

ENGAGEMENT OF THE DIASPORAS OF CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES



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PROLOGUE

The transnational links between countries of origin and countries of destination are one of the most important aspects of the relationship between migration and development. These links or networks woven between migrants and their communities of origin are an opportunity that governments can harness for social, cultural, economic, and political development, in communities of destination as well as of origin.

This issue has gained relevance in the international and regional agenda precisely in order to coordinate actions to advance these transnational links. The Diaspora Ministerial Conference, held in 2013, provided an international platform for the first time for governments to share experiences and thoughts on the participation, policies, and programs regarding the diaspora.

While IOM has worked with diasporas since the mid-1970s, this conference was a landmark in the commitment of the Organization and enabled us to define a strategy based on three pillars or axes: Enabling, engaging, and empowering the diaspora. This strategy (IOM's Strategy to Enable, Engage, and Empower Diaspora) defines diaspora as transnational communities because in a world of unprecedented global mobility, they comprise people who are connected to more than one country. The transnational nature of diaspora implies that these people are crucial when it comes to connecting countries and communities because they can call on multiple networks, relate to different identities, and share a sense of belonging to more than one community.

In this context, it is a pleasure to share this study, titled *The Engagement of the Diasporas of Central America and Mexico: Opportunities and Challenges*, with the various government actors, donors, diaspora organizations, academia, and the private sector.

This report is ground-breaking in the region in that it provides a look at the Mesoamerican diasporas and emphasizes a transnational and bidirectional focus on diaspora organizations and links with countries of origin and destination. The findings and evidence in this report will be useful for facilitating spaces in which diaspora organizations and the governments of the region can come together. The purpose of this is precisely to identify, agree on, and support more actions to enable, engage, and empower diaspora organizations, establishing through them true transnational corridors for development.

This investigation, undertaken in collaboration with the Laboratory of Economic and Social Studies (LEES), is without a doubt the first of its kind in the region. The available information on the Mesoamerican diaspora dealt in large part with the experiences of Mexico and El Salvador. With this exploratory exercise, IOM is contributing to a first regional approach to diaspora organizations. It is thus a starting point for continuing to deepen understanding of these Mexican and Central American diaspora organizations and promoting dialogue between the various actors involved in migration and development.



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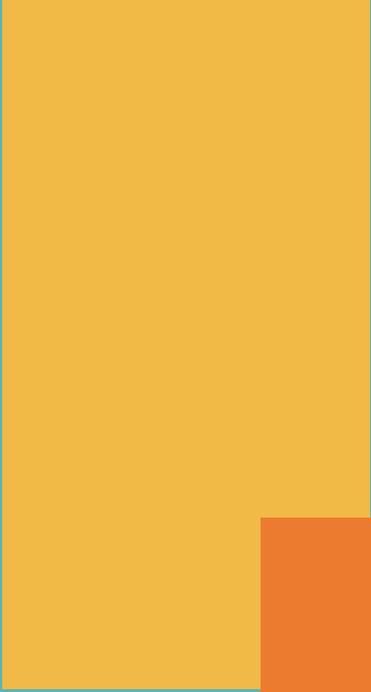
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ACRONYMS AND INITIALS

UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
ASTRODOMES	Association of Domestic Workers (Costa Rica)
CAMMINA	Alianza para las Migraciones de Centroamérica y México [Alliance for Migration of Central America and Mexico]
CCSALMTL	Comité Ciudadano de Salvadoreños en Montreal [Citizen Committee of Salvadorans in Montreal]
COFECA	Confederación Centroamericana [Central American Confederation]
CONAMIGUA	National Council on Migrant Services of Guatemala
CONAPROHM	National Council on Protection for Honduran Migrants
CONEVAL	National Council on Political Evaluation of Social Development
CONGUATE	Coalición Nacional de Organizaciones Guatemaltecas [National Coalition of Guatemalan Organizations]
CONMIGRANTES	National Council on the Protection and Development of Migrant Salvadorans and their Families
COTSA	Comunidades Transnacionales Salvadoreñas [Transnational Salvadoran Communities]
DESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
FISDL	Social Investment Fund for Local Development of El Salvador
FSV	Social Fund for Housing
IME	Institute of Mexicans Abroad
INM	National Migration Institute
ISSS	Social Security Institute of El Salvador
MIGUA	Movimiento de Inmigrantes Guatemaltecos en Estados Unidos de América [Movement of Guatemalan Immigrants in the United States of America]
MPI	Migration Policy Institute
NISGUA	Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
IOM	International Organization for Migration
UN	United Nations
PADF	Pan American Development Foundation
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
SAWP	Mexico-Canada Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program
PTTE	Temporary Foreign Worker Program
BHW	Binational Health Week
SICA	Central American Integration System
SRECI	Secretariat of Foreign Relations and International Cooperation of Honduras
USAID	United States Agency for International Development



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this study, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) presents an evaluation of the opportunities and challenges relating to the involvement of the diasporas of Central America and Mexico in their communities of origin. The following characterization is provided based on the identification of over a thousand diaspora organizations and a survey of 91 of them, complemented by a document review and interviews with key informants, with the caveat that the information obtained should not be generalized.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MESOAMERICAN DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS

The results of the survey of the 91 participating organizations make it possible to highlight various characteristics. The majority of the organizations represent people of Mexican origin. A significant second group of organizations represents people of Salvadoran origin. The great majority of organizations have been in existence for over 10 years. Regarding membership, a third of organizations are composed of over 200 people and another third have fewer than 50 people. One out of every three organizations is made up of similar numbers of men and women, whereas the other two thirds are predominantly either men or women. Most are made up of people from a single country. Almost all are of a secular nature.

ORIGIN OF ORGANIZATIONS AND GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

In addition to the specific information on the 91 organizations that responded to the survey, the characteristics of 1,014 diaspora organizations identified using official directories and other sources of information were mapped. The great majority (that is, 770) of these organizations are of Mexican origin. Salvadoran organizations are second with 131. The three countries of origin with the next greatest number of organizations identified are Honduras with 31, Nicaragua with 24, and Guatemala with 16.

Out of all the organizations identified, 964 were counted in the United States, 29 in Canada, and 21 distributed among the Mesoamerican countries included in this study.

Within the United States, the state with the greatest number of organizations is California, where 38% are located, followed by Texas with 21%, and in third place with a much smaller number, Illinois with 6%. The states of New York, North Carolina, and Florida each accounted for 3% of migrant organizations.

In Canada, meanwhile, the province with the greatest number of migrant associations is Ontario, where 14 were counted, followed by Alberta with 6 organizations.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBJECTIVES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MESOAMERICAN DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS

In order to understand the relationship of the diaspora organizations with their communities and countries of origin, the reasons why these groups were formed were analyzed. Thus, it was identified that Mexican organizations were formed in order to create a better environment for their families or simply for a feeling of belonging and nostalgia, as well as to create co-investment projects with the goal of helping communities of origin. Of the Mexican organizations identified, 69% belonged to the category of Hometown Clubs, which are made up of people from the same community, locality, municipality, or state, and based on their objectives belong to the category of Origin-Focused Organizations, which consider benefiting places of origin one of their goals.

Like Mexican migrants, the Salvadoran population abroad formed organizations to send collective remittances to finance improvements in communities of origin. 82% of Salvadoran organizations were identified as Migrant Clubs, that is, they are made up of people from different communities or places of origin.

In general terms, the Guatemalan and Honduran diasporas grew primarily in the 1980s. In the case of Guatemala, the sudden increase of refugees and displaced persons encouraged the formation of organizations, while in the case of Honduras, the natural disaster caused by Hurricane Mitch in 1998 motivated the formation of organizations with the objective of providing aid to those affected.

Regarding the Nicaraguan diaspora, the surge in migration to the United States occurred at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, primarily related to the armed conflicts and Sandinista revolution in 1979, while in the 1980s and 1990s development in Costa Rica attracted Nicaraguan laborers to migrate, primarily for agricultural work. This movement was accompanied by a flow of Nicaraguan women to Costa Rica in search of better economic, educational, and social opportunities for themselves and their children.

In the case of both Honduras and Nicaragua, Migrant Clubs are the most common type of organization, whereas for Guatemala 25% were identified as Hometown Clubs.

Belize, Costa Rica, and Panama are countries with lower levels of emigration, and thus identifying diaspora organizations was more complicated due to the fact that these countries have not implemented mechanisms to enable identification of migrant nationals.

LINKS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS OF ORIGIN AND THEIR ORGANIZED DIASPORAS AND SUPPORT FROM GOVERNMENTS FOR THE DIASPORA

The institutional linkage between national governments and the diaspora occurs primarily through consular services and embassies. The vast majority of the organizations that responded to the survey in this investigation found having a connection with their respective governments to be beneficial for their operation and their members. Consular services are links in the processes of the policies governments implement for their relationships with diasporas. The administrative, orientation, and representation services they provide are essential not only as part of the process of implementing the policy, but also for building a relationship and a connection between nationals and their governments, in which credibility and trust are indispensable.

It was identified that national governments have achieved greater linkage with their diasporas through: 1) creating a legal framework, 2) creating an institution to specialize in linkage with the diaspora, and 3) support to the diaspora through consular representation in the countries of destination.

Creating a legal framework aimed at the diaspora is of highest importance for guaranteeing their human rights and political participation. With the exception of Belize, which is currently developing its National Migration Policy, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Panama have a legal framework for the protection of the rights of migrants to vote abroad and to permit dual citizenship.

Creating a specialized institution. The Governments of Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico have taken an important step in creating an agency to specialize in engagement with the diaspora. Given Costa Rica's characteristics as a destination country, it does not have a specialized agency for its emigrants, but rather has an agency for assistance to immigrants.

While Belize, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Mexico all have government institutions that go beyond regular consular services and specialize in assistance to the diaspora, only the last three have bodies in which representatives of the diaspora participate to propose and define actions, programs, and policies relating to migration.

Support through consular representation. The countries of the Central American region implement various programs to support their diasporas. The primary means of providing this support is through consulates. It is therefore important for governments to strengthen consular services; their efficiency and quality play a very important role because they are the principal point of contact between governments and diasporas.

To a greater or lesser degree, all governments except Panama have implemented actions and programs to protect and guarantee the fulfillment of the rights of members of the diaspora and their families. It is essential to mention that implementing programs and actions is necessary for enabling the organization of diasporas and incentivizing their participation in the development of their countries and communities of origin, independently but above all in collaboration with their governments. Among the reasons why diasporas do not maintain communication with governments of origin are bureaucracy, non-existence of social programs, changes in government, lack of continuity in programs, lack of interest, empathy, or outreach among both parties, and lack of adequate public policies for this end.

MECHANISMS FOR THE INVOLVEMENT OF DIASPORAS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

The sending of remittances is the primary indirect mechanism of contribution for diaspora organizations in the Mesoamerican region and it has great importance in the economies of these countries. The possibility of incentivizing the use of collective remittances is an opportunity for both national and local governments to implement co-investment programs aimed at the development of communities of origin. This type of program has been implemented in Mexico, El Salvador, and Honduras.

Case of Mexico: Using the knowledge the organizations had gained from the 1970s to the 90s about taking action to carry out basic infrastructure projects in their places of origin, in 2002, the federal government institutionalized this strategy of co-investment for development by creating the *Programa 3x1 para Migrantes* [3x1 for Migrants Program] under the umbrella of the Secretariat of Social Development. The program managed to grow and sustain itself for 17 years, but disappeared entirely in 2020. In the first two years, the funds budgeted by the federal government were relatively low, although from the first year the number of projects was considerable— 924. By 2008 this had reached 2,457 projects, although it had dropped to 1,058 by 2018.

The program incentivized the formation of hometown clubs; these were kept relatively small, which on one hand simplified their organization, but above all facilitated monitoring, transparency, and accountability.

This type of program largely depends on the management capacity of diaspora organizations as well as the political will of national governments. Additionally, their high cost in comparison with programs to facilitate the sending of remittances makes these programs very vulnerable. The local governments are the ones with the most incentive to sustain them, and perhaps this is the place to promote this type of policy.

Case of El Salvador: After the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch in 1998, various organizations took action to help the affected population. In this context, the Salvadoran government identified an area of opportunity to implement co-investment strategies aimed at local development. After the General Directorate of Assistance to Communities Abroad was formed as part of the Vice-Ministry of Foreign Relations for Salvadorans Abroad and the Social Investment Fund for Local Development of El Salvador, the program *Unidos por la Solidaridad* [United in Solidarity] was implemented in 2002, based on a system of competitive grants. By June of 2004, 45 programs had been carried out through the program *Unidos por la Solidaridad* at a cost of 11.45 million dollars, of which 2.13 million, 18.6% of the total, were contributions from organizations of Salvadorans abroad.

Even though this program has ended, organizations abroad have continued to carry out some projects without direct government intervention. The program *Compatriota Solidario* [Compatriot in Solidarity] has been implemented for this purpose and enables Salvadorans settled abroad to contribute to social development through donations and various solidarity activities, such as health days.

Case of Honduras: The program *Remesas Solidarias y Productivas* [Caring and Productive Remittances] was launched in 2010. It sought to attract resources from Honduran associations in the United States for co-investment projects aimed at improving conditions in their communities of origin. According to a report from the Secretariat of Foreign Relations and International Cooperation and the United Nations Development Program, by 2017 17 community projects had been implemented. Honduran diaspora organizations contributed more than 100,000 dollars to these projects.

These sums differ from those achieved in El Salvador and Mexico both in terms of the number of projects and the volume of resources. This may be due in part to the differences in the magnitude of the migration phenomenon and to the fact that the program was operated by the Secretariat of Foreign Relations and International Cooperation and not by an agency responsible for social development as in the cases of Mexico and El Salvador.

NEEDS OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN DIASPORA

Central American diaspora organizations are constantly involved in activities that favor their countries of origin. These activities are diverse and may include small in-kind or monetary donations as well as participation in investment or infrastructure projects.

It was identified that the needs of the diaspora hinge on employment and adequate income. For some groups, needs are related to the ability to get support to their family members, procedures with government representatives in their countries, or recognition from government officials. One of the most mentioned needs was focused on communication, coordination, and follow-through on commitments. To a lesser degree, diaspora organizations seek assistance with places to hold activities such as seminars and conferences.

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mapping the Central American diaspora identified important challenges for governments in the region to face in forming and strengthening links with the diaspora, including: 1) Recognition of the contributions of the diaspora, 2) Incorporation of the diaspora into the destination country, 3) Identification of the diaspora, 4) Sustainable public policies for development, and 5) Strengthening organizations and addressing their needs.

For this reason, the recommendations for facing these principal challenges were developed along lines of action which seek to give the governments of the region an overview of the actions they can take to take advantage of the benefits of migration. Each of these actions is part of one of the three pillars of IOM's strategic focus: Enable, engage, and empower.

PILLAR I: ENABLE DIASPORAS AS AGENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Recognize the contributions of the diaspora

It is recommended that Mesoamerican governments facilitate or enable spaces for the participation of the diaspora, both to listen to their needs and so that they can make the country of origin aware of the variety of activities they undertake. To do this, governments in the region could focus on building more user-friendly websites for official institutions where the diaspora could find the variety of services available to them quickly, easily, and accessibly. They could also create spaces for the diaspora to express their needs and share information about their activities. This

would have two benefits; on one hand, it would enable diaspora organizations to be in constant communication with authorities in order to promote their activities, and second, it would give the migrant population a sense of belonging and identity. The recognition of their work, effort, and contributions both in the country of arrival and the country of origin is of highest importance for strengthening ties with the diaspora.

Integrating the diaspora into the destination country

Governments in the region have the responsibility to think of not only those who leave, but also those who arrive. The migration process has intensified and it is likely that this will be the trend. In this case, Costa Rica has distinguished itself by working to incorporate the migrant population into various development policies, thus fostering the economic contributions for the country within a human rights framework. In this context, it is indispensable for governments to establish policies and strategies to incorporate immigrants into the project of developing the country, building citizenship, and the social fabric, with the participation of or in consultation with diaspora organizations.

PILLAR II: ENGAGE THE DIASPORA AS AGENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Identify the diaspora

In order to promote the participation of the diaspora, it is first necessary to work to identify them in a timely and specific manner. For this task, governments of the region should work to construct a directory in which migrant organizations can register themselves. In the cases of Mexico and El Salvador, authorities could focus on validating, revising, and updating the information currently available in their respective directories. The mechanism employed by Mexico and El Salvador is a good model to use as a starting point; it makes the information public, which also enables organizations to expand their networks and new members to join because the information is available to everyone.

While in both countries the organization registers itself, the authorities responsible for linkage with the diaspora (the Institute of Mexicans Abroad and the Vice-Ministry of Salvadorans Abroad) could schedule periodic reviews of these sources of information in order to validate their content.

Guatemala and Honduras, countries where the authorities consulted have confirmed that they do have a directory of organizations although it is not public, should work to make the information public, as this strengthens diaspora organizations and makes them aware of one another.

Generate sustainable public policies for development

Governments can generate coordinated policies for diaspora participation. This is not only the responsibility of foreign relations; rather, the potential of diasporas should be leveraged in all areas of government. They could be included in national development plans, through cross-cutting public policies, and in sectoral policies. The issue of migration is not an issue that only concerns chanceries, but rather also affects several other ministries and secretariats—social development, health, human rights, ministry of women, secretariats of planning, etc.

Programs focused on investment or co-investment in local development programs should be part of a development plan rather than isolated projects. So that they can have real impact, they should be proposed as medium- and long-term projects in which diaspora organizations participate in the planning along with various actors in the community or locality. Governments should take care to construct projects that are sustainable in the medium and long term, transparent, and accountable, so that those who participate, particularly migrant organizations, know the ultimate destination of their contributions with certainty.

While the inclusion and involvement of the diaspora should come from the highest levels of government in the country, this linkage should extend to the level of local authorities, since it is precisely at this level where the majority of the diaspora can contribute, due to their relationship with their communities of origin.

Strengthen organizations and address the needs of diaspora organizations

Consulates, as the first point of contact the migrant population has with their countries of origin, should provide the best quality assistance and serve as places where migrants feel at home. Through them, authorities should provide a series of services focused not only on documentation and protection, but addressing all issues, as they do for citizens in the country of origin. In this area, Mexico's work model, which seeks to empower the emigrant population using "community hubs," has been successful.

The governments of the region could focus more on addressing the needs of migrant organizations, as assistance is currently focused on individuals and thus individual needs are addressed. Governments could provide support so that diaspora organizations could promote themselves while providing services to the migrants who are members. In order to contribute to development, diasporas should feel that they are not only senders of resources, but also receivers of the many or few services governments are able to coordinate in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, universities, and private enterprise in the destination country. Government institutions should then propose the plans for their intervention: To promote democratic, participative, and deliberative principles to strengthen organizations and offer informational and educational materials which they can use to improve conditions for their members and the migrant community.

I. INTRODUCTION

The migration trends in Central America and Mexico have been marked for several decades by their significance in terms of numbers of emigrants, their impact on countries of origin, and their primary directionality towards the United States of America, and to a lesser degree to Canada, Costa Rica, Panama, and Belize, and more recently to Mexico. The civil wars in the 1980s as well as the subsequent political instability, economic disparities, insecurity, lack of access to education and employment, and other structural and individual factors have motivated this emigration, as have pull factors in the countries of destination including established networks and diaspora.

To be able to migrate, people typically seek support from relatives, friends, or acquaintances who serve as a bridge between their place of origin and their destination. These people provide information and assistance and may even receive them in the places of transit or destination. In many places, this support has grown into formal and informal networks which, over time, have made possible “transnational migration circuits” (Besserer; Rouse).

Diasporas or transnational communities typically remain linked to their countries of origin in psychological, sociological, cultural, economic, and political terms, and they are important interlocutors for development both in those countries and in their host or destination countries. Their contributions are varied; they range from entrepreneurial investment, trade, and philanthropy to the transfer of skills and the tourism of the diaspora (IOM, 2017).

IOM defines diasporas as the set of migrants or descendants of migrants whose identity and sense of belonging, either real or symbolic, have been shaped by their migration experience and background. Members of the diaspora maintain ties with their country of origin and among themselves, through a shared history and identity or common experiences in the destination country (IOM, 2019).

Some characteristics of these transnational migration circuits or transnational communities are particularly important for the study of the diasporas of Central America and Mexico. In the first place, migration circuits are a product of the circulation of knowledge of procedures, strategies, possibilities, and difficulties associated with migration (Portes), which, over time, facilitates mobility between countries by reducing costs and risks and increasing the attraction and feasibility of migration (Massey et al., 1994). Thus, the existence of migration circuits enables the concentration of migrants from the same place of origin in destination country.

In the second place, migration circuits generate the necessary structure for maintaining migration processes, which in turn helps to maintain ties between communities of origin and destination. Non-migrants see in their relatives, friends, or acquaintances a possible future, while for migrants, communities of origin remain the places where they have their roots and families, and where many of them would prefer to be or where they wish their loved ones had better lives. This gives rise to processes of reciprocity and mutual aid that facilitate conditions in the destination country and quality of life in the country of origin.

THE INTEREST IN HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS OR MIGRANT ASSOCIATIONS BASED ON THE PLACE OF ORIGIN

In many places, groups of transnational migrants have brought about important changes in the relationship between countries of origin and destination. Migrant associations have become agents of change at the local level in the countries of origin and destination, making the international interactions much more complex.

On one hand, they have gained the ability to impact development in their communities of origin. In addition to sending remittances that can contribute to maintaining or improving the socioeconomic conditions of their family members, they have produced social investment and growth in sectors such as tourism and agriculture and

facilitated the development of human capital. On the other hand, they have developed mechanisms that facilitate the arrival and adaptation of other migrants. These types of organizations carry out various functions: They maintain cultural roots, promote social change and adaptation, have political influence, and seek to achieve small development goals in their communities of origin (Orozco).

Various studies have been conducted at the global level in order to understand the role and characteristics of this type of association and to analyze the impact on the development of their communities, particularly when linked with the State (Orozco; IOM, MPI). These studies have identified the significant potential of diasporas as promoters of development in their communities of origin; however, they have also identified the limitations imposed by a lack of partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organizations (IOM, MPI).

For this reason, subsequent work focused on analyzing successful cases in which public policies were implemented to stimulate development on the part of diasporas (IOM, 2007). In a more or less parallel manner, projects were developed to identify and characterize diaspora groups in destination countries (Gatica y Murrieta) and to gain deeper understanding in those cases in which partnerships between places of origin and destination have been successful in the development of communities in one or both countries.¹

In 2013, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) assisted with the development of the Diaspora Ministerial Conference, titled *Diasporas and development: Bridging societies and states*. This initiative was a milestone for the relationship between IOM and diasporas. Using the results, IOM has defined a strategic focus on the diaspora based on three criteria: Engage, enable, and empower.² As the event report summarizes, “This first IOM ministerial conference on diasporas opened the way for governments and their partners to explore, in a more inclusive and holistic manner:

- the relationships between diasporas, host societies and countries of origin, and the important role played by transnational communities in linking these societies;
- the advantages of transnationalism for countries of origin and destination of migrants, as well as the policies and best practices to enable diaspora engagement;
- the potential for diasporas to engage in development, as well as the policy and programmatic options to maximize this potential, and
- the potential for diaspora engagement during and after crisis situations, and the conditions to facilitate this engagement” (IOM, 2013).

Finally, in recent years work has been focused on identifying the needs of diasporas through these alliances: What economic and human resources they have, what dialogue can be developed between both countries, and what could be achieved if they had the resources necessary to promote development of their communities (see, for example, the project *Building Broader Communities in the Americas*).³

However, very little has been done to evaluate the opportunities and challenges of the diaspora at the local level, despite the growth in the number of migrant organizations and government actions aiming to mobilize resources (businesses and trade) and human, social, financial, cultural, and political capital in favor of the diaspora. This is precisely the aspect that is the subject of this research project, focused on Central America and Mexico.

¹ An example of this type of work is the project *Building Broader Communities in the Americas*, through which studies were conducted in order to characterize the Mexican and Caribbean diaspora in the United States and Canada (www.cfeads.org/issues-we-work-on/building-broader-communities-in-the-americas-bbca-initiative).

² International Organization for Migration (2012). *Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development: A Handbook for policymakers and practitioners in home or host countries*. See diaspora.handbook.en_for_web_28may2013.pdf

³ *Building Broader Communities in the Americas*, www.cfeads.org/issues-we-work-on/building-broader-communities-in-the-americas-bbca-initiative.

THE NEED FOR FURTHER STEPS

The objective of this study is to evaluate the opportunities and challenges for involving the diasporas of Central America and Mexico in their communities of origin.

In an IOM study in 2007, *Diasporas as Agents for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean*, an interest was observed among governments in collaborating with diasporas abroad. A wide variety of tools for mobilizing resources was identified; however, many difficulties with putting projects into practice were observed. It was observed that governments do not dedicate sufficient resources, media, or policies to attract investment or resources from the diaspora; it is difficult for them to identify the potential of diasporas and connect them with concrete development strategies.

To facilitate this connection, IOM has deemed it necessary to evaluate the challenges and opportunities for the involvement of diasporas in Central America and Mexico. This evaluation seeks to deepen knowledge of the characteristics of migrant organizations and the needs, challenges, and opportunities that impact the possibility of involvement in the development of their communities of origin.

This study was conducted as part of IOM's actions within the framework of the Regional Migration Program, through the IOM Regional Office for Central America, North America, and the Caribbean, with financing from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration of the Department of State of the United States of America.

The migration patterns of the Central American diaspora were the basis for defining the methodology used. A little over one thousand diaspora organizations were identified. Chapter II presents the description of the sample subset of organizations that agreed to participate as key informants in this study. Chapter III describes recent migration trends in the region. Chapter IV presents the characterization of these organizations, including georeferencing. This information was used to design an interactive map which can be consulted at (www.idiaspora.org/es/connect/get-advice). The same section identifies the commitment of the diaspora to participating in activities to benefit their communities of origin.

