



**Special Study on Migration for the MCGOVERN-United States Program**  
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## Acronyms

UNHCR	The UN Refugee Agency
AGN	Guatemalan News Agency
CTA	Coordinators, Technicians, Administrative
COCODE	Community Development Council
CONJUVE	National Youth Council
HUMAN RIGHTS	Human Rights
ENEI	National Employment and Income Survey
ENSMI	National Survey of Maternal and Child Health
GF	Focus Group
IDH	Human Development Index
INE	National Institute of Statistics
MAGA	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food
ME	Empowered Women's Groups
MIDES	Ministry of Social Development
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MPI	Migration Policy Institute
MSPAS	Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance
NNA	Child, Adolescent
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPF	Parent Organizations
PDH	Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office Ombudsman
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
PLAN	National Plan for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WV	World Vision



## Executive Summary

### Background and Context

UNIDOS is a program funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that aims to improve school-age children's literacy, increase the use of health and nutrition practices, and improve the effectiveness of food assistance through local and regional purchases. The project will run from October 2022 to 2026 and be implemented in 450 schools in the departments of Huehuetenango (292) and Quiché (158) by the non-profit organizations *Global Communities* and *Save the Children* as its sub-recipient. *Global Communities* as the prime implementer under UNIDOS will geographically focus on the Department of Huehuetenango, in the municipalities of: San Gaspar Ixchil, Cuilco, Soloma, Santa Eulalia, Barillas, San Ildefonso Ixtahuacán and Santa Bárbara; *Save the Children* as a sub-recipient under UNIDOS, will geographically implement in the department of Quiché, in the municipalities of: Chicamán, Chajul, Cotzal, Cunén, Nebaj, Sacapulas and Uspantán.

### Research Objectives

The principal scope of the research is to increase understanding of irregular migration patterns of household members and the effects on school-age children. Although UNIDOS does not directly address migration, the research seeks to inform implementers about the effects of this phenomenon on school-age children, who are the primary program beneficiaries. The study formulated six hypotheses:


- 1) Structural conditions of poverty, marginalization and exclusion determine the process of irregular migration in Huehuetenango and Quiché.
- 2) Students with a parent who has irregularly migrated are forced to assume new roles in the family;
- 3) Separation from the family due to irregular migration determines teacher-student-partner relationships and impacts school behavior;
- 4) Students with a parent who has irregularly emigrated have behavioral problems;
- 5) Students with a parent who has irregularly migrated are more likely to drop out of school; and
- 6) Activities implemented under UNIDOS (such as Women Empowered groups, participation of community members in school rehabilitation and school feeding activities, and support to local agricultural producers) address, in part, some of the causes of migration (poverty, marginalization and exclusion).

The scope of the special study was specifically to:

1. Determine the migration patterns of families with school-age children in the municipalities where the UNIDOS project is implemented.
2. Identify the effects of migration on school-age children in families with a family member that has migrated irregularly.

### Methodology

The methodology to test the study hypotheses corresponded to a mixed design that incorporates documentary and quantitative research through face-to-face surveys. The latter were directed to families with school-age children, where one member had migrated. This was complemented by a qualitative approach, which consisted of focus groups and in-depth



interviews with key actors. Data collection was conducted between August 5 and September 30, 2022. The study employed a sample of 762 households, contacting interviewees face to face through household visits, which included a sampling error of  $\pm 3.55\%$  on the total results, for a confidence level of 95%. Additionally, the study conducted 13 focus groups and 20 in-depth interviews.

With respect to report limitations, the research study was conducted only in project intervention municipalities for UNIDOS, and thus the results cannot be extrapolated to the national level. Given that migration is a multi-causal phenomenon, as is school dropout, and it is closely related to unfavorable economic conditions it was not impossible to determine which factor precedes the other. Finally, minors under the age of 18 were not interviewed, in compliance with the ethical regulations of the research in the interest of taking a Do No Harm approach where the inclusion of them may have been potentially trigger and/or emotionally difficult given the migration of their family member. Instead, information was obtained from close sources such as fathers, mothers, siblings, teachers, and caregivers.

### Summary of Key Findings

Regarding the migration patterns of families with school-age children in the municipalities where the UNIDOS project will be implemented, the data indicates that irregular migrants from Huehuetenango and Quiché share behaviors of other migratory experiences worldwide. The study can affirm that the conditions of poverty, marginalization and exclusion determine the processes of irregular migration in Huehuetenango and Quiché. The primary reasons for migration correspond to economic issues (73% of all respondents); 15% say that the intended destination country has better living conditions than Guatemala (*push-pull* effect), which is complemented by half (51%) of all respondents who think that a close family member will migrate soon. The proportion of students who dropped out of school in Huehuetenango and Quiché, according to data obtained in the families' surveys, is 10%.

For over a third (36%) of those interviewed, there was a change in roles in their households when a family member migrated. Among the new activities that occurred, the following stand out: a) more involvement in raising the children, which implies correcting their behavior and educating them (79%); b) responsibility of keeping the children in school (71%); and c) assuming more economic responsibility for the household (49%).

In relation to the third hypothesis, only 27% of the total number of respondents stated that they perceived changes in the children's school behavior after migration. However, contrary to what one would think at first glance, for the remaining 73% these changes have been positive and per respondents included: improving grade point average (47%); completing homework (55%); improving their relationship with their classmates (41%); and increasing receptivity to their teachers' instructions (53%).

The fourth hypothesis, referring to the fact that children with a parent who has irregularly migrated present behavioral problems, 25% stated that they have. Among these changes, 46% of children are sick more often, 44% have a loss of appetite and 35% are afraid of the dark. In the negative changes, those who are most affected are the children who drop out, while the positive changes occur equally in all children.

The results of analysis regarding the fifth hypothesis are inconclusive in indicating whether there is a relationship between school dropouts and parents who have migrated irregularly. This is because the study demonstrated that this only occurred in only 10% of families where

someone had migrated in addition to the limitations inherent in the study methodology. To demonstrate this relationship exists and is statistically relevant would require further study including a large and more randomized sample size and a potential comparison or control group. Additionally, since the phenomenon of migration is multi-causal; it cannot be affirmed from the data obtained that school desertion is due only to irregular migration because the unfavorable economic conditions were maintained before and after the phenomenon occurred.

To address the sixth hypothesis, the activities that UNIDOS intends to implement address, in part, some of the causes of migration. This is because they are oriented towards problems such as poverty, marginalization, and exclusion. However, since the UNIDOS project has not yet begun the study was limited in its ability to describe the extent to which it may or may not address the root causes of migration.

## Background

### Project Overview

Planned activities under UNIDOS include a) training teachers in the early grades to improve their reading and writing techniques; b) training principals to improve school leadership and school management; c) establishing school gardens; d) providing school meals (beans, rice, oil,) forming empowered women's groups; f) building or rehabilitating school infrastructure (kitchens, latrines, water systems); g) training in child health and nutrition practices; h) training in food preparation and storage practices; i) capacity building at local, regional and national levels; j) promotion of municipal public policies; k) training of members of Parents' Organizations (OPF); l) distributing take-home rations; and, m) linking schools and local producers for the purchase of fresh food. Through these planned activities, UNIDOS aims to reach the following beneficiaries: 65,344 students, 2,701 teachers, 1,936 collaborating mothers, 2,250 OPF members, 3,600 members of Women Empowered (WE) groups and 300 local producers.

*Table 1: Municipalities covered by the UNIDOS program*

No.	Huehuetenango	Quiche
1	San Gaspar Ixchil (11 schools - 1650 students)	Chicaman (49 schools – 7517 students)
2	Cuilco (67 schools – 6676 students)	Chajul (16 schools – 3089 students)
3	San Pedro Soloma (39 schools - 6443 students)	Cotzal (8 schools – 1361 students)
4	Santa Eulalia (23 schools – 3844 students)	Cunen (12 schools - 2531 students)
5	Barillas (81 schools – 9218 students)	Nebaj (40 schools – 5066 students)
6	San Ildefonso Ixtahuacán (36 schools - 7625 students)	Sacapulas (15 schools - 1559 students)
7	Santa Barbara (35 schools - 6963 students)	Uspantán (18 schools - 2669 students)





## Study Area Context


The National Statistics Institute (INE) has estimated, according to the latest population census (2018), that 14.3 million inhabitants reside in Guatemala: 51% women and 49% men. Of the total population, 70% are identified as young people (under 30 years old) and are legally eligible to work. At the socioeconomic level, 51% of the total population lives in poverty and 15% in extreme poverty. According to the latest Human Development Report (HDR), in Guatemala, those who experience a higher level of poverty belong to the indigenous and rural population, which is concentrated in the western highlands and typically do not reside in municipal capitals, lacking access to government aid. Regarding the latter, it is worth highlighting the poor structural and infrastructure conditions in Guatemala, which does not allow the State to address and meet the general needs of the population. According to a study published in 2015 by the Central American Institute for Fiscal Studies (ICEFI), for every dollar invested in non-indigenous communities, indigenous communities in Guatemala only receive 45 cents of public investment (Atlas of Public investment in Indigenous Communities, 2015). Finally, it is worth noting that poverty is closely linked to inequality and lack of opportunities, which affects the country's development from a general perspective.

According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, one in five migrants in Guatemala is a child, and 90% of those who migrate do so for economic reasons. (US Customs and border Protection , 2021). Between June and July 2021, approximately 34,198 unaccompanied Guatemalan children were detained by U.S. border authorities, which represented an increase of migrant children and, as a collateral effect, schools presented a dropout rate between 35-40% of students in rural areas of the country, which coincides with the areas previously mentioned as those that report the most migration (Save the Children, 2022).

According to recent data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), migration from Guatemala to the United States is mostly rural, young and male. However, due to factors like the pandemic, inequality and violence, there seems to be an increase in women and unaccompanied children (Organización Internacional de la Migración, 2022). The latter can be seen in the number of returnees to Guatemala in the last four years where the percentage of women has increased year after year: 105,277 returnees in 2019 (82% men and 18% women; 61.7% boys and 38.3% girls); 45,924 in 2020 (83.6% men and 16.4% women; 68.5% boys and 31.5% girls); 63,808 in 2021 (77.7% men and 22.3% women; 64.1% boys and 35.9% girls); and, 68,663 in 2022 (77.4% men and 26.6% women; 60.7% boys and 39.3% girls). In turn, this is complemented by the decrease in the male population due to labor force issues and job search opportunities (INE, 2018).

Regarding returnees, a total of 63,808 people were reported to have returned, and the vast majority (72%) came from the United States and 28% from Mexico in 2021 alone. The largest number of returnees are residents of the department of Huehuetenango (7,109), San Marcos (6,299) and Quiché (4,748) (International Organization for Migration, 2022). The entirety of the western Altiplano is vulnerable because most of the population reside in rural communities and agriculture continues to be the fundamental livelihood for the population. This allows us to affirm that there is a close correlation between economic pressures and migration. In contrast, in the departments of Quiché and Huehuetenango, there is a lack of access to quality and relevant health services since there is only one public hospital in each department. The lack of health care is closely related to the prevalence of malnutrition and food insecurity; the same MPI report highlights to the appearance of a strong link between the food insecurity





experiences of families in these departments and the desire to migrate. (Migration Policy Institute, 2022).


Regarding education, the educational system faces several challenges namely: low quality, low coverage, absence of an educational infrastructure policy with sufficient financial resources, etc. At the national level, it is reported that 20% of the population has not received any type of educational instruction, and a majority of 43% have completed only up to primary school, while 19% have completed up to middle school education and only 5% have received a higher education (INE, 2018). Regarding illiteracy, it should be noted that in people older than 15 years (high school age) there has been a decrease in recent years: from 29% in the 2002 census to 19% in the 2018 census. However, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), this trend worsened with the pandemic due to the non-attendance of classes and the loss of work that affected families. Although the State provided a voucher to cover household expenses and meet basic household needs, there were no solutions proposed to address the lack of attendance in in-person classes (i.e. virtual classes, etc.), which led school-age children to decide, at the behest of their parents or their own, to start working or performing housework. (UNICEF, 2021).

With respect to the departments of Huehuetenango and Quiché, we observed that in Huehuetenango 29% of people have not received any level of education; 51% of people had received primary education and people with secondary and higher education result in 14% and 2%, respectively. In Quiché, 33% of the population has received no education, which represents a high percentage similar to Huehuetenango. In both cases, at least one out of every three inhabitants have no education of any kind – while 46% have at least primary education and only 2% have higher education (INE, 2018). At the municipal level, Santa Barbara in the department of Huehuetenango and Chajul in Quiché have the highest concentration of population with no education at all with 41% and 37%, respectively. It is worth noting that both municipalities will benefit from the UNIDOS program, whose main objectives is to improve the literacy of school-age children, increase the use of health and nutrition practices, and improve the effectiveness of food assistance through local or regional purchases. It is expected that by the program completion at the end of 2026, the data will demonstrate a substantial improvement over the current condition.

Regarding school attendance, the number of primary school-age children enrolling in some educational institution varied from 2002 (86% at the total level) to 2018 (93%). However, this statistic is not reflected in the two prioritized case studies as Quiché (89%) and Huehuetenango (89%) presented enrollment rates below 90%. Unlike the findings in primary education coverage and attendance, progress in secondary and higher education was relatively stable over the last decade. One of the reasons has been the lack of existing educational offerings for these grades, since there are no institutions or entities that provide these services. Another factor that may explain this dropout or non-enrollment in education levels beyond primary school is migration, according to the National Human Development Report (IDH, 2022; Fundación Educativa Fe y Alegría Guatemala, 2021). Finally, at the international level, Guatemala is the Central American country that invests the least in education (3.3% of its Gross Domestic Product in 2020)<sup>1</sup>. As noted earlier, this gap in educational investment is

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<sup>1</sup> With respect to the rest of the countries and their investment in education in relation to their Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Costa Rica invested 6.7% in 2020; El Salvador 3.4%; Honduras 6.4%; and Nicaragua 4.6%. (Banco Mundial, 2022b).



especially notable in majority indigenous and largely rural departments such as Huehuetenango and Quiché.

