Diagnostic on Belizean Migration Trends and Migration Management Regulation
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Diagnostic on Belizean Migration Trends and Migration Management Regulation

Belmopan, Belize

October 2013
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ACRONYMS

CARICOM  Caribbean Community
CDF    Child Development Foundation
CGA    Citrus Growers Association
CIA    Central Intelligence Agency
CIB    Crimes Investigation Branch
CSO    Civil Society Organization(s)
DACS   Deportable Alien Control System
DINS   Department of Immigration and Nationality Services
DRIP   Diaspora Returnee Incentive Program
FICSS  Field Information and Coordination Support Section
GDP    Gross Domestic Product
HDI    Human Development Index
HfP    Help for Progress
ICE    Immigration and Customs Enforcement
IIRIRA  Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act
IOM    International Organization for Migration
IRCA   Immigration Reform and Control Act
MICS   Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey
MoES   Ministry of Education and Sports
MoFA   Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MPI    Migration Policy Institute
NEMO   National Emergency Management Organization
NOCAN  National Organization for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
OECD   Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIRS   Personal Information and Registration System
RCM    Regional Conference on Migration
SAW    Seasonal Agricultural Workers
SIB    Statistical Institute of Belize
SICA   Central American Integration System (Sistema de Integración Centroamericana)
SICREMI Continuous Reporting System on International Migration in the Americas
SSB    Social Security Board
TIP    Trafficking in Persons
UNDP   United Nations Development Program
UNHCR  United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIAP  United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking
UNICEF United Nations International Children Fund
UNDESA United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
YES    Youth Enhancement Services
YWCA   Young Women’s Christian Association
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Belize is an emigrant sending country and, at the same time, one of the three main immigrant receiving countries in Central America. The country’s geographical location enhances the arrival and entry of immigrants from neighbouring countries by sea, land or air. Belize is a favourable country of destination for immigrants from developing countries in the region seeking economic benefits, as well as an attractive destination for pensioners and tourists from developed countries. At the same time, many Belizeans are among those migrating to the USA. Furthermore, due to its proximity to Mexico (one of the world’s most transited countries) persons from various parts of the world use Belize as a transit point on their way northwards to the United States and Canada.

During the last years, Belize has become a transit point for drugs, arms, victims of human trafficking, traffickers in persons, smugglers, criminals and organized crime. This represents major challenges for national authorities who must respond to these activities within a context where material resources and technical capacities (software, equipment, technology and appropriate facilities) are limited. There is difficulty in establishing a coordinated response to administer the existing immigrant stock, and deal with the increasing temporary, permanent, regular and irregular migration. Additionally, the lack of adequate migration policies (strategy and planning) constrains the proper management of migration.

This document is an action-oriented diagnostic and explores contemporary Belizian migration trends and national migration management regulation characteristics. It presents a rapid assessment of needs, the capacities of governmental agencies to adequately administrate migration flows, and an overview of the existing legal framework.

Section A: Migratory movements and characteristics of migrants analyses the migration profile of Belize as a country of origin, destination, transit and return for migratory flows, taking into consideration aspects such as: demographic tendencies, Central American immigration, citizenship composition, Belizean emigration, conditions of free mobility of qualified migrant workers from, and to, Caribbean countries.

Section B: Migration and Development briefly analyses how migration has impacted the Belizean society. It discusses the impact on human and economic development. Furthermore, it considers other economic indicators such as the Gross Domestic Product, impact of remittances and the relationship between migration, the labour market and employment. It discusses migration from a social development perspective, primarily highlighting its impact on poverty levels, education, health services and the environment.

Section C: Migration Management in Belize reviews the current characteristics of migration management regulation and identifies government’s current capacities, legal instruments and needs to adequately administrate immigration flows in Belize. The needs assessment aspect is instrumental in identifying the level of awareness regarding the migratory situation. It will be used to establish a training program so that national authorities and decision makers from relevant institutions can adequately implement such a strategy.

Section D: Summary of recommendations suggests actions to be taken to reduce the challenges and maximize the opportunities posed by contemporary migration flows. The results of this diagnostic will be used to assist the government in the development of a migration management strategy aimed to develop guidelines for an eventual comprehensive national migration policy.

The elaboration of this document is supported by the International Organization for Migration which is committed to building and strengthening the capacities of migration authorities and policy-makers and to strengthen border security as a response to the current migration phenomenon in Belize. It also supports pertinent and practical solutions for its regulation and regularization through comprehensive and coherent migration policies.
Summary of Key Findings

- Belize has a complex migration situation. It is attractive to immigrants from the region due to a stable economic situation, higher living standards and job availability. On the other hand, deteriorating economic conditions, such as high levels of poverty and unemployment are factors stimulating migratory movements towards the USA and Canada, influencing a -972 net migration.¹

- Belize continues to be a destination for migrants from regional and extra-regional countries. In the past decade, the annual rate of change of the migrant stock rose from -1% to 2.8%. A male/female ratio of 0.91 in 2010 demonstrates that both men and women are migrating to Belize.

- In 2010, the foreign born population accounted for 14.8% of the total population of Belize. There were close to equal numbers of male and female immigrants in the country. By 2011, the number of Belizeans residing in major US cities such as Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Miami had reached well over 45,000 representing almost 15% of the estimated population of Belize.

- Transit-migration is influenced by extra-continental and regional migrants, using established irregular routes connecting Belize to Mexico.

- Trans-border migration into Belize is characterized by a well-sized volume of daily cross-border movements occurring between Melchor de Mencos, Guatemala and the main urban areas of the Cayo District, between Maya communities in southern Peten, Guatemala and the Toledo District and between the northern district of Corozal and Chetumal, Quintana Roo, Mexico.

- Temporary labour migrants in Belize work in the banana and citrus industries. The majority originates from the Central American northern triangle; Guatemala (57.6%), Honduras (21.6%) and to a lesser extent El Salvador (8.8%). Extra-continental labour migrants are primarily temporary workers from India and Turkey employed in various casinos and business establishments within the Corozal Free Zone. A total of 3,534 temporary workers had access to Social Security in Belize. In 2012, the majority (63.4%) were between the ages of 20-39 years of age earning less than $179.99 Belize dollars weekly. Females earn substantially less.

- Permanent labour migrants also come from the Central American northern triangle although the US also contributes to the workforce. China, India and Nigeria had the highest numbers of extra-continental permanent labour migrants. There are no specific programs to recruit workers or regulate working conditions of migrant workers, making them vulnerable to labour exploitation. Labour migration from Belize to Canada has been on the rise.

- Persons belonging to the Indigenous Maya groups migrate mostly internally, and mostly from rural to urban areas. In cases of trans-border migration of Maya persons, this occurs primarily to communities adjacent to the Belize-Guatemala border.

- The CARICOM Free Movement of Skilled Nationals program is currently under-used by CARICOM nationals. In 2008 there were only 58 applications for the skills certificate (term used for temporary employment permits for CARICOM nationals only). A total of 21 dependency permits were issued to spouses and dependents². It needs to be noted that nationals from other CARICOM member states may prefer to apply for the “regular” temporary employment permit as this provides the required starting point when applying later on for permanent residence or nationality.

- During the period 2002 to 2011, a total of 9614 Belizeans obtained permanent resident in the US, an annual average of 961.4. Since 2008, the number of Belizeans receiving permanent residence has been constantly declining 92.6% of the grounds on which Belizeans qualified for permanent residency were based on family ties, confirming the hypothesis that family reunification is a driving force of Belizean migration to the United States.

- There has been a decline in the number of Belizeans arriving in the US and the number of Belizeans found inadmissible. At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of apprehended undocumented Belizeans, inferring greater irregular migration.

- The Diaspora Returnee Incentive Program was developed in order to attract investment and technical aid from Belizeans living abroad. While it focuses on skilled possible returnees it also includes unskilled Belizean retirees. There is potential for this program to be scaled-up to maximize the benefits of migration for development.

¹ Note: this figure is being disputed due to indications of positive growth of the total population.
² CARICOM. Review of the Schedule of Free Movement of Persons. Data provided by Member States to CARICOM. Available from: http://www.belize.org/bcci/caricom
• Between 2002 and 2011, a total of 2,155 Belizens were forcibly returned from the US, an annual average of 215.5 persons. Those who had previous criminal convictions outnumbered those who didn’t. 2010 saw the most forced returns.

• Various measures have been taken to reduce commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons or minors. Belize developed a Protocol on “How to Care for Child and Adolescence Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation” in 2008. The following year, it adopted the “Regional Guidelines for Special Protection in Cases of the Repatriation of Child Victims of Trafficking” developed by the 2009 Regional Conference on Migration (RCM). From 2008 to 2012, there were 16 apprehensions of unaccompanied Belizean children in the US, an average of four per year.

• Between 2009 and 2012 thirteen cases of trafficking in persons and related offences were awaiting trial. Seven involved sexual exploitation and labour exploitation. Foreign-born victims were from Honduras, Guatemala, Nepal and India. In March of 2011 there was one reported case of a Belizean victim of trafficking in the United States.

• As of January 2010 there were 251 reported refugees and asylum seekers residing in Belize.

• In 2011, Belize’s GDP grew by 5.3%, up from $2.9 billion in the previous year to $3.2 billion. The agricultural sector, which employs the majority of labour migrants, is largely responsible for the notable growth in the GDP indicating a direct relationship between the contribution of immigrants and the economic development of the country.

• Remittances to Belize grew noticeably within the six year period from 2003 to 2009, remaining the same over time but with a noted decline in 2011. Belizeans are not remitting at the same rate as other countries with similar emigrant population. Workers’ remittances and employee compensation were the main contributors to inward remittances. Outward remittances are significantly lower than inward remittances signalling that immigrants in Belize are not sending money back to their communities of origin with the same frequency as Belizens living abroad.

• The foreign-born population boosted the national labour force by 18%. There were more male than female foreign-born persons in the labour force. The foreign-born population had lower unemployment rates (10.8%) when compared to the native born (17.2%). The majority were working in the Belize and Cayo Districts followed by the Stann Creek District. The Toledo and Corozal Districts employed the smallest number. Unemployment among females was more than twice that of males (23.2%).

• The Country Poverty Assessment (2009) indicated that the poverty rate at the Belizean household level was 31%. Among the foreign born, the rates were much higher (35%) indicating a marked increase from the 2002 poverty assessment which reported it at 20%.

• Between 47% - 87.1% (depending on source) of Belizens, age 25 and older, living in the US possesses a high school education or higher. This is not consistent with the number of Belizens who had, and continue to have, access to secondary or tertiary education. There is need to analyze whether unskilled people are emigrating in order to access higher education or if it means that skilled Belizens are migrating.

• Talent migration is expected to continue since unemployment in Belize remains high (16.1%), thereby creating an environment of low job availability and of jobs that are not commensurate with qualification. Belize ranks 4th in the top ten CARICOM countries with highest emigration rates for nurses.

As not all available data on migration flows has been compiled and/or analysed, it remains difficult to determine exactly how many immigrants are in Belize and how many emigrants have departed Belize. This feature also contributes to the disputes regarding the real figure for the net migration. Furthermore, the migration debate in Belize has been mostly centred on immigrants and their impact on the Belize society with little discussion on other forms of migration.

There is opportunity for Belize to establish as strong inclusive migration policy. There are many stakeholders involved in the migration response, therefore, there is need to coordinate the response by providing a platform for ensuring that initiatives are sustained and supported.

Belize will continue to be a migrant sending and migrant receiving country and as a result of its strategic location it will continue to experience mixed flows. Therefore, it is important that while establishing a migration policy to deal with the sustained flows it must also consider that the immigrant stock in Belize is mature and well integrated. This means that the best move towards managing Belizean migration in Belize must be done from a holistic position, ensuring a rights-based, migrant-centric approach adopting the six pillars set forth by the United Nations Development Program, Human Development Report (2009). These include: a. Liberalizing and simplifying regular channels that allow people with low skills to seek work abroad; b. Ensuring basic rights for migrants; c. Reducing transaction costs associated with migration; d. Improving outcomes for migrants and destination communities; e. Enabling benefits from internal mobility; and f. Making mobility an integral part of national development strategies.
COUNTRY PROFILE

Map 1.
Map of Belize


Population: 349,728 (July 2013 EST.)  Geographical area: 22,966 km²  Capital: Belmopan

Belize is a country with a rich history that dates back to pre-Columbian times. It was inhabited by several Maya groups up until around the end of the first millennium A.D. In the 17th and 18th century it was settled by the British, therefore, it is the only English speaking country in Central America. Belize obtained its independence from Great Britain in 1981.

Key statistics:

Migration Characteristics

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<td>Emigrants as percentage of population (2011)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Women as a Percentage of Immigrants (2010)</td>
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<td>-972*</td>
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* Data disputed as it contradicts the positive growth of total population


\footnote{Net migration is the net total of migrants during the period. For detailed information, see section A.2 Net Migration. http://www.tradingeconomics.com/belize/net-migration-wb-data.html}
Human and Social Development Indicators

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labour force</th>
<th>151,011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed Labour force</td>
<td>126,624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour force participation rate</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SIB (2012)

Economic Indicator

Agriculture, Tourism and Petroleum are the main economic activities. The agricultural sector continues to be the largest contributor to GDP. Since 2004, when petroleum was discovered in Belize, the industry has become one of the leading contributors to export earnings.

The GDP per capita (PPA) has remained at an estimated USD 8,400 for the last 3 years (2010-2012). Figure 1 illustrates the historic GDP growth trend (in percentages) over the past decade (2002-2012)

Figure 1.
GDP growth - % - 2002-2012


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4 The MPI measures acute poverty. It includes people living under conditions where they do not reach the minimum internationally agreed standards in indicators of basic functioning such as being well nourished, educated or having access to clean drinking water. It also refers to people living under conditions where they do not reach the minimum standards in several aspects at the same time. In other words, it measures those experiencing multiple deprivations, such as those who are both undernourished and do not have clean drinking water, adequate sanitation or clean fuel. It is measured based on the incidence of poverty, or the proportion of people (within a given population) who experience multiple deprivations, and the intensity of their deprivation - the average proportion of (weighted) deprivations they experience.
The trend shows major fluctuations within the past decade. The annual GDP growth rate has averaged 1.23 per cent over the 20-year period 1994 – 2013; the year 2000 recorded an all-time high of 13.45%.

A recent study produced by IOM and other institutions on *Regional Labour Migration Flows* (2011), recognizes economic and structural factors (e.g. regional economic integration and economic blocks) that influence migration. The result is that the capacity of migration and labour institutions in the region to promote and manage orderly and regulated migratory flows is constantly tested. Growing trends in transnationalism has facilitated those who migrate with the intent of establishing a new place of residence while at the same time maintaining a home in their community of origin.

It is within this context that the migrants from the northern triangle region of Central America migrate to Belize, presumably in search of stable environments that provide jobs and better standards of living. At the same time, driven by deteriorating economic and human security conditions, Belizeans are migrating north to the United States in search for a better life.

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PART A: MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS

A.1 WHAT IS DRIVING BELIZEAN MIGRATION?

Migration is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, regardless of the length of stay, composition and causes. It is the process of moving, either across an international border or within a State. It includes the movement of refugees, displaced persons, uprooted people, and economic migrants.

It is a common assumption that Belize is attractive to immigrants from the region due to its stable economic situation, better living standards and job availability. Conversely, it is assumed that the deteriorating economic situation such as high levels of poverty, and prevalent unemployment are the main factors stimulating migratory movements out of the country towards, inter alia the USA and Canada.

It is within this context that those emigrants from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador (the northern triangle region of Central America) migrate to Belize presumably in search of jobs. Simultaneously, Belizeans are migrating north to the United States for the same reason. Large numbers transit Belize as they migrate to neighbouring countries. Countless movements occur internally from one district to another. Some migrants return voluntarily to their country of origin after having lived elsewhere, while others are forcibly returned. Despite the evidence of dynamic migratory movements, little attention has been given to the migration phenomenon in Belize.

Belize is not the only country within the region that experiences major migratory movements, in fact, most countries have seen increasing numbers of persons moving in or out of their country for the purpose of establishing residence elsewhere. The 2011 study "Regional Labour Migration Flows" produced by IOM and other institutions, recognizes the economic and structural factors that influence migration. These include regional integration mechanisms such as CARICOM and SICA, which call for the adoption of policies and measures taken by member-countries to facilitate the movement of its citizenry. However, the capacity of migration and labour institutions in the region to promote orderly and regulated migratory flows is constantly tested as a result of increased movements. Growing trends in trans-nationalism have facilitated those who migrate with the intent of establishing a new place of residence, while at the same time maintaining a home in their community of origin.

A.2 NET MIGRATION IN BELIZE

The Net migration in Belize was last reported at -972 in 2010. Net migration is determined by the total number of immigrants less the annual number of emigrants. When an excess of persons enters the country, the result is a net immigration, conversely, when an excess of persons leaves, the state experiences net emigration. The net migration rate can be used an indicator of the contribution of migration to the overall population change.

Various sources are used to estimate net migration; including border statistics, administrative records, surveys, and censuses. In countries where official estimates cannot be generated, as result of inadequate data collection systems, net migration is derived through the balance equation, meaning the difference between overall population growth and the natural increase during an intercensal period. The United Nations Population Division for example, also factors in other variables such as past migration history of a country or area, its migration policy and if the influx of refugees, if any.

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7 G. Acuna (2011) op. cit.
## Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated population at mid-year</td>
<td>189,000</td>
<td>216,500</td>
<td>249,750</td>
<td>283,600</td>
<td>323,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated number of international migrants at</td>
<td>30,404</td>
<td>38,451</td>
<td>36,488</td>
<td>40,633</td>
<td>46,807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid-year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International migrants as a percentage of the</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated number of female migrants at mid-year</td>
<td>14,011</td>
<td>18,241</td>
<td>17,857</td>
<td>20,515</td>
<td>24,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated number of male migrants at mid-year</td>
<td>16,393</td>
<td>20,210</td>
<td>18,631</td>
<td>20,118</td>
<td>22,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female migrants as percentage of all international migrants</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated number of refugees at mid-year</td>
<td>30,404</td>
<td>8,804</td>
<td>2,071</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugees as a percentage of international migrants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual rate of change of the migrant stock</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2009) and SIB (mid-year population estimates).

Belize continues to be a destination country for migrants from regional and extra regional countries. In the past decade, the annual rate of change of the migrant stock rose from -1% to 2.8%. A male/female ratio of 0.91 in 2010 demonstrates that both men and women are immigrating to Belize.

### A.3 EMIGRATION

#### A.3.1 Emigration: Pre-independence

Emigration is the act of departing or exiting from one State with a view to settle in another either temporarily or permanently. The earliest documented historical emigration from Belize can be traced back to the 1920's. This section briefly summarizes the emigration flows out of Belize including the social, political or economic issues that influenced them.

1920: The Honduran Society in New York City was established by a group of Belizean emigrants and descendants of pioneer Belizean migrants. The objective of the Honduran Society was to maintain interest in Belizean (British Honduras) affairs. A similar group resided in Chicago.

1930: Antonio Soberanis Gomez, leader of the Belize Labour Movement visits New York. He is hosted by Belizeans living in New York/New Jersey. These migrants were mainly middle-class, Protestant, Creoles from Belize City.

1940: World War II created a shortage of labour in the United States. Over 1,000 Belizean men were recruited to work first in agriculture in the southern states such as Louisiana, then later for industrial jobs in northern states such as Massachusetts.

- Belizeans travel to Britain to support World War II efforts. Men were recruited by the colonial administration to join the Forestry Unit in Scotland and others joined the British armed forces and Home Defence. A few women joined the Women’s Auxiliary Corps.

- Hundreds of Belizean men migrate to Panama to work in the Canal Zone.

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12 Ibid.
1950: The devaluation of the Belizean dollar in 1949 created deteriorating economic conditions in Belize. At the same time, the American economy was booming, resulting in high demand for labor force. The English-speaking skills of Belizeans as well as the proximity of the US places Belizean migrants at a greater advantage that those from the region.

- Commercial air travel was inaugurated. The travel time was cut down from one week by sea, to three hours by plane. Becomes the mode of travel for wealthy Belizeans.
- Some families and dependents of British nationals, as well as, educated, middle class Belizeans migrate to Britain. The latter two groups emigrated to pursue further education.
- The shipping industry recruits Belizeans to work in Guatemala and Honduras. These workers settle in port towns of coastal areas in the banana producing region.

1960: The devastation left after Hurricane Hattie of 1961 propelled large-scale emigration. The U.S. offered refugee status to many Belizeans.

- The 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act restricted entrance of Caribbean immigrants into Britain with exception of the dependents of those already residing there.
- The 1965 Immigration Act in the US made it possible for some undocumented Belizeans to regularize their status and become permanent residents. Family reunification drives migration. Movements are gendered since women find jobs as domestic workers and nurses (58% of legal immigration from Belize were women).
- Canadian immigration laws facilitated the movement of Caribbean nationals, including Belize. Those from the upper classes and those with higher education migrate.
- Belizeans become knowledgeable of terrestrial roadways and travel routes through Mexico. Those who could not obtain a visitor’s visa could travel “thru d back”.
- Migratory movements exhibit afro-descent ethnic dimensions, as most emigrants are predominantly Creole and Garifuna.

1970: High unemployment, underemployment, and low wages encourage emigration by urbanites and public servants. US State Department estimates the number of Belizean migrants in the United States by mid-1970 was almost equal to the remaining Belizeans in productive age.

- British Military establishes presence in Belize due to Guatemala’s territorial claim and threat of invasion. Unions between British soldiers and Belizean women led to migration of Belizean women to the UK.
- A few Belizeans migrate to Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean (namely Cayman for jobs in the public sector in the Cayman Islands, and to a lesser extent, Jamaica).
- Women continue to dominate outflows to the US as they obtain employment in the service sector and as live-in domestic workers.

A.3.2 Emigration: Post-independence

1980: Belize’s Independence from England created a sense of uncertainty and instability, influencing extensive emigration to the US.

- A country quota is established for Belize. US Immigration and Naturalization Service and US Embassy in Belize recorded increase in the number of admitted Belizeans estimating that two of three Belizeans were residing there undocumented.
In the early 80's– one percent of the population migrated to the United States per year\textsuperscript{22}. By the mid 1980's– approximately thirty-five to forty percent of Belize's population had migrated to the US\textsuperscript{23}.