The following sections reflect the communication channels that exist between diasporas and their governments, the support the governments provide for the diaspora in the destination country, and the mechanisms for involvement that have been developed to engage the diaspora in development. The nature of Costa Rica made it necessary to focus on the projects it operates for its diaspora as a country of destination rather than origin. As a result, there is greater recognition of Costa Rica's efforts to promote the socioeconomic inclusion of the Nicaraguan and Panamanian diasporas.

While the focus of this analysis seeks to cover the Mesoamerican region, the cases of Panama, Nicaragua, and Belize are analyzed only from the point of view of mapping and identifying diaspora organizations, as there were no interviews with government officials in these countries and the information presented is solely the product of document review.

The presentation of results obtained in chapters V, VI, and VII seeks to contrast two points of view. First, it presents the point of view of governments with the official mechanisms for linkage, support, and involvement identified in each of the countries of the region, and second, the perspective and perceptions of the diaspora regarding these issues.

II. METHODOLOGY

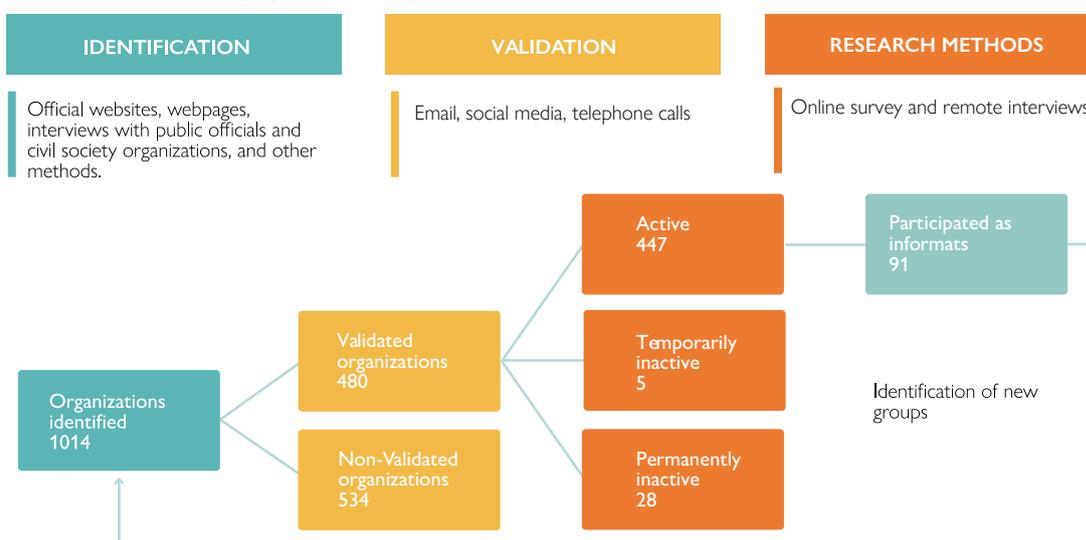
DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The investigation focused on the characterization of the diasporas of the countries of Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, which, in addition to being the countries with the highest migration in Mesoamerica, were also the countries with the highest number of diaspora organizations identified. In the cases of Costa Rica, Belize, and Panama, the identification revealed few organizations, which limited the characterization. Interviews were conducted with public officials in Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica. Information was collected about the diasporas settled in the countries within the region, and outside of it in the two principal destination countries, the United States of America and Canada.⁵

Within the region, two case studies were analyzed more carefully, Mexico and Costa Rica. Mexico was analyzed as both a country of origin and of destination: Mexicans and Central Americans primarily migrate to the United States of America, and Mexico is a place of destination and transit for migrants from Central America. Costa Rica is considered a country of destination, historically receiving Nicaraguans.⁶

This study began by identifying and validating organizations formed by migrants in destination countries. In order to carry out this process, an exhaustive review was performed of the information on the organizations in existing directories⁷ and documentary information, in electronic and social media. This information was used to contact the organizations by email and telephone calls, with the goal of verifying the contact information and that the organizations were currently active. In the second stage, the organizations were invited to respond to an online survey, through which specific information was obtained on 91 participating organizations.

Figure 1. Process of identifying diaspora organizations⁸



Source: Prepared by the authors.

⁴ The United States of America has been the principal destination of international migrants since 1970. The number of people born in other countries who have settled there has quadrupled since that year. Meanwhile, Mexico is the second most common country of origin for international migrants (IOM, 2020).

⁵ Diaspora organizations from the region also exist and operate in other countries (such as Spain, the United Kingdom, and Italy, among others); however, for reasons of prioritization, this study does not consider them. Global information about diaspora organizations can be found at www.idiaspora.org/en.

⁶ It is important to emphasize that Nicaragua has a secondary role in this investigation. It was not a central focus for the identification of diaspora organizations.

⁷ An internet search identified a Directory of Honduran organizations in the United States and one of Guatemalan Associations. In both cases, as much information as possible was extracted, but even so it was not sufficient.

⁸ An organization was classified as temporarily inactive when the person who responded to the contact commented that due to the current situation the organization had suspended work, and there was uncertainty about the continuity of its operation.

Those organizations for which it was not possible to find contact information were not included in the results of the mapping, even if they had been mentioned in more than one source.⁹

In addition to identifying active organizations, the size of the organizations was used as a selection criterion for the analysis. Specifically, in the case of Mexico, only those made up of 25 people or more were selected.¹⁰ In the rest of the countries this criterion could not be applied, due to the fact that the available directories did not provide this information.¹¹

Another part of the information used in the study was obtained through surveys and interviews with public officials from the secretariats and ministries of foreign relations of the different countries of interest. Table 1 lists the government agencies to which they belong. In various cases, they also provided information to identify diaspora organizations during the interviews.

Table 1. Government institutions interviewed

Country	Agency
Guatemala	Directorate of Consular and Migrant Affairs
El Salvador	National Council on the Protection and Development of Migrants and their Families
Costa Rica	Directorate of Integration and Human Development
	Directorate of Consular Affairs
Honduras	General Directorate of Consular Affairs
Mexico	Institute of Mexicans Abroad
	Migrant Liaison of the General Directorate of the Institute for Assistance to Priority Populations of Mexico City
	National Network of Councils and State Bodies of Science and Technology, Civil Association
	Mexico-Canada Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Mexico and El Salvador have official directories that can be consulted online. However, of the approximately 200 organizations listed for El Salvador, only approximately 20% could be reached as the directory is not up to date. In the case of Mexico, at the time of searching¹² over 200 organizations of Mexican migrants were registered globally.

The officials interviewed in Guatemala and Honduras mentioned the existence of a directory with information on diaspora organizations abroad. However, it was not possible to access them in either country given that they are considered non-public material, which significantly limited the number of organizations identified by the authors in these countries.

An important source was the directory of the CAMMINA initiative.¹³ This initiative seeks to contribute to free human mobility and the exercise of the rights of the migrant community of Central America, Mexico, and the United States. Some of the organizations identified were obtained through this directory.

⁹ Examples of this situation include the Guatemalan organizations AJAW KAWABIL, Corn Maya, Broad Group, Maya Quetzal, Pueblos Mayas en el Exilio, KOARAM Comité Acateco Kanjobal Maya, Coalición de Trabajadores de Immokalee, and Asociación Guatemalteca Americana AGA, which have been studied broadly and are mentioned in at least three documents. However, it was not possible to verify information on their existence, so they were eliminated from the directory.

¹⁰ In the case of Mexico, because the register is free, there is information on migrant clubs which have one or two members. Based on the preliminary investigation, it was judged that many of the small groups are not formal organizations, and thus it was decided to filter by size. The decision-making criteria concur with the results obtained through the validation of a random sample of small organizations, about which no information was found.

¹¹ Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. It is important to emphasize that Nicaragua has a secondary role in this investigation; it was not a central focus for the identification of diaspora organizations.

¹² May 2020.

¹³ CAMMINA (2020) Directory of organizations, migrant groups, family members of migrants, and networks that work in migration, refugees, asylum, and other related issues in Central America, Mexico, and the United States. See [CAMMINA \(hiponline.org\)](http://CAMMINA.hiponline.org)

Finally, a total of 1,014 organizations of the Central American and Mexican diasporas were identified, the majority of which were of Mexican origin with the United States of America as a destination country.

In order to locate the organizations geographically, the geographic coordinates of the physical address available from the collected information were determined. In cases in which the organization did not have a physical address, it was assigned the coordinates of the area, city, and country where it is located. In some cases, it was only possible to identify the country of origin. In these cases, georeferencing of the organization was not performed and it was not included in the mapping; of the 1,014 organizations, 26 were left out because it was not possible to identify them geographically.

The study attempted to identify each organization according to country of origin, whether of the people who are members or the people it serves. In some cases, the organizations are made up of immigrants from different countries, so they have Central American or in some cases Latin American origin.

COLLECTION OF SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS

Of the 1,014 total organizations identified, 480 were contacted, and 91 agreed to participate as key informants. One of the challenges observed for obtaining a better sample was the fear of providing information due to the relationship these organizations have with irregular migrants. Added to this, the impossibility of contacting them in person, due primarily to the health emergency, complicated trust between the interviewing group and the members of the organizations. In other cases, the organization was not interested in participating, sometimes due to the lack of incentives or a clear reward.¹⁴ In the case of Mexican diaspora organizations in the United States specifically, there were refusals to participate on the grounds that the organization had been dissolved when the 3x1 for Migrants Program was cancelled.

From the remaining organizations that did not participate as key informants, it was only possible to learn general information found on their websites or social media. In these cases, a description of the organization is given with their objectives and actions in favor of other migrant groups or their communities of origin which they share online.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE OF INFORMANT ORGANIZATIONS

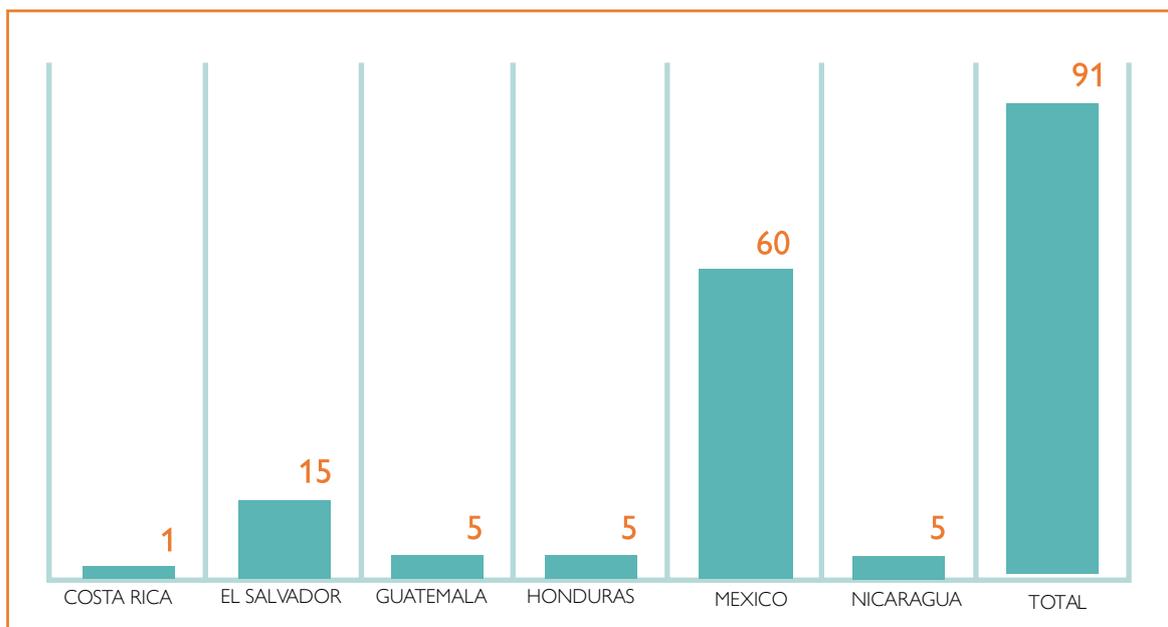
The sample of the 91 organizations that agreed to participate as informants in this study, like the set of organizations identified, is not statistically representative. Nor is the sample balanced with respect to the whole of the organizations identified. As a result, the information obtained for this study is the result of a survey rather than statistically representative sampling, and thus it is essential to understand the characteristics of this sample in order to assess the information obtained and not fall into erroneous and biased interpretations and statements.

The majority of the organizations that participated have Mexico as a country of origin, representing 67% of the responses obtained. Organizations from El Salvador represented 17%, Guatemala 5%, Nicaragua 5%, Honduras 5%, and finally Costa Rica 1%. Unfortunately, the document review conducted only identified four diaspora organizations from Panama and none of them participated as key informants.

With respect to their composition, 57% of these organizations are made up of people from a single country, and the remainder have members from different countries.

¹⁴ The first question many organizations asked upon being asked to participate as key informants was, "And what do we gain?"

Figure 1. Sample size by country of origin.



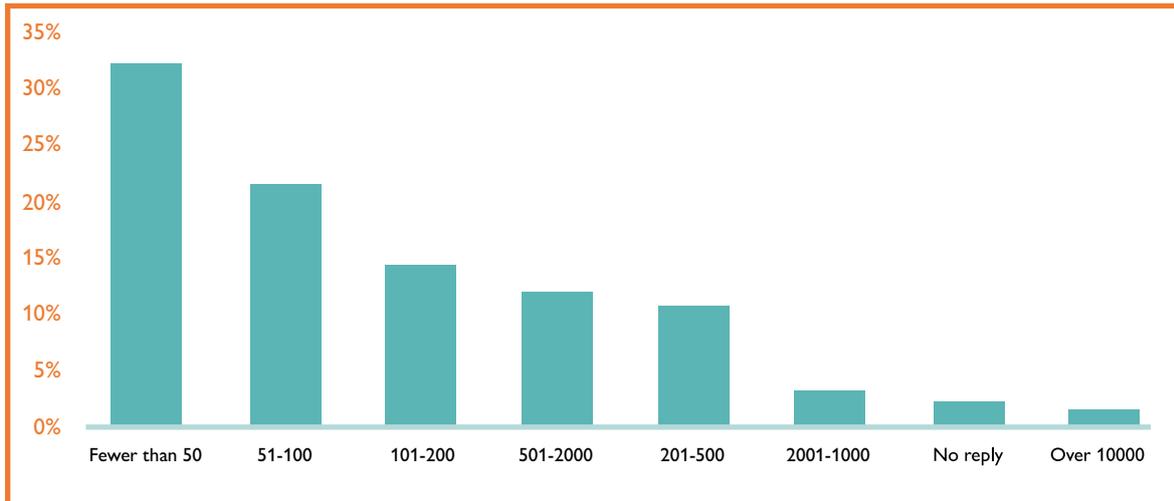
Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the survey.

The majority of the organizations in this sample have been active for more than 10 years, and thus have a good understanding of the interaction between diasporas and the governments of their places of origin. 68% of them have existed for over 10 years, 14% between 5 and 10 years, 7% between three and five years, 8% between one and three years, and 1% did not provide information on this question. The remaining 2% have been active for less than a year.

Regarding their size, half of the informant organizations have over 100 members, while a third have fewer than 50 people and 20% have between 51 and 100.¹⁵ Of the organizations with over 100 members, 15% have between 101 and 200, and the rest, that is, nearly a third of the total, have over 200 people. It is important to mention that the sample includes six coalitions, which are groups of organizations generally made up of people of the same origin and located in the same geographic area. These coalitions represent 7% of the sample; four belong to the Mexican diaspora and two to the Salvadoran diaspora.

¹⁵ For the purposes of this study, diaspora organizations with fewer than 25 participants were not considered.

Figure 2. Percentage of organizations by number of members

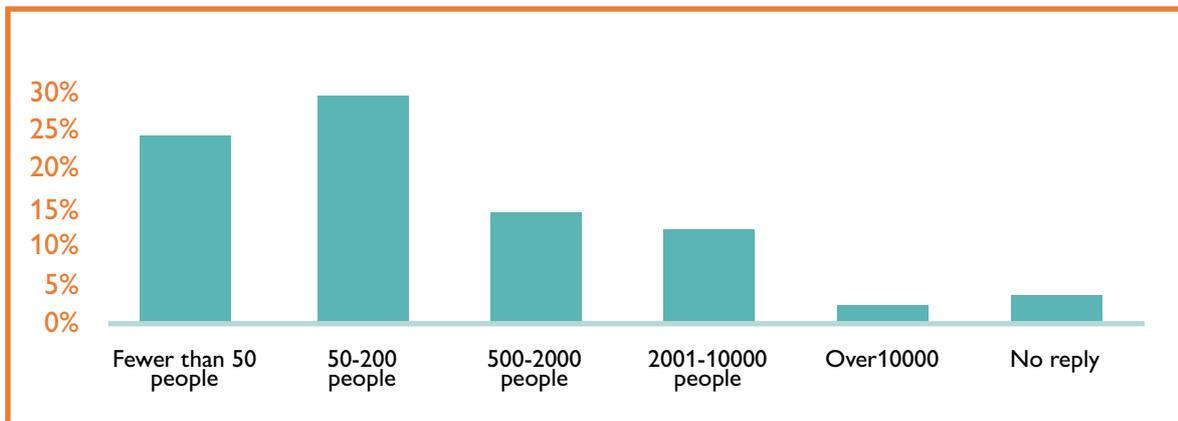


Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the survey.

35% of the informant organizations responded that they are made up of approximately equal numbers of men and women. Meanwhile, 31% say they have more women than men and 33% have a greater number of men than women. Additionally, 92% of organizations are of a secular nature and 95% were founded and are directed by migrants.

In terms of the level of activity and assistance these organizations offer to the migrant population, they were asked about the number of people they supported in the year 2019. In Figure 3, it can be seen that 24% mentioned having supported at least 50 people. Only one organization responded that it assisted over 10,000 migrants.¹⁶

Figure 3. Percentages of organizations by total number of migrants the organization supported during 2019.

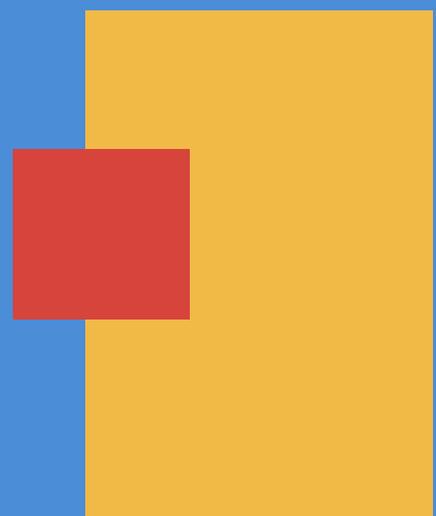
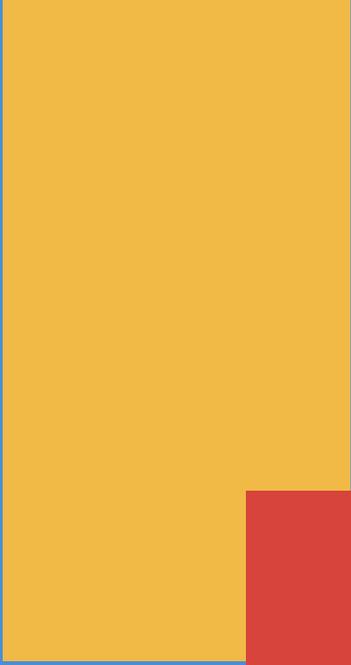


Source: Prepared by the authors.

¹⁶ Within the sample of organizations who responded to the survey, six coalitions, or groups of organizations, were identified. One of them stated that it had supported over 10,000 migrants.

III. MIGRATION PATTERNS IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO





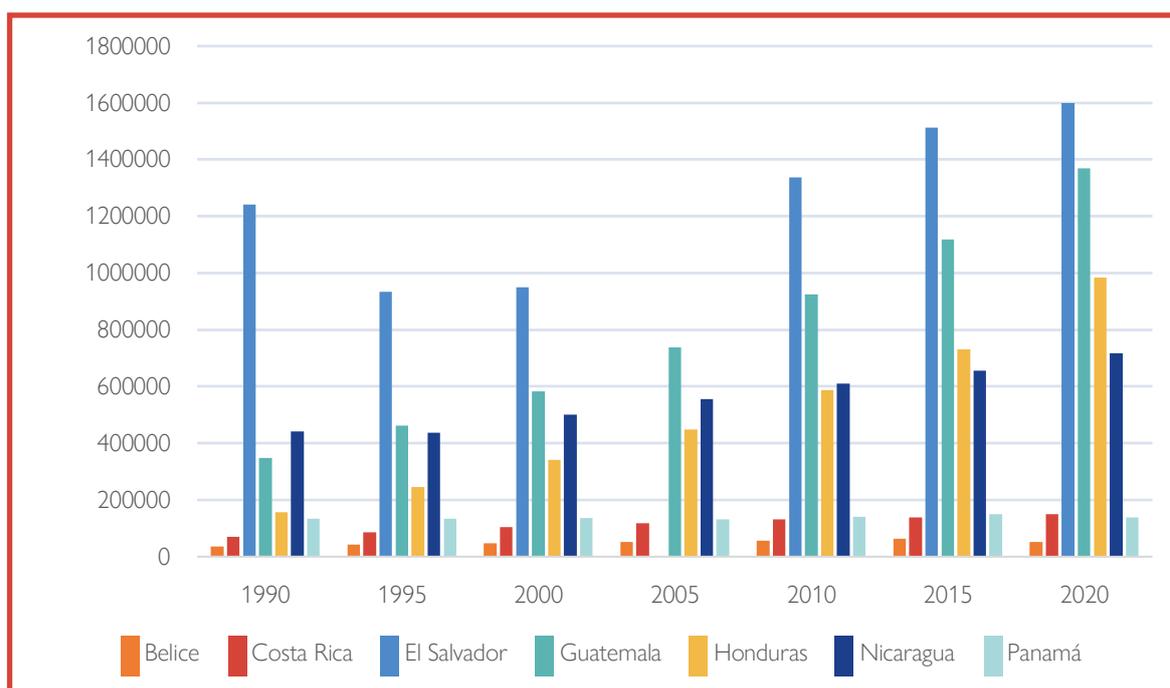
III. MIGRATION PATTERNS IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO

In the past 30 years, the number of migrants in the world and the visibility of migration in agendas has increased substantially, although their proportion relative to the world population has remained relatively stable. According to the most recent estimates of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), between 1990 and 2020, the number of migrants in the world grew from 153 million to 280 million people.¹⁷

In the case of the Mesoamerican region, this trend has not been homogenous across countries. Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico are the countries that have experienced the greatest increases. In the case of Honduras, during the period from 1990 to 2020, emigration grew by 530%, while in Guatemala the increase was 293%. Figure 4 shows this pattern for Central American countries.¹⁸

During the same period, Mexico had an increase of 154%. While this change in percentage is less than that of Honduras and Guatemala, the change in magnitude in terms of number of people is significant, with over 11 million Mexican migrants in the world recorded (UN DESA, 2020).¹⁹ El Salvador, although it has seen only a moderate increase of 29%, is after Mexico the country in the region with the highest number of migrants, estimated at 11.1 million in 2020. This represents 9% of the total population (see Figures 4 and 5).

Figure 4. International migrants originating in Central America, 1990-2020 (number of people in millions)



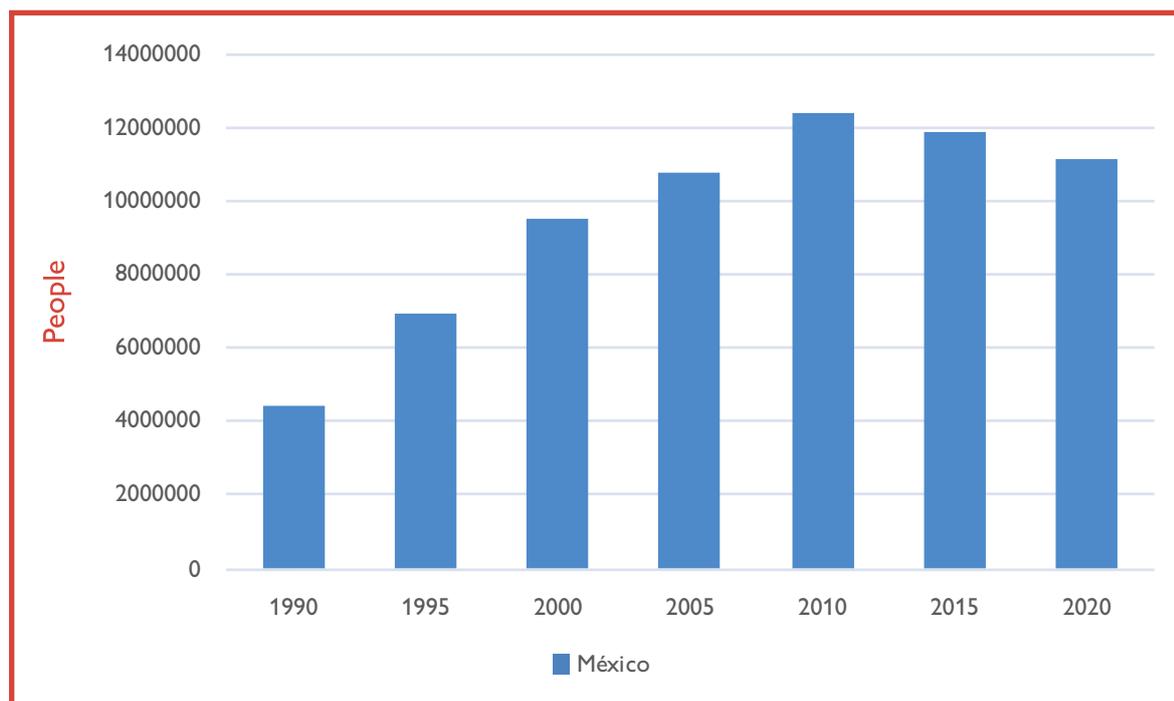
Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations, 2020.