## Regulatory Framework


In terms of legal regulations, the State of Guatemala is committed to respecting, safeguarding and promoting the basic rights of its citizens. Within these, and specifically, Article 74 of the Political Constitution of the Republic mentions that all inhabitants have the right and obligation to receive initial education within the limits established by law. State education is free and the State will provide and promote scholarships and educational credits for those interested. At the international level, Guatemala is a signatory of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was ratified in 1990. Finally, the country has a series of laws that respond to the needs of children and adolescents, although the existence of these laws does not ensure their compliance, the following can be mentioned:

1. Governmental Agreement 405-96. National Youth Council (CONJUVE). This was created and attached to the Presidency of the Republic by means of said agreement, later reinforced with Decree 114-97 of the Congress of the Republic. It establishes attributions for the execution and formulation of policies to make youth participation viable.
2. National Youth Policy 2021-2032. This policy links the real needs of youth with government programs and actions so that they become the instrument that guides state intervention. It proposes to address strategic areas with structural plans in education, health, science and technology, violence prevention, culture and sports, entrepreneurship and participation and citizenship.
3. In January 2018, the initiative 5402 Law of the National Fund for Scholarships and Educational Credits was presented. This initiative has had a favorable opinion by the Committee on Education, Science and Technology since December of that same year, it seeks to create educational opportunities for those who cannot afford it.
4. Decree number 16-2017, referring to the school food law, guarantees school food, promotes health and encourages healthy eating of children and adolescents attending public or private schools in order to take advantage of their teaching, learning and training processes. (Congreso de la República de Guatemala, 2017)

It is worth noting that in 2019 the Vice-Presidency of the Republic decided to eliminate the Youth Cabinet, which, in previous years, the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office (PDH) recommended to continue and strengthen. In addition, the budgets of the Ministry of Social Development (MIDES) and Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) focused on youth are limited and suffer from cuts year after year, making evident the little importance given to the issue. This allowed the rise of proposals and law initiatives that, instead of ensuring the development and security of youth, are detrimental to this population.

Law for the Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents, Decree 27-2003. The objective of this law is to impose a traditional and exclusive family concept composed of "man, woman and children". In one of its articles, it states that children and adolescents have the right to their own identity, as long as the guardians in charge decide so.

Regarding the legal framework on migration issues, the Guatemalan Migration Institute has several laws, including the law for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents, according to Decree Number 78-79, which states that there must be continuous and democratic actions to ensure the welfare and comprehensive development of children and adolescents in the country. In addition, Guatemala is part of the Regional Comprehensive Framework for protection and solutions, an initiative that looks after displaced persons,



refugees or returnees, from this framework promotes coordination and joint and collective construction with the private sector and international, multilateral and regional organizations to welcome refugees, but also reduce migration, in this sense, year after year Guatemala is committed to facilitate the generation of opportunities, solutions and conditions to protect, prevent and assist refugees, applicants for refugee status, displaced persons, returnees and those in need of protection. (Contreras, 2021).

The area of study focuses mainly on the Cuchumatanes region, encompassing the departments of Huehuetenango and Quiché. The latter are inhabited by diverse indigenous populations, which, in turn, have a human development index lower than the national level and similar data in terms of inequality according to the United Nations Development Program. (UNDP, 2022). The low schooling rate, for various reasons, has been a constant concern for the population of Huehuetenango and Quiché, which is why the implementation of “Inclusive schools, special education schools and special education centers for students with special educational needs” has been suggested. (Agencia Guatemalteca de Noticias, 2021). In addition, at the end of 2021, the government detailed the existence of one program to promote development in all municipalities, highlighting initiatives to promote actions to reduce malnutrition and to attract school-age children to continue their education. (Contreras, Ministerios rinden informe de proyectos ejecutados en 2021 en Huehuetenango, 2021))

The following section will focus on the results of the literature review on the effects of migration on school dropout. In this regard, the study by Victoria Paredes & Tovar Cuevas (2009) entitled "the study entitled *“International migration and education: an approach to the effect on school attendance in Colombia”* by Victoria Paredes & Tovar Cuevas (2009), stands out. One of the main data that stands out is the economic analysis of the document, which mentions that “in poor countries, the main cost of a child’s education is not represented by books, uniforms, tuition and other direct expenses, but by the income the student does not receive” (p. 178). In the eyes of parents, an optimal level can be found at low levels of schooling to the extent that other basic needs are met, which gives greater validity to the investment in school meals as the UNIDOS project does. Another element that stands out, specifically related to Guatemala, is the fact that children between 12 and 17 years of age belonging to households that receive remittances are 12 to 17 percent more likely to stay in school than those who do not (p. 181), a phenomenon also observed in Nicaragua and Honduras. Regarding the new roles to be played after the migration of the family member, the literature is not yet conclusive since it would be expected that children would fill the roles left by the family member by working and supporting the needs of the household, but others show that work days have decreased since the departure (p.183). This is intended to be verified by means of the surveys. A final element worth highlighting is related to the education of the parents and the jobs to which the migrants aspire, which condition the level of education attained by the children. In this sense, as migrants are mostly concentrated in jobs that do not require education, the incentive to invest in their own education (and future generations) is reduced. This applies in the same sense as the economic cost explained above: “the expected returns to investment in education may be lower for those who have considered migrating than for those who have not, which tends to reduce the schooling of children in migrant households... migration may put pressure on wages in the country of origin, increasing the opportunity cost of not working for older children” (p. 184). To conclude, to the extent that the conditions of reception (*pull*) are greater than those of exit (*push*), the incentives to migrate will continue to exist.



## Study Scope

### General Objective

Increase understanding of irregular migration patterns of household members and their effects on school-age children.

### Specific Objectives

1. Determine the migration patterns of families with school-age children in the municipalities where the UNIDOS project is implemented.
2. Identify the effects of migration on school-age children in families with a member who has migrated irregularly.
3. Estimate the proportion of primary school students who drop out of school due to irregular migration of a family member.

### Study Hypotheses

1. The structural conditions of poverty, marginalization, and exclusion determine the process of irregular migration in Huehuetenango and Quiché.
2. Students with a parent who has migrated irregularly are forced to take on new roles in the family.
3. Separation from the family due to irregular migration determines teacher-student-peer relationships and school behavior.
4. Students with a parent who has migrated irregularly have behavioral challenges.
5. Students with a parent who has migrated irregularly are more likely to drop out of school.
6. The activities that UNIDOS implements (such as forming Women Empowered groups, facilitating the participation of community members in school rehabilitation and school feeding activities, and support to local agricultural producers) address, in part, some of the causes of migration (poverty, marginalization, and exclusion).

## METHODOLOGY

To test the study hypotheses, this study used a mixed-methods design which allowed for the triangulation of information. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected between August 29<sup>th</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

### Literature Review

In order to analyze the socio-cultural and economic contexts in which the children and families of the communities find themselves, a review of secondary sources was carried out. This included review of:

- Previous studies related to the subject
- General population statistics according to the National Census of the National Institute of Statistics 2018.
- Statistics from the Ministry of Education
- Statistics from the National Institute of Migration
- National statistics on poverty, marginalization, and exclusion
- Characteristics of the rural employment and entrepreneurship ecosystem in each municipality.
- Project statistics with respect to beneficiaries



## Quantitative Approach & Sampling

The study population consisted of families residing near the schools included in the program intervention areas of the UNIDOS projects. Given the study's objective, the target population was limited to families that had at least one member of the nuclear family who had migrated internally, temporarily, circularly, or permanently in the last three years and also which included children and adolescents of school age (regardless of whether they attended school). The primary sampling units were the households near the schools, and the informants were the heads of household.

The study used a cluster sampling methodology. In contrast to simple random sampling where sampling units are all the elements of the population, this type of probability sampling defines a unit as a group of elements of the population, which is called a cluster. This study used cluster sampling because the study team did not have specific data on the research units. Specifically, the percentage of families with a nuclear member who had migrated abroad or internally and had school-age children was unknown.

The aim is for each cluster to resemble a random sample representative of the study universe with all its heterogeneity. The sample was estimated using the formula:

$E = \text{Sqrt}[(N - n)x/n(N-1)]$ , calculating a margin of error of  $\pm 3.5\%$  and a confidence level of 95%.

For operational purposes, 21 clusters were carried out in which surveys were planned to include 21 clusters (school communities) to include 18 surveys each for a total of 756 surveys. There is a difference between the theoretical sample and the final sample, as 762 surveys were conducted. For the selection of clusters, a list of schools in intervention areas of interest (where UNIDOS interventions will be implemented) was received from Global Communities and through a random procedure using an Excel algorithm, the communities where the schools existed were selected.

## Data Collection

In rural areas, informants were selected from within communities as follows:

- The school was located. From there, the study team went to the house closest to the northwest point of the school and began the "Zig-Zag" sweep until the cluster was complete.
- No systematic jumping was performed, but rather a sweep of the site was made until the cluster was completed.

In urban areas, informants were selected from within the communities as follows:

- The school was located. From there, the blocks were traversed in a spiral pattern, following the sequence of the house numbering, until the cluster was completed.
- When the route was blocked due to natural boundaries (mountains, drainage, avenues, etc.), the survey team moved to the first accessible block of the next ring of the spiral pattern, continuing data collection without crossing the natural boundary and maintaining the route in a clockwise direction.
- When a successful survey was conducted, a systematic skip was made where the next two houses were skipped on the route before engaging the next informant.

All surveyed households provided informed consent to participate in the survey before the survey began. Additionally, COVID-19 precautions (including maintain a physical distance, wear a mask, and handwashing) were taken to mitigate against the spread of the virus.

The surveys were conducted using electronic devices with Android operating systems. Dooblo Data Collection Survey software was used for data collection and met all the data collection security requirements of the U.S. Government. Data was transmitted from the tablets to the central servers through Wifi connections or continuous internet connection. The final distribution of the sample by department and municipality is shown in Table 2.

*Table 2: Distribution of the sample by municipality*

Municipalities of Huehutenango	Surveys	Percentage of the Department	Percentage of Total	Municipalities of Quiché	Frequency	Percentage of the Department	Percentage of Total
San Gaspar Ixchil		7.1	14.1	Chajul		8.0	16.1
Cuilco		7.1	14.1	San Juan Cotzal	51	6.7	13.5
San Pedro Soloma		7.1	14.1	Nebaj		7.1	14.3
Santa Eulalia		7.5	14.8	Cunén	51	6.7	13.5
Rods		7.3	14.6	Uspantan		7.3	14.8
San Ildefonso Ixtlahuacán		7.2	14.3	Pencil sharpener	51	6.7	13.5
Santa Barbara Huista		7.1	14.1	Chicaman		7.1	14.3
Total	384	50.4	100.0	Total	378	49.6	100.0
Quiché Surveys	378	49.6		Huehuetenango Surveys	384	50.4	
	762	100.0			762	100.0	

Univariate analysis tables were prepared for the quantitative data analysis. A second step consisted of identifying bivariate explorations, starting from the first univariate output. The bivariate analyses were processed in a descriptive manner only, no attribution or statistical association treatments were applied other than measures of central tendency.

### Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data was collected through focus groups and in-depth interviews. Participants were selected using a screening tool that assessed inclusion criteria by subgroup and were identified during process of collection of household interviews. To compensate participants for their time the participants were provide compensation for their time in the amount of \$20 paid in Guatemalan quetzales (approximately 157 GTQ).

The focus groups were attended by the following types of individuals:

- Spouse of a migrant and parent of at least one school-age child or adolescent. Adolescents of legal age (male or female) whose parent had migrated and who had siblings of school age.

The focus groups conducted are listed in Table 3. Note that four of 13 groups were conducted in the Mayan language at the request of the participants. After the qualitative research was completed, the data were transcribed, translated by bilingual specialists, and analyzed using double-entry matrices.

**Table 3. Focus groups by department and municipality**

Department of Huehuetenango			
N	Location	Participants	
		Description	Quantity
1	Chicol Village, Santa Barbara	Spouse of migrant and mothers or fathers of school-age children and	8

		adolescents, male/female	
	Tierra Colorada hamlet, San Gaspar Ixchil	Spouse of migrant and mothers or fathers of school-age children and adolescents, male/female	8
	El Chilcal, Cuilco	Spouse of migrant and mothers or fathers of school-age children and adolescents, male/female	9
	Acal Village, San Ildefonso Ixtahuacán	Adolescent males 18-20 years old sibling of a child whose parent had migrated	8
5	El Quetzal, Santa Cruz Barillas	Adolescent females 18-20 years old sister of a child whose parent has migrated	8
	Buena Vista, Santa Eulalia	Adolescent females 18-20 years old sister of a child whose parent has migrated	8
	Najab, Soloma	Adolescent males 18-20 years old sibling of a child whose parent had migrated	9
<b>Department of Quiché</b>			
	Xetzac Village, Cunén	Parents of school-age male/female children and adolescents	8
	Chacagüex hamlet, Sacapulas	Parents of school-age male/female children and adolescents	8
	San Felipe Chenla Village, San Juan Cotzal	Adolescent females 18-20 years old sister of a child whose parent has migrated	8
	El Pinal Village, Uspantán	Spouse of migrant and mothers or fathers of school-age children and adolescents, male/female	9
	Belejú Village, Chicamán	Spouse of migrant and mothers or fathers of school-age children and adolescents, male/female	8
	Juil, Chajul	Adolescent males 18-20 years old sibling of a child whose parent had migrated	9

**Table 4. In-depth interviews by department and entity represented.**

ENTITY	REPRESENTATIVES INTERVIEWED IN QUICHE	REPRESENTATIVES INTERVIEWED IN HUEHUETENANGO
CTA	1	0
MSPAS	1	0
MAGA	1	2
COCODE	4	4
MINEDUC	3	3
DIDEDUC	0	1
TOTAL:	10	10

## Ethical Considerations

All persons invited to participate were of legal age and provided informed consent prior to their participation in data collection activities. Permission was obtained by participants for the recording of the qualitative data collection and recordings will be permanently erased to protect participant confidentiality at the conclusion of the research study. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study and were guaranteed confidentiality, privacy and protection of their personal data.

## Limitations

- Since the study only included schools in the municipalities where Global Communities and Save the Children intervene with the Educamos and Lens Programs in Huehuetenango and Quiché, the results presented in the report cannot be extrapolated to the national level.
- Migration is a multi-causal phenomenon, as is school dropout, and since both are closely related to unfavorable economic conditions. Therefore, given the formative nature of the report, no regressions or statistical calculations were performed to confirm conditioning between variables and no conclusion can be drawn regarding the causation or statistical correlation between participants or the population of interest regarding the relationship between migration of a family member and dropping out of school.