- American television programming is broadcasted in Belize via satellite technology. Images of American consumer culture are constantly portrayed. Relatives residing there remit monetary gifts and barrels of consumer goods ranging from clothes to electronic products influencing a desire to seek the American dream.

- The lack of professional and technical education in Belize created a desire to migrate to the US to obtain greater educational opportunities\textsuperscript{24}.

- Well established social networks facilitate migration. “The 20,000-30,000 Belizians who emigrated to the U.S. during the 1980s did so not only to pursue better employment opportunities, higher wages, and the greater availability of housing, health care and education, but also to send money back home for dependents\textsuperscript{25}.”

- US investment and interest in political issues in Central America and Caribbean increase trade relations between US and Belize.

- Tourism becomes an important economic activity for Belize and consequently increased interaction between Belizeans and American tourists.

- The US Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, made legal provisions for Belizians living there to regularize their status. Of the 6,252 applicants, 2,630 had overstayed visas. Of the 3,490 who had entered the U.S. prior to January 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1982 most entered clandestinely. A total of 132 applied under provisions of seasonal agricultural worker program (SAW).

- Some Belizians migrate to Toronto, Canada influenced by commonwealth partnerships, governmental aid programs and tourism.

- Economic crisis in the sugar industry propelled migration of Belizians to southern Mexico, particularly Cancun where there was a high demand for bilingual workers for the booming tourism industry.

- In 1980, a total of 2,777 Belizians resided in other countries of the region including Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and Canada. Of the total emigrants during that decade, 43.7% resided in Central American countries, 34.3% were living in Mexico and 19.8% in Canada. Regional movements are predominantly female (52%), except for Panama (30%). Age dimension becomes evident as significant numbers are over 50 years of age (31.5%) in Guatemala and (67.4%) Panama\textsuperscript{26}.

1990– Belize’s Census data indicates that a total of 31,970 Belizians had emigrated during the inter-censal period to the United States, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama of which 93.7% were residing in the USA.  

- The United States Census Bureau (2003) estimated that by the end of 1990, 16.1\% of the national population of Belize was living in the USA. A decade later, this increased to 21.2%\textsuperscript{27}.

- During the 1990s the yearly rate of Belizian emigration fell from an average of 3,050 in the 1980s to 2,181 per year\textsuperscript{28}. The majority (52\%) had left Belize in the mid to late 1980s and migrated mainly to the USA (86\%). Five percent (5\%) migrated to Mexico and 3\% to Central American countries.

- Honduras 1991 Census data illustrates that 25\% of Belizians living there were younger than 10 years old. Close family ties and easy access between southern Belize and northern Honduras might have made it easier for children to migrate\textsuperscript{29}. However, it is important to consider that these children could have been born to refugee parents who had repatriated to Honduras after peace in the region had been restored.

\textsuperscript{26} E. Talbert. Taller de capacitación para el análisis de información censal sobre migración internacional en América Latina. Chile. 2002.  
A.3.3 Emigration: Contemporary

The 2000 Census indicated that emigration rates continued to be high but cautioned that numbers might be skewed due to the fact that households that migrated entirely would not be counted. Furthermore, household members might have been reluctant to give information on other household members that had migrated unlawfully.

The United States continues to be the main country of destination for Belizean emigrants. Although the available information provides insight on some numbers, there is substantial debate on whether or not it adequately reflects a true estimation of how many Belizeans are residing there since it may not capture the undocumented. There was a 23% change in the average annual emigration from Belize to OECD member countries. During the periods of 2003-2007 a total of 990 persons immigrated to OECD countries and in 2008-2009 there was a total of 122039.

By 2011, the number of Belizeans residing in the United States had reached well over 45,000. This represented almost 15% of the estimated population of Belize.

Table 2. Estimated number of Belizeans in the USA, 2009-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimate</td>
<td>48,567</td>
<td>47,197</td>
<td>45,556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margin of Error</td>
<td>+/-5,700</td>
<td>+/-5,054</td>
<td>+/-4,993</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey, 201331.

Figure 2 reflects an interesting trend. Since 2002, the number of Belizeans being admitted into the United States was gradually declining; however in 2007 there was a noticeable growth after which it began once again to decline. The 2011 figures reflect a notable slump.

19.0% of Belizeans living in the US arrived before the year 2000, signifying a mature emigrant stock32. Belizean emigrants are dispersed across the USA. However, there are sizable communities in major cities such as Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Miami. Table 3 below presents the top ten states of residence of Belizeans who obtained legal permanent residence. The top five were California, New York, Illinois, Texas and Florida. 32.8% lived in California.

Source: Office of Migration Statistics, 2012


Table 3.
Top 10 states/territory of residence of Belizens 2012- %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of Residence</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Within the Central American region, the Population Census of Panama (2010) reports 66 Belizean-born residing there. Males accounted for 63.6% and females made up the remaining 36.4%. The majority was relatively young, with 43.9% being between 20-39 years of age. However, there were a noticeable proportion of persons over 70 years of age (16.6%)33.

Canada has also been receiving Belizean visitors and emigrants. Over the past decade, the number of Belizens arriving in Canada has grown progressively. The Population Census of Canada (2006) reports 2,080 Belizean immigrants as well as 60 non-residents. 60% arrived prior to 1991. Along with increasing arrivals, the number of permanent residents also augmented by 8.4% during 1991-1995, 12.2% during 1996-2000 and 18.5% during 2001-2006.

Figure 3.
Number of Belizens admitted into Canada, 2000-2012


The United Kingdom is to a lesser extent another country that receives Belizean emigrants. At the time of the 2011 Census of the United Kingdom, living in London and its boroughs were 626 persons whose country of birth was Belize. Another 65 persons were living in Wales34.

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A.3.4 Emigrants: Characteristics

The most recent data on non-immigrant admissions show a healthy flow of Belizeans entering the United States. While the majority entered the US as visitors for tourism and business purposes, a sizable group of students arrived during the reported fiscal year.

| Table 4. Belize- 2011 non-immigrant admissions in the USA by broad category (I-94 only) |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Tourism and Business                          | 20,682                          |
| All other classes                             | 1,118                           |
| Students and exchange visitors                | 655                             |
| Diplomats and other representatives           | 439                             |
| Temporary workers and families                | 267                             |
| Unknown                                       | 112                             |
| Total                                         | 23,273                          |


There are many variables in favour of Belizean migration to the United States. First, the fact that Belize is an English speaking country signifies easier assimilation into the American society. The language proficiency makes them employable as well. Only 6.0% of Belizeans living in the USA were not proficient in English35.

Secondly, the fact that most Belizean emigrant reported having at least a high school education or higher, means that they have the basic qualifications to obtain decent jobs and the negotiating power to bypass those that would subject them to harsh manual labour. By 2000 it became evident that Belizean emigration is dominated by the female and youthful population. 55% of emigrants were female of which half were within the 15-24 years age range36. By 2009, only 43.6 per cent of Belizean immigrants were men37.

Young Belizeans find the USA attractive because of a culture of consumption and a Belizean ‘culture of migration’, that is considered to be a sign of upward mobility for the family and as a rite of passage for young people38. Another reason why they migrate is to join their parent(s) and/or relatives residing there. Family reunification is also a very common way for Belizeans in general to migrate39. Even older Belizeans who are seeking employment opportunities may find more benefits in moving to the USA instead of staying in Belize because of greater access to better health care40.

The Census Major Findings Report (2000) summarizes the general characteristics of the Belizean immigrant at the time as were young people in the productive age group who held at least a high school education. The findings highlighted the fact that the country was exporting its most valuable human resource. It is obvious that this brain drain affects the Belizean labour pool and can lead to a less robust social security system as well as possible future spikes in the need for immigrant workers.

A.3.5 Emigrants: Ethnic Dimension

Belizean emigration also exhibits an ethnic dimension. Both Census 2000 and 2010 highlighted that a substantial number of Afro-descendant Belizeans were migrating out of the country. In fact, analysis of the various time periods of emigration shows that this has always been a characteristic of the outflows. This is substantiated by a study conducted on Black Immigrants in the United States (2010) which shows significant numbers of Afro-descendant Belizeans residing in the US.

Table 5.
Black immigrants in the USA by country of birth (2006-2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>597,000</td>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>518,000</td>
<td>St. Vincent</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>188,000</td>
<td>Antigua-Barbuda</td>
<td>18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana/British Guiana</td>
<td>116,000</td>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
<td>18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>87,000</td>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>48,000</td>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>St. Kitts-Nevis</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>29,000</td>
<td>Bermuda</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belize/British Honduras</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>Total Caribbean</td>
<td>1,769,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Extracted from MPI Data hub, 2013

Another group of ethnic Belizeans that displays various forms of migration (emigration, return migration and extra-continental migration) is the Mennonite community.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs registered more than 1,600 Belizean Mennonites living in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. The majority migrated there a little over ten years ago. While it has not been determined how the movement of Mennonites in and out of Belize affects overall migration statistics, the knowledge that a sizable population of Belizean Mennonites is residing as far away as Bolivia underscores the importance of paying attention to their settlement patterns in other parts of the world.

Image 1.
Belizean Mennonites in Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Photo Credit: Jordi Ruiz Cirera, 2012.

Another group of 155 Belizean Mennonites was living in a community they had established in 1984 in Nova Scotia, Canada. There are also Belizean Mennonites living in Manitoba and Saskatchewan provinces, as well as a few who emigrated to Chihuahua State, Mexico from where their parents originally left in the 1950’s to settle in Belize. Relationships between the Belizean Mennonite communities are well-maintained. Families visit each other during vacations and special occasions. Transnational business networks are well established having their own newsletters highlighting business opportunities, activities and achievements across the diasporas.

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CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MANAGING EMIGRATION

a. The biggest challenge in managing migratory movements from Belize pertains to data collection. Apart from the population census, there has been little collection of data to determine the scope of emigration. Data collected by some host countries do not reflect the number of Belizeans residing there. Furthermore, in the case of the USA, various agencies collect statistical data but it is not sufficient to adequately determine the number of Belizeans living there, as they do not consider those in irregular migratory status.

b. When discussing the migration situation in Belize, the debate is often directed towards immigration of Central Americans to Belize. Emigration is not taken into consideration as an important factor affecting the development of the country; variables such as ethnicity, gender and age should be given special attention.

c. The Department of Immigration and Nationality Services of Belize is mandated to enforce migration related regulations; thereby, channelling its efforts on stemming migration whilst limiting focus on out-migration. Currently the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its consular services abroad is the only agency that maintains relations with the Belizean diasporas. Collaboration could be strengthened between the agencies in order to scale up existing programs that are currently underutilized, especially those presenting investment opportunities. There is a need for support of programs providing incentives, efficient channels for remittances, obtaining technical support from professional Belizians where the country lacks the expertise and in promoting philanthropic initiatives that can be beneficial to Belizean communities abroad and at home.

A.4 IMMIGRATION

A.4.1 Immigration: Pre-Independence

Immigration is embedded within the history of Belize. It has always been more long-lasting and dynamic than emigration. The following section briefly mentions the key migratory movements to Belize.

1600: British and Spanish pioneers settle on the coast of Belize. The ‘baymen’ were interested in harvesting and shipping Belizean hardwoods to Mexico.

- The few British who established themselves began to import African slaves for labour in the logwood and mahogany trade. According to historical records, the first slaves were brought to the Americas from Guinea in West Africa. Later, others were brought from areas such as Nigeria, Congo and Angola.

1800: In 1802, a number of Garifuna immigrated to the Caribbean coast of Central America from the Bay Islands off the coast of Honduras, where they settled temporarily after they had been exiled after an uprising against the British on the island of St. Vincent in 1795. By 1844, the major Garifuna settlement in Belize was Dangriga.

- During the Mexican Caste Wars of 1847 to 1853, large numbers of Mestizos moved into Belize from the Yucatan peninsula settling in the northern districts of Corozal and Orange Walk. Mestizos introduced their sedentary agricultural tradition into Belize and initiated the commercial cultivation and processing of sugar cane.

- In the late 1800’s, significant numbers of Mayas also migrated from Guatemala to southern Belize due to human rights abuses and unsettled conditions in their home country.

- During the 1860’s, further immigration came in the form of indentured servants mostly from China and East India. Barry (1992) points out that the multiethnic Belizean society is complimented by the presence of Chinese immigrants brought around 1860 as indentured servants.

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44 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
- In the 1890’s, after having migrated from Lebanon to Mexico and Colombia, significant numbers of Lebanese came to Belize. They earned their livelihood mostly through mercantile enterprise47.

- The Census of 1893 indicated that 291 persons living in the colony were born in India. This is evidence that Belize received a number of people from this country brought between the period of 1844 and 1917 as indentured servants to work in the sugar plantations48.

1950: Mennonites, relocated to Belize in 1958, after internal splits and disagreements with the Mexican government. Most Mennonites live in self-contained rural communities, and make their living through large-scale mid-latitude agricultural production of corn, eggs, poultry and dairy products49. Although they trace their origins to the Swiss Alps and Northern Germany, those who came to Belize had before transited and settled in Canada and Mexico.

The census of 1981 (the year of Belize’s independence) reported 12,940 foreigners living in the country. This represented 9% of the population.

A.4.2 Immigration: Post-Independence

1980: Between 1983 and 1992, Belize experienced a large influx of immigrants. Due to the situation of internal conflict in some of the neighbouring Central American countries during the 80’s and 90’s, thousands of refugees and displaced persons migrated to Belize or to other politically stable countries. Through UNHCR and the Belizean government, humanitarian assistance was offered in the form of a food basket, housing and agricultural land. Land in areas such as Valle de Paz and Armenia were settled, resulting in exclusive communities of new immigrants50. During this period, nearly 98.5% of the inhabitants residing in these settlements were from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras51.

1990: By 1991, the number of foreign born had risen to 25,548 accounting for 13.8% of the population52.

- In 1995, the Government of Belize, under the auspices of the Ministry of Finance, redesigns and markets the Economic Citizenship Program to attract foreign investments. As a result, various investors, professionals and retirees from developing countries such as United States of America, Canada, Taiwan and some European countries migrate to Belize.

- The booming tourism industry attracts foreign investors and foreign labour.

- In 1999, the Government of Belize launches an Amnesty Program in order to assess and address the scope of undocumented migrants and refugees.

The decades of the 80’s and 90’s are perhaps the most significant as it relates to the migration scenario in Belize. By the 1991 Census, the number of foreign-born had reached 25,000 people accounting for 14% of the national population. Nearly 75% of immigrants were of Central American origin, particularly from Guatemala (10,538) and to a lesser extent from El Salvador (5,650). Nearly a third of all migrants had settled in the Cayo District (8,213). The Belize district hosted the most extra-continental, Caribbean, European and American immigrants. A notable number of Mexicans (1,035) settled in the Orange Walk district53.

The percentage of immigrants that were from Central America grew from 74.2% in 1991 to 75.6% in 2000. In the Census of 2000, nearly 42% of immigrants living in Belize came from Guatemala, 18% from El Salvador and 14% from Honduras. The main emitting countries were from the Central American Northern Triangle which accounted for 98.5% of all immigrants from the region. A small proportion of immigrants (7.2%) came from the USA, United Kingdom and Canada, 4.8% from China and Taiwan, and 5.7% from the Caribbean or ‘other’. It can be also observed that 31% of the immigrant population lived in the Cayo District and 22% in the Belize District.

The number of persons residing in Belize but born in Honduras has increased considerably. The Census began to capture a significant increase in the number of Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants. While the Cayo District continued to attract large numbers of immigrants, the population of those living in the Belize District doubled. One out of five people living in the Cayo District was an immigrant54. It is important to point out that Corozal is the only district that experienced a decline in the number of immigrants.

48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
Naturally, due to the proximity with Mexico, the districts of Corozal and Orange Walk in the north of the country continued to receive high numbers of Mexicans.

Table 6.
Foreign born population in Belize by district and country of origin (2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Belize</th>
<th>Cayo</th>
<th>Stann Creek</th>
<th>Toledo</th>
<th>Corozal</th>
<th>Orange Walk</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>1,392</td>
<td>5,396</td>
<td>2,028</td>
<td>2,989</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>1,892</td>
<td>14,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>1,326</td>
<td>2,553</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>6,021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>1,645</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>1,901</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>4,936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>2,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1,738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-Worldwide</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>1,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-Central America</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Caribbean</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dk/Ns</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>7,468</td>
<td>10,577</td>
<td>4,959</td>
<td>3,885</td>
<td>2,758</td>
<td>4,629</td>
<td>34,276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Central Statistical Office, 2000

In 2010, the foreign born population accounted for 14.8% of the total population of Belize. There were close to equal numbers of male and female immigrants in the country. 38% of the total foreign-born population arrived between the 2000 and 2010. This indicates that 62% had migrated prior to the year 200055. This is consistent with the view that the migrant stock arrived during the 1980’s and 1990’s.

A.4.3 Immigration: Contemporary

The Cayo District continues to host the largest numbers of foreign-born (31%). The Belize District is also a favourable destination for immigrants with 25% of them settling there. The Central American Northern Triangle remains that main emigrant-sending region, with Guatemala continuing to be the main one with 19,000 immigrants; El Salvador and Honduras had 7,000 citizens living in Belize. In terms of age range, approximately 42% of all immigrants were between the ages of 25 and 44 year of age.

---

Table 7.
Foreign born population in Belize, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Belize</th>
<th>Cayo</th>
<th>Stann Creek</th>
<th>Toledo</th>
<th>Corozal</th>
<th>Orange Walk</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>2,295</td>
<td>7,600</td>
<td>2,496</td>
<td>3,478</td>
<td>1,011</td>
<td>1,996</td>
<td>18,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>1,835</td>
<td>2,950</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>7,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>2,422</td>
<td>987</td>
<td>1,917</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>6,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1,032</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>2,821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1,299</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>3,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>1,567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All others</td>
<td>2,223</td>
<td>1,110</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>4,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11,550</td>
<td>14,548</td>
<td>6,005</td>
<td>5,185</td>
<td>3,834</td>
<td>5,104</td>
<td>46,226</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2011.

The level of education of the immigrant population has improved, 60% stated that they had achieved at least a primary education. The foreign-born population displays a lower unemployment rate (10.8%) than the national average of 16.1%. Of note is that while only 5.6% of males were unemployed, the percentage of unemployed female foreign-born was as high as 19.0%.56.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MANAGING IMMIGRATION

- The biggest challenge in managing immigration to Belize is the absence of a rights-based approach in service delivery to both regular and irregular migrants. This includes a focus towards social cohesion and integration, respect for diversity and reduction of xenophobic attitudes. Furthermore, the discussion of immigration revolves around current inflows and seldom considers that Belize has a well-established, mature migrant stock.

- There has been no comprehensive review of the legal framework in order to update it to reflect current realities. This is needed in order to address challenges to the efficient management of terrestrial and maritime border controls, especially at informal entry points, that threaten internal security and migrant security.

- There is an urgent need to conduct a thorough review of the regularization process with a view to identify and eliminate practices that promote unintended and counter-productive objectives and that marginalize vulnerable migrant populations.

- The absence of a migration management strategy or a national migration policy presents an opportunity for Belize to develop a strong management system. Considerations must be made for adequate funding to acquire and utilize modern technology, capacity building and training, data collection and sharing mechanisms and a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure that initiatives are in line with policy objectives.

- There is need to strengthen bilateral relationships between Belize and major emigrant-sending countries in order to maximize positive contributions to the development of both the host and emitting country. Furthermore, the establishment of mechanisms and agreements such as a country quota system, visa categories, recruitment programs and data sharing protocols can help promote regular immigration flows.

A.5 BELIZE AS A TRANSIT COUNTRY

Transit-migration refers to certain forms of supposedly temporary immigration and migrants who keep moving from one country to country either intentionally or in response to changing conditions, rising pressures and new incentives57. Belize is without a doubt a country of transit for migrants wishing to reach the United States. Generally, the routes are determined by the region of origin of the individual.

The CA-4 agreement between the countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras grants citizens’ free mobility between them, meaning that in order to transit through Belize, the main restriction would be to cross the Belize/Guatemala border. Once in Belize, they continue northwards via the Belize/Mexican border or they may remain temporarily in Belize to work.58

Along with the flow of regional migrants, there were a number of extra-continental migrants arriving from Taiwan, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, China, India and Pakistan. Nationals of China, India, Korea, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, Taiwan, Japan, and Thailand were residing in Belize. In 2008, there were 6,141 arrivals of Asian nations, 4,071 in 2009, and 3,480 in 2010. Within a three year span, a total of 12,692 Asians arrived in Belize.59 Of note, is that the Census of 2010 only captures 1,567 Chinese nationals living in Belize even though they were the main emitting country of extra-continental emigrants. Clearly, only a conservative fraction of those arriving within the three year span is reflected. This requires further analysis and a side by side comparison with departure records in order to determine whether the large quantity of Asian nationals arrive in Belize to conduct business and/or for tourism purposes or if there are elements of transitory movements towards the United States.

For extra-continental migrants, the main route to get to Belize would be through countries not requiring visas. For this reason, the routes may be further, more costly and more complex (transiting at least three countries or more). The most common countries transited before arriving in Belize are El Salvador, Guatemala and Cuba.60 In an earlier study on Extra-continental Migrants in Belize, it was noted that Nigerians in particular come to work and study in Belize. Upon completion of studies, they often migrate to the United States where they have greater opportunity for professional and academic advancement.61

The US Immigration Statistics (2010) indicate that of the 997 persons who received permanent residence, and listed their last place of residence as Belize, only 965 were actually born in Belize. This means that for that year, 32 people had been living in Belize prior to migrating to the US. In 2011, there were 933 permanent residence granted to persons emigrating from Belize of which 905 were born Belizeans. This means that for that year, 28 people had made Belize their home before migrating north.

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF TRANSMIGRATION**

- Perhaps one of the biggest challenges for managing transit-migration is that it is often confused with irregular migration. However, current regularization mechanisms are accessible to trans-migrants once they remain in the country for the stipulated period of time.

- It has been challenging for Belize to ensure free mobility of transit-migrants while at the same time minimizing the risks to national security and enforcing migration laws to ensure that illegal activities such as human smuggling and trafficking in persons do not remain unchecked.

**A.6 TRANS-BORDER MIGRATION**

**A.6.1 Trans-border migration: Guatemala**

Trans border migrants can be broadly defined as those persons who live or work in an adjoining country while still maintaining their habitual residence in their community of origin.63 However, what differs from definition to definition is the frequency and length of visits. For example, someone who visits their habitual residence periodically or for a substantial part of the year can be considered a transborder migrant in the same way that someone who visits weekly or even daily.

