geographical location. This situation reflects the wide dispersion of the immigrant groups. Third, some people participating in the study felt intimidated by the duration of the interview (total duration approximately 55 minutes). In several occasions, the interview could not be finished because of the rejection of the issues raised.

#### **Design and implementation of focus groups**

Focus groups were conducted after surveys were finalized. The purpose was to know the opinions and perceptions of migrant workers and their employers in the different economic sectors chosen had about working conditions, types of

contracting and the migratory process. Since the main goal of this technique was to obtain qualitative information, the sample was not subject to the criteria of being statistically representative. Another important consideration was the gender dimension. Since it was important to obtain information that represented the reality of both men and women, specific sessions were held with each.

Between May 15-17, 2010 six focus groups were conducted in the Belmopan and Stann Creek districts, having eight to ten participants each.

The guide for the session with immigrant workers was oriented towards (Annex 2):

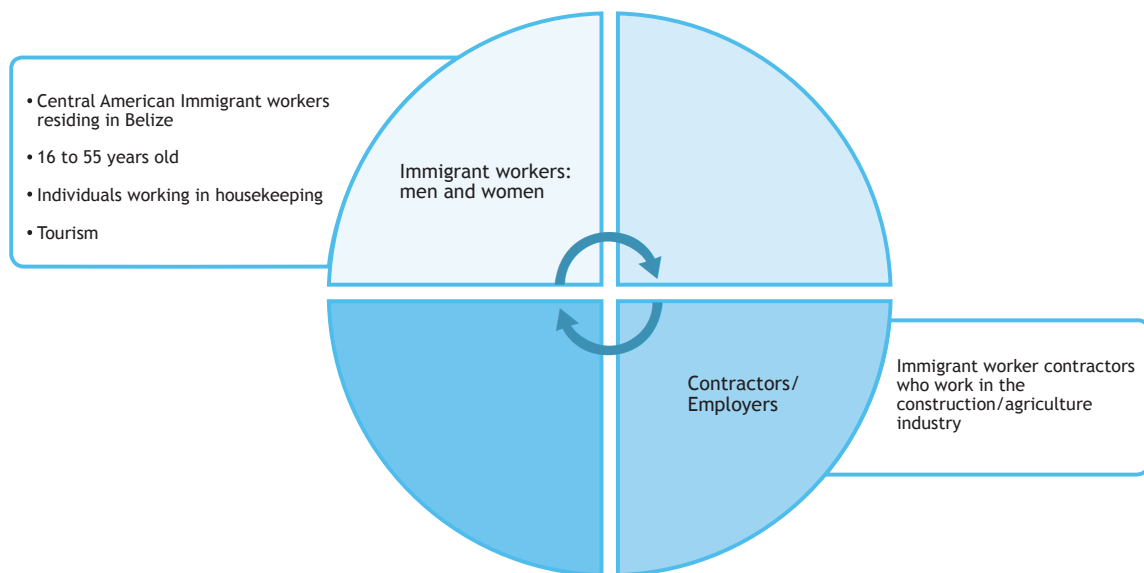
1. Determining the migration movements and the reasons for migrating.
2. Inquire to about the documentation brought and about the documentation needed to get a job in the destination country.
3. Determine their working conditions as well as their knowledge of labour laws.
4. Compare living conditions both in the origin and destination country.

The guide for the session with employers was oriented towards learning about (Annex 3):

1. Characteristics of the companies employing immigrants.
2. Process used by employers to hire immigrant workers (reasons, age, sex and nationality of the migrant worker).
3. Impact of labour migration (positive-negative) on the companies and on the country.
4. Laws and regulations relating to labour migration.
5. Working conditions of the immigrants.

The survey instrument was prepared by the coordinating technical team and revised along with CID-GALLUP. There were two focus groups consisting of migrant workers over the age of 18 working in the agriculture and tourism sectors; two focus groups with employers from the agriculture sector and contractors from the construction industry; and, finally, a focus group was conducted specifically with immigrant women over the age of 16, performing domestic work activities and another one with women working in the tourism sector.

FIGURE 1.1





## Structure

This report is divided into seven chapters:

Chapter 1: Provides an overview of the objectives, scope and methodology.

Chapter 2: presents a comprehensive literature review regarding migration to and from Belize, including those with particular emphasis on labour migration processes that the Belizean society has been experiencing in the past decade.

Chapters 3 to 5 discuss the results of the fieldwork.

Chapter 3 describes the *general characteristics of the Belizean labour market*, addressing issues as population, the migration scenario and the geographical location of immigrants, among others.

Chapter 4 examines the *socioeconomic characteristics of immigrants*, including a profile of the social, demographic, economic and family composition, making constant reference to the social context of the origin place, in order to determine transformative changes resulting from migration. Furthermore, it looks at the issue of remittances and its impact on the families remaining in the origin country.

Chapter 5, concerning *labour* conditions, describes the immigrants' in Belize job placement, as well as their access to labour rights.

Chapter 6 reviews the *institutional and legal framework* of migration management in Belize.

Finally, chapter 7 of the report provides *conclusions and recommendations for the formulation of public policies related to labour migration*.

## 2 Labour Migration in Belize

Migratory movements<sup>4</sup> are not new to Belize, they date back to colonial days when foreigners came from different places of the world to populate the country. In the book “Peopling of Belize: Chapters in migration”, St. John Robinson (2006), reviews historical records in Belize and in the Royal Archives in the United Kingdom which document the arrival of several immigrant groups. These records indicated that English, Indian, Chinese, Belgian and German Mennonites arrived at the colony. Several migrated in groups directly from their origin country or through the island of Jamaica, which was the administrative center of the colony at the time.

While the Indians, Chinese and Mennonites established ethnic communities in Belize, others moved to different countries. The author interviewed descendants and wrote life histories of the people mentioned in the historical archives. His work summarized the history of colonial immigration and the origin of Belizean families.

### 2.1 Migration from Developed Countries: Investors, professionals and retirees

According to Palacio (1993), contemporary migratory flows from developed countries include three types of immigrants: investors,

professionals and retirees. The majority came to Belize to seek economic opportunities investing in the major industries such as in tourism. Most were from the United States of America, Canada, Europe and Taiwan and resided in urban areas.

### 2.2 Extra-Continental Immigrants

Another group of immigrants came from Asia and the Middle East. They participated in the economy of the country as investors in small companies, especially in restaurants and lived in urban areas. Many used Belize as a transit country to emigrate to the United States (Palacio 1993). In the 2000 Census, 17.7% of all foreign-born came from Asia, Middle East and the Caribbean regions (Central Statistical Office/CSO, 2000). Recently, there has been an increase in Asian investments in supermarkets and hotels.

### 2.3 Central American Immigrants

Central Americans are another major group of immigrants<sup>5</sup>. Because of the internal conflict in some of the Central American countries during the 80's and 90's, thousands of refugees and displaced persons migrated to Belize or to other politically stable countries. Through the United Nations High

- 
4. Migration is the movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification (source: [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)).
  5. We define Central American immigrants as people who were born in any of the countries in Central America. For the purposes of this study they will be referred to as “Central Americans”.

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Belizean government, humanitarian assistance was offered in the form of a food basket, housing and agricultural land. The refugees settled in communities such as Valle de Paz and Armenia, officially designated to accommodate the new immigrants (Montgomery, 1991). During this period, nearly 98.5% of the immigrants residing in these settlements came from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras (CSO, 2000).

## 2.4 The situation of immigrants in Belize

The report “Refugees in Belize” (Montgomery, 1991) focused on the population that arrived as refugees and displaced people, being the first study to address a migration issue.

This study was conducted during a time when refugee settlements were experiencing a process of formation and consolidation (beginning of the 90’s). At the same time, the immigrant population was going through a period of assimilation and integration. Using ethnographic methodologies, the author identified patterns of mobility and spatial distribution of refugee settlements across the country. He pointed out that the State should have taken into account the social situation of Central American

immigrants and showed that the problems faced by immigrants and refugees were related to the exercise of their human rights and their living conditions in the country. Among the most outstanding findings, the study highlights the lack of physical infrastructure and the absence of social services in the refugee settlements (Montgomery 1991).

Belizean anthropologist Joseph Palacio (1993) also examined this issue. He provided a description of the immigrants in Belize and reviewed State and International legal frameworks that influenced the arrival and subsequent integration of Central American immigrants and refugees in Belize.

Central American immigrants impacted the economic, political and cultural aspects of the Belizean society. Their presence modified the national fertility rates (Moss et al. 1993), the male-female ratio and the age range distribution. They also helped to balance the share between rural and urban population and had an impact over growth rates in each district. The presence of young people is remarkable, as it is showed by both census of 1991 and 2000 (Table 2.1), with a majority of the immigrant population between 5 and 44 years of age. This indicates that during that period of time entire families had migrated to Belize (Plaisier, 1996; Population Unit, 1998).

**TABLE 2.1**  
IMMIGRANTS BY AGE AND SEX- 1991 AND 2000

Ages	1991						2000					
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
	13739	100	11809	100	25548	100	17516	100	16760	100	34276	100
00-04	564	4.1	595	5	1159	4.5	368	2.1	350	2.1	718	2.1
05-14	2399	17.5	2374	20.1	4773	18.7	2156	12.3	2151	12.8	4307	12.6
15-24	2968	21.6	2695	22.8	5663	22.2	3613	20.6	3845	22.9	7458	21.8
25-34	2877	20.9	2555	21.6	5432	21.3	3846	22	4021	24	7867	23
35-44	2237	16.3	1711	14.5	3948	15.5	3178	18.1	3024	18	6202	18.1
45-54	1242	9	894	7.6	2136	8.4	2211	12.6	1829	10.9	4040	11.8
55-64	752	5.5	545	4.6	1297	5.1	1196	6.8	785	4.7	1981	5.8
65+	700	5.1	440	3.7	1140	4.5	948	5.4	755	4.5	1703	5

Source: Central Statistical Office, Census 2000.



Palacio (1990, 1993) points out positive and negative changes in the social and economic conditions of immigrants. He acknowledges that both immigration and emigration completely transformed the ethnic population of Belize.

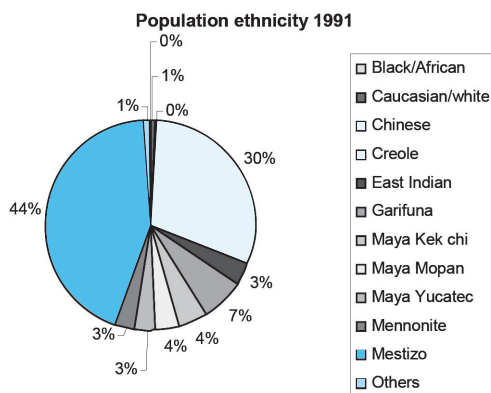
As we have seen, there are few studies on migration in Belize, making it difficult to assess its impact. There is a lack of data both for immigration and emigration, but authors like Vernon (1990) and Barry (1992) reported that in the early 1990's, one out of five (over 50,000) Belizeans lived in the United States. It is difficult to confirm this information, since there isn't a national system that collects emigration data and the population captured in the census does not provide adequate statistics. It is assumed that many immigrants are residing irregularly in the United States. It is possible that entire families may have migrated during the census periods, which led to severe underreporting. However, what was captured by the Census of 1980, 1991 and 2000, shows that most of the Belizean emigrants were creole women

between the ages of 15 and 24, from urban areas (CSO 2004).

There was a drastic change in the ethnic composition of the country due to the large number of Afro-Belizeans migrating to the United States and the great number of Hispanic migrants arriving to Belize. Studies by Woods, et al. (1997) and the Foundation Arias (2000) claim that the change in the ethnical composition of Belize, is a result of this migratory pattern. They agree that this process led to the "latinization" of Belize because the "mestizos" became a majority and, therefore, Spanish became a very important language (Plaiser, 1996; Arias, 2000).

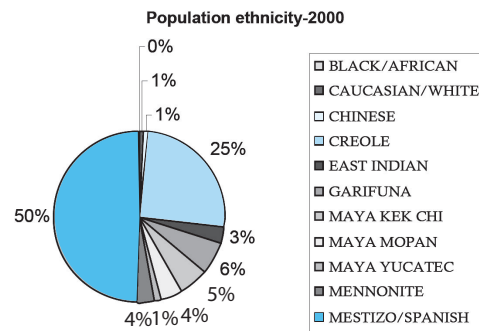
The change in ethnic composition becomes evident when analyzing census data. In 1980 census, the Mestizo population represented 33.4% of the population and the Creole, 40%. The 1991 census revealed a shift where Mestizos increased to 44% and the Creole diminished to 30%. By 2000, the Mestizo population represented half of the total population, while Creole decreased to one quarter.

**CHART 2.1**  
ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION 1991



Source: Central Statistical Office, Census 1991.

**CHART 2.2**  
ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION - 2000



Source: Central Statistical Office, Census 2000.



**TABLE 2.2**  
EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE IMMIGRANTS

Education level	2000		1991	
Total	2181	100	3050	100
None	226	10.4	106	3.5
Elementary	682	31.3	1258	41.2
Secondary	601	27.6	1236	40.5
Higher	419	19.2	357	11.7
DK/NS	253	11.6	93	3

Source: Central Statistical Office, Census 2000.

Concerning emigrant population, Palacio (1990) reveals that a large number of Belizeans professionals, including those having a secondary education degree or higher, migrated to the United States, where they can easily integrate because of their English language skills.

Table 2.2 shows that in 1991 over half of Belizean emigrants had at least a secondary or higher level of education, while in 2000, 47% had obtained a secondary education or higher before their migration. “The general profile of the emigrant is: young, in productive age, and have received at least a secondary level of education (2000 census; p. 64)”.

As for Central American immigrants, it can be said that the majority had low levels of

education. During the 90’s, most had only obtained a primary education. However, in the following decade the majority of them had received no formal education (table 2.3).

This became an issue of national concern since there was the prevailing view that the rapid influx of an immigrant population with low levels of education would create a socio-economic burden on the country and major challenges for the education system in particular. Despite this, no additional infrastructural investments were made to provide academic training for these immigrants. There is no evidence that programs were put in place to integrate students whose maternal language was Spanish.

**TABLE 2.3**  
LEVEL OF EDUCATION ACHIEVED BY NATIVES AND IMMIGRANTS 1991-2000

Level of Education	Natives 1991	Natives 2000	Immigrants 1991	Immigrants 2000	Dk/Da 1991	Dk/Da 2000
	159113	183773	25548	34073	61	163
None	33,774	47,856	6587	16583	18	34
Preschool/Kindergarten	4516	2,814	292	89	1	-
Elementary	92352	98,235	14404	11,655	19	10
Secondary	22491	22,852	2569	3228	5	3
Pre-University/post-secondary	3812	8,651	466	1,038	0	2
University	1342	2,892	1024	1,330	0	1
Other	416	209	83	70	18	-
Dk/Da	411	264	123	100	0	113

Source: Central Statistical Office, 2000.

English being the official language in Belize is also the language of instruction, thereby placing the immigrant student at a disadvantage since they do not receive the proper support for language acquisition. Integration of those who remained in school was also difficult since no programs were implemented to raise cultural awareness so as to foster acceptance among the native population (Foundation Arias, 2000).

On the basis of national reports and census data regarding Central Americans in Belize, Talbert (2002) compiles the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of each group of immigrants. The report noted that one of the major contributions of immigrants was that it created a balance in the population growth in the country. Due to high levels of emigration, especially to the United States, the arrival of Central Americans promoted a positive natural growth. Talbert also points out that the lack of response of the State to migration management had a negative influence on the social structure of the country. He highlights that the families had no support facing the difficulties of their new situation: high education costs, lack of social programs to face domestic violence, teen prostitution and cases of human trafficking.

Nearly a decade before that study, Joseph Palacio (1990, 1993) through a series of investigations focused on the situation of Central American immigrants' integration in Belize. Using qualitative surveys in six locations inhabited by a large number of immigrants, he pointed out that most of them achieved integration exclusively on their own means, since both the State and Belizean natives remain distant from them.

The State neither developed nor implemented integration programs. There was no response to the needs of basic infrastructure such as water, sanitation and housing (Arias 2000). There were no investments in social infrastructure such as education centers or health care centers. Plaiser (1996) acknowledges that certain efforts towards integration were launched

but that the large number of immigrants that arrived to the country in such a short period of time placed pressure on existing social services, particularly in terms of education and health. For example, the health sector suffered a great impact since most Central Americans settled in areas with a high incidence of communicable diseases, such as dengue and malaria. There was also reported a 15% incidence of HIV/AIDS among Central Americans, due to the fact that many Central American women became involved in commercial sex work (National AIDS Commission 2006).

Foundation Arias (2000) pointed out that the impact was also on the environment, since rapid growth of settlements in rural areas compromised biodiversity and the land tenure system.

According to some researchers, immigration fostered cultural pluralism, impacting the national identity and even boosting the possibility of ethnic conflict (Palacio 1990). It caused a renewed perception of what it meant to be Belizean among the native ethnic groups and as a result, fostering an "anti-Central American" ideology.

Palacio also points out that accepting the Central American immigrants was difficult, because of the existence of stereotypes against them between the natives and also by the State, that viewed them as a social burden. He suggests that the reason for the national xenophobic feeling is the fact that Belize had been an English colony and therefore it identifies itself more with the Caribbean islands rather than the Central American countries. This generated a feeling of superiority by Afro-Belizeans (1990). Ethnic conflicts against Central Americans by the Creoles, Garifunas and Mayas resulted in a division of classes which coincided with an ethnic division (Plaiser 1996). Woods et al. (1997) confirm that there are anti-Central American feelings in the country. However, because of the fact that the various ethnic groups resided in specific communities where they had little or no interaction with the new inhabitants,



these conflicts and competition were not evident in the labour market.

Palacio (1993) emphasizes something remarkable: the fact that Belize offered humanitarian assistance to Central American immigrants and refugees during the time of civil conflicts, created a sense of national pride amongst Belizeans and international acknowledgement. The immigration of Central Americans widened Belize's relationship with Central America, opening the door to the integration into the Central American region, from which it was artificially separated.

## 2.5 Labour Migration<sup>6</sup>

Previous investigations indicate a steady economic growth in the country after the arrival of Central American immigrants who provided manpower to the industry, being the agro-export sector the most benefited. Without them the expansion and the economic development would not have been possible (Plaiser, 1996). Even though the study undertaken by the Population Unit (1998) did not specifically analyze the labour market, it revealed some of the most important contributions of the immigrant workforce. The study reveals that the agricultural sector, especially the citrus and banana industries, took advantage of their availability. This sector became one of the

major economic activities of the country and this continues to be the case today.

The Banana industry began to recruit immigrants as their workforce in the early eighties. However, in 1982, when Belizean banana workers attempted to establish Trade Unions, they were fired and replaced with migrant workers in an effort to get rid of unionists. Ever since then, the ethnic composition of the banana industry workforce was radically altered (Moberg, 1997).

In 2001, the Society for the Promotion of Education and Research (SPEAR) in collaboration with the National Trade Union Congress of Belize (NTUCB) conducted a research on the workers situation and conditions in the banana industry. They discovered that many immigrants working in the banana farms were homeless and undocumented. Furthermore, they were often exploited, offered minimum wages, and corresponding benefits were eliminated.

Table 2.4 reflects data obtained from the Labour Force Survey (2004). It shows that, of a total of 95,911 employed people, 15,917 were Central Americans. It revealed that immigrants participating in the labour force were mostly young people between 25 and 44 years old. It also indicated that most of them entered the labour market at the age of 14 and continues to work past their retirement age.

---

6. Labour Migration is generally defined as a movement of persons from one State to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment. However, there is not a universally accepted definition of work migration. The term "economic migrant" is sometimes used as an equivalent of "migrant worker". Nevertheless both concepts may entail different categories. The term "migrant worker" is used strictly to indicate movement with the purpose of employment, while the term "economic migrant" may be used in a more limited sense which entails movement with the purpose of employment, or in a broader sense, it entails people who enter a State to perform other types of economic activities such as investors or business travelers. The classification of labour migration is generally based on the duration of activities just like in the distinctions made by the countries of destination in their regulation chart where the conditions for admittance and residency are established. Source ([www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)).

**TABLE 2.4**  
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF CENTRAL  
AMERICANS IN THE LABOUR FORCE 2004

Ages	No.	%
14-24	2939	18.6
25-34	4216	26.6
35-44	4098	25.9
45-54	2938	18.0
55-64	1122	7.1
65+	563	3.6
DK/NS	41	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>15917</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Labour Force Survey (CSO, 2004).

On the other hand, Table 2.5, drawn from the same survey, shows the sectors where they are employed. We can see that in 2004 a good number of Central Americans were working in commerce and commercial, social and domestic services. Altogether, commerce and services accounted for 31% of migrant workers, including those who worked in the informal sectors such

as peddlers and street food vendors. The agricultural sector which includes small and large farms producing banana, citrus and sugar employed 32% of them. Even though there aren't any new studies or data regarding other industries. Table 2.5 shows that tourism, construction and food processing industries also attract a large number of labour immigrants.

**TABLE 2.5**  
CENTRAL AMERICAN EMPLOYEES BY SECTOR

Industry	Employees	%
Commerce	2807	17.6
Services	2148	13.5
Agriculture	1831	11.5
Tourism	1716	10.8
Banana	1644	10.3
Construction	1415	9
Citrus	1216	7.6
Food Processing	691	4.3
Sugar	407	2.5
State Services	380	2.4
Other	1662	10.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>15920</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: CSO (2004).

In 1993, Moberg reported that 90% of permanent workers in the banana industry were Central Americans. More than a decade later, Smith, August and Erich (2004) in “The Impacts of Central American Immigrants on the Belize Banana Industry”, indicated that in 26 farms

employing 2,280 people, 1,718 (75.4%) of them were Central American. Table 2.6 illustrate that most migrant workers were men. While men worked in every activity related to growing, harvesting and packing banana, women worked exclusively in the packing sheds.

**TABLE 2.6**  
BANANA FARM WORKERS BY REGION AND SEX

Farm	Total Employees	Central Americans	Central American Men	Central American Women
1-3,6,9, 10-12	692	546	424	122
5,25 & 26	462	306	240	66
4	167	150	120	30
7	215	136	88	48
8	148	147	116	31
13	40	34	27	7
14	137	98	78	20
15	150	120	98	22
16	103	91	73	18
17	13	3	2	1
18	25	5	3	2
21 & 22	128	82	59	23
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2280</b>	<b>1718</b>	<b>1328</b>	<b>390</b>

Source: Banana Growers Association (2004).

This study also reported that most of migrant workers in the banana industry were Honduran (45%) and Guatemalan (41%). Generally, they were men between 20 and 24 years of age, either single or in a common-law union.

It was identified that migrant workers were not only working in the farms of the company employing them but also in large orange groves and aquaculture farms. Even though they were permanent employees in the banana farms, many times they worked in other farms when asked to do so. The people interviewed indicated that they had worked in the banana industry for many years. Those who had worked in the industry

for over five years claimed to have been residing in the surrounding communities for a number of years. Newcomers were usually young, possibly indicating that immigrants often settle in the area and become permanent workforce for this industry.

Another sector that depends on immigrant workers is the citrus industry. In 1990, nearly 70% of temporary harvesters in the industry were Central American nationals (Moberg 1990). Data obtained from the Citrus Company of Belize, indicated that 40% of their permanent workers were Central Americans. This figure doubles to 80% during the harvest season (Plaiser, 1996).

**TABLE 2.7**  
EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS OF CENTRAL  
AMERICAN WORKERS

Employment conditions of Central American workers	%
Self-employed/entrepreneurs	30.4
Waged employment	66.1
Unpaid Family employment	3.4
DK/NS	0.1

Source: CSO, 2004.

Table 2.7 illustrates that in 2004, 66% of Central Americans worked for a wage; 30.4% were self-employed, of which nearly 13% were in a situation where they employed other people. These statistics revealed disparity between the incomes of Central American workers when compared with the native workforce (CSO, 2004). For Central Americans, the average income per month was BZ\$690 (USD\$345) and the median income was BZ\$608 (USD\$302.50). For natives, the average income was BZ\$939.00 (USD\$469.50) and the median income was BZ\$739.00 (USD\$369.50) (CSO, 2004).

The report on Trafficking in Persons<sup>7</sup> in Belize (Petit, 2004) unveiled a different angle of labour migration in Belize. It approached migrant smuggling and

trafficking in persons and acknowledged the vulnerability of immigrants to exploitation. One of the objectives of this report was to recognize the existence of this phenomenon in the Belizean society and, specifically, its relation to migratory flows.

What stands out in this study is that it highlighted the realities experienced by immigrants in Belize. It provided evidence of forced labour and forced prostitution. Through a multi-method approach including literature review, ethnographic methodologies, and instruments such as questionnaires, surveys, and interviews with state agencies, the study allowed for a better understanding of the volume and seriousness as well as the characteristics of trafficking in persons in Belize.