¹⁷ United Nations. Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020). International Migration 2020 Highlights (ST/ESA/SER.A/452). See www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa_pd_2020_international_migration_highlights.pdf

¹⁸ This pattern is interpreted through analysis of the data available from UN DESA 2020.

¹⁹ International Organization for Migration (IOM). World Migration Report 2020. See: www.publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf

Figure 5 International migrants originating in Mexico, 1990-2020 (number of people in millions)



Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations, 2020.

Belize has also experienced a significant increase of 31.57%, and the number of emigrants estimated for 2020 was 52,756. However, this increase was less than population growth, so the percentage of Belizean people abroad went from 19.11% in 1990 to 17.79% in 2019.

Although emigration from Costa Rica represents a very small proportion of its population, as in 2020 only 3.01% of Costa Ricans lived outside the country, this number increased by 116.85% between 1990 and 2020.

In the case of Nicaragua, the number of emigrants grew by 62.67% during the same period, but as a proportion of the total population it has essentially remained stable. It is worth mentioning, however, that due to the sociopolitical situation and economic impacts in the country, there has been a spike in the migration of Nicaraguans since 2018. According to data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of March 2020, at least 100,000 people have been forced to leave the country. The majority are in Costa Rica, although significant numbers of asylum applications have been filed in Panama, Mexico, and Europe.²⁰

Panama is the country where the phenomenon of emigration has had the least magnitude, both relative to the total population and in terms of the increase in the number of Panamanians abroad. Between 1990 and 2020, the percentage of the total population settled outside the country went from 5.45% to 3.34%, estimated at 139,520 people in 2020.

²⁰ UNHCR (2020) Two years of political and social crisis in Nicaragua force more than 100,000 to flee. See at www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2020/3/5e6759934/years-political-social-crisis-nicaragua-force-100000-flee.html#_ga=2.18980476.517103517.1618267065-1498828812.1618267065

Table 2. International migrant stock by country, 1990-2020

Origin	Emigrants 2020	Destination	Immigrants 2020	1990	2000	2010	2020
Belize	52,756	United States of America	42,970	83%	85%	85%	81%
		Mexico	2,127	4%	3%	4%	4%
Costa Rica	150,241	United States of America	96,903	62%	70%	68%	65%
		Mexico	3,430	3%	3%	2%	2%
		Nicaragua	11,281	9%	7%	8%	8%
		Panama	9,320	6%	4%	5%	6%
		El Salvador	889	2%	1%	1%	1%
El Salvador	1,599,058	United States of America	1,410,659	37%	88%	89%	88%
		Guatemala	20,683	19%	1%	1%	1%
		Mexico	16,807	24%	1%	1%	1%
		Honduras	9,071	9%	1%	0.5%	1%
Guatemala	1,368,431	United States of America	1,226,849	65%	85%	88%	90%
		Mexico	46,318	21%	5%	4%	3%
Honduras	985,077	United States of America	773,045	70%	85%	84%	78%
		El Salvador	11,878	10%	3%	2%	1%
		Mexico	38,764	1%	1%	2%	4%
		Nicaragua	13,110	6%	3%	2%	1%
Mexico	11,185,737	United States of America	10,853,105	98%	98%	98%	97%
Nicaragua	718,154	United States of America	255,008	38%	45%	42%	36%
		Honduras	7,943	32%	1%	1%	1%
		Panama	15,517	1%	1%	2%	2%
		Costa Rica	350,854	22%	46%	47%	49%
Panama	139,520	United States of America	99,764	64%	78%	76%	72%
		Mexico	1,767	19%	2%	1%	1%
		Costa Rica	13,711	6%	8%	8%	10%

Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), 2020.

In terms of migration patterns toward certain destination countries, as observed in Table 2, Belize has remained stable during the period from 1990 to 2020. At the beginning of the period, 83% of Belizeans who left the country were headed to the United States of America, 4% were going to Mexico, and the rest to other countries. As of 2020, the pattern was very similar, with a slight decrease to 81% of people going to the United States and an unchanged trend of people going to Mexico. The same thing has occurred in Costa Rica, where the primary destination is the United States of America, followed by Nicaragua and Panama, with 65%, 8%, and 6% respectively. On the other hand, El Salvador and Guatemala show significant changes in their migration patterns. In 1990, 37% of migrants from El Salvador were headed toward the United States of America. By contrast, the current percentage is 88%. Similarly, migration from Guatemala to the United States has increased from 65% to 90% over the same period (see Table 2).

In Table 2, it can be observed that the United States of America is the primary destination for Mesoamerican migration in every case.

According to information from the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), the principal destination city in the United States is Los Angeles, California. Table 3 lists the primary destination cities for each of the countries analyzed.

Mexico is the second country of destination in terms of the number of migrants. In this case, the principal destination city is Mexico City. This country is also a transit zone along the route to the United States. Rodriguez (2016) has estimated that each year approximately 392,000 people transit through Mexico irregularly. Additionally, during the period from 2016 to 2019, 465,000 people from Central American countries and the Dominican Republic were detained in Mexico due to their irregular migration situation. However, it is not known what proportion of migrants achieve their goal. According to IOM, in 2019 178 thousand events were recorded involving Central Americans, who generally had the intention of reaching the United States. In the United States, 78 thousand Central Americans were deported. In some cases, facing the obstacles of crossing the border, they ultimately reside in Mexican border states.

Table 3. Principle destination cities in the United States of America

Origin	Principal destination cities in the United States of America
Belize	Los Angeles County, California; Harris County, Texas; Bronx County, New York; Kings County, New York; New York County, New York; Cook County, Illinois; Lake County, Illinois.
Costa Rica	Los Angeles County, California; Kings County, New York; Harris County, Texas.
El Salvador	Los Angeles County, California; Bronx County, New York; Kings County, New York; New York County, New York; Cook County, Illinois; Lake County, Illinois; Harris County, Texas.
Guatemala	Los Angeles County, California; Cook County, Illinois; Lake County, Illinois; Harris County, Texas; Bronx County, New York; Kings County, New York; New York County, New York.
Honduras	Los Angeles County, California; Cook County, Illinois; Lake County, Illinois; Harris County, Texas; Bronx County, New York; Kings County, New York; New York County, New York.
Panama	Los Angeles County, California; Bronx County, New York; Kings County, New York; Harris County, Texas.
Nicaragua	Los Angeles County, California; Bronx County, New York; Kings County, New York; Cook County, Illinois; Harris County, Texas.
Mexico	Los Angeles County, California; Harris County, Texas; Bronx County, New York; Kings County, New York; New York County, New York; Cook County, Illinois; Lake County, Illinois.

Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the MPI, 2019.

While immigration from Mesoamerican countries has the United States of America as the principal destination, frequently passing through Mexico as a transit country, the migration process that occurs between Central American countries is also relevant, as it means that countries of origin also become countries of destination within the region. In 2020, UNDESA estimated that 62,043 immigrants were settled in Belize, representing 16.19% of the total population. The principal places of origin of this population are Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, making up 43%, 16%, and 15% respectively. Table 4 details information on immigrants in the different Central American countries, as well as their principal places of origin.

Table 4. Total number of immigrants in Central American countries by country of origin and destination, 2020

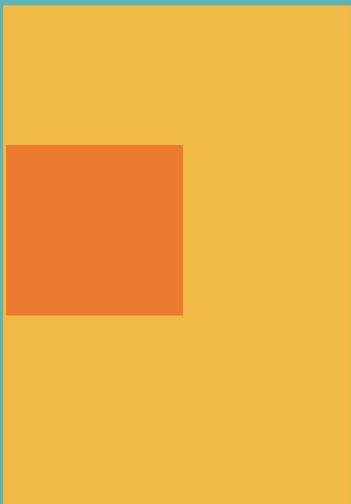
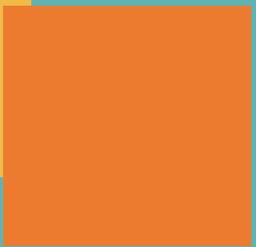
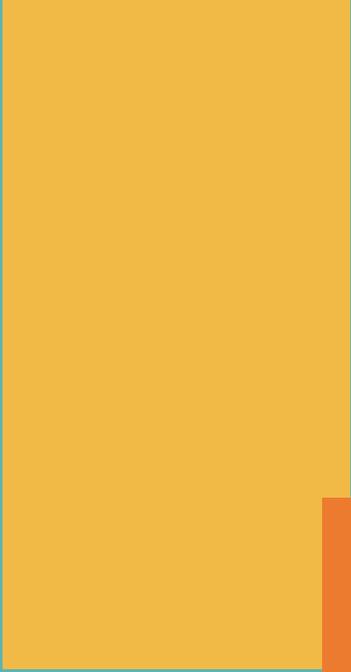
Destination	Immigrants in 2020	Origin	Percentage of total immigrants
Belize	62,043 people, equivalent to 16.19% of the total population	Guatemala	43.14%
		El Salvador	16.14%
		Honduras	15.77%
Costa Rica	520,729 people, equivalent to 10.41% of the total population	Nicaragua	67.38%
		El Salvador	3.20%
El Salvador	42,767 people, equivalent to 0.66% of the total population	Honduras	27.77%
		Guatemala	21.13%
		Nicaragua	18.61%
Guatemala	84,311 people, equivalent to 0.48% of the total population	El Salvador	24.53%
		Mexico	22.39%
Honduras	39,195 people, equivalent to 0.4% of the total population	El Salvador	23.14%
		Guatemala	12.09%
		Nicaragua	20.26%
Mexico	1,197,624 people, equivalent to 0.95% of the total population	El Salvador	1.4%
		Honduras	3.23%
Nicaragua	42,167 people, equivalent to 0.65% of the total population	Honduras	31.09%
Panama	313,165 people, equivalent to 7.50% of the total population ²¹	El Salvador	1.32%
		Nicaragua	4.95%
		Costa Rica	2.97%

Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), 2020.

Although the United States of America is the primary destination in North America, according to DESA data it is estimated that during 2020, 185,379 migrants from various Central American countries and Mexico settled in Canada. Of these, 47% were from Mexico, which situates Canada as the second most important destination for the Mexican immigrant population. The Mesoamerican country with the second-largest presence in Canada is El Salvador, with 51,776 Salvadoran people settled in that country. Third and fourth place are Guatemala and Nicaragua with 18,602 and 10,627 people respectively.

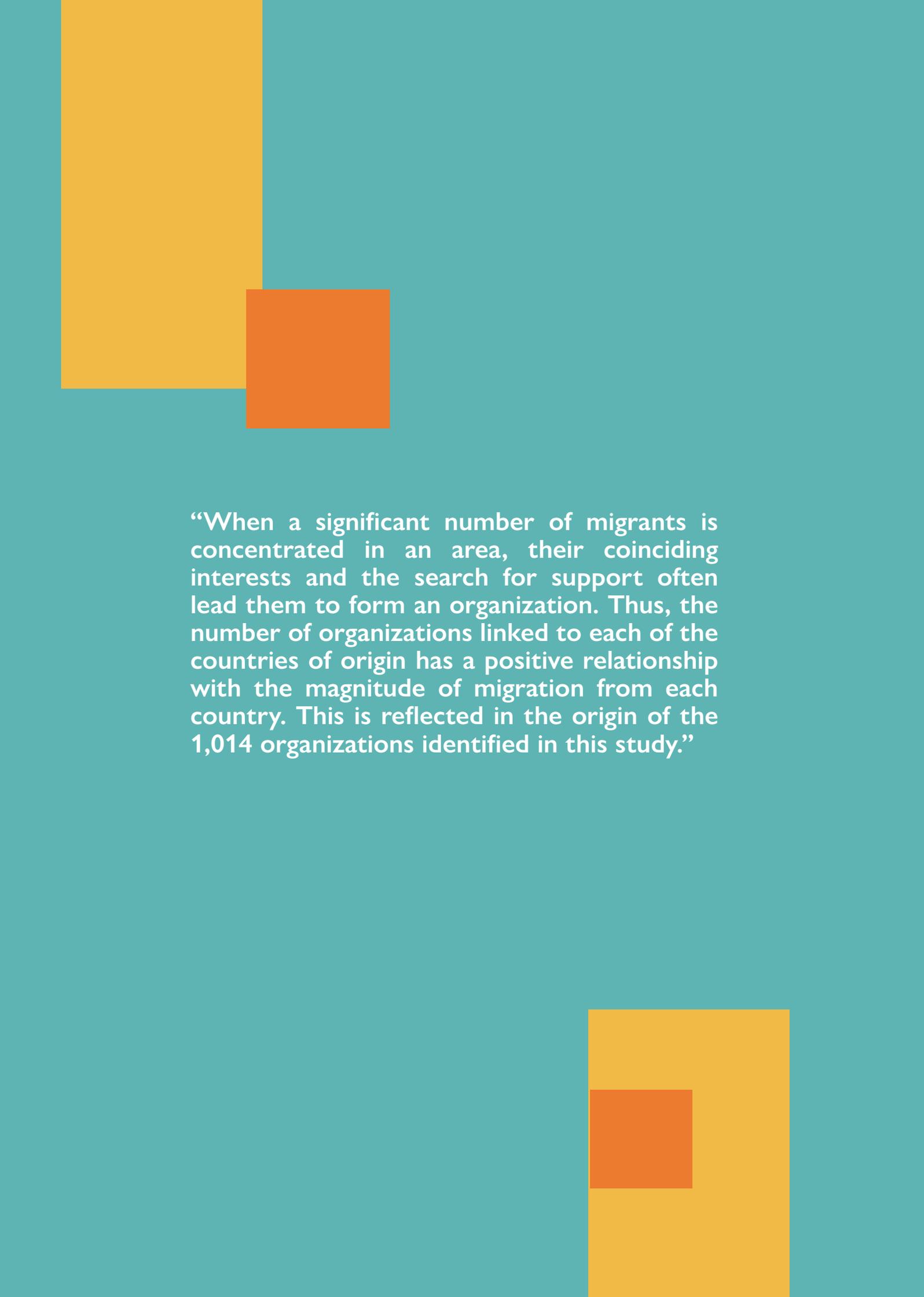
The migration patterns identified enable a better understanding of migration processes and provide context for actions taken in migration policy in Central American countries and Mexico. Thus, governments of those countries with higher levels of emigration, such as Mexico or El Salvador, make greater efforts to connect with their diasporas in comparison with those countries where emigration is less evident, such as Panama, for example. These patterns also make it possible to identify Costa Rica and Belize as net receiving countries, and thus it is expected that policies referring to migration would primarily be focused on actions to integrate the immigrant population settling in these countries.

²¹ This number increased because there was an influx of people from Venezuela.



IV. CENTRAL AMERICAN AND MEXICAN DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS





“When a significant number of migrants is concentrated in an area, their coinciding interests and the search for support often lead them to form an organization. Thus, the number of organizations linked to each of the countries of origin has a positive relationship with the magnitude of migration from each country. This is reflected in the origin of the 1,014 organizations identified in this study.”

IV. CENTRAL AMERICAN AND MEXICAN DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS

ORIGIN OF THE ORGANIZATIONS

When a significant number of migrants is concentrated in an area, their coinciding interests and the search for support often lead them to form an organization. Thus, the number of organizations linked to each of the countries of origin has a positive relationship with the magnitude of migration from each country. This is reflected in the origin of the 1,014 organizations identified in this study.

As can be seen in Table 5, the vast majority of the organizations, 770, are of Mexican origin, followed by Salvadoran organizations, with 131. The three countries of origin with the next greatest number of organizations identified are Honduras with 31, Nicaragua with 24, and Guatemala with 16.

Table 5. Identified diaspora organizations. Origin-Destination

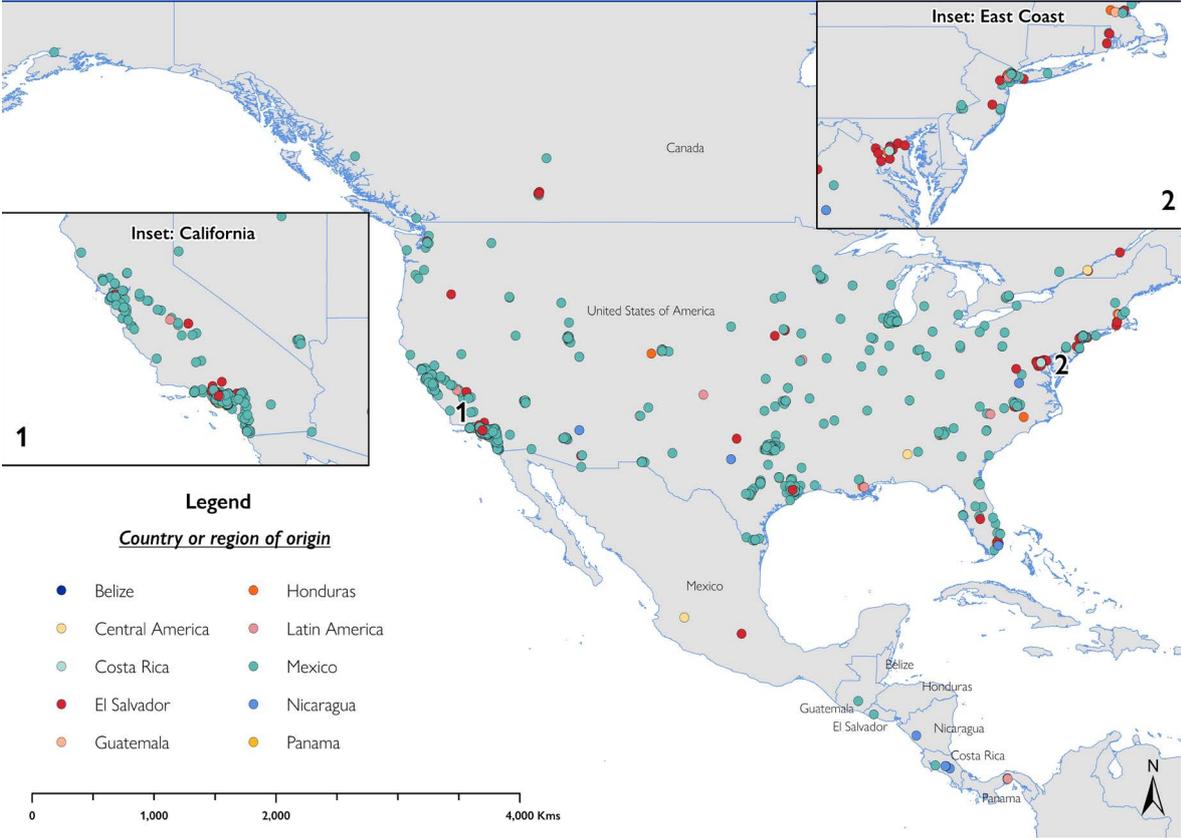
Country of Origin	Country of Destination									Total
	Canada	Costa Rica	El Salvador	United States of America	Guatemala	Honduras	Mexico	Nicaragua	Panama	
Belize				3						3
Central America	1			12			1			14
Costa Rica				6						6
El Salvador	12			117		1	1			131
Guatemala				16						16
Honduras				31						31
Latin America				12				1	2	15
Mexico	16	1	1	748	1	1			2	770
Nicaragua		7		17						24
Panama		1	1	2						4
Total	29	9	2	964	1	2	2	1	4	1014

Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the mapping.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

When diasporas settle in a given place in a destination country, they form groups, including small clubs that unite people from the same community in countries of origin, broader groups that combine these clubs, such as federations or confederations, and associations with specific objectives regarding the needs of migrants, but not necessarily those from a common place or country. Thus, migration flows have defined the geographic distribution of the organizations, which, as can be seen in Map 1, is very spread out.

Map 1. Diaspora organizations in Central America, Mexico, the United States of America, and Canada

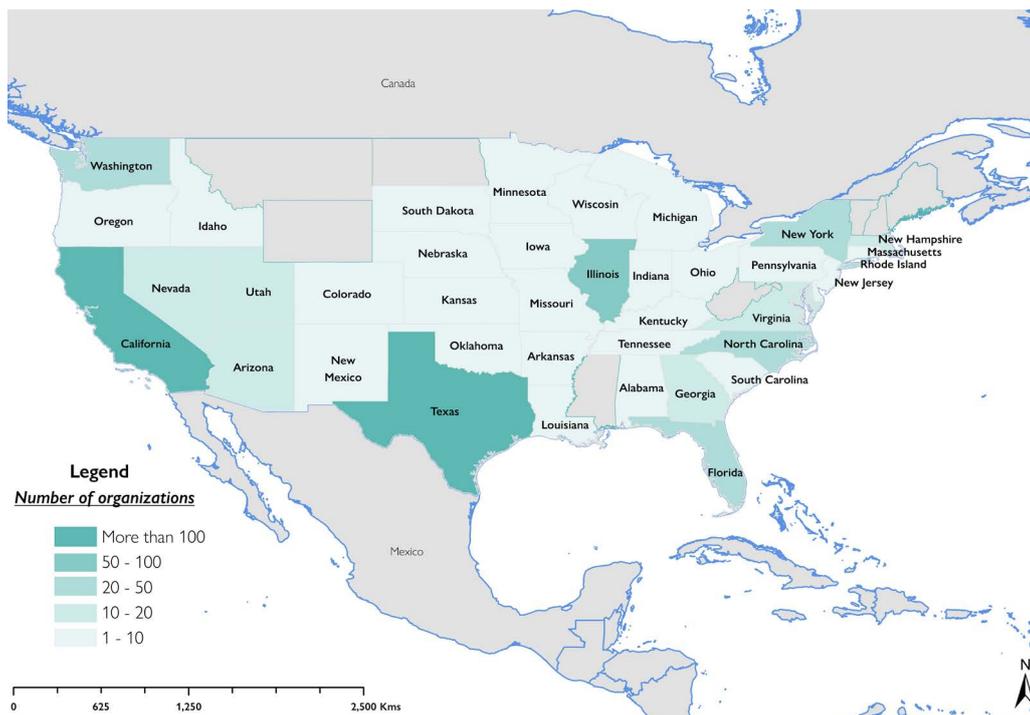


Basemap source: LEES, ESRI and UN World Map.
 Note: This map is for illustrative purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration

The vast majority of the 1,014 organizations identified are located in the United States of America, where 964 were recorded. Canada hosts the second greatest number with 29, and the others are distributed throughout the countries of Mesoamerica, as can be seen in Map 1 and in Table 5. Their density is greater in urban areas and can be better seen in the interactive maps available at (www.idiaspora.org/es/connect/get-advice).

Within the United States of America, some states have a notable concentration of identified organizations. The state with the greatest presence of organizations is California, where 38% are located, followed by Texas with 21%, and in third place with a much smaller number, Illinois with 6%. The states of New York, North Carolina, and Florida each accounted for 3% of migrant organizations. Map 2 shows the concentration of diaspora organizations by state in the United States of America.

Map 2 State distribution of diaspora organizations in the United States of America



Basemap source: LEES, ESRI and UN World Map.

Note: This map is for illustrative purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration

Table 6. United States of America: States with Central American diaspora organizations present

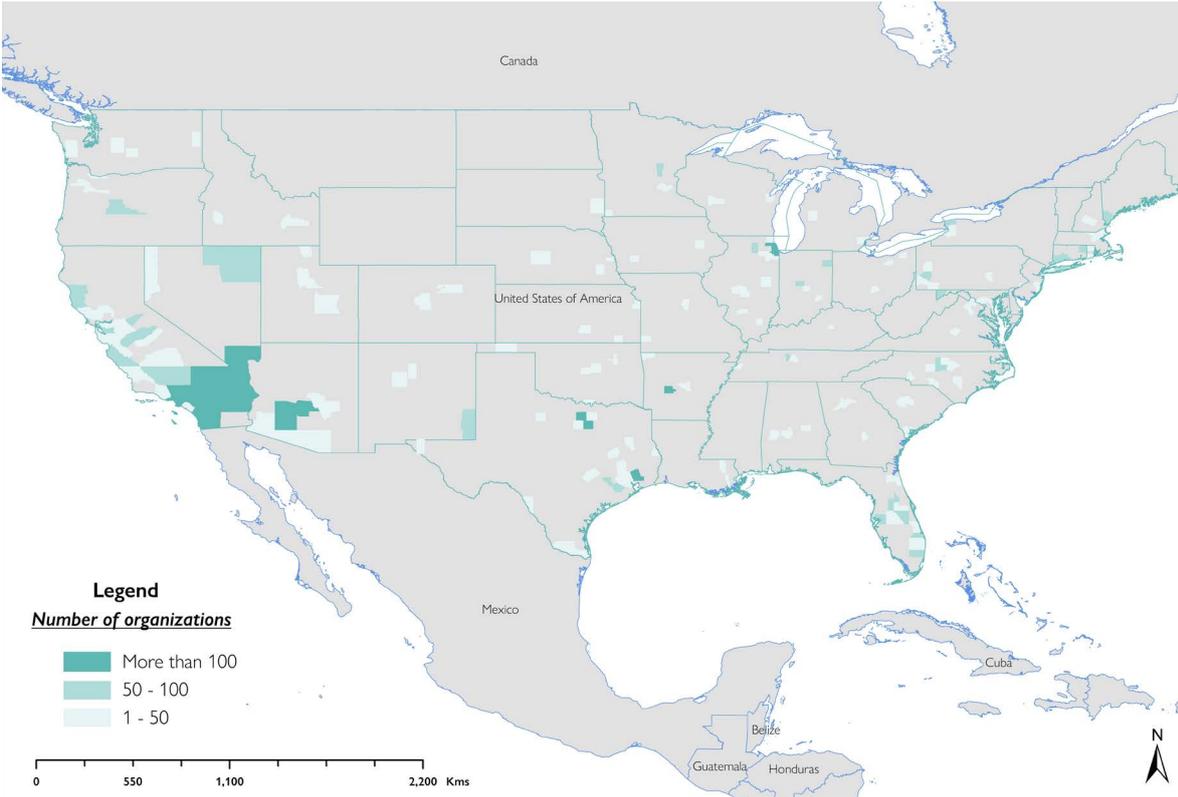
Diaspora	States where diaspora organizations are present	Number of states	Number of diaspora organizations in the United States of America
Salvadoran	Arizona, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, and Virginia	15	117
Guatemalan	California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Nebraska, North Carolina, and Texas	9	16
Honduran	Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia	14	31
Nicaraguan	Arizona, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia	9	17
Costa Rican	North Carolina, Georgia, and Kansas	3	6
Panamanian	California	1	2
Latin American	California, Kansas, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas, and Washington	7	12
Central American	Alabama, California, District of Columbia, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, New Mexico, and Texas	8	12

Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the mapping.