Transborder migration takes on different forms in Belize. Although there are no statistics to indicate quantity, it is known that there are a number of elderly women temporarily residing with their migrant children in Belize. Their role is to take care of grandchildren and performing household chores, during the summer when the children are off school they return to their habitual residence.64

Another type of transborder migration is characterized by daily cross-border movements. Transborder migration from Guatemala and Belize generally occurs between Melchor de Mencos, Guatemala and the main urban areas of the Cayo District: San Ignacio/ Santa Elena, Benque Viejo del Carmen and to a lesser extent, the City of Belmopan. Cross-border workers are involved in various

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59 Immigration Department. 2011.
60 FLACSO, 2011.
61 Ibid.
62 IOM. 2011
economic activities ranging from those involved in informal economic activities such as newspaper sellers, shoe shiners and vendors, to more stable, formal economic activities such as domestic workers, farmers and contractors. Agriculture is the main economic activity of this district; therefore, notable numbers of transborder migrants are employed in this sector64.

In this district, there are various favourable conditions for trans-border migrants. First, its bilingual characteristic facilitates labour insertion and social assimilation. The proximity of communities is another factor; the furthest urban area is the City of Belmopan, which is approximately one hour away by public transport while the closest community, Benque Viejo, is within walking or biking distance. Due to the higher cost of living in Belize, it is more beneficial for them to maintain their habitual residence in Guatemala and work in Belize. Wages are maximized as a result of a favourable exchange rate65. The Social Security Board expects that many transborder migrants are involved in labour a situation which poses a challenge to the social security scheme and, most importantly, the workers' own occupational safety and health situation.

These practices are facilitated by various mechanisms. Firstly, there is the possibility of obtaining a day pass which allows the trans-border migrant to remain in the country for a maximum of 72 hours. Secondly, since the agricultural sector requires extensive manual labour, farmers would recruit seasonal workers from border region communities in order to meet the shortage of local labour.

**Indigenous Maya persons as trans-border migrants**

The majority of Belize’s indigenous Maya population resides in the Toledo District. Migration from those communities tend to be mostly internal, rural to urban and trans-border. Trans-border migration of Maya persons is primarily due to the mutual close vicinity of Guatemalan and Belizean communities such as San Vicente, Jalacte, San Benito Poite, Otoxha, Dolores and Machacilha are geographically isolated from the only urban area of Punta Gorda, inevitably establishing strong cross-border ties in terms of trade, employment and social networks66.

**Map 2. Communities of Southern Belize**

![Map of Communities of Southern Belize](source_image.jpg)

**Source:** Tumulkin Centre of Learning (2011)

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64 Ibid.
65 The average Belize $ to Quetzal is $1:Q3.50
A.6.2 Trans-border migration: Mexico

Thousands of Belizeans cross daily into Mexico. The National Migration Institute of Mexico reported 2,742,422 entries of Belizeans between the periods of 2000 to 2004 through the adjoining border stations. These entry points alone reported annual average cross-border visits of over 57,000 between the months of January to October. During the months of November and December, this number increases substantially since Belizeans conduct their Christmas shopping in the bordering towns of Melchor de Mencos, Peten, Guatemala and Chetumal, Quintana Roo, Mexico.

Since 2000, the Government of Mexico developed a new system of temporary visitors’ visas for Belizeans and Guatemalans. Cognizant of the fact that cross-border trade and family ties can create large inflows of migrants, the new system allows visitors from neighbouring countries to enter the country with a Regional Visitor Card or a Border Worker Visitor Card. This card limits mobility of the trans-border migrant to a defined geographical area, within the adjoining Mexican state. This has allowed the Mexican government to gather statistics that are specific to transborder migratory movements. It provides a good indication of the quantity and value of cross-border trading. “The new law does not, in general, provide a framework or mechanisms for responding to the country’s emerging labour market needs. However, as Mexico’s economy continues to grow and evolve, and it becomes a more attractive country for immigrants from the immediate region and beyond, the country will need to address the critical element of modern migration policy- strategically managing the process by which foreign workers are legally admitted, both on a temporary and permanent basis, and adjusting it based on the country’s needs67.

Another area of interest for cross-border migration and daily movements is the Corozal Free Zone. While the Free Zone is still in Belizean territory, entrance and exit requirements into Belize are often bypassed, creating loopholes for the data management system. Furthermore, the flows of persons crossing the border daily can easily be infiltrated by irregular transitory migrants.

Temporary workers from India, Mexico and Turkey work in the various casinos and business establishments within the free zone. Due to the classification of being an Export Processing Zone and Free Zone, there are mechanisms in place to facilitate these establishments to hire as much as 25% of their staff being migrant workers to fill existing vacancies.

Source: Centro de Estudios Migratorios/Instituto Nacional de la Migración, México.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MANAGING TRANS-BORDER MIGRATION

- Since transborder migration involves shorter distances and more localized movements, it is essential for local government authorities such as town councils, Alcaldes and Village Councils, to be involved in the discussion towards the management of trans-border migration. This will facilitate the discussion related to labour market identification, standards for commerce and trade (both formal and informal), and access to services.

- As with other forms of migration management, it must be approached from a rights-based migrant-centred approach. However, taking into account that communities on both sides of the border have familial, language and ethnic similarities it must also include a cultural dimension.

- Access to education should be inherent in a trans-border management strategy, primarily since the English-based education in Belize is attractive to the neighbouring Spanish-speaking communities in Guatemala, while the diversity of career options in Mexico is attractive to Belizean students.

- Considering that there is already a local pass (pase local) in place, there is opportunity to adopt a more structured trans-border pass for communities near the Guatemalan and Mexican territory.

A.7 LABOUR MIGRATION

Labour migration refers to the movement of persons from their usual place of residence to another primarily with the intent of obtaining employment. Since international migratory movements are generally associated with work, most migrant receiving countries have addressed it in their migration laws. Belize has ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which provides the country with a framework for responding to the situation of labour migration. Labour migration which occurs internally is often overlooked. Labour migration from Belize to other countries is currently unregulated and informal.

While there are no formal labour migration programs in Belize, the agriculture industries recruit large numbers of seasonal migrants. The majority of seasonal migrants enter Belize on their own but a few are recruited. Once in Belize, the employer requests temporary employment permits on the migrant worker’s behalf. In most instances, the corresponding fees are paid by the employer. Defining factor is the regulation that the worker cannot change jobs nor can he/she extend the temporary employment permit without the permission of the employer who originally applied for it. The concern from a social protection perspective is that migrant workers may be at risk of exploitation, may not have many mobility options, security or reporting system to their disposal. In some cases where the employer pays for temporary employment permits, the migrant worker often has to repay expenses incurred, therefore, even in harsh conditions they may have no choice but to remain there. Overall, the fact that this system is available is of great benefit to the employer since they can easily recruit workers in times of natural disasters and in times of labour shortage.

The Government of Belize, through the Labour Department and the Department of Immigration and Nationality Services (DINS) has established a Temporary employment permit Committee, which vets temporary employment permit applications. Upon approval, DINS issues the necessary documentation. A temporary employment permit allows the migrant worker to register for social security and other employment benefits that may be available to him/her.

A.7.1 Labour Migration: Seasonal and Temporary Workers

A total of 3,534 temporary workers were actively insured with the Social Security of Belize in 2012. The majority (63.4%) were between the ages of 20-39 years of age. The top three countries of origin of temporary workers were Guatemala (57.6%), Honduras (21.6%) and to a lesser extent El Salvador (8.8%). Men far outnumbered women temporary workers with 2,923 and 611, respectively.

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70 Temporary workers refer to those persons whose Social Security Card is valid for less than or equal to 12 months.
Table 8.
Active insured temporary workers by nationality and sex, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>1775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All others</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>2923</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Social Security Board of Belize

The number of active insured temporary workers includes migrant workers who have permanent residence as well as those holding a dependents permit or a conditional migratory status such as in the case of students. A review of the characteristics of the actively insured temporary workers reveals that 3,114 held a temporary employment permit.

Table 9 substantiates the view that regional labour migrants originate predominantly from the Central American northern triangle. The USA also provides a sizable workforce. As it relates to extra-continental countries, China, India and Nigeria had the highest numbers of labour migrants. As it relates to extra-continental countries, China, India and Nigeria had the highest numbers of labour migrants.

The establishment of structured migrant worker recruitment programs, along with a strengthened implementation of the regulations for the working conditions of workers, national and migrant alike, could make them less vulnerable to labour exploitation. There have been reported cases of Trafficking in Persons among these two groups.

Table 9.
Temporary Employment Permits Issued- Top Ten Countries 2008-mid 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Mid 2010</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvador</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>3225</td>
<td>3654</td>
<td>1181</td>
<td>4043</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Immigration Department, 2010

As it relates to income, temporary workers obtain a wide range of earnings as is illustrated in Table 10, which shows the brackets of insurable earnings, which stand at an average of 80% of the actual earnings. The majority records insurable earnings of less than $179.99 Belize dollars weekly. Females’ insurable earnings are substantially less than their male counterparts. The majority (21.9%) of females recorded insurable earnings between $70 - $109.99 a week while the majority of men had enjoyed insurable weekly earnings in the bracket $140 - $179.99.
A recent study conducted on labour migrants in Belize discovered that a significant number of them moved to Belize as single persons. However, once having established themselves in the country, they start their families. It also revealed that 28% of the 300 participants indicated having migrated to Belize with their entire family or they later came to join them.\textsuperscript{71}

**A.7.2 Labour Migration: Economic Activity**

The majority of labour migrants are involved in occupations in Agriculture, Hunting and Forestry (78.8%). In these categories men accounted for 83.2% of the migrant workforce. Wholesale, Retail, Repair employed 5.7%. 5.5% worked in Hotels and Restaurants, Manufacturing (5.3%) and Construction (3.9%). Female migrant workers were employed in Agriculture, Hunting and Forestry; Hotels and Restaurant; Wholesale and Retail, Repairs; Private Household with Employed Persons and Health and social work. This is supported by the study on labour migrants in Belize, which revealed that 50% of respondents worked in the agriculture sector, tourism (17%), domestic work (17%) and construction (16%). The study clearly revealed gender segregation in the various sectors. Domestic work, for example, was exclusively performed by women and the construction sector by men. In agriculture, especially in the banana and citrus fruit industries, women worked in packing sheds performing tasks such as processing and packing fruit, men on the other hand worked in the field performing tasks such as crop maintenance and others requiring strenuous manual labour. In the tourism industry, women mainly did waitressing and housekeeping. In the citrus industry, men harvested fruit.

**Table 10.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insurable Earnings</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$70 or less</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70.00 - $109.99</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$110.00 - $139.99</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$140.00 - $179.99</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$180.00 - $219.99</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$220.00 - $259.00</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$260.00 - $299.99</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$300.00 and over</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years and over</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Social Security Board Belize

**Figure 5.**

Number of temporary employment permits issued to seasonal workers in the citrus industry Crop years 2009-2011

Source: Citrus Growers Association, 2011

\textsuperscript{72} Social Security Board. Statistics of Insured Persons-Temporary Permit Holders. Provided by the SSB. 2013.
In the 2009-2010 crop years a total of 1,664 permits were requested by the Citrus Growers Association (CGA). In crop year 2010-2011, there was a reduction to 1,232. Guatemalan seasonal workers continued to account for the majority of seasonal workers in the citrus industry even though there were fewer arrivals during that time. According to the CGA, factors influencing the drop were the economic slump in Belize, coupled with high unemployment (14.9%) in the region. Belizeans who generally prefer not to work in such seasonal and fragile activity now find themselves seeking jobs in the industry thereby reducing the need for migrant workers.

Another industry which relies heavily on labour migrants is the banana industry. The majority of workers form a stationary stock. Without immigrant labour, the banana industry would not have attained its current status as a major “vein” of the national economy. Crisis in the banana industry would have a significant detrimental effect, not only on the national economy, but also on the local economy of the Stann Creek District and northern Toledo district. In 2004, the banana farms employed 2280 persons of which 75.3% were from the Central American northern triangle.

Unlike the citrus industry where Guatemalans were the majority, Honduran migrants were more visible in the banana industry, accounting for as much as 45% of all banana workers. Honduran workers are an asset to this sector primarily because they bring experience obtained in the banana industry in their home country. Males far exceeded females, accounting for 77.2% of all banana workers of Central American descent. An overwhelming 66.6% lived on the banana farms in housing provided by the farm owners or housing areas in the nearby communities. While new migrant labourers continue to arrive in the ‘banana belt’ region on an annual basis the bulk arrived between 1981 and 1991, consistent with the arrival of large numbers of refugees and displaced persons. During 2004, there was a noticeable rise in the number of young, male, labour migrants arriving in the region.

Belize is a member state of CARICOM. The program for the free movement of skilled nationals is currently underused by CARICOM nationals; this is evident in the low numbers of application for temporary employment permits. In 2008 there were only 58 applications for the skills certificate (term used for temporary employment permits for CARICOM nationals only). A total of 21 dependency permits were issued to spouses and dependents. It needs to be noted that nationals from other CARICOM member states may prefer to apply for the “regular” temporary employment permit as this provides the required starting point when applying later on for permanent residence or nationality.

A.7.3 Labour Migration: Emigrants

Recently, private Canadian recruitment agencies have been coming to Belize to enlist Belizean workers. Since there is a shortage of workers for the service industries, particularly in low-paying entry level jobs with companies such as McDonald’s-Canada, English speaking Belizean employees have become an attractive option. There are no official agreements between these private agencies and the Government of Belize, in terms of monitoring and protection mechanism. It is a widely accepted notion that Canadian companies have a good track record in terms of decent jobs, fair wages and good working conditions. Despite this, Belizeans would benefit more from a structured, formal recruitment system. With a proper monitoring and evaluation system in place, the financial and social impacts of this type of program could be quantified.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MANAGING LABOUR MIGRATION

- A clear opportunity exists for Belize to capitalize on the demand for labour migrants by Belizean industries and the demand for Belizean workers by the United States and Canada. Therefore, it is essential that a labour migration strategy be contemplated so that an orderly flow of labour migrants in and out of Belize benefits both receiving and sending countries.

- Cooperation amongst governments of the region and the regional and international systems related to migration can be strengthened to promote an orderly and guided labour migration. Paramount among these actions is the establishment of a permanent work program to regulate and regularize labour migration flows in and out of Belize that contribute to the protection of the rights of migrant workers and their families. Such program should favour an orderly migratory flow and include protection measures for migrant workers vulnerable to labour exploitation, labour discrimination and child labour.

- The advent of cruise ship tourism in the southern region may cause serious challenges for the agribusiness sector (citrus, banana, aquaculture) attracting labour at competitive rates. The resulting shortfall in labour does not only lead to sector’s increased labour costs, but the inability to have timely access to labour supply can lead to seriously decreased levels of production in future years.

75 Ibid.
There is need to establish measures sanctioning those who hire irregular labour force, while at the same time, establishing protection measures in favour of workers. When the demand for irregular labour force is high, migrants will take advantage of job availability despite governmental intervention. Therefore, it is important to involve the private sector in the formulation of any labour migration management measures. The private sector is a major actor in ensuring that regulation and regularization of the migrant workforce occur. Stronger relationships between the private sector and governmental agencies could be improved through the acknowledgement of best practices such as simplified processes of hiring, adhering to labour migration authorization, and a certification system that will help businesses incorporate their products into solidarity markets.

There is opportunity for civil society organizations (CSO) for a covenant with the state in the monitoring of labour laws, with a focus on migrant workers, and for the proper functioning of labour migration management mechanisms. This will minimize the vulnerability of the labour laws to being sidestepped by employers and will increase transparency in hiring procedures and work conditions. The involvement of civil society in this process will allow for independent monitoring and intervention, thereby reducing the burden on governmental agencies.

There must be more active involvement of the institutions responsible for ensuring the wellbeing of female migrants and that their human rights are upheld. In essence, it is necessary to include the gender dimension within the analysis and creation of public policies that target the migrating population.

The current regulation and regularization of labour migration, particularly the temporary employment permit mechanisms, are to be reviewed from a rights-based perspective. Considerations must be given to issues such as situations that warrant the need to change employer or job, including provisions to extend the duration of permits.

A.8 IRREGULAR MIGRATION

A.8.1 Irregular Migration: Emigration

Irregular migration refers to the actual movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of either the sending, transit or receiving countries. It is important to note that there is no clear or universally accepted definition of irregular migration. Other terminologies used to identify irregular migration are clandestine migration and undocumented alien. From the perspective of destination countries it is illegal entry, unauthorized stay or work in a country, meaning that the migrant does not have the required documentation or authorization under immigration regulations. From the perspective of the sending country, it involves cases in which a person crosses an international boundary without a valid passport or travel document or does not fulfill the administrative requirements for leaving the country. There is a tendency to use the term “illegal migration” when discussing illicit activities involving migrants such as smuggling and trafficking in persons.

It is clear that there is a relatively high number of Belizeans residing in the United States. However, there is concern that the available data does not take into consideration the undocumented. At the beginning of the 90’s it was estimated that more than 60,000 Belizeans were living in the US with almost one third being undocumented. Even though there are many Belizeans living under irregular status in the US, as evident in the following tables there are thousands who ensure that they obtain proper documentation and legal status.

The 1990’s was a difficult decade for many undocumented immigrants. In 1990, stricter immigration laws were passed and strengthened even more in 1996 with the passing of the Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA). New restrictions were implemented and changes were made to already existing ones, including sponsorship guidelines, adjustment of irregular to permanent residence. One such adjustment was the waiting time for family reunification visas. Prior to the adjustment, family members had to wait two years to receive visas, this was extended to four or five years. Family members viewing the required separation as too lengthy or who could not endure being separated often opted to migrate illegally with potentially serious consequences. Even ‘alternative’ documents, such as social security card and driver’s license, which could be used as proof of residence in the USA became harder to obtain.

The first step in ensuring that one migrates under regularized condition is to obtain a visa, although, not every person issued a visa will be guaranteed admission into the country. The second step in the process is to obtain permanent resident status commonly referred to as a “green card” in Belize. Between the periods of 2002 to 2011, a total of 9,614 Belizean obtained permanent resident status with an average of 961.4 persons obtaining permanent residence annually. Since 2008, the number of Belizeans receiving permanent residence has been constantly declining.

The final stage is to obtain US citizenship. In 2011, data on Central Americans in the USA shows that Belizeans had one of highest naturalization rates (61.2%) of all Central American immigrant groups, second only to Panama. The road to naturalization is a lengthy and costly process, but considering the various provisions under which a migrant can obtain permanent residence or citizenship, there are possibilities of regularizing status once conditions can be met. In 2008, a notable number of Belizeans obtained their citizenship but the numbers declined sharply thereafter, rising again in 2011.

The same is true for Belizeans living in Canada. However, in comparison to the US, the number of persons receiving permanent residency in Canada is low. Nevertheless, it shows a consistent flow of persons into the country with the intent of residing there permanently.

### Table 11.
**Number of Belizeans obtaining permanent residence - Canada - 2002-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>139</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Canada Citizenship and Immigration, 2012*
A.8.2 Irregular Migration: Immigration

The regularization of migrants in Belize has had periods of highs and lows. In 2002, there was a spike in the number of foreign-born acquiring nationality. The numbers dipped substantially from 2003 to 2005, but again began to rise in 2006. There was a visible slump in 2009.

![Acquisition of Belizean Nationality](image)

Source: SICREMI, 2012

Guatemalans outnumber all others in terms of acquiring nationality during the period of 2000-2009. The largest number did so in the year 2000 which coincides with the tail end of the 1999 Amnesty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Previous Nationality</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>4866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
<td>2579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-Central America</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
<td>2535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>1656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>331</td>
<td></td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-worldwide</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2328</td>
<td>2501</td>
<td>2567</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>1560</td>
<td>1614</td>
<td>1549</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>15208</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SICREMI, 2012

A.8.3 Irregular Migration: Routes into Belize

There are many routes for irregular migrants to enter Belize. Generally, those who want to come into Belize can do so with a passport or, in the case of those living in neighbouring communities, with photo identification. Those who are not admitted or may not have the required documentation to enter the country at the official border points will do so with the assistance of smuggler or ‘coyotes’. Money changers, taxi drivers and others working around the border area connect the migrant in need with the smuggler82.

For the more adventurous migrants, border areas between Belize, Mexico and Guatemala have neither enough immigration officers nor police presence. There are countless paths, rivers and roads where it is easy to cross the border by foot or by canoe. These isolated routes are commonly used by those living in nearby communities to transport goods or as footpaths to get from one community to the next. However, once smugglers become familiar with them, they become converted into pathways for entering the country undocumented\(^3\).

Belize’s border expands over miles of terrain, most of which is covered with unmonitored dense jungle. Any move to regulate movements across it will require major investments in human, technological and economic resources. These factors have contributed to Belize becoming an important transit point for illegalities and for those searching for irregular routes in and out of Belize. In 2008, a leading newspaper in the bordering town of Chetumal, Quinatana Roo, Mexico, published an article regarding vulnerable points along the Belize-Mexico border. It reports that the Mexican Embassy in Belize is cognizant of this. They are aware of at least 27 points of entrance into Mexico from Belize\(^4\). However, due to stable diplomatic relations, military presence at those exits could be interpreted as an insensitive act.

A Map 3. Commonly used irregular entrance and exit points into Belize

Transit migrants use Belize as they head north towards the United States which is often their final destination. Once in Mexican territory they access well established routes and support systems that will help them cross into the United States.

**A.8.4 Irregular Migration: Routes from Belize to the USA**

Despite difficulties in acquiring alternative documentation and despite stricter enforcement of U.S. immigration laws (especially since 9/11), many still choose to reside in the United States undocumented. Perhaps because visitors’ visas are harder and more expensive to obtain, many chose the option of migrating illegally. Figure 9 refers to those who obtained visas but were not admitted into the United States.


Considering that there has been a decline in the number of Belizeans arriving in the USA (Figure 2) and the number of Belizeans found inadmissible it can be inferred that Belizeans are using the regular migration channels with less frequency. The economic downturn in the USA may be creating greater economic hardships for relatives residing there. Relatives are usually the ones who sponsor and fund the migration of new members. Those who can afford to migrate but does not meet visa eligibility will opt instead for the irregular route.