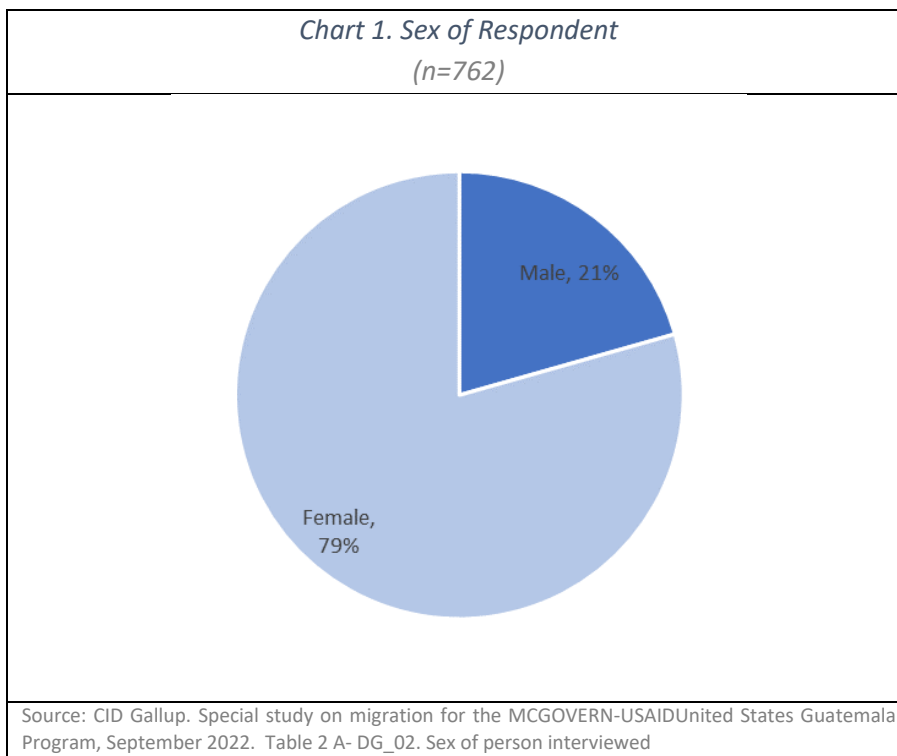


- The inclusion criteria for the surveyed households considered having a family member who had migrated irregularly within the nuclear family. This may cause some data analyzed to be "inflated" since households that did not meet this condition were not considered.
- Participants under the age of 18 were not included in interviews or focus group discussions within the study, in compliance with the ethical regulations of the research and in the interest of taking a Do No Harm approach where the inclusion of them may have been potentially trigger and/or emotionally difficult given the migration / absence of their family member.

## Demographics

This section presents the demographic results of the study population.

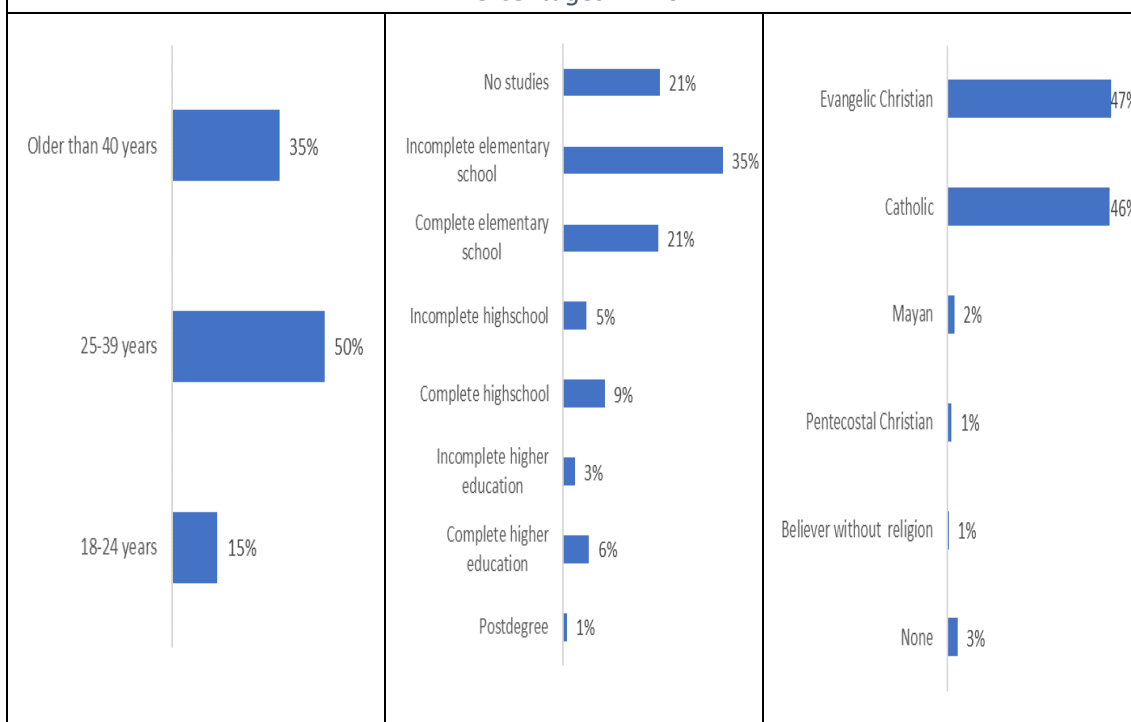
Of those interviewed, 79% were women and 21% men, as illustrated in the below chart. The estimated population projection for Guatemala in 2022, based on the INE 2018 census, is 49% male and 51% female (DataExport, 2020). However, since this survey focused on households where a member of the nuclear family had migrated, a greater representation of women in the households was found. According to the literature and general trends, this was anticipated as men tend to be more likely to migrate.



Data was collected on survey participants' ages. According to these data, 15% of respondents were between 18 and 24 years old, 50% were between the ages of 25 and 39 years old, and 35% were 40 years old or older. The average age of survey participants was 34 years old. Seventy-three percent of those surveyed said they knew how to read and write, while 27% said they did not know how to read and write. Among those who have had access to education, the majority reported having attended primary school (35%), as shown in Figure 2.



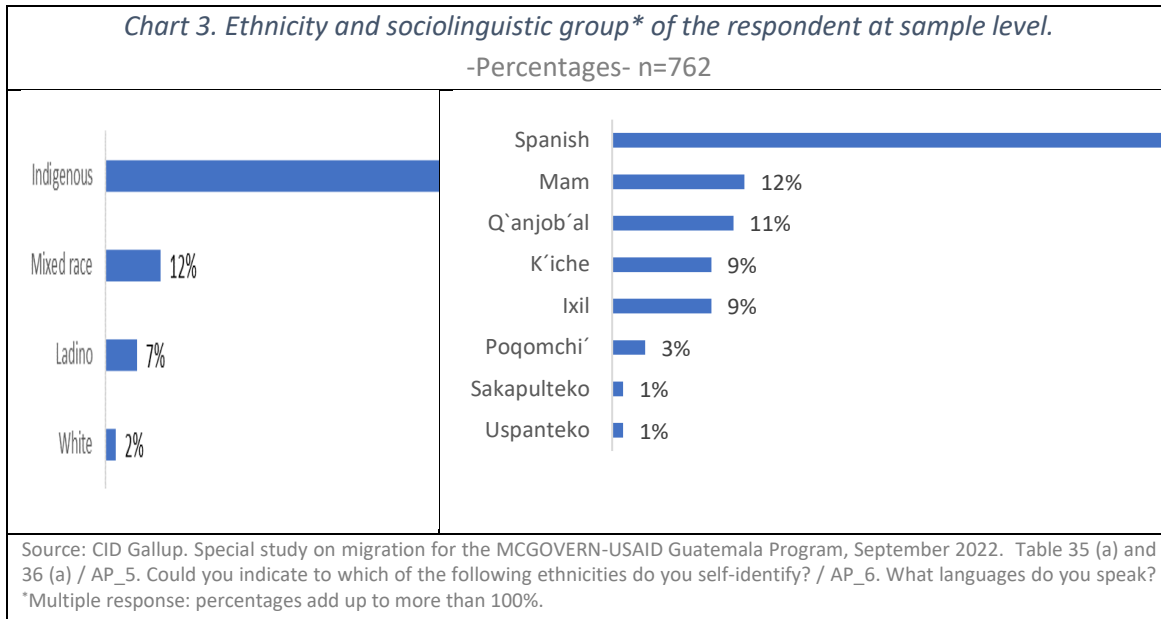
Figure 2. Age, education and religion of the respondent at the sample level.  
-Percentages- n=762



Source: CID Gallup. Special study on migration for the MCGOVERN-United StatesUSAID Guatemala Program, September 2022. Table 2 A- What is your age in years completed / DG\_04.

According to the National Employment and Income Survey ENI of 2015, the educational level reached by most of the population men and women aged 15 years and older is primary with 40%, followed by basic with 16%, followed by diversified with 19% and 4% for the higher or university level. (INE, 2016).

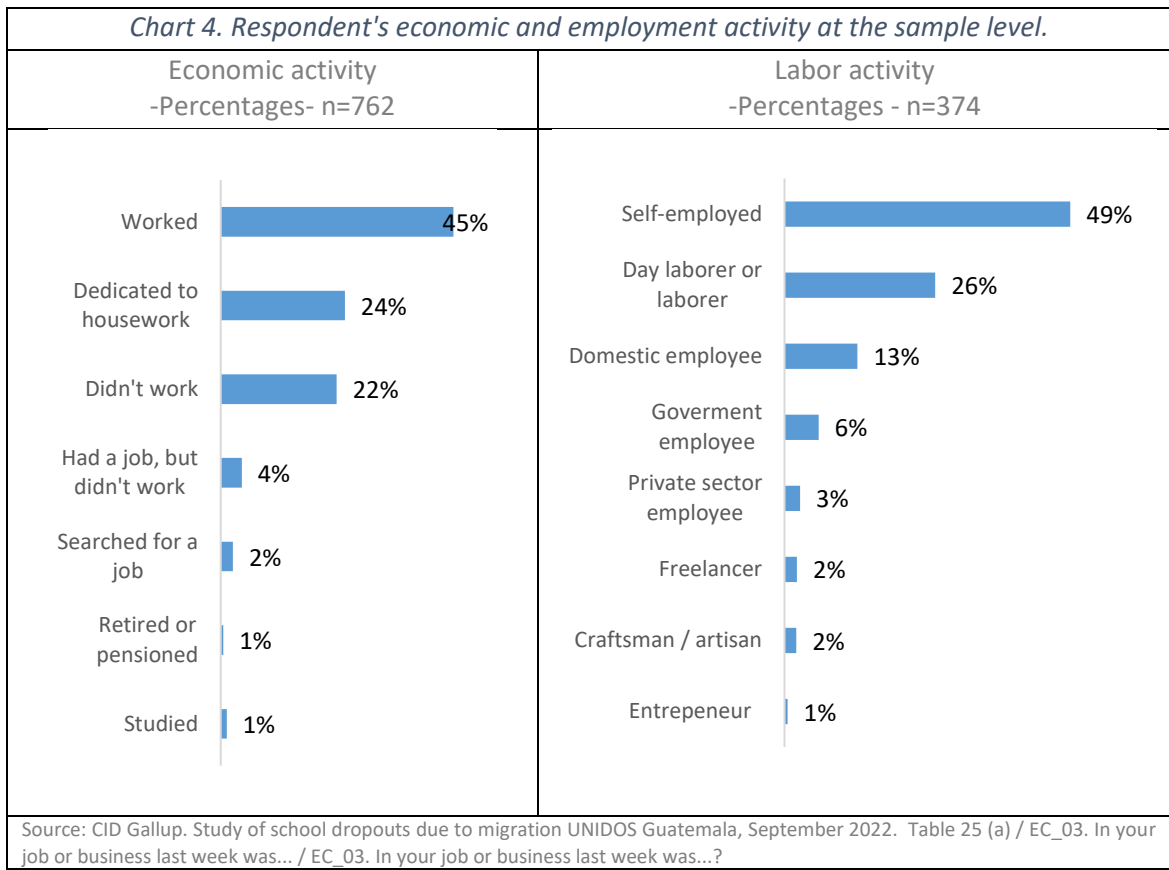
In the document, *Guatemala: 2017 Report on Freedom of Religion, from the Embassy of the United States of America*, it is indicated that according to the consulting firm ProDatos in 2015, approximately 45% of the population is Catholic and 42% is Protestant, in addition, about 11% of the population does not profess any religion and that among the groups together constitute less than 3% of the population are Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Jews and adherents of the Mayan, Xinca and Afro-indigenous Garifuna religions (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2020).



Within the ethnicity or peoples with which the respondents identified themselves, the majority said they belonged to the indigenous/Maya people (78%), followed by mestizo or ladino (19%), while 2% said they were white, as shown in Figure 3. According to the results of the 2018 INE Census on the self-identified ethnicities of the Guatemalan population, 42% of the population identify as indigenous/Maya and 56% as Ladino (INE, XII National Population Census and VII Housing Census, 2018). According to the same Census, in the departments of Huehuetenango and Quiché, 65% of the Huehuetecos and 89% of the Quichelenses self-identify themselves as indigenous/Maya, while 35% and 11% consider themselves Mestizos or Ladinos respectively.

Among the respondents who answered that they belong to an indigenous ethnic group, 45% indicated that they speak some Mayan language as shown in Figure 3, 12% speak Mam, 11% speak Q'anjob'al, in the same proportion 9% indicated that they speak Ixil and K'iche', 3% speak Poqomchi', and 1 % indicated that they speak Sakapulteko and Uspanteko.

Figure 4 presents respondents' occupations and, subsequently, the sector to which they belong. Forty-five percent indicated that they worked outside the home the week prior to the survey, while 24% were engaged in housework. Forty-nine percent of respondents said they were self-employed, 26% said they were day laborers, 13% said they worked in the home, 6% said they were civil servants, and 3% said they worked in the private sector.