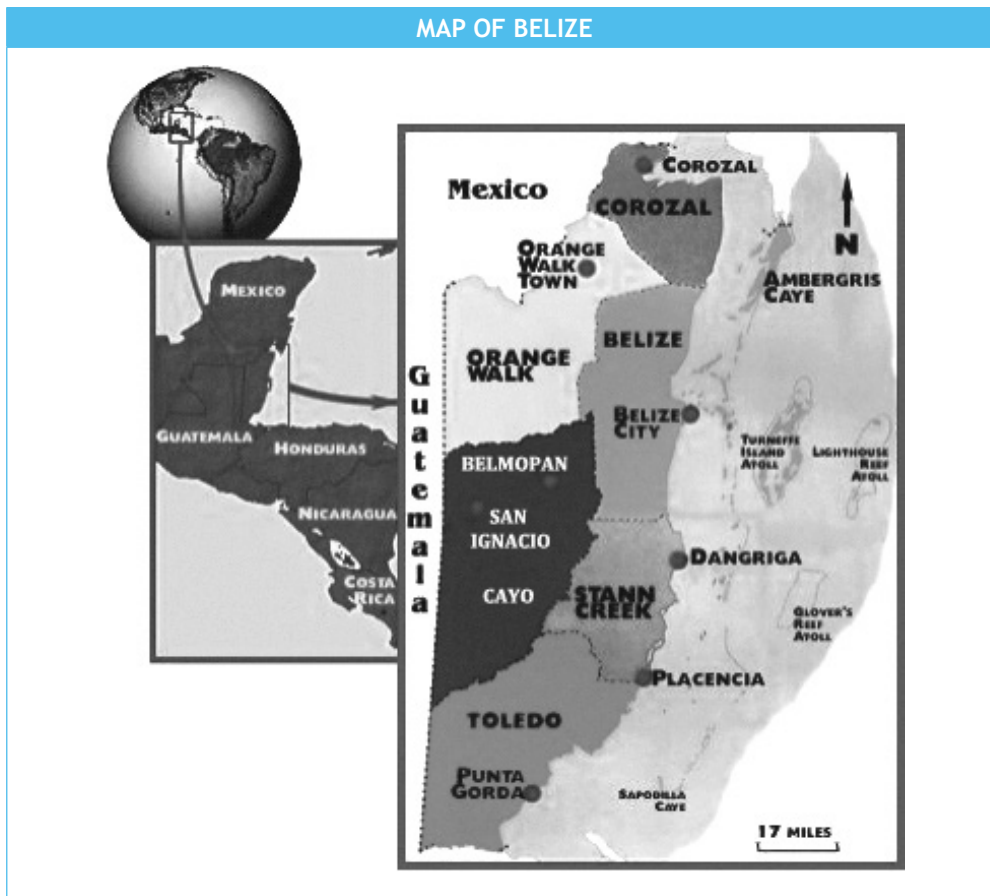
7. Trafficking in persons is a crime, a violation of human rights and is based on coercion. Victims obtain deceitful information about their destination and generally the trader forces them to work using threats, violence and abuse in order to obtain sexual and economic benefits (Petit, 2004).

# 3 General Characteristics of the Belizean Labour Market

## 3.1 Population characteristics

Belize is located north-east of the Central American isthmus. The territory expands 8,866 square miles (approximately 22,966 km<sup>2</sup>). It is delimited by the Caribbean Sea along the entire East coast; the northern border is shared with Mexico and with Guatemala at the west and south. Up until 1973, it was known as British Honduras.

The country obtained its independence from The United Kingdom in 1981. The city of Belmopan is its official capital but Belize City, the old capital, is considered the economic capital. Belize is the only country in Central America where English is the official language. Belize is divided into six main administrative districts: Corozal, Orange Walk, Belize, Cayo, Stann Creek and Toledo. There are eight urban centers and 180 villages and rural communities.



Source: Belize Tourism Board, 2010.



In 2008, the estimated population was 301,270 people. According to the 2009 mid-year estimates, the population reached 307,899 (Statistical Institute of Belize/SIB, 2009), reflecting a population growth of 2.2%. Belizean population stands out for its large percentage of young people. It is estimated that 37.9% of the population is between 0 to 14 years of age and 58.6% between 15 to 64 years of age (SIB, 2009).

Another distinctive feature regarding the population of Belize is the large number of immigrant population. According to the 1991 census, the number of immigrants were 25,548 (14% of the population). In the 2000 census, 34,274 people (15% of the population) were born abroad. In 2000, 40.3% of

immigrants were living in rural areas and 59.7% in urban areas.

### 3.2 Migration Scenario

The census of 1981 (the year of Belize's independence) reported only 12,940 foreigners living in the country. This represented a 9% of the population. Table 3.1 shows that a decade later, that number had doubled to 25,000 people. This means that approximately 14% of the national population were foreign born. Nearly 75% of immigrants were of Central American origin, particularly Guatemalans and Salvadorans, to a lesser extent. Nearly a third of them settled in the Cayo district. In the northern region there were a great number of Mexicans and Guatemalans (CSO, 1991).

**TABLE 3.1**  
IMMIGRANTS BY DISTRICT AND COUNTRY OF ORIGIN - 1991

Country of Origen	1991 Bz.	1991 Cayo	1991 S. C.	1991 Tol	1991 Coro	1991 O. W.	1991 Total
Guatemala	770	3925	1490	1845	929	1579	10538
El Salvador	779	2550	483	266	602	970	5650
Honduras	684	220	924	179	153	169	2329
Mexico	221	468	19	7	801	1035	2551
USA	587	396	252	120	163	82	1600
Other-Worldwide	316	136	35	18	27	69	601
China	315	31	15	3	44	58	466
Taiwan	35	0	0	0	0	2	37
Canada	37	211	12	14	69	115	458
Other- Central American	202	102	15	13	46	80	458
Jamaica	269	36	36	3	21	9	374
Other Caribbean	123	44	10	4	15	6	202
United Kingdom	123	88	7	13	23	5	259
Dk/Da	6	6	1	6	5	1	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4467</b>	<b>8213</b>	<b>3299</b>	<b>2491</b>	<b>2898</b>	<b>4180</b>	<b>25548</b>

Source: Census 1991, CSO.

When comparing table 3.1 and table 3.2 it is possible to see that, according both 1991 and 2000 Census, nearly 76% of immigrants were of Central American origin. While Guatemalans continue to be the majority, the number of immigrants born in Honduras has increased considerably.

Also Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants have significantly increased. While the Cayo

district continued to attract a large number of immigrants, the population of immigrants living in the Belize district doubled. It is important to point out that Corozal is the only district that experienced a decline in the number of immigrants. Naturally, due to the proximity with Mexico, the districts of Corozal and Orange Walk in the north of the country continued to receive high numbers of Mexicans.

**TABLE 3.2**  
IMMIGRANTS POPULATION BY DISTRICT AND COUNTRY OF ORIGIN 2000

Country of origin	Belize	Cayo	Stann Creek	Toledo	Corozal	Orange Walk	Totals
Guatemala	1,392	5396	2028	2989	884	1892	14,581
El Salvador	1,326	2553	435	206	599	902	6,021
Honduras	1,645	513	1901	400	170	307	4,936
Mexico	221	463	32	22	620	947	2,305
USA	694	443	254	123	138	86	1,738
Other-Worldwide	493	356	83	94	126	126	1,278
China	631	113	59	1	80	110	994
Taiwan	275	227	11	2	53	87	655
Canada	64	220	23	17	26	92	442
Other-Central America	211	75	28	12	19	38	383
Jamaica	235	55	43	4	22	7	366
Other Caribbean	159	62	33	8	6	27	295
United Kingdom	119	91	29	4	12	7	262
Dk/Ns	3	10		3	3	1	20
	<b>7468</b>	<b>10577</b>	<b>4959</b>	<b>3885</b>	<b>2758</b>	<b>4629</b>	<b>34,276</b>

Source: Census 2000, CSO.

Based on the information presented in table 3.2 it is possible to identify five categories of immigrants. These are: Central Americans, North Americans, Caribbean, Asians and a group of “others”. In 2000, nearly 42% of immigrants came from Guatemala, 18% from El Salvador and 14% from Honduras. These are the largest group of immigrants and the target population of this study.

It can be observed that 31% of the immigrant population lived in the Cayo district and 22% in the Belize district. One out of five

people living in the Cayo District was an immigrant (CSO, 2000).

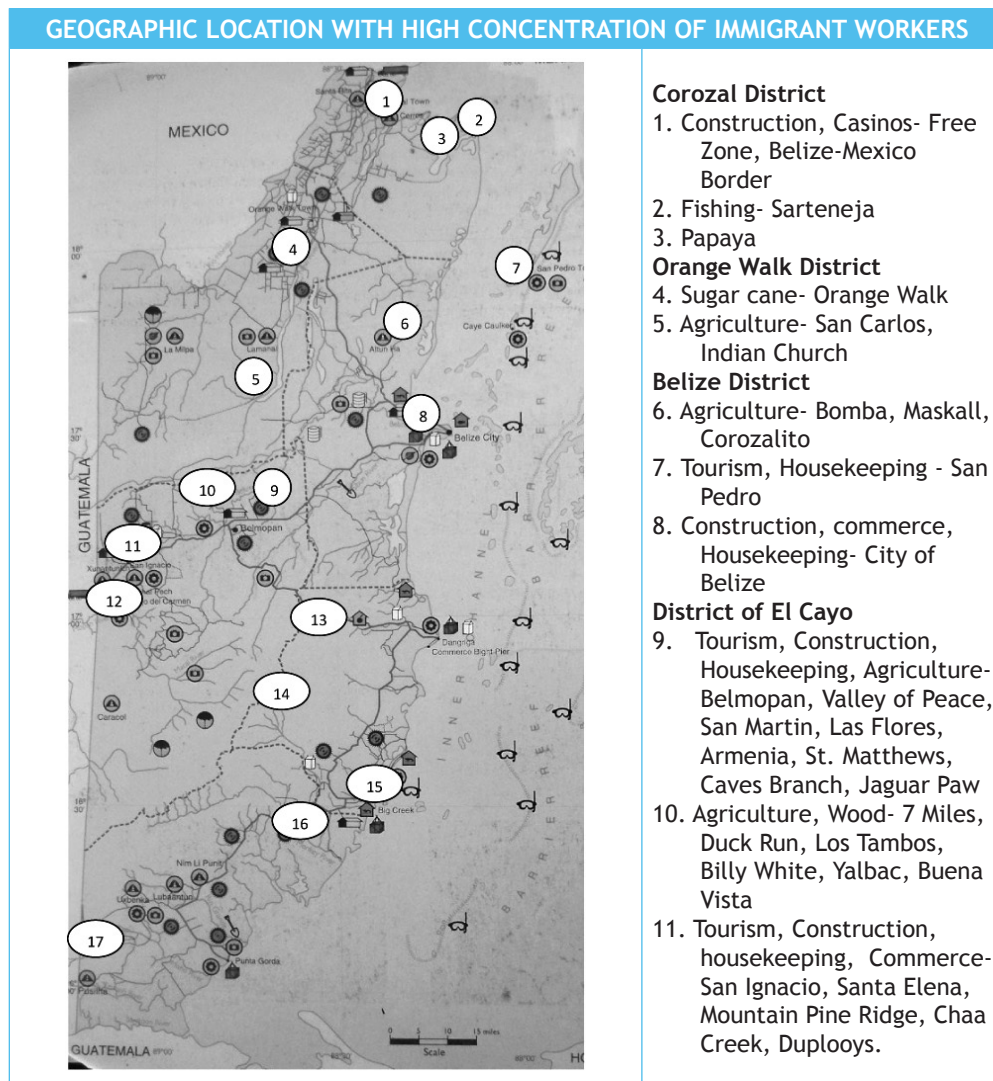
### 3.3 Ethnic origin of the population

Migration has generated a multi-ethnic population. Many Belizeans are mestizos, because of the high number of intercultural marriages and migrations.

Migratory flows that defined the multi-ethnic character of the country began with the English who settled in the colony during

the XVII century. Later on, they brought African slaves as their workforce. After slavery was abolished in 1838, the English then began to import workers from India and a few Asians. The mixing of races began early in the 20th century with Mexicans who migrated to Belize during the Caste War<sup>8</sup>. During the eighties and nineties the country received thousands of refugees, emigrants and displaced persons from Central

American countries, mostly from Guatemala and El Salvador. The “shift” in the ethnic composition of the population had a great impact on the social life of the Belizeans. The country moved from an Afro-centric population to a Latin one. This change is also the result of an extended migration period where over 60,000 Belizeans emigrated to the United States, 60% of which were Creole descendants (Barry, 1992).



8. The Caste War of Yucatán (1847-1901) began with the revolt of native Maya people of Yucatan against the population of European descent, called Yucatecos, who held political and economic control of the region. A lengthy war ensued between the Yucateco forces in the north-west of the Yucatán and the independent Maya in the south-east. It officially ended with the occupation of the Maya capital of Chan Santa Cruz by the Mexican army in 1901, although skirmishes with villages and small settlements that refused to acknowledge Mexican control continued for more than a decade.



### 3.4 Geographic location of immigrant population

For the purposes of this investigation, the country has been divided into three areas or regions: 1) Northern Belize which includes the districts of Orange Walk and Corozal, 2) Central Belize which includes the districts of El Cayo and Belize and 3) Southern Belize which includes the district of Stann Creek and Toledo.

Lack of statistics on migration has made very difficult to really know the number of immigrants living in these areas. However, based on chart 3.2, it is evident that a substantial number of immigrant population can be found in Central and Southern Belize. Consequently, these were the target areas selected for the purpose of this study.

#### *Immigration and the Belizean Economy*

Belize has an agricultural-based economy specializing in export products such as sugar cane and fruits (papaya, banana and citrus). The country also exports fish and seafood (lobster, shrimp and tilapia). Tourism is also one of the biggest service industries.

Immigrants have contributed considerably in all aspects of the national economy, being the main workforce in most of these industries. Recently, the Ministry of Labour reported that the high demand for workers in the agricultural sector triggered procedural changes to respond to the high demand for work permits. This evidences the impact that migrant workers have on the country workforce and on the national economy.

#### *Economic Impact: Central Belize- El Cayo*

In the Cayo district, within the geographic area of Central Belize, the largest industries are tourism, handicrafts, agriculture, poultry farming and, more recently,

petroleum. This district produces most of the basic grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy products and meat in the country. Although no statistical data on the number of migrant workers in these industries is available, there is evidence that a large number of them work in construction and agriculture.

Based on that knowledge, the sectors selected for this study are tourism, construction, housekeeping and agriculture. In the central region of the country, we find migrant workers in the tourism sector in the City of Belmopan, Caves Branch and Jaguar Paw. Other immigrant communities such as Salvapan, San Martin and Las Flores, closer to the city of Belmopan, provide workforce for commerce, housekeeping and construction. Most of the immigrants found in the communities of St. Mathews, Valley of Peace and Armenia were small farmers.

Other communities near the municipalities of San Ignacio and Santa Elena where a large amount of immigrants reside are Billy White, Yalbac, Buena Vista, Duck Run, Los Tambos and Seven Miles. These migrant workers participate in the production of timber, agriculture and poultry farming. Many of them are permanent migrants with access to rented land. However, a considerable number are employed in Spanish Lookout, the main center of agricultural production and marketing.

Others are employed in tourist resorts near the municipalities of San Ignacio and Santa Elena and in the area of Macal River and Mountain Pine Ridge. They also work in the domestic service, sales and construction.

A type of labour migration that deserves to be highlighted is cross-border labour migration. The proximity of these communities to the Melchor de Mencos border (Guatemala) encourages many Guatemalans to cross the border as frontier workers<sup>9</sup>. In the village of Arenal there

9. Frontier workers “move almost daily crossing the border in one or other sense to develop tasks, whether in relation of dependence, as an autonomous worker or practicing any specialization or profession” (quoted from Texido et al., 2003).

is a very peculiar situation. Half of the village is considered Guatemalan territory and the other half is Belizean territory. The expansion of Mollejon Hydroelectric Dam, located a few kilometers from this community, attracted construction workers to this area.

*Economic Impact: Southern Belize - Stann Creek*

Another attractive region for foreign workers is the Stann Creek district located in the Southern zone. The industries identified in this area are: banana, seafood and citrus. We find temporary and permanent workers in the citrus industry and at the port, where banana and oil are exported. There are 17 banana plantations in this district that employ seasonal and permanent labour migrants. Nearly 51% of the workers in this industry are immigrants (BEST, 2005). Many of them live in the villages of Mango Creek and Independence. The communities of San Pablo, San Roman, Santa Cruz and San Juan, in the banana belt, inhabited by a significant number of migrant workers who, after a long period of time working there, have settled permanently.

Citrus is the only industry that employs mostly seasonal migrant workers. They work in Pomona, Middlesex and Valley Community, located near the citrus processing plants and citrus farms. The immigrants living in the southern village of Bella Vista are mostly employed in nearby shrimp farms.

These dynamics reveal the importance of migration to Belize. The focus on intraregional migration is fundamental, since migratory labour flows come from countries within the region. The interest of the State in establishing an amnesty that will regularize thousands of undocumented immigrants indicates that this is recognized by the government of Belize.

Nevertheless, to date, the topic of migration in public and political debates is absent. In order to arouse interest about this issue it is necessary to understand

how and why migratory flows in and out of Belize are occurring. This, along with a better understanding of the impact of migration on the various social, political, legal and economic structures in Belize, should provide the framework for better management of labour migration flows. This knowledge can positively influence the implementation of a multi-disciplinary migratory policy. Therefore, Belize would benefit of the positive impacts of labour migration on its development.

The following section presents the main results obtained in the fieldwork conducted between April and May 2010. These results highlight the social characteristics and working conditions of Central American migrant workers living in Belize.

### 3.5 The migration processes for migrant workers

In this section, the main aspects of the migration process experienced by the Central American immigrant workers in Belize are analyzed, including migratory routes. The data collected was verified and supplemented with information obtained through secondary sources.

The first part describes the socioeconomic characteristics of the immigrant workers in Belize. The second part examines the characteristics of the family unit and their socio-economic conditions, including household information. The third section focuses on the migration process, analyzing the reasons for migration and the role of migrant networks in supporting the migratory process. This information will lead to a better understanding of how the migratory systems integrate and consolidate in the region.

The last section analyzes remittances as a key factor in the migration process. Remittances represent an important source of income for many families in the region and are regarded as a positive impact of migration on the communities of origin.

# 4 Socioeconomic characteristics of immigrants

Researchers verified that many labour migrants are employed in the construction sector, where jobs are available in carpentry and masonry in buildings, homes and State infrastructure construction. Likewise, many are working in banana plantations (Department of Population, 1996; Moberg, 1999; Smith, August and Erich, 2004), citrus production (Moberg, 1990; Plaiser, 1996) and sugar cane harvesting.

Both the agriculture and construction sectors are important economic activities for the country, contributing significantly to the gross domestic product (GDP). According to the SIB (2008) agriculture constituted 8.4% of the GDP, and construction 4.6%. Both sectors depend heavily on foreign workers since the demand for workers exceeds the number of Belizeans in productive age available to work in this activity (Plaiser, 1996; CSO, 2004).

As stated before, the total number of people included in this study cannot be considered a statistically representative sample of the entire population of intraregional immigrants in Belize. Nevertheless, the information obtained provides extremely valuable information towards an understanding of the situation of immigrants in Belize. It is worth mentioning that the literature review conducted by various researchers regarding the Belizean labour market and labour migrants in particular, determined the selection of the sectors included in this study.

A first approach to the socio-demographic characteristics of the immigrant population surveyed shows a higher proportion of men. The selection of sectors explains why in this sample there are more men (69%) than women (31%). The data reconfirm that the occupational sectors are strongly gender segmented, both in the case of national population and migrant population.

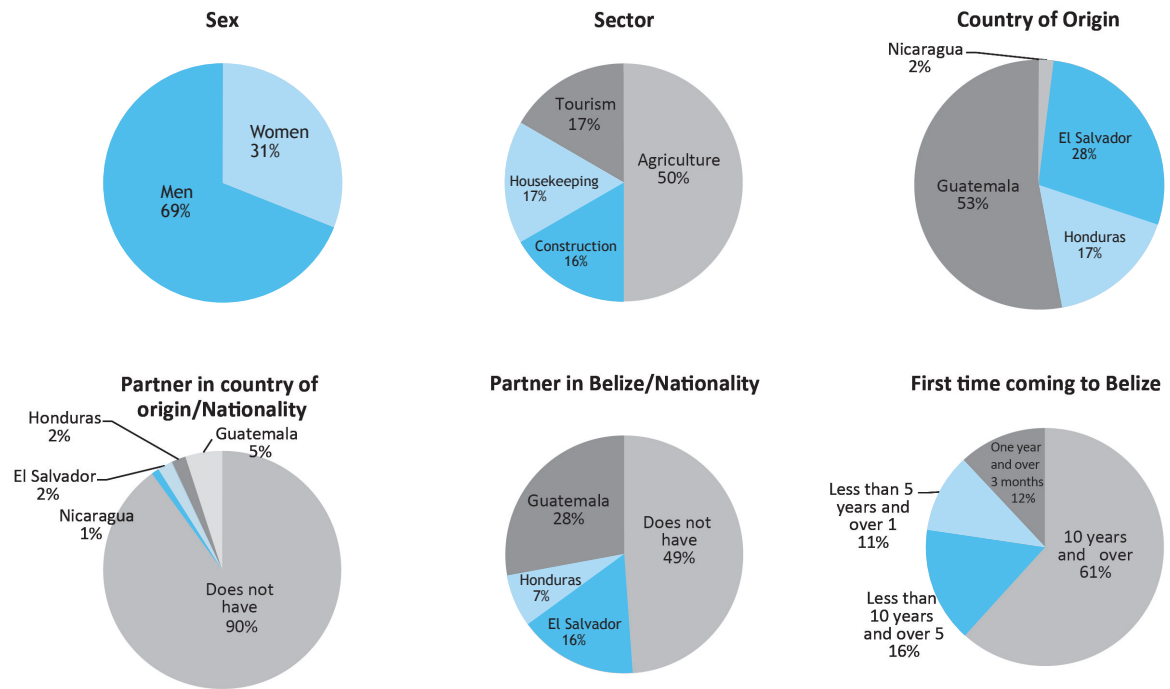
Participants in the survey worked in the following sectors: agriculture (50%), tourism (17%), housekeeping (17%) and construction (16%). While there were not specific criteria for selecting participants based on gender, those employed in domestic work were exclusively women, whereas, in the construction sector, all were men. In agriculture, especially in the banana and the citrus fruit industry, the gender segmentation is also clearly defined. For example, women employed in the banana sector work specifically in processing and packing fruit<sup>10</sup>, whereas men perform tasks such as crop maintenance and carry out heavy work. In the citrus industry, men are responsible for the harvesting of fruit which often requires many hours of manual work. It is less clear the type of work that men do in the tourist sector, but it is known that women undertake domestic tasks as waitresses and housekeepers.

The lack of statistical information on the national workforce in relation to immigrant workers makes impossible to compare the situation of natives and immigrants regarding horizontal labour segregation.

10. This was noted during a working tour by the academic team of the study to some banana farms located in the south of the country.

GRAPH 4.1

BELIZE: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEYED IMMIGRANT POPULATION



Source: Based on data gathered from the surveys applied by CID-GALLUP in Belize, march 2010.

At the same time, the information obtained from the surveys, indicate that immigrants were exposed to horizontal segregation in their native countries. As a general rule, both men and women worked in their native countries in the same sectors where they found employment upon arriving in Belize. This observation raises the question of whether a person who works in a certain productive sector in their origin country gain employable skills that can be used when they migrate out of their country. This information highlights the possibility that migrant laborers possess the necessary job skills that the Belizean labor market lacks, or experience a shortage of, consequently attracting skilled migrant workers to meet the demand. This was not explored in this study as a determinant factor influencing Central American migration to Belize but certainly raises curiosity. Although the present study does not provide sufficient

basis to support this theory, there are elements that allows us to presume its validity, at least partially.

Within the region, Belize is known as a country of destination for migrants. Three historical waves mark the arrival of labour immigrants to Belize. The third and most recent one was a result of growth in the agro-exports and processing sector and the regional integration initiatives. The second stage resulted from the emergence of transnationalism (Morales, 2007). The first stage started with forced migration as a result of armed conflicts in the late 70's and part of the 80's. This is the most significant stage, in quantitative terms, since it was during this time that thousands of refugees and displaced people migrated from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, permanently establishing in Belize and, in some way, giving rise to the subsequent movements.



In terms of country of origin, data gathered through this study indicates that more than half of the migrant workers come from Guatemala (53%). Also, a significant percentage originates in El Salvador and Honduras (28% and 17%, respectively) and a marginal flow in Nicaragua (2%). It is clear that Belize is a destination country for Central Americans. This study confirms the findings of various studies conducted in the last decade and verifies that this migratory movement persists.

In this respect, many authors acknowledge that during the last thirty years a *process of Cumulative Causation*<sup>11</sup> has been sustained by immigrants living in Belize. This means that the first big waves of immigrants created the necessary social capital to sustain subsequent movements<sup>12</sup>. This social capital was transformed into social networks which provide information and link potential migrants with employment opportunities when they decide to move to Belize. This aspect explains why the labour migration flows to Belize consists nowadays mainly of people from Guatemala and El Salvador.