Map 4 indicates the routes migrants frequently use to travel through Mexico on their way north. As a result of porous borders, its proximity to Mexico and lack of tracking system for migrants entering the country, Belize has always been a very attractive transit point.

Belizeans are also knowledgeable about the various terrestrial migratory routes into the United States through Mexico which have been in use since the early 1960’s when the first waves of Belizeans began to migrate “tru di back”. Of recent, due to bilateral agreements between Mexico and Belize, Belizeans can easily and frequently enter Mexican territory with either a border crossing card or passport. Once the migrant crosses into Mexican territory it is relatively easy to continue northwards.

**Map 4.**
Migrant Routes to the USA via Belize and Mexico

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Since a sizable population of Belizeans lives in Los Angeles and Houston, the entrance points into the US are primarily through Tijuana, Nuevo Laredo and Reynosa. Tijuana, however, is a preferred entrance point for those heading to the west coast for two reasons: Belizeans can fly relatively cheap from Chetumal and Cancun to Tijuana; once there, they converge with the cross-border party crowds. Those who had already been living there and who had returned to Belize may have documentation such as social security and/or drivers’ license. Another route that is constantly used is the ‘coastal’ routes from San Pedro, Consejo and Sartaneja in Belize to Chetumal, Mexico through Casa Cualcos, Soto La Marina, Tampico, and Matamoros all the way to Raymondville, USA.

A.8.5 Irregular Migration: Apprehensions of Undocumented Belizeans in the USA

In terms of apprehensions of undocumented Belizeans entering Mexico and the USA, the Mexican Institute of Migration reports that between January and November 2011, a total of 24 Belizeans were apprehended there and returned. In 2012, 67 apprehensions of Belizeans were made in the USA.

When transiting through Mexico, the afro Belizean has greater level of difficulty in merging with flow of migrants from the region, following the same route. However, once having reached Tijuana they integrate into the crowd as African-Americans. The Mestizo Belizean on the other hand, does not stand out as much during the route but upon arriving in the US border area are often profiled as Hispanic-descent migrants trying to enter the US unlawfully.

During the ten year span from 2001 to 2011, a total of 2,325 undocumented Belizeans were apprehended in the US. From 2008 onwards the number of apprehensions rose notably although there was an insignificant dip in 2009 and 2010. A comparison of the decline in the numbers of admissions, permanent residence and acquisition of nationality during the same time period with the increase in the number of apprehensions of undocumented migrants may indicate that more Belizeans are using irregular routes to get to the US.

Figure 10. Belizeans apprehended in the USA - fiscal years 2001-2011

Source: Office of Migration Statistics, 2012

A.8.6 Irregular Migration: Apprehensions of Undocumented Immigrants in Belize

It is not uncommon to hear local news broadcasts reporting frequently on the apprehension of groups of regional and extra-regional migrants by Belizean immigration officials. In 2008 and 2009 there were 167 and 275 apprehensions, respectively. Guatemalan nationals record the highest number of apprehensions followed by Hondurans (98) and El Salvador (85). Illegal entry was the most common reason why migrants were being detained.

---

Table 13.
Irregular Migration- Apprehension & Prosecution for Migration Related Offenses, year and country of origin -2008-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-Extra-contiental³</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-Caribbean¹</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other - Central America²</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹- Includes Trinidad, Dominica, Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica. ²- Includes Panama and Costa Rica ³- Includes Nigeria Germany, Brazil, Czech Republic, Algeria, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Liberia and Somalia

Source: Immigration and Nationality Belize. Court Statistics, 2009

Irregular migrants must be considered in the same manner as those entering the country with proper documentation. Even though they may enter or remain in the country undocumented or in an irregular status, the receiving country must consider the need to reduce unemployment among them, to provide education and health care for them and their dependents. Regularizing undocumented migrants is often a very controversial topic in the receiving countries, there is a tendency to focus on the negative impacts of migration in developing countries as opposed to the benefits it generates.

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MANAGING IRREGULAR MIGRATION**

- The greatest challenge in managing irregular migration is that it there are many loopholes for it to occur even when regularization mechanisms are in place. The greatest opportunity for managing irregular migration lies in the fact that Belize has not yet developed robust migration management strategies.

- Considering that DINS functions also as an enforcement agency, there is need to invest in frontier management efforts, with increased security in known areas of illegal entry. Such action will require increasing DIN's access to material resources (software, equipment, technology and appropriate facilities) and technical capacities to properly control the national borders as well as budgetary requirements to ensure that they are sustainable.

- Greater effort needs to be placed on issues that pose a threat to national security as well as the security of migrants. Realistic management actions as well as stronger laws with stronger penalties for participating law enforcement agents are required to better combat smuggling and trafficking in persons (the 2012 Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Offences Act is a big step in the right direction). Interagency collaboration (between the Police Department, Coast Guard, Belize Defence Force, among others) and cross-border initiatives to curb organized irregular immigration and emigration must be established. Funding agencies can support sustained campaigns on preventive education, migrant protection efforts by civil society organization and migrant rights awareness.

- Since Belize shares borders with Mexico and Guatemala, cooperation can be enhanced in the areas of frontier monitoring and information exchange, identification and replication of best practices. Regional integration mechanisms can be used as a platform for discussion and planning, and most importantly, to ensure that policies are related to each other. Partnerships towards the effective management of irregular migration need to be improved and law enforcement measures including preventative measures such as training and information sharing need to be put in place.
The Personal Identification and Registration System can be complemented by improved personal documentation for Belizeans. Currently, there is no specific national identification document for internal use. One such opportunity is to capitalize on the SSB data collection and tracking system by enhancing cards with security features and electronically readable features. Furthermore, categories of cards can also improve personal documentation for migrants and minimize fraudulent documentation which currently makes it difficult to verify migrants’ identity. A monitoring and evaluation system can accompany the PIRS system to improve reporting mechanisms, data sharing and optimal use of equipment.

A.9 RETURN MIGRATION

Return migration refers to the movement of a person returning to his/her country of origin or habitual residence usually after spending at least one year in another country\(^92\). This return may or may not be voluntary. Forced return migration is the compulsory return of an individual to the country of origin, transit or third country, on the basis of an administrative or judicial act\(^93\).

A.9.1 Diaspora Return Migration to Belize

The Diaspora Returnee Incentive Program (DRIP) was launched in September of 2009 as part of a “comprehensive program being developed by the Government of Belize to attract members of the Belizean Diaspora, who are willing and able to return to their home country and use their skills and/or resources to aid in its development”. The program basically provides tax breaks, duty exemptions on personal effects, tools of trade and a vehicle for those living abroad for 10 years or more. This program is currently underutilized by returnees\(^94\).

DRIP was developed in order to attract investment and technical aid from Belizeans living abroad. In 2010, the program attempted to conduct a registry of Belizeans living abroad. Although the initial response rate was low, registrations are ongoing\(^95\). Through the registration exercise, Belizeans with military and law enforcement experience will be identified and invited to join the Belizean Diaspora Medical Brigade and the Belizean Diaspora Law Enforcement and Defence Brigade\(^96\). These brigades will participate in service provision, technical capacity building and training of Belizeans. While it focuses on skilled returnees, DRIP also includes unskilled Belizeans who plan to retire.

A.9.2 Forced return migration to Belize

While due attention is being given to voluntary return of Belizean diasporas, the same cannot be said for forced returnees. Forced return migration of Belizeans living abroad has been significant and has had noteworthy impacts on the Belizean society and on the migrants themselves. Firstly, there is minimal consideration of how forced returned migration influences the immigration situation in the country. This population requires the same social support services and employment opportunities as immigrants from other countries, particularly, if they do not have assets, a home or employable skills or education at the time of repatriation. Secondly, forced returned migrants who may have been living abroad for many years or whose entire family migrated may not have the ties or support systems needed to reintegrate back into their home community. Finally, when the number of returnees with a criminal background becomes too significant, the return may become a threat to citizens’ security.

As it relates to forced return migration to Belize, between 2002 and 2011, a total of 2,155 Belizeans were returned from the USA. An annual average of 215.5 persons with 2010 seeing the most forced returns\(^97\). Those who had previous criminal convictions outnumbered those who didn’t. This distinction is important since it determines what procedures will be adopted once they arrive in Belize. Generally, the US Embassy informs the Belize Police Department of dates and numbers of those to be repatriated. The Police Department receives, registers and presents the conditions of the Deportee Monitoring Program.

\(^93\) Ibid.
\(^95\) Ibid.
There are three classifications of deportees: non-criminal; criminal and gang affiliate. Those with non-criminal background are not monitored. Those with criminal backgrounds must make a weekly report to the police station nearest to their community of residence. Once in compliance, and after a period of satisfactory reporting by the monitoring officer, they are provided with a clearance letter absolving them of those requirements. Those with gang affiliation are monitored by the Gang Suppression Unit based in Belize City. This was implemented in order to curb the high levels of gang violence. Similarly, in the 1980’s and possibly as a result of unmonitored gang-affiliates being returned from the US, local gangs are reportedly affiliated with US inner city gangs such as the notorious CRIPS and Bloods emerged in Belize City. By the 1990’s the gang situation became so acute that the government mediated a gang truce in 1994 and established the Conscious Youth Development Program designed to provide employment opportunities and reintegration of gang members into mainstream Belizean society. The gang problem persists, but it is unclear to what extent contemporary return migration has influenced its longevity.

### A.9.3 Forced return migration: from Belize

In Belize, the situation of forced return migration is much more complex and all indications are that the problem is a structural one. There are mechanisms, such as the Deportation Act and Convention on the Rights of Migrants and their families, in place to deal with the various processes for returning migrants. However, implementation and monitoring of corresponding guidelines are often bypassed. The main impediments in ensuring compliance are a lack of knowledge of enforcement officials of the commitments made by Belize through the various conventions and international agreements as well as financial and human resources.

Generally, when immigrants are arrested for infringing on the Belizean migration laws, they are subsequently charged and taken to the Magistrates court. At this level, the Judge determines culpability and what punitive measures will apply, including length of prison term and/or fines to be paid. If fines are not paid forthwith, the persons are remanded to the Belize Central Prison in Hattieville, Belize District to serve sentence. Upon completion of sentence, they are expelled from Belize. Usually, when fines are paid forthwith they are thereafter repatriated in case the migrant is from an adjoining country.

In the case of extra-regional migrants, whose return is harder to arrange and finance, there are various problematic issues. The first option is to keep them detained at the Belize Central Prison until they can be repatriated either by their Embassy or Consulate or by family members who offer to pay for their return ticket. The second option is to release them into the Belizean society after having served their sentence.

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98 Criminal- refers to persons removed from the United States who have a prior criminal conviction. It is defined by the Department of Homeland Security (2013) as “The deportation, exclusion, or removal of an alien who has 1) been charged under a section of the Immigration and Nationality Act that requires a criminal conviction and that charge is the basis for the removal or 2) a criminal conviction noted in the Deportable Alien Control System (DACS) for a crime that renders the alien removable. An alien with an appropriate criminal conviction is considered a criminal alien regardless of the section of law under which the alien was removed.

99 Interview with official from the Belize Police Department. 2013.

There is a prevailing opinion among protection agents that standard procedures are inexistent or disregarded when dealing with return migrants from Belize, oftentimes resulting in unmerited judgments concerning referrals to the court system, sentencing, fines to be paid, and procedures for forced returns. In this regard, there is need for improved communication and liaison with Consulates and Embassies, as they are not always notified of the apprehension or detention of co-nationals. Detainees often report that due process was not followed upon apprehension, detention, prosecution, and repatriation.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MANAGING RETURN MIGRATION

- As the country experiences the arrival of relatively large numbers of forced returnees as well as voluntary return migrants and repatriates, and the continuous departure of a sizable amount of immigrants to their home country, return migration seems to be problematic to manage. This is especially obvious when considering the far-reaching negative impacts of forced return migration in the past and the low positive impact of attracting skilled diaspora returns today. This type of migration should be brought to the limelight.

- When dealing with forced or voluntary returns to and departure from Belize, it is imperative to implement an effective return and reintegration strategy, such as the IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) program. Such strategy should include rights-based and effective guidelines, including standard operational procedures, for the return of foreign nationals and re-admission of Belizean nationals, giving preference to voluntary return.

- Conscious that the state lacks the institutional capacity and human and financial resources to manage this type of migration, there are opportunities for civil service organizations to come to the forefront. This goes along with multiple opportunities for both national and regional civil service organizations, faith-based organizations and other social protection agents to review their capacity to assist in the reintegration of return migrants into Belizean society. Furthermore, interventions such as skills training programs, job placement, and educational training can be organized. As an example, CSOs could establish reintegration programs and act as monitoring agents for some categories of migrants while the Police functions as an intermediary when necessary. This will ensure that reintegration and return programs are implemented with the dignity of the migrants in mind.

- Due to the long history and association between forced return migration and crimes in Belize, it is important to create awareness programs that will minimize the social stigma and marginalization of returnees. In those cases where migrants cannot be repatriated, regularization channels must be available so that they can be integrated and contribute to society.

- As it relates to forcibly returned immigrants, there is need for closer collaboration between the Diplomatic Corps and regional security agencies to improve communication and resource sharing (establishment and management of a database of detained and incarcerated persons and projected year of return so as to inform decision-making).

- Diaspora Returnee programs can be approached more aggressively by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through more aggressive campaigns and the adjustment of incentives so that it better benefits returning students and those with less than ten years of residence abroad.

A.10 VULNERABLE GROUPS

A vulnerable group can be broadly defined as any group or sector of society that is at higher risk than any other group within the State of being subjected to discriminatory practices, violence, natural or environmental disasters, or economic hardship; or any group or sector of society (such as women, children or the elderly) that is at higher risk in periods of conflict and crisis. This section briefly discusses the situation of unaccompanied minors, refugees and asylum seekers, displaced persons and victims of trafficking in persons.

A.10.1 Migrant families

Immigration

A recent study conducted on labour migrants in Belize discovered that a significant number of labour migrants moved to Belize as single persons. However, once having established themselves in the country, they start families. 28% of the 300 participants in the study indicated having migrated to Belize either with their entire family or with their family members joining them afterwards.

Oftentimes, immigrant families with children are required to participate in the informal economy as way to maximize family income; they are taken out of school to work on the streets, making them vulnerable to abuse.\textsuperscript{102}

The UNICEF Situation Analysis of Women and Children in Belize (2012) reports that families whose primary breadwinners labour in seasonal agriculture were living in squalid conditions. “Their children often face food insecurity and lack of medical care. “The report goes on to note that they were living in “the worst living conditions of all children in Belize with limited or no access to potable drinking water, indoor sewer facilities, proper sleeping and living spaces and educational or leisure resources (p. 97)”. This highlights the need for increased interventions through services and protection provided by civil society organizations and faith-based organizations, overseeing the wellbeing of this particular group of children.

Emigration

One of the possible reasons that may explain why Belize has not been able to capture a realistic number of those having migrated to the USA is the fact that entire families may have migrated. Table 15 indicates that the majority of issued Legal Permanent Resident status was based on the existence of family sponsored preferences and immediate relatives of US citizens. Combined, these practices account for 92.6% of the grounds under which migrants qualified for permanent residency. This confirms the belief that family reunification is one of the driving forces of Belizean emigration to the United States.

Table 15. Belizeans obtaining legal permanent resident status by broad class of admission, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of Admission</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family sponsored preferences</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Based preferences</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate relatives of US Citizens</td>
<td>591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugees and Asylees</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>905</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In some instances, the parent migrates and later sends for the children. Children are left behind in the care of a single parent, grandparents, elder siblings or other relatives. Migrant parents, in many cases, try to compensate for their absence by sending a significant amount of material resources in the form of remittances or barrels of clothing and footwear. In Belize this kind of compensation has been observed to possibly play a role in making children attached to material goods and resulting in a loss of moral values and deterioration of love and respect for their absent parents. Social workers noted that the desire for material goods often leads children to crime and violence, especially when parents no longer continue to remit.\textsuperscript{103}

Additionally the dependence of family members, left behind, on remittances as a source of income creates stress in those families, especially if there is certainty of when remittances will arrive. Children and elderly left behind become prone to abuse especially as child-care and care for the elderly becomes strained. Family members who cannot cope often resort to substance abuse.\textsuperscript{104}

A.10.2 Unaccompanied minors

Belize has a good track record in terms of the treatment of unaccompanied minors, in part as a result of the various measures taken to reduce commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons or minors. In 2008, it developed a Protocol on “How to Care for Child and Adolescence Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation”. The following year, it adopted the “Regional Guidelines for Special Protection in Cases of the Repatriation of Child Victims of Trafficking” developed by the 2009 Regional Conference on Migration.

\textsuperscript{102} C. Bakker, M. Elings-Pels & M. Reis. The Impact of Migration on Children in the Caribbean. UNICEF: Office for Barbados and Eastern Caribbean. 2004.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
Belize is often used as a transit point for children who are sent overseas for reunification with their parents. In some cases, they are found travelling with adults whose parents have entrusted their care or may be paying those adults to do so. In other cases, they travel as unaccompanied minors across more than one border. Belize is also one of the countries from which unaccompanied minors originate. The US Border Patrol agency reported that between the periods of 2008-2012, there were a total of 16 apprehensions of unaccompanied Belizean children, an average of four per year.

A.10.3 Refugees and Asylum Seekers

The situation of refugees and asylum seekers regularly generates controversial discussions. The debate surrounding their level of vulnerability is frequently overshadowed by the belief that refugees and asylum seekers are criminals, who are running away from their country or who seek a loophole in the migrant protection system. There is also the belief that more than being only a migrant rights issue, the acceptance or rejection of asylum seekers must be done from the perspective of national security. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that since the era of civil strife and unrest in the region, Belize has recognized refugees and asylum seekers. As the situation in the region improved, some were repatriated but many remained in Belize. The country continues to receive small numbers of request for refuge and asylum. The total number of recognized refugees was below the 9,000 mark and the estimated number of displaced persons from Central America, who arrived for refugee-like reasons but was never recognized, is estimated at 20,000.

As of January 2010, there were 230 recognized refugees and 21 asylum seekers residing in Belize. This implies that the vast majority of the earlier estimated population of close to 9,000 refugees has either returned to the country of origin or changed legal status in Belize.

Over the period 2000 to 2010, 106 persons requested asylum in Belize and of this amount, 59 or 56.6% were requests made by extra-continental asylum seekers. Table 16 below shows for the group of extra-continental asylum seekers the break-down by country of origin. The figures also indicate that, as a result of the conclusion of the various peace accords in neighbouring countries, the flow of asylum seekers has decreased drastically and has taken on an extra-continental aspect.

While the numbers of asylum seekers appear to be relatively low, there are implications for the country of Belize. This is even more complex since officers at the border points are not trained in dealing with those seeking refuge. Oftentimes, they are treated as irregular and undocumented migrants and charged for immigration related offences. Once they are sent to the Belize Central Prison, officials may detect their case and refer it to the UNHCR Liaison Office at the NGO Help for Progress in Belmopan. Once it has been established that the person is eligible to be assessed for refugee status, that office provides them with legal advice, protection services including a stipend, food basket and shelter. Once a referral is made, DINS generally seeks to regularize their immigration status, albeit not as a refugee.

Table 16.
Requests for asylum by country of origin, 2000-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total Requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigerian</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghanaian</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar (Burma)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory coast</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guineans</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Help for Progress (2011)

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106 Help for Progress. 2013. UNHCR Liaison Office.
107 UNHCR/FICSS. UNHCR/Governments Statistics. 2010
Belize has laws and protocols in place that set the framework for the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers such as the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol which it ratified in 1990. The Refugees Act, Chapter 165 of the Laws of Belize was revised in 2000. However, the last official recognition of a refugee was in 1996. In 1998 the Refugee Department, established earlier under the Refugees Act, was downsized to a desk within the Department of Immigration and Nationality Services since then. All new applications for refugee recognition are on hold in the absence of an Eligibility Committee for Refugee Status Determination.

A.10.4 Trafficking in persons

Trafficking in persons is “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person through threats, use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or by giving or receiving payments or benefits to obtain the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation”.

Trafficking in persons (TIP) is the most documented and analyzed migration issue in Belize. In 2000, the government signed and ratified the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime as well as the Palermo Protocol.

In 2003, the United States Department of State placed Belize as a Tier 3 country on its Watch List. Since then, Belize has increased its efforts to combat TIP. In the same year, the National Assembly of Belize passed the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons Act. It incorporates the provisions of the Palermo Protocol and creates the offence of trafficking in persons. In 2010, the Belize Tourism Board incorporated the issue of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the National Tour Guide Training Program to raise awareness among tourism sector stakeholders on the issue of Trafficking in Persons and Child Sex tourism.

The US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report (2012), mentioned on page 87-88: “The Government of Belize does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. During the reporting period, government officials demonstrated a sustained commitment to addressing trafficking in persons by achieving two convictions of trafficking offenders, devoting resources toward victim protection and raising public awareness. Flaws in current legislation, a very low victim identification rate, and official complicity remain challenges”. Aided by efforts in combating Trafficking in Persons and the subsequent Belize’s adoption (December 2012) of the revised Trafficking in Persons and Related Offenses Act, the US government’s assessment resulted in an upgrade of Belize’s position on the TIP watch list to tier 2, where it has remained up to present day.

Between 2009 and 2012 thirteen cases of trafficking in persons and related offences were awaiting trial. Seven of them involved sexual exploitation of foreign-born victims from Honduras, Guatemala, Nepal and India. The latter two involved cases of forced labour in the service sector and construction industry.

