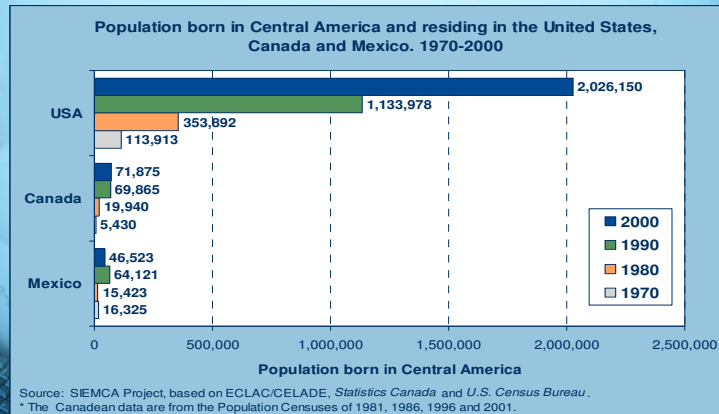# Statistical Information System on Migrations in Central America (SIEMCA)

THE CENTRAL AMERICAN MIGRATION PICTURE

√ **An increase in the magnitude and complexity of migration movements:** Two new phenomena have been added to labour migration flows historically found in the Region:

- Forced movements of broad sectors of the population, as a result of armed conflicts that worsened during the 1980s, which persisted until the beginning of the 1990s, and gradually dissolved with the consolidation of the Peace Accords in Nicaragua (1990), El Salvador (1992) and Guatemala (1996).

- A marked increase in extra-regional migration, mostly directed towards the United States. This trend has become the most salient pattern of Central American migration.

√ **A persistence of flows of Nicaraguans toward Costa Rica and to a lesser extent, of Guatemalans, Salvadorans and Hondurans toward Belize.**
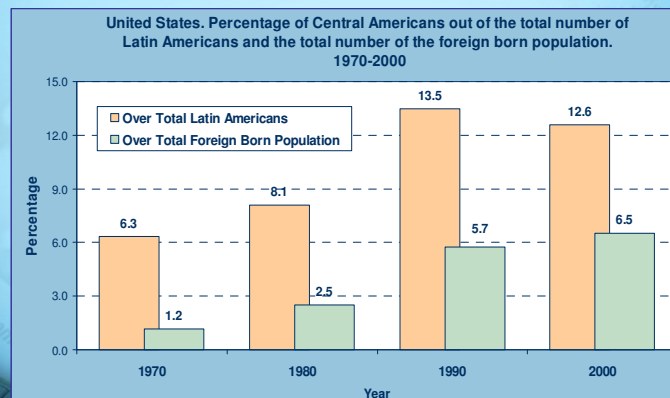
EXTRA-REGIONAL EMIGRATION

1. The main receiving country of extra-regional emigration is the United States, where 2 million Central Americans lived in 2000, a figure which has double during the last ten years.

2. The most notable increases occurred during the past two decades: From 1980 to 1990 the number of Central Americans tripled, and a similar increase occurred from 1970 to 1980.

3. El Salvador exhibited the greatest increases until 1990, and while the intensity of emigration has decreased since that date, it still contributes 40% of the total number of Central Americans residing in the United States.
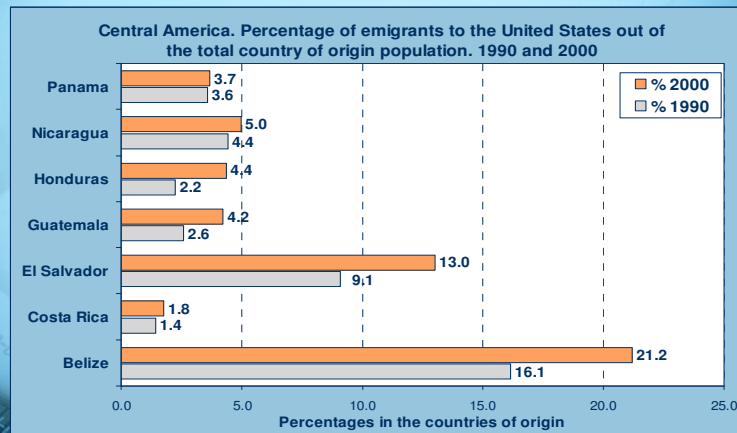
Population born in Central America and residing in the United States, Canada and Mexico. 1970-2000

Region		Value
USA	2000	2,026,150
	1990	1,133,978
	1980	353,892
	1970	113,913
Canada	2000	71,875
	1990	69,865
	1980	19,940
	1970	5,430
Mexico	2000	46,523
	1990	64,121
	1980	15,423
	1970	16,325

Legend: ■ 2000 ■ 1990 ■ 1980 □ 1970

X-axis: **Population born in Central America** (0 – 2,500,000)

Source: SIEMCA Project, based on ECLAC/CELADE, *Statistics Canada* and *U.S. Census Bureau*.
* The Canadean data are from the Population Censuses of 1981, 1986, 1996 and 2001.