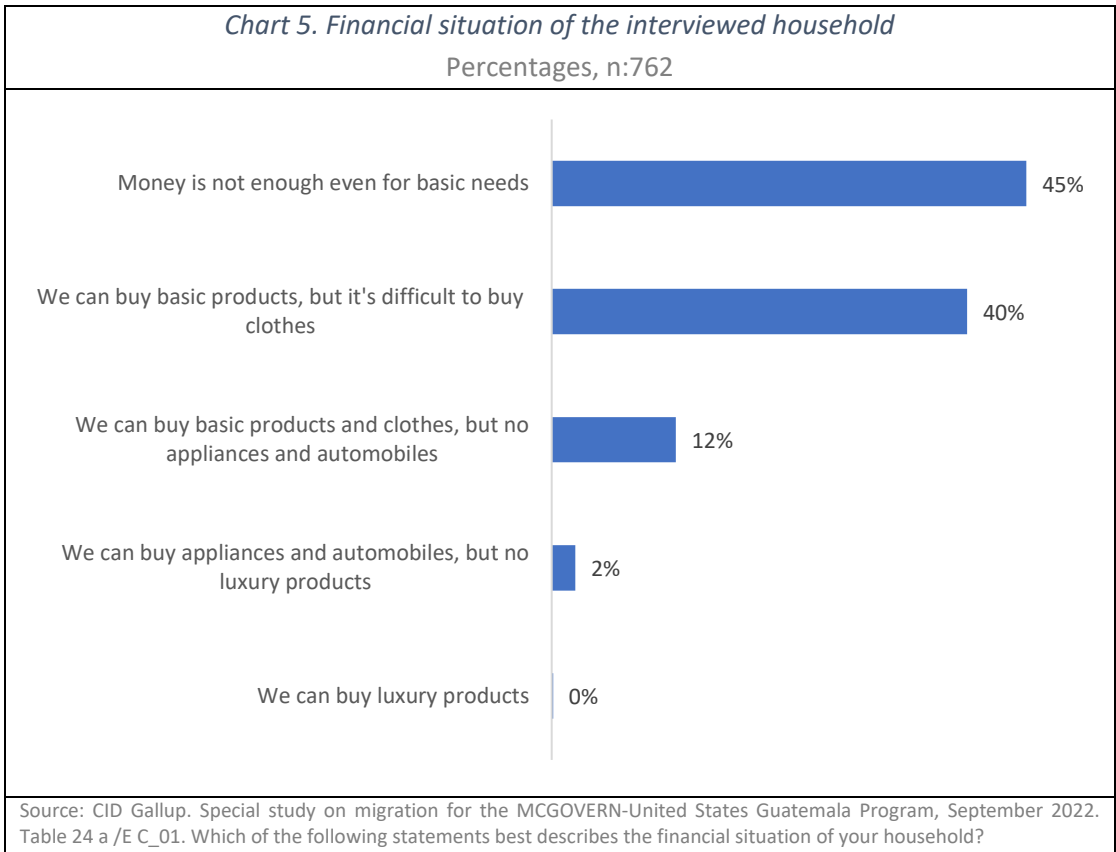


## Presentation of Findings Regarding Study Hypotheses

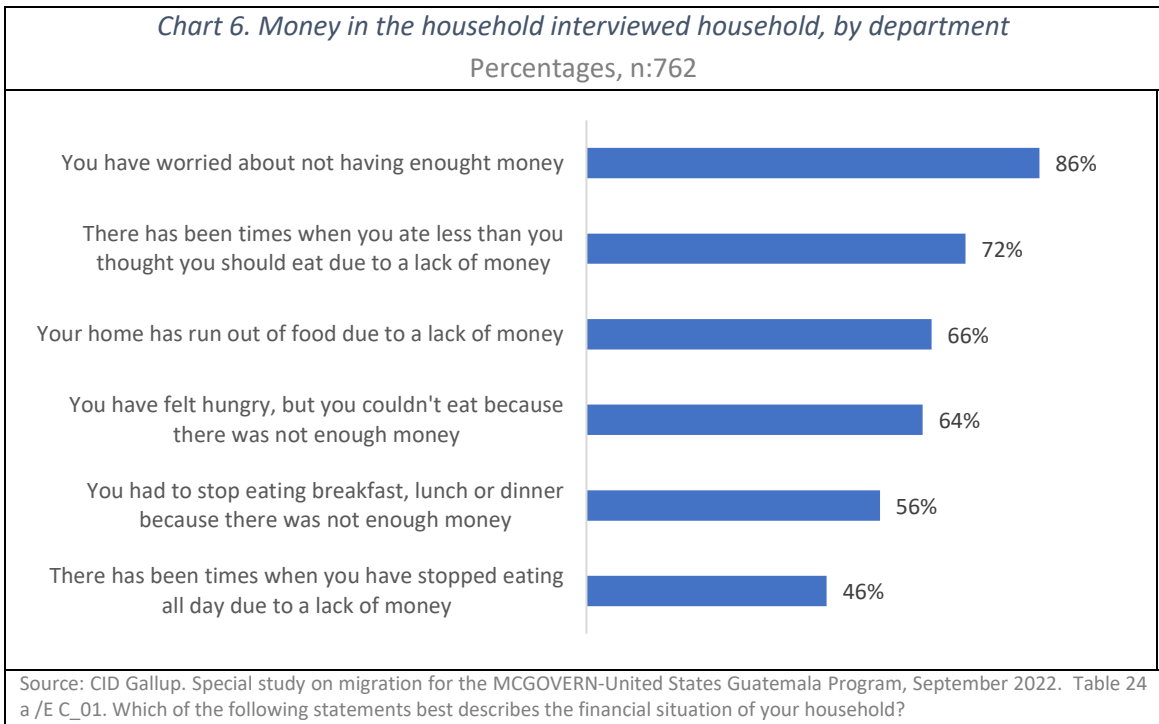
### 1) Structural conditions of poverty, marginalization and exclusion determine the process of irregular migration process in Huehuetenango and Quiché.

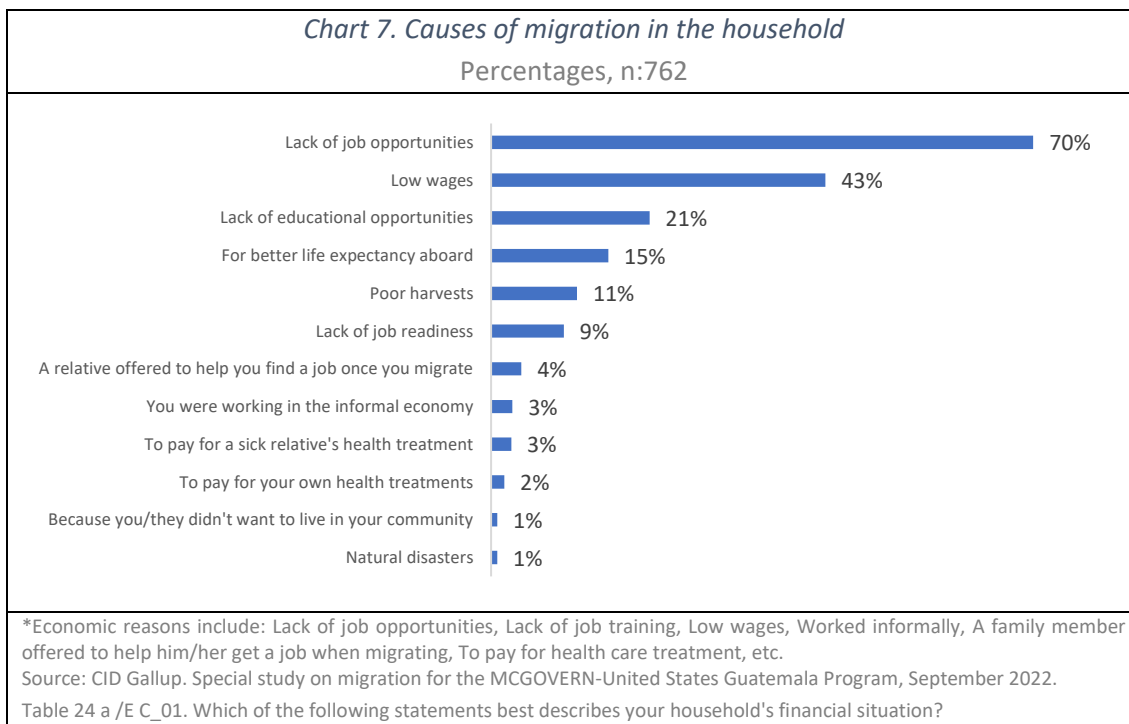
The first section focuses on the first hypothesis, which seeks to prove that the structural conditions of poverty, marginalization and exclusion determine the process of irregular migration in Huehuetenango and Quiché. The analysis is based on family surveys, discussion groups and information from secondary sources. Among the results obtained, it stands out that the great majority (73%) attribute the reasons for migrating to economic reasons. In turn, the lack of state presence, which is reflected in the lack of opportunities (lack of employment and poorly paid, poor education levels, food shortages, etc.) perpetuate the cycle of poverty, leading to an overwhelming sense of hopelessness that ultimately pushes people to migrate in search of a better life in which they find themselves.

As shown in Graph No. 06Figure 5, respondents were asked to listen to a series of statements and choose the one that best describes their current household situation, approximately half of the households interviewed (45%) indicate that money is not enough to cover even basic needs. When looking by department, the municipality reporting the greatest needs is Chajul, in Quiché (62%), and Santa Eulalia (51%) in Huehuetenango. Disaggregating the data by sex, 47% of women and 39% of men indicate that money is not enough, which reveals a gender imbalance, with women more vulnerable to the effects of poverty.-. Likewise, those with less schooling are the ones who suffer the most from the consequences of the lack of resources (48%).



In Figure 6, it is possible to observe that 86% of the respondents in the last year have been concerned about money issues.






In addition to the graphs that provide an overview of the situation of those surveyed, the study found that in all the discussion groups the lack of employment and decent wages were mentioned as the two main reasons why people are thinking of migrating (Figure 7). This is consistent with the increase in the price of the Basic Basket (Q3,264.62/\$417USD) and the Expanded Basket (Q7,453.53/\$952USD) at the beginning of 2022.<sup>2</sup> (Congreso de la República de Guatemala, 2022)). On the other hand, the interviewees argued that the absence of the government support to meet the basic needs of the population and implement aid programs is absent in their communities, so they think that the only option to improve the quality of life and ensure a good future for families is to leave the country.

*"I have a daughter in the United States and she is fighting for her life, she works hard out of necessity because here there is a lot of need. In, there is poverty, in all of Guatemala, everywhere we look there is poverty, or rather, there is no work. We, although we want to work, but there is nowhere consistent, there is a little, for example, in the coffee harvest, we women take advantage of that because we know how to cut the coffee, because here all the people suffer from poverty and in all of Guatemala there is poverty and for that reason our people migrate to the United States and in my case my daughter who left, she is the one who feeds me, she supports me. - GF, Huehuetenango.*

Material difficulties, on the other hand, force children and adolescents to abandon their studies and enter the labor force in order to generate income to help their families. (Acevedo, 2000). In turn, participants mention that it is mentioned that exclusion and discrimination often prevent them from obtaining jobs in the country, which motivates them, from a very early age, to seek options to migrate irregularly and work in construction, agriculture or other trades that do not require certifications but tend to be well paid.

<sup>2</sup>According to the INE (2022), the Basic Food Basket is composed of the the energy and protein needs of a family, even considering cultural relevance. The Expanded Basket is the set of goods and services that meet the minimum needs of a family, including food, clothing, housing, furniture, health, communications, transportation, recreation and culture, education, restaurants and hotels and various goods and services.



*"I have a son who was already studying third grade, but he did not finish the year because he went to work because there was no more money; he went to work in a mechanic shop (colloquial term that refers to a place where vehicles are repaired) and he went to work in Mexico, his father wanted him to return to study again, but he did not want to." - GF, Quiché.*

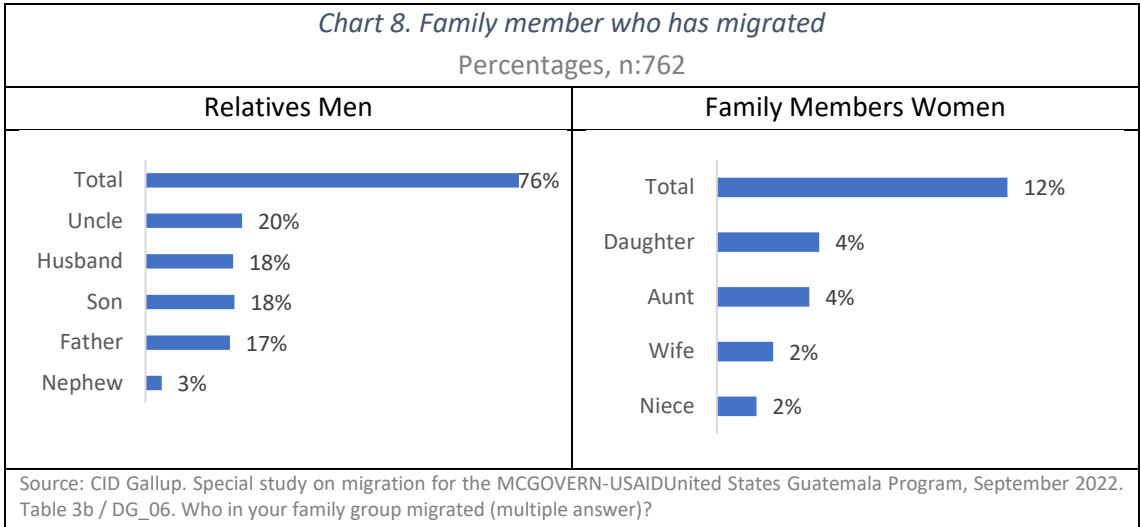
The reasons for staying in the country are diminishing, especially because there is no foreseeable economic improvement in the country's future. The cycle of poverty is more evident than ever and more difficult to break free from, as the interviewees shared their experiences in which they have been rejected and have limited job opportunities because they do not have a high level of education or because of a language barrier. They mentioned that many times they have tried to look for work in other parts of the interior of the country or in the capital, but several things tend to happen: first, the remuneration does not correspond to the level of work they do; second, if they get the job, they are mistreated for speaking differently or for being indigenous; and third, they are often rejected for having a limited level of education (primary and basic secondary education). This makes people begin to look for other opportunities outside the country because they see experiences of other family members or friends working abroad and perceive that they do not suffer in the same way as they do, and that they receive fair remuneration for the work done.

## 2.) Migration forces to assume new roles in the family structure

The second section focuses on whether students with a parent who has migrated irregularly are forced to assume new family roles based on the family surveys and focus groups. In this sense, at a general level, it can be observed that new roles have been assumed due to family members migrate and one parent having to bear the burden of raising children or an elder child or grandparents stepping in to take care of young children, for example.

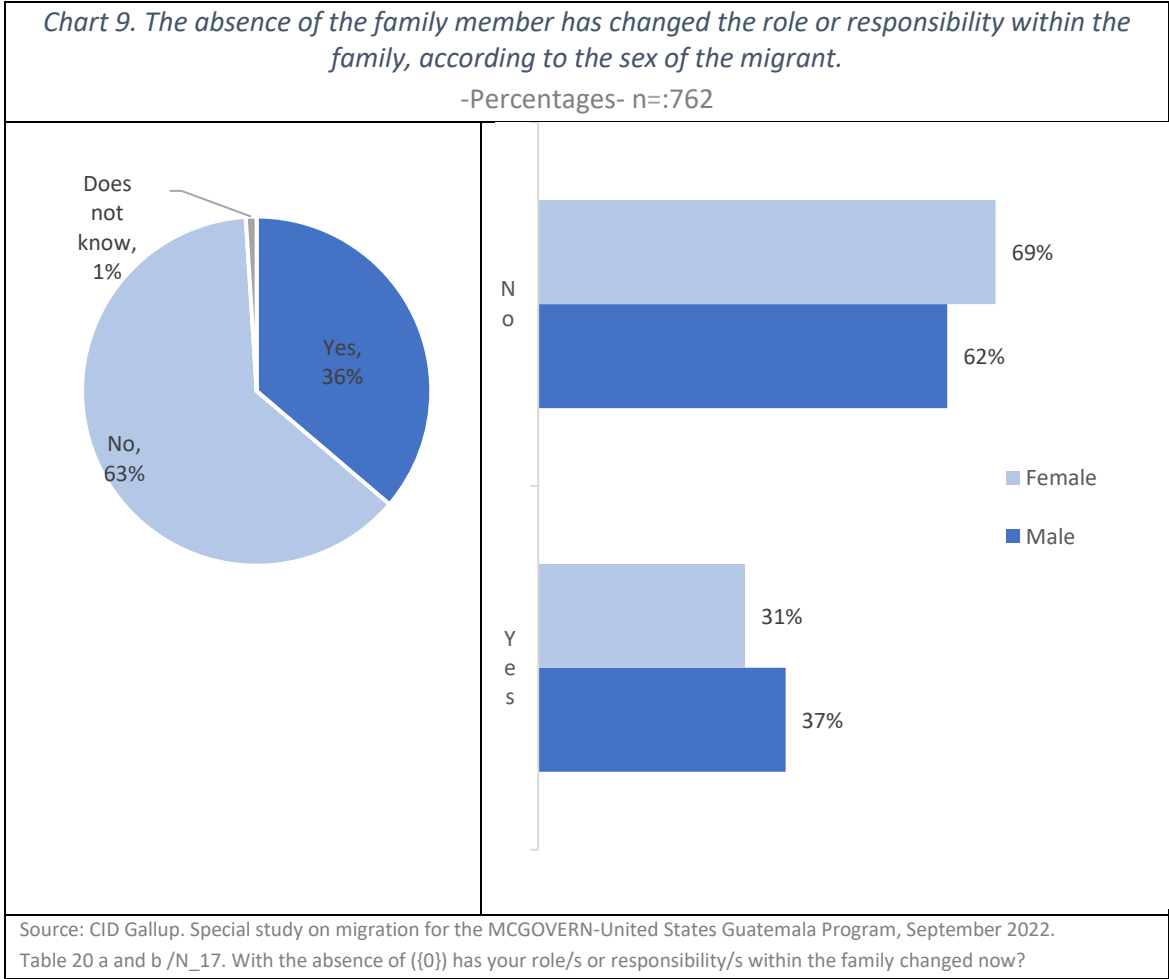
To contextualize irregular migration, Figure 8 presents which family members migrate the most at the total level, disaggregated by sex and at the departmental level. Fourteen percent of respondents stated that some family member has migrated. As the graph indicates, male family members (79%) tend to migrate more than female family members (12%). (Portal de Datos sobre Migración, 2021) The following family members are more likely to migrate: husband/father (35%), son (18%) and uncle (20%) versus daughter (4%), aunt (4%), wife (2%) and niece (2%). In this case, the fact that women migrate less may be due to the risks and vulnerability to which they are exposed during their journeys. (Parrini Roses, 2018). Taking into account the sample interviewed in this study, it can be interpreted that, at the total level (79% of women; 21% of men), women are less likely to migrate than men.