In terms of the sexual exploitation cases, the victims testified that they were recruited by other women under the pretence that they will be working, upon arrival in Belize, as domestic workers, models or service personnel in restaurants. In one case, the girls worked as promoter of a known Guatemalan beer and were told that they could obtain jobs in Belize as promoter of the local beer. However, upon arriving in the country they were trafficked into sexual exploitation and coerced or forced into working as waitresses, bartenders and/or prostitutes in bars and brothels. The recruitment agents act as ‘middlepersons’ whose main function is to bring women and girls from their country of origin. Both Belizean men and foreign tourists contribute to generating the demand for sexual exploitation of women and girls in Belize. Nightclubs prefer to hire foreign women because their local clients demand a certain amount of anonymity, which would be unlikely when “using” local women, given the small size of Belize. Furthermore, discriminatory practices against immigrants play a role in this preference. Oftentimes, the victims are held against their will, threatened with

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108 Section 3 of The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, No. 18 of 2003
110 Tier three is the lowest level in the ranking system of the US Department of State that reflects the extent of the state’s efforts to comply with the “minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking” found in Section 108 of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. Tier 2 reflects the mid position, indicating that a state is not yet fully compliant with the related minimum standards, but that a state has recognized the existence of TIP, and has demonstrated sustained commitment and has taken efforts to address and eliminate TIP. Tier 1 is the highest ranking level indicating that a government has acknowledged the existence of human trafficking and has made efforts towards addressing it and that they are in compliance with the minimum standards set forth by the act (Department of State, 2013).
violence, physical restraint or reported to the police or immigration authorities for immigration-related offenses, especially after having entered the country undocumented.

In terms of trafficking in Belizean citizens for labour exploitation, there was one reported case in March of 2011. The victim was adopted as child and taken by her new family to the US and forced to live in servitude for many years. There are also documented cases linked to a group of men who came to Belize from India with the promise of obtaining decent jobs; instead they worked up to seventeen hours a day in isolated warehouses, for minimal or no wage and were housed in very harsh conditions.

While no specific cases of trafficking in persons have been detected in other Asian communities, there is a widespread belief that it is practiced. There have been reports of Asians recruited in their home country to work in Belize. Their sponsor covers the costs of tickets, housing and food which are then deducted in exchange for work. As a result of the social isolation by the Asian community from the rest of Belizean society, there is limited contact with people outside of their circles and little possibility of reporting to authorities.

CHALLENGES IN MANAGING MIGRANTS IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS

- The definition of vulnerable migration can be expanded to include those with disabilities, the elderly and families travelling with minors. Special waiting lines and special document screening procedures need to be established and designated as well as access ramps and adequate signage at all exit and entry points to facilitate flow and mobility of travellers who are physically impaired. The implementation of such measures should be disseminated through public service announcements, notices, etc. prior to being put into practice so that families with children can secure relevant documentation and expect additional screening if necessary.

- Due to the high risk of children being trafficked or smuggled for a variety of purposes, there is need for increased vigilance of persons travelling with children. However, screening mechanisms must consider that families often travel as a unit and therefore interventions must be rapid and respectful.

- The current migrant stock grew from an influx of refugees more than two decades ago, indicating that Belize has a reputation and long history of refuge and asylum. As a result, commitment should be made on the part of the government to re-establish a Refugee Eligibility Committee as proposed in the domestic legislation). Such committee will oversee applications and determine recognition and protection of those asylum seekers arriving with genuine cases. At the same time, the committee can be vigilant to ensure that this facility is not being used inappropriately by irregular and transit migrants.

- Acknowledging that indigenous groups may be vulnerable and exposed to migration-promoting circumstances, their migration movements should be further analyzed and discussed to better understand the factors driving the indigenous people out of the communities to which they are seemingly connected. Such knowledge is useful to inform migration policies and to ensure that this vulnerable group is not overlooked.

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PART B: MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

B.1 MIGRATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The UNDP Human Development Report *Overcoming barriers: Human Mobility and Development* (2009) directed attention towards the relationship between migration and human development. The report argues that migration can be beneficial for both the destination country and the country of origin, since migrants enhance economic inputs with minimal cost to the local population. Even if migrants arrive in the host country with limited resources, once they have integrated into the society they tend to acquire them and generally experience upward mobility, unless major systemic barriers limit their access to services\textsuperscript{114}.

In the migrant-sending country, the economic benefits of migration are channelled through higher incomes and multiplier effects of remittances in the community of origin. As result of remittances, families and individuals can increase their income and consumption. They are able to afford better education and health services. Social and cultural dimensions such as gender relations are also impacted. Female empowerment as a result of exposure to new cultures and options for a wider range of employment opportunities minimizes their confinement to traditional role patterns\textsuperscript{115}.

Debate regarding the impact of migration on development is often polarized. Prominent in the debate is the view that migration adversely impacts social structures and value systems. Another negative effect is the outflow of skilled persons. This type of migratory movement impacts delivery and quality of vital services such as education and health. The report calls for both countries of origin and countries of destination to adopt practical measures to ensure reciprocity of benefits.

Considering that migration is a multidimensional process, the report highlights six pillars for the development of constructive policies.

1. Liberalizing and simplifying regular channels that allow people with low skills to seek work abroad;
2. Ensuring basic rights for migrants;
3. Reducing transaction costs associated with migration;
4. Improving outcomes for migrants and destination communities;
5. Enabling benefits from internal mobility; and
6. Making mobility an integral part of national development strategies

The IOM supports the view that a holistic view of the migration phenomenon, as opposed to focus on the economic dimension, is paramount in order to ensure that the issue of migration is debated within the context of human rights.

B.2 MIGRATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

B.2.1 Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Countries with sustained economic growth are often attractive destinations for migrants. While the relationship between migration and economic growth is complex and multidimensional, it is necessary to consider the GDP\textsuperscript{116} growth of a country to determine if it can sustain in-flows of migrants or to what extent out-flows of migrants will affect its economic development. Using the GDP as an indicator, various social and economic dimensions can be monitored. These include accumulation and/or loss of financial and human capital, labour productivity, technological innovation and necessary government investment which are all impacted by the quantity of people immigrating and emigrating\textsuperscript{117}.

In 2011, Belize’s GDP grew by 5.3\% up from $2.9 billion in the previous year to $3.2 billion. This growth was influenced by an increased production in the agricultural, agro-manufacturing, tourism, construction and telecommunications sectors (Barrow, 2012).

\textsuperscript{114} UNDP, 2009.
\textsuperscript{115} UNDP, 2007; 2009.
\textsuperscript{116} The GDP measures annual economic output, meaning the total value of new goods and services produced within a country’s borders. Real GDP is the inflation-adjusted value. Average GDP per capita tells us how big each person’s share of GDP would be if we were to divide the total into equal portions. World Bank. 2011.
The agricultural sector, which employs the majority of labour migrants, is largely responsible for the notable growth in the GDP, indicating a direct relationship between immigration and domestic economic development.

The Human Development Index is another important indicator that illustrates the state of country’s development. The HDI is a summary measure for assessing long term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living. The HDI index and ranking system provides a basis for a rough comparison with other countries regionally and globally. Belize’s HDI value for 2012 is 0.702 positioning the country at 96 out of 187 countries and territories. This is above average for countries at the medium human development level, but is significantly below the Latin America and Caribbean average of 0.741. Within the region, countries close to Belize in HDI rank and population size are Bahamas (0.794) and Jamaica (0.73).

### B.2.2 Remittances

The amount of remittances received by a sending country is an important indicator of the impact of migration on its economic development. The amount of the outward transfer of funds is also an indicator of how much of migrant workers’ income is sent to their country of origin and an approximation of how much remains in the host country. The effects of remittances are wide-reaching, affecting areas such as poverty, income disparity, consumption of goods and services, investment and household savings, labour markets, human capital and other macro-economic variables such as a countries’ GDP and foreign exchange earnings.

For many in the community of origin, the arrival of remittances from their relatives abroad is often a stream of income, regardless if it is done occasionally or consistently. The constant flow of remittances cements familial ties even during their physical absence, thereby creating ‘trans-nationally integrated households’. These funds are often used to meet basic needs and as a result, play a vital role in reducing poverty at the household level. This income also directly contributes to education and human capital formation. When remittances are used to cover educational expenses, they increase school retention and minimize drop-out rates. At the macro-economic level, they impact the migrant-sending country by increasing foreign-exchange flows and de facto create a safety net during times of economic recession and crisis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Remittance</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inward Remittance flows</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>80</td>
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Remittances to Belize grew noticeably within the six year period from 2003 to 2009. Although, by most accounts, remittances are underreported, it is clear that Belizean emigrants are not remitting at the same rate as other countries with a comparable emigrant population. Workers’ remittance was the main portion of inward remittances; however, in 2006 when remittances grew by 14%, the compensation benefits of employees contributed to the marked increase.

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119 in the medium human development category
122 For Comparison: Net FDI inflows US$0.2 BN, total international reserves US$0.2 BN, exports of goods and services US$0.8BN in 2008
123 According the World Bank (2013). Workers’ remittances; receipts (BoP; US dollar) in Belize was last reported at 73,296,606.31 in 2011, according to a World Bank report published in 2012. Workers’ remittances are current transfers by migrants who are employed or intend to remain employed for more than a year in another economy in which they are considered residents.
More recent data shows that in 2010, the amount of transfers by Belizeans working abroad remained almost the same as in the previous year. However, in 2011 there is a notable decline bringing the total remittances sent to Belize at US$73,296,606.31\(^{124}\). Outward remittances are significantly lower than inward remittances, signalling that immigrants in Belize are not sending money to their communities of origin with the same frequency and/or volume as Belizeans living abroad. External transfers remain low with diminutive growth throughout, but with an obvious decline in 2009. Workers continue to be the single most significant outward remitters. In 2008, their contributions grew 4.49% from the previous year, reverting close to the average of US$24 Million. Limited analysis has been done regarding the impact of remittances on the Belizean society and economy and data regarding social remittances is even more lacking.

For the purpose of policy development and planning, it is important to highlight that the IOM emphasizes two basic premises. Firstly, that remittance cannot be the sole variable to determine the relationship between human development and migration, since it limits the analysis of inverse remittances\(^{125}\). Secondly, remittances are not always sufficient to determine how they compensate for the loss of other development indicators such as the loss of creative talent (brain drain) and knowledge workers.

\(^{125}\) those going out of the country of origin into the country of destination
### B.2.3 Labour market and employment

While remittances can be seen as a poverty reduction measure at the household, community and national levels, remittances constitute actually the output of a migration process. It is often unstable and undependable as a source of income for the family. Therefore, job security and quality, and reasonable wages are valued among those in the productive age in the country of origin and the country of destination.

The construct of labour demand and supply is at the starting point of the debate regarding the relationship between migration and economic development\(^{126}\). Oftentimes, the discussion on why people migrate centres on the view that people move in search of jobs and a higher standard of living. Effectively, when jobs are widely available in one place, the number of persons actively employed will increase. When the labour market cannot meet the needs of the productive sector, the actors will recruit labour elsewhere.

![Figure 13. Foreign-born in the labour force by sex, district and place of birth, September 2012 (%)](image)

**Source:** SIB, Labour Force Survey, September 2012

In terms of the foreign-born population, more males than females were employed. The majority of the foreign-born worked in the Belize and Cayo Districts followed by the Stann Creek District. The Toledo and Corozal Districts employed the smallest number.

As discussed in length so far, it is clear that Belize's working population is small (44%). By September 2012, there were 151,011 persons of working age (14 years or older) active in the labour force. The highest proportion of persons of working age (70.1%) was living in the Stann Creek District and the lowest rate was recorded in the Toledo District (56.6%). The foreign-born population boosted the labour force by 18%\(^{127}\). There were more male than female foreign-born persons in the labour force. The majority were working in the Belize and Cayo Districts.

Of the total labour force, 83.9% were actively employed. A sizable portion (33.6%) of the actively employed resided in the Belize district. Key economic centres such as Belize City, considered the economic capital of the country and harbouring a quarter of the total pool of employed persons, and the tourism areas of San Pedro and Caye Caulker are part of the Belize District. These areas attract a significant number of internal and international migrants. Nationally, 48.8% of employed were residing in rural areas and 51.2% in urban areas. A large portion of the urban workforce was also residing in the Cayo District, being the only district with three urban areas\(^{128}\).

Countries with high levels of unemployment are at risk of losing people in the productive age bracket as they may leave in search of employment elsewhere. When unemployment is high in a migrant-receiving country, there is strain on the social infrastructure, especially when migrants do not have adequate safety-net or extended social networks to help them cope with the lack of income.

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\(^{126}\) W.A. Lewis. Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour. Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies 22:139-91. 1954.


\(^{128}\) Ibid
In September 2012, Belize’s unemployment rate was estimated to be 16.1%. This was a marked increase from 14.4% in April of the same year and may indicate strong seasonal variations. The Cayo and Belize Districts experienced the highest unemployment, while the Orange Walk District had the lowest. The unemployed population in Corozal increased notably, although all the other districts, except for the Stann Creek District, experienced increased unemployment rates.

Overall, the foreign-born population had lower unemployment rates (10.8%) when compared to the native population (17.2%). In terms of sex, unemployment among females (23.2%) was almost twice that of males (13.0%). This was also true among the native population where 11.9% of men were unemployed and the rate for women almost doubled at 19%. In Stann Creek, unemployment rates were almost similar for both Belizeans and foreign-born (14.3% and 13% respectively). In the Toledo and Stann Creek district however, the unemployment rates for foreign-born was well below 5%, substantially lower than that of the locals.

More than half of the country’s population is in the working age bracket; however, with the high unemployment levels, inevitably families will contemplate migrating as a strategy for increasing family income. It is noticeable that of the employed population, a significant percentage does not have access to social security benefits.
Since it has been established that the agricultural sector customarily employs both seasonal and permanent migrant workers, it is important to note the growth and contribution of these sectors to the export markets. Agricultural products accounted for more than half of all major exports in 2011. As a result of greater market access and favourable prices, citrus concentrate exports grew in volume by 17% growth and contributed a little over 21% to the exports. Banana export earnings recovered from 2010 as a result of expanded acreage planted and improved farming techniques, growing by 35.1%. Marine exports increased by 10% due to the reopening of one of the country’s largest shrimp farm. Non-traditional exports, particularly, citrus pulp, red kidney beans and corn meal went up 33.8%129. Sugar exports grew by 30%, while its volume increased by 19%.

The US and Europe continued to account for approximately 80% of Belize’s export earnings. However, the share of earnings from the US fell from 58.2 percent in 2010 to 44.3 percent in 2011. This decline is attributed to the sharp fall in crude petroleum sales. In contrast, the share of sales to Europe increased from 23.0 percent to 35.9 percent, due mostly to increases in sugar and citrus concentrate sales. When comparing imports and exports, it is of note that imports far exceeded exports, indicating that in order to

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balance the trade gap, Belize is in fact highly dependent on exports. Imports increased by 8.7% (US$1.46 billion) in 2011 as a result of increased consumer spending\textsuperscript{130}.

**B.3 MIGRATION AND SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

**B.3.1 Migration and Poverty & the Social Protection Floor**

There is widespread belief that immigrants have drastically changed the social dynamics in Belize and strained the education, health and social services systems. Furthermore, there are common assumptions that they are being given preferential treatment over native Belizeans to access land and services\textsuperscript{131}.

As with the economic impacts of migration, there is also a lack of current information on how migrants have impacted the current social development of Belize. Even important national studies conducted by local and regional organizations, such as the Country Poverty Assessment (2009), briefly mention the relationship between migration and various social indicators. Clearly there is limited understanding of the social impacts of migration, evident in the absence of the inclusion of the immigrant and emigrant populations in recently formulated education, health and social services strategies, including the Education Sector Strategy (2013), the Health Strategy (2006), and the Revised National Gender Policy (2013).

The relationship between immigration and poverty is a complex issue because of its economic and social implications. Poverty levels in Belize remain high; the Country Poverty Assessment (2009) indicated that the poverty rate at the Belizean household level was 31%. Among the foreign born, the rates were much higher (35%) indicating a marked increase compared to the 2002 poverty assessment, which reported it at 20%.

Not only are immigrants generally living in poverty, there are local perceptions that they are displacing native Belizeans from much needed employment (minimizing their wage negotiation power since they are thought to be willing to work for minimal wage) and social sector services. “There are no data by which to judge if they are contributing to a decline in wages, which remains a contentious issue\textsuperscript{132}”.

Mindful that immigrants contribute to the economic and social development of Belize, the UNICEF Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Belize (2012) report highlights that migrants benefit the country by filling employment opportunities, by investments in micro-enterprises, and paying direct and indirect taxes for goods and services consumed locally. As a result of the lack of data, the report adds that “Overall, it is not possible to assess with any degree of certainty whether or not immigration is contributing to poverty in Belize. What can be said with greater confidence is that, for whatever reason, there are a significant number of jobs across all occupational levels that are being taken up by immigrants. This implies a degree of failure by education and training programmers to provide new labour market entrants with the technical and non-technical skills needed to access these jobs. Focusing on Belizean workforce development would be a more productive strategy than the imposition of stronger immigration controls (p. 39)”. As a result of the analysis, UNICEF and the University of Belize Policy Observatory commissioned the construction of a Children’s Issues National Research Agenda (2012). Immigration and emigration are key issues among those requiring research (See Annex C).

Through the Social Security Act and accompanying regulations and administrative policies, Belize provides a basic level of social and economic protection for citizens and registered migrants alike, who are active in the labour force. This includes a scheme of social security contributions the finance the provision of short and long term benefits to the insured persons. Recognized as a major factor in improving the well-being of insured persons and the financial health of the social security scheme, increased focus has been placed on occupational safety and health parameters of employed persons. To also provide a basic level of protection to persons who have never been in the position to contribute to the scheme, the scheme also includes the provision of non-contributory pensions.

To create facilities that complement the social security scheme, Belize has expanded the social protection floor to provide for a scheme of conditional cash transfers, providing support under certain conditions to vulnerable or poor households. An additional scheme, the Food Pantry, provides food supplies to households who are challenged in meeting their basic nutritional needs.

\textsuperscript{130} ibid


\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.
B.3.2 Migration and Education

The fact that a relative high proportion of Belizeans emigrants possesses a higher level of education, may be indicative of a trend that many Belizeans who emigrate for study reasons decide to remain abroad after completing their studies instead of returning home. Revisiting Table 4, we can recall that for 2011, a total of 655 students were admitted into the USA\(^{133}\). In Belize, 7,625 students were enrolled in tertiary schools countrywide during that same academic year\(^{134}\). The number of students admitted in 2011 alone represents an 8.59% of the entire tertiary school population in Belize. Between 2002 and 2011, Canada also reported admitting 173 Belizean students\(^{135}\).

Belize has only had a national university since the year 2000; master degree programs however are not yet being offered, prior to that many Belizeans would have had to seek higher education elsewhere. The juvenile tertiary education sector reflects the low numbers of highly qualified professionals and the need to import. Interestingly, reports that make reference to emigration from Belize persistently report that the majority of Belizeans moving to the US had a high level of education. In the 2000 Census of Belize, 47% of Belizean emigrants reported having a high school degree or higher. Data from the US Census Bureau’s 2009 American Community Survey (ACS), the 2000 Census, and the Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS) reports as much as 87.1% of Belizeans adults age 25 and older who were residing in the US had a high school education or higher. This is not consistent with the number of Belizeans who had, and continue to have, access to secondary or tertiary education. Clearly there is need to analyze more in depth, whether people are actually emigrating to access education or whether educated Belizeans are migrating.

Access to education in Belize appears to be improving, but there is data that indicates stagnating or decreasing education outputs. At the same time there is a need to retain educated Belizeans and to start ensuring that Belizean students going abroad return to their home country. The UNICEF Situational Analysis of Women and Children (2012) makes a specific recommendation in this regard, stating that there is need to build internal capacity particularly in the areas of health, education, data and social services. This could be done through a bonding mechanism for students who are funded by the Belize government and international partners so that they return to Belize for a specified period of time (e.g. five years)\(^{136}\).

The domains of migration and education are often closely related to talent migration, often colloquially known as ‘brain drain’. It refers to the emigration of trained and talented individuals from the country of origin to another country, due to causes such as conflict or lack of opportunities\(^{137}\). In the case of Belize, since there are limited educational opportunities, those moving abroad to study become exposed to other standards of living, job market networks and new knowledge of job opportunities, which all create a higher propensity to return to the host country to seek employment. It is widely believed that this trend will continue since September

2013 Labour Force Survey, indicates that unemployment in Belize remains high at 16.1%\textsuperscript{138}, thereby creating an environment of low job availability or available jobs that are not commensurate with qualification.

In terms of immigration and education, it is often said that Belize is faced with tremendous problems to deal with the situation of integrating immigrant children in the schools. However, there was no specific study or report supporting or dispelling this assertion. The Education Strategy (2012) only alludes to the fact that “Anecdotal evidence suggests that the English-medium education is attractive to Hispanic speakers and a pull factor for neighbouring countries, and that Spanish speakers generally acquire English quickly in school and develop strong second language proficiency (p. 16). Yet, UNICEF’s Situational Analysis mentions that “English is the second language for many children of immigrants, and many have to repeat the first year of school so that they can learn English before advancing to higher grades (p. 97).”\textsuperscript{140}

Anecdotal evidence also indicates that hundreds of children cross the Belize-Guatemala border from Melchor de Mencos (Guatemala) into Benque Viejo del Carmen and surrounding areas to attend preschool, primary school and high school in specially designated buses. Yet, there is a lack of tangible data from either DINS or the Ministry of Education and Youth that supports this common occurrence.

**B.3.3 Migration and Health**

In *Talent in the 21st Century Economy* (2008), the authors rank Belize 4\textsuperscript{th} in the top 10 CARICOM countries with the highest emigration rates for nurses. While this underscores the talent migration of nurses, it is not difficult to assume that there may be high emigration rates for other professionals as well\textsuperscript{139}.

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<td>81.6</td>
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<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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**Source:** Extracted from Talent in the 21st Century Economy (2008).

This feature impacts Belize in many ways; it indicates that the country does not have the capacity to retain health care professionals. As a result, the country has been attracting health care professionals from countries such as Cuba, Nigeria and Nicaragua to work primarily through bilateral cooperation programs. The associated public health risks are often as a result of administrative issues such as lack of funding for these programs, high staff rotation, and a greater demand for monitoring and evaluation of the quality of services being provided. At the service level, the language barrier and other cultural differences impact service delivery\textsuperscript{141}.

The Ministry of Health’s Health Workforce Plan of Action 2010-2014 recognizes that there is a need to provide adequate coverage for all Belizeans. Due to the shortage of health professionals, it intends to monitor the migration of Belize’s health care workforce, while promoting the recruitment of international health care workers as needed.

Research on the impact of immigration on the current public health situation has been limited. There are strong indications that, although immigration itself is the main driver of population growth in Belize, the resident migration population records higher fertility rates which may drive demographic changes in the long run. There is continued popular debate about the assumption that immigrants are straining the health care system as a result of the high demand for services in the areas of reproductive health, maternal and child health and primary health care. The only study found on the impact of international migration on health outcomes was conducted in 1989. The study did not find any significant health differences between the native and migrant populations. It concluded that children of refugees and immigrants have intense health needs, even in a relatively benign social environment, as do the children of native Belizeans\textsuperscript{142}. Whether this conclusion holds ground in the context of contemporary migration is unknown.