When cross tabulating economic sectors with the country of origin of migrant workers, it is clear that Guatemalan nationals predominate in all of the economic activities presented in this study. Almost 55% of the consulted labour migrants were of Guatemalan origin. Only in the construction sector was there less than half, however, the number was still significant (44%).

The cross tabulation of nationality and economic activity variables show that

Guatemalans have greater access to a diversity of economic activities throughout the country. In the Cayo district, the Guatemalans surveyed were involved in diverse occupations. This can perhaps be attributed to the fact that agricultural production and tourism are both well developed in this district. Other favorable conditions are the bilingual population and its geographical proximity with the Guatemalan department of Petén. The characteristics of this zone facilitate job placement and social inclusion of cross border workers. It is relatively easy to cross into Belize from the municipality of Melchor de Mencos every day to work in the urban centers in San Ignacio, Santa Elena and, to a lesser extent, Belmopan. During harvesting of citrus fruits workers come from areas more in the interior of Petén. Findings indicate that once they have settled in the destination country, many chose to live in areas near their place of origin. This is seen as a strategy to reduce travelling costs and to facilitate the visit of their family members remaining in their community of origin.

In accordance with the aforementioned analysis, the information obtained indicates that many Hondurans work in the banana industry. This is the result of two fundamental factors. First, the majority of Hondurans in this industry originate from communities near the banana producing zones in their home country. This means that they bring knowledge and experience to the banana industry. As was previously mentioned, many people had experience working in this field before migrating. The

- 
11. The theory of the Cumulative causation (Massey, 1990) postulates that migration tends to perpetuate across the time, because every act of migration creates additional social capital that promotes and supports subsequent movements.
  12. Social capital refers to the potential value of social relationships (Portes et al. 1995). The value is measured by the capacity to obtain resources through the social structure and social networks. In relation to migration, Massey (1997) links the theory of social capital with the classic cost-benefit model. For the first immigrants, the costs and risks were extremely high, but once settled in the country of destination, the costs and risks for subsequent relatives were reduced significantly as they become share capital for potential emigrants in their communities of origin. They facilitate the movement of others by communicating information to facilitate the integration of the new arrivals. It is a scheme that presents a process of a migration which is strongly supported by social relations and social networks, clearly contrasting the classic push-pull model which indicates that the persons decide to emigrate as a result of difficult situations that they face in their native land towards a more favorable situation in the place of destination.



second factor is the short distance between Honduras and Belize; a boat trip takes less than one hour. Both factors make it more viable for this sector to employ Honduran migrants instead of unskilled natives.

When consulted Belizeans authorities on immigration and labour, they agreed that both the banana and the citrus fruit industry recruit many immigrants in their origin countries. The Department oversees the work permit process which ensures that seasonal and permanent migrants obtain the documentation so that they can work in the country. The agricultural sector is considered to be the industry with the greatest need for migrant workers since the native Belizeans prefer to do other jobs. In the last three years the flow of foreign workers has increased. This is beneficial for employers, due to the fact that it becomes unnecessary to send recruiters, or to make arrangements with contractors, because at the beginning of the season workers find their way to the farms.

This information highlights another type of segmentation in the labour market: the ethnic segmentation. Although it does not explain why this phenomenon occurs, we can think of several reasons. It may be caused by discriminatory practices to Central American workers, so they can only obtain a job in certain productive sectors and work places; or maybe the ethnic segmentation might be a result of established social networks or to the immigrants' personal and professional background. Another explanation might be that many employers prefer to hire based on the recommendation of present employees. The integration of new labour immigrants into certain places or sectors provides major benefits for the employer. Since they work alongside persons of the

same culture and speak the same language, they are more productive (Dustman, Giltz, Shonberg, 2008)<sup>13</sup>.

In terms of marital status, data reveals that upon arriving in Belize almost 90% of the immigrants were single, whereas, at the time of the survey, only 42% of the participants were single (Graph 4.1). We note that some of them established conjugal relationships while living in Belize. 54.3% of the people interviewed who said they had a relationship in Belize were married. The other half informed to be in a common-law union.

The majority of their spouses were either Guatemalans or Salvadorans (both members); this means that many immigrant workers in Belize eventually have married to a compatriot. Only 14% of those who said that they had a relationship had a partner who was a Belizean national. The fact that only a handful of persons had a Belizean couple can be interpreted as a low level of integration into Belizean society. The fact that they prefer to marry a compatriot indicates that once living in Belize, close social relationships are established first and foremost, with persons from the same country.

In Belize, as in the rest of the countries of the region, establishing marital relationships is important to regularize their migratory status. Since 1999, the State declared that any person who can prove that: (1) has been residing in Belize for four years or more; (2) is the spouse (legal or common-law marriage) of a Belizean citizen for three years or more; or (3) is a woman who has given birth to a child in Belize, qualifies for permanent residence (Murillo, 2005). Regulating one's migratory status, facilitates the possibility

13. Dustman, Giltz and Shonberg, (2008; p.32) explain that the model "productivity spillover" assures that people are more productive when they work with people from the same culture and speak the same language.



of family reunification and visits to family and relatives in the home country. However, the low percentage of those surveyed being in a union with a Belizean national indicates that, in spite of its implications, getting married for regularization purposes is not widely practiced.

Finally, graph 4.1 shows the length of time since the immigrant entered into Belize for the first time. It emphasizes that a great number of those interviewed entered into the country for the first time more than 10 years ago (61%). Only 12% entered for the first time less than a year ago.

Concerning age and gender, a similar distribution of ages exists between both sexes. It is a “more mature” migration, since a noticeable percentage of immigrants (57%) were older than 35 years of age.

31% of the total sample is between 16 and 29 years of age and only 43% is less than 34. While in general terms, it is a mature

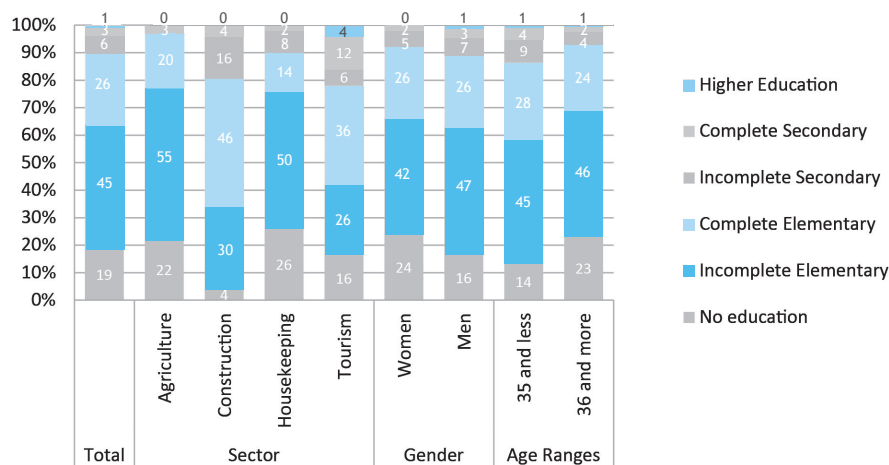
population, there are some variations by sector which are important to outline. In domestic work activities, there is a higher presence of a mature population, accounting for 18% those aged between 16 and 29. On the other hand, in the tourism sector, the same range of age represents as much as 44%.

In the agricultural sector, for example, data suggests that the majority of men working in this sector were between 40 and 44 years old. The 2000 Census reported that the highest number of immigrants arriving into the country during this period were within the productive age of 15-44 years of age.

In relation to the level of education of respondents, the information shows that the majority of labour migrants in Belize had a very low level of education. A high percentage had absolutely no formal education (19%) and 45% had an incomplete primary education (Graph 4.2).

**GRAPH 4.2**

**BELIZE: EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF SURVEYED IMMIGRANTS ACCORDING TO SECTOR, SEX AND AGE GROUP, 2010 -PERCENTAGES-**



Cases: Total: 300, Agriculture: 150, Construction: 50, Housekeeping: 50, Tourism: 50; Women: 92, Men 208; 35 and under: 140, 36 and over: 160  
 Source: Based on data gathered from the surveys applied by CID-GALLUP in Belize, may 2010.

More than three quarters of the surveyed immigrants employed in domestic activities and in agriculture have little or no formal education (76 % and 77 %, respectively).

It is interesting that tourism is the only sector among the surveyed immigrants that employs migrant workers with a university level education (4%) and those who had completed secondary school (12%). This is indicating that the immigrants working in this sector arrived in Belize from their native countries with some level of academic training that allowed them to work in tourism-related occupations. It also suggests that they have a good command of the English language.

When comparing surveyed men and women levels of education, there are no marked differences. Nevertheless, further analysis of the data gathered on women shows that almost a quarter of them (24%) had no type of formal education, in relation with men (16%). Clearly, this educational difference between sexes causes horizontal labour market segregation. Women, having a lower level of education, have fewer employment opportunities and are limited to take on domestic labour or non-specialized services, since these do not require academic qualifications. In addition, they receive lower wages and have fewer possibilities of receiving skills training, because the jobs they get are not as competitive as those requiring a higher education.

The collected data reveals that high levels of illiteracy exist among the surveyed labour migrant population. There is a very high percentage that did not receive any

formal schooling and, consequently, are illiterate. The fact that they carry out arduous physical labour in the agriculture, domestic work and construction sectors implies that they receive very little job training. In addition, this indicates that they have few possibilities of improving their incomes, which as mentioned before, are already very low.

When comparing the employment situation in their native country in relation to the country of destination, Chart 4.1 summarizes some important findings. Before migrating, a little more than a quarter of them were unemployed. A total of 22% of men surveyed mentioned having been unemployed in their home country, while for women this was as high as 40%.

Among the group of women respondents with an occupation in their country of origin, 22% reported having jobs in domestic work, 16% were enrolled in school and 12% worked in agricultural activities. Also it should be highlighted that in their origin countries, men were employed mainly as farmers (50%), masons (11%) and 11% of them were enrolled in school. Once arriving in Belize, these men began to work in farming and other agricultural activities (60%), as masons or in tourist businesses (24% and 11%, respectively), whereas women still do domestic work (54%). Another revealing issue is that a number of those who were enrolled in school in their home country gave up their education all together and migrated to Belize. This demonstrates that young, relatively educated migrant workers were seeking their first job abroad instead of in their native countries.

CHART 4.1

BELIZE: OCCUPATION OF THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN ORIGIN AND DESTINATION COUNTRIES BY SEX  
-PERCENTAGES-

	Women	Men	Total
Origin country			
Farmer	12	50	38
Brick layer		11	8
Hawker: cards, newspapers	2	1	2
Maid	22		7
Office clerk	2		1
Student	16	11	13
Security guard		1	1
Waiter	2		1
Skill worker	2	1	1
Informal activities	1		
Fishing		1	1
Unemployed	40	22	27
Destination country			
Farmer	27	60	50
Brick layer		24	17
Maid	54		17
Waiter	15	5	8
Touristic activities	3	11	9

Cases: Total: 300; Women: 92, Men 208.

Source: Based on data gathered from the surveys applied by CID-GALLUP in Belize, may 2010.

#### 4.1 Socioeconomic situation of the migrant worker and their family unit in the country of destination

Families in Latin America always have fulfilled functions of social support and protection when faced with economic hardship. With the structural changes in the economies of the region, especially with the exponential increase of female job placement in the last 30 years (Martínez, 2008; Arriagada, 2004, CEPAL, 2004), roles have changed and survival strategies have intensified (Arriagada, 2002; Arriagada, 2004; Martínez Franzoni, 2008).

Latin American types of households and families are very heterogeneous. Although

the nuclear, two-parent family has been a social paradigm and still is the most prevalent, family structure in the region has changed and new ways of organization have developed. The most remarkable ones have been changes in family composition (more single-parent families) and an increase in the number of female-headed households, especially in the Central American region (Arriagada, 2002; Arriagada, 2004; CEPAL, 1995, 2004).

In order to understand the migratory process in the countries of the region, it is important to understand these changes in the family structure and how they impact the well-being of its members. The decision to migrate is directly linked to the family life cycle, the number of dependents and the families' access

to resources<sup>14</sup>. Arriagada (2002, 2004) found that in Latin America the majority of families were either in the phases of expansion or consolidation; they are in the family life cycle where they experience “more pressure on the family resources, since there are more members and more children in the age of economic dependency” (2004: 50). Families in the start-up phases, expansion and consolidation present higher incidences of poverty and indigence (Arriagada, 2004: 53).

In synthesis, the current family structure in the countries of the region places pressure on their scarce resources. Lack of employment opportunities and of social protection mechanisms are important forces that push the population to take the decision to migrate.

If in the origin country employment in the formal sector is unavailable or jobs are not well remunerated to assure family members survival, migration will be taken into consideration. A prevailing thesis is that migration is a strategy for family welfare, where the family becomes a transnational provider and operates within a social network that generates value for the immigrant and family members remaining in the country of origin (Castles and Miller, 2009).

The upcoming section presents data obtained from the surveys and focus group sessions related to family composition of the immigrants residing in Belize.

#### 4.1.1 Characteristics of the family unit

Considering the reality of the Belizean society, in comparison with other

destination countries, it can be noted that family reunification accumulates new social capital for other families or friends in the communities of origin. As social networks are reinforced, future immigrants and relatives may plan to follow.

Once immigrants move from being irregular to being regularized, another migratory phenomenon emerges: transnationalism<sup>15</sup>. Having legal documents, migrant workers can travel frequently to their native countries. As a result, they become a channel to spread information about the destination country and increase contact with their relatives still residing there. These relatives become potential migrants that often choose to migrate to the same country.

Chart 4.2 summarizes some of the general characteristics of the family unit of respondents before and after migrating. Before migration, 73% were living with parents, 21% with their couple and 8% were residing with their children.

Migration impacts the household composition. The majority of immigrant families interviewed are composed of a spouse and children. Almost half of them live with a partner, 33% of them live with their children, while a small percentage (10%) live with their parents. There is a complete shift in the living situation of the migrants, since the majority lived with their parents before migrating. This indicates that many come as adventurous young persons with either the intention of starting a new life or with the intention of contributing financially to their families in their origin country.

14. The family life cycle refers to the different phases that a family experiences. These phases are, according to Arriagada (2004): the stage of beginning a family, birth of the children; a stage of expansion which occur when the number of children increases; a stage of consolidation, when no more children are being born; and the stage where the children begin to leave their homes and establish their own families.

15. Portes et to. (1999), describes transnationalism as the trend of immigrants to “speak two languages, having two homes in two countries, and having regular and constant contact between national borders “(218).

CHART 4.2

## BELIZE: FAMILY UNIT OF IMMIGRANTS IN ORIGIN AND DESTINATION COUNTRIES, 2010

	Origin country	Destination country
People he/she lived/lives with		
Father/Mother	73	10
Spouse/Partner	21	53
Children	8	33
Main provider		
Father/Mother	63	4
Interviewee	27	78
Other; siblings, grandparents	10	18
Children economically dependent		
None	81	44
One or two	9	27
More than two	9	29
Age ranges of the children		
0 - 6 years	42	55
7 - 14 years	44	61
15 -17 years	28	34
18 and over	34	24

Source: Based on data gathered in the surveys applied by CID-GALLUP in Belize, may 2010.

It was noted that before migrating to Belize, 73% of respondents resided with their parents, who were the main financial contributors to the home. Less than a quarter were living with a spouse (Chart 4.2). Once having settled in Belize many establish permanent relationships and take on the financial responsibilities as the primary wage earner. There were also cases of migrant workers sharing a residence with one or more siblings, other relatives, other couples or other living arrangements.

The high numbers of male and female respondents living with their spouse and children reaffirms the theory that they establish families once they have settled in Belize or that entire families immigrated. Another related issue is family reunification, considering that 28% of those who were living with their wives and children in their native countries later brought them to Belize.

It is necessary to mention that many of the households surveyed were female-headed, meaning that almost half of immigrant women live only with their children, and, at the same time, the responsibility of financial support rests on them. This finding has important implications regarding child-care and well-being of the children in single-parent homes, since it raises the question of who is taking care of them when the parent is working out of the home.

Family relationships reinforce the idea that migration to Belize is strongly influenced by an accumulated causality supported by social capital available to migrants before coming to the country. On the basis of this theory, the information obtained proves the existence of strong social networks and indicates that connections are based on family links. 79% of respondents revealed that before migrate the main information

provider relating to Belize was a family member.

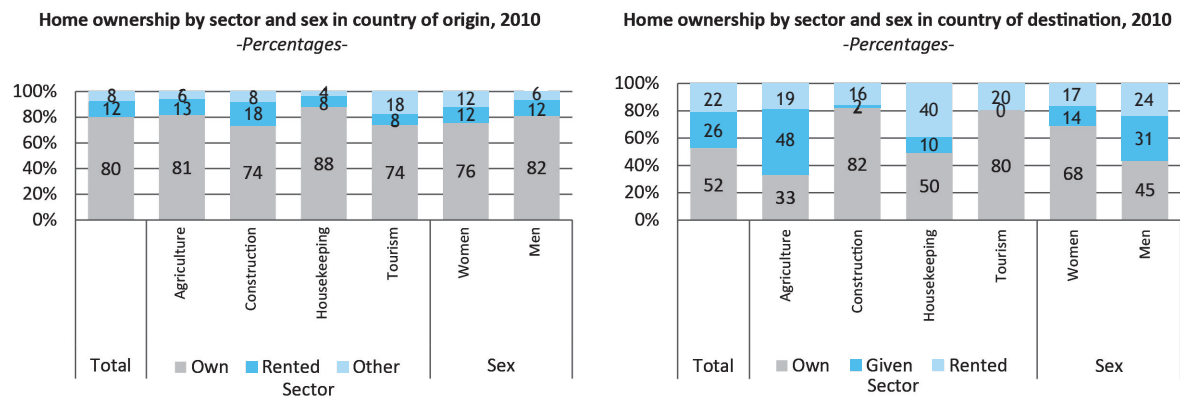
#### 4.1.2 Housing conditions of the surveyed immigrants in their native countries and in Belize

In this section some indicators that measure housing conditions of immigrants in their native countries and in Belize are analyzed. In that regard, Morales and Castro (2006) mentioned that obstacles immigrants face in the region “are employment, quality of employment, quality of housing, access to social services and benefits of adequate

health services” (Morales and Castro, 2006: 59).

Graph 4.3 shows that most of the people surveyed lived in a house of their property or a house owned by their family in their countries of origin. In Belize, almost half of the people surveyed were home owners, whereas a quarter were living in rented homes and another quarter lived in provided housing. The fact that many of them are homeowners in Belize means that they have obtained land and other resources that have allowed them to establish themselves permanently in the country.

**GRAPH 4.3**  
**BELIZE: DATA ABOUT HOUSING OF THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN ORIGIN COUNTRY**  
**-PERCENTAGES-**



	Origin country	Destination country
People that lived/live in their home (Average)	6,38	4,18
Bedrooms there are/were (Average)	2,57	2,18
Shares/shared house with people not related		
Yes	5	21
No	95	79
Satisfaction with living conditions		
Very satisfied	48	53
Rate <sup>2/</sup>	3,97	3,97

1/ Includes: given house, settlement.

2/ 5 Is very satisfied and 1 is no satisfaction.

Source: based on data gathered by CID-GALLUP in Belize, may 2010.

Another interesting data is the average number of persons per household. In their native countries the average persons per household was 6.4. In Belize, the numbers decline to 4.2. Despite the decline, there is indication that entire families, or at least a significant part of the unit, migrated and established themselves in Belize. Living conditions inevitably improved since smaller numbers of persons occupy a household.

The fact that nearly one fifth of the surveyed immigrants share homes with people who are not part of their family unit, indicates that they might be living together to share expenses such as rent and services. Data collected as a result of the surveys indicates that as much as 82% of men were homeowners prior to migrating. In contrast, only 45% of them are homeowners in Belize.

31% of male immigrant workers live in houses provided by their employers or co-workers. In the case of those employed in agricultural

activities, the provided housing was shared. During the field work carried out for this study, it was noted that in some banana and citrus farms, houses were usually barracks-style or small rooms shared by up to four persons.

76% of the women participating in the survey said that they were owners of their house in their origin countries, while 68% of them said that they were owners of their home in Belize.

On the other hand, Chart 4.3 compares the situation of access to utilities and household commodities of surveyed migrant workers living in Belize, in comparison with their native countries. It can be pointed out that intraregional migrant workers in Belize have better access to utilities, such as electricity, toilet, potable water (household access) and telecommunications than in their home country. They also have more household appliances, such as televisions, radios, irons, stoves, refrigerators and computers.

**CHART 4.3**  
BELIZE: SERVICES IN IMMIGRANTS' HOUSES, 2010  
-PERCENTAGES/SAMPLE=300/-

	Origin country	Destination country
Services had/ has the house		
Electricity	63	91
Toilet	31	47
Drinkable water (public out side home)	34	26
Drinkable water (use at home)	64	78
Telephone	11	34
Appliances had/ has the house		
Television	44	71
Radio	60	71
Iron	34	57
Stove	53	82
Refrigerator	15	54
Computer	4	10
Access to services		
Schooling	58	72
Health service	73	78
Places for recreation	37	51
Garbage picking	37	66

Source:Based on the information from surveys of CID-Gallup in Belize, May 2010.



CHART 4.4

BELIZE: PUBLIC SERVICES FOR IMMIGRANT POPULATION BY SECTOR AND SEX, 2010  
-PERCENTAGES-

	Sector				Sex	
	Agriculture	Housekeeping	Construction	Tourism	Women	Men
Origin country						
Health services	68	76	84	72	76	71
Schooling	63	50	48	58	51	61
Recreation places	39	26	50	30	32	40
Solid waste recolection system	36	20	48	46	25	42
Has none	1	8	4	0	5	1
Access to day care	10	8	16	14	12	11
Destination country						
Health services	71	92	80	84	83	76
Solid waste recolection system	62	92	62	94	87	66
Schooling for children or themselves	61	82	70	60	74	62
Recreation places	40	78	58	48	63	45
Access to day care	9	40	16	24	27	14
Has none	4	2	6	0	3	3

1/ Multiple choice answer

Cases: Total: 300, Agriculture: 150, Construction: 50 Housekeeping: 50, Tourism: 50, women: 92, Men 208.

Source: Based on data gathered from surveys applied by CID-GALLUP in Belize, may 2010.

BELIZE: ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR IMMIGRANT POPULATION BY SEX, 2010  
-PERCENTAGES-

	Sex	
	Women	Men
Origin country		
Health services	76	71
Schooling	51	61
Recreation places	32	40
Solid waste recolection system	25	42
Has none	5	1
Access to day care	12	11
Destination country		
Health services	83	76
Solid waste recolection system	87	66
Schooling for children or themselves	74	62
Recreation places	63	45
Access to day care	27	14
Has none	3	3

1/ Multiple choice answer

Cases: Total: 300, Agriculture: 150, Construction: 50 Housekeeping: 50, Tourism: 50, women: 92, Men 208.

Source: Based on data gathered from surveys applied by CDI-GALLUP in Belize, may 2010.



Likewise, participants expressed improved access to services such as education, health, recreation and garbage disposal. They indicated having more access to educational services in Belize than in their country of origin (72% as opposed to 58%). As it relates to health care services, there wasn't a marked difference (78% versus 73%).

Although there is not a great difference between sexes, it is important to highlight that women have experienced an improvement in the access to services such as education and childcare facilities, among others. This fact might benefit women in their integration to the labor market. (Chart 4.4)

#### **4.1.3 Socioeconomic situation of immigrants**

In this section, the socioeconomic situation of the migrant workers in their native countries and in Belize is discussed. According to Martínez (2008) the increase of migratory flows in the region during the last decades can be attributed to socioeconomic and political factors. The most recent flows in the region are caused by the lack of opportunities in their native countries and the search for an improvement of their socioeconomic situation (Acuña, 2010; Martínez, 2008; Morales and Castro, 2006). Chart 4.5 reflects the economic situation of the migrant workers who participated in this study.

Immigrants seek to improve their living conditions and in many cases they achieve their goal in one or various aspects of

their lives. The information obtained in this study indicates that the income of surveyed immigrants is higher in Belize than it is in their native countries. 57% revealed having incomes below \$200 monthly in their native countries, whereas in Belize, 81% of them received on average more than \$200 monthly.

The higher wages in Belize are an attractive feature for migrant workers. Through a well established network, relatives who remain in the native countries discover new possibilities of moving in search of jobs that offer better wages. Therefore, migratory movements are sustained over time.

In terms of sources of income in migrant workers households, data reveal that their only source of income was their salary. This was true both in their home country and in their destination country. Regarding the level of income, 64% felt that they were able to sustain themselves on the income received in Belize and almost an equal percentage (63%) were dissatisfied with what they were being paid in their origin country.

The disparity between the level of income and the cost of living in most countries of the region is obvious. The way money is spent can also contribute to this. In Belize, most of them spend their money on clothing, public services such as electricity and water, basic needs such groceries and transportation and education related costs. The fact that 59% spend their incomes on transportation means that almost half of migrant workers commute to work.