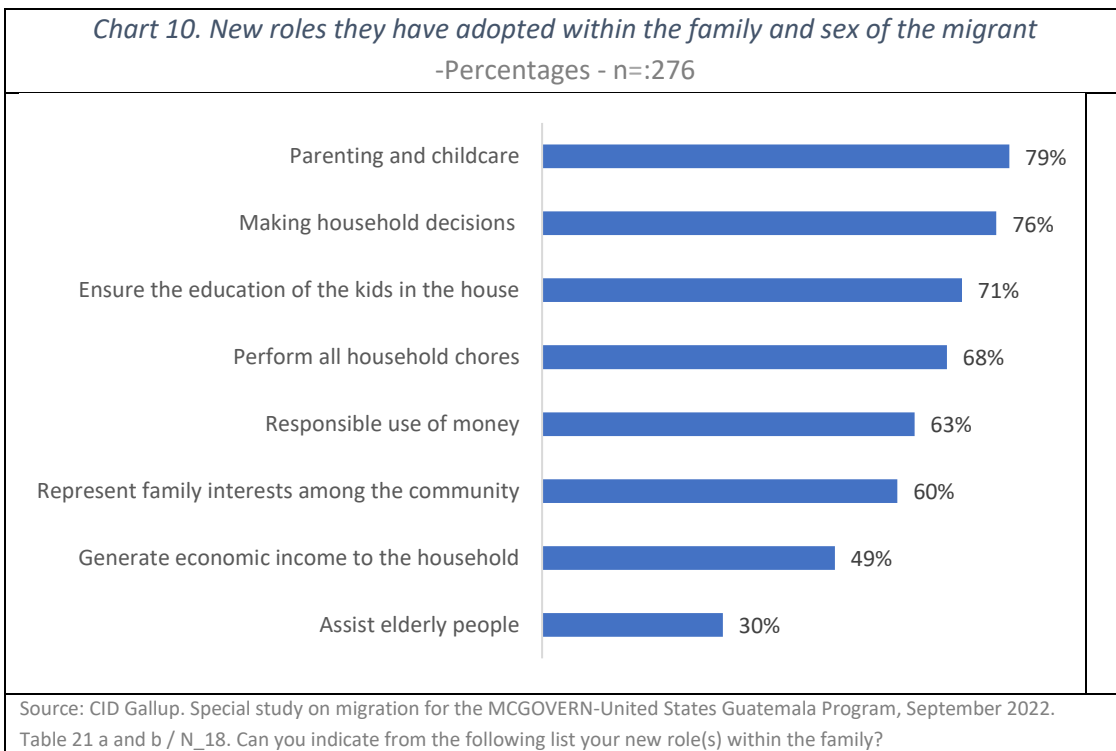


Another element that stands out from the surveys is that the role of the family member who migrated varies according to the age of the respondents. For example, in the case of people between 18-24 years old, they stated that it is their fathers or uncles who migrate; respondents between 15-39 years old, it is their husbands; and people over 39 years old, it is their sons.

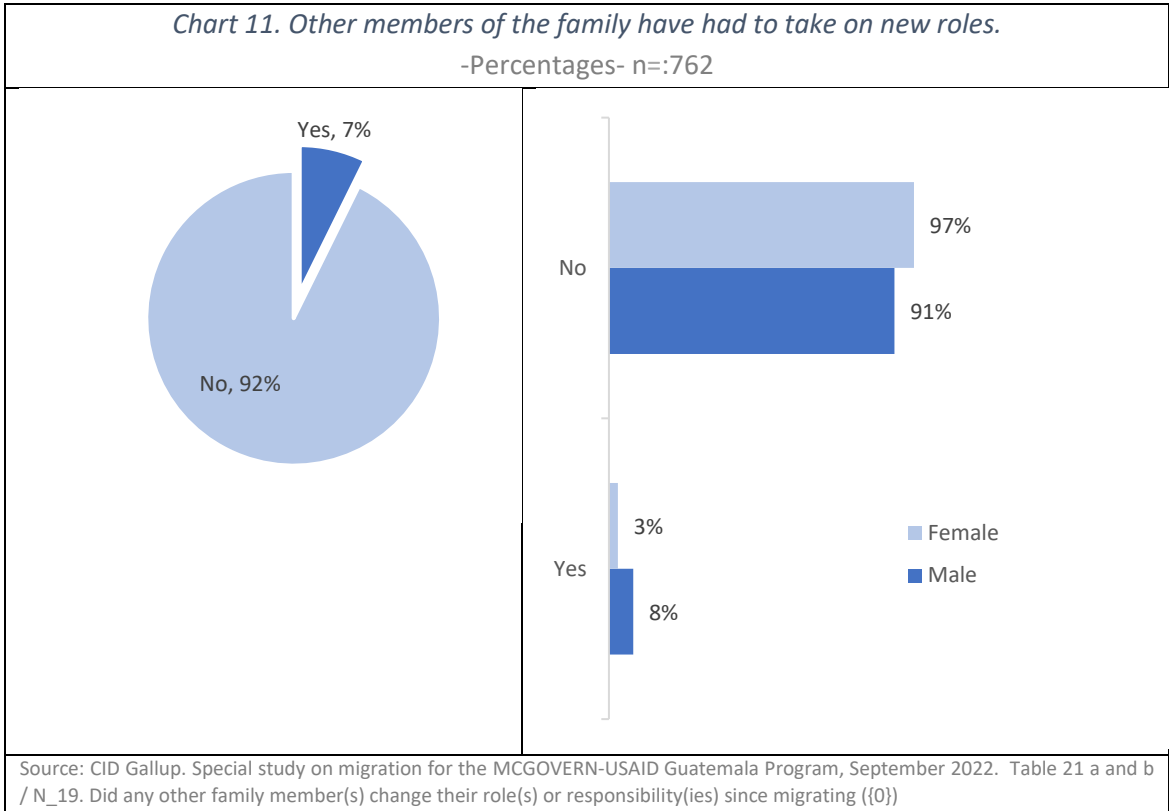
Understanding the context of migration, Figure 9 presents 36% of the cases in which there was a change of role when a family member migrated and, to a greater extent, when the woman was the one who left. No differences were observed by department, so we can indicate that the change of role is not a matter of geography but rather of family structure.



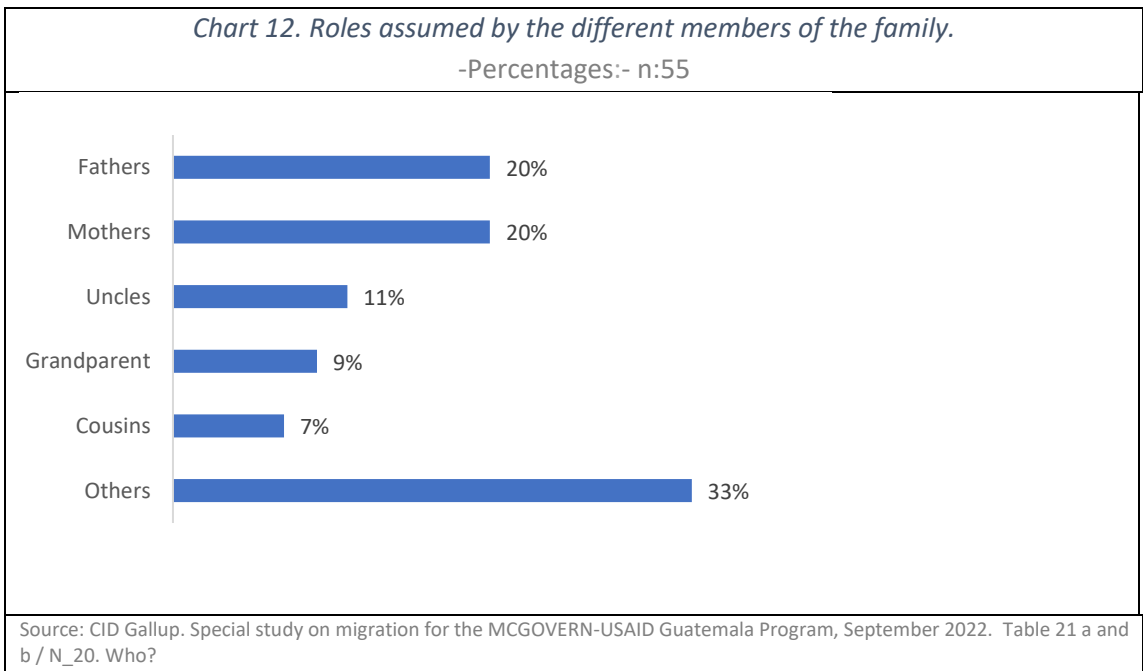
The main role changes identified in this study are raising children in the home (Huehuetenango 80% and Quiché 77%), followed by making decisions in the home (73% in Huehuetenango and 80% in Quiché) and taking care of the children's education in the home (Huehuetenango 66% and Quiché 75%). This reinforces the fact that there is an alteration in the role of upbringing and the responsibility of educating children at home. Although this incidence is not a constant reference for those surveyed, it is a topic that should be studied in greater depth to better understand the influence of the migration of one of the family members on the children, and especially on their education. For example, when the father migrates and the mother remains as head of household, it is common for the migrant's family to move in with the paternal grandparents, who share the upbringing of the children. (Consejo Nacional de Población, s.f.) This information is reinforced by the focus groups conducted with the different members of the household.




When asked if other family members have assumed new roles, only 7% responded affirmatively, which indicates that there is not a drastic change in the roles of those surveyed as seen in Figure 10. Within this 7% (n=55), the new roles identified in the migrants' families were mainly to take care of the education of the children of the household raising and caring for the children, responsible for the use of the money that the migrant(s) send to the family. Parenting and responsibility for the children are observed as the most important roles that can shift particularly when a head of household migrates.



This change in roles can be explained in the sense that, traditionally speaking, men have played the role of resource provider, as they are the ones who migrate and send remittances. It is important to note that technological advances in telecommunications allow families to stay connected from a distance, so that the roles that men had within their families are not completely lost, or at least their families do not perceive a radical change. If it is the woman who migrates, the change of role has a clearer impact, as a close relative takes over the upbringing and care of the children.





In the discussion groups conducted with household members of legal age, it was stated that there is an abrupt change when someone migrates and that the restructuring is one of the biggest challenges for everyone, since new responsibilities must be assumed. This implies more burdens and stress to keep the family together and keep the children in school. During these discussions, participants mentioned that one of the biggest challenges faced, especially by women, is the responsibility of being "father and mother at the same time", as they must educate the child, accompany and support him/her, while at the same time correcting and controlling his/her behavior. This second task of correcting behavior is traditionally the role of the father figure.

*"The father was the one who corrected them, gave them order and control, the one with the strong hand and the one they were afraid of. Now it's my turn to scold them and put them in control, but they don't pay much attention to me, it's a struggle to get them to listen to me the first time" - GF, Huehuetenango.*

In addition, the departure of the men, who are usually the breadwinners, forces women to find jobs while the economy stabilizes again, since the first large payment to be made is for the "coyote" and the person's first expenses of the person in the United States or Mexico. Some women mention that they used to dedicate themselves only to housework and childcare, while now they have had to go out and look for a job that generates an income, even a small one.


*"I didn't work before, but he left, and since he didn't send money at the beginning, and we had to pay to get the paper for the land title again, I had to start to see where to wash clothes, or cook, and clean other houses, because it's not much money, but it's something to start to help here while we wait for him to get a job and send us money" - GF, Huehuetenango.*

Another responsibility that has fallen on women, or on the person who is left in charge, is that of ensuring that children and adolescents continue their studies. In this regard, it is noted that the first thing they think about is dropping out of school for different reasons: they have more freedom; they feel sad; or because they want to migrate with the father, whereas before it was not a problem to keep the children in school.

*"I have a lot of responsibility now, because I am the one who is fighting for my children to study. He is there and sends the money, but I see that the children have everything and also that they are attending and don't start to hang around. " - GF, Quiché.*

From the perspective of the other sons, or men in the household, the fact that the male figure or head of the household migrates makes them think that they, as men, should be responsible for the mother and the other remaining members of the household. This idea is so ingrained that boys, upon completing the primary school cycle, refuse to continue their educational development in order to take control and provide for the household economically as well. In addition, some young people comment that they have had experiences in which parents who have migrated stop sending money or stop communicating, so they are forced to go out to look for work and generate income for the household.

*"When my father left, everything was fine, he built us a house and everything went smoothly, but then he didn't send any money. I know what he thought and he looked for another woman, and we had to work, I had to leave school because I could see that my mother couldn't do it, and being the man of the house I had to do it"- GF, Huehuetenango.*



Finally, it was mentioned by teachers and community leaders that many children are left orphaned and in the care of an aunt or grandmother. When this happens, they are the ones who directly receive the remittances from their parents and, being very young, they do not know how to manage the money, so they begin to make poor decisions, fall in with a bad crowd, get taken advantage of and often begin to consume alcohol or other drugs. This situation of being left in the care of someone other than the father leaves them vulnerable and easily influenced to make bad decisions, because "there is no one to control them".