It must be noted that health facilities in Belize provide mostly basic health care services; as a result, people requiring access to specialized health care often travel to Guatemala, Mexico and the United States. Furthermore, many Belizean women travel to the US to deliver their babies to obtain citizenship for the child at birth. There is currently an insistent push towards establishing medical tourism in Belize\(^{142}\).

The Ministry of Health Agenda (2006) highlighted the fact that the incidence of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue was high among the migrant population, particularly those living on or near the citrus and banana producing areas. Of the 1,549 cases reported in 2005, 42\% of cases were from the Stann Creek District. The prevalence is attributed to various factors, particularly, the frequency of movement and substandard housing. In parallel to this, there are also concerns about inadequate access to and/or the quality of water and sanitation facilities among the more recently-arrived immigrant population.

### B.3.4 Migration and Environment

The Belizean physical environment has also been impacted by immigration as new settlements emerge. As a result of greater access to land in both rural and urban areas, the geographical expanse of villages and towns continues to grow, driven by the increased demand for residential lands. A study by the ECLAC Expert Group (2006), noted that immigrants negatively impacted the environment causing degradation as a result of unsustainable agricultural practices. There have been no known studies on how immigrants have assisted in the sustainable development of the environment.

The Chiquibul National Park is one such area that has constantly been under threat as a result of cross-border incursions and encroachment by economic trans-border migration. The Chiquibul National Park is an important eco-region as it provides water to over 230,000 Belizeans and Guatemalans living in the watershed area. There has been a consistent stream of media reports on ‘immigrants’ exploiting forest resources, panning for gold, extracting lumber and xate (*Chamaedorea*) palm leaves, capturing exotic birds and clearing forest for farming\(^{143}\). This is a contentious issue with may be closer associated to illegalities and national security than to a migration management issues. Since the areas in question are uninhabited and located in remote and inaccessible zones that require hours of travel. Notwithstanding, most media outlets often highlight that these issues need to be addressed through enforcement interventions and restrictive migration management measures.

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CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- It must be reiterated that in order to maximize the benefits of migration for the sending and receiving countries it is important to adopt practical measures to ensure reciprocal benefits. Therefore, a multilevel, multiagency and multilateral migration management forum is needed.

- The current migration legal framework needs to be updated to reflect current realities and to ensure that they adequately reflect Belize’s commitments to international migratory frameworks.

- Social and economic development issues in Belize extend beyond migration. The high demand for skilled and unskilled labour reflects the need for the country to build internal capacity in areas of health, education and social services. Furthermore, there is need to diversify career options in the tertiary education sector, ensure that jobs are commensurate with qualifications and establish a bonding mechanism for students with study scholarships from the Belize government or international partners, promoting a return to Belize for a specified period of time.

- Remittances should be a priority topic for further analysis and research so as to understand how it impacts macro-and micro-economic growth. Social remittances can also be investigated so as to determine how these influence further migration and cultural values systems.

- Support should be given to the Ministry of Health to establish monitoring guidelines in order to understand trends and characteristics in the migration of Belize’s health care workforce. Assistance can be extended to include guidelines for the recruitment of foreign health-care workers and medical professionals in the Belizean diasporas.

- Since there is limited data or research to determine the ways in which migration impacts social and economic development in Belize, priority should be given for the development of a migration research agenda, or for the updating of the UNICEF Children’s Issues National Research Agenda. This poses an opportunity for academia to become involved in the migration debate, to contribute to policy development and to obtain funding for academic research.
PART C: MIGRATION MANAGEMENT IN BELIZE

C.1 BACKGROUND OF THE EXISTING MIGRATION LEGISLATION

C.1.1 Analysis of the current legal framework

The legal migration framework of Belize focuses solely on inward-bound immigration; there are no legal provisions that govern matters related to the emigration of nationals, other than a description of the required administrative exit procedures. The main national law governing immigration matters in Belize is the Immigration Act\textsuperscript{144}, which regulates matters related to “aliens, immigration and citizenship”. It regulates the general requirements and parameters for entry to and stay in Belize, as well as the issuing of temporary employment permits. The implementation of all provisions of the Act falls since June 2012 within the ministerial portfolio of the Minister of Labour, Local Government, Rural Development, National Emergency Management Organization and Immigration & Nationality, whereby the latter area is an emphasis of attention for a Minister of State.

The Immigration Act distributes and provides powers to the various legal persons and bodies:

- It provides the power to the Minister responsible for Immigration and Nationality to make regulations, prescribing the ports of entry and exit, governing the issuance and cancellation of permits and certificates, issued under the Act, and prescribing the forms of warrants, permits, certificates or other documents to be issued or used. The Act also gives discretionary powers to the Minister to prohibit or permit entry to any immigrant and to revoke a temporary employment permit (a decision that cannot be overruled by a court).

- The Act prescribes the appointment, by the Governor General and in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, of the Director of the Department of Immigration and Nationality Services, who is given the general powers and absolute discretion to issue any of the following kind of permits: transit permit; visitor’s permit; dependent’s permit; student permit; temporary employment permit; and special permit.

- Immigration officers, headed by a Senior Immigration Officer who may act as the Director, have the powers of a police officer to enforce the Immigration Act and any regulations and orders given on the basis of the Act or regulations relating to the arrest, detention and deportation. They may also call upon the police forces for assistance in the performance of their duties. For the performance of his/her duties, an immigration officer may enter on and search any vehicle, vessel, aircraft or other means of conveyance in or arriving or departing from Belize and/or question any person who desires to enter or leave Belize.

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

- A person entering Belize as a visitor is required to have a visa, issued by a diplomatic or consular officer of Belize or by the country that acts on behalf of Belize in the country of issue, except:
  - Citizens of Commonwealth countries;
  - Nationals of countries with which Belize has concluded visa abolition agreements;
  - Nationals of the European Union
  - Citizens of the United States of America entering Belize for a period of less than six months;
  - Persons who are passengers on tourist vessels and who intend to remain in Belize only during the stay of the vessel by which they arrived and to depart by the same;
  - Transit passengers, provided that such passengers do not intend to remain in Belize for more than seven days and are in possession of a ticket and of such valid documents as will permit them to enter the country of their destination.

Applications for Belize Permanent Residence are made to the Department of Immigration and Nationality Services (DINS) after having resided continuously in Belize for one year and not having left the territory for a period of 14 consecutive days during this period.
time. The application requirements include a medical check-up (including an HIV test), a recent police certificate of non-criminal convictions, and two recommendations from individuals, who have known the applicant for at least one year.

Belizean citizenship is acquired by *jus soli* (right by soil) or by *jus sanguinis* (right by blood). Nationals of Belize by birth or descent who acquire the citizenship of any other country may, if the laws of the other country so permit retain their Belize citizenship. To acquire nationality by naturalization, the applicant must be a permanent resident for five years before applying and will have to pass a citizenship test. If the applicant is a spouse or dependent of a citizen, the application can be made after one year of residency, instead of five.

In the case of the applications from migrant workers, the Labour Act\(^{145}\) constitutes the complementary institution (Labour Department) that provides an opinion and advice to the Department of Immigration and Nationality Services regarding the issuing of a Temporary Employment Permit to immigrants who wish to work in Belize. The domestic legislation provides the possibility of legal employment of foreign citizens under certain circumstances. There are two types of temporary employment permit applications in Belize:

a) **Application for permission to employ a foreigner**: any foreign citizen who wishes to work in Belize must have been legally residing in Belize for at least six months with proper visas and/or permits issued by DINS. At the same time, the Labour Department must be satisfied that all efforts to employ a national have been exhausted. This includes providing proof that the vacant position was advertised locally for at least three weeks, following which no suitable applicant was found.

b) **Application for Temporary Self-Employment**: this category would apply to foreign investors, among others. All applicants must be in the country legally, with proper visas and/or permits issued by DINS. They are required to produce proof of reasonably sufficient funds for their proposed venture (i.e.: local bank statement of account). Applicants must also obtain a reference from the relevant Ministry or local organization concerned with the category of work involved. In such situations, the six-month residency requirement is waived, and it is assumed that the venture will lead to creation of employment for nationals in the future.

The Director of DINS issues those permits approved by the Temporary Employment Permit Committee, although the Director of DINS may deny the applications approved by the Committee for valid immigration reasons. The application fees depend on the category of the temporary employment permit. Categories of temporary employment permits and their fees are stipulated in the Immigration (Permits and Fees) Regulation.

**The Refugees Act**\(^{146}\)

A second national law, related to the immigration domain, is the Refugees Act which contains provisions for persons seeking asylum in Belize which are in accordance with the provisions set by the Convention on the Status of Refugees of 1951. The Act provides that people seeking refugee status are entitled to remain in Belize until their application has been heard, and if their application has not been approved, they can remain until all avenues of appeal have been exhausted, up to three months after the close of appeals, if the decision was not reversed. This provision allows asylum seekers to make adequate arrangements to depart Belize. Under the Act, every recognized refugee shall be accorded the rights of a resident, and as per the Convention, be subject to all laws in force in Belize.

Partly due to the decrease since the late 1990s in the reported number of asylum seekers and the dismantling of the former Refugee Office, the existence of the Refugee Act has dropped from the radar screen. Although the legislation is still in place, the actual application and implementation may constitute the weak links in the chain.

**The Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons Act (2003)**

A third legislative component related to migration is within the area of Trafficking in Persons (TIP). In 2003, the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons Act was passed. The Act incorporates the provisions of the Palermo Protocol and created the offence of trafficking in persons. Weaknesses in the 2003 legislation were detected and amendments were made in the new Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Offences Act, 2012. This Act, which replaces the 2003 legislation, establishes a stronger framework:

- Trafficking in Persons is now an extra territorial offence -either national or transnational-; it applies coverage to TIP actions occurring on board of a ship or on an aircraft registered in Belize; by a citizen or permanent resident of Belize on board a ship or on an aircraft in or outside the limits of Belize;

- Government officials involved in TIP will be held accountable and can be convicted;

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\(^{145}\) Laws of Belize; Volume VII, Title XXVIII, Chapter 297. 2000.
\(^{146}\) Laws of Belize, Volume IV, Title XIII, Chapter 165. 2000.
• Trafficking cases will now be undertaken at the Supreme Court instead of the current practice of trying these cases as a ‘summary offence’ in the Magistrate court, where cases are often dismissed, postponed for long periods of time and tried by police prosecutors who are less in-depth trained;

• There are stiffer penalties and fines; most of the TIP related offences will carry a minimum sentence of 15 years to maximum sentence of life in prison. This feature causes intense debate as some believe that severe sentences are necessary as a deterrence measure while other factions believe that the sentences are impractical;

• It provides the courts with the ability to forfeit assets that are derived, obtained or realized as a result of the commission of trafficking in person. However, this will require an amendment to the Evidence Act;

• Child witnesses will now be allowed to testify from behind a screen, via video, or other electronic means, minimizing trauma, easing fears of having to face perpetrators, and facilitating testimonials even if victims cannot be located. While it is notable that Belize is moving away from the current requirement for witnesses to be physically present during trial to a more witness-friendly approach, it is indispensable that improvements be made in the current witness protection programs;

• Now, all forms of trafficking are criminalized. The “related offences” are now expanded to include: i) Trafficking in children for adoption; ii) Facilitating child prostitution; iii) Facilitating sexual exploitation; iv) Profliteering from trafficking in person; v) advertisement vi) Providing facilities in support of trafficking in persons; vii) Providing services for the purpose of trafficking in person; viii) Intentional omission to give information; ix) Offence by person in the position of official authority; and x) Unlawfully withholding identification papers. The two main concerns here are: firstly, the expansion elements should constitute aggravating circumstances to justify a higher penalty, instead of being regarded as separate offences. Secondly, as the expansion elements reflect additional violations that will need to be proven, they reduce the probability of a conviction.

The Social Security Act147

A fourth legislative component related to migration is within the national scheme of Social Security. Under the Social Security Act, every person between the ages of 14 and 65 employed in an insurable employment, as defined in the First Schedule of the law, is insured to receive social security benefits in Belize. The holders of temporary employment permits are, upon registration and submission of the original permit at the Social Security Board, insured for as long as their temporary employment permit is valid. The spouse of a holder of a Temporary Employment Permit will be issued a Social Security card to entitle him or her to social security benefits only if he or she presents a valid Dependent Permit issued by DINS. The CARICOM Agreement on Social Security facilitates the portability of certain social security benefits for migrants within the participating CARICOM countries. This facility does not exist for the SICA member countries.

Migration-related international instruments, ratified by Belize:

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

Regional instruments signed within the CARICOM framework

These instruments aim to facilitate the free movement of workers in the region. Belize is part of the following agreements:

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

147 Laws of Belize; Volume I, Title V, Chapter 44.
C.2 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE MIGRATION RESPONSE

C.2.1 Data collection mechanisms

Data Collection: general population. The Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) is the primary agent that collects and compiles statistical data on the population of Belize. Through its various census and surveys conducted nationwide or in specific regions and/or economic sectors, the migrant population can be detected. During the Census of 2010, a specific section of the questionnaire was devised in order to gather information regarding the immigration and emigration in Belize. The data obtained through the census and population surveys can be compiled, analyzed and utilized to determine internal migration as well as immigration, place of origin and destination among other demographic tendencies such as age, sex, level of education and household characteristics.

The challenges for this agency as it relates to data accuracy are; underreporting and ‘missed’ respondents. The underreporting aspect can be attributed to the fact that those in irregular status may prefer not to mention that they are foreign-born. In terms of ‘missed’ respondents, entire families may have emigrated; therefore, they would not be accounted for in the population statistics. Additionally, the SIB recognizes its limitations in available resources to process and compile expeditiously the wealth of available raw data, also in relation to the migration domain.

The Police Department is tasked with the recording of data regarding the number of immigrants who are accused of crimes, victims of crimes as well as potential victims of trafficking and smuggling. The Crime Investigation Branch (CIB) maintains record of forced return migrants. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) of the United States submits reports to the Police regarding the number of persons to be forcibly returned. The CIB Unit receives the returnee upon arrival and conducts periodic monitoring.

Data collection: Immigration. DINS is tasked with the recording and documentation of departures and arrivals at the established migration control points at the Philip Goldson Airport and other border crossings. International entries and exits are documented. Travelers fill out arrival or departure records and immigration personnel enters the data in journals and arrival cards are collected. DINS consolidate these numbers and submit monthly reports to the Belize Tourism Board which in turn, uses these for tourism arrival statistics. There are various limitations pertaining to the current data collection mechanisms. However, it is important to mention that the data collection mechanism is in transition.

The US Government with assistance from IOM recently assisted the Government of Belize in the implementation of a modern electronic border management system for Belize which facilitates passport control and data collection. The system has been installed at all eleven recognized ports of entry and is managed by a central server at DINS headquarters in Belmopan. This will change the way data is currently being recorded. The Personal Information and Registration System (PIRS) software, developed by IOM and used by at least 18 countries worldwide, will collect biographical data, detect overstays and will formulate statistics such as length of stay, nationality of foreign visitors among other information.

The new system is utilized by officials at all established border crossing points, and ends the practice of manual recordings which have constrained data analysis because of the large volume of journals that had to be consolidated and from which migration related data had to be extracted. Secondly, every person crossing the border enters as a visitor (tourist) and all visas granted are issued under the same category. Consequently, there is no way to determine who enters the country as tourists, migrant workers, seasonal workers, transit, students, and business persons or any other category. Therefore, it becomes even more difficult to determine the migratory flows.

Perhaps, the number of day workers and daily border crossings could have been estimated, since there are mechanisms in place to facilitate those from border regions. For example, with a very basic form of personal identification, 72-hour passes are being issued. However, this is practiced subjectively and since the ‘local pass’ is merely a strip of paper that is stamped but not documented it is even more challenging to determine exact numbers of persons crossing the official terrestrial migration control points.

DINS records information on the number of visas extended, residence permits, nationalization, and temporary employment permits issued and the number of persons detained for migration-related offences.

The Ministry of Labour collects data specifically related to temporary employment permits approved to seasonal labourers, immigrants waiting for their permanent status, and those who are temporarily in the country and permitted to work.

The Social Security Board (SSB) has a comprehensive data collection system that allows it to generate the number of actively insured foreign-born persons and the sector or industry where they labour. Information can be generated regarding the number of foreign-born in the labour force as permanent, temporary or seasonal workers who are actively insured. This includes the number of temporary card holders, the type of pension covered and the number of foreign-born senior citizens who receive non-contributory benefits.
In general, the conclusion may be drawn that each actor collects a reasonable amount of adequate data, relevant to each actor’s institutional mandate; this does however not mean that data are available on all important sub-aspects of the migration domain. The institutional mandate includes the number of Belizeans living outside of Belize, the number of persons who have returned to Belize, the reasons for migration and its types, and the number of migrants who are living abroad. Nevertheless, data exists on the number of Belizean nationals residing in the US that were captured through the population census. The US Population Census generates information regarding the foreign-born population and the regions of origin and residence.

Data Collection: Emigrants. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs documents the number of Belizeans living abroad, seeking consular services and the types of services requested. The number of returned migrants applying for the benefits available to them through the Retiree Program is also documented. The challenge with this current data collection mechanism is that it captures only those citizens who approach the various consulates and embassies for services, therefore, a sizeable number will be missed.

The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency and the Border Patrol document and report on the number of persons detained for irregular migration and forced returned migrants. Furthermore, ICE maintains records of the number of permanent residents, area of residence and other regularization services requested by Belizean nationals.

The office of the US Immigration and Nationality Services records the number of persons who have received nationality from the United States of America.

Since 1991, the Belizean census questionnaires have included a section that gathers information on emigrants’ year of departure, age, sex, and education at time of departure. The Central Bank of Belize determines the quantity and frequency of remittances sent from the United States via the formal channels. Remittances are an important indicator of the economic impact of migration since it is a medium for reducing poverty and for stimulating economic growth and social well-being in the country of origin.

The Institute of Statistics in Mexico maintains records of Belizeans crossing the border using special provision documentation such as the border crossing card. Additionally, it collects statistics on the number of Belizeans residing in Mexico, temporarily or permanently.

A number of periodic reports are presented by international agencies (e.g. UNDP and UNICEF) based on official statistics provided by the various governmental agencies. The 2013 Human Development Report (HDR), “The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World” can be used to determine the changes in human development indicators which are directly impacted by the migration processes. The 2009 HDR highlighted the relationship between migration and human development, stating that migration is an important process for improving human development targets since it allows for improved access to basic services and increases household income. The Government of Belize / UNICEF Situational Analysis of Women and Children (2012) present the current living and social conditions of migrant women and children across the country and provide recommendations for their improvement. The United Nations Population Division has also presented data regarding trends in migrant stock. However, regional studies conducted by academic institutions and regional agencies and which can be an important source of reference regarding the number of migrants and their social and economic conditions often do not include data for Belize.

In general, the conclusion may be drawn that each actor collects a reasonable amount of adequate data, relevant to each actor’s institutional mandate; this does however not mean that data are available on all important sub-aspects of the migration domain. The
data problem appears to have two faces: firstly, there may be a wealth of data that is lodged at each actor, but it may be in a format that creates a critical barrier to the actual extraction, processing, compilation and analysis of relevant data. Secondly, the flow of data and the routing and compatibility of the various data systems is weak and causes obstacles to the concept of the “one-database-shop” for migration and migration-related issues.

C.2.2 Division of labour in Migration Management

State Institutions

At the level of the state, there are several organs that respond to migration issues in a direct manner.

The Department of Immigration and Nationality Services (DINS): the principal actor is the multi-portfolio Ministry of Labour, Local Government (Cities and Towns), Rural Development (Villages), National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) and Immigration and Nationality. Within the Ministry, and functioning as a junior Minister of the Cabinet, is a Minister of State with a work emphasis on Immigration and Nationality. The management of migration matters, and foremost matters of immigration, are delegated to the Department of Immigration and Nationality Services (DINS), which is headed by a Director of Immigration and Nationality. The services provided by DINS are described and documented in the department’s Standard Operating Procedures Manual. DINS has adopted a Detection Protocol and over 90% of its personnel was, at one point in time, trained in all aspects of the provision of the services.

The Labour Department: this institution, which is within the same ministry as DINS, is the second important actor in migration issues. This body plays a vital role in the investigation and screening of applications for a temporary employment permit for foreigners/immigrants. The intersection within the Ministry of migration and labour matters is at the Temporary Employment Permit Committee that vets applications for any temporary employment permit. Furthermore the department’s officers monitor the labour markets for the proper implementation of the domestic labour laws. Officers of the Labour Department now incorporate training on detecting TIP during field visits.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is involved in three aspects of matters related to migration:

- It provides, at its diplomatic missions/consular sections abroad, information about and facilitates the issuing of visa documents to foreigners who want to travel to Belize;
- Via its diplomatic missions abroad, it maintains contact with the Belize Diaspora to register Belizean emigrants and to attract some of them to a incentivized return to Belize;
- It manages the TIPs database while consular representatives and Foreign Service Officers have been trained on their roles and procedures in victim protection services;

The Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation plays an important role in the national response to Trafficking in Persons. It has developed a case-management tracking system and all of the ministry’s Social Workers have been trained in providing protection services to Victims of Trafficking. Protocols and Operational Materials are in place.

The Belize Police Department records primary data on various features: number of immigrants, who are accused of crimes, or who are victims of crimes; and number of immigrants who are potential victims of trafficking and smuggling. The Crime Investigation Branch (CIB) maintains record of forced return migrants.

Specialized police investigators investigate suspected TIP practices to enable a police raid, if required. Such raid may lead to police’s support to a rescue operation while case files are compiled and forwarded to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution.

The Ministry of Health is the national authority that will represent the nation’s public health surveillance capacity. The Ministry, through the Director of Health Services, can issue a declaration in view of the need to control, at the point of entry or stay, certain diseases that may cause a threat to the national public health. The Ministry also plays a role in the protection and care of victims of trafficking; it has established a referral mechanism for victims and has enabled trafficking to be a reportable situation in the Belize Health Information System. Many health workers have been trained on their roles and procedures in victim protection.