POPULATION IMPACT IN DESTINATION COUNTRIES

1. Although their numbers have doubled, the population impact of Central Americans in the United States has remained virtually stable: They constituted roughly 13% of all Latin Americans and about 6% of the total number of foreigners born abroad, both in 1990 and in 2000.

2. For the last census year (2000), Latin Americans constituted 52% of the total foreign born population living in the USA. Among them, Mexicans represent 57%; in second place were those from the Caribbean with 18%; and then Central Americans and South Americans with similar shares of 13% and 12% respectively.

United States. Percentage of Central Americans out of the total number of Latin Americans and the total number of the foreign born population. 1970-2000

Year	Over Total Latin Americans	Over Total Foreign Born Population
1970	6.3	1.2
1980	8.1	2.5
1990	13.5	5.7
2000	12.6	6.5

Y-axis: **Percentage** (0.0 – 15.0)
X-axis: **Year**

Source: SIEMCA Project, based on ECLAC/CELADE, IMILA Project, and Web page of the US Census Bureau.: http://www.census.gov).
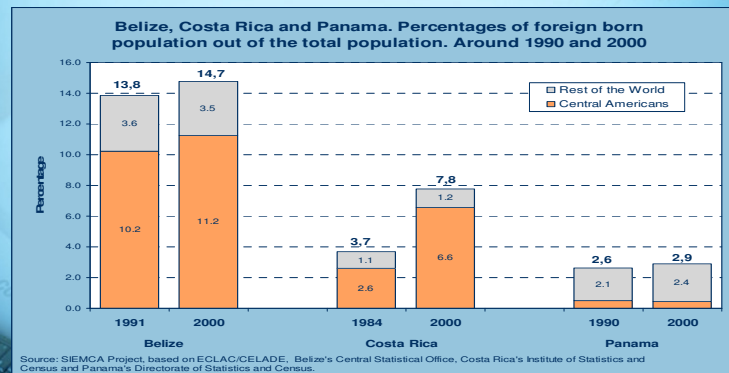
POPULATION IMPACT IN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

1. The impact of emigration in the regions of origin is increasing: While in 1970 it represented only 0.7% of the Central American population, in 2000 the number rose to 6%.

2. This impact increased in every country, but is even more prominent in Belize (21%) and El Salvador (13%).

Central America. Percentage of emigrants to the United States out of the total country of origin population. 1990 and 2000

Country	% 2000	% 1990
Panama	3.7	3.6
Nicaragua	5.0	4.4
Honduras	4.4	2.2
Guatemala	4.2	2.6
El Salvador	13.0	9.1
Costa Rica	1.8	1.4
Belize	21.2	16.1

Percentages in the countries of origin

Source: SIEMCA Project, based on population estimates by ECLAC/CELADE and the US Census Bureau.

IMMIGRATION IN THE REGION

1. Belize, Costa Rica and Panama continue to receive foreign immigrants, although with a different impact and magnitude: In 2000 immigrants constituted 14.7% of the population in Belize, 7.8% in Costa Rica, and only 3% in Panama.

2. The percentage of immigrants out of the total population doubled in Costa Rica. In contrast, in Belize and Panama the increase is not very significant.

3. The origin of immigrants differs in each country: In Belize the majority are Guatemalan (43%), Salvadoran (18%), and Honduran (14%). In Costa Rica 76% are Nicaraguan. Meanwhile, Panama receives migrants from outside the region: The majority are Colombian, as well as Chinese and Taiwanese (with shares of 26% and 24% respectively).

Belize, Costa Rica and Panama. Percentages of foreign born population out of the total population. Around 1990 and 2000

	Belize 1991	Belize 2000	Costa Rica 1984	Costa Rica 2000	Panama 1990	Panama 2000
Total	13,8	14,7	3,7	7,8	2,6	2,9
Rest of the World	3.6	3.5	1.1	1.2	2.1	2.4
Central Americans	10.2	11.2	2.6	6.6		

Source: SIEMCA Project, based on ECLAC/CELADE, Belize's Central Statistical Office, Costa Rica's Institute of Statistics and Census and Panama's Directorate of Statistics and Census.