CHART 4.5

BELIZE: ECONOMIC SITUATION OF MIGRANT POPULATION, 2010  
-PERCENTAGES-

	Origin country	Destination country
Total income during the last three months		
Less than \$200	57	16
\$200 or more	35	81
Dk/Da	8	3
Type of income source		
Salary	76	87
What the money is/was spent on		
Clothing	84	91
Electricity	53	81
Food	77	54
Transportation	46	59
School expenses (without transportation)	10	25
Health care and medication	46	53
Water	33	59
Did/do they think the money was enough		
Less	63	13
Same	23	21
More	12	64

Source: Based on data gathered from surveys applied by CID-GALLUP in Belize, may 2010.

## 4.2 Migration process

In the Migration Systems Literature, the economic, social and demographic factors that lead a person to take the decision to migrate (Castles and Miller, 2009) is a major issue. In this section, the migration process is analyzed, including how and why people migrate and what factors influence the decision to migrate to Belize.

In sum, the most important reason why people migrate from their native countries is the lack of opportunities and the search

for an improved economic situation (Morales and Castro, 2006; Acuña, 2010). Recent studies indicate that nearly 10% of the population of Central America was living outside their native country, and a majority is motivated by economic reasons (PER, 2008). In countries where labour markets are mostly informal, where the salaries are low and the States have little capacity to undertake the de-commodification of the welfare state, migration takes on a central role as a survival strategy for many families (Martínez Franzoni, 2008).

As stated above, labour migration flows to Belize are a part of a greater regional population movement resulting from emerging economic dynamics (Acuña, 2010). For a long time, Belize has been an attractive country for Central American immigrants, for different reasons. While some decades ago Belize was considered as a country of refuge, in recent years its attraction lies in its labour market. The Belizean labour market is favorable and less competitive regarding the workforce supply. In addition, when compared to the countries of origin where high levels of poverty, unemployment and job insecurity persist, Belize is often viewed as a good destination with better social and economic welfare.

This section seeks to understand the reasons why immigrants leave their country, why Belize is the chosen destination and what kind of information influenced the decision-making process, along with other aspects of the migration process.

Respondents unanimously agreed that the reason why Belizean employers contract immigrant workers is because “natives are not used to working hard. Consequently,

they leave the heaviest jobs to “Hispanics” (as Belizeans call them) that come from other countries of the Central American region”.

According to key informants interviewed, the primary reason for leaving their homeland was to seek employment in Belize. In consequence, for almost all of them economic reasons were the driving forces. A considerable number of participants indicated that they were not previously employed nor receiving any form of wages prior to their migration to Belize. Thus, for many immigrants their first job experience was in Belize. Those who were already employed in their native countries before migrating were working mainly on a temporary basis.

For most surveyed immigrants, lack of employment and low salaries were the main reasons influencing their decision to migrate (49%). 30% migrated to Belize by curiosity and because they had heard that it was a nice place to visit. A small percentage (4%) migrated to Belize because they were suffering extreme poverty, even lacking the resources to fulfill their basic needs.

**CHART 4.6**  
BELIZE: MOTIVATION TO MIGRATE, 2010  
-PERCENTAGES-

Reason to leave the country	Number	
Searching for a job	37	
Curiosity, to see other places, nice	30	
Bad wages/ money	12	
Searching for a better life quality	9	
Personal problems	7	
Extreme poverty: they lacked everything	4	
Reason to come to this country	Main	Other
Better job opportunities	28	32
It is safer for my family and I	13	16
Better salaries	12	38
Proximity, easier to get to	9	--
Personal issues	8	--

Source: Based on data gathered from the surveys applied by CID-GALLUP in Belize, may 2010.

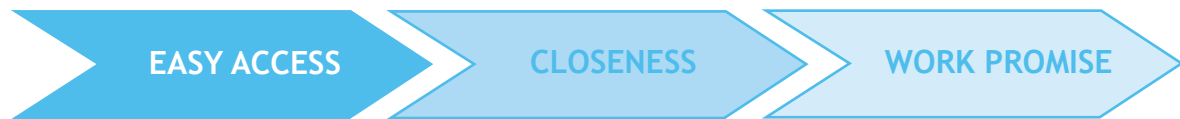
The main factors of attraction for migrant workers to Belize are the availability of jobs and better wages. A large number of respondents stated that they chose Belize because they were informed that there were employment opportunities.

Another attractive feature was that in Belize salaries are paid in Belize dollars. The currency is stable and the salaries are at least three times more than what they receive in their home country (Guatemala and El Salvador)<sup>16</sup>.

“In my country there were no jobs available, we were very poor, we lacked food, we had to look for opportunities to survive”. - *Group sessions, CID-Gallup, 2010.*

While some labour migrants participating in this study said that economic reasons were the main factors influencing their decision to migrate, others expressed that

the political situation in their countries was a factor which impelled them to migrate. They feel their governments do not promote economic policies to support the poor.



The geographical location of Belize and its proximity to Guatemala cannot be overlooked as an attraction factor. Not only do these two countries share a border, there are various means of transportation that facilitates mobility between them, and connect Honduras and El Salvador with Belize. Easy access and proximity are determining factors. Overall, it was confirmed that the high probability of obtaining higher wages is a major determinant in the decision to migrate from their native countries.

Other reasons were highlighted. The civil wars of the past and the perception of danger in a violent and criminal environment in the countries of origin were also mentioned. Insecurity entailed the migration flows to a safer place during the end of the 70’s and 80’s. The civil wars were the primary reasons of the first huge migratory flows to Belize. The current climate of insecurity in the Central American region is still a motivating factor for the new waves of immigrants to safer environments within the region.

“We came running away from the civil war that existed in Guatemala, here we got help to stay and have a safer life”. - *(Regularized immigrant)- Group sessions, CID-Gallup, 2010.*

When compared to their native countries there is a greater feeling of security for the migrants and their families in Belize, which is known for its atmosphere of peace and tranquility, low crime and delinquency.

This safety environment was the reason why many Central American families emigrate to Belize during the civil wars years. These first displacements influenced subsequent migratory movements. At that

16. BZ\$2 = \$1USD



time, the country built a reputation among its Central American neighbors of being politically stable and safe.

For many surveyed immigrants, there is little hope that the socioeconomic

situation in their countries would change. There is also lack of optimism that there will be employment opportunities or economic development; for these reasons, returning is not an option, at least not in the short-term.



For immigrant workers who participated in the focus groups, the main reason to migrate was the influence of their parents and relatives who had previously migrated to Belize. Those who have been residing in the country for many years explained that they were brought to Belize at an early age. They were educated in Belize, socialized with the native population, and assimilated the language, culture and way of life. As a result, they consider themselves as Belizeans.

Some participants expressed that within the options of countries to migrate was the United States. However, when travelling through Belize on their way north, they decided to stay. Others came as tourists and decided to stay because of the favorable living standards, access to employment and proximity to their place of origin.

In the case of women respondents, many did not specifically consider migrating to Belize. Men, however, expressed that they were searching for jobs in the agricultural sector since it is what they do well. At the same time, these jobs generally do not require that employees have documentation such as work permits. The job search in that sector was not difficult, since there are a

significant number of banana and citrus plantations needing workers.

Those immigrants who have the required documents to enter the country in a regular way, they cross the borders by bus. Those who do not have documents, explained that they entered the country with the help of people offering services as coyotes or smugglers. Among the service providers are taxi drivers and informal money changers who operate near the border crossings.

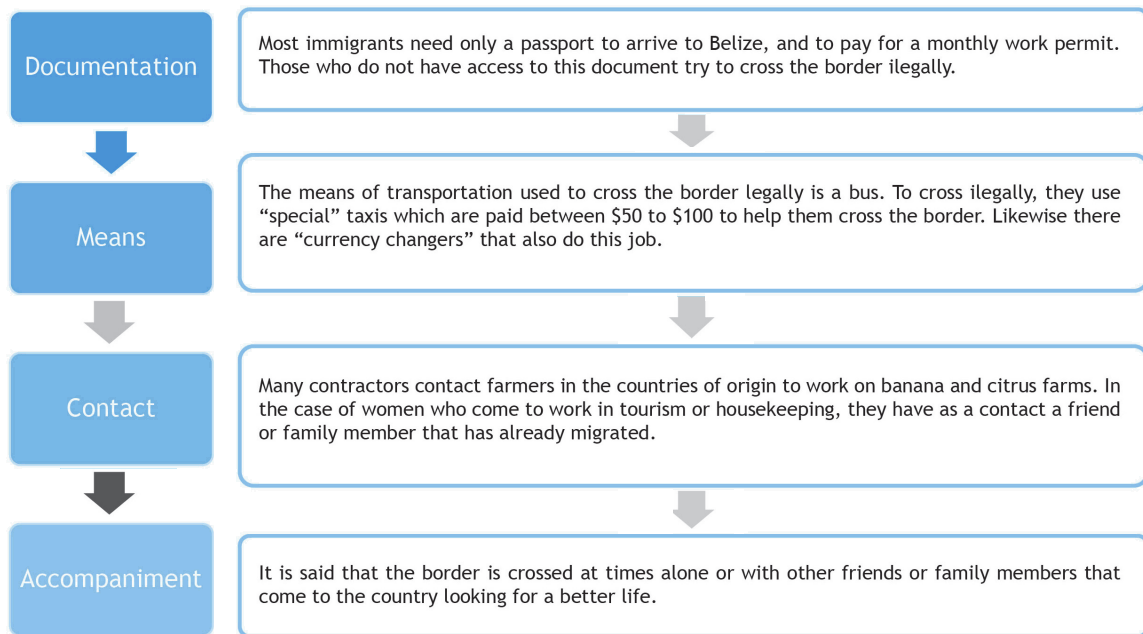
Besides this connection, there are several easy ways to enter the country without going through official migration posts. Border areas between Belize, Mexico and Guatemala have neither enough immigration officers nor police presence. There are countless paths, rivers and roads where it is easy to cross the border by foot or by canoe. Merchants and people living in border communities use these routes to trade agricultural products, textiles and grains, among other things (Smith, 2010; Petit, 2004). These are informal routes to the villages near the border areas and are used by irregular immigrants to enter the country. It is a very easy way to enter the country without documents.

According to the Department of Immigration Belize, this is difficult to control. Even near the migratory posts, controlling migration is difficult. Until a couple of years ago, entries and exits were recorded manually. This explains the lack of statistical information that could reveal a more accurate picture of the migratory flows in and out Belize. The lack of technological instruments for recording migratory movements is an advantage

for local smugglers. This along with an absence of authorities along the border facilitates the entry of undocumented immigrants.

Figure 4.1 broadens the previous comments, describing types of transportation used to cross the borders, migratory documents and contacts established to get a job in Belize. This information was obtained through the various focus groups conducted.

**FIGURE 4.1**  
PREPARING TO MIGRATE



Regarding the main problems that immigrant workers face when arriving the country, participants of the group sessions expressed that on a recurrent basis they were discriminated by the native population, especially from afro descendent Belizeans. This made harder the initial adaptation. Moreover, the English language was a barrier for those coming from rural Guatemala and El Salvador, whose schooling was minimal and had limited knowledge of the language.

their migratory process. Based on data collected, only 35% of immigrants had information about Belize when they left their homeland. This includes possible sources of employment, the working environment, wages and where they would stay once they have reached their destination. Of all the information they acquired, the most useful was related with possible jobs.

Graph 4.4 refers to the information the immigrants had before starting

In most instances (79%) they said that relatives who have been living in Belize for many years, some even since the civil war period, provided them with information



that facilitated the migration process. This situation confirms the existence of social networks which support the migratory movements. These networks are directly connected to previous migrations, meaning that there is enough social capital in Belize to promote successive movements. In other words, the theory of cumulative causation is confirmed, reiterating the point that initial movements were the forced migrations of the 80's. This cumulative causality allows for an exchange of information and services and to a lesser extent to provide assistance to new migrants. Social networks are used to facilitate migratory movements.

Concerning the travel and identity documents, the information obtained from those participating in the study was that

the majority (76%) had either a Temporary Work permit or was a Permanent Resident. 26% did not have any migratory document.

On the other hand, data shows that in almost 50% of the cases, employers did not request any documentation to hire the surveyed immigrants. Only in 22% of the cases there was a work permit requested. Concerning women working in tourism and domestic service sectors, surveyed immigrants indicated that it was more difficult to get a job when they did not have documents to confirm their migration status in the country. Only 3% confessed having been deported because they didn't have the required migratory documents. However, they returned a few months later.

**GRAPH 4.4**  
**INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS TO ENTER THE COUNTRY**  
**-PERCENTAGES-**

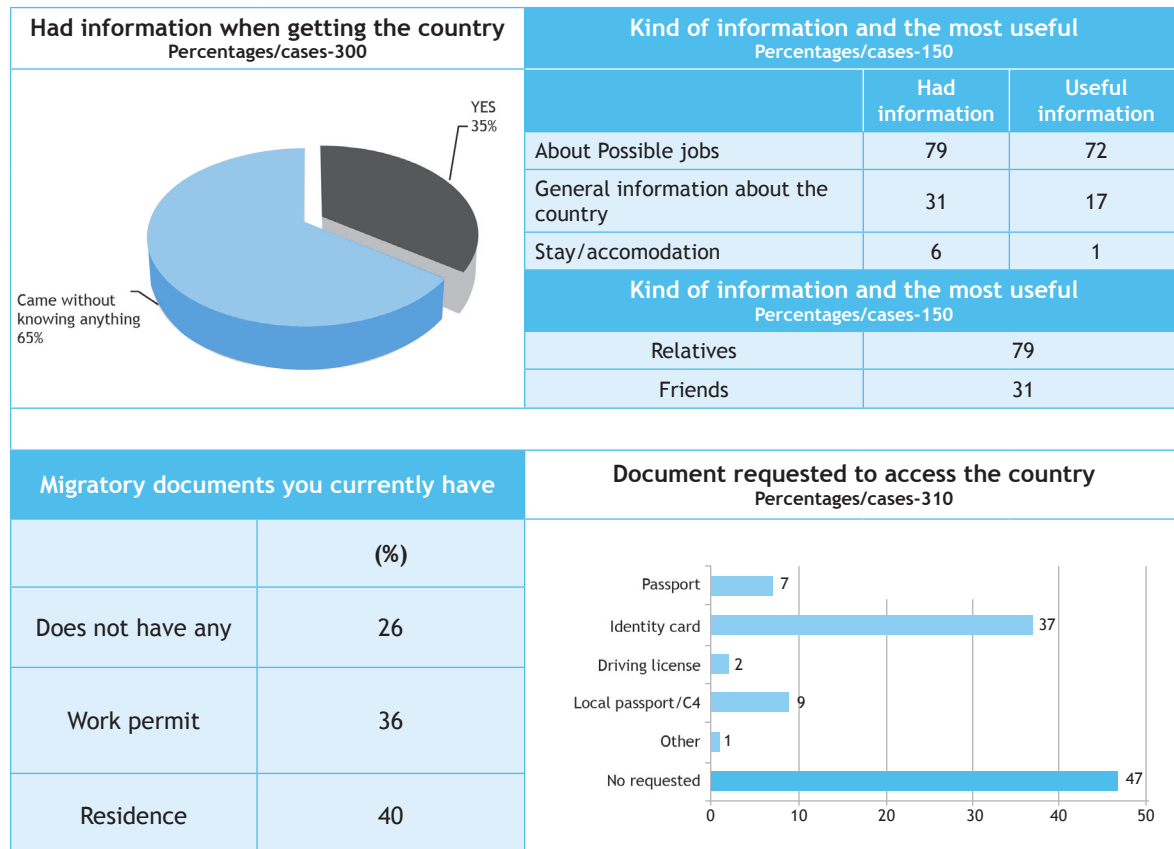




Chart 4.7 summarizes the number of migrant workers who received assistance upon arrival to Belize. It indicates that 70% of the surveyed immigrants did not receive any type of assistance upon entering the country. Of those receiving assistance, 69% received support from their families and friends who were residing in Belize. Other

humanitarian organizations such as churches and non-governmental organizations (no particular NGO was specified) were among those offering support to them upon arrival. The main assistance received was food and lodging. A small number of migrant workers were helped by their employers or by their travel companions.

**CHART 4.7**  
BELIZE: HAD SUPPORT WHEN ENTERING THE COUNTRY, 2010  
-PERCENTAGES-

	First mentioned	Other mentioned
Kind of support		
Housing	20	68
Economic	1	19
Food	2	66
Had help finding a job	2	24
Legal counseling	1	4
Clothing	3	1
Did not have any	70	--
Where the help came from -Casos:94		
Family		44
Friends that live here		25
Employer		6
Workmates		6
Other: church, workmates, NGO,		19

Source: Based on data gathered from surveys applied by CID-GALLUP in Belize, may 2010.

The following section analyzes the migrant worker ties with their communities of origin. In essence this information shows that strong links are maintained with their relatives in their native country.

### 4.3 Remittances: trends and use

Morales and Castro (2006) explain that “local economies have become highly dependent on familial remittances” in many Central American communities (Morales and Castro, 2006: 63), not only through financial remittance but also “through a number of other transactions, both material and

symbolic” (ibid.). According to Martínez (2008), “one of the goals of migration is to procure resources that can be forwarded to the place of origin.” (Martínez, 2008: 61). As a consequence of international migration, Central America now experiences “household trans-nationalization” (ibid. 60).

Remittances are a key element of the migration process. They serve as a coinsurance or as a form of repayment resulting from an implicit contract between each migrant and their family. “Resources are remitted to support dependents, to redeem loans, to make investments, and for other household purposes” (CEPAL,



2000: 378). Lucas and Stark (1985) view remittances as part of a mutually beneficial contractual agreement temporarily made between the migrant person and their family members who remain in their place of origin (CEPAL, 2000).

Baumeister, Fernandez and Acuña (2008) noted that “the use of remittances depends on the migrants place of destination” (Baumeister, Fernandez and Acuña, 2008: 45), therefore those “migrating within Central America (...) sent remittances to cover household expenses and to purchase household appliances. Migrant workers owning agricultural land in their home country, use remittances to purchase agricultural products to sow basic grains and buy wire to set limits of pastures” (ibíd.). Remittances from Extra regional countries, mainly The United States and Spain, are used to pay debts, invest in their homes, purchase land or livestock, or to pay for the education of their children.

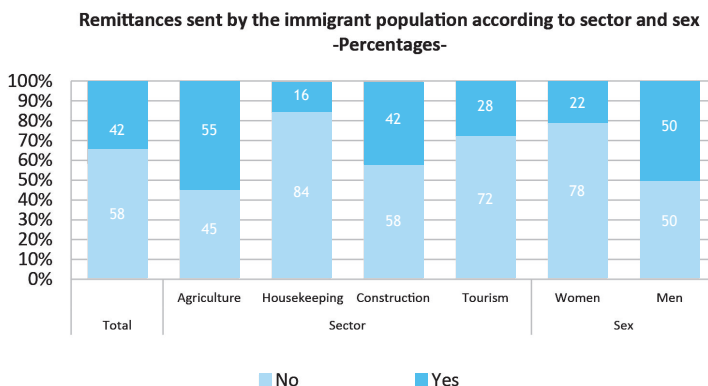
Morales and Castro (2006) noted that within the Central American region, many “local economies have become highly dependent on familial remittances” (Morales and Castro, 2006: 63). Contributions of immigrant workers to their communities of origin are carried through monetary remittances and “through a number of material and symbolic transfers that act as functional

mechanisms for social reproduction of their group and preservation of their cultural identity. As a result, a whole cultural heritage of experiences and knowledge is generated, supporting new migrations” (PRISMA, 2009: 26).

This section presents information provided by migrant workers participating in the survey. It explores the practice of remitting and the purpose for sending remittances. Graph 4.5 indicates that remittances from Belize are usually minimal and uncommon. 58% of migrants surveyed do not send remittances to their native lands. When comparing remittances by sex, only half of men said that they were sending money to their relatives, while 78% of women said they were not sending any remittances at all.

Most immigrants working in domestic service and in the tourism industry expressed not to send remittances; in the agricultural sector however, this is the opposite. Low rates of remittance transfers can be an indicator that the cost of living in the destination country is high. There is also the possibility that the low remittance rates is due to the fact that their immediate family members are already residing in Belize. Another explanation can be that immigrants save their incomes and upon returning to their homeland they take it with them in the form of savings.

**GRAPH 4.5**  
BELIZE: REMITTANCES SENT BY IMMIGRANT POPULATION, 2010



Cases: Total: 310, Agriculture: 160, Construction: 75, Housekeeping, 75; Women: 105, Men 205.

Data on sent remittances -Cases: 125-			
Amount sent		Cost of delivery	
Less than \$200	57	Up to \$10	8
\$200 and over	38	Over \$10	74
Dk/Na	5	Dk/Na	18
Means to send remittances		Frequency of remittance	
Especialized company	58	Once a month	42
Bank	11	Every 15 days	13
People traveling	17	Irregular: every 2 months or +	22

Source: Based on data gathered in surveys applied by CID-GALLUP in Belize, may 2010.

57% of the population surveyed expressed sending remittances to their relatives in their native countries for an amount usually less than \$200 monthly. Out of that number, 42% sends money on a monthly basis and 13% every two weeks. 22% indicated sending remittances to their relatives occasionally with no defined time period. According to the data collected, the main beneficiaries of the remittances are their parents, in the first instance, then their children or spouse.

Remittances are usually sent through companies specializing in the provision of that service (58%), the cost being more than \$10 for each transaction (74%). 17% entrusts remittances with other migrants who are returning home or visiting their community of origin. This evidences the existence of relationships and social connections between people from the same place of origin and a constant flow of communication between the origin and destination countries.

If the data gathered during this study about frequency and amount of the remittances

sent from Belize would adequately reflect the reality of the remittances sent by the whole immigrant population in the country, then we would have to conclude that remittances sent from Belize do not have significant impact on the economy of the migrants' origin countries as is usually the case of the remittances from countries such as The United States of America.

The remittance of material goods other than money is unusual among surveyed immigrant workers. This is difficult to do from Belize because there are few companies dedicated to the transportation of goods towards Central American countries. In other Central American countries, cross-border trade is strong and extensive. In Belize, it seems to be that this type of trade is weak. It is expected that commercial linkages will be strengthened with the establishment of new regional integration initiatives. In order to understand flows, impacts and culture of remittances in Belize it is necessary to conduct a more extensive research on this topic.

CHART 4.8

BELIZE: REMITTANCES SENT BY IMMIGRANT POPULATION, 2010  
-CASES: 125-

Amount of people benefited by remittances		What the remittances are used on	
One to two	42	Basic household expenses	94
Three to four	30	Education	7
Over four	18		
People directly benefited by remittances		Sending items other than money	
Children	30	Clothing	4
Father/Mother	57	Food	2
Spouse/partner	20	Does not send	94

Source: Based on data gathered from surveys applied by CID-GALLUP in Belize, may 2010.

Remittances are almost always sent to a relative, such as parents (57%) who in many cases take care of the child/children of the immigrant, children (30%) or couple (20%), keeping this way the family ties. This shows the economic nature of migration and that is a family strategy to improve wellbeing. Almost in every cases the remittances benefit more than one person, underlying that migration is a viable option for families to improve life conditions, not only of the immigrant but also of the family in the origin country (Chart 4.8). As explained above, remittances are commonly used to cover the basic household expenses. In few cases there is a surplus that can be converted into savings. In addition,

as illustrated in the chart, only 6% of the interviewees send other resources such as clothes or food.

In synthesis, these findings coincide with theories regarding migratory system and the new economy of labour migration (Castles and Miller, 2009), which maintain that the decision to migrate is not undertaken by an individual alone but rather by the family members. Migration and, consequently, remittances are part of a family strategy to diversify sources of income. This constitutes a form of familial contract between migrants and the remaining family members in their home country.

# 5 Labour conditions of migrant workers

After the 80's crisis, a structural change process of the Central American economies based on the "Washington Consensus" doctrine began. This proposed a series of economic reforms that required a process of economic independence, state deregulation, and labour market flexibility.

As a result, the agricultural sector lost its relative economic importance in favor of secondary and, especially, tertiary sectors (Rosa, 2008; Segovia, 2004, 2005; Robinson, 2003). The region began to experience a process of rural people's migration ("descampesinización") (Morales and Castro, 2006) and both internal and external migration.

Labour markets of the countries in the Central American region have customarily been unable to absorb the surplus supply of labour. With these economic changes and a decline in wages many people in productive age were compelled to diversify their survival strategies (Martínez Franzoni, 2008). For instance, there was an outstanding increase in female labour participation during the last three decades (ibid.), a rise in the informal sector as well as higher urban and international migration flows (Segovia, 2004; Robinson, 2003).

According to Morales and Castro (2006), the unstable and unregulated nature of Central American labour market created opportunities for the informal economy to flourish. Microenterprises, with one or two employees at the most, most of them in urban areas, grew in those sectors that required both a small initial investment and

working capital (CDR, 2010). Bad working conditions prevailed (there were not formal labour contracts). A large number of national workers didn't receive labour benefits, being working conditions for immigrant workers even worse, making them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse (Morales and Castro, 2006).

In this section, the labor situation of migrant workers is analyzed, focusing on the characteristics of job placement, employment conditions, leisure time and perceptions of migrant workers regarding their situation.