The Mexican diaspora organizations that were identified in this study were distributed throughout the United States of America, with the exceptions of the states of Montana, North Dakota, Wyoming, Mississippi, and West Virginia. It can thus be estimated that this diaspora has the greatest presence in the country. The other Mesoamerican countries have a more limited geographical distribution, which is different for each country of origin. This can be observed in Table 6.

Los Angeles, California; Harris and Dallas in Texas; and Cook, Illinois host the highest concentration of Mesoamerican diaspora organizations. 42% of the 1,014 organizations identified are concentrated in these counties. The rest are distributed among 194 other counties (see Map 3).

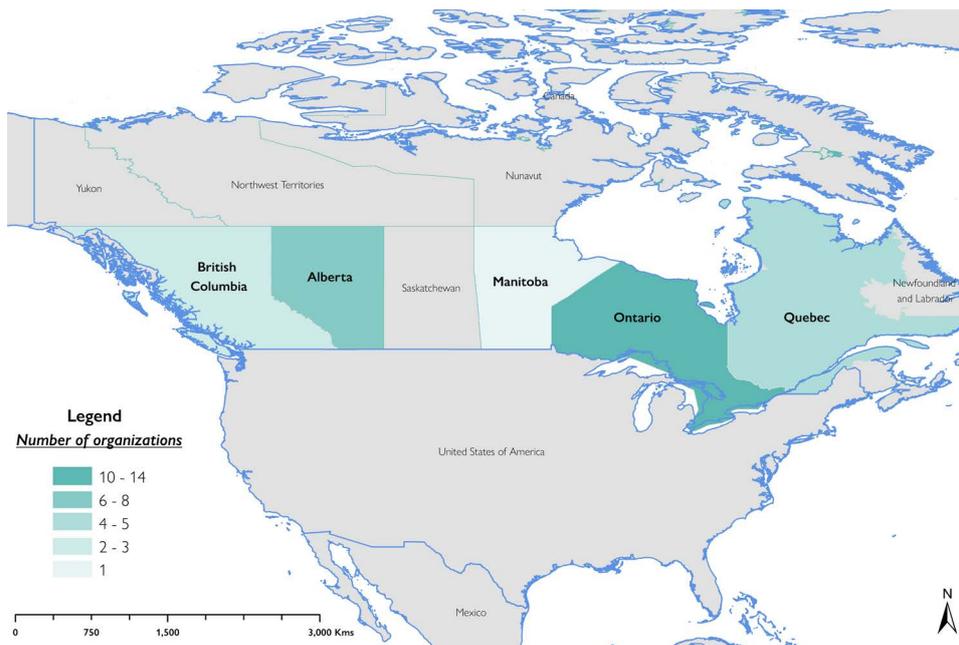
Map 3. Diaspora organizations, distribution at the county level in the United States of America



Basemap source: LEES, ESRI and UN World Map.
 Note: This map is for illustrative purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration

Canada is the second most common destination country for the Mesoamerican diaspora, and, as such, it follows that it is also the country with the second greatest number of organizations identified. Ontario is the Canadian province with the highest number of migrant associations, where 14 were recorded, followed by Alberta with 6. This can be observed in both Map 1 and Map 2.

Map 4. Diaspora organizations, by Canadian province



Basemap source: LEES, ESRI and UN World Map.

Note: This map is for illustrative purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration

The rest of the organizations identified are distributed among the Mesoamerican countries, although no organizations could be identified in Belize. The country with the third greatest number was Costa Rica, with 9 organizations within its territory, followed by Honduras with 2, as can be observed in Table 6.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBJECTIVES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS

In-depth analysis of the reasons why diaspora organization were formed and their objectives is key to understanding the relationship between the organization, their communities, and their countries of origin.

The reasons for the founding of an organization can be diverse, including defending migrants' rights, facilitating greater and better inclusion in the receiving country, supporting members of the community and those who have recently arrived, achieving higher levels of education and better working conditions, sharing and preserving the culture of their country of origin, or promoting sports. However, it is also possible to identify more concrete objectives related to improving the living conditions of their communities of origin, such as renovating a park or school, providing infrastructure or basic services to a community, building a road or paving a street, among other things.

The objectives migrant groups propose are very diverse. In order to facilitate the classification of organizations by their objectives, the typology described in Table 7 was developed and used to analyze the 1,014 organizations identified. In the case of groups with more than one general objective, their activities were analyzed more closely to determine their primary area of action. For example, if an organization states that it holds cultural and educational activities, but its social media shows that the majority of the actions it has taken are solely cultural, the organization is classified within the cultural category. The typology presented in Table 7 was developed specifically for this study. Therefore, the analysis centered about two primary variables, under the premise that they have particular impact on the relationship and the engagement an association may have with development projects in places of origin: the type of activity for which they were created and the place of origin of their members.

Table 7. Classification of diaspora organizations

Classification	Type of organization	Description
By origin of members	Hometown Club/Association	Link a city of residence with a very specific community of origin, following community and regional interests; therefore generally named in reference to a population or place in the country of origin.
	Migrant Club	Groups of migrants with the same country of origin, but from different communities.
Coalition		Group of various migrant organizations/associations. Coalitions may have various goals, depending on the associations that make them up; in general, they work for the rights of migrants and provide them a variety of services. They seek to assist with migration regularization.
By their objectives and the actions they undertake	Chamber of Commerce	Associations of businesspeople with trade connections to the country of destination and the country of origin who seek to strengthen their economic and trade relationships.
	Service Organization	Groups that offer a range of services for migrants, such as legal advice, guidance, and training in economic and financial skills. They support the migrant population in the country of origin with various processes. This group also encompasses those organizations that seek to participate in and influence the political situation and those that fight for the rights of workers.
	Community Organization	Groups formed with the goal of promoting their rights and improving living conditions in their community of residence in the destination country. They work to empower their members and promote fraternity and full, equal participation. They seek to provide information services so that people can obtain benefits regardless of migration status. They hold education and disease prevention campaigns.
	Scientific Organization	Groups developed as networks for circulating knowledge and establishing employment opportunities among their members and introducing them to the scientific community of the destination country.
	Business Organization	Groups formed in order to promote small businesses and strengthen commercial relations at the microeconomic level, which differentiates them from Chambers of Commerce. They assist their members with procedures to obtain loans and, in some cases, provide them.
	Educational Organization	Groups developed as networks to promote the education and training of the community in their place of destination, as well as to keep the student community united outside of their country of origin.
	Cultural Organization	Groups that seek to make the culture of their country of origin known in the destination country, for the purpose of preserving their traditions. They fight to recover historical memory, reconciliation, civic participation, and above all to promote binational identity.
	Women's Organization	Groups that incorporate a gender perspective and/or are made up exclusively of women seeking better conditions for themselves or for their families in the countries of origin.
	Athletic Organization	Groups that seek to promote sports or recreation among migrants
	Origin-focused Organization	Groups with the primary objective to support their communities in the country of origin, whether through contributing or raising funds or providing resources to the most vulnerable people or groups. They seek to build links with the government of the country of origin to benefit the places they left behind.

Source: Prepared by the authors using original definitions.

Understanding the origin of the people who make up an organization is key to identifying migrant organizations as one of two types: hometown clubs or migrant clubs. A hometown club is made up of a group of migrants from not only the same country, but from the same state, district, locality, or municipality, while those who make up a migrant club share only the same country of origin.

It can be difficult to identify the place of origin for the members of some organizations, such as chambers of commerce; these diverse groups of businesspeople promote links and business creation between countries, and the country of origin of their membership is often unclear.

These types of organization also differ in their primary activities. The origin-focused organizations include those that specifically state their intention contribute to the development of the country of origin among their general objectives or in the description of their organization. By contrast, community organizations are those that primarily seek to benefit the destination community; this does not mean that they do not contribute to their community of origin, but this is not one of the primary objectives of the organization. Additionally, the coalition category was included to distinguish groups of organizations from single organizations.

The analysis of the characteristics of the identified organizations was performed according to country of origin. In order to present the results, the eight countries of origin were separated into three groups based on the magnitude of their migration flows and the proportion of the total organizations represented by each country.

The first group includes the organizations of Mexican and Salvadoran origin, the second includes the Nicaraguan, Honduran, and Guatemalan organizations, and the third group covers the Costa Rican, Panamanian, and Belizean organizations. A fourth group includes the organizations which do not have particular country of origin and which have been catalogued by Central American or Latin American origin.

DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS: MEXICO AND EL SALVADOR

Migration processes naturally promote the formation of groups of people, initially to accompany one another in an uncertain endeavor and to support each other in facing conditions that are often adverse, and later to improve their conditions in the place of destination and to serve as bridge for those who migrate subsequently. However, once a certain stability is achieved, in many cases, in addition to sending remittances to homes and families, these groups also organize. They do so to contribute to the development of their communities of origin, whether because they are seeking a better environment for their family members and for their material interests to prosper or simply due to a sense of connection and nostalgia. This has been the case for Mesoamerican migration, where the United States of America is the primary destination.

Although migration in the Mesoamerican region dates to the beginning of the 20th century, it took on greater importance during the last quarter of the century. In the case of Mexico, it was through the solidification of the labour migration pattern in the 1970s and 80s, which continues today, that a series of groups were organized. They primarily originated from the states of Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Michoacán, and Jalisco, to promote improvement projects in their communities using collective remittances. Over time, these organizations proposed the first co-investment schemes to their state governments, later adding municipal governments and the federal government. The organizations' influence on the government agenda for creating co-investment public programs for local development culminated in the creation of the federal program *Programa 3x1 para Migrantes* [3x1 for Migrants Program], which began in 2002 and ended in 2019.²² Fernandez (2006) presents an extensive review of the antecedents of the 3x1 program.

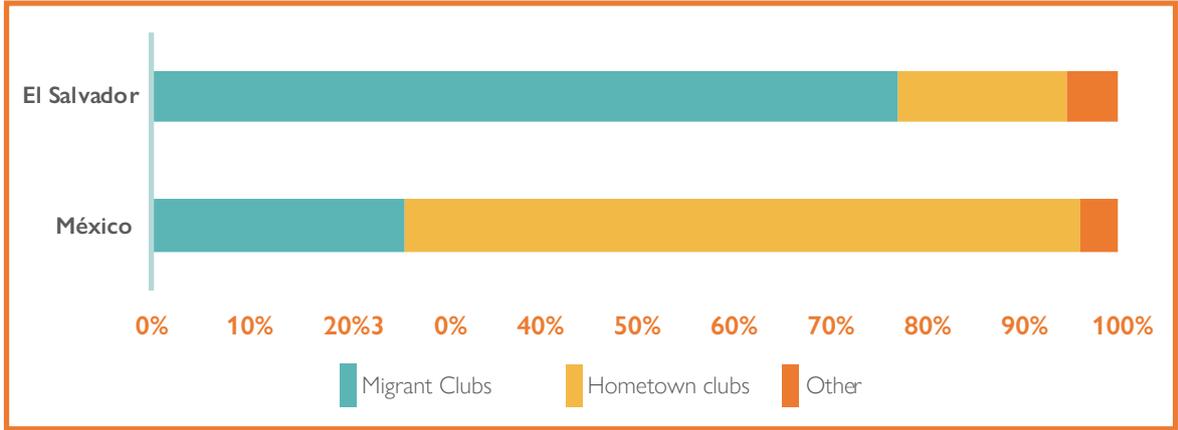
²² Government of Mexico (2020) Webpage of the 3x1 for Migrants Program. See www.gob.mx/bienestar/acciones-y-programas/programa-3x1-para-migrantes. [Spanish]

Like Mexican groups, Salvadoran groups formed organizations that sent collective remittances to finance improvements in their communities of origin. In response to the damage caused by Hurricane Mitch in 1998, these initiatives were strengthened and gained visibility. In this case, the Salvadoran government saw the collective remittances as an opportunity to contribute to local development and started a public co-investment program at the beginning of the 21st century, inviting groups of Salvadoran migrants to participate. This program, *Unidos por la Solidaridad* [United in Solidarity], began in 2000 and finished in 2005.

The goal to participate in the development in communities of origin, which has been fundamental for many Mexican organizations since the 1970s, has shaped the nature of the organizations. The majority of the Mexican organizations identified, 69%, belong to the category of Hometown Clubs, which are made up of people from the same community, locality, municipality, or state. Based on their objectives, they are placed in the category of Origin-focused Organizations, which consider benefitting their places of origin to be one of their goals, unlike Migrant Clubs, where the primary focus is local community activity in the destination country (see Figure 6). Their connection with States -- and even localities and municipalities -- is specified in their objectives.

82% of the Salvadoran organizations were identified as Migrant Clubs; that is, they are made up of people from different communities or places of origin. Almost 50% of these organizations are origin-focused, and their objectives include the development of localities in El Salvador. On the other hand, 18% of Salvadoran organizations were identified as Hometown Clubs, with a focus on the development of their communities of origin (see Figure 6). Some of these organizations participated in the projects promoted by the Salvadoran government program, which ended 15 years ago.

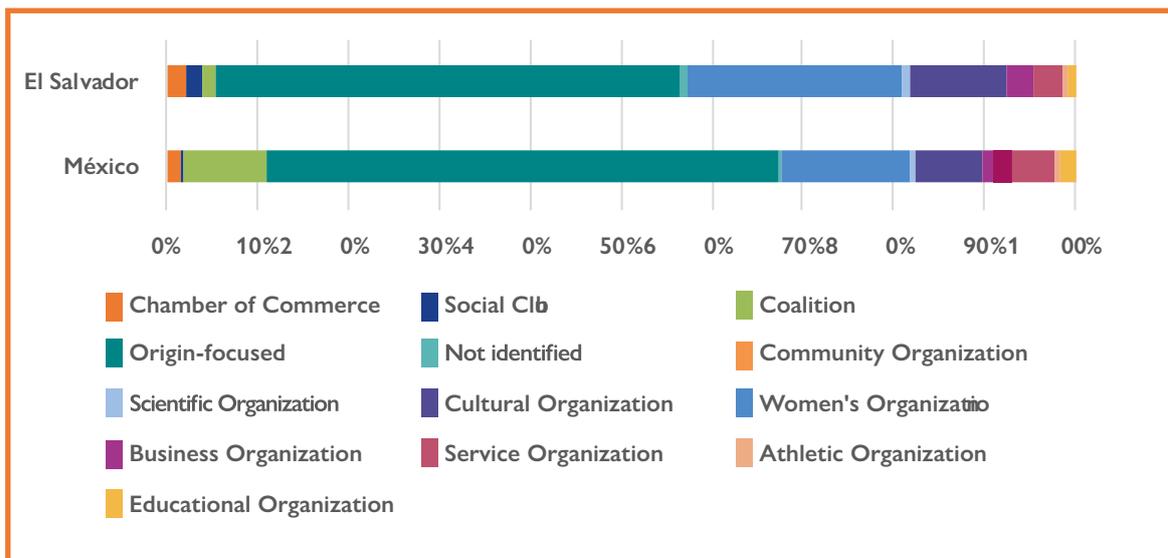
Figure 6. Diaspora organizations by origin: Mexico and El Salvador (%)



Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the mapping.

Based on the activities they undertake, organizations in the Hometown Club category focus more on supporting the community of origin than Migrant Clubs do. In Mexico and El Salvador, it was observed that supporting development in communities of origin was a common objective for creating Hometown Clubs.

Figure 7. Type of Salvadoran and Mexican diaspora organizations, by objectives



Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the mapping.

The presence of a co-investment program such as 3x1 for Migrants can incentivize migrants to organize in formal associations. In the case of Mexico, in addition to the many organizations that mention participation in the 3x1 Program within their objectives, 70% of the organizations identified were formed between 2000 and 2016, the period during which the program began and expanded.

The desire to impact public policy in places of origin, in addition to strengthening associations, has led to the formation of coalitions. Likewise, local development policies that seek the participation of migrant groups strengthen the role of coalitions as points of contact for these types of programs. Coalitions are the third most common type of organization for the diaspora from Mexico. For this country, the majority of coalitions identified are linked to specific states. They are also grouped according to the areas in which they are found within North American territory and are origin-focused. Two Salvadoran coalitions were identified. One, *Comunidades Transnacionales Salvadoreñas* [Transnational Salvadoran Communities](COTSA),²³ is located in the United States and has participated in development projects in different parts of El Salvador. The other, *Comité Ciudadano de Salvadoreños en Montreal* [Citizen Committee of Salvadorans in Montreal] (CCSALMTL),²⁴ was founded more recently in Canada.

Approximately 70% of the organizations identified for Mexico and El Salvador have participated directly in activities or projects for local development. These activities may range from infrastructure projects or funding community projects to cash and in-kind donations, such as the donation of equipment. A smaller number of organizations were identified as Business Organizations or Chambers of Commerce (13 from Mexico and 3 from El Salvador). However, the objectives of these organizations include the promotion and generation of employment opportunities in the country of origin and the facilitation of better trade relations.

Organizations that do not specify a focus on development in communities of origin can also have positive impacts on the creation of businesses and jobs, though often to a lesser degree. For example, in the case of Mexico, the cultural organization *Casa Puebla New York*, in addition to promoting the customs, traditions, culture, and history of Mexico in coordination with various chambers of commerce, holds periodic orientation meetings on issues of interest to the Mexican community regarding the creation of new businesses and investment.

²³ Website of Transnational Salvadoran Communities. See www.festivalcotsa.com.

²⁴ Infrastructure encompasses building roads, highways, schools, etc., all for the benefit of a community or locality.

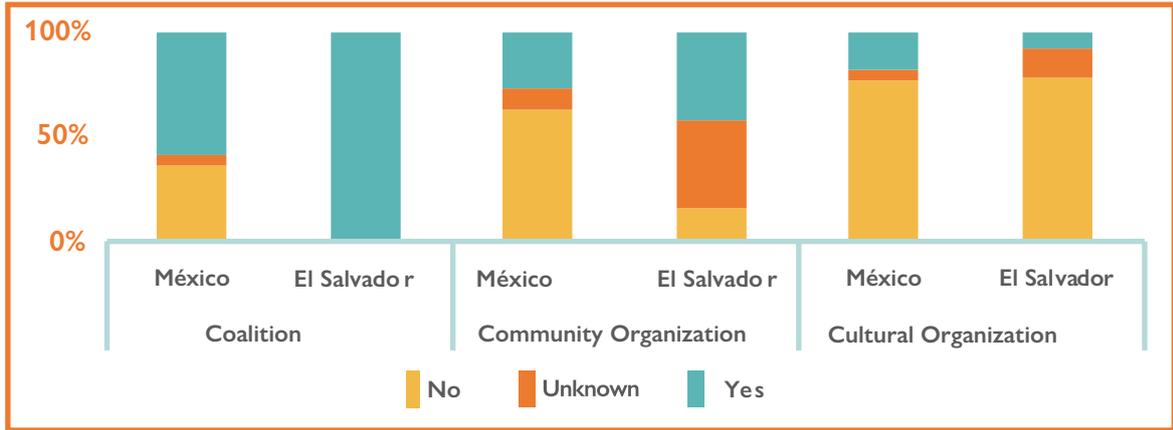
Table 8. Number of diaspora organizations and type of support to the community of origin: Mexico and El Salvador

Type of Support	Diaspora Salvadoran	Diaspora Mexican
Nutrition	29	21
Health	20	15
Education	9	24
Various infrastructure²⁵	28	412
Commerce and employment	8	56
Other in-kind donations	14	17
Economic aid	10	17
Other	7	38

Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the mapping.

After analyzing the principal types of support organizations provide to their communities of origin, it was observed that a greater number of Salvadoran diaspora coalitions and community organizations contribute to their communities compared to the number of Mexican diaspora organizations that also contribute to their country of origin (See Figure 8).

Figure 8. Percentage of diaspora organizations that contribute to their country of origin



Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the mapping.

Outside the United States of America and Canada, Salvadoran and Mexican organizations have a different purpose. They may be classified as community and cultural organizations, which focus their activities on offering services to migrants in the places of destination and maintaining their cultural ties with their countries of origin. They also work to promote the exchange of traditions and culture between the countries of origin and destination (see Table 9).

²⁵ Infrastructure encompasses building roads, highways, schools, etc., all for the benefit of a community or locality.

Table 9. Nature of diaspora organizations by destination country

Diaspora	Destination	Percentage of diaspora organizations in the destination country that contribute to their country of origin	Principal type of organization
Mexican	United States of America	72%	Origin-focused Organization
	Canada	19%	Cultural Organization
	Central America	16%	Cultural Organization
Salvadoran	United States of America	70%	Origin-focused Organization
	Canada	33%	Community Organization
	Central American	0%	Service Organization

Source: Prepared by the authors.

While the majority of organizations located in the United States are focused on collaboration for local development, this is not the case with those found in Canada. Although origin-focused organizations do exist, the majority of these organizations have a community and cultural focus.

DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS: GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, AND NICARAGUA

After Mexico and El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua are the Mesoamerican countries with the greatest emigration recorded in 2019. The number of organizations identified as belonging to these three countries is much smaller than for Mexico and El Salvador, so it is clearer to describe them separately. It should be noted that while the other five Mesoamerican countries experience emigration primarily to the United States of America, Nicaragua has a different pattern. Although the majority of its diaspora is located in the United States of America, this only represents 44.34% of its emigrants, while 43.42% reside in Costa Rica.

The number of Honduran organizations is next greatest after those from Mexico and El Salvador, with 31 organizations located in the United States of America. Nicaragua, with 17 organizations in the United States of America and 7 in Costa Rica, and Guatemala, with 16 organizations in the United States of America, follow in number. Given the similarity in the number of associations identified and in the magnitude of their migration, these three countries were grouped to analyze the features of their organizations and offer a clearer perspective of their characteristics.

The organizations of the Guatemalan diaspora originated primarily in the 1980s, driven by the increase of refugees and displaced persons in the United States of America. The Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA) was formed in the mid-80s, leading to the emergence of leaders who founded various migrant organizations.

In 1998, the first National Congress of Guatemalan Civic Organizations in the United States of America, also called GUATENET, was held, bringing together Guatemalan leadership from various states and cities in the United States. The *Coalición Nacional de Organizaciones Guatemaltecas* [National Coalition of Guatemalan Organizations] (CONGUATE) was formed the same year; years later, the *Movimiento de Inmigrantes Guatemaltecos en los Estados Unidos de América* [Movement of Guatemalan Immigrants in the United States of America] (MIGUA) was formalized.

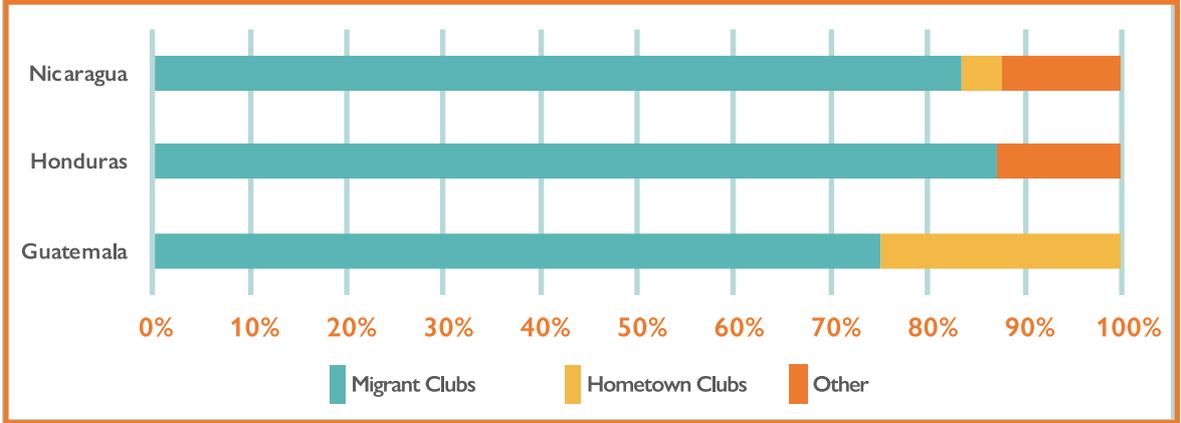
In the case of Honduras, large-scale migration is a relatively recent phenomenon. It began with the economic restructuring resulting from the crisis of the 1980s, and paradoxically, with the pacification of the zone at the end of the same decade. The role of Honduras as a provider of consumer goods in the region was reduced, which negatively affected its economy due to the size of the domestic market and its levels of industrialization (Segovia,

2010; Lopez, 2013). Finally, the damage caused by Hurricane Mitch in 1998 ultimately set off the massive departure of Hondurans from their country (UNDP, 2006; Segovia, 2010; Lopez, 2016). The government, along with religious institutions and non-governmental organizations, did not spare efforts in providing aid to the affected population.²⁶ In 2010, the central government of Honduras began the program *Remesas Solidarias y Productivas* [Caring and Productive Remittances], which sought to incentivize the participation of organizations of Hondurans abroad in local development projects.