Interagency collaboration

A major actor in the counter trafficking efforts in Belize is the Anti-Trafficking in Persons (A-TIP) Committee, a formal group consisting of representatives from various ministries, governmental agencies and non-governmental agencies. The committee is chaired by the CEO of the Ministry of Human Development. The Secretariat of the Committee is at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
The A-TIP committee comprises of three sub-committees: a) Information, Communication and Education; b) Operations; and c) Monitoring and Evaluation. The committee has made important achievements in advancing the Trafficking in Persons responses, including a legislative review of the TIP Prohibition Act of 2003, public sensitization drives, capacity building of frontline law enforcement and public officers, and protection and care of victims of trafficking.

To provide deeper institutional footing, the committee is expected to be upgraded to a Council for Anti-Trafficking in Persons. The council will adopt the portfolio of the committee but its membership will now be constituted by heads of departments, instead of appointed focal points in departments. Prompt decision-making and departmental commitments will create an added-value for counter-trafficking efforts.

The A-TIP Committee oversees the use of the data collection mechanism. It is envisioned that all agencies that are currently using a database, will network and feed information into the central database (Border Management, gender based issues database, the national health information system, Police database, among others). Through the database training conducted by IOM, IT technicians in key agencies were trained in the tracking of patterns, routes and areas of vulnerability for both internal and trans-border trafficking.

Civil Society

Some of the civil society organizations are predominantly providing services for the protection of the rights of the children, both Belizean and non-Belizean.

The organizations Child Development Foundation (CDF), National Organization for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NOPCAN), Youth Enhancement Services (YES) and Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) are all working to enhance the quality of life of children, boy and girls, Belizean and non-Belizean, who are at risk of being abused and/or neglected, including trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation.

The CSO/NGO Help For Progress (HFP) is the prime civil society organization that focuses on migrants in Belize, and in particular on the vulnerable group of asylum seekers. HFP constitutes the national liaison office of the UNHCR. It also lodges the office of the Human Rights Committee of Belize.

Apart from the Jamaican Association of Belize, there are no formalized associations or groups of migrants in Belize. There are two groups, in San Martin, Belmopan and in Bella Vista, Stann Creek, which function as cultural groups, enhancing the cultural expressions from the countries of origin (mostly neighbouring countries in Central America).

C.3 TOWARDS A POLICY FRAME FOR MIGRATION

C.3.1 Point of Departure

To acquire a picture of the current way of thinking and the essence of the various opinions in view of migration management in Belize, the IOM office facilitated a structured focus group discussion that brought together a small number of key migration-related actors in the public and private sector and civil society. The focus group discussions initially centred on the identification of the main systemic bottlenecks in the current practices of managing migration flows (inward, outward and transit), whereby the existence, availability, quality and sharing of data were identified as major matters of concern and in need of improvement. The discussion evolved quickly into a reflection of the need and feasibility to start the process of the development of a policy or policy frame for migration.

It is clear, in the opinion of the key actors, that the time has arrived to start rolling the ball towards the goal of having a comprehensive national migration policy. The Department of Immigration and Nationality Services is working towards the updating of various legal and regulatory instruments and has expressed that there is an added benefit by doing this in a broad policy-focused fashion, but lacks the institutional space, both at department level and inter-institutional level, to start a formal policy development process.

The Labour Department, mandated to implement the regulations for temporary employment arrangements for immigrants, manages the operations of the Temporary Employment Permit Committee. One of the components of the Terms of Reference of this committee, which brings together the main actors in the domain of migration, speaks to its role in stimulating and guiding policy development.

It is therefore apparent that two core actors are ready to embark on the initial steps of elaborating a national policy. It is also agreed by the stakeholders that, due to the characteristics of policy-making in Belize, there is a need to break the ground for the political directorate to become convinced of the overall benefits of a national migration policy or policy framework. Expressed in the terminology of the policy cycle, there is a need to reach consensus on the fact that there is an issue (e.g. missed development
opportunities through ad-hoc management of migration flows) that needs to be addressed within and through a comprehensive policy. The technical policy development phase therefore would have to be preceded by a series of advocacy activities that focus on sensitizing and convincing policy-makers and their audiences (the general public) on the benefits of migration management via a comprehensive policy. To roll out the menu of advocacy initiatives, there is consensus that a number of advocacy products will need to be developed. The advocacy products and activities, including the strategic use of the national media, would all support the platform from which the Minister with responsibility for migration issues can develop and present a Joint Cabinet Information Paper. For a detailed description of the type of advocacy products (see the Annex 1: Brief synopsis of the envisioned development process of the national migration policy).

C.3.2 The Policy-Formulation Process

Once consensus about the need for a migration policy has been established, the actual policy development can start. This would ideally include the aspects of defining the broader policy goals, establishing the policy development process or roadmap, and the generation of technical knowledge and evidence, all leading ultimately to the selection of best, most feasible and realistic policy option.

The conceptual and technical capacities for policy development on an as-much-as-possible rational basis tend to be nascent in Belize. The participants in the focus group discussions confirmed that this is likely to be valid for the actors connected to the issues of migration to, from and through the territory of Belize. To be able to successfully embark on a policy development process will require the strengthening of capacities in two main areas:

a) The conceptual and contextual aspects of policy development

There is a need to introduce the key policy-preparation and policy-making actors in managing “the nature of the beast”; who are the required actors, what is the key profile of the policy formulation process or roadmap, what are –generically seen- the core strategic aspects of the subject matter that will need to be articulated in the policy, and what kind and level of objectives and/or intentions and or targets need to be assigned to those selected aspects.

b) The technical content aspects

Here, the attention is zooming in on the fact that the policy is addressing a specific identified issue, in this case, migration. There is a need to identify all the specific core strategic aspects and possible sub-aspects that will need to be included in the policy and therefore in the policy-formulation process. The technical work involved will also include the undertaking or commissioning of focused research in the area of literature review, data analysis, data-projections or modelling, cost-benefit analyses, etc.

It is envisioned that a capacity strengthening initiative for migration policy development be best implemented with a series of events that focus on the more generic level of context and concepts; this will strengthen the technical capacities of the key actors to initiate and implement the preparatory advocacy phase of migration policy development as well as to jumpstart the technical formulation process via an initial mapping of the strategic subject aspects that will need to find their way into the policy frame.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN RELATION TO THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

- There has been no legal review undertaken to investigate whether the domestic legislation with regard to migrant labour is fully harmonized with the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

- The current legislation is at times not very specific: It does not detail the competencies of the authorities, or the criterion they are to use when making their decisions (e.g. the criteria for the approval of temporary employment permits; the “valid immigration reasons” that can justify the refusal to issue an approved temporary employment permit).

- Limited possibilities to appeal: The law does not specify possibilities to appeal decisions made by the immigration authorities. In the case of revocation of temporary employment permits by the Minister or under his orders, appeal possibilities are explicitly excluded.

- Application for a temporary employment permit by the employer on behalf of the employee may be problematic, as the employer may not necessarily have an interest in arranging a temporary employment permit.
- Violations of labour law can lead to penalties (fine and imprisonment) as specified by law. Labour inspectors have the power to inspect any place they suspect may be a place of employment, however, they are not allowed to enter private residences without the owner’s or the occupant’s permission.

- Irregular migrants do not seem to be able to access the national social security scheme.

- Many agencies collect migration related data; however, it is neither well-coordinated nor shared among them. This could be improved by establishing one data collection hub where all migration related data could be analyzed and accessed. The publication of a Migration Monologue could be supported and the possibility of a Migration Statistics Unit could be discussed.

- Acknowledging that there are challenges in the migration data environment, and with the assumption that alternative proxy data sources exist, there may be an opportunity to develop and provide technical advice to key actors in the migration data domain on where and how to find and utilize parallel or proxy data sources that, via data manipulation techniques, can enrich the current migration statistics in a cost-effective manner.
PART D: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Challenges and Opportunities in Managing Emigration

1. The biggest challenge in managing migratory movements from Belize pertains to data collection. Apart from the population census, there has been little collection of data to determine the scope of emigration. Data collected by some host countries do not reflect the number of Belizeans residing there. Furthermore, in the case of the USA, various agents collect statistical data but it is not sufficient to adequately determine the number of Belizeans living there since they do not consider those in irregular migratory status.

2. When discussing the migration situation in Belize the debate is often directed towards immigration of Central Americans in Belize. Emigration is not taken into consideration as an important factor affecting the development of the country variables such as ethnicity, gender and age should be given special attention.

3. The Department of Immigration and Nationality of Belize is mandated to enforce migration related regulations; thereby, channelling its efforts on stemming migration whilst limiting focus on outmigration. Currently the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its consular services abroad is the only agent that maintains relations with the Belizean diaspora. Collaboration could be strengthened between these agencies in order to scale up existing program that are currently underutilized especially those presenting investment opportunities. There is need for support of programs providing incentives, efficient channels for remittances, obtaining technical support from professional Belizeans where Belize lacks the expertise and in promoting philanthropic initiatives, that can beneficial to both Belizean communities abroad and the Belizean society.

Challenges and Opportunities in Managing Immigration

4. The biggest challenge in managing immigration to Belize is the absence of a rights based approach in service delivery to both regular and irregular migrants. This includes a focus towards social cohesion and integration, respect for diversity and reduction of xenophobic attitudes. Furthermore, the discussion of immigration revolves around current inflows and seldom considers that Belize has a well-established, mature migrant stock.

5. There has been no compressive review of the legal framework in order to update them to reflect current realities. This is needed in order to address challenges to the efficient management of terrestrial and maritime border controls, especially at informal entry points, that threatens internal security and migrant security.

6. There is urgent need to conduct a thorough review of the regularization process with a view to identify and eliminate practices that promote political agendas (such as ‘election-time amnesty’) and those that marginalize vulnerable migrant populations.

7. The absence of a migration management strategy or a national migration policy presents an opportunity for Belize to develop a strong management system. Considerations must be made for adequate funding to acquire and utilize modern technology, capacity building and training, data collection and sharing mechanisms and a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure that initiatives are in line with policy objectives.

8. There is need to strengthen bilateral relationships between Belize and major migration sending countries in order to maximize positive contributions to the development of both sending and receiving countries. Furthermore, the establishment of mechanisms and agreements such as a country quota system, visa categories, recruitment programs and data sharing mechanism can help promote regular immigration flows.

Challenges and Opportunities in the management of transmigration

9. Perhaps the biggest challenge for managing transit migration is that it is often confused with irregular migration. However, current regularizations mechanisms are accessible to transmigrants once they remain in the country for the stipulated period of time.

10. It has been challenging for Belize is to ensure free mobility of transit migrants while at the same time minimizing the risks to national security and enforcing migration laws to ensure that illegal activities such as human smuggling and trafficking in persons do not remain unchecked.
Challenges with opportunities in managing trans-border migration

11. Since trans-border migration involves shorter distances and more localized movements, it is essential for local governments such as town councils, Alcaldes and Chairpersons, to be involved in the discussion towards the management of trans-border migration. This will facilitate the discussion related to labour market identification, standards for commerce and trade (both formal and informal), and access to services.

12. As with other forms of migration management, it must be approached from a rights-based migrant-centric approach. However, taking into account that communities on both sides of the border have familial, language and ethnic similarities it must also include a culture dimension.

13. Access to education should be inherent in a trans-border management strategy, primarily since the English-based education is attractive to the neighbouring Spanish-speaking communities in Guatemala, and the diversity of career options in Mexico is attractive to Belizean students.

14. Considering that there is already a local pass (“pase local”) in place, there is opportunity to adopt a more structured trans-border pass for communities near Guatemala and Mexico.

Challenges and opportunities in managing labour migration

15. A clear opportunity exists for Belize to capitalize on the demand for labour migrants by Belizean industries and the demand for Belizean workers by the United States and Canada. Therefore, it is essential that a Labour Migration Strategy be contemplated so that an orderly flow of labour migrants in and out of Belize benefits both receiving and sending countries.

16. Cooperation amongst governments of the region and the regional and international systems related to migration could be strengthened so as to promote an orderly and guided labour migration. Paramount among these actions is the establishment of a permanent work program to regulate and regularize labour migration flows in and out of Belize that contributes to the protection of the rights of migrant workers and their families. Such program should favour an orderly migratory flow and include protection measures for migrant workers vulnerable to labour exploitation, labour discrimination and child labour.

17. There is need to establish measures sanctioning those who hire irregular labour force, while at the same time, establishing protection measures in favour of workers. When the demand for irregular labour force is high, migrants will take advantage of job availability despite governmental intervention. Therefore, it is important to involve the private sector in the formulation of any labour migration management measures. The private sector are major actors in ensuring that regulation and regularization of the migrant workforce. Stronger relationships between the private sector and governmental agencies could be improved through the acknowledgement of best practices such as simplified processes of hiring, adhering to labour migration authorization, and a certification system that will help businesses incorporate their products into solidarity markets.

18. There is opportunity for civil society organizations to monitor labour laws for migrant workers and for the proper functioning of labour migration management mechanisms. This will minimize the vulnerability of the labour laws to being sidestepped by employers and will increase transparency in hiring procedures and work conditions. The involvement of civil society in this process will allow for independent monitoring and intervention, thereby reducing the burden on governmental agencies.

Challenges and Opportunities in Managing Irregular Migration

19. The greatest challenge in managing irregular migration is that there always remain opportunities for migrants to migrate illegally, even when regularization mechanisms are in place. The greatest opportunity for managing irregular migration lays in the fact that Belize has not yet developed robust migration management strategies.

20. Considering that DINS functions also as an enforcement agency, there is a need to invest in frontier management efforts, with increased security in known areas of illegal entry. Such action will require increasing DIN's access to material resources (software, equipment, technology and appropriate facilities) and technical capacities to properly control the national borders as well as budgetary requirements to ensure that they are sustainable.

21. Greater effort needs to be placed on issues that pose a threat to national security as well as the security of migrants. Realistic management actions as well as stronger laws with stronger penalties for participating law enforcement agents are required to better combat smuggling and trafficking in persons (the 2012 Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Offences Act is a big step in the right direction). Interagency collaboration (between the Police Department, Coast Guard and Belize Defence Force among others) and cross-border initiatives to curb organized irregular immigration and emigration must be established. Funding
agencies can support sustained campaigns on preventive education, migrant protection efforts by civil society organization and migrant rights awareness.

22. Since Belize shares borders with Mexico and Guatemala, cooperation can be enhanced in the areas of frontier monitoring and information exchange, identification and replication of best practices. Regional integration mechanisms can be used as a platform for discussion and planning, and most importantly, to ensure that policies are related to each other. Partnerships towards the effective management of irregular migration need to be improved and law enforcement measures including preventative measures such as training and information sharing need to be put in place.

23. The Personal Identification and Registration System can be complemented by improved personal documentation for Belizeans. Currently, there is no specific national identification document for internal use. One such opportunity is to capitalize on the SSB data collection and tracking system by enhancing cards with security features and electronically readable features. Furthermore, categories of cards can also improve personal documentation for migrants and minimize fraudulent documentation which currently makes it difficult to verify migrants’ identity. A monitoring and evaluation system can accompany the PIRS system to improve reporting mechanisms, data sharing and optimal use of equipment.

Challenges and Opportunities in Managing Return Migration

24. As the country experiences the arrival of relatively large numbers of forced returnees as well as voluntary return migrants and repatriates, and the continuous departure of a sizable amount of immigrants to their home country, return migration seems to be problematic to manage. This is especially obvious when considering the far-reaching negative impacts of forced return migration in the past and the low positive impact of attracting skilled diaspora returns today. This type of migration should be brought to the limelight.

25. When dealing with forced or voluntary returns to and departure from Belize, it is imperative to implement an effective return and reintegration strategy, such as the IOM’s Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) program. Such strategy should include rights-based and effective guidelines, including standard operational procedures, for the return of foreign nationals and re-admission of Belizean nationals, giving preference to voluntary return.

26. Conscious that the state lacks the institutional capacity and human and financial resources to manage this type of migration, there are opportunities for civil service organizations to come to the forefront. This goes along with multiple opportunities for both national and regional civil service organizations, faith-based organizations and other social protection agents to review their capacity to assist in the reintegration of return migrants into Belizean society. Furthermore, interventions such as skills training programs, job placement, and educational training can be organized. As an example, CSOs could establish reintegration programs and act as monitoring agents for some categories of migrants while the Police functions as an intermediary when necessary. This will ensure that reintegration and return programs are implemented with the dignity of the migrants in mind.

27. Due to the long history and association between forced return migration and crimes in Belize, it is important to create awareness programs that will minimize the social stigma and marginalization of returnees. In those cases where migrants cannot be repatriated, regularization channels must be available so that they can be integrated and contribute to society.

28. As it relates to forcibly returned immigrants, there is need for closer collaboration between the Diplomatic Corps and regional security agencies to improve communication and resource sharing (establishment and management of a database of detained and incarcerated persons and projected year of return so as to inform decision-making).

29. Diaspora Returnee programs can be approached more aggressively by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through more aggressive campaigns and the adjustment of incentives so that it better benefits returning students and those with less than ten years of residence abroad.

Challenges and Opportunities in Managing Migrants in Vulnerable Situations

30. The definition of vulnerable migration can be expanded to include those with disabilities, the elderly and families travelling with minors. Special waiting lines and special document screening procedures need to be established and designated as well as access ramps and adequate signage at all exit and entry points to facilitate flow and mobility of travellers who are physically impaired. The implementation of such measures should be disseminated through public service announcements, notices, etc. prior to being put into practice so that families with children can secure relevant documentation and expect additional screening if necessary.
Due to the high risk of children being trafficked or smuggled for a variety of purposes, there is need for increased vigilance of persons travelling with children. However, screening mechanisms must consider that families often travel as a unit and therefore interventions must be rapid and respectful.

The current migrant stock grew from an influx of refugees more than two decades ago, indicating that Belize has a reputation and long history of refuge and asylum. As a result, commitment should be made on the part of the government to re-establish a Refugee Eligibility Committee as proposed in the domestic legislation. Such committee will oversee applications and determine recognition and protection of those asylum seekers arriving with genuine cases. At the same time, the committee can be vigilant to ensure that this facility is not being used inappropriately by irregular and transit migrants.

Acknowledging that indigenous groups may be vulnerable and exposed to migration-promoting circumstances, their migration movements should be further analyzed and discussed to better understand the factors driving the indigenous people out of the communities to which they are seemingly connected. Such knowledge is useful to inform migration policies and to ensure that this vulnerable group is not overlooked.

**Challenges and Opportunities in Managing Migration and Development**

It must be reiterated that in order to maximize the benefits of migration for the sending and receiving countries it is important to adopt practical measures to ensure reciprocal benefits. Therefore, a multilevel, multiagency and multilateral migration management forum is needed.

The current migration legal framework needs to be updated to reflect current realities and to ensure that they adequately reflect Belize’s commitments to international migratory frameworks.

Social and economic development issues in Belize extend beyond migration. The high demand for skilled and unskilled labour reflects the need for the country to build internal capacity in areas of health, education and social services. Furthermore, there is need to diversify career options in the tertiary education sector, ensure that jobs are commensurate with qualifications and establish a bonding mechanism for students with study scholarships from the Belize government or international partners, promoting a return to Belize for a specified period of time.

Remittances should be a priority topic for further analysis and research so as to understand how it impacts macro-and micro-economic growth. Social remittances can also be investigated so as to determine how these influence further migration and cultural values systems.

Support should be given to the Ministry of Health to establish monitoring guidelines in order to understand trends and characteristics in the migration of Belize’s health care workforce. Assistance can be extended to include guidelines for the recruitment of foreign health-care workers and medical professionals in the Belizean diaspora.

Since there is limited data or research to determine the ways in which migration impacts social and economic development in Belize, priority should be given for the development of migration research agenda, or for the updating of the UNICEF Children’s Issues National Research Agenda. This poses an opportunity for academia to become involved in the migration debate, to contribute to policy development and to obtain funding for academic research.

**Challenges and Opportunities in relation to the Legal and Institutional Frameworks**

There has been no legal review undertaken to investigate whether the domestic legislation with regard to migrant labour is fully harmonized with the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

The current legislation is at times not very specific: It does not detail the competencies of the authorities, or the criterion they are to use when making their decisions (e.g. the criteria for the approval of temporary employment permits; the “valid immigration reasons” that can justify the refusal to issue an approved temporary employment permit).

Limited possibilities to appeal: The law does not specify possibilities to appeal decisions made by the immigration authorities. In the case of revocation of temporary employment permits by the Minister or under his orders, appeal possibilities are explicitly excluded.

Application for a temporary employment permit by the employer on behalf of the employee may be problematic, as the employer may not necessarily have an interest in arranging a temporary employment permit.
44. Violations of labour law can lead to penalties (fine and imprisonment) as specified by law. Labour inspectors have the power to inspect any place they suspect may be a place of employment, however, they are not allowed to enter private residences without the owner’s or the occupant’s permission.

45. Irregular migrants do not seem to be able to access the national social security scheme.

46. Many agencies collect migration related data; however, it is neither well-coordinated nor shared among them. This could be improved by establishing one data collection hub where all migration related data could be analyzed and accessed. The publication of a Migration Monologue could be supported and the possibility of a Migration Statistics Unit could be discussed.

47. Acknowledging that there are challenges in the migration data environment, and with the assumption that alternative proxy data sources exist, there may be an opportunity to develop and provide technical advice to key actors in the migration data domain on where and how to find and utilize parallel or proxy data sources that, via data manipulation techniques, can enrich the current migration statistics in a cost-effective manner.
CONCLUDING REMARKS

It has been difficult to ascertain exactly how many immigrants are currently residing in Belize and how many Belizeans are residing in the United States. This is due in part to the fact that up until now Belize did not have a migration data collection system that could provide somewhat reliable information on the profile of immigrants and emigrants, trends and the extent of the impacts of migration.

Another factor is that migration is rarely brought to the forefront as an issue that requires a coordinated response. The word migration is synonymous with immigration for labour purposes, consequently often overshadowing other forms of migratory movements such as emigration, transit-migration, trans-border migration, talent migration and labour migration. This is evident in the fact that the legal migration framework of Belize focuses solely on inward-bound immigration.

There is opportunity for Belize to establish as strong inclusive migration policy. There are many stakeholders involved in the migration response, therefore, there is need to coordinate the response by providing a platform for ensuring that initiatives are sustained and supported.