## 5.1 Job placement of labour immigrants- General characteristics

Immigrant workers participating in the survey indicate that their living conditions have improved in several aspects. They express having better jobs with better work conditions than in their native countries. This includes better wages, with greater job security and consequently lower chances of being unemployed. In general, there were more benefits and better working conditions in Belize.

Chart 5.1 contains information regarding the type and the duration of jobs, as well as labour stability among migrant workers. According to respondents, the majority were employed only temporarily in their native countries. In Belize, only 29% were working temporarily and 69% had permanent jobs. Sectors as tourism (86%), agriculture

(72%) and domestic service (66%) provided greater job security and continuity. Almost three fourths of immigrant women said they had permanent jobs. Half of the men

working in construction, where temporary jobs predominate, were actually in full-time employment. Only 2% of migrant workers were self-employed.

**CHART 5.1**  
BELIZE: LABOUR SITUATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE DESTINATION COUNTRY, 2010  
-PERCENTAGES-

	Total	Sector				Sex	
		Agriculture	Housekeeping	Costruction	Tourism	Women	Men
Type of employment the immigrant holds in destination country							
Permanent	69	72	66	46	86	74	67
Temporary	29	25	34	54	12	26	30
Work on their own	2	3	0	0	2	0	3
Times the immigrant has changed jobs							
Has not changed	72	87	46	68	56	64	75
One to three times	21	13	30	26	30	22	20
Over three times	8	1	24	6	14	14	5
Means to find current job							
Turned up at the place and asked	46	59	22	36	40	37	50
Recomended by a friend	41	29	70	38	52	54	35
Other	13	13	8	26	8	9	15
Duration of current job							
Less than a year	18	10	3	3	2	5	13
1 to 2 years	8	4	1	1	2	4	4
Over 2 years	74	36	12	13	13	22	52
Size of the company the immigrant works for in destination country							
DK/DA	2	2	4	0	2	2	2
Microenterprise (1-5 people)	41	34	86	36	22	62	32
Small enterprise (6-10 people)	9	3	4	26	12	8	9
Medium and big enterprises (over 11 people)	48	61	6	38	64	28	57

Cases: Total: 300, Agriculture: 150, Construction: 50 Housekeeping: 50, Tourism: 50, Women: 92, Men 208.  
Source: Based on data gathered from surveys applied by CID-GALLUP in Belize, may 2010.

Chart 5.1 clearly shows that the majority of labour migrants in Belize have stable jobs. 72% of the informants remain employed in the same job since their arrival to Belize. According to this information, the agriculture sector provides greater job

continuity. The fact that more than half of the people working in all sectors included in this study have not changed jobs, except for those in the domestic service, means that jobs are usually stable and provide a sense of security.

The most common methods used to find a job were going to the workplace to inquire on possible vacant posts and through a friend recommendation. Men usually show up at the workplace to inquire about vacant positions (50%), whereas women are generally recommended by their friends (54%). In the agricultural sector, 59% of migrant workers simply went to the workplace and were hired forthwith. In the domestic services 70% of women were employed based on the recommendation of a friend. This information indicates that informal channels and social networks play an important role during the job searching process.

41% of the participants were working in small and micro enterprises and 48% had jobs in medium and large enterprises. Of those working in the agriculture and tourism sectors 64% and 61% were working in medium and large enterprises respectively. It is interesting to note that women are generally employed in micro enterprises (62%) while men (57%) work in medium and large enterprises. Evidently this is directly related to the jobs available in those sectors. For example, in the case of the domestic services, where women

predominate, usually families or small companies employ them.

These small companies include restaurants, commercial centers and hotels. The large ones, where men tend to work, include banana, citrus, poultry-rearing and aquaculture farms, as well as large construction companies.

During the focus group sessions with immigrant workers (CID-Gallup Belize, 2010) the job search process which immigrants follow was discussed. Figure 5.1 illustrates this process. In general, it is considered that jobs are easy to find in Belize. Most participants reported finding a job relatively fast, although they didn't have a job upon arrival. They believe that they have easy access to jobs because they provide a cheaper workforce.

As mentioned before, social networks are a key component in the job search. Most of labour migrants obtain an employment through friends' recommendations. In general, they are all aware that they need specific documentation in order to get a job, being these documents a passport, a work permit and a social security card.

Chart 5.2 summarizes the access to training received by the migrant workers surveyed. Only one out of ten respondents indicated having received some type of skills training both in their native country and in Belize. The few who received training in their country of origin explained that it was through an apprenticeship program or through the public vocational training center. On the other hand, while in Belize

40% of surveyed immigrants who had received training did so through a private training center, 23% were trained by the company for which they work through a in-person workshop or seminar. Those who received skills training acknowledged the usefulness for their jobs. In total, only 45 people (36 men and 9 women) out of the 300 respondents actually received some training in Belize.

### CHART 5.2

BELIZE: TRAINING PROCESSES FOR MIGRANT POPULATION IN ORIGIN AND DESTINATION COUNTRIES  
ACCORDING TO SEX, 2010  
-PERCENTAGES-

	Origin country			Destination country		
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
Has the immigrant received any training in the origin country?						
No	88	98	86	85	91	83
Yes	12	3	14	15	9	17
Cases	180	40	140	300	92	208
Institution that provided training in the origin country						
Private training institution	19	0	20	40	13	46
In the company/ employer				23	63	14
Was an apprentice	33	0	35	19	0	23
Public institution	29	0	30	14	25	11
Other	19	100	15	5	0	6
Cases	21	1	20	43	8	35
Kind of training or support given in origin country <sup>1/</sup>						
Workshop or seminar	38	0	40	30	0	37
NA	29	0	30			
Professional certification/ training/ programme	19	100	15	23	63	14
Other	19	0	20	58	38	63
Cases	21	1	20	43	8	35
Has it been useful for the immigrant's job?						
Yes	100	100	100	93	88	94
No	0	0	0	7	13	6
Cases	21	1	20	43	8	35

1/ Multiple choice answer

Source: Based on the data gathered from surveys applied by CID-GALLUP in Belize, may 2010.



85% of migrant workers participating in the survey didn't get a skills training program. Job training programs addressed to this population are needed, in order to improve their job placement. First of all, implementation of literacy programs is fundamental, since the low levels of education and the high number of illiterate migrants makes very difficult for them to find a non-manual job, limiting the kind of jobs they can perform. The combination of a lack of job training, lack of formal education and, in many cases, the absence of basic literacy skills, increases labour segmentation and confines migrant workers to specific activities and particular occupations which often happen to be badly paid and in poor working conditions.

Secondly, implementation of English learning programs is fundamental. Being Belize the only English speaking country in the region, language represents a barrier for Spanish speaking Central American immigrants to integrate into the Belizean society. This is a barrier to establish personal relationships, making friends and integrate in social networks with Belizean people. It will inevitably set up a distance between immigrants and Belizean authorities. It will also place them in a position of disadvantage to access state sponsored programs and interventions. In terms of job availability, those who cannot speak the language will be unable to obtain jobs that require contact with English speaking clients. For instance, in the tourism sector the employment opportunities for immigrants are frequently limited to support services and manual work, since any other job will require direct customer assistance.

## 5.2 Working conditions

Chart 5.3 presents a characterization of the immigrants' working conditions in their place of origin and in Belize. Regarding this issue, most of the immigrants surveyed expressed that their working conditions improved in Belize.

It is worrying to note that 53% of informants expressed that in their native countries their labour rights were not respected. Those whose rights had been acknowledged clarified that it was mainly a weekly day off with pay and leave of absence from the work place in the event of emergencies. In contrast, in Belize, the majority stated that their rights were respected. Only 4% reported labour rights unfulfilment. Although the surveyed immigrants expressed improvements in Belize as it relates to the recognition of workers' rights, the collected data identifies gaps regarding their own awareness of their labour rights.

The most important benefits and labour rights recognized by the employers in Belize were, first and foremost, leave of absence from the workplace in the event of an emergency and, secondly, social security coverage. 85% of informants indicated that they had access to social security. Both women and men confirmed that their rights as workers were recognized regardless of their sex.

15% of the respondents had retirement insurance. Only 29% had occupational risks insurance; 34% had the possibility of receiving temporary disability payments if necessary; 36% had the right to paid vacation time and 38% received bonus. Probably the most alarming finding is the percentage of immigrants that receive minimum wage (only 43% actually receive a minimum wage). This may indicate that there is little monitoring of migrant workers' working conditions.

Regarding occupational risk prevention programs, 94% of respondents said that in their native countries they did not have health or occupational risk prevention programs at their workplace. However, once in Belize, this situation changed. 35% said that these programs were being implemented in their workplace. In absolute numbers, whereas only nine respondents had these programs in the workplace in their country of origin, in Belize the number ascends to as much as 88. Of that total, 76% received first aid briefing and 74% received

CHART 5.3

BELIZE: WORK CONDITIONS OF IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN ORIGIN AND DESTINATION COUNTRIES BY SEX, 2010  
-PERCENTAGES-

	Origin country			Destination country		
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
Benefits or rights the immigrant had in the job of the origin country? <sup>1/</sup>						
None	53	48	54	4	1	5
Paid day off a week	24	35	21	36	37	35
Leave of absence in case of emergency	22	20	23	42	37	44
Social security	8	10	7	85	86	84
Minimum wage	7	10	6	43	42	43
Bonus	4	5	4	38	42	37
Paid work disability	3	3	4	34	38	32
Holidays	3	5	3	36	36	37
Health insurance	2	5	1	41	41	41
Retirement insurance	2	5	1	15	21	13
Occupational risks	2	0	2	29	25	31
Cases	180	40	140	300	92	208
Preventive health and occupational risks program in the company						
No	94	95	94	65	67	64
Yes	6	5	6	35	33	36
Cases	159	20	139	250	42	208
Information provided by the company in which the immigrant worked <sup>1/</sup>						
Information about accidents or illness	89	0	100	73	93	69
Protective equipment	89	100	88	68	79	66
Immediate access to first aid	78	100	75	76	71	77
Machinery in good conditions	67	0	75	43	36	45
Cases	9	1	8	88	14	74
Affiliation to worker organization						
Was not affiliated	97	100	97	96	98	95
Is affiliated	3	0	3	4	2	5
Cases	159	20	139	300	92	208

1/ Multiple choice answers

Source: Based on data gathered from surveys applied by CID-GALLUP in Belize, may 2010.

information about accident or disease prevention.

Affiliation to workers' rights organizations or workers trade unions is not a common practice neither in their countries of

origin or in the country of destination. 97% of migrant workers surveyed were not affiliated to workers' unions in their native countries and an almost the same number (96%) were not involved in these organizations in Belize.

CHART 5.4

BELIZE: RESPECT OF LABOUR RIGHTS OF THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN ORIGIN AND DESTINATION COUNTRIES, 2010  
-PERCENTAGES-

	Origin country			Destination country		
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
<b>Mistreatment in place of work</b>						
There was no abuse	98	96	99	97	95	98
Labour harassment	1	4	0	2	3	1
Psychological aggression				1	2	0
Hidden documents				0	1	0
Physical punishment	1	0	1	0	1	0
Amount surveyed	106	28	78	300	92	208
<b>Respect of rights</b>						
Always respected	99	98	100	98	96	99
No rights respected	1	3	0	2	4	1
Amount surveyed	180	40	140	300	92	208

Multiple choice answer.

Source: Based on data gathered from surveys applied by CID-GALLUP in Belize, march 2010.

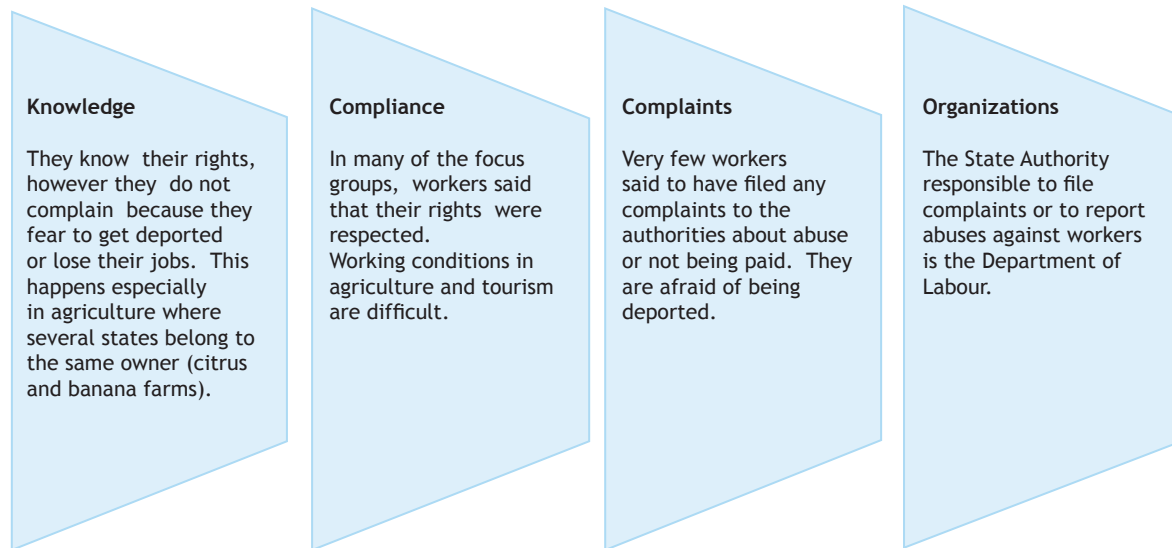
In terms of whether or not their employers respected the labour laws of the country, 97% of migrant workers in Belize declared that they had never experienced mistreatment at their work places (Chart 5.4). It is interesting that when asked “Were your labour rights in your origin country always respected?” and “Have your labour rights in Belize been respected?” almost all answered affirmatively. Nevertheless, when the core labour rights were drawn from the broader question (minimum wage, vacations, at least one day off with full pay), there were resulting discrepancies (Chart 5.3). This information indicates,

on one hand, that they do not know their labour rights and, on the other, the need to scale-up programs to raise awareness of migrant workers’ rights and develop their capacity to claim them.

Figure 5.2 summarizes the information obtained during the focal group session regarding immigrants’ knowledge of their labour rights. It can be outlined that they know what their rights are but they say that in some cases they weren’t respected. As a result of their labour vulnerability, they think they are not entitled to claim them.



**FIGURE 5.2**  
KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR RIGHTS AS WORKERS?



Source CID-Gallup. Group sessions Belize, 2010.

It is interesting to note that some of the participants in the study observed that there is a problem with reporting the violations of labour laws. In other words, the violations exist but there is a culture of not reporting them. The fear of losing their jobs or even to be deported is undeniably a major factor. An example was provided by farmers employed in citrus and banana plantations. Within the industry, there are several estates belonging to a same owner, therefore, losing a job in an estate or accusing an employer of any violation implies difficulty in finding another job in a similar activity in another estate. “If you file a claim, you are running a risk of being sent back to your country or to not be hired elsewhere.”

The Labour Department is the State authority responsible for investigating allegations of labour rights violations. When a report is received, Labour Officials conduct the relevant investigation.

Employers participating in the focus group, expressed that violations are a result of a lack of knowledge about the

labour law with respect to immigrants’ rights and the corresponding sanctions. However, they showed openness to deal with any form of complaints regarding the mistreatment of migrant workers in their workplaces.

As a result of these findings, it is necessary to determine the implications of the current procedures to present complaints regarding labour rights violations against migrant workers. In Belize, the worker is at a clear disadvantage since it must be the employer the one who requests and obtains their work permit so that the migrant worker can be regularized for the duration of their stay in the country. The employer also pays the corresponding fees, makes the necessary arrangements and completes the applications directly with the Labour Department.

During this process, the employer establishes a direct relationship with the government officials involved in the work permits process. These permits are workplace and employer specific, therefore, they are not transferable and the migrant

worker cannot change jobs. This means that, for practical reasons, work permits operate as a contract of exclusivity. In addition, due to the fact that the costs of permits are covered by the employer, frequently these are discounted from the immigrants' salary until totality of debt is cancelled<sup>17</sup>. This practice inevitably limits the possibility of the employee to report any violations of their labour rights. As a result, employees feel that by reporting infractions, they have more to lose.

In general, respondents consider that the working conditions in Belize are better than the ones in their native countries. The fact that they earn better wages motivates them to remain permanently in Belize or to return annually during the harvest.

Generally, working conditions in agriculture and tourism are difficult. According to the discussion in the focus groups, in some cases labour rights are not being respected. In the agricultural sector, sometimes vacations and overtime work are not remunerated: "after the harvest, workers are allowed for vacation time so that they can visit their origin country as opposed to getting paid leave", "overtime cannot be calculated as such, since payment is based on output. Output is determined by how much each person can endure." In tourism jobs, "overtime is paid in rare instances, depending on the employer". In general, migrant workers participating in the focus groups express satisfaction with their income since it is better than what they would be paid in their native countries. However, they are aware that the salary they receive is often lower than the salary paid to native

workers. They believe that employers take advantage of their migratory status. They are often aware that they have the same rights as the native worker, but consider that they are not entitled to claim them, because of their migratory status (Focus Group sessions, CID-Gallup Belize, 2010).

### 5.3 Leisure time and relationships

As stated above, social networks play a fundamental role in the migration process and they are very important in the process of adaptation and integration.

In general, immigrants have strong social relations in Belize and often participate in social activities with both compatriots and nationals, and with their community members in general. 82% of those who participated in this research indicated having good relationships with their fellow citizens and interact frequently with them. When asked to rate their workplace relations with their compatriots on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest, 87 % scored 4.85.

There are strong ties among compatriots, reconfirming the idea that frequent contacts and strong links are established between people of the same nationality before, during and even after migrating. Links are maintained for long periods of time and are fundamental resources for newcomers to adapt to their new reality as migrants. Nationals also help newcomers in the process of gathering and disseminating information about potential jobs, accommodation and key people who could facilitate their stay in the country.

17. Work permit costs range between \$25 for farmers each harvest to \$750 for professionals and technicians.



**CHART 5.5**

BELIZE: RELATIONSHIPS OF IMMIGRANT POPULATION WITH WORKMATES AND COMMUNITY, 2010  
-PERCENTAGES-

	Compatriots	Nationals	Community
<b>Social Activities</b>			
Very good	82	60	83
Rate <sup>1/</sup>	4.78	4.3	4.77
<b>Work relations in general</b>			
Very good	87	63	81
Rate <sup>1/</sup>	4.85	4.32	4.74
<b>Friendship</b>			
Very good	88	68	85
Rate <sup>1/</sup>	4.84	4.41	4.8

**Participation in religious or community organizations**

Category	Percentage
Did not participate	76%
Religious group	20%
Other: community	4%

**Use of spare time**

Activity	Percentage
Rest	50%
Spend time with friends	32%
Go to church	5%
Practice sports	8%
Other	3%

1/ Rate in a scale where 1 is “very bad” and 5 is “very good”.

Source: Based on data gathered from surveys applied by CID-GALLUP in Belize, march 2010.

The score diminishes when social and workplace relations with Belizeans are measured. 60% of respondents said they participated in social activities with native Belizeans. On the 1 to 5 scale, social relations with Belizeans obtained a score of 4.3., expressing good workplace relations between them. When asked how much they value their relationships with native Belizeans, using the same scale, a 4.41 score was obtained.

When assessing the social relationships between the migrant and the Belizeans, from the migrants’ perspective, there is a marked difference in terms of the quality of relations and the value placed to those relationships. They have better relationships with their compatriots than with the native population. This is probably

due to the factors presented earlier in the document (separation between the migrant and Belizean population, ethnic occupational segregation that favors the relationship with their fellow-citizens, existences of family support networks, common language and traditions). In addition, the small percentage of immigrants who established a family with a Belizean national demonstrates to a certain extent a relatively low level of integration of the intraregional migrant population in Belize, particularly when data gathered in this study is compared with the obtained for other countries included in this research.

Naturally, due to labour segmentation, immigrants share both work and leisure time with their compatriots. Likewise, the spatial segmentation in Belize indicates

the existence of communities in urban and rural areas inhabited mainly by immigrants. Around the country many communities exist where residents are predominantly hispanics.

For instance, in the periphery of the capital City of Belmopan, there exist at least five immigrant communities: Salvapan, Las Flores, Armenia, Valle de Paz and St. Matthews. When residing in neighborhoods and communities where the majority of inhabitants are immigrants, social activities meet their own needs and wishes. In addition, the establishment of relationships with their compatriots strengthens their social networks. The shared language facilitates socialization and work with their compatriots or with other Spanish speakers. Nevertheless, the fact that almost three quarters of immigrants establish social, workplace and friendship relations with Belizeans indicates a stable coexistence.

As mentioned before, immigrant workers customarily marry people of the same nationality. This actually allows for the Latino culture to survive in a country where

Afro-Caribbean culture and English language prevail. When having children, they learn their parents' language, their beliefs, their traditions and integrate in their communitarian networks. This process had a great impact on the ethnic shift that took place in the eighties and nineties, when, for the first time the number of Mestizos exceeded the afro-descendants, thereby becoming the majority ethnic group.

#### **Use of leisure time**

Concerning leisure and recreation, although the majority of respondents expressed that they prefer to rest and relax, two out of ten persons spend their leisure time doing other things such as going to church, play sports or spend time with friends.

32% say that they use their time off from work to perform household duties. These are almost exclusively women, showing the stress women face between paid and unpaid work, such as household duties and dependents' care, which are seen as women responsibilities. (Martínez, Mora and Voorend, 2009).

# 6 Legal and Institutional Framework

## Preface

This section aims to present an overview of the legal framework of labour migration in Belize. The country has ratified a number of international treaties regarding labour migration. The main national law regulating migration matters in Belize is the Immigration Act, which regulates the general entry requirements to Belize as well as the approval of Temporary Employment Permits.

The first section presents the authorities principally in charge of labour migration issues and their competencies. The next sections lists the international and regional instruments ratified by Belize as well as describes the Belizean national law regarding immigration, specifically labour migration matters. In the fifth section, the procedure for obtaining an employment permit is described.

## Institutions in Charge of Labour Migration

The Ministry of National Security is in charge of immigration, border protection and citizenship issues. Its Immigration and Nationality Department is, through immigration officers, in charge of carrying out the provisions of the Immigration Act, the main law regulating labour migration (Immigration Act Section 3).

The National Work Permit Committee, under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, which reviews and approves the

applications, is comprised of 3 members from the Department of Immigration, the Department of Labour and the Ministry of Human Development and Social Transformation respectively. The Director of Immigration and Nationality Department issues the permits approved by the Committee (Immigrant Act Section 16; Memorandum on Temporary Employment Permits, OAS).

### Powers of the Minister of National Security and Immigration

Pursuant to Section 5 Subsection 4 of the Immigration Act, the Minister may prohibit or permit the entry of any immigrant into Belize.

Pursuant to Section 12, the Minister may revoke a temporary employment permit at his discretion, and the decision cannot be overruled by a court.

According to Section 39 of the Immigration act, the Minister has the power to make regulations:

*(d) governing the permits and the certificates which may be issued under [the Immigration] Act, the conditions upon which any such permit or certificate shall be issued, the circumstances under which they may be cancelled and the fees which may be charged for any such permit or certificate;*

*(e) regarding the amount and nature of the security to be furnished for the due carrying out of any conditions upon which a permit to enter and reside for*



*a specified period may be issued to a prohibited immigrant;*  
*(f) prescribing the forms of warrants, permits, certificates or other documents to be issued or used or of the declarations to be made or of the books to be kept for the purposes of this Act, and the particulars to be inserted in any such document, declaration or book;*  
*(g) generally for the better carrying out of the objects and purposes of this Act.*

### **Powers of the Director of Immigration and Nationality Services**

Issues temporary employment permits approved by the Temporary Employment Permit Committee, and may deny the applications approved by the Committee for valid immigration reasons. (Section 16) The issuance of these permits is at the absolute discretion of the Director (Section 13).

### **Powers of immigration officers**

The immigration officers have the powers of a police officer to enforce the Immigration Act and any regulations and orders given on the basis of the Act or regulations relating to the arrest, detention and deportation (4:1) and may also call upon the police forces for assistance in the performance of their duties (3). For the performance of his duties, an immigration officer may, pursuant to Section 4 Subsection 5,

*(a) without a warrant enter upon and search any vehicle, vessel, aircraft or other means of conveyance in or arriving or departing from Belize;*  
*(b) question within the scope of his functions under this Act any person who desires to enter or leave Belize or whom he believes is in Belize otherwise than in accordance with the provisions of this Act.*

### **Labour inspections**

Labour officers from the Ministry of Labour are in charge of carrying out labour inspections.

## **1. International Instruments**

International instruments ratified by Belize include:

- ILO Migration for Employment Convention (revised), 1949 (No.97). Ratified in 1983.
- 1951 Refugee Convention. Ratified in 1990.
- 1967 Protocol on the Refugee Convention. Ratified in 1990.
- ILO Convention on Equal Remuneration, 1951 (No. 100). Ratified in 1999.
- ILO Convention on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), 1958 (No. 111). Ratified in 1999.
- The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Ratified in 2001.
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons of 2000. Ratified in 2006.
- Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea of 2002. Ratified in 2006.