*"The parents are working and they are out of control here, spending their money, getting into drugs or bad things. All because the mom or dad is looking for a better future for the family"-  
Teacher, Huehuetenango*

In general, the three main responsibilities, or new roles that the family members of a migrant must assume are 1) raising the children (correcting behavior and educating them), 2) keeping the children in school, and 3) assuming economic responsibility for the household (going out to work and managing money). At the departmental level, there are no major differences between departments, although the roles do vary if it is the mother or father who migrates. Men are more likely to migrate than women, and women are the ones who tend to fulfill the roles left by men in the household.

### 3.) Separation from family due to irregular migration affects school behavior

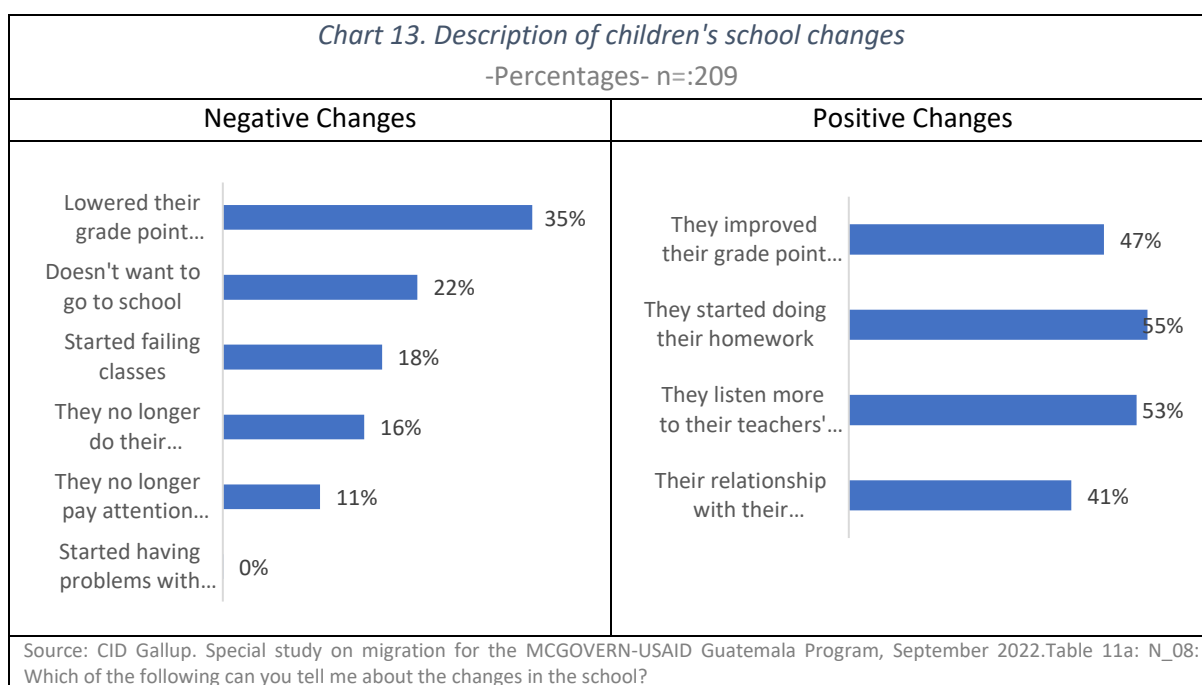
The third hypothesis focuses on the effects of irregular migration on students' school behavior and their relationship with teachers and classmates. In this sense, the analysis includes family surveys and in-depth interviews, which allow us to observe a broader panorama of the effects of this phenomenon on children.

At the total level, more than a quarter (27%) of the respondents stated that the children did experience changes at the time the family member migrated (Figure 13), 22% of the total respondents from Huehuetenango and 33% from Quiché. Disaggregated by sex, the data is very similar among those who reported observing changes in the children, 29% of men and 27% of women. When dividing the responses into age groups, a similar trend can be observed, 27% in the 18 to 24 years age group; 27% from 25 to 39 years of age; and 29% among respondents aged 40 years and older. The following graphs will show the types of changes observed; it is worth noting that the vast majority of the changes identified are positive. A review of migration studies in similar contexts helps to explain this phenomenon. While it was outside of the scope of the research to conduct an investigation to identify the reasons behind the changes, one might speculate, as other research has suggested, that the provision of remittances which helps to alleviate some of the economic root causes of migration helps to keep children in school by allowing households to more easily pay for education and/or other household costs and needs without needing to send the children to work. While this has been demonstrated in other research it was not affirmed or negated during the course of this study.

Regarding the changes perceived in the children since the migration of the family member, it is worth noting that they can be positive or negative, as shown in Figure 28. With respect to positive behaviors, 47% of the total number of respondents (39% from Huehuetenango and 53% from Quiché) mentioned that the children's grade point average grades of the children


improved after the family member's departure of the family member; 55% (47% from Huehuetenango and 60% from Quiché) affirmed that said that the children now the children do their homework; 41% (27% in Huehuetenango and 51% in Quiché) improved their said that the relationship with their classmates improved; and 53% of the total (42% in Huehuetenango and 60% in Quiché) listened more to the teachers' instructions.

From the negative point of view, low percentages are observed in comparison to the positive changes; no behavior is higher than 50%, identifying that 35%. Thirty-five percent of the total respondents mentioned that the children lowered their children's grade point average has dropped since the family member's migration of the family member (35% in both departments);; 22% do not want to go to school anymore (25% in Huehuetenango and 21% in Quiché);; 16% no longer do all their homework (17% in Huehuetenango and 15% in Quiché); ; and 18% started missing classes (16% in Huehuetenango and 20% in Quiché); 7% started having problems with their classmates (10% in Huehuetenango and 5% in Quiché); and 11% no longer pay attention to the teachers' instructions (13% in Huehuetenango and 10% in Quiché).



Although in the survey the percentages of negative behaviors are relatively low, in the discussion groups it was possible to perceive that keeping children with good conduct and good behavior is difficult, because the father was the one who assumed the role of disciplining them. In this sense one of the main changes that the students tend to experience is they don't have as much discipline and ignore the instructions of their mothers. Likewise, it is. Likewise, it was mentioned by the participants that, when the mother goes out to work, there is no guidance at home and there is more permissiveness and freedom to keep bad company and leave school without the parents' knowledge, or to have rebellious and disobedient behaviors at school.

*"There is a change, because before when the father was here, they paid attention because they were afraid of him, but now that we are alone they don't pay attention. Their behavior is different when their father was here and different with us now, and we tell him, he tells me that I have to correct them and at school they have to be scolded more, or they have to talk to them differently so that they will pay attention" - GF, Huehuetenango.*



In addition, in all the participatory research, it is mentioned that most of the children are "sick with sadness", and this causes their motivation to attend school to decline, and their school attendance is irregular, besides this sadness makes the children more withdrawn and they share less with classmates and teachers, including them in social activities and group activities becomes a challenge, because the children look listless and unwilling to continue. Teachers should implement new techniques, and should pay special attention to provide support, either in homework or in listening and counseling.

*"I saw that three of them got sick because of sadness, because when the children asked, they told them that their father was coming, they didn't eat, and I cured them of their sadness, and the father called them and told them not to cry and little by little they got used to it"- GF, Quiché.*

In addition, the young people themselves mention that when they had the experience of a father migrating and they were in school, it was very difficult for them to adapt to growing up without a father figure, and not having the support they needed, even as young people of legal age, they resent the absence of the father and recall moments lived in the past with the hope of being reunited with the father in the future. Although the children are aware that the needs and the economic situation of their homes has forced their fathers to leave, it is difficult for them to accept that they must grow up without the father's advice and accompaniment, and they resent this because they have no one to correct them, advise them or give them words of support.

*"The consequences are that we are growing up alone, even though he has left out of necessity, but it would be good if he were with us because there is other advice, other words that he would say to us, that is, the love of a father, and for that reason we are not very "found" (close, in communication) with my father, but only with my mother.*

Teachers in the communities indicate that a child whose parents have migrated, in most cases, presents behavioral changes; they refer that the absence of parents is not only due to permanent migration but also to seasonal migration, mainly in households where the economy depends on agricultural activities. It is common for one parent or both to migrate to coffee plantations in Huehuetenango or Chiapas in Southern Mexico to find work during the harvest season.

*"In rural areas, many parents, when there is a coffee harvest or the harvest, used to take the children with them, but child labor is becoming more and more regulated, so the children who stay behind start to leave because they no longer have control in the house, someone to force them" -Teacher, Huehuetenango*

From the above, it is possible to conclude that 1 out of 4 respondents stated that they perceived changes in the children's school behavior due to the migration of a family member. However, as we have been able to verify, the great majority have been positive changes: improvement in grade point average (47%); improvement in their homework (55%); improvement in their relationship with their classmates (41%); and greater receptiveness to the indications of their teachers (53%), this may be due to the effort in raising the children, assumed by the family members who stay behind. At the departmental level, Quiché concentrates more positive behaviors in children than Huehuetenango. In families where the father was the migrant, men are more likely to migrate than women and, in the absence of fathers, there is a greater likelihood of negative behaviors due to the role of "corrector" that they used to play with their children (strong hand).



#### 4.) Students with a parent who has migrated irregularly have behavioral problems

The fourth section refers to whether there is a change in the behavior of students with a parent who has migrated irregularly. At the total level, one in four households reported having perceived changes in the behavior of the children after the migration of the family member (24% in Huehuetenango and 26% in Quiché). Children who have dropped out of school show greater behavioral changes than those who remained in school after migration.

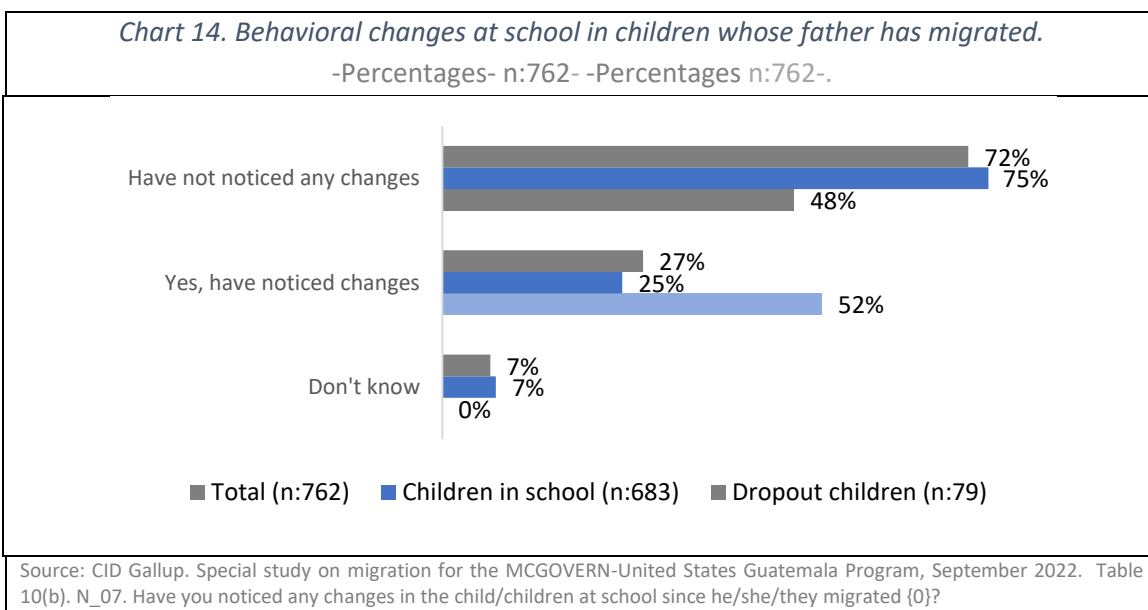
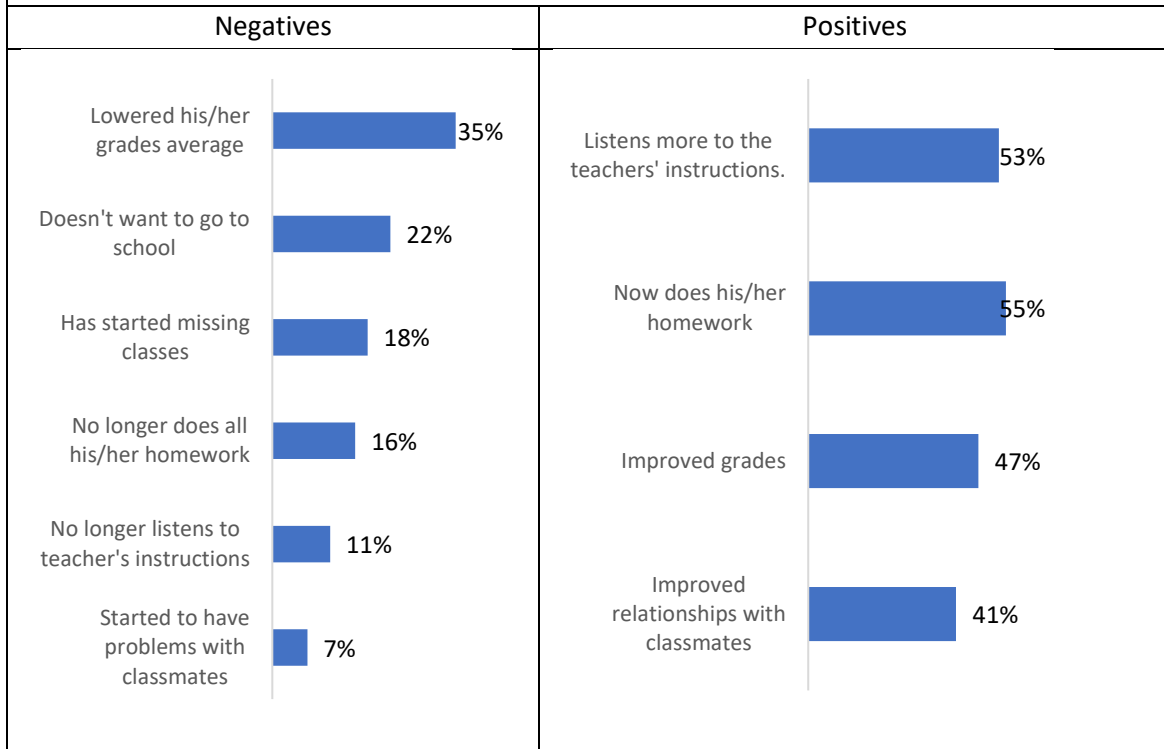


Figure 15 shows that the children's improved their school performance has improved since their relative migrated. The clearest signs can be seen in the child's behavior with his/her peers and school authorities. In this regard, the graph shows that only 11% of the children say that they no longer pay attention to their teachers' instructions, while 53% do listen more to these instructions. The other percentage that demonstrates this improvement in school performance is the completion of homework, since 16% say that children do not do their homework, while 55% do.