SIEMCA: A RESPONSE TO THE NEW INFORMATION DEMANDS

- SIEMCA was launched in 2001 and is being executed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in cooperation with ECLAC's Latin American and Caribbean Center for Demography (CELADE).

- It is a regional project conceived by iniciative of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) and OCAM, covering all seven Central American countries: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

- Its primary objective is to establish a Statistical Information System that will facilitate understanding and monitor the magnitude and characteristics of migration movements – among Central American nations and out wards, as well as viceversa –.

- Owing to the results attained by SIEMCA, for the first time a Web site is available in the region offering substantive information for designing migration-related policies and actions, as well as sectorial policies aimed at regional development in general.

HOW TO ATTAIN THE RESULTS?

SIEMCA's development strategy consists of the following:

INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

A dynamic relationship with regional fora and with the countries

The RCM is its framework

It participates in OCAM's Technical Commission

Cooperation Agreement with Central American governments

ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

The Project is based in the IOM's offices in San Jose, Costa Rica

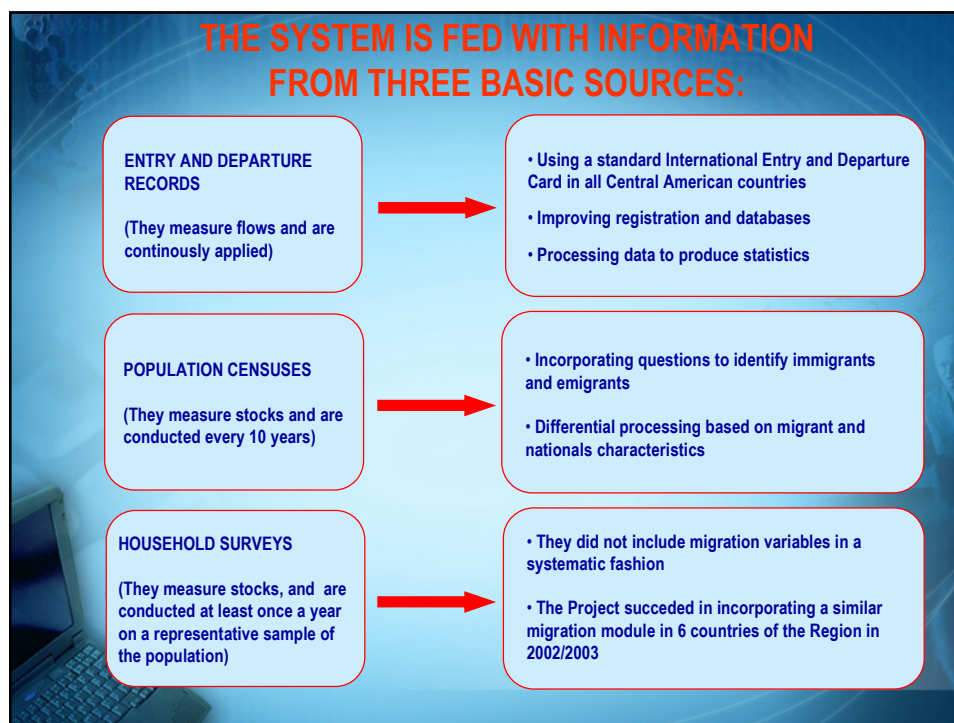National Counterparts of the Project: Migration and Statistics Directorates

Liaisons designated in Migration and Statistics Directorates in all 7 countries

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Synchronizing and improving migration-related information from the various statistical sources
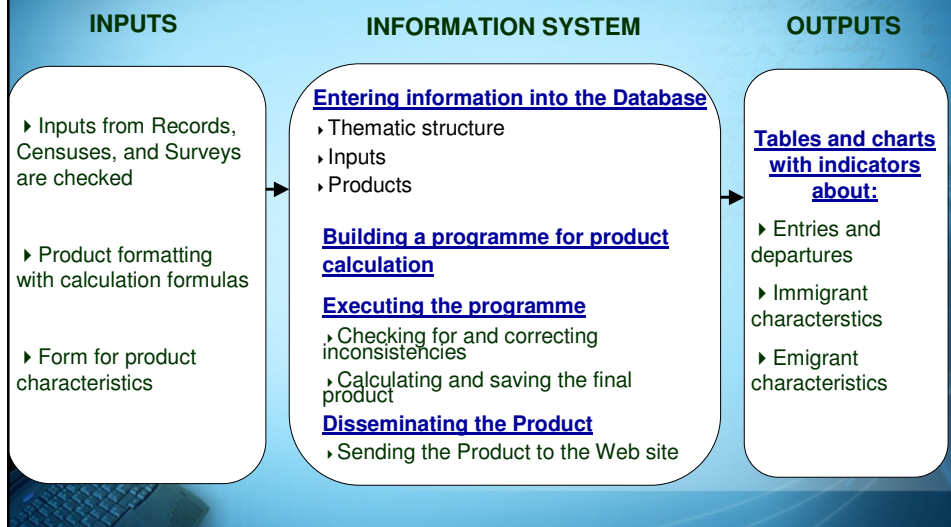
Strengthening producing agencies and training its experts on migration matters