Nicaraguan migration history is also relatively recent and is related to internal armed conflicts. At the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, these events caused a significant number of Nicaraguans to leave the country, particularly those in political exile, as well as people and families with higher incomes and levels of education in the urban area of Managua. This first wave began the flow toward the United States of America. Later, during the 1980s and 1990s, greater development in Costa Rica attracted the migration of Nicaraguan laborers, primarily to work in the agricultural sector. This movement was accompanied by a flow of Nicaraguan women to Costa Rica in search of better economic, educational, and social opportunities for themselves and their children (Gutierrez, 2008). In contrast to the migration to the United States, this migration to Costa Rica has a rural, less qualified origin (Baumeister, 2006). During the mid-2000s, the intraregional migration of Nicaraguans to El Salvador and Panama increased. Migration, particularly of women, also increased to Spain and other countries in Europe. Although the organizational experiences of the Nicaraguan diasporas have not been extensively studied, the document review indicates that the diaspora is relatively disperse and disunited compared to other groups (IOM, 2013).²⁷

Existing organizations tend to be made up of people from different places most likely due to the lower number of migrants in comparison with Mexico or El Salvador and to the fact that they are geographically dispersed. Migrant Clubs are the most common type of organization, representing almost every organization for both Honduras and Nicaragua, while 25% of Guatemalan organizations were identified as belonging to the category Hometown Clubs (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Diaspora organizations by origin: Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua



Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the mapping.

²⁶ www.cidbimena.desastres.hn/ri-hn/pdf/spa/doc11043/doc11043-1.pdf
²⁷ International Organization for Migration (2012) Migration Profile of Nicaragua 2012. See: www.nicaragua.iom.int/sites/default/files/Publicaciones/perfil_migratorio_de_nicaragua%20%281%29.pdf [Spanish]

In this group, there is little diversity in the activity of the organizations; the majority are community organizations, followed by service organizations. Origin-focused organizations represent at least 20%²⁸ (Figure 10, Table 10). This indicates that, at least in terms of their objectives, the majority of organizations from these three countries are primarily focused on assisting their members in the places of destination and do not specify an interest in participating in the development of their places of origin.

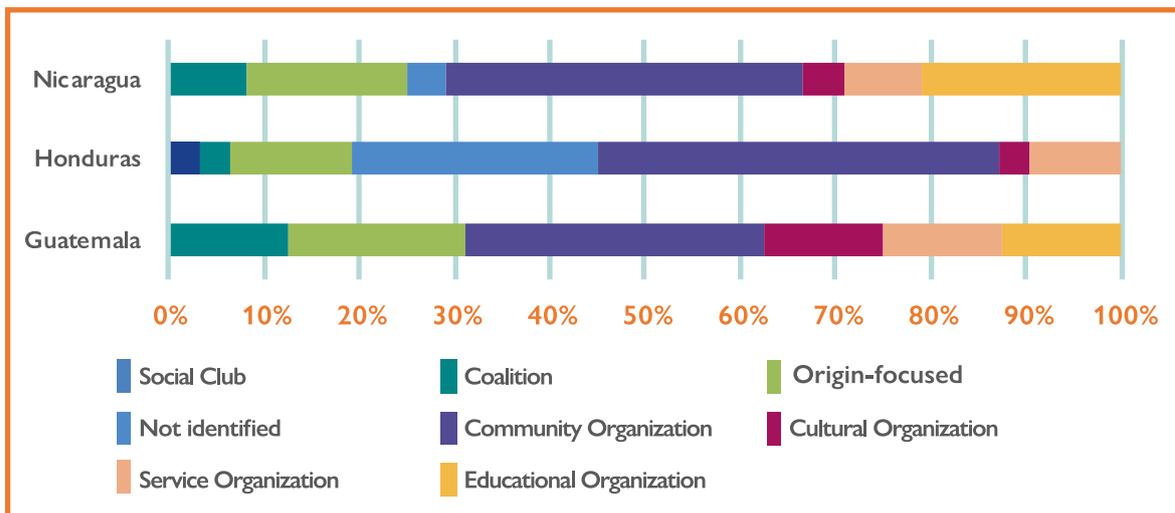
Table 10. Nature of diaspora organizations by destination country

Diaspora	Destination	Percentage of diaspora organizations in the destination country that contribute to their country of origin	Principal type of organization
Guatemalan	United States of America	31%	Community Organization
Honduran	United States of America	16%	Community Organization
Nicaraguan	United States of America	18%	Community Organization
	Costa Rica	14%	Women's Organization Service Organization

Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the mapping.

The characteristics of these organized groups of migrants contrast with individual behavior; considering the magnitude of the remittances that are received in these countries, which evidences the importance of the link between diasporas and their homes in the places of origin. Of course, interest in the development of their communities of origin exists; however, this is not explicitly reflected in the objectives of their organizations.

Figure 10. Type of organizations of the Guatemalan, Honduran, and Nicaraguan diasporas



Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the mapping.

²⁸ It should be recognized that in the case of Honduras, four organizations were identified which do not have a clear description, which impeded their classification.

Two Guatemalan coalitions were identified that are origin-focused and seek to impact the development of their communities of origin and connect Guatemalans in the United States with the Guatemalan government. In the case of Nicaragua, two coalitions were identified that focus on the Nicaraguan community in the United States.

31% of Guatemalan diaspora organizations undertake activities to benefit their communities in Guatemala, primarily in the form of nutrition assistance. In the cases of Honduran and Nicaraguan organizations, 16% specify having contributed to development projects in their communities of origin.

Table 11. Number of diaspora organizations that offer support to the community of origin by type of support

Type of Support	Diaspora Guatemalan	Diaspora Honduran	Diaspora Nicaraguan
Nutrition	3	1	3
Health		2	3
Education		3	1
Various infrastructure	1	2	
Other in-kind donations	1	1	1
Other		1	

Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the mapping.²⁹

Like Honduran and Guatemalan organizations, Nicaraguan organizations in the United States of America have also participated in health and nutrition projects in their communities of origin. However, Nicaraguan organizations in Costa Rica are focused on community and offer services related to labor issues to Nicaraguan migrants in that country. Some of these organizations are the Association of Domestic Workers, the Association of the Nicaraguan Women's Network, and the Nicaraguan Links Costa Rica Association. The first of these is focused on defending, training, and advising women who perform paid domestic work.

DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS: COSTA RICA, BELIZE, AND PANAMA

Costa Rica, Belize, and Panama are the Central American countries with the least emigration recorded in 2019; in total, the three recorded 379,000 emigrants. The identification of diaspora organizations for these countries was more difficult because the countries have not implemented mechanisms for coordination with organizations of their migrant nationals.

Identification of the diaspora organizations produced only three associations in the case of Belize, four for Panama, and six for Costa Rica. One of the Costa Rican organizations is a chamber of commerce, and the others are migrant clubs. These organizations carry out community, service, and cultural activities, primarily focused on providing services to their members in the places of destination and preserving cultural identity. They are not systematically involved in local development projects, although some occasionally provide donations.

²⁹ The breakdown of the number of organizations identified in each category of support does not necessarily reflect the number of organizations that contribute to their community of origin, due to the fact that the same organization may contribute in more than one category.

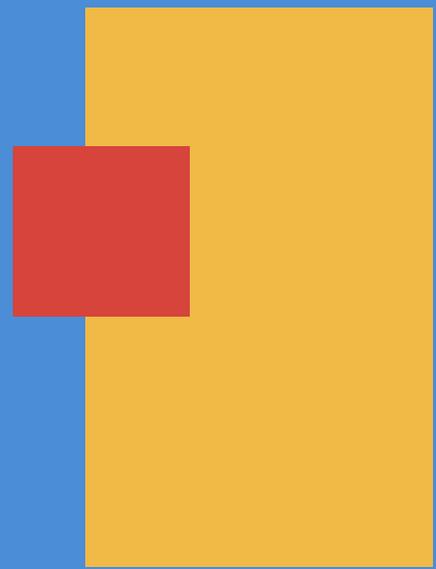
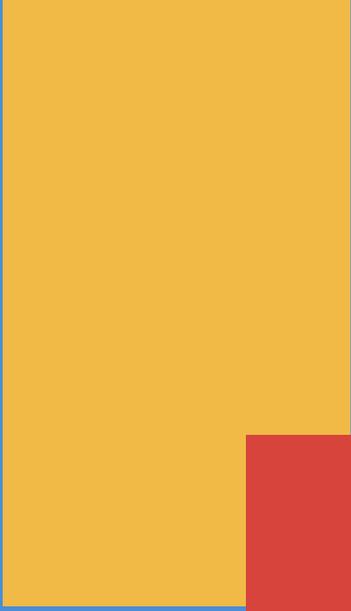
DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS: LATIN AMERICAN AND CENTRAL AMERICAN

The mapping identified 24 organizations with membership from multiple nationalities. Three of these are coalitions: *Alianza Américas* [Americas Alliance],³⁰ *Confederación Centroamericana* [the Central American Confederation] (COFECA),³¹ and *Asociación Centroamericana Unida* [the United Central American Association].³² These coalitions include over 50 organizations focused on improving the quality of life of the Latino population and the Latino immigrant population in their communities, both in the United States of America and in countries of origin. They also promote the safety, social equality, education, and overall development of their members. The primary focus of these organizations is to support the migrant community from their respective countries of origin, currently located in the United States of America.

³⁰ Website of Americas Alliance. See www.alianzaamericas.org.

³¹ Website of the Central American Confederation. See www.cofeca.org.

³² Facebook page of the United Central American Association. See www.facebook.com/pg/acaunida/about?ref=page_internal.

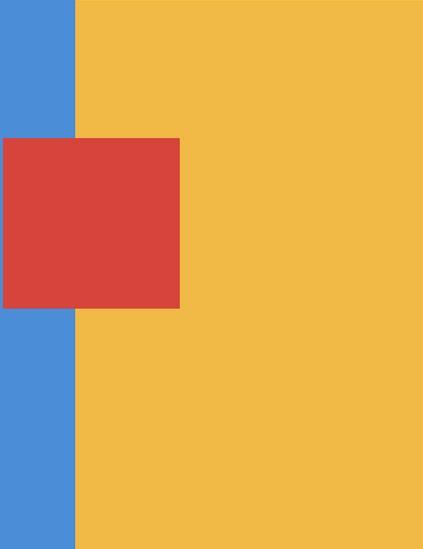


V. ENGAGING GOVERNMENTS OF ORIGIN WITH ORGANIZED DIASPORAS





“National governments and the diaspora connect primarily through consular services and embassies. These institutions play a fundamental role in the policies governments implement relating to their diasporas; the administrative, guidance, and representation services they provide are essential not only as part of the process of implementing policy, but also for building a relationship and a connection between nationals and their governments, in which credibility and trust are indispensable.”



V. ENGAGING GOVERNMENTS OF ORIGIN WITH ORGANIZED DIASPORAS

National governments and the diaspora connect primarily through consular services and embassies. These institutions play a fundamental role in the policies governments implement relating to their diasporas; the administrative, guidance, and representation services they provide are essential not only as part of the process of implementing policy, but also for building a relationship and a connection between nationals and their governments, in which credibility and trust are indispensable. According to representatives of organizations and the officials of various chancelleries, efficiency and sensitivity in consular services are just as important as consular representation itself; it is not enough merely to add more consulates and expand coverage.

Consular services are links in the policy-making process that governments undertake regarding their diasporas. Independently of consular processes and services, the actions, programs, and policies governments implement can be classified in the following manner:

1. Those that aim to guarantee rights as citizens of the country of origin. These range from programs that guarantee access to education such as, for example, distance education and certification programs, access to financial and credit systems, the possibility of dual citizenship, and participation in public decisions through the option to vote from abroad and have representation on government councils.
2. Those that seek to guarantee rights as citizens outside the country of origin. These are actions that seek to guarantee the integrity of and respect for citizenship abroad. This also includes actions and services to reduce the risks of those in transit, particularly those who migrate irregularly.
3. Those that seek to support and facilitate the improvement of the economic conditions of migrant citizens and their families in the country of origin. Actions to facilitate the sending and receiving of remittances are the most notable of these, but they also include socio-occupational reintegration programs for the national returnee population.
4. Actions and programs to include the diaspora in the development of the country. These include investment and co-investment programs for development projects in the places of origin, linkage strategies for developing job creation projects, and networks for labor, productive, technological, and scientific collaboration, as well as for the diffusion of culture and knowledge.

Many of these actions and programs require the involvement of an organized diaspora, such as participating in councils for government decision-making or launching co-investment projects. Likewise, the vast majority of these actions can have greater reach and better results with the involvement of diaspora organizations. Thus, connecting not only with individual citizens abroad but also with diaspora organizations is key for national governments.

OFFICIAL BODIES FOR ASSISTANCE, ENGAGEMENT, AND PARTICIPATION WITH THE ORGANIZED DIASPORA

With the exception of Panama, and to a lesser degree Costa Rica, the issues of emigration and the diaspora are a part of national public agendas in all the countries of the region, and governments have created institutions focused on these issues, as described in this section.

As a country that receives significant numbers of migrants, Costa Rica has focused on policies to promote inclusion and the fulfillment of the human rights of those who settle in their territory. For this purpose, it has created the Directorate of Integration and Human Development, an agency of the General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs. Like Panama, Costa Rica does not have a specialized mechanism to enable coordination with its diaspora abroad or a directory of organizations abroad.

The chancelleries of the other Mesoamerican countries, in addition to offices responsible for consular services, have also created institutions focused on the issues and problems associated with the processes of large-scale emigration. Likewise, the magnitude of the phenomenon in each country and the importance governments place on connecting with their organized diasporas have determined the strength of institutional efforts to maintain registries of organizations of nationals abroad. Table 12 presents this information.

Table 12. Existence of mechanisms for linkage with the diaspora

Country	Does it have a directory or registry making it possible to identify the diaspora?	In addition to regular consular services, does it have an agency, area, or specialized body for linkage with the diaspora?	Law on the protection of migrants
Belize	Yes, it has a registry page	Yes, the Office of the Diaspora	No data
Costa Rica	No	Not for emigrants. Yes for immigrants, the Directorate of Integration and Human Development	General Law on Migration and Foreign Nationals (Law 8,764)
El Salvador	Yes, it has the Directorio ComunidadES	Yes, the Vice-Ministry for Salvadorans Abroad and CONMIGRANTES	Special Law on the Protection and Development of Migrant Salvadorans and their Families (Decree 655)
Guatemala	Yes, but it is not public	Yes, CONAMIGUA	Law on the National Council on Assistance to Migrants of Guatemala (Decree 46, 2007)
Honduras	Yes, but it is not public	Yes, the General Directorate of Protection for Honduran Migrants	Law on the Protection of Honduran Migrants and their Family Members (Decree 106)
Mexico	Yes, it has the Directory of Hometown Organizations and Clubs	Yes, the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME)	Migration Law
Panama	No	No	National Migration Service, Migration Training, and other provisions (Decree Law no. 3)

Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the document review.

In the cases of Mexico, El Salvador, and Belize, these are self-reported directories, meaning that the diaspora or migrant organizations are the ones who decide to register themselves in the directory. In Honduras and Guatemala, the directory is maintained by the authorities, and so the information collected is not public.

The Office of the Diaspora was created within the Ministry of Foreign Relations of Belize in 2009 and has a program to support the return of its emigrants, Belizean Diaspora Returnee Incentive Program.³³ This program reflects the government's interest in establishing links with its diaspora to integrate its members into the process of the country's development. As part of this program, a registry of Belizeans abroad has been developed in order to incorporate qualified people into social development programs such as the Belizean Diaspora Medical Brigade and the Belizean Diaspora Law Enforcement and Defense Brigade.

In 2019, the government of Guatemala published the Public Policy on Protection and Assistance to Migrants 2019-2032.³⁴ In 2007, the National Council on Assistance to Migrants of Guatemala (CONAMIGUA) was created to define, coordinate, and provide follow-up to policies on assistance to the Guatemalan migrant population and their families.³⁵ This council includes representatives of Guatemalan groups abroad, and a registry of organizations is important to its function. Official sources from the government state they have a directory of Guatemalan diaspora organizations; however, this registry is not public.

In the case of Honduras, within the Undersecretariat of Consular and Migration Affairs, part of the Secretariat of Foreign Relations and International Cooperation (SRECI), there is a General Directorate of Protection for Honduran Migrants in addition to the office responsible for consular affairs. This directorate is focused on the needs of the emigrant population. *The Law on Protection for Honduran Migrants and their Families* mandates that the government foment and strengthen organizations of Hondurans abroad, for which a registry of existing organizations is currently being constructed.³⁶ Like in El Salvador, a body exists for cross-cutting design of public policies, the National Council on Protection for Honduran Migrants (CONAPROHM), in which various ministries of the central government participate, but it does not have representation from communities abroad.

In El Salvador, the Vice-Ministry for Salvadorans Abroad seeks to better link Salvadoran citizens residing abroad with the social, cultural, political, and economic processes of the country. Additionally, the National Council for the Protection and Development of Salvadoran Migrants and their Families (CONMIGRANTES), which is an independent guiding entity on migrant affairs, works to design and provide follow-up for the National Policy for the Protection and Development of Salvadoran Migrants and their Families. This council is composed of governmental and non-governmental representatives, which include three representatives of associations of Salvadorans settled abroad.

Another representative body is the Citizen Assembly of Salvadoran Communities Abroad, which seeks to formalize a transnational space for citizen participation, consultation, dialogue, planning, and coordination with nationals residing abroad. El Salvador also created the Directory of Salvadoran Associations Abroad,³⁷ a tool to simplify contact with associations of nationals and highlight the commitment of the public sector to the development of their places of origin. As in the case of Mexico, although it is a government initiative, the registry is voluntary, and the associations register themselves by electronically filling out a questionnaire.

³³ Ministry of Foreign Relations of Belize (2010). Belizean Diaspora Returnee Incentive Program. See: www.belizeinvest.org.bz/uploads/6/4/9/6/64967361/diaspora_retiree_incentive_program_-_guideline_and_application_form.pdf.

³⁴ Government of the Republic of Guatemala (2019) Public Policy on Protection and Assistance to Migrants 2019-2032 See: www.minex.gob.gt/Uploads/PoliticaPublicaDeAtencionAlMigrante.pdf.

³⁵ CONAMIGUA's website. Available at: [servicios - Conamigua](http://servicios-conamigua.gob.gt/)

³⁶ Article 1 of section 11 of the law mandates that the government "Foment and strengthen the organization of Honduran migrants, supporting the creation and operation of civil associations and centers of Honduran migrants that have the purpose of social, cultural, and legal welfare and assistance for Hondurans abroad; as well as the legalization of their migration situation in the country in which they intend to live or their reinsertion into Honduras.

³⁷ Website of ComunidadES See www.comunidades.org.sv/.

Mexico created the Directory of Hometown Associations and Clubs,³⁸ which works to publicize the network of Mexican associations abroad. Mexico also works through the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME), a decentralized body of the Secretariat of Foreign Relations which, since 2003, has addressed the initiatives and community needs of the Mexican population living and working outside Mexico. Until 2018, Mexico also had the Consulting Council of the Institute of Mexicans Abroad, in which representatives of Mexican organizations abroad participated. This council sought to offer elements for the design and implementation of public policies favoring migrant Mexicans.

While Belize, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Mexico have government institutions that go beyond usual consular services and specialize in the emigration process, only the latter three have bodies in which representatives of the diaspora participate to propose and define actions, programs, and policies relating to migration.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE DIASPORA

The methodology of this study included a survey of diaspora organizations. Out of the total diaspora organizations identified, 91 agreed to participate as informants for identifying needs and mechanisms for linkage and communication with the governments of their countries of origin.

In all the Mesoamerican countries with large emigration flows, the central governments feature institutions that explicitly or implicitly include connecting with the organized diaspora within their functions and objectives. However, this is not a simple matter and is not necessarily accomplished.

According to the survey conducted for this investigation, one out of every three organizations consulted, that is, 33% of the sample, stated that they do not currently maintain communication or a relationship with government institutions in their country of origin. In the case of Mexico, 20 out of 60 organizations do not have any communication with Mexican government institutions, including embassies or consulates. In the case of El Salvador, out of the 15 organizations that responded, four reported not having a relationship with the government of the country. Unfortunately, the sample is too small for the other countries to provide clear findings.³⁹ However, in the case of the five Guatemalan organizations, all mentioned having some link with their governments.

Various organizations mentioned consulates, and in the cases of Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador, they also mentioned consulting bodies for migration policy such as the National Migration Institute, the National Council on Assistance to Migrants of Guatemala (CONAMIGUA), and the National Council for the Protection and Development of Salvadoran Migrants and their Families (CONMIGRANTES).

In the case of Mexico, a significant number of organizations mentioned the authorities in various levels of government, both municipal and state, which reflects the process by which the organizations were founded, their characteristics as hometown clubs, and their focus on origin. Additionally, some of them continue to participate in state co-investment programs. Only eight organizations out of 60 said they had a link with a consulate, and only one with the Institute of Mexicans Abroad. Of the 15 Salvadoran organizations, only one reported having communication with a consulate and another with CONMIGRANTES. In the case of Costa Rica, in which a response was only received from a single organization, it was mentioned that a connection existed, but the name of an institution was not given. Regarding the Nicaraguan organizations, the survey showed that none of the five organizations that responded had communication or linkage with their country of origin.⁴⁰

The reported benefits and advantages of having a link with government institutions varied. Of the 60 Mexican organizations, it was found that 57 see a benefit, while only three do not. Out of the 15 Salvadoran organizations, none responded that a relationship with their government of origin does not offer them any benefit. In the case

³⁸ [Website of the Directory of Hometown Associations and Clubs of the Institute of Mexicans Abroad. See www.asociaciones.sre.gob.mx.](http://www.asociaciones.sre.gob.mx) [Spanish]

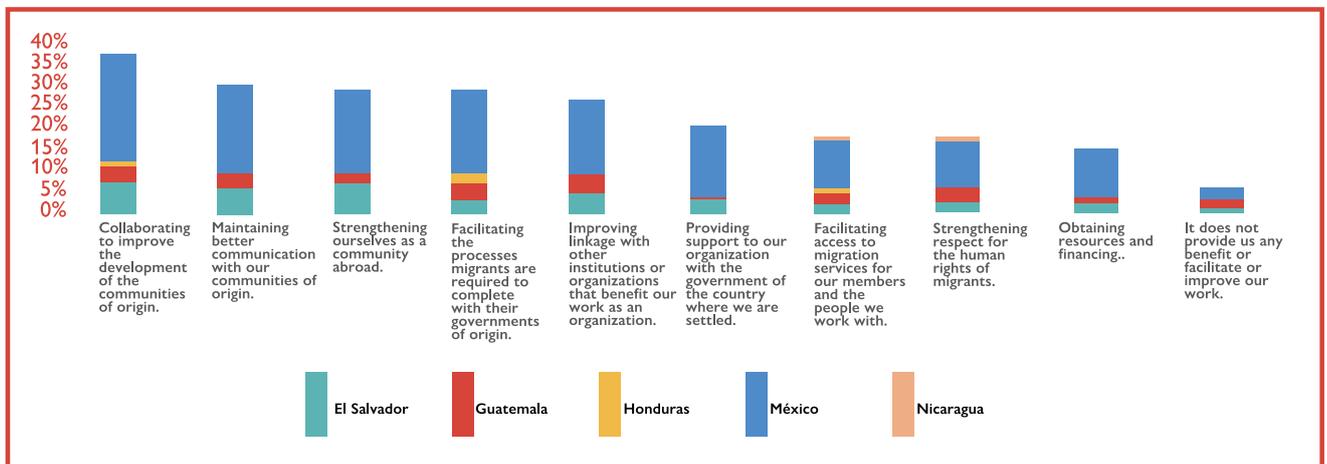
³⁹ The sample contains information on one organization from Costa Rica, five from Honduras, and five from Nicaragua.

⁴⁰ It must be emphasized that the survey conducted is not statistically representative and constitutes an approach to the needs and relations of the diaspora.

of Honduras, only five organizations were included in the sample, and two of them answered that connecting with their government did not offer them any benefit.

Thus, as can be observed in Figure 11,⁴¹ the great majority of organizations find having a link with their respective governments to be beneficial for their operation and their members.

Figure 11. Benefits for the diaspora of communication and linkage with the country of origin.



Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the survey.

Out of the options presented to the organizations for the possible benefits of connecting with their governments, the most commonly mentioned was the possibility of collaborating for better development in their communities of origin.

The organizations that cited this option are Salvadoran, Mexican, Guatemalan, and Honduran. In the case of Mexico, the selected option relates to the previous existence of the co-investment program 3x1 for Migrants Program. It is notable that, in the case of Mexican organizations, only 24 of the 60 organizations chose this option. It is equally notable that seven out of 15 Salvadoran organizations considered participation in the development of their places of origin to be an advantage of connecting with the government even though a co-investment program has not existed since 2005. In the case of the five Guatemalan organizations in the sample, the four organizations that considered it beneficial to have a relationship with their government of origin also considered one of the benefits to be collaboration to improve conditions in their places of origin.

None of the five Nicaraguan organizations nor the single Costa Rican organization chose this option. They did not believe that having links with their governments could help them improve their work or strengthen their community abroad either. It is very probable that this result is related to the political situation Nicaragua is experiencing. In the case of Costa Rica, because the sample only includes a single organization, it is not possible to cite a larger pattern that infers Costa Rican diaspora organizations do not see a benefit to maintaining a relationship with the government. However, it is important to recognize that the benefit of linkage for diasporas depends on the support the government of origin can provide them.

By contrast, 19 out of 60 Mexican organizations, seven of the 15 from El Salvador, and two of the five from Guatemala believe that connecting with their governments allows them to strengthen themselves as communities abroad.