## **2. Regional Instruments**

Regional instruments signed within the CARICOM framework aim to facilitate the free movement of workers in the region. Belize is part of the following agreements:

- Protocol II of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, on work permits and free circulation. Adopted 1997.
- The CARICOM Agreement on Transference of Social Security. Adopted in 1999.
- The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Free Movement of Persons Act; 45th Law, 1999.

These acts have facilitated the entry of certain professionals into Belize, namely university graduates, artists, media workers, sportspersons and musicians, by eliminating the need for work permits for these categories of CARICOM nationals.



## National Law

The Belizean Constitution prohibits the use of forced labour (Section 8) and guarantees everyone the “opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts” (Section 15(1)). However, the latter may be restricted in the case of non-citizens (Section 15(3)(c)). Section 13 guarantees the right to form or belong to trade unions, and the Labour Act Section 30 prohibits employers to restrict the affiliation of their employees. The principal legal instrument in Belize regarding labour migration is the Immigration Act.

Section 5 of the Immigration Act lists categories of persons regarded as “prohibited immigrants” under Belizean law, including persons who are likely to become a charge on public funds. However, the Minister may permit or prohibit the entry of any migrant into Belize. A prohibited migrant may, according to Section 27, be ordered to leave Belize, or be arrested and brought to a magistrate’s court with a view to being removed.

According to Section 9 of the Act,

*“The principal immigration officer may issue to any prospective immigrant a permit to enter or remain in Belize subject to such conditions as to occupation, security to be furnished, or any other matter or thing as the principal immigration officer may think expedient.”*

Pursuant to Section 11(3), an immigrant for employment is a person who migrates to Belize with a view to being employed otherwise than on his own account. According to Section 11(1):

*An immigrant for employment who has been admitted on a permanent basis and the members of his family who have been authorized to accompany or join him shall not be returned to their territory of origin or the territory from which they emigrated because the immigrant*

*is unable to follow his occupation by reason of illness contracted or injury sustained subsequent to entry, unless the person concerned so desires or an international agreement to which Belize is a party so provides.*

An immigrant wishing to work in Belize may apply for a temporary employment permit. According to Section 16(1) of the Immigration Act:

*“A temporary employment permit may be issued by the Director of Immigration and Nationality Services to any person who satisfies the Director of Immigration of Nationality Services that he wishes to enter Belize for the purpose of employment there and is the person described in a current voucher issued for the purposes of this section by or on behalf of the Minister responsible for Labour.”*

The issuance of these permits is at the absolute discretion of the Director of Immigration and Nationality Services. In case the permit is revoked, cancelled or expires, or if the permit holder fails to comply with the terms of the permit, the holder shall be deemed a prohibited immigrant and may be dealt with as such. (Sections 13(2-3))The permit is issued for a specified period and a specific type of employment, although the Director of Immigration and Nationality Services may allow employment for other employer than the one specified in the permit. The Director may also cancel the permit if the holder fails to take up the employment. (Section 16(2-4)).

A visitor’s permit holder may not accept employment without a written permission of the Minister, and if the holder does so, the permit may be cancelled by the Director of Immigration and Nationality Services. (Section 19).

As a condition for the issuance of a permit, an immigrant may be required to deposit a sum to cover the expenses of maintenance

and repatriation; the sum will be returned, unless the person is deported, when the Director of Immigration and Nationality Services is satisfied that the person and his dependents have left Belize or after 3 years of residence. (Section 20).

A temporary employment permit may be revoked by the Minister at his discretion or by an immigration officer if so directed by the Minister; or when the terms of the permit so provide. In this case the immigrant may be brought before a court of summary jurisdiction to be charged for any possible infringements of the Immigration Act; the court may release him and restore his permit unless it was revoked by the Minister or under his instructions. (Section 12).

Pursuant to section 34(2)(h), the employment of someone who does not have a work permit constitutes an offence, with a liability to a fine up to 5,000 dollars or imprisonment of up to 2 years, or both. The employer may also be liable for the costs of removing such an immigrant from Belize. The punishment shall be at least 1,000 dollars for a first offence and at least 3,000 dollars or 1 year in prison for the second or subsequent offence. This is an offence of strict liability in that it does not matter whether the employer knew the employee did not have a work permit. (Section 34(3-4)).

According to the Labour Act (Section 9), labour inspections are conducted to ensure that to ensure that the laws concerning conditions of employment and the protection of workers are applied. Pursuant to Section 10, a labour officer, in the role of a labour inspector, may

*(a) enter freely and without previous notice at any hour of the day or night any place wherein he may have reasonable cause to believe that persons enjoying the protection of any law relating to employment are employed, or accommodated, and inspect such place*

The inspector may carry out any inquiry or examination to ensure the laws are

applied, including interrogating employers or workers, requiring the production of registries or other documents and taking analysis samples. However, according to Labour Act (Application to Domestic Servants) Regulations, “no Labour Officer shall enter a private dwelling house at a time which the owner or occupier indicates is inconvenient to him”. This provision affects the possibilities of Labour Inspectors to inspect the working conditions of domestic servants.

### Procedure in National Law

Applications for temporary employment permits are reviewed and approved by the Temporary Employment Permit Committee under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour. A voucher system is used to inform the Director of Immigration and Nationality Services and to keep track of permits granted. Audits by the Office of the Auditor General are conducted to ensure only permits approved by the Committee are issued by the Director of Immigration and Nationality Services and to determine whether visa extensions are used to circumvent the application of a temporary employment permit. The Director of Immigration and Nationality Services can turn down applications by the Committee for valid immigration reasons and will, in this case, inform the Committee of the reasons for denial under confidential cover (Ministry of Labour Memorandum).

Applications for Temporary Employment Permits are submitted by employers wishing to employ foreigners, or by migrants who wish to work as self-employed in Belize. Application requirements for the employment of foreigners include proof of legal migrant status, police record, BZD \$25 administration fee and proof of exhaustive efforts to employ nationals. In the case of agricultural workers, the applicant must present proof of ownership or lease of land and satisfy the authorities that he or she is a bona fide farmer. To facilitate the citrus, banana and sugar industries,

the processing of applications and issuing of vouchers to the Director for agriculture workers, laborers and farmers will be done on a day set by the Committee and in accordance with guidelines established for the industry concerned. (Ministry of Labour Memorandum) Applications should be processed, if possible, within four weeks. (Immigration (Permits and Fees) Regulations Section 3(1)).

Applications for self-employment need to include proof of having established a company with a track record of development, or, in case of a new company, a business plan with proof of funding.

Applications are reviewed and supported by the Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE), based on criteria established by the Ministry of Economic Development and BELTRAIDE. For operating business in municipalities, a trade license is needed.

Applications for a Temporary Work Permit may also be submitted on the basis of longevity in Belize (proof of legal entry required) or on grounds of family ties (proof such as marriage certificate required) or on the grounds of special or unique qualifications (applicants must submit evidence of training received and a training plan to train Belizean counterparts), (Ministry of Labour Memorandum).

For renewals, the same requirements apply as for the original applications, and applicants must also present their previous work permits. (Ministry of Labour Memorandum).

There are different categories of temporary employment permits, and the application fee depends on the category of the permit. Categories of temporary employment permits and their fees, as stipulated in the Immigration (Permits and Fees) Regulation, are the following (the duration of a permit is one year unless otherwise stated):

- (a) *Professional Workers (BZ\$ 1,500.00).*
- (b) *Technical Workers (BZ\$ 750.00).*
- (c) *General Workers/Farmhands (in the banana, sugar, citrus industries, other than seasonal agricultural workers) (BZ\$ 100.00).*
- (d) *General Workers (in all other industries not covered by sub-paragraphs (c) or (e) (BZ\$ 200.00).*
- (e) *Seasonal Agricultural Workers (BZ\$ 50.00 duration 1 crop season).*
- (f) *Self-Employed Workers (in other industries not covered under sub-paragraph (g) i.e., owners or managers) (BZ\$ 1,200).*
- (g) *Self-Employed Workers in the agriculture industry (i.e., owners or managers of farms) (BZ\$ 1,000).*
- (h) *Entertainers performing in groups of two or more persons but whose group consists of less than six persons (BZ\$ 500.00 per group, duration one week or less).*
- (i) *Entertainers performing in groups of six persons or more (750.00 per group, duration one week or less).*
- (j) *Entertainers performing alone (BZ\$ 300.00, duration one week or less).*
- (k) *Religious, cultural, educational and voluntary workers (BZ\$ 50.00).*
- (l) *Import/Export Traders (BZ\$ 750.00).*
- (m) *Waitresses and domestics (no permit to be issued; only in exceptional cases).*

## Labour Migrants and Social Security

Under the Social Security Act, according to Section 3, every person between the ages of 14 and 65 employed in an insurable employment, as defined in the First Schedule of the law, is insured to receive social security benefits in Belize. The insurance is paid partly by the employer and partly taken from the employee's salary (Social Security Act Section 5(1)). The holders of work permits are insured for as long as their work permit is valid. The spouse of a Work Permit holder will be issued a Social Security card to entitle them to social security benefits only if he or she presents a valid Dependent Permit issued by the Immigration Department (Belize Social

Security Board).

To obtain a Social Security Card which enables the holder to claim social security benefits, an employee must register, collect the card from the Social Security and show it to the employer. To get the card, temporary work permit holders must present the original permit as well as an identification document from the country of origin. Thus it appears that irregular migrants cannot have access to social security in Belize. (Belize Social Security Board).

THE CARICOM Agreement on Social Security, which Belize has signed, facilitates the portability of certain social security benefits for migrants within the participating CARICOM countries. Article 5 states:

*Unless otherwise specified in this Agreement, the benefits specified in Article 2 and provided for in the applicable legislation of Contracting Parties shall not be reduced, modified, suspended or forfeited by reason only of the fact that the claimant is resident in the territory of a Contracting Party other than that of the Contracting Party where the competent institution liable to pay such benefits is situated.*

### Concluding remarks

- Legislation is not very specific: It does

not detail the competencies of the authorities, or the criterion they have to use when taking their decisions (for example, what are the criteria for the approval of work permits; what are “valid immigration reasons” that the Director of Immigration and Nationality Services can use to decline to issue a work permit).

- Limited possibilities to appeal: The law does not specify possibilities to appeal decisions taken by the immigration authorities. In the case of revocation of work permits by the Minister or under his orders, appeal possibilities are explicitly excluded.
- Application for a work permit: Solicited by the employer on behalf of the employee. This may be problematic, as the employer may not necessarily have an interest in arranging a work permit.
- Violations of labour law: The penalties specified by law are fines and even imprisonment. Labour inspectors have the power to inspect any place they suspect may be a place of employment, however, they are not allowed to enter private residences without the owner’s or the occupant’s permission.
- Irregular migrants do not seem to be able to access Belizean Social Security.

# 7 Final considerations and recommendations on public policies' drafting

This study has generated a series of thoughts based on information gathered through a multi-method research and data collection. Although it is not statistically representative of the entire immigrant population, it provides adequate data and interpretation for stakeholders to understand the existing migration management processes and migratory flows to Belize. It evidences interesting trends regarding national, social, political and economic transformations occurred in the country as a result of migratory movements.

In a sense, it can be said that immigration to Belize follows a historical timeline in which Central American migration has played a fundamental role. As this study has demonstrated, migration flows from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, are playing an important role in the construction of new social links and in the formation of the Belizean labour market.

It is necessary to point out that contemporary intraregional migratory flows show remarkable differences from those experienced in Belize in the mid eighties. While the essential cause for those migrations were socio-political conflicts affecting most of the region, recent migrations are economically driven as people move in search of better jobs and income.

The profile of surveyed migrant workers in Belize, as reflected in this and other migration-related studies, indicates an age range between 16 and 56, although most of them were over 30 years of age. This reflects a historic record of immigrants who

left their countries as a result of the armed conflicts during the eighties and nineties in Central America. Even though a significant number of respondents were young, the immigrants 'stock from past decades as a consequence of the displacement seems to constitute the largest group of intraregional migrants in Belize. Upon cross examination of counterpart studies in the countries of the region, Belize stands out as an immigrant receiving country where the average age of participating immigrants exceed that of other countries of the region. Nevertheless, an important part of the immigrants today are young and have migrated to Belize for employment reasons. They are currently working in the construction, agriculture, housekeeping and tourism sectors.

Linked to the youthful migrant population is the fact that they are in reproductive age, which means that they will form a family in the destination country.

As for the educational background of intraregional immigrants in Belize, it is acknowledged that they have little or no formal education and they were not given the opportunity to improve its education or benefit from a skills training program in the country.

According to the information gathered and analyzed in this study, it is possible to draw few important considerations.

Belize continues to be an appealing destination for people of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador; not only because it offers security but also because of the

job opportunities. Immigrants find Belize attractive for various economic reasons, such as finding a job in a nearby country that offers opportunities, better salaries and labour benefits. In addition, it is relatively unpopulated in comparison to the neighboring countries. There seems to be less competition for jobs in agriculture given the availability of land, being relatively easy to acquire land.

The second consideration is related to the processes of integration of immigrants into Belizean society. As revealed by this report, after living for some time in the country, many establish marital relationships with other immigrants. The settling of immigrant families in Belize often produces first-generation Belizeans. This means that they become primary wage earners and providers in their households. In this sense, migration does not only represent a change in the geographic environment but also a major shift in their personal lives as they become more economically and family independent. These factors make migration permanent: a new family and a new job in Belize assure permanence.

Through the establishment of a permanent home, social links are developed within the community. They also become essential social capital for the forthcoming immigrants, therefore creating the necessary conditions for the strengthening of migratory systems between the origin and destination countries.

Migrant integration and assimilation is complex. This study pointed out that the native Belizean population rejects the “Central Americanization” that the country has been experiencing over the last thirty years. The risk of losing the afro-Caribbean identity together with a supposed “competition” with the local population regarding economic and labour opportunities, seem to explain the negative perception of a large part of the Belizean population on the presence of the Central American migrant population. This element, without doubt, represents a challenge for

the implementation of inclusive policies in a diverse country, with a short history and great potential.

The third aspect worth mentioning concerns the formation of a segmented labour market in Belize. This is characterized by job placement of Central American migrants in specific sectors and in certain specific occupations (unskilled and requiring little schooling).

This study identifies how Central American labour migrants have been placed into Belizean labour market in certain activities and represent a very important flow of people to sustain the economy.

Central Americans experience labour segmentation and they concentrate in the less skilled occupations of the Belizean labour market. Here the key factor is the lack of fluency in the English language, which is the official language of Belize. Only a limited number of intraregional immigrants have a good command of English. In the tourism industry for example, knowledge and fluency of the language is essential to relate with clients; therefore, those who do not speak the language are unable to develop activities that require direct contact with English speakers.

On the other hand, low levels of education among the interviewed immigrants, is another limitation in the search for better paid jobs that can also offer better working conditions.

Migratory flows toward Belize are consistent, it doesn't seem that they are a response to cyclical factors, and, instead, they have structural causes. This also indicates that there are good and continuous opportunities to obtain good jobs in the country and it seems that this will last. However, Belize does not have an explicit policy on labour migration; there are not adequate procedures and legislation to effectively monitor the constant movement of people entering the country for employment purposes and there is also a weak culture of information on migration management.



At the same time, it is necessary to point out the lack of interventions to promote integration of immigrants into Belizean society, especially of the migratory flows of the last two decades. In general, it should be noted the lack of a comprehensive national migration management strategy to guide the efforts of the institutions involved in migration management, understood from an integral perspective.

It is recommended to encourage a national debate with relevant stakeholders regarding the design and implementation of a comprehensive migratory policy. This would be a necessary step to promote a comprehensive management of migratory flows that would approach the issue from all angles and help to reduce migration negative impacts maximizing the positive ones.

An adequate migratory policy should be based on a precise and updated diagnosis of the reality of the migration scenario in Belize. While this investigation has brought to the forefront important elements of intraregional labour migration in certain sectors of the economy, it is necessary to continue examining other aspects of labour migration, in particular, the impacts of labour migration on the development of Belize.

The lack of knowledge on the migratory reality in Belize is problematic. This became obvious during the design of this investigation as there were difficulties in obtaining previously generated information about immigration in the country. There is a lack of both qualitative and quantitative information. The State should strengthen its mechanisms of data collection on migration and promote academic research about migratory flows in the country. This information is necessary not only for state institutions but also for civil organizations whose work includes migration-related issues.

## Recommendations

Based on the information presented in previous chapters, a series of recommendations have

been made. These recommendations will serve as input for a much needed debate regarding the implications of intraregional labour migration and the actions that should be carried out in order to increase the positive effects and diminish the negative ones. Those recommendations are listed below:

## Causes for migration

First of all, academic institutions, public institutions and civil society organizations should approach the migration phenomenon from a structural perspective whose roots can be found on economic and labour structures in both origin and destination countries. These considerations are important to avoid simplistic analyses and policies that tend to assume that the causes of the labor flows are solely in the origin countries. As a result of this perspective, it is believed that labour migration challenges can be alleviated simply through the commitment and interventions of State entities.

To be successful, the formulation of a labour migration policy should take into account the role of the demand for migrant workforce as the primary pull factor and also the role of employers in the management of migratory flows.

## Gender

There must be a more active involvement of the institutions responsible for ensuring the exercise of women's human rights in the migration field. Gender perspective should be taken into consideration in the analysis and implementation of public policies that target the migrant population.

Migrant women's labour and human rights should be respected, especially in the domestic service. Women working in this sector are more vulnerable to violations of human rights because labour inspection in a private environment is extremely complicated and the violation of labour rights less evident. It is essential to establish measures to facilitate labour inspection



in the households that employ domestic workers. It is also fundamental to raise awareness among employers regarding their responsibilities. Also it is very important that people who employ domestic workers know their obligations and what their role entails.

Additionally, it is important for the country to strengthen its care infrastructure and extend the already existing programs for the benefit of migrants. Public policies must be directed towards the promotion of work-life balance with social co-responsibility, meaning that care duties should be shared not only between men and women, but also the State, the market and the families, as well as the society as a whole.

One of the limitations in this study was that it only addressed the gender dimension on the base of data related to migrant women working in specific activities such as agriculture, domestic service and tourism; therefore, it doesn't reflect the diversity of occupations migrant women are involved in. Studies on other economic activities should be developed in order to generate specific information on the participation of women in the workforce. This will deepen the understanding of the situation of migrant women in Belizean society and economy.

## Education and Training

An important challenge resulting from the analysis of the information is the restrictions of the migrant population surveyed to access educational services. Taking into account that the educational background of the majority of the immigrant population is low or none, it is clear that this is an issue that must be addressed with no delay by the country authorities, in order to improve the integration and conditions of migrant workers and their families. Even though the problem is directly related to difficulty in accessing education and scarce educational opportunities that migrants face in Belize and in their home country, it is also linked with the absence of integral and institutional mechanisms to

promote the improvement of the migrant workers 'integration to the work place. Thus, training and capacity building public policies targeted to the migrant population should be formulated in order to improve their performance in the labour market. It is also necessary to expand educational infrastructure, assess the relevance of the training provided and reduce the exclusion of a large proportion of the population as is the case of immigrant population.

## Working conditions

The information gathered in this study confirms that migrant workers are highly vulnerable to labour rights violation, as it happens in the rest of the Central American countries studied. A policy of "zero-tolerance" to labour right violations, which must not exclude people based on their migratory status, is necessary. It is also fundamental to draft, regulate and implement laws that ensure the protection of labour migrants' social and labour rights, regardless of migratory status, including penalties for those who violate these rights.

Any public policy related to regulation and regularization of labour migration must take into account the private sector, especially the companies that employ migrant workers. These policies must acknowledge good practices of the institutions and companies that hire migrant workers in regular conditions and respect their labour rights. These acknowledgements can include, among other actions, access to simplified contracting procedures and management of working migratory authorizations, and obtaining ad hoc certifications so that their products can enter solidarity markets.

## Institutional strengthening

Given the characteristics of immigration in Belize as destination country for intraregional migratory flows, it is important to address the need for a comprehensive migratory policy. This policy must deal with not only the emigration processes but also



the challenges of the labour intraregional migration flows management. It is then necessary to strengthen the capacities of the Administration concerning the enforcement of regulations that protect the migrant population. This process must be developed through investment in necessary resources, increased budgets and through capacity building training, forums and workshops.

Among the aspects that should be strengthened, an immediate improving of the functioning of labour inspections is required. To do so, it is imperative not only to have more economic resources but also to establish training processes on labour migration topics that widen the inspector's knowledge on migratory reality, including the issue of trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling.

Likewise, it is important to invest in a data processing system that includes equipment to collect electronic data from passports; software for the collection and processing of data as well as training for the operators. This process must be implemented with the input of the institutions that support migratory processes, such as the Labour Department, Statistical Institute of Belize, Belize Tourism Board and regional organisms such as SICA.

## Social Integration

Lack of access to social services of a country is in itself a deterioration of human rights. It affects nationals as well as immigrants and their families.

Actions must be undertaken to facilitate immigrants' access to social support services that will improve their integration to the Belizean society. These include improved access to education, health, and housing, among others. These services must be adapted to meet the needs of the target population since they may require different approaches because of their specific situation. For instance, housing projects

for migrants should be presented within the scope of human mobility dynamics that are emerging in the region as a result of regional development.

It is also important to raise awareness among the national population about the contributions of immigrants to the economy, culture and society of the country, with the aim of reducing xenophobia and discrimination. In this sense, NGO's and governmental departments can be involved in this process in order to improve the information on the causes and consequences of migration in Belize. Information campaigns on labour migration should be launched at national level. Migrant service centers dedicated to provide assistance to migrants can be operated in collaboration with NGO's. In terms of institutional strengthening, continuous training should be offered to migration officers; financial and technical support to governmental agencies and migration related organizations (IOM, ILO, Universities, UNHCR and researchers) should also be available.

Finally, it is fundamental to foster bilateral agreements through the involvement of a wide range of partners including governments, private sector, civil society and the migrant population in both origin and destination countries. This collaborative environment will foster platforms for migration related concerns.

## Adequate Management of Labour Migration

Belize has a dynamic labour migration flow. Even though there is no certainty about the number of immigrants, it is estimated to be near 15% of the entire population, the highest percentage of immigrant population in relation to native total population in the countries of the region. This has a great impact on all the social structures of the country. Therefore, it is important to place greater emphasis on this phenomenon, with specific emphasis on labour migration management.

In order to do so, it is necessary that the State moves forward to:

- Establish a permanent program to regulate and regularize labour migration flows in the country that contributes to the protection of the rights of migrant workers and their families.
- Foster programs that ensure greater collaboration between the state institutions and civil society in monitoring migrant workers' labour rights and the proper functioning of labour migration management mechanisms. This will help to ensure that workers' labour rights will be respected and will increase transparency in hiring procedures and work conditions as well as in the functioning of institutions in charge of labour migration management.
- Improving the existing mechanisms of regulation and regularization of labour migration flows. In particular, work permit procedures must foresee issues such as the need to change employers or jobs, and to allow to increase the duration of the work permit. It is necessary that these possibilities exist because, as it has been shown, the fact that they are not foreseen in the current work permits, generates vulnerability. Migrant workers are obligated to stay with one employer, regardless of their situation, to keep their work permit.
- Establishing professional training programs (in the immigrant's native language), information campaigns about decent work conditions in Belize (social security, labour laws), culture, language, safe remittance system, among others, as well as developing education accreditation programs among the countries of the Central American region with the purpose that diplomas and degrees obtained in other countries of the region may be valid in all countries.

## Strengthening the relation between Belize and migrant sending countries

In order to improve the recruiting and management processes regarding seasonal labour migration flows, it is important that collaborative mechanisms are set into motion between Belize and the migrant sending countries.

This collaboration will not only favor an orderly migratory flow but it will also reduce migrant workers vulnerabilities. It is essential to consider implementing practices that will reduce labour exploitation, labour discrimination, child labour, and trafficking in persons. An effective administration of labour migration requires Belize and the origin countries to commit to certain initiatives, amongst them are:

- Exchange of lessons learnt and good practices related to migrant services and in particular the supervision of migrant workers recruitment in origin countries and hiring in Belize.
- To achieve collaboration amongst governments, worker organizations and unions that fight for workers rights in origin and destination countries to promote proper work conditions and access to decent jobs for migrant workers.
- To develop migratory policies that favor integral human development of immigrants and their families both in their origin countries and in Belize, through specific programs that consider their particularities.
- To encourage cooperation amongst governments of the region and the systems and regional and international organizations related to migration in order to promote an orderly and well geared labour migration.
- To promote the creation of permanent information and cooperation exchange



mechanisms between the origin countries and Belize, with the purpose of insuring a proper organization and administration

of labour migration flows and the optimization of the positive effects on the origin and destination communities.

# 8 Bibliography

Arias Foundation. (2000). *Migration and Integration in Belize: Realities and Responses*. San Jose, Costa Rica: Arias.

Acuna Gonzáles, G. (2010). *Investigación Flujos Migratorios Laborales Regionales: Situación, Actual, Retos Y Oportunidades” Diseño Teórico-Metodológico*. San Jose, Costa Rica: CECC/SICA-FOIL.

Arriagada, Irma (2002). Cambios y desigualdad en las familias latinoamericanas. *Revista de la CEPAL*, No. 77. Pp. 143-161.