Belize has a rich history of migration, one that has given it a rich a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural flavour. This makes it unique in the region and an attractive feature for tourism. Changes in the ethnic composition over the years have challenged the Belizean identity but at the same time created opportunities for a renewed feeling of what it means to be Belizean.

Belize will continue to be a migrant sending and migrant receiving country and as a result of its strategic location it will continue to experience mixed flows. Therefore, it is important that while establishing a migration policy to deal with the sustained flows, it must also consider that the immigrant stock is Belize is mature and well integrated. This means that the best move towards managing Belizean migration in Belize must be done from a holistic position, ensuring a rights-based, migrant-centric approach adopting the six pillars set forth by the United Nations Development Program, Human Development Report (2009). These include: liberalizing and simplifying regular channels that allow people with low skills to seek work abroad; ensuring basic rights for migrants; reducing transaction costs associated with migration; improving outcomes for migrants and destination communities; enabling benefits from internal mobility; and making mobility an integral part of national development strategies.
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CIA
CITRUS GROWERS ASSOCIATION

CÓRDOVA ALCARAZ, R.

CRIMES INVESTIGATION BRANCH

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IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTADÍSTICA Y CENSO

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION.

KAIKI CONSULTANTS

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LABOUR DEPARTMENT

LEWIS, W. A.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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MONTGOMERY, T. S.

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UNITED NATIONS

US CENSUS BUREAU

US DEPARTMENT OF STATE

VERNON, D.

VON LOEPER, K.


WORLD BANK
## Annexes

### Annex A: Migration Statistics: Arrivals

#### Table 1.

**Philip Goldson International Airport Entries by Visa Category and Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PORT OF ENTRY:</th>
<th>PHILLIP GOLDSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT</th>
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<th>Day Arrivals</th>
<th>BTB</th>
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<td>4052</td>
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**Total PGIA Arrivals 2012**

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<th>INT</th>
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<th>TEP</th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>DP</th>
<th>DIP</th>
<th>ORG</th>
<th>Trippers</th>
<th>QRPR</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>78988</td>
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<td>1055</td>
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#### Table 2.

**Belize-Guatemala Border Entries by Visa Category and Region**

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<th>NATIONALITY</th>
<th>RR</th>
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<th>OV</th>
<th>TEP</th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>DP</th>
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<th>ORG</th>
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<td>0</td>
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**Total Western Border**

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<th>BV</th>
<th>INT</th>
<th>OV</th>
<th>TEP</th>
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<th>DP</th>
<th>DIP</th>
<th>ORG</th>
<th>Trippers</th>
<th>QRPR</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2396</td>
<td>22452</td>
<td>5555</td>
<td>3734</td>
<td>10173</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1018</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25819</td>
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Table 3.
Corozal-Mexico Border- Arrivals by visa category and region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>JANUARY - DECEMBER, 2011</th>
<th>Day BTB</th>
<th>SANTA ELENA BORDER STATION</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>RR TV BV INT OV TEP SP DP DIP ORG Trippers QRP TOTAL</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Belize</td>
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<td>0 0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central America</td>
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<tr>
<td>North America</td>
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<tr>
<td>South America</td>
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TOTAL Northern Border 81065 9561 269 3827 9 261 103 131 48 94 1631 0 96999

Annex B: Institutional Mapping- Migration Management stakeholders

The focus group discussions included an exercise to map, comprehensively, the entities that have a stake in migration affairs. This listing is an initial listing that may be adopted by the group/task-force/ committee for the policy development process. The stakeholders are not necessarily all members of that group/task force/committee but can be included in the process at specific steps within that process.

Public Sector Actors (Government & Quasi-Government)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry of Labour, Local Government, Rural Development, NMO and Immigration &amp; Nationality</th>
<th>Department of Immigration and Nationality Services (DINS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Labour (DoL)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation</td>
<td>Department of Human Services (DHS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy &amp; Planning Unit</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Diplomatic Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Education and Youth</td>
<td>Diaspora Desk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Training Unit</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy &amp; Projects Unit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Finance and Economic Development</td>
<td>Policy &amp; Planning Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITO</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Tourism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney General</td>
<td>Magistrates Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of National Security</td>
<td>Prisons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
<td>Director of Health Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belize Social Security Board</td>
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<td>Statistical Institute of Belize</td>
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<td>Belize Tourism Board</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>National Committee for Families and Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Bank of Belize</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Association of Village Councils</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toledo Alcaldes Association</td>
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</table>
Private Sector

Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Belize Business Bureau
National Trade Union Congress of Belize
Citrus Growers Association
Banana Growers Association
Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association
Belize Agro-Productive Sector Group

Service Providers

Help For Progress – UNHCR Liaison Office Belize / Human Rights Commission of Belize
Child Development Foundation
Youth Enhancement Services
Young Women’s Christian Association
National Organization for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
Belize Council of Churches
Evangelical Council
Academia (individual; institutional)
International Organization for Migration
United Nations Country Team (PAHO-WHO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF)
Media Houses (Print & Audio-Visual)

Migrant Populations

Cultural Group San Martin, Belmopan
Cultural Group Bella Vista, Stann Creek District
Jamaican Association of Belize
International Women’s Group, Belmopan
Chinese Association & District Branches
Annex C: Institutional & Capacity Building Support - Key Stakeholders

As a result of the consultative process, the following emerged as the specific areas of institutional and capacity building support that key stakeholders identified as their needs.

**Citrus Growers Association**
- Establish health care program in an effort to minimize the strain on governmental health services in the Citrus Belt
- Sensitize Citrus Growers on labour market migration issues and benefits of labour migration
- Provide skills training programs for migrant women
- Collaborate with local and regional NGO’s to establish a pilot project on a formal farm worker recruitment program

**Social Security Board**
- Network existing database and information sharing capacity between Social Security Board, Vital Statistics, Immigration Department and Labour Department
- Identification of bottlenecks in data collection and interagency collaboration in order to better manage migrant populations particularly to detect fraudulent documents.
- Obtain expert advice from countries with advance information systems and experience with managing migrant populations
- Improve bio-data gathering system (possibility of improving features on Social Security card to be utilized as a national identity document)

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs**
- In collaboration with the Solicitors General Office obtain a Expert in Migration Law to review existing migration-related legislation
- Support Diaspora Projects
- Sensitize the Ministry officials to understand the importance of engaging diasporas

**Statistical Institute of Belize**
- Capacity Development Training for collecting, data methodologies/models for calculating/estimating migration indicators
- Acquire necessary software and hardware in order to store and process data
- Train and support human resources for data collection Migration Statistics Unit
- Provide funding for producing and publishing of Migration Monologues
Annex D: Compiling a Migration Research Agenda

The following section was extracted from the Children Issues National Research Agenda which focused on highlighting those issues related to the wellbeing of women and children presented in the Situation Analysis of Women and Children in Belize. UNICEF. 2012.

BACKGROUND

2.2: **Determine the social and economic impacts of immigration & emigration focusing on its impact on family wellbeing.**

Belize continues to experience high levels of immigration and emigration. There is the prevailing perception that immigration negatively impacted literacy rates, birth rates, provision of educational services, ethnic shift, environmental degradation, and minimizing employment opportunities for natives. Garifuna and Mestizos perceived that immigrants dominate the labour force contributing to a reduction in household income and increase in poverty. Census data indicate that 20% of Belizean households are headed by a foreign-born. These households exhibit slightly higher poverty rates than the national average. The agriculture sector which is vulnerable to commodity price fluctuations recruits high numbers of unskilled migrant labour. It is estimated that as many as 20,000 undocumented migrants are in Belize. Living without basic registration documents limits participation in government and civil society. Despite the difficult situations that immigrant workers experience in Belize, it is estimated that they transfer large funds as remittances to families in their countries of origin. Remittances are a significant source of income totalling $75M in 2007 and $78M in 2008 with an average of $260 per capita (UNICEF, 2011). However, little is known about how financial remittances impact development; the effects of labour migration on Belize’s development; and the assimilation of immigrants and their families.

Emigration is also prevalent. The Human Development Report (2009) indicated that Belize has a 16.5% emigration rate. There is limited data on emigrants from Belize particularly those migrating to the US. There is need to investigate the effects of emigration on the well-being of families and children who remain. There is also need to investigate the impacts of financial, social, and cultural remittances on traditional Belizean lifestyles. Data collected will provide necessary qualitative and quantitative information about the immigrant and emigrant population and inform a much needed National Migration Policy.
## Needs, Timeframe and Output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Needs</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Output</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Justification:</strong> The 2000 Census indicated that 20% of Belizean households are headed by a foreign-born. Immigrants exhibit slightly higher poverty rate than the national average. They often reside in difficult living and workplace conditions, for example, agricultural labourers live in makeshift shacks and their children often face food insecurity and lack of medical care. Despite these difficult situations, large volumes of remittances are sent to their countries of origin. Limited research has been conducted regarding the effects of labour migration, the situation of immigrants and their families, and overall effects of immigration and emigration on Belize’s economic development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A) undertake comprehensive study on families with a foreign-born head of household</td>
<td>5+</td>
<td>- qualitative and quantitative data reflecting current situation of family migration utilized to inform national migration policy - identify the need for a mobility agreement/policy between Belize and neighboring countries - recommendations to establish a data collection mechanism that will provide updated statistical information on family migration rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) examine factors influencing high poverty rates among immigrant families in Belize</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>- inclusion of this target population in poverty alleviation strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) determine the positive and negative consequences of amnesty for undocumented immigrants and their dependents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- data utilized to inform future proposals to provide amnesty for immigrants - data to inform migration and family reunification policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D) undertake longitudinal study on both immigrant and emigrant worker remittances to their countries of origin</td>
<td>5+</td>
<td>- continuous tracking of remittances to determine the extent, destination, and quantification of amount of remittances - data on formal and informal remittances to Belize utilized in economic development strategies - policies/programs instituted to encourage investment in Belize by the Belizean diaspora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E) conduct comparative study of work conditions and opportunities of immigrant workers with that of native population to determine if immigrants displace local workers</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>- migrant labour policies and regulations established to ensure proper work conditions, decent work, improved living conditions, and availability of social services for immigrant workers and accompanying family and dependents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F) investigate the situation of children of immigrant labourers in the agricultural sector</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- data utilized to ascertain the presence of accompanying children as immigrants or first-generation Belizeans and to establish strategies to ensure well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G) determine adjustment and assimilation of immigrants and their children in Belize</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>- qualitative data reflecting the number of immigrants and their families (household size, heads of household, educational attainment, etc.) utilized in national migration policy - education policies amended to respond to challenges in providing ESL and education for immigrant children and 1st generation Belizeans to minimize repetition and low transition rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H) investigate the impacts of social &amp; cultural remittances on Belize’s development and culture</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- strategies and recommendations to minimize negative impacts of social and cultural remittances on children and adolescents</td>
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### GAPS TO ADDRESS & PROPOSED TOPICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas addressed in Sit An. &amp; Gaps - What do we want to know &amp; Why?</th>
<th>Opportunities for Research - Gaps to address</th>
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<th>Priority</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Short term</strong> 1-2 years</td>
<td><strong>medium-term</strong> 3-5 years</td>
<td><strong>long term</strong> 5+</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-theme: Immigration &amp; Emigration-Social and Economic Impacts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Office of Migration ECLAC 2006 shows that Belize has not had an overall positive experience. Effects on environmental degradation, unsustainable agricultural practices and pressure on agricultural employment for natives. Immigrants typically work in the agriculture sector which is vulnerable to commodity price fluctuations. It also typically seeks less-skilled workers. They are also employed in a wide range of occupation from unskilled workers to hotel managers’. Garifuna &amp; Mestizos believe that immigrants displace them in the labour force and contribute to their household income and subsequent poverty. As many as 20,000 undocumented migrants are in Belize. Without basic registration documents which affects their identity. Regularization is often very expensive for refugees and undocumented migrants. They often do not have the required documentation. With proper documentation, immigrants in Belize can participate in government and civil society. Their children can obtain proof of citizenship and identity.</td>
<td>Current situation of migration and emigration in Belize. Do immigrants really displace local workers? There is no available statistical data to approximate how many undocumented immigrants reside in Belize. What are the actual numbers? Women, Children? Where do they reside?</td>
<td>Social integration and cohesion of immigrants in Belize</td>
<td>Comprehensive study of immigration and emigration in Belize. How does immigration impact poverty indicators in Belize? What are the positive and negative consequences of amnesty for undocumented immigrants?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF informally reports that large volumes of funds are being transferred outside the country as remittances to families in their countries of origin. Immigrants are often unskilled labourers, often work in lowest paying occupations and have higher poverty rates than locals. To what extent are they remitting? How are they coping with the cost of living in Belize and the need to remit to families in their home country? Remittances are a significant source of income totaling $75M in 2007 and $78M in 2008 with an average of $260 per capita. What are remittances used for? How does it contribute to family income? How does remittance impact Belize's development? How do social and cultural remittances affect Belize's development?</td>
<td>Determine to what extent immigrant workers are remitting? Approximate amount of remittances and to where? Analysis of reported formal remittances to Belize. Research on informal remittances (frequency, methods, amounts). Research on types and forms of social and cultural remittances (frequency, methods, amounts).</td>
<td>If immigrant's remittances are impacting the local economy, what policies/programs can be put in place to encourage immigrant investment in Belize? Characterize recipients of remittances (family size, male/female heads of households, rural/urban, etc.) and remitters (parents, children, occupation, amounts) How does cultural remittances support or affect traditional culture? How does the Diaspora contribute to the social and economic development of Belize? How does remittance impact Belize's development? How do social and cultural remittances affect Belize's development?</td>
<td>- Effect of Migration in Belize on economic development - Impact of immigration on poverty indicators - Consequences of Amnesty for Undocumented Immigrants</td>
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<td>- Immigrant workers Remittances - Emigration and Remittances - Social &amp; Cultural Remittances to Belize</td>
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Continues...
**Areas addressed in Sit An. & Gaps - What do we want to know & Why?**

What is the impact of labour migration on Belize’s development?

20% of households are headed by a foreign-born. They have slightly higher poverty rate than the national average. No data exists in terms of how they are contributing to a decline in wages nor if they have been denied jobs. How are immigrants treated generally in Belize? What is the situation of immigrant children and women and first-generation Belizians? Why do labour migrant flows concentrate in the agriculture sector? What are the living conditions of immigrant families and their children?

1996 Literacy survey in Belize indicated that literacy was lower among Central Americans than natives. Birth rates in CA immigrant families tend to be higher than North Americans and Asians. The lack of education and documentation often leads them to low wages or seasonal agricultural work. What is the current situation of immigrant children and their families in Belize?

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<tr>
<td>Comparative study of work conditions and opportunities of immigrant workers with that of native population</td>
<td>Work conditions of immigrant labourers and effects on the social conditions of their accompanying family and dependents</td>
<td>Gender equity among immigrant labourers if parents are living in less than ideal conditions in the agricultural areas where they work, then children must also be living in these less than favourable situations. What social services, infrastructure, are available to them? How are they treated in these conditions? Educating migrant children and 1st generation Belizian children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants starting families in Belize</td>
<td>Issues of Immigrant families &amp; their children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work permit statistics does not include dependents. Furthermore, there is no certainty that immigrant workers bring their children with them. Do they start families in Belize?</td>
<td>If immigrant families start having children in Belize, then they are 1st generation Belizians, what does it mean for them? Family composition and living conditions. Living conditions for migrants are typically worse than that of native Belizians. Children often face food insecurity and lack of medical care. Agriculture workers live in makeshift shacks and urban workers lack basic infrastructure.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households size</td>
<td>Literacy rates?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How many migrated as a family unit? How many established families in Belize?</td>
<td>What are challenges faced by the education system’s response to immigrants and children of immigrants. ESL creates high repetition and lower transition rates.</td>
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Annex E: Data Collection Instruments

Interview Guide- Service Providers: Governmental and Non-Governmental

CLIENTELE
Do you collect data on immigrants that you provide services to? If yes, how is the data collected? How is the information used?
Do you know how many immigrants are currently living in Belize?
What type of vulnerable immigrant populations have you encountered through your work?
What are the nationalities of those immigrants who most request services?
Do you provide services for Belizeans living abroad?
Do you provide services to return migrants and deportees? If yes, what type of programs?
What do you think is driving migration to and from Belize?

SERVICES
Do Belizeans living abroad access assistance from your Ministry? If so what have been the main issues and response?
How do you manage the issues affecting Belizeans living abroad?
What are the areas of migration management that you think Belize needs to develop in order to improve their response?

COLLABORATION
What policies, laws or regulations do you feel need to be put into place in order to adequately manage migration issue in Belize?
What are the specific areas that you think your Department needs assistance in order to manage both immigrants and emigrants related issues in Belize?
What are the current collaborative efforts with regional partners that are helping the Ministry manage migration? How can these be strengthened?
Would an amnesty be feasible for Belize? What do you think will be challenges for your department/ministry?

Interview Guide- Consular Representatives

DATA COLLECTION
Do you collect any data on migratory flows from your country to Belize? If yes, how is the data collected? How is the information used?
Do you know how many of your citizens are currently living in Belize?
What do you think is driving migration from your country to Belize?

SERVICES
What have been the main issues that you have had to deal with as it relates to your nationals living in Belize?
How do you manage the issues related to irregular migration from your country to Belize?
What are the areas of migration management that you think Belize needs to develop in order to improve their response?
COLLABORATION
What are the specific areas that you think the IOM/GOB can help you in your effort to manage migration from your country to Belize?

What are the specific areas that you think that your country or Embassy can help GOB can in their effort to manage migration from your country to Belize?

Would an amnesty be feasible for Belize? What do you think will be challenges for your office?

Interview Guide- Industry Representatives

Migrant Labour
Does your industry utilize labour migrants? If yes, what are the primary jobs that labour migrants perform?
How dynamic has the migrant labour been over the past 10 years?
Do you know how many immigrants are currently working in your industry? What are the main characteristics (origin, sex, age?)
If yes, how are they recruited?

Migration Policy
Which governmental agency or departments do you most liaise with to meet the needs of labour migrants? What services are most requested?
What do you think is driving migration to Belize?
What policies, laws or regulations do you feel need to be put into place in order to adequately manage migration issue in Belize?
What are the areas of migration management that you think Belize needs to develop in order to improve their response?
Would an amnesty be feasible for Belize? What do you think will be challenges for your industry?

Collaboration
Are there any programs/projects in place to ensure the well-being of the labour migrants employed in your industry? If no, what programs/projects do you think can be implemented?

Interview Guide: Academic Institutions

Potential Immigrants
Does the University collect data on how many foreign students are attending the University? If so, how is it collected?
How is the data used?
What types of programs or projects are in place to attract foreign students?
What are the career choices that are most attractive to foreign students?
Does the university facilitate the immigration procedures for students? Or do they approach immigration department on their own?
Are students tracked after completing their program to determine how many returned to their home country, how many stayed in Belize or how many migrated to other countries?
For those students who stay? Why do you think they chose to stay?
For those who transit to a third country? Where are the countries they most migrate to?
Potential Emigrants

Does the University see many Belizean students migrating out of the country after completing their studies?

If yes, what are the careers that see the highest numbers of graduates migrating out of Belize?

Do recruitment programs come to the University to encourage students to work in other countries?

What factors do you think influences the Belizean university graduate to migrate out of Belize?

Skilled workers

Does the University take advantage of regional programs such as CARICOM-CSME to attract skilled workers?

If so, what careers/technical expertise has been most utilized?

Does the university have any programs in place to attract skilled workers from other parts of the world to assist in its development? If yes, explain.

Collaboration

Has the university or any of its faculty conducted any research on migration related issues? If so, what kind?

How do you think that the academia and government can collaborate in order better manage migration issues?

What capacities does the University of Belize currently have that they can assist the government in establishing a strong migration policy?

What migration-related training programs would the University benefit from?

Interview Questionnaire- Labour Migration

IN-MIGRATION

Do you collect data on immigrants working in Belize? If yes, how is the data collected? How is the information used?

Do you know how many immigrants are currently working in Belize?

What are the nationalities of those who most request the Labour Department services?

What do you think is driving migration to Belize?

As it relates to CARICOM nationals migrating to Belize what type of labour migration agreements exists between Belize and CARICOM?

Do you think that this has been an area that has benefited or negatively affected the Belizean society?

Would an amnesty be feasible for Belize? What do you think will be challenges for your Department?

OUT-MIGRATION

Do you collect data on Belizeans working abroad? If yes, how is the data collected? How is the information used?

Do you know how many Belizeans are currently working abroad? Where?

What do you think is driving migration from Belize?
SERVICES
How is your Ministry structured?
Which departments are responsible for responding to the needs of the migrant population?
How do you manage the issues affecting irregular migrants in Belize?
What are the areas of migration management that you think Belize needs to develop in order to improve their response?
What specific training needs do you think your officers need in order to better manage the migratory flows?

COLLABORATION
What are the specific areas that you think the Department needs assistance in order to manage both immigrants and emigrants related issues in Belize?
What policies, laws or regulations do you feel need to be put into place in order to adequately manage migration issue in Belize?
What are the current collaborative efforts with regional partners that are helping the department manage migration? How can these be strengthened?

Interview Questionnaire: Data collection agencies

Data collection
Do you collect data on immigrants living in Belize?
If yes, how is the data collected?
How often is the data collected?
Do you know how many immigrants are currently living in Belize?
Is this data disaggregated by the various categories of immigrants?
- Retirees, migrant workers, return migrants, deportees, CARICOM, economic citizens recipients
How is the information used?
Do you collect data on Belizeans living abroad? If yes, how is the data collected? How is the information used?
Do you know how many Belizeans are currently living abroad? Where?
Has your department done any research on migration? If yes, what are they and when were they conducted?
Has any data collected to date indicate what factor(s) are driving migration to and from Belize?
Do you have access to other databases that may have some relevant data on immigrants in Belize? Which are they?
What has been the biggest challenge for your department as it relates to collecting migration data?

COLLABORATION
What are the areas of migration management that you think Belize needs to develop in order to improve their response?
What specific training needs do you think your department needs in order to better collect data on migratory flows?
What are the specific areas that you think the Department needs assistance in order to collect data on both immigrants and emigrants in Belize?
What policies, laws or regulations do you feel need to be put into place in order to adequately manage migration in Belize?

What are the current collaborative efforts with regional partners that are helping your department manage migration? How can these be strengthened?

Would an amnesty be feasible for Belize? What do you think will be challenges for your department?
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