⁴¹ The sum of the organizations that answered positively to each of the different options is greater than the total of the organizations included in the survey due to the fact that an organization may consider the relationship beneficial in one or more ways.

This perception on the part of organizations speaks to challenges for government institutions in some countries to provide an inadequate communication strategy and services that are attractive to diaspora organizations, though these are included in the objectives of the government institutions relative to the diaspora, as presented in the previous section.

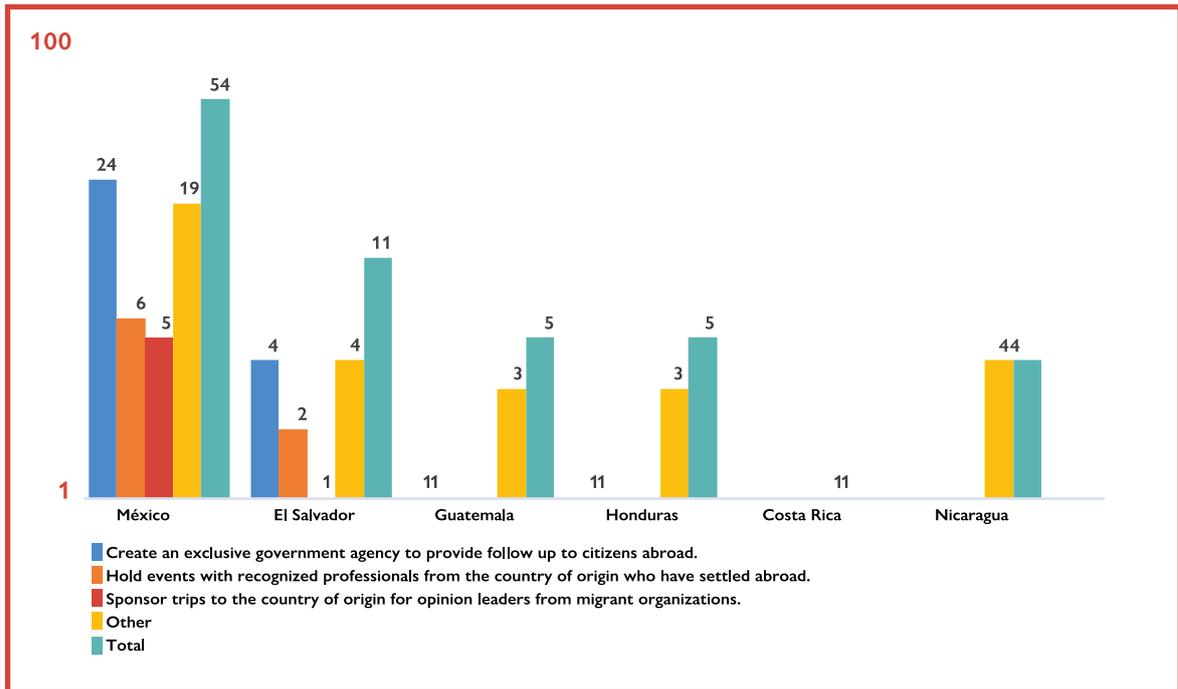
Among the reasons why diasporas do not maintain communication with governments of origin are bureaucracy, non-existence of social programs, changes in government, lack of continuity in programs, lack of interest, empathy, or outreach among both parties, and lack of adequate public policies for this purpose.

Some of the strategies governments have implemented to establish and strengthen their links with their diasporas include organizing events and promoting trips to the country of origin. When the organizations were asked which actions they thought the governments of their countries of origin could take to improve linkage, two primary responses were given. 33% of migrant organizations responded that governments should create an exclusive government agency to follow up with citizens abroad in order to strengthen connections with diaspora organizations. Out of the group that chose this option, over 80% were Mexican organizations; however, the Mexican government already has an institute for this purpose. This indicates the lack of knowledge among some diaspora organizations about mechanisms and means of connection, as well as the need for the Mexican government to develop a more effective communication strategy. Only 18% of the organizations believe that promoting trips and organizing events are relevant mechanisms for strengthening ties, which differs from the strategies that some governments believe are most effective.

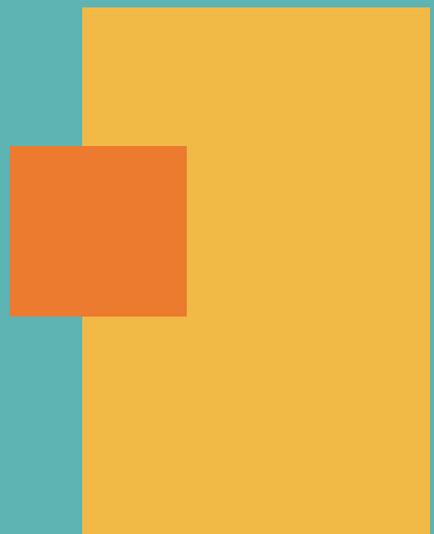
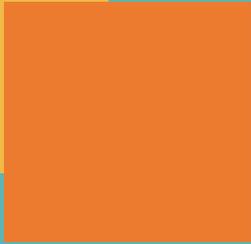
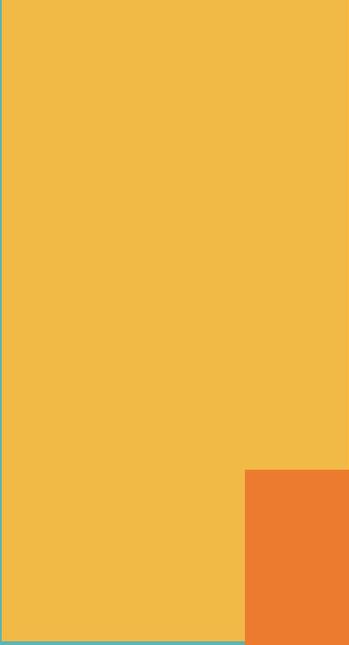
Other recommendations are:

- Not politicizing the engagement with organizations;
 - Bolstering the migrant councils in which the diaspora has representation and the government institutions responsible for assisting them;
 - Continuing, resuming, or starting co-investment projects for development;
 - Listening and paying attention to the needs of migrants;
 - Working on transnational policies for connection and economic growth;
 - Supporting migrants in obtaining documents;
 - Seeing the diaspora as allies for development; and
 - Taking into account the agendas of the organizations to promote development.
- In some specific cases, the recommendation hinges on the creation of chambers of commerce, which, while they are not government bodies, are an axis for the participation of private enterprise that generates benefits for both the countries of origin and destination of the diaspora.

Figure 12. Requests from the diaspora for strengthening links with the country of origin



Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the survey.



VI. SUPPORT FROM GOVERNMENTS TO THE DIASPORA





“While governments’ efforts to ensure the wellbeing of their respective diasporas are very important, so are policies to guarantee the rights of migrants abroad as citizens of their respective countries. For this reason, processes have been solidified to guarantee citizenship through dual citizenship schemes and protect the right to political participation abroad, at least in terms of the opportunity to vote in presidential elections.”

VI. SUPPORT FROM GOVERNMENTS TO THE DIASPORA

The countries of the Central American region and Mexico operate various support programs for their diasporas. Consulates are the primary means of delivering this support.⁴² Two types of consular officials have been identified in these countries, one focused on documentation and the other on protection. These carry out basic functions and respond to the most pressing needs that a citizen might experience abroad. In the case of Mexico, the model of assistance to the diaspora has included the role of a community consul, which seeks to empower Mexicans abroad.

This section collects the principal mechanisms for support to the diaspora, as reported by the countries.⁴³ The commitment of the governments of countries of origin to the safety and wellbeing of their diasporas, as well as the efficiency of their actions for this end, are fundamental components for building partnerships for the development of their countries. In this way, governments can gain the trust of diaspora organizations and incentivize their participation. Implementing actions to guarantee the safety and human rights of migrants ultimately strengthens their links with their governments of origin.

Thus, given that consulates are the primary point of contact between governments and their diasporas, work in consular services and their efficiency and quality play a very important role.

According to data obtained in the survey that was conducted, organized groups of the Mesoamerican diaspora appear to have little communication or relationship with their consulates and embassies. Their perception of the closeness of their governments, the interest these take in their situation, and their institutional capacity and efficiency also reflects the perception of closeness or distance the organizations have of the consular services of their countries of origin.

Constant effort to improve consular services and reach out to organizations through them is one of the first steps for strengthening the links between governments and diasporas. According to the results of the survey, this is an area in which progress can be made in Mesoamerica.

Consulates of all the countries of the Mesoamerican region offer documentation and identification services, assistance and protection, support for repatriation, and economic aid in special adverse circumstances. There are also strategies for achieving better coverage of consular services. For example, Guatemala has a Phone Assistance Center for Migrants in the United States, through which information is provided to Guatemalans regarding migration policies, legal advice, locating persons, and various documentation processes⁴⁴ Additionally, in order to make services accessible to remote communities, a mobile consulate service has been implemented.

There are also projects to take advantage of cell phones and make use of social media to improve access to consular services and tighten bonds with the diaspora. However, the fear people in irregular migration situations have of being discovered through social media is a challenge for implementing these types of strategies.

⁴² According to IOM's Glossary on Migration (2019), consular functions are defined as: Any function entrusted to a consular post or a diplomatic mission by the sending State, listed in Article 5 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, or any other functions which are not prohibited by the laws and regulations of the receiving State or to which no objection is taken by the receiving State or which are referred to in the international agreements in force between the sending State and the receiving State. The consular functions described in Article 5 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (ratified April 24, 1963 and in force since March 19, 1967) consist, among other things, in protecting in the receiving State the interests of the sending State and of its nationals; issuing passports and travel documents to nationals of the sending State, and visas or appropriate documents to persons wishing to travel to the sending State; helping and assisting nationals of the sending State; acting as notary and civil registrar and in capacities of a similar kind, and performing certain functions of an administrative nature; and safeguarding the interests of minors and other persons lacking full capacity who are nationals of the sending State, particularly where any guardianship or trusteeship is required with respect to such persons. Source: www.publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf.

⁴³ In the case of Costa Rica, as a net receiving country of migrants, its focus is naturally on implementing programs to support the Nicaraguan diaspora.

⁴⁴ Government of the Republic of Guatemala, Public Policy on protection and assistance to migrants 2019-2032 www.minex.gob.gt/Uploads/PoliticaPublicaDeAtencionAlMigrante.pdf

Additionally, the activities, sporting events, cultural events, health and job fairs, and opening ceremonies for businesses that consulates typically host improve their relationship with the migrant population abroad, particularly with certain types of groups and organizations.

The Honduran consular service offers local programs to benefit their migrant population directly, including medical assistance programs, health fairs, financial education, and various training programs. The majority of their activities, like those of the Mexican consular service, which has similar programs, are held in collaboration and cooperation with other associations in the destination country.

In terms of health, El Salvador offers the *Salud 503* [Health 503] program, which, through the Social Security Institute of El Salvador (ISSS), provides complete health coverage to Salvadorans residing abroad and their nuclear families; a small monthly fee is required to receive this benefit.

In the case of Mexico's consular services in the United States, the *Ventanillas Comunitarias* [Community Hubs] serve as a comprehensive strategy for assisting the Mexican population in matters of health, education, and financial advice.

Regarding education, Mexico has 40 education orientation hubs, which give Mexicans in the United States access to a range of options, from information on scholarships to information about opportunities for adults to return to school. Mexico also has 44 financial education hubs offering personalized financial advising and workshops on savings accounts, credit, banking services, and entrepreneurship, among other services.

Within Mexico's operation model for assistance to the diaspora through the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME), in the areas of education and financial advising it is significant that all these activities are held through agreements or memoranda of collaboration with partners, which makes it possible to offer a range of practically free options. Unlike the other two types of hubs, for health care Mexico has an annual budget that allows it to offer the Mexican diaspora basic preventative health screenings, early detection of various diseases, vaccines, referrals to health services, and guidance in priority areas such as nutrition, women's health, and more. The Binational Health Week (BHW), in which various organizations participate in order to promote fairs, workshops, and talks about preventative health care, is held through this hub. Mexico has a health hub in all its consulates in the United States.

While governments' efforts to ensure the wellbeing of their respective diasporas are very important, so are policies to guarantee the rights of migrants abroad as citizens of their respective countries. For this reason, processes have been solidified to guarantee citizenship through dual citizenship schemes and protect the right to political participation abroad, at least in terms of the opportunity to vote in presidential elections. [Table 13](#) presents this information for each country.

Likewise important are the mechanisms for the representation of the diaspora in the construction of public policies specifically relating to migration affairs. For this purpose, El Salvador, Mexico, and Guatemala have created councils with representatives of diaspora groups.

It is also important to offer programs that promote rights such as education, health, access to jobs, and housing, both for the families of migrants in the country of origin and in the case that they return.

The Ministry of Foreign Relations of Guatemala, for example, with collaboration from the Ministry of Education and some universities in the United States, has developed the program National Alternative Education Program (PRONEA), which has the objective of recognizing work migrants have done in the United States in order to certify them to do it in Guatemala. Mexico, Honduras, and El Salvador have also implemented distance education and certification programs.

An example in the area of housing is the Social Fund for Housing (FSV) in El Salvador, which allows Salvadorans abroad to access a line of credit to acquire or construct housing in El Salvador.⁴⁵ Mexico has also implemented this type of program.

Governments have also implemented specific strategies to strengthen the bonds and identities of diasporas with their countries of origin, particularly aimed at youth. This is the case for the Salvadoran programs Camp Kuskatan and Tukul-ES Volunteer Program, in which they invite Salvadoran youth abroad to visit the country and participate in processes of social, economic, and political transformation.⁴⁶ In Mexico, a program of this type is the Cultural Immersion and Volunteer Program for Mexican American Youth.

Table 13.. Services for the diaspora

Country	Services other than consular protection and documentation services.	Right to vote	Year when voting from abroad was allowed	Dual citizenship	Year in which dual citizenship was allowed
Costa Rica	Opportunities for returnees Currently operating a program for the returned population.	Yes	2013	Yes	1995
El Salvador	Health Health 503 Program Housing Social Fund for Housing Opportunities for returnees El Salvador is your home (Returnees) Employment Information about job opportunities	Yes	2013	Yes	1983
Guatemala	Education Distance Certification and Training Program PRONEA Employment Information about job opportunities.	Yes	2016	Yes, selectively.	1996
Honduras	Employment Temporary Work Abroad Program (PTTE) Opportunities for returnees Center for Support to Returned Migrants Communication ALHO Voz phone assistance	Yes	2001	Yes	2013

⁴⁵ Social Fund for Housing (2020). Buy your house from abroad through the Programa Vivienda Cercana [Nearby Housing Program] with the tools the Social Fund for Housing provides you. See [Fondo Social para la Vivienda \(fsv.gob.sv\)](https://www.fsv.gob.sv) [Spanish]

⁴⁶ Ministry of Foreign Relations of the Government of El Salvador (2019) Tukul-ES' volunteer youth arrive in El Salvador from Canada. See www.rree.gob.sv/jovenes-voluntarios-tukul-es-llegan-a-el-salvador-provenientes-de-canada. [Spanish]

Country	Services other than consular protection and documentation services.	Right to vote	Year when voting from abroad was allowed	Dual citizenship	Year in which dual citizenship was allowed
Mexico	Health Health Hubs Education Bachillerato General [High School Diploma] Virtual distance education Financial Retirement savings program Tu vivienda en México [Your housing in Mexico] Debicuenta Express Directo México Giro Paisano CETES Directos Employment Mexico-Canada Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) Qualified Diaspora Nodos México Strategy	Yes	2005	Yes	1998
Panama	Not found No program	Yes	2006	Yes	1972

Source: Prepared by the authors with information from various sources.

Implementing and strengthening these types of actions and programs is essential for protecting and guaranteeing the fulfillment of the human rights of diasporas and their families, but it is also a necessary element for enabling the organization of diasporas and incentivizing their participation in the development of their countries and communities of origin, independently but above all in collaboration with their governments.

THE CASE OF COSTA RICA

Unlike the rest of the countries in the region, Costa Rica is primarily a receiving country for migrants. As a result, the policies implemented by the government of Costa Rica are more focused on the process of immigration and integration. However, this experience cannot be left out due to its importance as a case in which a strategy has been used to incorporate immigrants into the process of Costa Rican development, which is an important learning opportunity for other countries.

In this case, the government has developed programs to support the migrant and refugee populations which are implemented through the Directorate of Integration and Human Development. In general terms, the government of Costa Rica has chosen to work towards the integration of people who have immigrated irregularly, who are usually working in the agricultural production sector and in domestic services. To facilitate this process, the authorities have implemented the program Migra Móvil, through which they visit various regions of the country inviting the migrant population to update their migration affairs. Once they are regularized, people can access all the social and labor guarantees the country offers. Significantly, regardless of people's migration situation, the government seeks to protect and guarantee their human rights, which includes, for example, access to health services.

Regarding emigration, the Directorate of Integration and Human Development conducted a screening to evaluate the needs for reintegration of returnees. Based on the data obtained in this study, a series of directories have been created to provide information to returned migrants about obtaining social security, work, birth certificates,

identification, and other services. Additionally, a series of guides to different institutions was designed to provide guidance when returned migrants face a problem and provide information about which institutions they should approach for support.

Currently, a comprehensive program is being designed to address social, economic, and psychosocial reintegration and community participation for returnees, in which state and local government institutions will participate to identify specific issues and needs.

The services Costa Rica offers its diaspora primarily relate to processing and basic assistance with registration and civil matters. These actions reflect the profile of Costa Rican migrants, who are typically middle class and enter the destination country regularly and decide to stay. (Interview 11).

THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE DIASPORA

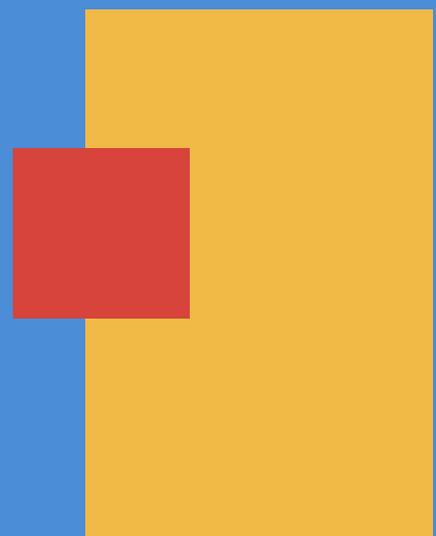
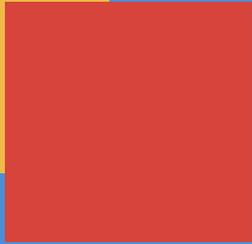
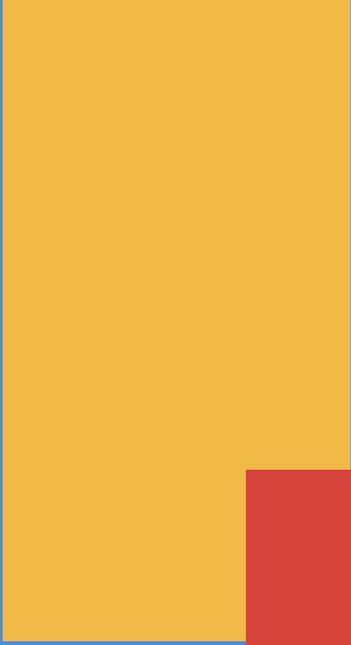
According to the survey, 49% of the organizations consulted stated they had some knowledge of the programs and services their governments offer, that is, over half of these organizations are unaware of the services and programs the governments of their countries of origin provide to their diasporas.

In the case of Mexican organizations, 53% said they knew of the support Mexico offers them abroad, while out of 15 Salvadoran organizations, only 3 reported having knowledge of the services and programs their government offers. The five Guatemalan organizations responded that they were aware of some services or support from their government. In the case of the single Costa Rican organization consulted and three out of the five from Honduras, they answered that they did have some knowledge of programs and services, but they only made reference to consular administrative services and repatriation of human remains.

Out of all the organizations in the sample, only 12% reported having received support or services from a public institution in the country of origin. This is an important indicator in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, given that these organizations can be a channel for contact and communication between migrants and consulates during this health emergency. However, only one organization, a Mexican club in New York, mentioned having received support related to this emergency with the goal of assisting with distribution: groceries, face masks, hand sanitizer, and other articles. The same organization reported that on other occasions it has received educational materials. Thus, only one of the 60 Mexican organizations in the sample is acting as a bridge between the migrant community and government institutions.

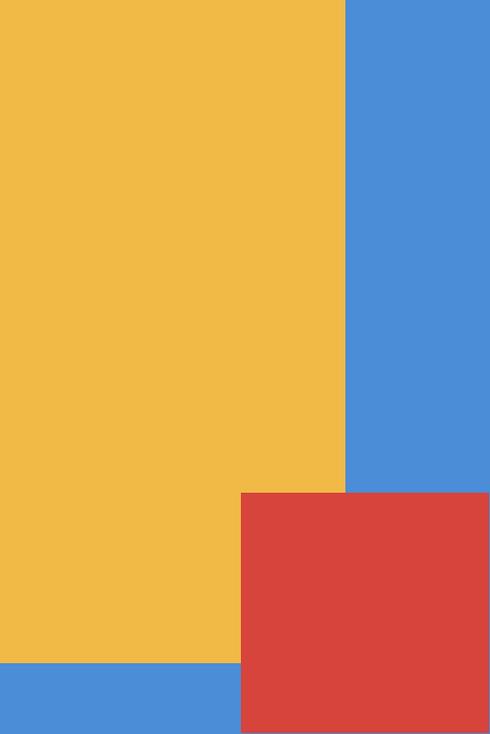
Independent of the type of support, seven out of the 60 Mexican organizations, or 11%, reported receiving services or support. In the case of the Salvadoran organizations, two said they were supported by the chancery and by the Ministry of Education, in one of the cases for the construction of an educational complex. Two out of the five Guatemalan organizations consulted currently receive some type of support from a public institution of their country of origin. They mentioned that the consulate provides them with information and assistance in their relations with the current government administration.

When they were asked if they receive support from governments in the place they are located, 18% responded that they do receive some type of support, that is, in the set of organizations in the sample, there are more who receive support from the governments of the country of destination than from their governments of origin. Likewise, regarding awareness of the support governments in their destination countries offer the immigrant population, 45% responded that they knew of the services and support provided by the government in the place of destination, and a little over 49% were aware of support from governments of origin. These facts are not surprising given that ultimately the organizations must coordinate themselves and adapt to conditions in the places they are located. In all the cases in which organizations described the type of support, it was provided by local government institutions, whether at the state, county, or city level, and in no case was a federal or national institution mentioned.

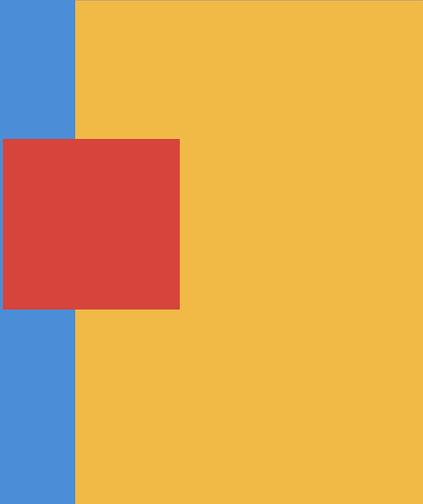


VII. MECHANISMS FOR INVOLVEMENT OF DIASPORAS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR COMMUNITIES OF ORIGIN





“The possibility of incentivizing the use of collective remittances is an opportunity for both local and national governments to implement co-investment programs for the development of communities of origin.”



VII. MECHANISMS FOR INVOLVEMENT OF DIASPORAS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR COMMUNITIES OF ORIGIN

The sending of remittances is the primary indirect mechanism of contribution for diaspora organizations in the Mesoamerican region and it has great importance in the economies of these countries. For example, in the case of Honduras and El Salvador, they represent more than 20% of the Gross Domestic Product (see Table 14). Remittances do not only improve the quality of life within households; the increase in the consumption capacity of families has an impact on the local market and economic activities, as does the increase in savings and investment in durable goods, primarily housing, and the funding of productive projects. The impact they have on educational levels and health conditions has benefits that are propagated in communities.

However, remittances in of themselves are not capable of generating positive impacts if governments do not provide basic services such as social security, health care, and education. In this context, remittances have the maximum beneficial impact on households when they are a source of additional income and not the sole or primary source.

From this perspective, and in accordance with *Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development* (IOM, MPI: 2012), remittances are the first key area for development in communities of origin. While this is the most important mechanism, there are other mechanisms for contributing to development. According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), the principal forms and mechanisms for the involvement of diasporas with their countries of origin are: I) Direct investment by business people in the diaspora; II) investment by the diaspora in the stock markets of countries of origin; III) tourism; IV) philanthropy; V) volunteering; and VI) defense and diplomacy.

Except for the category of defense and diplomacy, these topics are consistent with the key areas previously identified by IOM and MPI, in which the Mesoamerican diaspora plays a positive role.⁴⁷

Table 14. Remittances as percentage of GDP 2019⁴⁸

Country	Remittances in 2019 as % of GDP	Sum of remittances ⁴⁹ 2019 millions of dollars	Average cost of sending remittances to the country 2017*
Belize	5.29%	99.47	No data
Costa Rica	0.90%	554.32	5.71%
El Salvador	20.92%	5,646.77	3.91%
Guatemala	13.89%	10,621.00	4.98%
Honduras	21.52%	5,368.84	4.19%
Mexico	3.06%	38,520.31	4.46%
Nicaragua	13.28%	1,653.77	4.16%
Panama	0.86%	580.91	4.95%

Source: Open access data from the World Bank (September 2020 estimates).
*Percentage of the value of the remittances.

⁴⁷ In the document titled *Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development: A handbook for policymakers and practitioners in home and host countries* (IOM, MPI; 2012).