Arriagada, Irma (2004). Estructuras familiares, trabajo y bienestar en América Latina. En: Irma Arriagada y Verónica Aranda. *Cambio de las familias en el marco de las transformaciones globales: necesidad de políticas públicas eficaces* División de Desarrollo Social. Santiago de Chile: CEPAL.

Barry, T. (1992). *Inside Belize: The Essential Guide to its society, economy and environment*. Albuquerque, N.M.: The Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center.

Baumeister, Eduardo; Fernández, Edgar y Acuña, Guillermo (2008). *Estudios sobre las migraciones regionales de los nicaragüenses*. Ciudad de Guatemala: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.

Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology (2005). *Final Report- Consultancy to “Undertake a Social Survey of the Banana Communities to Establish a Grant Fund for the Social Recovery within the European Union Banana Support Programme”* Belize, Belmopan, : BEST.

Belize Tourism Board (2010). *Map of Belize*. [www.btb.org](http://www.btb.org). Accessed 24 May 2010.

Castles, Stephen y Miller, Mark (2009). *The Age of Migration. International Population Movements in the Modern World*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York: The Guilford Press.

Central Statistical Office (2000) *National Census*. Belmopan, Belize: CSO.

Central Statistical Office (2004). *National Labour Force Survey*. Belmopan, Belize: CSO.

Central Statistical Office (2008). *Belize Gross Domestic Product (GDP) 2000 - 2008*. Belmopan, Cayo: CSO.

Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, CEPAL (2000). *La migración internacional y el desarrollo en las Américas*. Simposio sobre migración internacional en las Américas. Santiago de Chile.

Cornebise, M. (2004). *An Analysis of Belizean International In- and out-Migration Trends*. The Association of American Geographers 100th Annual Meeting.

Dustman, C. Glitz, A. & Shonberg, U. (2009). *Job Search Networks and Ethnic Segregation in the Workplace*. <http://mbc.metropolis.net/assets/uploads/files/Glitz.pdf> Retrieved 10 August 2010.

ECLAC (2005). *Migration in the Caribbean - What do we know? An overview of data, policies and programs at the international and regional levels to address critical issues*. Port of Spain: Population Division.

- International Monetary Fund (2009) *IMF Executive Board Concludes 2009 Article IV Consultation with Belize*. Public Information Notice (PIN) No. 09/58 May 14, 2009 <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pn/2009/pn0958.htm>
- Martínez Franzoni, Juliana (2008). Domesticar la incertidumbre en América Latina: mercados laborales, política social y familias. San José: Editorial de la UCR.
- Martínez Franzoni, J., Mora, S. & Voorend, K. (2009). *Entre Ocupación y Pilar de los Cuidados. El Trabajo Doméstico Remunerado en Costa Rica*. Consejo de Ministras de la Mujer de Centroamérica del Sistema de Integración Centroamericana. UNIFEM-AGEM, Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres de Costa Rica.
- Massey, D. (1990). "Social Structure, Household Strategies, and the Cumulative Causation of Migration." *Population Index*. Vol. 56, no. 1: 3-26.
- Massey, D. & Espinosa, K. (1997). "What's Driving Mexico-U.S. Migration? A Theoretical, Empirical and Policy Analysis." *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol 102, Number 4 (January 1997) p. 939-99.
- Ministry of Education (1996). *National Literacy Survey*. Belmopan, Belize: CSO.
- Moberg, M. (1990). Class Resistance and Class Hegemony: From Conflict to Co-optation in the Citrus Industry of Belize. *Ethnology*. 29 (3): 189-207.
- Moberg, M. (1997). *Myths of Ethnicity and Nation: Immigration, Work and Identity in the Belize Banana Industry*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press.
- Montgomery. T.S. (1991). *Refugees in Belize*. Report to the High Commissioner of Refugees. Belmopan, Belize: UNHCR.
- Moss, N., Stone, M.C. & J.B. Smith (Fertility among Central American Refugees and Immigrants in Belize. *Human Organization*. Volume 52, Number 2 / Summer 1993 p. 186 - 193.
- Morales Gamboa, Abelardo y Castro Valverde, Carlos (2006). *Migración, empleo y pobreza*. Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales. San José: FLACSO-Costa Rica.
- Morales, A. (2007). *La diáspora de la posguerra. Regionalismo de los migrantes y dinámicas territoriales en América Central*. San José, : FLACSO-Costa Rica.
- Murrillo, G. (2005). Integración de Migrantes en Belice. Conferencia Regional de Migración "Seminario sobre Integración de Migrantes en Países Receptores" San José, Costa Rica. 23 -24 de junio del 2005.
- National AIDS Commission (2006). *Strategic Plan for a Multi-Sectoral National Response to HIV/AIDS In Belize (2006 - 2011)*. Belize City, Belize: NAC.
- Palacio, J. (1990). *Socioeconomic integration of Central American immigrants in Belize*. Benque Viejo del Carmen: Cubola Productions.
- Palacio, J. (1993). Social and cultural implications of recent demographic changes in Belize. *Belizean Studies*, 21 (3), 2-12.
- Portes, A., Guarnizo, L. & P. Landolt (1999) The Study of Transnationalism: pitfalls and promise of an emergent research field. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 22 (2). 217-237.
- Portes, A. (1998): Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24: 1-24.
- Plaisier, J.L. (1996). *The impact of Central American immigrants in Belize*. Master's Thesis, Dronen: University of Amsterdam.
- Petit, J. M. (2004). *Trafficking of Persons in Belize* - Preliminary report.
- PRISMA (2009). Las expresiones territoriales de las dinámicas migratorias: Entre la

superación y el rezago en Santa Rosa de Lima. San Salvador: Programa Salvadoreño de Investigación sobre Desarrollo y Medio Ambiente.

Robinson, St. John (2006) *Peopling of Belize: Chapters in migration*. National Institute of Culture & History. Belmopan, Belize: Print Belize.

Robinson, William (2003). *Transnational Conflicts. Central America, Social Change and Globalization*. New York: Verso.

Rosa, Herman (2008). *Perfiles y trayectorias del cambio económico en Centroamérica. Una mirada desde las fuentes generadoras de divisas*. Programa Salvadoreño de Investigación Sobre Desarrollo y Medio Ambiente (PRISMA): San Salvador.

Segovia Alexander (2004). *Centroamérica después del café: el fin del modelo agroexportador tradicional y el surgimiento de un nuevo modelo*. *Revista Centroamericana de Ciencias Sociales* 2 (1), diciembre.

Smith Santiago, M.C. & August, E., Erich, F. (2004). *Impacts of Central American Immigrants on the Belize Banana Industry*. Belmopan, Belize: Help for Progress.

SPEAR/NTUCB (2001). *Fruit of their Labour: Living and Working in the Banana Region of Belize*. Belize City, Belize: SPEAR.

Statistical Institute of Belize (2009). *Abstract of Statistics 2009*. Belmopan: SIB.

Texidó E., Baer G., Vichich N. P., Santestevan A. M. , & C. P. Gomes (2003) *Migraciones laborales en Sudamérica: el Mercosur ampliado. Estudios sobre Migraciones Internacionales-63*. Ginebra: OIT. Sector de la Protección Social Programa de Migraciones Internacionales.

Talbert, E. (2002). Taller de capacitación para el análisis de información censal sobre migración internacional en América Latina. Chile.

Vernon, D. (1990). "Belizean Exodus to the United States: For Better or for Worse." *SPEAR Reports 4: Second Annual Studies on Belize Conference*. P. 6-28. Belize City, Belize: SPEAR.

Woods, L. A., Perry, J.M. & J. W. Steagall. (1997). The Composition and Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Belize: Immigration and Emigration Patterns, 1980-1990. *Latin American Research Review* Vol. 32, No. 3, p. 63-88.



# Annexes

## ANNEX 1

### # 1- Questionnaire for Immigrants

Project N. Project N. 9-2-017-10	
a	Country: Guatemala....1 El Salvador.....2 Costa Rica....5 Panamá....6 Belize....7
b	Place/Country, __ a/Province: _____ District/Municipality _____ Interviewer:
c	Informant: Active immigrant worker: Country: _____
d	Date: _____
e	Time: _____ Before 10am...1 10 to- 12m...2 12 to -2...3 2 <sup>a</sup> -4pm..4 4 <sup>a</sup> -6pm....5 6 to- 8pm...6 8pm+...7
f	Interviewer. _____ Approving Supervisor _____
g	Do you currently work? Yes...1 No....2 Thank him/her and finish
h	Location of interview: Workplace....1 Home...2 Park or place of recreation....3
i	Sector: Agriculture....1 Construction....2 Housekeeping...3 Collateral Commerce construction ...4
j	Sex: Female....1 Male....2
<p>Good Morning/Afternoon/evening y name is _____ (show ID) and I work for CID Gallup well known in our country for its social studies. Right now we are working on a very important study among people who have come to this country to work. The objective is to know how you are and direct actions that will give you a better life quality for people like you - I want to let you know that everything you say is confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study, I guarantee I will not reveal your personal information. Here is a flyer with my name, phone number and you can call and ask for our supervisor if you wish to do so. I beg for a few minutes of your time, you have been randomly selected and as we are interviewing you we will interview other men and women as well. Thank you for your help. Before we continue, we have a few questions about yourself - <b>Please have a clear profile of the informant</b></p>	
<p><i>Before we continue, How long ago did you enter for the first time this country to work?</i></p>	
1	NA...0 Thank him/her and finish 10 years and over...1 less tan 10 years and more tan 5...2 Less than 5 and more than 1...3 one year and more than 3 months...4 Less than 3 months...5 Thank him/her and finish
<p><i>How long ago did you enter for the last time to work in this country? Write down clearly: _____</i></p>	
2	11 to 9 months....1 1 year to - 2 years ...1 2 to -4 yrs.....2 4 to -6 yrs.....3 6 to -8 yrs....4 8 to - 10 yrs....5 10 to -15 yrs.....6 15 yrs. and more.....7
3	How old are you? _____ (Only between the ages of 16 and 55) Other Thank him/her and finish
a	Code: 16 to 24....1 25 to 29...2 30 to 34...3 35 to 39...4 40 to 44...4 45 to 49...5 50 to 55.....6
4	Thank you, now let's talk about your life in general. What is the best thing about our country? -- Let's say in one or two words _____
5	And, what is the not-so-good or bad? _____
6	If you think a year from now, How do you see your future regarding your job situation? Rotate. Better than now....3 Same as now....2 Worse than now...1 DK...0
7	What was the last grade you were in or that you passed? Where? Write down: _____ None.....0 Primary. Incomplete...1 Primary. Complete...2 Secondary/basic. Incomplete...3 Secondary Basic. Complete...4 University. Incomplete... 5 University Complete...6
7a	Only if he/she answers none: Can you read and write? yes...2 No....1 NA....0
<p><b>I. THE FAMILY UNIT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS</b> Thank you for helping us, now we have a few questions about your family life</p>	
8	Do you have a partner in this country? No.....0 Go to question 9 Yes. What is the nationality of your partner? Write down _____ Code with question 10
8a	Are you currently married to your partner? Yes..... 1 No.....2 NA....0



9	Do you have a partner in your country of origin? Yes: What is the nationality of your partner in your country of origin? Write down _____ Code with q.9 No.....0 Go to question 10		
9a	Are you married to your partner in your country? Yes..... 1 No.....2 NA....0		
10	Let's talk about you: What is your country of origin? I mean, where were you born? Spontaneous Nicaragua ....01 El Salvador ....02 Honduras...03 Guatemala ...04 Panamá ....05 Costa Rica ...06 Belize ..07 Colombia.....08 México...09 Other: _____ NA...00		
10a	What is your nationality? Write down: _____ Code with q.10		
11	And in your last trip, what country did you come from, the last time you came here? Spontaneous _____ Code with q. 10 _____		
12	a) Before coming here _____ what department did you live in? _____ b) Do you remember the name of the municipality where you lived? _____ Refer to code guide		
13	Think back to your home before you came to this country, -In every step we will also think about your current home.		
	Category	13 Origin Family/home	13a.Current family
	Who do you live with? Cross those mentioned		
	Father/Mother	1	1
	Wife/Partner	2	2
	Children	3	3
	Siblings	4	4
	Other relatives	5	5
	Friends	6	6
	Employer	7	7
	Other: Note: _____	8	8
14	Who is the main provider for the expenses at home? -only one- First mention	(14)	(14 a)
	Interviewee	9	9
	Father/mother	1	1
	Spouse/Partner	2	2
	Children	3	3
	Other relatives: grandchildren, grandparents, uncles, cousins....	4	4
	Friends	5	5
	Other: _____	6	6
15	As for children, How many depend on you economically?- In your country of origin and here? None....0 PGo to q.16a	(15)	(15 <sup>a</sup> )
16	How old are your children? Note in each case.	(16)	(16a)
	Leer: 0 to 6 yrs.	1	1
	7 to -14 yrs.	2	2
	15 to -17 yrs.	3	3
	18 yrs. and over NA....0	4	4
		0	0
16a	Do you have any children who were born in this country? Yes: How many? note in chart None...0	(16b)	(16c)
17	And your housing situation was? And now? Rotate:	(17)	(17a)
	Owner	1	1
	Rented	2	2
	Granted or loaned by employer	3	3
	Granted or loaned by family	4	4
	Settlement/ unstable	5	5
	Other: _____	6	6
18	In total, how many people lived in your house?	(18)	18 <sup>a</sup> )
	01.....	note. _____	note. _____
19	In total, how many bedrooms were there?	(19)	19a
		Note down _____	Note down. _____
20	Did you share/or currently share your house with people other than your family? Note Quote	(20)	
	Yes: Friends	1	1
	Workmates	2	2
	Other families	3	3
	Did/does not share	0	0



21	In general, how satisfied are/were you with your housing situation? Where 5 is very much and 1 is not at all note.	(21) _____	(21 <sup>a</sup> ) _____
23	Did/does your house have any of these services?: Rotate reading. Cross affirmative answers	(23) Family of origin	(23a) current Family
	Drinking water from an outside source	1	1
	Electricity	2	2
	Telephone	3	3
	Toilette	4	4
	Latrine	5	5
	Bathroom/ Shower	6	6
	Drinking water at home	7	7
	Any other? note: _____	9	9
	Interviewer: note total of services	23b) _____	23c) _____
24	As for the following items, which ones did/ do you have?	(24)	(24 <sup>a</sup> )
	Radio or stereo	1	1
	T.V.	2	2
	Iron	3	3
	Refrigerator	4	4
	Computer	5	5
	Washing machine	6	6
	Stove	7	7
	Internet	8	8
	N.A. Other _____	9	9
	Interviewer: note total of items	24b) _____	24c) _____
27	As for these services, which ones did/does your family have access to? Cross all affirmative answers.	(27)	(27 <sup>a</sup> )
	School, for your children or yourself	1	1
	Solid waste collection services	2	2
	Places for recreation: parks, squares	3	3
	Daycare access	4	4
	Health services	5	5
	(does not have access to any of these) Only if not coded from 1 to 5	0	0
28	Who were/are beneficiaries of health establishments read/ rotate	(28)	(28a)
	Only you	1	1
	Only your spouse/partner and children	2	2
	Only your children	3	3
	All of the family	4	4
	None	0	0
30	On average, what is the total income at your home for the last three months before coming here?-And now that you are here, what has been the total income in your home for the last three months? Note in national currency Before _____ Now _____	(30)	(30 <sup>a</sup> )
	Code in \$ \$-up to \$ 200 ...1 201 to 400 2 \$401 to 600..3 \$ 601 to 800..4 \$801 to 1000...5 \$1001 to -1200...6 \$1201 to 1400...7 \$1401 and over...8	_____	_____
31	From that total, who was the main provider?	(31)	(31 <sup>a</sup> )
	Interviewee	1	1
	Spouse/ partner	2	2
	Father/ mother	3	3
	Children	4	4
	Grandparents ...5 6/Other _____	5/	6/
		5/	6/
32	How did/do you obtain the total home income?: Rotate: Cross affirmative answers	(32)	: (32 <sup>a</sup> )
	Salary	1	1

	Scholarships, State benefits	2	2
	Help from family members- not remittances-	3	3
	Welfare	4	4
	Remittances: money received from family members	5	5
	Retirement fund...6 Other.....7	6	7
33/a	<b>What did/do you spend your money on?: Rotate: - Cross yes</b>	Before (33)	Now (33 <sup>a</sup> )
	Clothing	01	01
	Home rent or mortgage	02	02
	Medical attention and medicine	03	03
	Transportation	04	04
	School tuition (transportation not included)	05	05
	Electricity	06	06
	Water	07	07
	Food	08	08
	Telephone	09	09
	Welfare	10	10
	Daycare	11	11
	Recreation	12	12
34	<i>In general, do you consider that you made do with your income? And now?</i> <b>Rotate:</b> More ....3 The same....2 Less....1	(34)	(34 <sup>a</sup> )
35	<i>Do you provide any economic help for family in your country of origin?</i> yes....2 No....1 <b>Go to q.43</b>		(35 <sup>a</sup> )
36	<i>And most of those times, what is the amount you send? National currency Amount:_____</i> Code in \$ - up to \$ 200 ...1 201 to 400 2 \$401 to 600...3 \$ 601 to 800...4 \$801 to 1000...5 \$1001 to -1200...6 \$1201 to 1400...7 \$1401 and over...8 NA...0		(36 <sup>a</sup> )
37	<i>Through what means do you often send those remittances?</i> Family/friend ....1 Bank...2 Transportation services/buses..5 People in charge of carrying money...3 Companies: W. Union, Money gram...4 . NA...0		(37 <sup>a</sup> )
38	<i>Approximately how much does it cost to send that money?</i> \$1 to 10... 1 \$11 to 20...2 \$21 to 30...3 \$31 to 40...4 \$ 40 and over..5 nothing...6 NA...0		(38 <sup>a</sup> )
39	<i>Could you indicate how often do you make remittances?</i> Every 8 days...1 Every 15 days...2 Once a month...3 Irregularly.....9 Every other month....4 Every four months...5 Every 4 months and over... 6. Other..... NA....0		(39 <sup>a</sup> )
40	<i>How many people benefit directly from your remittances? note:_____ NA....0</i>		(40 <sup>a</sup> )
41	<i>Who are the people directly benefited? spontaneous , cross the ones quoted Interviewee...1 Spouse/ partner...2 Father/mother...3 Children...4 grandparents ...5 Friends...6 Other..... NA....0</i>		(41 <sup>a</sup> )
42	<i>To finish this section, how do they use the money you send? Spontaneous cross the ones mentioned: Pay basic expenses of the house (food, education, rent, etc.)...1 Savings...2 Loan payments...3 Business Investment...4 Recreation...5 Education...6 NA....0</i>		(42 <sup>a</sup> )
43	<i>Do you send items or things that are not money?</i> Yes: <b>spontaneously:</b> Clothing...1 Medicine...2 Food...3 School supplies....4 Electrical appliances....5 Computer...6 Others.....8 Does not send anything....0		(43 <sup>a</sup> )
<b>II. MIGRATORY PROCESS</b>			
50	<i>Now we are going to talk a little about your arrival ----- When you decided to come here, did you have any information about what to do, where to live or any other kind of information?</i> Yes....2 No/came without knowing anything, haphazardly.....1 <b>go to q .55</b>		
51	<i>What kind of information did you have? Anything else? Spontaneously cross the ones mentioned General information about the country.....1 Information about job possibilities...2 Travel expenses...4 about possible migration problems....5 about permanence/lodging ...3 Other:..... 9</i> Other: About friends and help from locals 6 About abuse in workplaces....7 NA...0		



52	From the information you mentioned before, what helped the most in making the decision to come here? Note first. _____ Code with q.51 NA....0
54	Through what means did you get that information? Esp. : _____ cross the ones mentioned: Friends....1 Family....2 Newspapers...3 employers ....4 Church....5 Radio....6 Internet....7 Other. _____ 8 workers that returned NA....0
55	And since the first time you came to this country, how many times have you gone to your country of origin? note _____ None /First time ....0 go to q. 57 Note if they have returned to the country of origin between the first and last time they entered the country to work
56	What is the main reason why you return to your country? sp. _____ I live there, I work here for a day and go back for the weekend (or day off)... 1 To visit my family...3 to find documents...5 When the harvest season/work is over I go back temporarily.....4 Other... _____ 6 Holidays: Christmas, Easter, other.....5 NA.....0
57	Interviewer Try as much as possible that to ask question 58 as casually as you can so that the interviewee is not uncomfortable Do you remember if in any occasion you were deported or banned from entering the country? Yes...1 No...2 Go to q.59
58	How long after did you come back in after you were deported _____ NA...0
59	What means of transportation do you use when you come here? spontaneous - cross the one mentioned on foot ...1 by car...2 by truck/pick up...3 by bus...4 by plane...5 By boat....6 horseback...7 other _____ 8
60	Right now you are in the country: _____ Rotate: temporarily (less than 6 months)...1 permanently...2 by periods, you return to your country when you're not working...3 Only for harvest season...4 Other _____ 7
61	What documents did you use to enter the country? - Rotate: Cross affirmative answers. None.....7 go to 63 Birth certificate...1 Baptism certificate....2 Identification Document..3 Passport...5 safe-conduct...6
62	From all those documents, which ones do you still keep? Cross affirmative answers Birth certificate...1 baptism certificate....2 ID..3 Passport...5 safe-conduct....6 None...7 NA...0 go to q.64 -
63	Did not having any documents give you any trouble? Yes: could you please tell me what kind of problems? : _____ _____ No trouble ... 0
64	Today, do you have any kind of migration document to remain in the country? cross affirmative answers- yes which ones: Passport/ visa(tourist visa)...1 Passport/visa - work permit.....2 Residence permit...3 residence card...4 Permit or work card...5 Passport C4...6 Other _____ doesn't have any documents or permits...0
65	Have you worked in other countries in between your first time here and the last one? Yes: where? _____ No...0 go to 66
65a	Why did you leave that country?: _____ - NA...0
66	To be given a job here, where you required an ID or migration document? Yes :what? cross the ones mentioned: Other. _____ 7 None....0 Passport....1 ID...2 Residence license...3 Passport C4...6 Work permit ...5
67	Rotate q. 67 and 68 Could you share with us the best experience you had entering this country? _____ _____
68	Could you share the worst experience you had entering this country? _____ _____
69	When you came to this country, did you have support from a person or institution? Yes, what kind of support? spontaneously: _____ Code with q. 69 No ....0 go to 70
69a	Is there any other kind of support? spontaneously cross the ones mentioned: Economic....1 Housing..2 Food...3 Labour counseling....4 legal counseling....5 None other...9 Got help finding a job...6 Clothing....7 Other _____ N.A....0
69b	The support you got was it from a person or an institution when you came to this country? From whom? spontaneously several Family....1 Workmates....2 Institution/ nongovernmental organization...4 Government...5 Church....6 International organizations....7 employer...8 Friends that live here.....3 Other _____ 9 NA...0
<b>III. REASONS FOR MIGRATION</b>	
70	Rotate blocks 70/ and 71a/- what was the main reason you left your country of origin the first time? spontaneously: note: _____ Code with q70a
70a	What are other reasons? Cross the ones mentioned: other _____ 0 Was unemployed and came to find a job...1 better education....2 medical treatment...3 Family reasons...4 Marriage...5 Natural disasters....6 safety...7 family brought you here...8. Was attracted to the country....9 Other. _____
71	Do you think the main reason why you left your country is still valid? yes.....1 ..... No.....2 (DK/NS)...0
a	What is your opinion based on? _____

72	What was the main reason you chose to come to this country? spontaneously. _____ - Code with q 72a	
72a	What other reasons? cross affirmative answers: Better wages...6 Safe place to live in....0 Better job opportunities...1 it is easier to find a job.....2 More opportunities for better education..... 7 Salaries are paid in dollars....4 Migratory process is not too complicated.....8 Better health care...3 There are better work conditions.....5 It is a safe place for me and my family...9	
<b>IV. WORK SITUATION</b>		
	We are going to talk about your work situation in your country again _____ before you came here and about your life in _____. Try to rotate every now and then...country of origin and current country of residence.	
73	What is/was your main occupation? -Both in the country of origin and now. specify clearly Country of origin: _____ Current country of residence _____	73. country of origin _____ 73 <sup>a</sup> country of destination _____
73b/c	Were you trained in your main occupation? -in your country? And here? yes...2 No...1 go to q. 73	73b _____ 73c _____
73d/e	Who trained you? rotate code NA....0 Public training institution...1 Private training institution...2 NGO...3 Church.....7 The company/employer...4 was a trainee...5 Other... (specify) _____ 8	73d _____ 73e _____
72f/g	What kind of training did you receive in your country and here? Rotate/ cross affirmative answers online course...1 some kind of distance course...2 Certification program...3 Professional training...4 Workshops or seminars...5 Professional Certification...6 NA....0 A combination of the above (indicate which ones)... 7 Other _____ 8	73f _____ 73g _____
73h/1	Was your training useful for the job you currently have? Yes...1 No...2 NA...0	73h _____ 73i _____
73j/k	What is the main reason for your opinion? _____	72j _____ 72k _____
74	The last week before you came here, did you have a paying job? yes....1 No.....2	74 _____
74 /bclf	Now let's talk about the job you had before you came here and the one you have: What kind of job was/is Rotate	(74b) (74c)
	Temporary....	1 1
	Permanent....	2 2
	Self employed	3 3
	Worked without payment for friends or family	4 4
	Was unemployed NA ...	0 -
75	Which ones of the following benefits or rights did/do you have in your job? Rotate cross all affirmative answers	Origin: (75) (75 <sup>a</sup> )
	Social security	01 01
	Health insurance	02 02
	Occupational risks	03 03
	Work disability (paid by the employer)	04 04
	Did you get minimum wage?	05 05
	Did you get a bonus at the end of 13 months?	07 07
	Did you get vacations?	08 08
	Were you entitled to have leaves of absence?	10 10
	As far as retirement funds, did/do you have any?	11 11
Did you have a day off every week?	12 12	
	Did not work - Only if there are no codes from 1 to 12	00 -
76	And the activity you currently do is it potentially harmful for your health? yes...1 No...2	(76) (76 <sup>a</sup> )
77	In the company that your worked for is there any kind of program to prevent occupational risk yes ....1 No ...2 housekeeping... NA....0 go to q.79	(77) (77a)
78	In the job you had and the one you have now you get: Rotate cross affirmative answers	(78) (78a)
	Information on what to do in case of disease or accident at work	1 1
	Protection equipment	2 2
	Machinery in good conditions	3 3
	Immediate access to first aid	4 4
	Not valid	0 0