**Chart 15. Description of general changes in students whose father has migrated.**

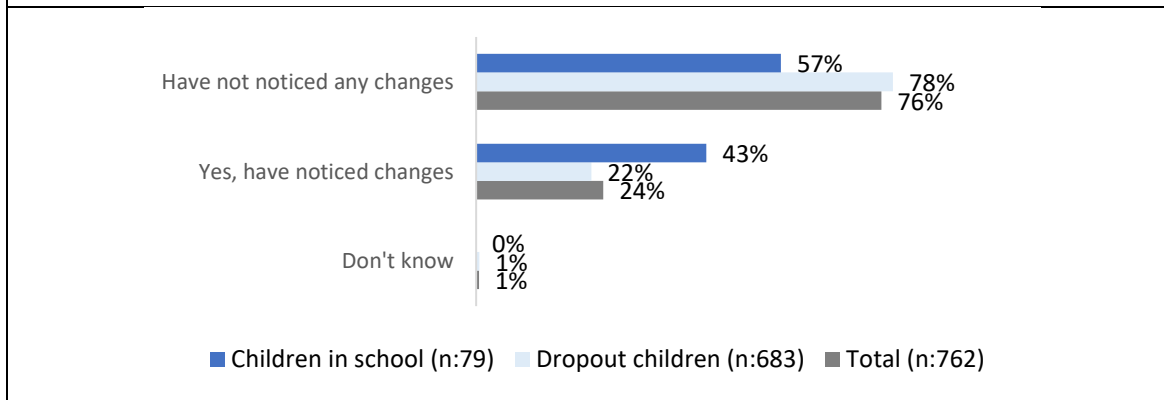
-Percentages,- n:168



Source: CID Gallup. Special study on migration for the MCGOVERN-United States Guatemala Program, September 2022. Table 11(b). N\_07. N\_08. Which one/s of the following list can tell me what are the changes in the school?

**Chart 16. Behavioral changes in students whose father has migrated.**

-Percentages- n:683

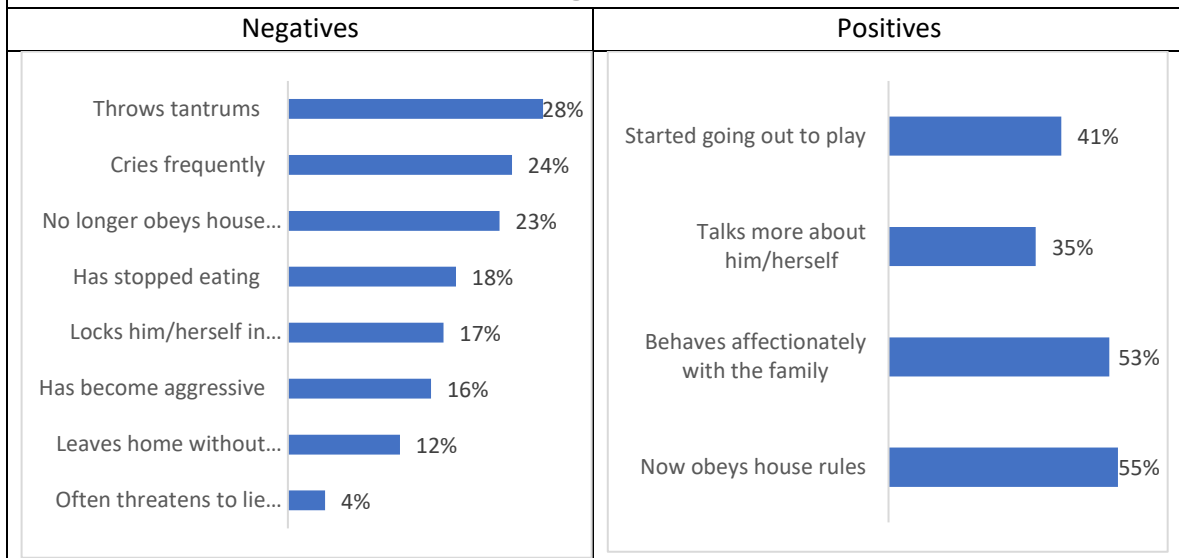


Source: CID Gallup. Special study on migration for the MCGOVERN-USAID Guatemala Program, September 2022. Table 12 b./ N\_09. Have you noticed any change in behavior (way of behaving) in the child/children since they migrated {0}?

Graph 17 shows that of the total number of children, 78% were in school and had no behavioral changes after the family member migrated; on the other hand, 22% who were not in school did have behavioral changes. Overall, the dropout rate rose to 43%, which can be taken as a consequence of a behavioral change and/or a behavioral change in itself.

Chart 17. General Behavioral changes in students whose father has migrated (outside school).

-Percentages- n:147181

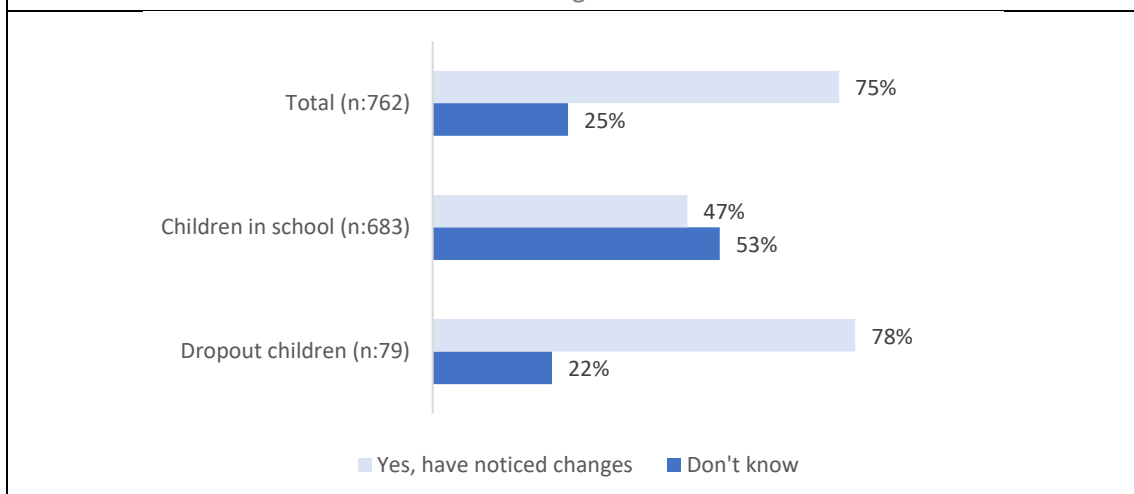


Source: CID Gallup. Special study on migration for the MCGOVERN-USAID Guatemala Program, September 2022. Table 13(b)/N\_10. Which of the following list(s) can tell me what are the changes in behavior?

Graph 18 describes in a better way the changes in the children's behavior, the numbers indicate that the positive changes were more than the negative ones, since 55% affirmed that the children began to comply with the rules of the house, 53% said that they behaved more affectionately with the family, and 35% talked more about themselves. The most significant negative change is that they throw tantrums that they did not do before, as 28% say so. However, the highest negative change (28%) does not even reach the lowest percentage of positive changes (35%), therefore, it can be inferred that since the family member migrated, the children have presented more positive than negative changes. However, it should be confirmed that 28% began to present negative changes derived from the migration of the relative, which is significant, since it would be almost 1/3 of the sample.

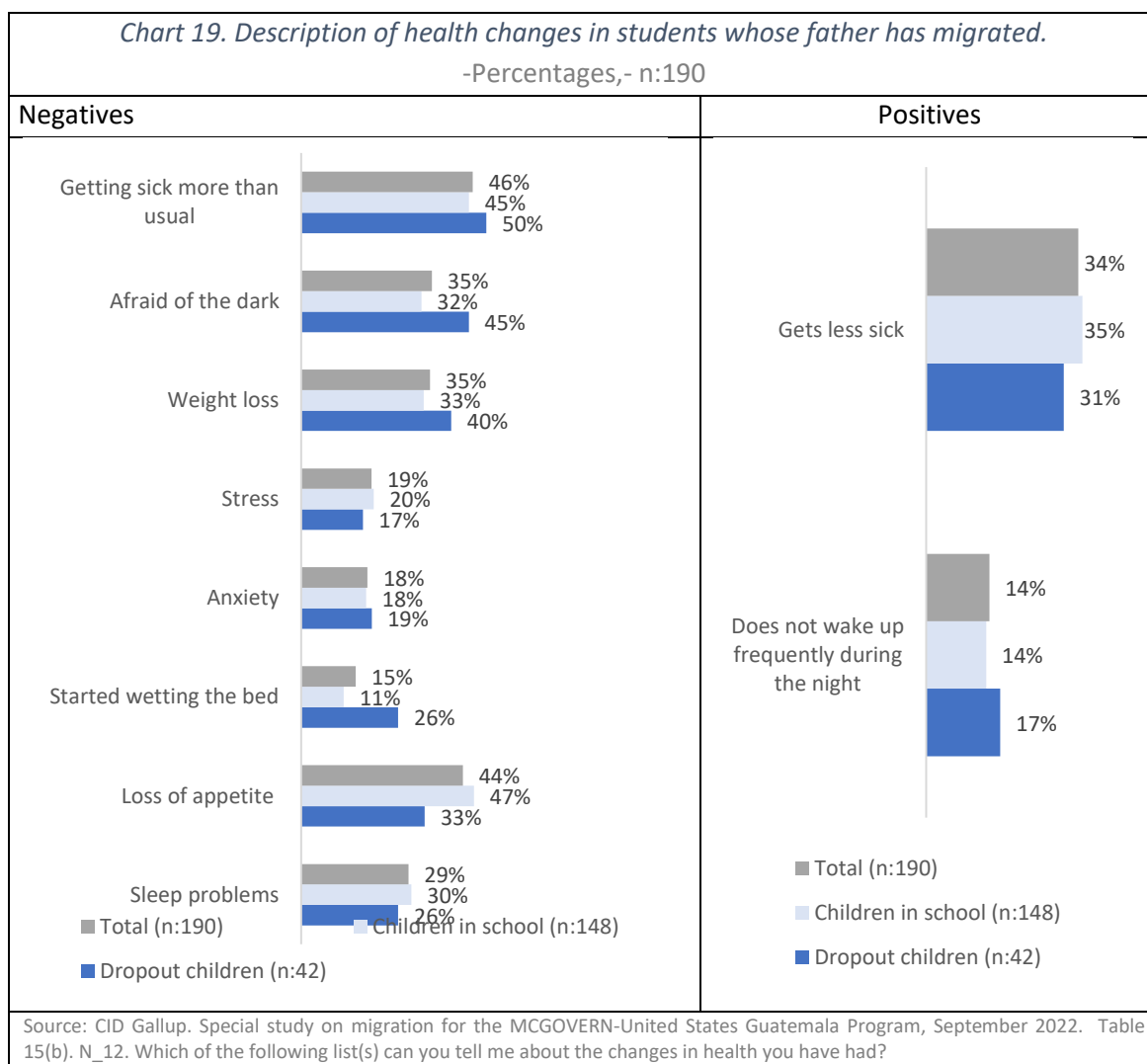
Chart 18. Changes in the health of students whose father has migrated.

-Percentages- n:683

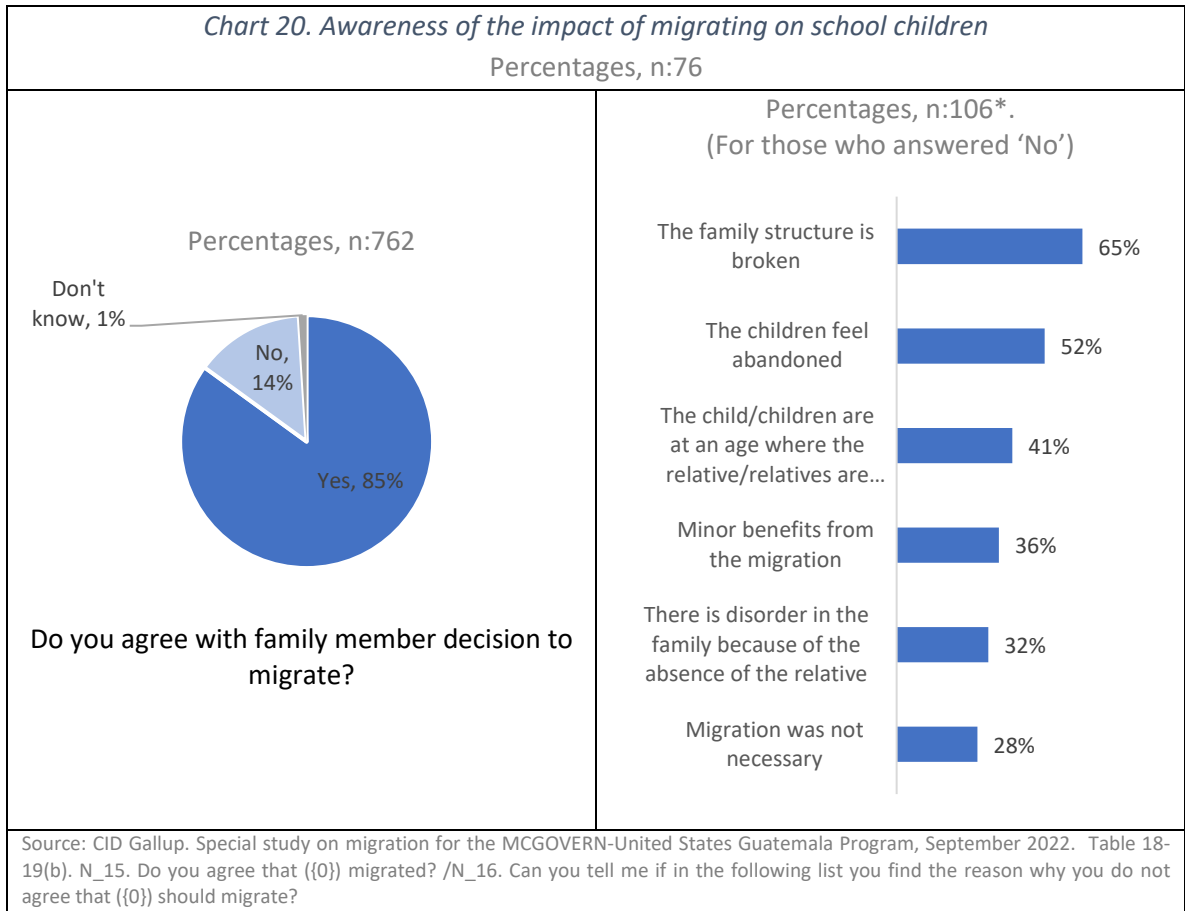


Source: CID Gallup. Special Study on Migration for the MCGOVERN-USAID Guatemala Program, September 2022. Table 13(b)/N\_10. Which of the following list(s) can tell me what are the11. Have you noticed any changes in the health? of your child/children since you migrated {0}?