⁴⁸ World Bank, Data on Migration and Remittances. See www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data. The average cost of sending remittances from the United States to any country is 5.74%, while from Canada it is 7.28%.

⁴⁹ Includes the total remittances received in the country.

Given the magnitude of the flows of money they represent for Mesoamerican countries, and given the role they play in reducing poverty, governments have focused efforts on facilitating the sending of remittances and reducing the costs of the process. One of the prevalent problems in the region is low access to banking among the population and the limitations of the bank system, which leads to extremely high costs and a significant loss of opportunities for households and communities, as can be seen in Table 14.

Beyond remittances to households, there are collective remittances. In many cases, organized groups of migrants seek to bring about collective improvements in their countries of origin. This means, first of all, providing better services for families in these communities, but it also follows financial reasoning: When conditions in these places improve, the value of the buildings, property of those who have migrated, appreciates. The latter phenomenon is observed, for example, in the case of Mexico with the Zacatecan migrant population, which seeks to improve conditions in these communities with the aim of returning once they have retired from working in the United States.

Based on these facts, the possibility of incentivizing the use of collective remittances is an opportunity for both local and national governments to implement co-investment programs for the development of communities of origin. This type of program has been implemented in Mexico, El Salvador, and Honduras.

THE CASE OF MEXICO

Groups of Mexican workers from small rural communities began to organize in the 1960s and 1970s to perform basic infrastructure projects in their places of origin, independent of sending remittances to their households. This phenomenon principally occurred in the state of Zacatecas, one of the states with the greatest emigration in the country.

Due to the low budget capacity of rural municipal governments, these groups of migrants based in the United States of America from communities which were being left behind due to the scarcity of public resources organized to finance basic works of infrastructure and manage the necessary procedures with government agencies. Many of these cases were not located in municipalities, but in even smaller and less protected communities. In practice, this has continued to occur up to the present and is the foundation of the co-investment projects that have been implemented in the country.

As the process was generalized, different Zacatecan groups in the United States came together to form federations, and in 1986 proposed a co-investment program to the state government of Zacatecas in which the government would invest the same amount as the organizations. In 1994, they agreed on a similar scheme with the federal government, in which the state and federal governments and the organizations participated in the financing of these projects in equal proportions; that is, for each peso invested by the clubs, a government contribution of two pesos was received. In 1999, a three-for-one strategy was agreed on in the state of Zacatecas, in which municipal governments in the state committed to contribute equally to the other two levels of government, state and federal, while the Mexican migrant clubs provided 25% of the investment.

Through the course of this process, communities abroad learned to organize themselves into clubs belonging to specific communities, which organized into federations, and these into confederations. This enabled them to collect sufficient force and presence to make proposals and negotiate with the state and federal governments. Although the federations are responsible for negotiating with governments, the resources of the different groups are not mixed and go to projects in their own communities, as defined by the clubs and communities.

Finally, the federal government institutionalized this co-investment strategy for development by creating the 3x1 for Migrants Program within the Secretariat of Social Development in 2002. The program was able to grow and sustain itself for 17 years. It ended in 2020.

This program included not only basic services and public works, but also social projects, such as scholarships and productive projects for development or providing capital for businesses in the community. Its structure and characteristics maintained to a large degree the way in which the clubs and federations had been working before the institutionalization. Its principal characteristics were the following:

1. The program could only be applied in marginalized communities. This focused government resources on the most vulnerable areas.
2. The proportions of participation were fixed. The migrant clubs contributed 25%, the federal government 25%, and 50% was split between the government of the corresponding state and the municipal government. This created opportunities to finance important projects even in small communities, where the clubs were not very large or had limited economic capacity.
3. The proposals and financing had to come from a club from the community. In the case of social projects, they had to benefit people in the community of origin of the club.
4. The participating clubs had to be endorsed by and registered with a federation. This incentivized the organization of clubs and federations, which generated benefits for the groups and communities abroad.

Because the program was an institutionalization of the actions that the clubs themselves had implemented and managed for 30 years, from the moment it began it had very broad coverage. As can be seen in Table 15, even though in the first two years the amounts budgeted by the federal government were relatively low, from the first year the number of projects was considerable, 924. By 2008 this had reached 2,457 projects, though by 2018 it had decreased to 1,058 projects.

Table 15. 3x1 for Migrants Program Federal budget, total investment, number of projects completed, municipalities and states covered, and number of clubs participating, for different years

Year	Federal Budget Millions of Pesos*	Total investment Millions of pesos*	Number of projects	Number of municipalities	Number of states	Number of clubs
2002	218.51	874.03	924	247	20	20
2003	178.60	714.41	899	257	18	200
2008	704.21	2,816.82	2,457	564	27	797
2013	606.74	2,426.96	2,023	583	28	732
2016	632.45	2,529.79	2,154	590	28	599
2018	329.04	1,316.16	1,058	-	-	599

Source: Secretariat of Wellbeing (2019), National Council on Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL).

It can also be observed that from its beginning the program covered 20 out of 32 states.

Regarding the number of clubs, during the first year, the projects were promoted by only one club per state. It is possible that this is due to the inability of the various existing organizations to complete the registration required by the program in time. By the second year, the number of participating clubs had multiplied by ten, and in 2008 787 organizations participated. This reflects how the programs incentivized the formation of clubs, which is consistent with the comments of the organizations in both interviews and the survey. A significant number of these organizations included participation in this program as one of their objectives and the reactivation of this type of program among their requests and complaints.

One of the problems observed was that the mechanisms for the verification of the clubs' investment were inadequate. This incentivized many municipal governments to obtain resources for municipal projects and define projects without necessarily targeting them to the communities that needed them most (CONEVAL, 2017). Additionally, the fact that the decision and choice of projects could be determined by the municipal governments opened up the possibility of clientelist usage of the program. Finally, this practice reduced each project's share of the total funds, as well as the likelihood that the projects actually proposed by the clubs would be carried out.

This program incentivized the formation of hometown clubs, which meant they were relatively compact, facilitating their organization but above all facilitating monitoring, transparency, and accountability. Additionally, working to develop the projects and collect resources strengthened the relationship of their members and communities abroad.

As can be seen in Table 15, the number of localities benefited over the life of the program was significant. However, at the national level these numbers are not particularly relevant. In addition, this program strengthened links between the migrant community, the local community, and particularly state and municipal governments. After the federal program disappeared, some state governments have maintained this kind of co-investment program, although their budget capacity is less and thus their coverage is reduced.

The experiences described show that these types of programs depend to a large degree on the management capacity of diaspora organizations, as well as the political will of national governments. Additionally, their high cost in comparison with actions to facilitate the sending of remittances makes these types of programs very vulnerable. The local governments are the ones with the most incentive to sustain them and perhaps this is the place to promote this type of policy.

It is important to highlight that these programs have neglected the possibility of participation from other types of actors, particularly private enterprise. This is an alternative that could be explored by both national and local governments with a goal of not only providing public services that are currently limited by budgets, but also creating jobs.

THE CASE OF EL SALVADOR

As is natural, the Salvadoran migration process has been accompanied by flows of resources, remittances, which Salvadorans abroad have sent to their families in El Salvador and to their communities of origin. In 1998, for example, due to the damage caused by Hurricane Mitch, various Salvadoran organizations abroad took action to get aid to the affected areas and began to carry out reconstruction projects independently of the government. Given these conditions and facing the magnitude of the migration, the government of El Salvador saw an opportunity to look for co-investment strategies aimed at local development.

One of the first actions for this purpose was the creation in 1999 of the General Directorate for Assistance to Communities Abroad as part of the Vice-Ministry of Foreign Relations for Salvadorans Abroad, which formally included the issue of Salvadorans abroad in the government agenda. Based on this agency's working agenda, a program was developed in 2001 to promote and coordinate infrastructure projects and social aid in which Salvadoran organizations abroad participated to benefit their communities of origin through partnerships with the federal and local governments. This program was operated through the Social Investment Fund for Local Development of El Salvador (FISDL). Initially, the FISDL had the role of promotor and facilitator, offering connections, technical support, and information for Salvadoran organizations relating to the needs and priorities of municipalities. Later, in 2002, taking as a model the Mexican 3x1 program, the program *Unidos por la Solidaridad* [United in Solidarity] was formalized.

Unlike the Mexican program in which the participation of the different levels of government and the organizations of nationals abroad were fixed, in the case of *Unidos por la Solidaridad* the scheme was based on a competitive

mechanism implemented by FISDL with the municipal governments. This scheme of competitive funds had three characteristics that not only determined the program's mechanisms for operation but also defined the incentives for those who participated in the process.

1. The funds were not preassigned, whether for a specific type of process or for a particular location. The organizations of Salvadorans abroad were the ones who presented proposals with which they competed for funds. This required close cooperation and agreement between the communities of origin, municipal governments, and the organizations abroad to define the projects, which provided incentives for a deliberative process that included all parties and for project proposals that tended to reflect the real needs of communities.
2. The proportions of the co-investment were not predefined either, whether for the participation of the organizations or for the local governments. On one hand, this opened the possibility of distributing funds to prioritize the most pressing projects, considering the differing financial capacities of localities. On the other hand, it enabled greater discretionary use of the resources and its client-focused utilization.
3. The proposals presented by the organizations provided the total cost of the project and included the amount of their contribution. The funds were assigned to projects according to the percentages of financial participation from the organization, beginning with those providing a larger percentage and continuing until the sum of money assigned to the fund was used up. This method of auctioning resources sought to maximize the financial result of the sum budgeted for the fund. It likewise incentivized greater activity and organization of associations in order to collect more funds. On the other hand, this mechanism also failed to protect smaller communities and limited the reach of the proposed projects, particularly in those same localities.

By June of 2004, a total of 45 projects had been completed through the program *Unidos por la Solidaridad*, at a cost of 11.45 million dollars, of which 2.13 million, representing 18.6% percent of the total, were contributions from Salvadoran organizations abroad. The remainder was financed by FISDL, providing 60%, by municipal governments, and to a lesser extent by other government institutions, providing 19.91%.

In 2005 development policy and FISDL focused on a program of transfers aimed at poverty reduction, with which the program *Unidos por la Solidaridad* disappeared. From that time the strategy of co-investment for development with participation from Salvadoran organizations abroad was abandoned. From that moment to the present, there has been a return to the model centered on sending remittances to homes.

Even now that this program has ended, organizations abroad have continued carrying out some projects without direct government intervention. As a result, the program *Compatriota Solidario* [Compatriots in Solidarity] has been implemented to enable Salvadorans settled abroad to contribute to social development through donations and various acts of solidarity, such as health days.⁵⁰ The government of El Salvador supports non-governmental organizations in this process by granting a presidential exemption that excuses them from paying duties on in-kind donations.

Although the impacts of this program were important for the development of the places where projects were implemented, from a national perspective its impact was more marginal, as was expressed during one of the interviews conducted for this study (Interview 7).

THE CASE OF HONDURAS

Like the other Mesoamerican countries with significant emigration, the Honduran diaspora has financed projects to improve their communities, including without government participation. According to communiqués from the

⁵⁰ Vice-Ministry for Salvadorans Abroad. Manual of the *Compatriota Solidario* program, See www.drive.google.com/file/d/1FQzVnWf_9cBHEnJbIz3KcPixVsct5QD/view [Spanish]

Secretariat of Foreign Relations and International Cooperation of the government of Honduras, the program *Remesas Solidarias y Productivas* [Caring and Productive Remittances] began in 2010 and sought to attract resources from Honduran associations in the United States for co-investment projects aimed at improving conditions in their communities of origin. The financing for the projects was shared between contributions from Honduran organizations in the United States and the central government, which invested a dollar for every dollar contributed by the organizations.

In its first stage, it was implemented as a component of the program Youth Development Via Employment to Overcome the Challenges of Migration in Honduras, coordinated by the Secretariat of Foreign Relations with participation from the Secretariat of Development and Social Inclusion and local governments, with support of the UNDP and the financing of the UNDP/Spain Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Achievement Fund.⁵¹ This stage acted as a pilot program and the projects were directly tied to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). By 2013, the project was institutionalized and was part of the budget structure of the Secretariat of Foreign Relations and International Cooperation, which, as the agency that created the program, took on coordination of it. The Secretariat of Foreign Relations, through Honduran consulates, had a very important role in the publicization of the program and the identification of the Honduran communities in various cities of the United States in order to organize them into clubs or committees. These committees held activities to raise funds and presented project applications to the consulates. From there they were channeled to the Secretariat of Social Development, where the viability of the projects was evaluated in order to execute them.

According to a report from the Secretariat of Foreign Relations and International Cooperation and the UNDP, by 2017, 17 community projects had been completed. Honduran organizations abroad contributed more than 100,000 dollars to these projects.

These sums contrast with those achieved in El Salvador and in Mexico, both in the number of projects and the amounts of resources. This may reflect in part the differences in the magnitude of the migration phenomenon, which, although it is very significant in Honduras, continues to be greater in the other two countries.

Likewise, it is possible that the lesser reach in Honduras is related to its institutional structure. In this case, the initiative for creating the program originated with the Honduran chancery. Thus, unlike the experiences in El Salvador and in Mexico, from its beginning the head of the program *Remesas Solidarias y Productivas* was the Secretariat of Foreign Relations and International Cooperation rather than the agency responsible for social development, whose operating capacity may have been more suited for this type of program, as occurred in the other two cases.

It is possible that, for the same reason, in the case of Honduras the chancery and especially its consulates played a leading role in the coordination and organization of the participating clubs, which also contrasts with the experiences of Mexico and El Salvador.

Evidently, even though the Secretariat of Development and Social Inclusion did coordinate to channel and execute the projects, the coordination of the program involved a budgetary and operative burden that did not entirely match the functions and capacities of the chancery. Thus, in 2019, a year after the beginning of the new presidential term, the program *Remesas Solidarias y Productivas* disappeared from the budget structure of the Secretariat of Foreign Relations and International Cooperation and, although according to one of the interviews conducted for this study (Interview 8), there is an intention of continuing the program, but under the coordination of the Secretariat of Development and Social Inclusion, up to now it has not been included in the budget of this agency either.

⁵¹ The MDG were predecessors of the SDG.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE DIASPORA

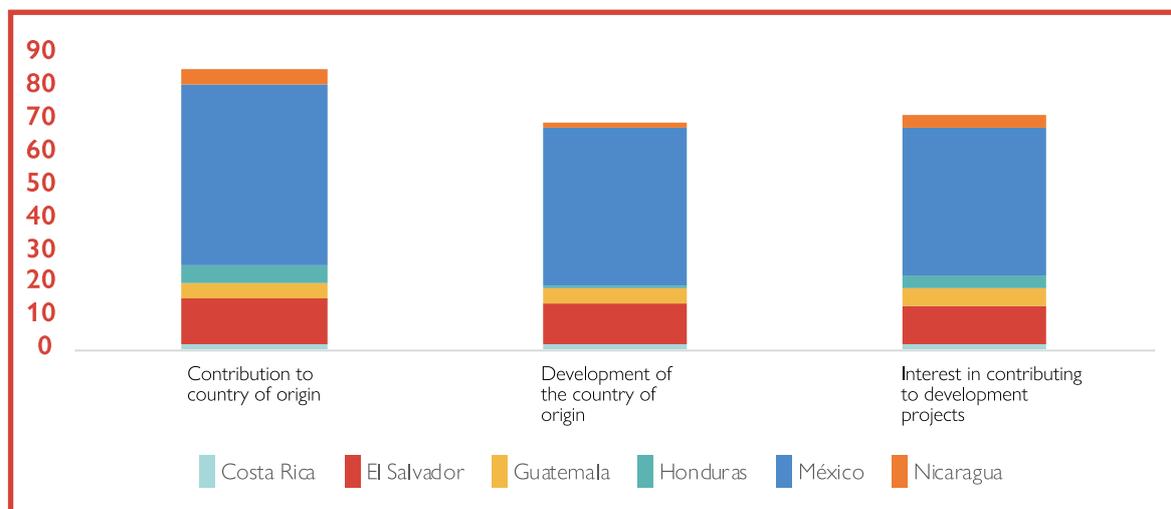
The commitment of diasporas to the development of their places of origin has led them to take action in different ways. In many cases this is through their own initiative and independently; in other cases it involves the participation of non-governmental organizations and the private sector. As IOM states, the causes are very diverse, as are their motivations, objectives, capacities, and impacts (IOM, 2012).

In the case of El Salvador, for example, the initiative *Manos Unidos por el Salvador*⁵² [United Hands for El Salvador] was able to benefit more than 45,000 students, thanks to the implementation of 70 projects with resources from almost 50 Salvadoran groups in the United States, the private sector, and the public sector.⁵³ The projects benefited 65 schools, equipping 36 computing centers, remodeling 21 schools, and installing 19 libraries and student resources and five science labs.

Another example is *Oportunidades para mi Comunidad* [Opportunities for My Community] in Guatemala. Through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and The Interamerican Dialogue,⁵⁴ this project was developed to strengthen the human and economic capital of the country. This project is a three-year vision that seeks to link remittances, migrants, education, and savings to promote economic and human development in Guatemala.⁵⁵

The survey with the sample of organizations that participated as informants for this investigation asked them about their participation in activities or projects that promote the development of their countries of origin. The results obtained are presented in Figure 12. It can be seen that 93% of the Central American diaspora organizations that participated in the survey responded that they contribute in some way to development in their country of origin, while 76% have expressed an interest in this type of activity and 78% have participated in projects of this type.

Figure 13. Ways in which the diaspora contributes to the country of origin



Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the survey.

⁵² This project was implemented through the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), which seeks to empower people in vulnerable situations in Latin America and the Caribbean to achieve economic sustainability and social progress. See www.padf.org.

⁵³ Page of *Manos Unidos por El Salvador* in the Central American and Caribbean Portal for Social Responsibility. See [MANOS UNIDAS POR EL SALVADOR: BANCO AGRICOLA \(centrors-ca.org\)](http://MANOS UNIDAS POR EL SALVADOR: BANCO AGRICOLA (centrors-ca.org)).

⁵⁴ The Interamerican Dialogue is a center for political analysis and exchange that unites a network of global leaders to foster democratic governance, prosperity, and social equity in Latin America and the Caribbean. See www.thedialogue.org/about/.

⁵⁵ The Dialogue (2016) *Opportunities for My Community: A Strategy for Guatemala*. See www.thedialogue.org/programs/programs/opportunities-for-my-community/.

In terms of the ways the diaspora contributes to their countries of origin, the principal mechanism for contribution identified is remittances, with 85% of responses. This is followed by participation in community investment projects, with 59%, and contribution to a charitable organization or association, with 40%. In addition to the ways of participating given as answer choices, the organizations mentioned other specific ways they participate in the development of their countries and communities of origin.



- Community projects.
- Sending remittances for farming, housing, or businesses.
- Containers and humanitarian aid.
- Infrastructure systems, such as potable water, and education and athletic programs.
- Sending medication for the elderly.
- Promoting the sale of traditional crafts.

When asked if the organization or any of its members had participated in a project for the development of the community of origin (Q2), 76% responded yes. Some of the most important examples stated by the organizations in the sample were developing cooperatives; support to small business owners to promote their businesses; participating in various infrastructure projects such as building roads, potable water systems, streets, hospitals, and schools; donations in cases of natural disasters; support with supplies for education; resources for educational workshops; and food aid.

The bond between the migrant community and their communities of origin is present even in the most adverse conditions. According to the results of a survey on the impact of COVID-19 on the migrant population, even during the pandemic,⁵⁶ 59% of the migrants who participated in the survey stated that they continue to send remittances, although 82% of them stated they had reduced the amount. Additionally, even with these limitations, 9% of participants said that during the pandemic they had received help from the migrant community in the country where they live.

Out of the organizations that had not participated in these types of projects, 60% said they had an idea or project to contribute to the development of their country that they would like to implement. The primary reason why they have not implemented it is the lack of resources.

When asked what the primary limiting factor for getting involved in the development of their countries of origin, 29% answered the lack of resources and 10% are not interested in getting involved, as it is not among the objectives of their organization. 13% of the participating organizations have resources but do not know how to participate, while the remaining organizations stated other limiting factors, the most significant of which are: The credibility of the government, cancellation of co-investment programs, lack of linkage, distrust of government institutions and the corruption they perceive, and not feeling motivated because there are no programs that enable them to participate. In the specific case of Mexico, the weakening of the link with the government and the cancellation of the 3x1 for Migrants Program was mentioned.

The organizations of the Mesoamerican diaspora believe that to expand the contributions they make to their communities of origin, governments could take some of the actions presented in Table 16.

⁵⁶ IOM (2020) Effects of COVID-19 on Migrants. Main Findings: Survey in Central America and Mexico. See www.kmhub.iom.int/sites/default/files/publicaciones/surveyeffects_of_covid-19_june_2020_final.pdf

Table 16. Recommendations of the diaspora for expanding their contributions

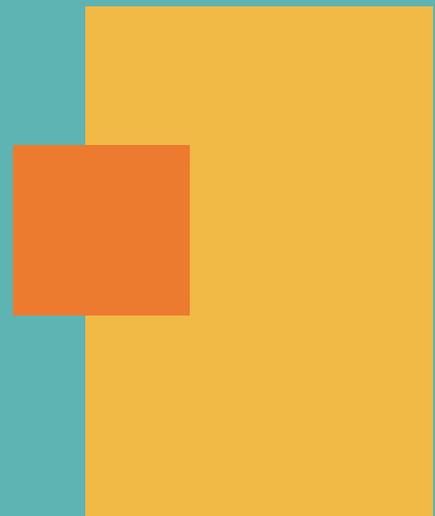
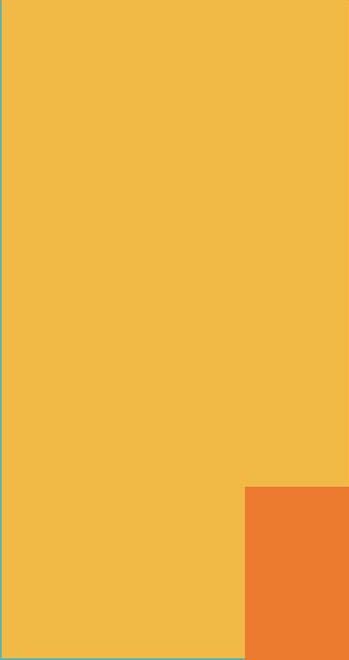
Country	Specific recommendations from diaspora organizations
El Salvador	<p>“Promote an investment fund for Salvadorans Abroad (SALEX) using 5% of remittances to invest them in businesses.”</p> <p>“Providing a place where we could meet, where seminars, conferences, network marketing, business, advising, etc. could be held.”</p> <p>“Matching our contributions to our communities of origin.”</p> <p>“Strengthening the diaspora through NGOs; separating consular work, politics, and community work.”</p>
Guatemala	<p>“Using the funds from remittances to improve education of people who are deported.”</p> <p>“Providing economic support with part of the project. Financing a percentage of the project.”</p> <p>“Training members of the community.”</p> <p>“Creating development projects.”</p> <p>“Having a more operative law in support of migrants and more action oriented toward migrants abroad.”</p>
Honduras	<p>“Having stronger linkage with the Honduran community in the United States.”</p>
Mexico	<p>“Including us and supporting us as community leaders in our place of origin. This would benefit the community. We have support in the United States from consulates, but it is lost in the state and municipal government.”</p> <p>“Promoting migrant investment programs, connecting migrant investors with the government to invest in Mexico.”</p> <p>“Creating migrant representatives in the 32 states. Mexican Migration Law that is more inclusive of Mexicans abroad.”</p> <p>“Collaborating to ensure remittances are not stolen by financial institutions in the country of origin. Facilitating processes for sending aid.”</p> <p>“Recognizing the importance of migrants and the support they provide to their communities of origin.”</p>

Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the survey.

The Mexican diaspora requests that the 3x1 for Migrants Program be reinstated, while the Salvadoran and Guatemalan diasporas suggest the implementation of similar co-investment programs. The Guatemalan diaspora also refers to the importance of making the law on support to migrants operative. In the case of Honduras, the diaspora organizations suggest greater linkage.

Certainly, the economic limitations of the involvement of diasporas in the development of their countries are significant, but, as can be seen through the statistical data and the evidence of their participation, the barriers have more to do with the lack of spaces to carry out their contributions, the lack of credibility and trust in the governments, and the lack of connection with institutions. Governments' strategies to promote the participation of their diasporas in the development of their countries of origin should focus on eliminating these barriers.

Diasporas do not only contribute to their countries of origin, but they also have an important impact on places of destination, in that they expand cultural diversity, contribute innovation, skills, and knowledge, and fill the gaps in the labor market with a range of skills and aptitudes, stimulating the economy of the country of residence, which in turn creates more employment and promotes the collection of taxes (Goldin, Cameron, and Balajaran, 2012).



VIII. NEEDS OF THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN AND MEXICAN DIASPORAS





“Diaspora organizations identified the necessity to be recognized in countries of origin and destination as a need.”

VIII. NEEDS OF THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN AND MEXICAN DIASPORAS

In order to gather more information and evidence about the main needs of diaspora organizations, an open question about the subject was included in the survey. The survey, in which 91 organizations participated, provides important findings about the principal challenges and areas for improvement that organizations face in countries of destination. These include:



Employment and appropriate income:

- Socioeconomic limitations of the members of the diaspora organizations, either because they are unemployed or because labour mobility does not allow them to dedicate time to organizational and community work.



Engagement with the migration agenda in country of destination:

- Limited capacity to impact government agenda in host countries.
- Changes in migration policies and legislation with increased restrictions for migrants.



Integration and Communication:

- Cohesion and trust between diaspora collectives.
- A wide gender perspective that acknowledges the differentiated needs of migrant women.
- Not having recognition of the countries of origin and destination.
- Knowledge of the language in host country also hinders diaspora organization approaching authorities to manifest their needs.
- The organizations also indicated the expressions of xenophobia can limit the work of diaspora organizations in some way.