79	Were /are you a part of a trade union?	(79)	(79a)
	Not valid/ did not work	0	-
	Was not/is not a part of a trade union	9	9
	Union	1	1
	Employee solidarity association	2	2
	Employee committee	3	3
	Savings and loans association	4	4
	Other: _____		
80	Did you experience any kind of abuse in your previous/current job?	(80)	(80a)
	Not Valid/did not work	0	-
	There was no abuse <b>go to q. 81</b> Yes: what kind of abuse? Cross the affirmative answers	9	9
	Sexual harassment: flirting, invasion of personal space, inappropriate contact....	1	1
	They hid your documents, passport, ID	2	2
	Labour harassment: mobbing, non justified penalties...	3	3
	Physical punishment	5	5
80	Psychological violence: insults, bullying	6	6
81	You felt like your rights as worker were at any point violated	(81)	(81)
	Not Valid / did not work	....0	-
	Your rights were always respected <b>Go to q. 83</b>	1	1
82	If your rights were violated, what did you do about it?	(82)	(82a)
	Not valid	0	0
	You filed a claim to the company	1	1
	You reported it to a worker's organization Lo denunció con una organización de trabajadores	2	2
	You talked about it with your workmates	3	3
	You filed a complaint to the company	4	4
	You went to the department or organism in charge of labour	5	5
	You didn't report them because you feared losing your job	6	6
	You were scared since your migratory condition is irregular	7	7
You didn't do anything about it	9	9	
83	How long were you at your last job? How long have you been at your new one? _____	(83)	(83a)
	Not Valid...0 9 months less than 12 months/a year....5 Less than 30 days .....1 One to three months...2 Over 2 yrs.....7 Three to six months ....3 over 6 months less than 9 ...4 one to two yrs.....6	_____	_____
84	What does the company you work for do/produce? Specify clearly. Not valid ... 0	(84)	(84)
	Worked _____ a )Works _____	_____	_____
85	How many people worked/work there? note in each case Not valid did not work/ 0 Number: _____ up to 98 99 and over....99	(85)	(85a)
86	Why did you leave your job in your country of origin?. Note the ones that match	(86)	(86 <sup>a</sup> )
	Your contract ended...1 Staff layoffs...2 you had problems so you had to leave the job...3 you decided to look for a better job...4 Better offers....5 Disease.....6 too far from home.....7. Other..._____ Not Valid /----- 0	_____	_____
	_____		
Last few questions about your activity in this country:			
87	Since the last time you came, have you switched jobs? Yes: How many? _____ _NO....0 <b>go to q. 89</b>		
88	What was the main reason you decided to switch jobs? : _____ _____ Not valid....0		
89	Have you ever done any procedures with national institutions to get this job? How was it? Cross the ones mentioned: Yes: it was fast and easy....1 It was slow and complicated....2 The staff was rude....3 The staff was nice.....4 You got what you needed....5 No...0 <b>Go to q.90</b>		
a	What kind of process did you do?: _____ Not valid...0		
90	Let's talk about your current job in this country, How did you find a job? Through a friend ....1 Newspapers....2 You came here hired...3 Agreement between companies...4 Job listings...5 You went to the place and asked...6 You had worked before....8 They came to your house and offered a job...7 Radio.....9 Other.....0		
91	<b>Rotate 91/92</b> Have you ever had any positive experiences with migration authorities in this country? No experiences....0 Yes: what kind of experience? _____		

92	Have you had any negative experiences with migration authorities in this country? Yes, what kind of experience? _____ No experiences....0			
Let's talk about your relationships with workmates and your community. In general how would you qualify your relation with workmates compatriots and nationals as well as your community? Make sure you ask about the three categories				
93	Rotate categories and ask where 5 is very good and 1 very bad (has no contact) 0	A- compatriots	B nationals	C community
	Social Activities: parties, meetings, games, sports	_____	_____	_____
	Work relations in general	_____	_____	_____
	Friends and friendship	_____	_____	_____
94	Have you ever felt discriminated against? Yes, by whom? Rotate: cross affirmative answers Compatriots....1 Nationals ...2 Employer...4 community....3 National authorities migration, police:....5 Supermarkets, stores....6 Other...7_ No problems.....0			
95	What have you been discriminated for? _____ For nationality.....1 For being undocumented.....2 Skin color.....3 Accent...5 For not speaking the same language....4 They say we create trouble...6 There are criminals the same nationality as you.....7 Other_____			
95a	What's the nationality of your boss? note: _____			
95b	Keeping in mind your experience and knowledge who do you think are the best bosses?: Rotate People same nationality as you.....1 Nationals.....2 They're both equally good...3 They're both equally bad)....4 Other_____			
96	Before coming here were you a member of a religious organization or in your community?. If yes which ones note. _____ Code the ones mentioned religious....1 women's organization....2 Community association....3 No participation No participation.....0 School association....4 Political party.....5 Sports association....6 Other..._____			
97	What do you do with your spare time? Note the first one mentioned Rest..... .01 Watch T.V.....02 Practice sports...03 Spend time with friends...04 Visit family.....05 Visit malls....09 House chores...06 Study...07 Go to church....08 Go to bars....09 Go to billiards...10 Other_____ Nothing...0			
90	Comparing your general life conditions with the ones you had in your country, would you say it is better or worse?. Where 5 is a lot better and 1 is a lot worse _____			
91	As far as you work conditions how would you compare them to present day? Where 5 is a lot better and 1 is a lot worse _____			
92	How much would you want to return to your country? Where 5 is a lot and 1 is not at all _____			
93	Do you think that you are using your formation skills in your current job? Where 5 is very much and 1 is not at all. _____			
94	Would you recommend someone like you to come to this country to work? Where 5 is very much and 1 is not at all. _____			
95	Which of these two positions do you agree with?: If we say that 5 equals that you wish to stay here permanently and 1 temporarily, how would you rate it? _____			
96	How do you think the economic situation of your country will be in the next few years? Where 5 is a lot better and 1 is a lot worse: _____			
97	When you think about your country, what conditions would have to change for you to return?: _____			
98	The last time you came here, who did you come with? Friend...1 Children...2 Spouse/partner...3 Other /family members....4 Alone.....			
Thank you again for all your support it has been very helpful for us to understand the conditions of people like you. To finish and for reasons of reference of my work, just a few last questions about you. If they should visit you or o call I beg you answer the same way you did with me.				
	Name of interviewee: _____			
	Address (home or work) _____			
11	Landline phone number. _____ Yes...2 No...0 _ b: Cell phone number. _____ Yes....1 NO...0.	l1	l2	
13	Time of end of interview _____ Time of duration (in minutes). _____			
14	Interviewer: I certify that the information given here is pertaining to the profile and requirements that I was given for interviewees. Any variation may be considered false and a crime punishable by our laws _____ I.D. _____ Signature Yes...2 No...1			
15	Supervisor: I approve of the quality of this questionnaire and take full responsibility and consequences for any doubts Signature: _____ Code. _____ No...0			
16	Coder: _____ Date. _____ NO....0	a	b	
17	typist _____ Date. _____ No.....0	a	b	



## ANNEX 2

### Instrument #3: Focus Group guide for migrant workers

INTRAREGIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION FLOWS INVESTIGATION: CURRENT SITUATION, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
 APPLY TO MIGRANT WORKERS WHOSE CONDITION ENTAILS  
 SOME KIND OF WORKING ACTIVITY  
 CONSIDERING THE GENDER/AGE CRITERIA IN FORMING FOCUS GROUPS

#### GENERAL GUIDELINES

This guide for the study of focus groups is oriented towards gathering the opinions, perceptions and considerations of migrant workers in the places of destination where they are currently working. The main objective is to gather and systematize qualitative information about the opinions and perceptions produced by migrant workers in the different economic sectors that have been selected (construction, agriculture, housekeeping) for the realization of this study.

The main criterion for selection of participants of the focus group is that at the time the fieldwork is done, these participants are working. Other criteria include the importance of the physical activity as well as gender, age and ethnicity conditions.

In every country included in this study (Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala) four (4) focus groups will be formed with migrant workers. The following chart contains the details of distribution by country and required profiles for the creation of focus groups with migrant workers, for the destination places and for those cases in which focus groups are formed by migrant workers that have returned to their origin countries.

SESSION PROGRAM CHART FOR  
 FOCUS GROUPS WITH MIGRANT WORKERS FROM GUATEMALA, EL SALVADOR, COSTA RICA AND PANAMA

Where?	Who?	Group Sessions (with whom?)
<b>PANAMA</b> Panama City /Colón	Central American Workers	2 Male migrants working in construction (1 Panama, 1 Colón) 2 Female migrants working in activities associated with construction (1 Panama, 1 Colón) *See annexes
<b>COSTA RICA</b> Guanacaste/central area, South Zone, San José	Central American workers	2 Male migrants working in construction (1 San Jose, 1 Guanacaste) 2 Female migrants in housekeeping (2 metropolitan area)
<b>EL SALVADOR</b> San Miguel, La Unión, Pasquina and Santa Rosa, San Salvador	Central American workers	2 male migrants working in construction (2 San Miguel) 2 female migrants in housekeeping and commerce (2 from La Unión, Pasquina y Santa Rosa)
<b>GUATEMALA</b> Zacapa, Izabal and Chiquimula, Guatemala City	Central American workers	1 male migrant working in construction (Guatemala city) 1 female immigrants, housekeeping, (Ciudad Guatemala) Agricultural male immigrants (Chiquimula/Izabal) 1 Agricultural male immigrant (Izabal)
<b>BELICE</b>	Central American workers	



1. There will be 8 to 10 participants per group, previously selected through the survey application process to develop during fieldwork of this study.
2. Due to the duration of the interview and the session, it cannot be insured that everyone has been previously interviewed.
3. In each group, this guide will be applied, directed by an experienced person in this methodology. Sessions will be recorded in digital audio and will be transcribed for later processing and development of a qualitative data base that will be used for later analysis.
4. The list of questions for association will not be included as such.
5. CID-GALLUP is in charge of recording audio but not for transcribing. They will hand in the recordings for each of the six sessions.

### Part I: Participant identification

It is requested that all participants give general information to be recognized. This general information is in the identification and selection form.

Country

Name

Place of origin

Time you have been performing the activity

Lives alone or with family

### SESSION GUIDE

#### Part II: Open ended questions

#### Topic 1. Migratory process: Thank you and now let's talk about your arrival to this country

1. Let's close our eyes and think of this: **foreign workers in this country**. Now, let's say everything that comes to mind.
2. Alright so, what are the reasons why people like you leave your countries and come here or other Central American country?
3. **Rotate q. 3 to 5** Now let's think that I come from another planet: you have to explore what "**migra**" (**migration**) means
4. What does "**coyote**" (**person who brings other people illegally to a country for money**) mean?
5. What does "**contractor**" mean?
6. When you decided to come here, how did you choose this country?
7. Apart from this country, did you think of others?
8. And at the end what was the main reason to come here?
9. Was the decision to leave your country only yours or did you discuss it with family, friends, partners?
10. Were there any family members that influenced you to leave your country and come here?
11. Did anybody object? Why?
12. How did you prepare to come here? What kind of information did you have?
13. When you got here, what means of transportation did you take? Car, boat, bus, walk
14. Did you get here alone or accompanied? By whom?
15. Before you came here the last time, did you or the people coming with you know this country?
16. Is it difficult to cross the border if you travel without a migratory permit?
17. Is that dangerous?
18. Once you came to this country, what were your main concerns or problems?
19. Did you have any kind of support to settle into your job when you came to this country? Like what? Or who?



20. Do you know any undocumented workers that live and work here?
21. Why do you think that don't have any documents? Passport, ID
22. What about the people here? **Check to see if they have any documents**
23. If they don't have any- Why don't you have any documents? If they do- What documents do they have and what was the process like?
24. How long did it take to get documents?

### Topic 2. Previous process: The search and work conditions

25. Now let's think about the word **employment** what is the first thing that comes to your mind?
26. And now let's think about the word **work**
27. The first job you had here- How did you get it? **Ask** enterprise, institution that hire them
28. Did you have enough training to take on the job you got?
29. How did you manage with no training?
30. Were there any difficulties, enablers... let's share the experience you had when you were looking for a job
31. What did you plan to work on when you came here? Was that what you got? Why?
32. Have you switched activities during your stay in this country? Why?
33. This changes, were they good or bad? Let's say more knowledge, better pay, problems
34. Do you think that the things you have learned in your jobs in this country could be useful in your country if you were to return?
35. What do you think is the reason for employers in this country to hire immigrants and not nationals?
36. Do you feel like your boss is interested in your wellbeing? What gives you that idea?

### Topic 3. Work conditions

37. We have two more words to think of: "**coyote**" and "**pollero**" ( a very hated and notorious person that smuggles immigrants into other countries "Pollero" literally means chicken leader for the way illegal immigrants, known as "pollos" walk behind them through the harsh border region like a big bag of chicken feed)- what do you wish to say?
38. In companies/workplaces, do you have any kind of signed contract?
39. Let's talk about your work day: What is it like? How many hours a day do you work? Overtime?
40. When you work overtime, how do you get paid? Double, the same?
41. If you decide not to work overtime, does that jeopardize your job?
42. Days off, how often do you get one?
43. Is it always the same day or does it depend on what the employer says?
44. Where do you live regularly?
45. Those of you who live in your workplace, what do you do when your working-hours are done?
46. Do you feel like your schedule is respected?
47. There are different ways to get paid by the hour, weekly, monthly. How does it work for you?
48. Do you get paid what you were offered or are there any deductions? Why?
49. Do your workmates who are nationals get paid the same way? If not, why?
50. If your employer provides food or housing, do you pay for those services or is it deducted from your salary?
51. As far as holidays, have you had any holidays and do you get paid before or after?
52. Do you have access to health services? Has your employer helped you to get social security?
53. What can we say about work conditions?
54. **Ask about:** security, protection, machinery in good conditions, occupational risk

55. In general, do these conditions allow you to do your job properly?
56. In your workplaces is there any kind of program to prevent accidents related to your job?
57. Have you ever had any accidents related to your work? If you did, did you have any support from your employer?
58. Right now, are you working temporarily or permanently?
59. How do you feel about the form of hiring- enterprise, intermediaries, contractors, coyotes, polleros- that is more benefited?
60. In general, how do you think work conditions are in this country? Ask about: social security, proper housing, transportation, salary, health, basic services availability, among others
61. Beside that job, do you do any other activities that generate income?
62. If you think about your country, what are the conditions there?
63. Here's another word to think about: **Family**
64. You are living with family here, how do you feel?
65. There is talk about an economic crisis, have you felt any changes in your jobs because of the crisis?

#### **Topic 4. Knowledge about Labour Laws**

66. Let's go back to the benefits you receive as workers: which ones do you remember and use?
67. Do you think you have the same rights as nationals? Yes, no and why?
68. Does your employer provide those benefits?
69. Have you had the chance to join a trade union?
70. Have you ever filed a claim about your rights? What happens if you report them to the authorities?
71. Do you know about other people or even yourselves that have reported them? How was that?
72. If you have reported them, where did you go?
73. Have you had guidance or support from people or organizations about your rights ?

#### **Topic 5 Life Conditions**

74. Let's talk about adapting to this country, did you leave your family in your country? Who takes care of them?
75. How do you feel about being far from your children? Would you like to bring them here?
76. How has your family life changed regarding your origin country?
77. Do you travel back to see your family? How often?
78. Do they come to visit you?
79. Are there any specific dates when they come and go?
80. Do you send money or things back to your family?
81. What do they use that money on? Do you think they use it well?
82. In this country do you have family, a partner, kids, siblings
83. Do you participate in activities in your community?
84. How do you feel here in this country?
85. As far as how they get treated in this country, what can you say?
86. How do you see the next two years in this country?
87. How about in your country?
88. Do you think to go back to your country? Why?
89. Since you came to this country, has your situation improved or decreased? Why?

Thank you very much for your support CID-GALLUP April 2010.



## ANNEX 3

### Instrument #4: Focus group guide for businessmen or their representatives

INTRAREGIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION FLOWS INVESTIGATION: CURRENT SITUATION, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
(CID DOCUMENT FOR GROUP SESSIONS)

#### GENERAL GUIDELINES

This guide for the development of focus groups is oriented towards gathering information, opinions, perceptions and considerations of businessmen or their representatives that employ migrant workers.

The main objective is to gather and systematize qualitative information about the opinions and perceptions of the businessmen or their representatives involved in different sectors (construction, agriculture, and housekeeping) for this study.

The main selection criterion for participants of this focus group is that at the time of performing fieldwork for this investigation, they represent companies active in the previously mentioned economic sectors.

In each country included in this study (Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic) two focus groups with businessmen or their representatives will be applied and in some cases, distribution criteria will be mainly geographical.

Note: The sessions will be coordinated with the migrant workers sessions- this indicates that there are two places or communities where the 6 sessions will take place- three for each one.

The following chart is the detailed distribution of focus groups with businessmen:

SESSION DETAIL:  
CONFIRM LOCATION WITH IMMIGRANTS' SESSIONS

Country	Place	Sessions conformation/Coordinate place with migrant sessions
Panama	Panama city/ Colón	2 groups with businessmen from construction (1 Panama, 1 Colón)
Costa Rica	Guanacaste/ central area	2 groups: One with construction San José) and another one in agriculture (Guanacaste). Both mixed
El Salvador	San Miguel	2 groups with businessmen from construction San Miguel)
Guatemala	Ciudad Guatemala and Zacapa	1 focus group in construction from Guatemala city 1 group in agriculture from Zacapa
Dominican Republic		1 businessmen from construction and 1 with businessmen in agriculture

- In each group there will be about 8 to 10 companies or their representatives, previously selected in the framework of this study.
- In each group the following guide will be applied, directed by an expert in applying this kind of methods.
- Necessary information:
  1. Name
  2. Age
  3. Name of the company or institution you represent
  4. Geographic location of the company or institution
  5. Position held in the company
  6. Time of work in the company
  7. Time of hiring Central American workers- Belize

Notes:

1. Sessions will be recorded in digital audio by CID-GALLUP.
2. Approximate duration 70 minutes.
3. Transcripts are a responsibility of ILO/- for its later processing and developing a qualitative data base to be used later on for analysis.

**Part I: Identification of participants**

1. Everybody has to have a participant registration form filled out.
2. Warning: The information you provide is of confidential character and follows scientific research means. The opinions hereby expressed will not be attributed to you once published.
3. Presentation: Moderator.
4. Participants that have already their names: Where do you come from, how long have you been in the country, occupation.
5. Introduce the rules of the session:
  - Speak one at a time, very clearly
  - Everything said is very important and stays confidential within the group
  - It's important to be precise and brief
  - If you agree: indicate you do so and continue on, don't repeat things previously mentioned
  - We have a guide to get to so let's start
  - This information must be registered in the selection form of the participant

**SESSION GUIDE**

**Part II:**

**Let's talk first about the conditions presented by companies in this country.**

1. What do you think is the situation in this country for companies like the ones you represent?  
Let's examine both negative and positive
  2. Do you think this is the desired situation? Why?
  3. If it isn't the desired situation, what do you think is necessary to make it right?
  4. Where do you think the main obstacles lie for companies not to develop to their full potential?
  5. If we think about the last five years and recently, have Central American men and women workers been hired? What is an approximate number?
- A. As we all know, migrant workers have a fundamental role in developing activities that the companies you represent do. Now, let's talk a little about these workers.**
6. Could you indicate in general terms what have been the tendencies as far as the arrival of



Central American workers (Panama and Colombia) to Belize in the last 5 to 10 years?

7. As far as migrant women, what is the tendency that you have observed in the last, let's say, 5 years?
8. As far as the age ranges of these migrant workers, what is the average age? Have you seen that change in the last few years?
9. The need to have migrant workers is it permanent or does it only happen a few times a year? Has it diminished?
10. Why are national workers not using all the job positions in your company?
11. What positions are usually filled by migrant workers?
12. What are the positive aspects of migrant worker participation in the activities related to your company?
13. Have you ever noticed any negative impact? Could we talk a little about that?
14. Do these workers have enough experience to do the job they have?
15. What is your opinion about the training that migrant workers have?
16. What areas or fields do you think should these people be better qualified in?
17. Do you think that such training should come from this country or should there be some kind of coordination established with the countries they come from?

**B. For the insertion of migrant workers into the job activities is it necessary to implement a series of actions in socio-labour and laws?**

18. Do you have immigrants working in your company, would you rather have nationals instead? Why?
19. Could you comment on the health conditions that these migrant workers arrive in?
20. How is it that you find migrant workers? Do they arrive, or do you have intermediaries?
21. Do you remember any official program or project oriented towards the facilitation of arrival of migrants to your country? **Ask about:** agreements of foreign workforce knowledge and application.
22. Whether or not you remember these programs, what kind of communication or information campaigns to attract immigrants to your companies?
23. If there was any way to bring migrant workers regularly to work in your company, do you think you would do it?
24. If there were any programs to enable the arrival of migrant workers to the companies of this country, what would this program have to be like in order for it to be attractive for your company? **Ask about:** special permits, financing, involved institutions, etc.
25. What country would you prefer to bring migrant workers from?
26. What kind of occupation, age and gender would you like the people working in your company be?
27. Speaking of laws, do you remember any laws or regulation linked to migration or its work-related parts?
28. Do you think migrant workers have the same rights and benefits as national workers?
29. Do you think there are differences in the way a legal immigrant versus an illegal immigrant is treated?
30. What experiences do you know or do you have with migrant workers and migratory authorities? Bribery, etc.?
31. Do you think the rights of immigrants who work in this country are respected in the companies they work for? Why?
32. Are there any differences of treatment according the kind of company?
33. Like what and where?
34. Do you remember what are the proceedings needed to hire regularly an immigrant in this country?
35. What can be said about the proceedings that migrant workers have to do for their work and social regularization in this country? **Ask about:** too much paperwork, too long to be done, too expensive.

36. From your experience, are there people who do this work? What kind of people are they?
37. Are there any programs of business social responsibility that you know of? What is it? Is it in any way linked to migrant workers?

**C. The effects of the financial crisis have been present in some productive activities. In your specific case is this true?**

38. Have you experienced any diminishing in the arrival of migrant workers to your country or companies?
  39. If yes, how have you made up for it?
  40. What is your opinion about the future of economical activity and the participation of migrant workers in it?
- D. Finally, coexistence of populations is an important element to consider in case of the presence of foreign workers.**
41. What are the biggest difficulties when providing housing, food, health services and other benefits to migrants and their families?
  42. From what you know and have heard, how do migrant workers and national workers get along in your company?
  43. Do you think it is necessary to create programs oriented towards improving relationships among immigrants and nationals?
  44. If these programs are created, who would be responsible for them? The state, a private organization , NGO.
  45. Back to those problems, do you think they affect the quality of work and productivity in your company? How does that impact it?
  46. What are the biggest problems that migrant workers face? Finishing the work day, values, alcoholism, aggression, disease.
  47. If we think a little: are these problems different from the ones that Nicaraguan and Honduran workers have?
  48. If you had the choice and capacity to hire migrant workers, what country would it be from?
  49. We've had a very productive time, are there any final observations about the topic that we forgot about?

Thank you very much again.  
CID-GALLUP April 2010.

ISBN: 978-9968-542-49-4



9 789968 154249 4



# COUNTRY REPORT BELIZE

RESEARCH REPORT

Intraregional Labour Migration Flows: Current situation, challenges and opportunities in Central America and the Dominican Republic



IOM • OIM



International Labour Organization



CECC/SICA  
Coordinación Educativa y Cultural Centroamericana



Ministry of Labour, Local Government, Rural Development, National Emergency Management and Immigration and Nationality



Under the auspices of

And the support of