Figure 19 shows the changes in children's health since the family member migrated. These physical changes may be due to psychological conditions that concern or affect the children of these migrant relatives. Most are found to have high percentages of negative health changes, such as loss of appetite (44%), getting sick more often (46%) and even fear of the dark (35%) and starting to wet the bed (15%). Bedwetting may often involve an emotional situation that directly impacts the child as stress, as stated by the American Academy of Pediatrics (2004), which states that emotional problems are an occasional cause of involuntary urination (bedwetting).



In addition, in five of the negative health changes, children who dropped out were more affected, being those who became sick more than usual (50%), were more afraid of the dark (45%), had greater weight loss (40%), anxiety (19%) and began to wet the bed (26%). Positive changes are also present in almost equal measure equally in children who are in both school children and dropouts in those who dropped out. Thirty-five percent of the children in school began to get sick less, and 31% of the children who dropped out also began to get sick less. However, the percentages indicate that more children in both groups have become sicker since their family member migrated.



The responses in Figure 21 are related to the impact on the behavior of the children, especially in three aspects in which the highest incidence is observed: the family nucleus is broken (65%), the children feel abandoned (52%) and the children are at the age when they most need the migrant family member (41%). This graph shows that the migration of the family member affects children in school and dropouts almost equally. Children who are not in school feel abandoned by the migrant family member (62%). Meanwhile, 51% of children in school feel abandoned. Both children in school and those who have dropped out of school are affected by the breakup of the family nucleus, with percentages of 66% and 62%, respectively.

For the qualitative research, the main finding with respect to this topic is the mention of the different actors who indicate that the children's sadness prevents them from concentrating and they begin to lose motivation and the impetus to get ahead and to prepare themselves academically. Children face the trauma of family disintegration very suddenly, and parents do not prepare them for it, so that many times dropping out of school is only a consequence of the trauma they have had to face individually and without prior psychological preparation.

*"My children sometimes wanted to drop out of school, but I forced them to continue, only basic (high school/middle school) no longer because we don't have the money for that. My daughter went to the States because of the need to overcome, although here you can get money, but only to eat, not to do something in life. Now I am struggling for another son to finish school, but we are trying to get him through. "Mother, Quiché*

## 5.) Students with parents who migrated are more likely to drop out of school

The fifth hypothesis is aimed at testing whether students whose fathers have migrated irregularly are more likely to drop out of school compared to those who have not. Figure 22 presents the data on whether the children dropped out of school since the migration of the family member at the total level: 89% said no and 10% said yes. When disaggregated at the departmental level, 88% and 91% said no in Huehuetenango and Quiché, respectively; while the remaining 12% and 9% said that children did drop out of school since the family member's departure in those departments. As in section three, it was assumed that the effects of irregular migration were directly related to school dropout, but the data indicate a different or insignificant reality, especially when considering that the reasons for migration, in the first instance, are linked to economic deprivation and, on the other hand, are the ones most frequently repeated to explain why children did not continue their studies (Figure 23).

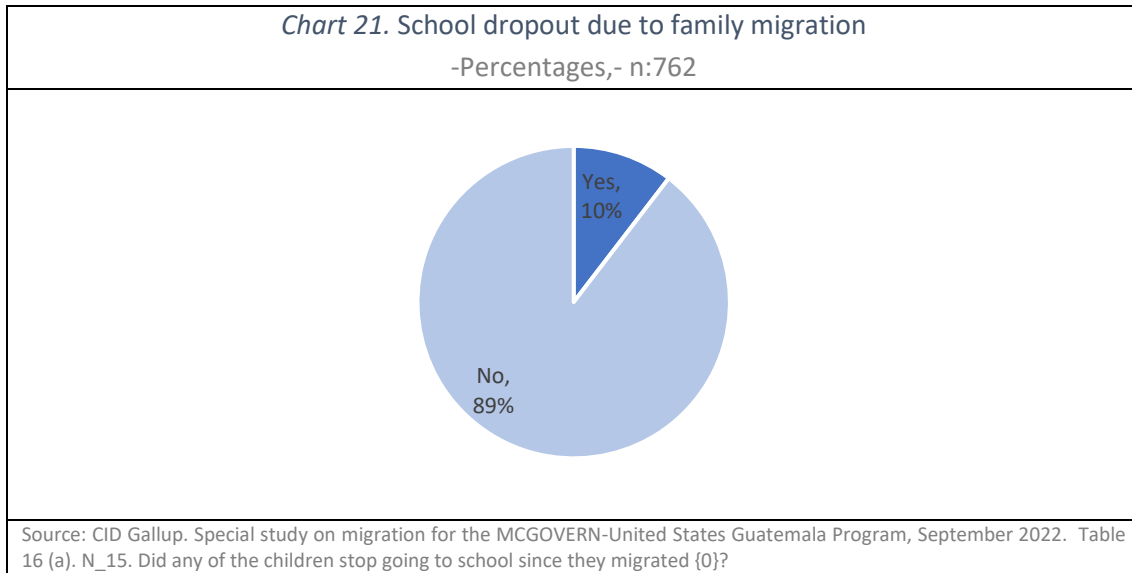
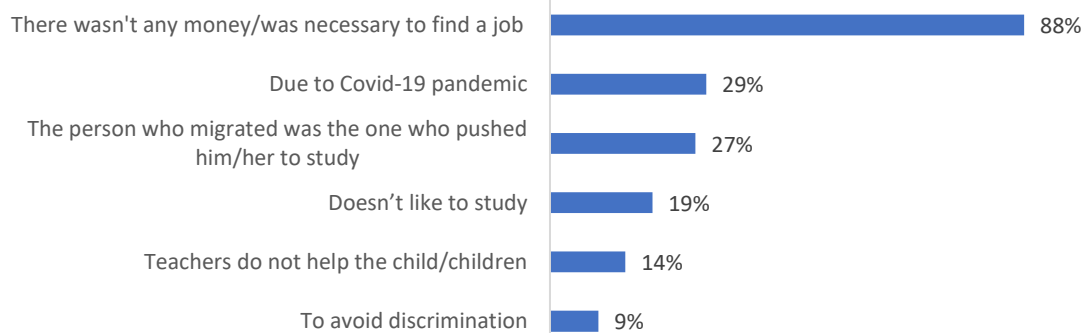


Chart 22. Reasons for dropping out of school by department and sex.

-Percentages- n=:79



Reasons	Total	Who in your family group migrated?		Who migrated?	
		Man	Woman	Boy	Girl
Economic reasons	88%	77%	36%	61%	
The modality due to the pandemic is very complicated.	29%	32%	9%	36%	27%
The migrant was the one who encouraged him to study.	27%		36%	18%	23%
Does not like to study			27%	18%	17%
He preferred to go to work	16%	16%	18%	18%	13%
Teachers do not help the children	14%	14%	9%	11%	7%
To avoid discrimination	9%	10%	0%	7%	3%

Source: CID Gallup. Special study on migration for the MCGOVERN-United States Guatemala Program, September 2022. Table 15(b). N\_12. Which of the following list(s) can you tell me about the changes in health you have had?

The participatory research shows that the decision to drop out of school is considered by children whose parents have migrated, but this idea is also installed in the imagination of young people when they see that the family has unsatisfied needs. In this sense, the migration of the father drives children and adolescents to try to do the same and join them in the country to which they migrated, not only to work and generate more income, but also to rebuild the family bond. Participants mention that children begin to think that they will be better off somewhere else than at school, and do not see the point of continuing their studies since their future is uncertain and the family nucleus has already disintegrated.

*"I think that there is no more opportunity for me to go to study, if I earn more if I leave, it's a waste of time" - GF, Huehuetenango*

Some teachers mention that there are other relevant causes for school dropout, such as teenage pregnancies, forced marriages among minors, poor accessibility of roads to reach schools and poor infrastructure conditions.

*"Sometimes getting to school is a real miracle, especially in this rainy season, when bridges fall down and roads are closed. If it is difficult for an adult, let alone the students" - Teacher, Quiché*

Therefore, in short, it cannot be said that students whose family members have migrated irregularly are more likely to drop out of school than those who have not: 1 in 10 total households (12% in Huehuetenango and 9% in Quiché). On the other hand, economic reasons prevail in explaining why they dropped out, which is a precondition that explains irregular migration itself.





## 6.) UNIDOS activities address, in part, some of the root causes of migration

The following section will address the impact of the projects carried out by UNIDOS, which will allow us to evaluate whether they have been oriented to the most vulnerable populations, specifically in school rehabilitation activities and school feeding activities, and support to local agricultural producers. In Huehuetenango, Educamos was consulted and in Quiché, Lens. In

terms of general poverty, 84.6% of the population lived in this condition in Quiché and 78.3% in Huehuetenango (INE, 2015). This allows us to infer that the projects implemented in the municipalities of interest have had an effect and, above all, have been oriented to the most vulnerable groups that can best benefit from the program. However, one important limitation of the study is to note that given that the UNIDOS project is in start-up phase and hasn't yet begun implementation of activities and that the data collection was carried out at the household level, there is limited ability to gain insights on what the UNIDOS project may or may not impact in regard to the root causes of migration.


Separately, the participatory research through interviews with institutions identified a series of programs or initiatives that have been implemented in both departments. General knowledge about these initiatives is presented in the following table, by program and description of who is implementing them.

It is worth noting that through the different interviews it was identified that many institutions complain about the lack of resources to better implement certain programs, such as food deliveries, or the implementation of workshops and training. In addition, there is a lack of joint work; each organization indicates that it is doing its own work without collectively discussing what other organizations or entities are doing.

Not all institutions have the same knowledge about the situation of vulnerability of the communities in which they work, they themselves allude to the lack of knowledge because "they are overloaded with work and there are not enough people to do the job". It should also be noted that in the interviews conducted with MAGA personnel, a higher level of knowledge about programs implemented at a general level was observed; these people were the ones who provided the most explanations and shared the most information about the different initiatives mapped in the communities, and they were also the ones who knew the most about the empowered women's program.

*"Not many people know about it, but it is important, there are two communities: Esquipulas Tajuin and Pajares, it is a group that was created with the purpose that they can have a community savings. When they have a need they do not have to go to the bank, they are given loans with 5%, advantages: the group can lend only among themselves, the third part of savings. They learn about the importance of animal welfare, they also receive training on topics such as "NO to migration", non-violence, women's rights, women's self-esteem, leadership, and other things. - EEP institutional staff, MAGA.*

In addition, it is worth noting that when interviewing health ministry personnel, they focused on two main areas in which they implement projects and direct their attention to the communities: Pregnant women and nutrition. This is due to the fact that, according to



mapping carried out, and based on experiences receiving patients, these have been identified as the two major problems affecting the population, so that efforts are focused on these areas.

*"I have seen more pregnant women at the health post than before, I don't know why, but they are young women, so we have to take care of them and also ensure that these children are born without malnutrition, which is the other problem, there are women who have more than two children and do not find a way to feed them, they are malnourished, so the two things go hand in hand to do a job"- EEP institutional staff, MSPAS.*

Finally, the MINEDUC states that the programs they are responsible for are to educate and keep children in school so that they can develop academically, however, they have begun to have coalitions with other governmental or non-governmental entities, as they have realized that for children to stay in school there must be comprehensive programs that address other needs that children face, especially food and economic needs. In this sense, the ministry staff mentions that in addition to implementing school insurance and compulsory feeding, they have also begun to create other programs with the help of entities such as Global Communities, who have proposed the implementation of school gardens and family gardens so that the family nucleus of the students have daily food security without having to worry about this basic need that most of the population suffers.

In addition, MINEDUC personnel emphasize that this type of initiative encourages and motivates the population to learn independent survival techniques and makes them have ideas of entrepreneurship with these newly acquired skills, in the words of one interviewee "It encourages independence and the desire to get ahead, people begin to have ideas of how to develop themselves and not wait for the government to provide them with help".



## CONCLUSION

Six hypotheses were proposed in this report, which were addressed by means of household surveys and complemented with in-depth interviews with teachers and family members. Regarding the conditions of poverty, marginalization and exclusion, it was found that these determine the process of irregular migration in Huehuetenango and Quiché, in 4 out of 5 households (73%) it was stated that the reason for migration is economic, highlighting that money is not enough to cover basic needs. The most vulnerable groups are women and people with less schooling. This encourages children to enter the labor force due to the material deficiencies they present at home. Public policies, from the State's point of view, could improve school dropout and irregular migration indicators.


The second hypothesis proposed attempts to verify whether students whose fathers have migrated irregularly are forced to assume new family roles. In this sense, it could be verified since 1 out of 3 (36%) households mentioned that new roles were generated by the migration of the family member. These include: a) raising the children, which implies correcting their behavior and educating them; b) keeping the children in school; and c) assuming economic responsibility for the household (both producing and managing a budget). Men are the most likely (76%) to migrate compared to women (12%), and the latter must fill the gaps left by the father in the family.

With respect to the third hypothesis, which states that family separation from the family due to irregular migration affects the relationships between students and teachers, in addition to school behavior, it was observed that only 1 out of 4 households (27%) stated that they perceived changes in the children's school behavior. On the other hand, the vast majority of the changes identified have been positive, such as improved grade point average (47%); homework completion (55%); improved relationships with classmates (41%); and greater receptiveness to teacher's instructions (53%).

The fourth hypothesis mentions that students with a parent who has migrated irregularly present behavioral problems, which means that in 1 out of 4 homes (25%), it was mentioned that there was a change in the behavior of the students. Among the behavioral changes observed, it was identified that 46% of children get sick more often, 44% show loss of appetite and 35% are afraid of the dark. Among these negative changes, those most affected were children who dropped out of school, while among the positive changes, children with and without dropout were observed.

In the fifth hypothesis, it was proposed that students with a parent who has migrated irregularly are more likely to drop out of school. In that sense, the data analyzed do not allow us to affirm whether this is true or not, since only 1 in 10 households (10%) confirmed that the children stopped attending school after the migration of the family member. It cannot be affirmed that the 10% of children who stopped attending school are due to irregular migration per se since adverse economic conditions are found before and after the event of the family member's migration. However, as mentioned in section five of the report, it falls into the fallacy of a vicious circle, in the sense that unfavorable economic conditions are found before and after irregular migration.

Finally, regarding the sixth and last hypothesis, in which it was questioned whether UNIDOS activities would address, in part, some of the causes of migration. As mentioned previously the study was limited in investigating such a hypothesis given the multi-dimensional nature of





poverty and its links to migration as well as that the UNIDOS project had not yet begun implementation at the time of the study.

As a result of the study, one recommendation proposed is to create and promote new support networks for both education and for family to support children and their education in cases where a family member has migrated, as based on the need demonstrated by the 25% of households who reported negative changes in their children's behavior following the migration of the family member. This support network could work at both the household and school level to provide more direct support to children from these households including providing opportunities for more direct attention and learning, proactively engaging parents regarding their children's education and at a community level provide more resource management and psycho-social support for the well-being of the children as well as to ensure that they have the basic requirements and needs for continuing their education. To generate such networks, would require strategic alliances, including with the MINEDUC and COCODES as well as other relevant departmental and community level stakeholders.

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