Organizational Needs

- Limited staff dedicated to the organization. In some cases, these organizations work on a voluntary basis.
- They do not possess a venue, financing or sufficient funds for sustainability, as well as limited strategies to raise funds for the organization.
- Limited human and financial resources to implement strategies that attract membership for the organization.
- When the organization does not have formality and legality in the constitution, it can limit the field of action.
- The impact and deterioration of economies, together with the impacts of COVID-19, are also a challenge in the work of organizations.

One of the main challenges organizations face is to maintain their members active and engaged, mostly because migrants are focused in solving their needs to integrate the labour market, access to services and migratory regularization; and thus finding a minimum of stability that enables them a real participation in diaspora organizations. Hence, finding strategies that contribute to finding resources that will respond to the needs of migrants is a challenge in itself.

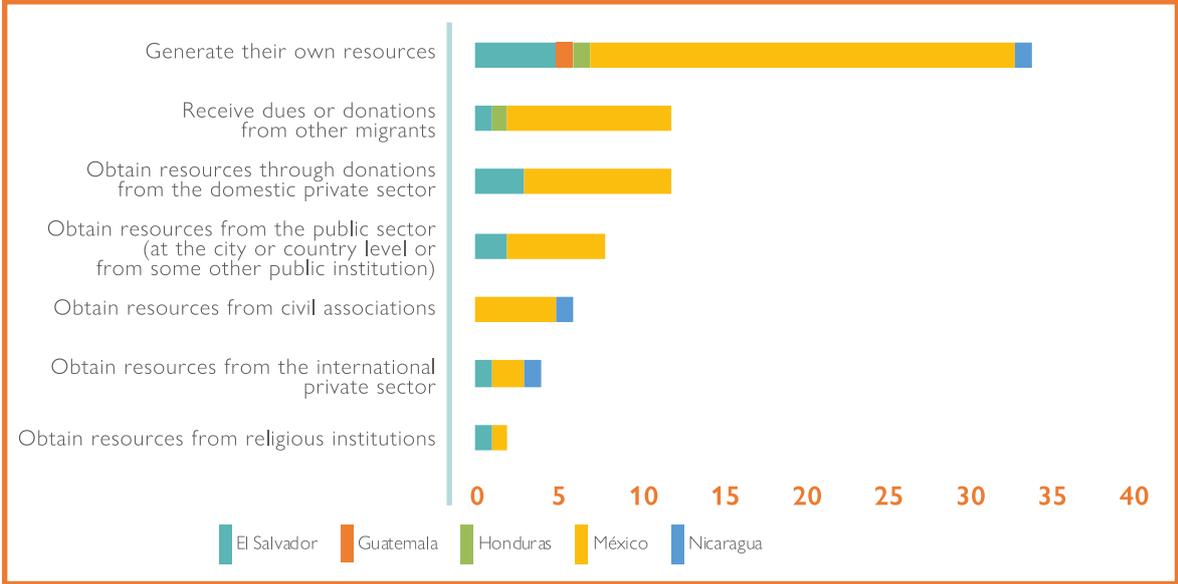
The organizations of the Central American and Mexican diasporas are constantly involved in activities that benefit their countries of origin, and at once promote migrants' well-being in countries of origin through community activities, job creation and their contribution to socioeconomic development of host communities.

These activities are diverse and may include small in-kind or monetary donations as well as participation in investment or infrastructure projects.

Despite the resources they invest in supporting their communities, few organizations have a defined budget for their operation. Only 13% of them have a system of dues to guarantee a minimum of resources. In some cases, they depend on donations obtained from the public or private sector, as well as from other civil society organizations. Figure 14⁵⁷ shows organizations' different types of income.

Out of the 91 organizations that responded to the survey, 45% mentioned having requested support from the government of origin, and of this group, less than a third received a positive response. The lack of response has been for many a reason why they do not typically request support.

Figure 14. Type of resources obtained by diaspora organizations



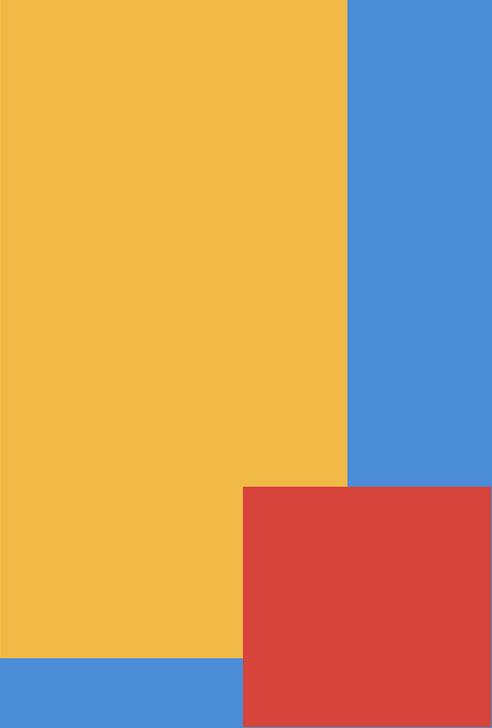
Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the survey.

In addition to needs for employment or sufficient income, for some groups the needs have to do with the ability support their family members adequately, with procedures relating to representatives of the governments of their countries, or recognition from government officials. One of the most mentioned needs was focused on communication, coordination, and follow-through on commitments.

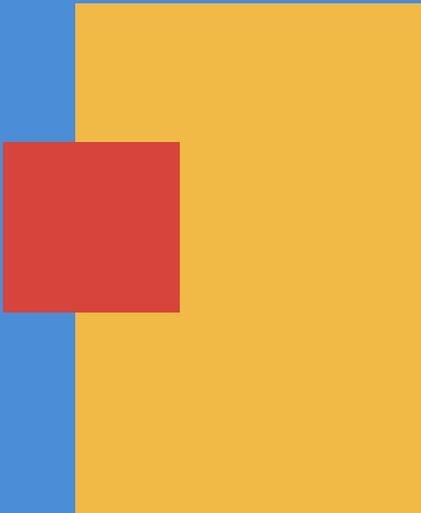
⁵⁷ The Costa Rican and Honduran diaspora organizations stated they did not have budgets for operation.

IX. CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT





“Based on the strategic focus of IOM’s three pillars of institutional intervention—that is, enable, engage, and empower—crucial elements for intervention include knowledge of diasporas, means of communicating with them, creation of institutional structures for participation, consultative mechanisms, and granting of rights to diasporas. Within this framework of action, the governments of the Mesoamerican region could work to strengthen each of the three fundamental pillars.”



CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

This study on the Central American and Mexican diaspora enabled the identification of significant challenges which governments in the region must face in creating and strengthening links with the diaspora. Many of these challenges and limitations are recognized by the governments themselves, with the notable exception of the identification of diaspora organizations, which has not been given attention as an area for improvement.

It is necessary, first, to recognize that this is the principal challenge. Identification is not an easy task; despite the fact that Mexico and El Salvador have created directories in which organizations can self-register, identification remains complicated as these directories are not updated or verified.

Once diaspora organizations have been identified, it is necessary to recognize their contributions and implement mechanisms and strategies to strengthen their identity as citizens of their country of origin. This study provided a sample of the variety of contribution mechanisms diaspora organizations have found in order to support their countries of origin. Many of these mechanisms have been driven by the initiative of the diaspora itself, while others have come from the government and the private sector. Therefore, and with the goal of generating trust, governments should recognize these contributions whenever they can. They should likewise strengthen the relationship and services provided to the diaspora through consulates in order to strengthen the feeling of belonging to their country of origin.

A further challenge that the governments of the region must face is the design of an adequate cross-cutting migration policy which links the diaspora with all strategic sectors in the country of origin. The document review performed revealed that the topic of the diaspora is primarily given attention as a task for ministries or secretariates of foreign relations; however, the diaspora should be included in different areas of government in a coordinated manner. If the construction of such a cross-cutting policy is not achieved, all efforts remain incomplete and collaborative potential is not reached. Doubtlessly, in order to achieve this public policy, governments must face a new challenge—dedicating financial and human resources to develop a plan of action. Additionally, governments must face the challenge of appropriately publicizing and communicating the new policy to the diaspora, in order to bring about their participation in its design, implementation, and evaluation.

Finally, one of the greatest challenges is to construct an engagement and cooperation mechanism to make development sustainable. The case of Mexico demonstrates how a program based on the interests and experiences of diaspora organizations can be sustained. Involving actors from the non-governmental sector and the private sector and designing strategies to redirect a portion of individual remittances to collective remittances can help to protect these programs.

The document review has also showed some challenges specific to particular countries. In the case of Mexico, after the cancellation of the 3x1 for Migrants Program, engagement with the diaspora has been damaged and migrant organizations feel more alone, which has affected the relationship of trust with the government. Restoring relationships with them will be the principal challenge faced by Mexico.

In the case of Honduras, a greater challenge has been identified, since the authorities are currently working to rebuild the component of *Remesas Solidarias* which operated as part of the comprehensive strategy then called Joint Program for Human Development, Youth Employment, and Migration. In order for the reconstruction of

this program to be successful, authorities need to ensure that the design and permanence of the program do not depend on and are not subject to changes in the political actors.

Overcoming these regional and particular challenges also involves giving legal certainty to the participation of the diaspora, so that their actions are no longer seen as collaborative entities and are included as agents of change, for the good of their communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A series of recommendations were prepared in response to the challenges facing the Mesoamerican region. These recommendations center on six lines of action that reflect the three pillars of institutional intervention of IOM's strategic focus: Enable, engage, and empower.

Table 17. Recommendations and lines of action.

Strategic Pillar	Line of Action
Enable	Recognize the contributions of the diaspora
	Integrate the diaspora into the destination country
Engage	Identify the diaspora
	Generate sustainable public policies for development
Empower	Build the organizational capacity of the diaspora
	Address the needs of organizations

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Based on the strategic focus of IOM's three pillars of institutional intervention—that is, enable, engage, and empower—crucial elements for intervention include knowledge of diasporas, means of communicating with them, creation of institutional structures for participation, consultative mechanisms, and granting of rights to diasporas. Within this framework of action, the governments of the Mesoamerican region could work to strengthen each of the three fundamental pillars as follows.

PILLAR I: ENABLE DIASPORAS AS AGENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Governments should work on strategies that enable the diaspora, through which they are seen as companions or partners of the government to contribute to development. For this purpose, it is recommended that the governments of the region work on strategies to recognize the contributions of the diaspora and pay attention to their needs.

Governments should give the diaspora a voice, both to listen to their needs and to make the variety of activities they carry out known to the population of the country of origin. To do this, it is necessary to implement effective and efficient communication mechanisms which enable governments to approach their citizens abroad, listen to their needs, and recognize and publicize their contributions in the country of origin. Consultative regional processes on migration like the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) serve as an ideal space for developing this type of mechanism.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Website of the Regional Conference on Migration. See www.rcmvs.org/en.

Governments in the region could focus on building more user-friendly websites for official institutions where the diaspora could find the variety of services available to them quickly, easily, and accessibly. These sites could include mechanisms to detect the needs they have which the country of origin could resolve. This type of site could include, as El Salvador does, publicization of activities carried out by diaspora organizations. This would have two benefits; on one hand, it would enable diaspora organizations to be in constant communication with authorities in order to promote their activities, and second, it would give the migrant population a sense of belonging and identity. It would also let the population in the country of origin learn more about the activities of their fellow citizens abroad, which enhances and enriches the culture and traditions of each country while also improving and strengthening the image of diasporas in their countries of origin. The recognition of their work, effort, and contributions both in the country of arrival and the country of origin is of highest importance for strengthening ties with the diaspora.

In this same line of recommendation, governments should work to construct mechanisms and bodies for the participation of the migrant population in decisions of public policy, and strengthen existing institutions and councils such as CONAMIGUA and CONMIGRANTES so they can focus on work with the diaspora.

The participation of diasporas also requires an environment that enables them. For the diaspora to develop its full potential and to facilitate its participation, it is essential to implement policies regarding integration in both the countries of origin and of destination. Based on this pillar, governments in the region have the responsibility to think of not only those who leave, but also those who arrive as immigrants. The migration process has intensified and it is likely that this will be the trend. In this case, Costa Rica has worked for example to include the socioeconomic integration of the migrant population and respect for human rights in various migration and development policies and programs. In this context, it is indispensable for governments to establish policies and strategies to incorporate immigrants into the project of developing the country, building citizenship, and the social fabric.

Table 18. Specific recommendations by line of action: Pillar I

Line of Action	Specific Recommendation
Recognize the diaspora	Create informational webpages where people in the country of origin can learn about the activities of the diaspora. Represent as many organizations as possible in these webpages.
	Recognize the stories of exceptional migrants, both men and women, especially those who have worked individually or through an organization on activities to benefit their communities of origin.
Integrate the diaspora	Create and strengthen councils of representatives of diaspora organizations, to support the political participation of the migrant community.
	Create and reinforce programs to assist and integrate the diaspora from the perspective of the country of destination.
	Hold events in the destination country in which diaspora organizations participate.
	Promote trips to the country of origin, primarily so that the children of migrants can get to know their roots and be involved in activities that foster community development.

PILLAR II: ENGAGE AND ADVANCE THE ROLE OF DIASPORAS AS AGENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

In order to involve transnational communities in development, it is indispensable to have a solid knowledge of diasporas and their organizations. Identification is the starting point to generate this knowledge. For this task, governments of the region should work to construct a directory in which migrant organizations can register themselves. In the cases of Mexico and El Salvador, authorities could focus on validating, revising, and updating the information currently available in their respective directories. The mechanism employed by Mexico and El Salvador is a good model to use as a starting point; it makes the information public, which also enables organizations to expand their networks and new members to join because the information is available to everyone.

While in both countries the organization registers itself, the authorities responsible for the engagement with the diaspora, the Institute of Mexicans Abroad and the Vice-Ministry of Salvadorans Abroad, could schedule periodic reviews of these sources of information in order to validate their content.

Guatemala and Honduras, countries where the authorities consulted have confirmed that they do have a directory of organizations although it is not public, should work to make the information public, as this strengthens diaspora organizations and makes them aware of one another.

As part of this identification process, governments could include the legal status of migrant organizations and disaggregate data on their members, ratio of men to women, and other variables that advance the creation of timely, reliable, and high-quality data (Goal 17.18, 2030 Agenda).

Once the diaspora organizations have been identified, it is recommended that governments work to design sustainable public policies. During the Diaspora Ministerial Conference, organized by IOM in 2013, it was established that the focus on collaboration with the diaspora should become a high-level political priority, integrating different governmental structures and including budget planning.

For this purpose, governments can generate coordinated policies for the participation of the diaspora. This is not only the responsibility of foreign relations; rather, the potential of diasporas must be leveraged in all areas of government. They could therefore be included in national development plans through cross-cutting public policies. The issue of migration is not an issue that only concerns chancelleries, but rather also affects several other ministries and secretariats—social development, health, human rights, etc.

Programs focused on investment or co-investment in local development programs should be part of a development plan rather than isolated projects. So that they can have real impact, they need to be proposed as medium- and long-term projects in which diaspora organizations participate in the planning itself along with various actors in the community or locality. Governments must take care to construct projects that are sustainable in the medium and long term, transparent, and accountable, so that those who participate, particularly migrant organizations, know the ultimate destination of their contributions with certainty. In this direction, the Comprehensive Development Plan for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and south and southeast Mexico is an innovative proposal that seeks to create a space for sustainable development by stimulating economic growth, promoting universal access to social rights, fostering resilience to climate change, and guaranteeing rights throughout the entire migratory cycle.⁵⁹

While the inclusion and involvement of the diaspora should come from the highest levels of government in the country, this engagement can extend to the level of local authorities, since it is precisely at this level where the majority of the diaspora can contribute, due to their relationship with their communities of origin.

Certainly, to achieve this public policy it is necessary for governments to dedicate financial and human resources to develop an action plan. Additionally, governments must appropriately publicize and communicate the new policy to the diaspora in order to bring about their participation. Prior and ongoing identification of the diaspora is crucial to this process.

⁵⁹ ECLAC (2020) The Comprehensive Development Plan is an Innovative Proposal that Addresses the Structural Causes of Migration, With a Focus on Growth, Equality and Environmental Sustainability. See www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/comprehensive-development-plan-innovative-proposal-addresses-structural-causes#:~:text=The%20Comprehensive%20Development%20Plan%20for,to%20climate%20change%2C%20and%20guaranteeing

Table 19. Specific recommendations by line of action: Pillar II

Line of Action	Specific Recommendation
Identify the diaspora	Create directories of diaspora organizations. To do this, use self-registration mechanisms so that the information is publicly available (especially contact information and activities).
	Review and update directories periodically, in order to validate the information.
	Identify migrant groups by type of organization.
	Include information in the identification process which is relevant to the country and enables the generation of timely data.
	Create and strengthen links for constant and efficient communication with diaspora organizations. This may be through electronic media, preserving at all times the integrity of migrants regardless of their migration situation.
Generate policies for involvement	Coordinate different areas of government to achieve cross-cutting public policy for the participation and involvement of the diaspora.
	Abandon passive policy centered on the reception and facilitation of sending remittances.
	Construct proactive policies that seek greater involvement from the diaspora in development and design systems of incentives for participation.
	Design programs for the qualified diaspora to be involved in the diffusion of knowledge.
	Promote policies to fund investment projects for migrants who, due to their migration situation, cannot access the financial system in the destination country.
	Promote migrant investment projects to connect migrant investors looking to invest in the country of origin.

Pillar III: Empower diasporas as agents for development

Members of the diaspora benefit directly from programs that aim to empower organizations, which facilitate the conditions that enable communities and individuals to build connections and capacities. With this purpose, IOM is contributing to the design of a methodology for mapping diasporas, as well as a virtual community of practice for diaspora organizations (www.idiaspora.org), which can be promoted among the mapped diaspora organizations for capacity-building.

Consulates, as the first point of contact migrants have with their countries of origin, should provide the best quality assistance and serve as places where migrants feel at home. Through them, authorities could provide a series of services focused not only on documentation and protection, but working with the diaspora on all issues, as they do for citizens in the country of origin. Mexico's working model has been successful in this area, seeking to empower the migrant population through the implementation of community hubs.

The governments of the region could focus on addressing the needs of migrant organizations, as assistance is currently focused on individuals and thus individual needs are addressed. Governments could provide support so that diaspora organizations could promote themselves while providing services to their members. In order to contribute to development, diasporas should feel that they are not only senders of resources, but also receivers of the many or few services governments are able to coordinate in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, universities, and private enterprise in the destination country. Government institutions should then propose the plans for their intervention: To promote democratic, participative, and deliberative principles to strengthen organizations and offer informational and educational materials which they can use to improve conditions for their members and the migrant community.

The survey conducted in this study revealed that some of the diaspora organizations request support in obtaining a place to meet where they can hold seminars and conferences. These actions would also contribute to strengthening them.

Table 20. Specific recommendations by line of action: Pilar III

Line of Action	Specific Recommendation
Strengthen the diaspora	Create support programs in the destination country to foster the organization of the diaspora.
	Share information about the diaspora organizations located in the destination country with groups of migrants in order to promote membership.
	Create legal mechanisms to give diaspora organizations expedited official documentation from the country of origin that accredits them as formal organizations.
	Provide diaspora organizations with spaces in which they can meet to hold seminars, conferences, network marketing, business, advising, and other activities.
	Support community leadership in the country of origin so they can be recognized by authorities at the various levels of government.
	Design public policies to empower the migrant population in the destination country.
	Foster organization in the country of destination to promote the unification of the diaspora.
Address the needs of the diaspora.	Increase the assistance provided in consulates and from consular representatives and make it more efficient.
	Expand the services in consulates to cover not only documentation and protection for migrants, but also health and education services.

These recommendations, organized in six lines of action under these three pillars, aim to provide the governments of the region with an overview of the actions they should take to create the necessary conditions for migrants and diasporas to be able to contribute fully to sustainable development in all countries. These lines of action have been recognized by governments at the international level, for example, under goal 19 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.

While there are various areas of opportunity for improvement in diaspora involvement in Mesoamerican countries, it is important to point out that best practices were identified which may be taken as a starting point for strengthening relations between diaspora organizations and governments, primarily those of the countries of origin. These practices are given in Table 21.

Table 21. Best practices identified.

Empower diaspora organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico have a legal framework for the protection of the rights of migrants to exercise the right to vote and to allow dual citizenship. The model for assistance of Mexican consulates, primarily in the United States, aims to empower the migrant population through a triple consular focus that includes documentation, protection, and community work through networks of leadership, associations, and government agencies.
Enable diaspora organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The website developed by the authorities of El Salvador is a novel way to centralize services for the diaspora, and at the same time, to recognize them as Salvadorans abroad. Migrant councils such as CONAMIGUA in Guatemala and CONMIGRANTES in El Salvador are mechanisms to connect and involve the diaspora with the country of origin.
Involve diaspora organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mexico and El Salvador have a mechanism through which diaspora organizations can self-register; it is public and searchable. Mexico has the Global Network of Qualified Mexicans (RGMX), which seeks to eliminate the concept of brain drain and adopt a paradigm of circularity of knowledge. The objectives of RGMX include identifying the highly qualified Mexican population residing outside the country and promoting the insertion of Mexico into the global knowledge economy through synergy with Mexican talent abroad.

X. GLOSSARY

The concepts of the International Organization for Migration, as cited in their Key Migration Terms, were used as a basis for this study.⁶⁰ Only those concepts relevant to the investigation were included.

Migration cycle – Stages of the migration process encompassing departure, in some cases transit through a State, immigration in the State of destination, and return.

Displacement – The movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters.

Diaspora: Set of migrants or descendants of migrants whose identity and sense of belonging, either real or symbolic, have been shaped by their migration experience and background. Members of the diaspora maintain ties with their country of origin and among themselves, through a shared history and identity or common experiences in the destination country (IOM, 2019).

Emigration – From the perspective of the country of departure, the act of moving from one's country of nationality or usual residence to another country, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.

Migrant flow (international) – The number of international migrants arriving in a country (immigrants) or the number of international migrants departing from a country (emigrants) over the course of a specific period.

Immigration – From the perspective of the country of arrival, the act of moving into a country other than one's country of nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.

Migration – The movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State.

International migrant – Any person found outside the State of which he or she is a citizen or national, or, in the case of stateless persons, the country of birth or usual residence. The term includes migrants who have the intention of moving permanently or temporarily, those who move regularly or with the required documentation, and those in an irregular situation.

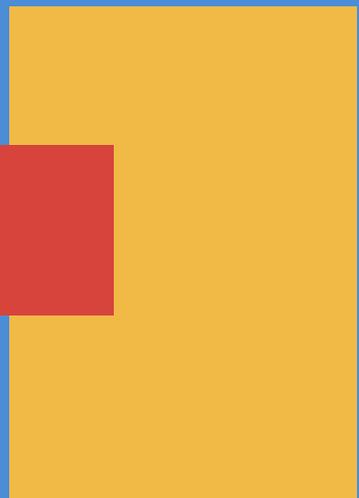
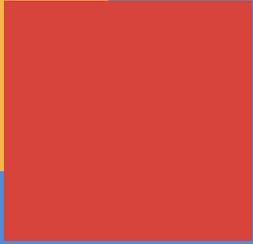
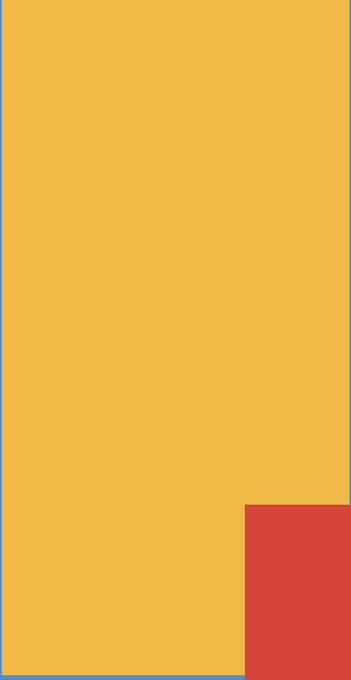
Country of destination – In the migration context, a country that is the destination for a person or a group of persons, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.

Country of origin – In the migration context, a country of nationality or of former habitual residence of a person or group of persons who have migrated abroad, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.

Country of transit – In the migration context, the country through which a person or a group of persons pass on any journey to the country of destination or from the country of destination to the country of origin or of habitual residence.

Remittances (migrant) – Private international monetary transfers that migrants make, individually or collectively.

⁶⁰IOM webpage on Key Migration Terms. See www.iom.int/key-migration-terms.



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ANNEXES

Annex 1. List of interviews

Interviews with diaspora organizations	
Interview 1. Interview with diaspora organization 1	July 31, 2020
Interview 2. Interview with diaspora organization 2	August 5, 2020
Interviews with officials in countries of origin and destination	
Interview 3. Mexico, interview with the Institute of Mexicans Abroad	June 30, 2020
Interview 4. Mexico, interview with the National Network of Councils and State Bodies of Science and Technology, Civil Association	June 30, 2020
Interview 5. Costa Rica, interview with the Directorate of Integration and Human Development	July 21, 2020
Interview 6. Mexico, interview with the Secretariat of Inclusion and Social Wellbeing of Mexico City	July 21, 2020
Interview 7. El Salvador, interview with the Executive Secretary of CONMIGRANTES	July 22, 2020
Interview 8. Honduras, interview with the directorate of Consular Affairs	July 24, 2020
Interview 9. Mexico, interview with the Consulate General of Mexico in Vancouver	July 24, 2020
Interview 10. Guatemala, interview with the Sub-Directorate of Consular Affairs	July 31, 2020
Interview 11. Costa Rica, interview with the Consular Department	August 10, 2020
Interview 12. Mexico, interview with the Secretariat of Labor and Social Planning	August 13, 2020