Producing statistics and studies for a more thorough understanding about migration processes

THE SYSTEM IS FED WITH INFORMATION FROM THREE BASIC SOURCES:

ENTRY AND DEPARTURE RECORDS

(They measure flows and are continously applied)

→

- Using a standard International Entry and Departure Card in all Central American countries
- Improving registration and databases
- Processing data to produce statistics

POPULATION CENSUSES

(They measure stocks and are conducted every 10 years)

→

- Incorporating questions to identify immigrants and emigrants
- Differential processing based on migrant and nationals characteristics

HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS

(They measure stocks, and are conducted at least once a year on a representative sample of the population)

→

- They did not include migration variables in a systematic fashion
- The Project succeeded in incorporating a similar migration module in 6 countries of the Region in 2002/2003

SOURCE	INDICATORS OR PRODUCTS ABOUT:	
RECORDS OF INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENTS	❖ Entries and departures ❖ Migratory balance ❖ Gross migration ❖ Composition of flows	By nationality, sex, and age border crossing, time period
	IMMIGRANTS **Censuses/Surveys in Central American countries**	**EMIGRANTS** **Censuses/Surveys in receiving countries & countries of origin**
NATIONAL POPULATION CENSUSES	Quantity, composition, and impact Characteristics of immigrants and nationals ❖ Demographic ❖ Educational ❖ Labour-related ❖ Living conditions	Magnitude and presence of Central Americans in the United States, Canada, and Mexico Socio-demographic and labour characteristics, living conditions in the destination country
MIGRATION MODULES INCLUDED IN HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS	Indicators are similar to census indicators; data more clustered together; more emphasis on labour markets	*Indicators are similar to census indicators ; Data is more clustered together *Household members living abroad *Reception of remittances and amounts

COMPUTERIZED ARCHITECTURE OF THE SYSTEM

INPUTS

INFORMATION SYSTEM

OUTPUTS

‣ Inputs from Records, Censuses, and Surveys are checked

‣ Product formatting with calculation formulas

‣ Form for product characteristics

Entering information into the Database
‣ Thematic structure
‣ Inputs
‣ Products

Building a programme for product calculation

Executing the programme
‣ Checking for and correcting inconsistencies
‣ Calculating and saving the final product

Disseminating the Product
‣ Sending the Product to the Web site

Tables and charts with indicators about:

‣ Entries and departures

‣ Immigrant characterstics

‣ Emigrant characteristics

RESULTS ACHIEVED

- Information System on international migrations already established and placed on the Web site **www.siemca.iom.int** for permanent consultation.

- Strengthened human and computing resources at organizations producing migration-related information in the countries of the region.

- Forthcoming incorporation of Mexico into the System, transforming it into the Statistical Information System on Migration in Mesoamerica (SIEMMES).

- SIEMMES emerges as the only initiative addressing migration matters within the Puebla Panama Plan. The Government of Mexico has officially confirmed its decision to participate in the Project. SIEMCA will be significantly enriched by SIEMMES:

  ◆ Its geographical broadening to include Mexico facilitates the visualization of international migration within an increasingly integrated picture, and enhances the System's sociopolitical importance.

  ◆ It provides it with a broader scope, as it aims to diversify its outcomes in order to cover a wider range of information that is useful to other sectors whose policies and interventions have a migration component.

SIEMCA WEB SITE SCHEME

Available options

Institutional Framework – Statistics – Methodology – Publications – Site Map – Related Sites – Contact us

Consulting Statistics - Type of search

Topics	Indicators	Country/Region	Sources	Format	Period
International Movements Characteristics of Immigrants Characteristics of Emmigrants	Disintegrate by population group	Belize Guatemala Honduras El Salvador Nicaragua Costa Rica Panama The Region	Records of International Arrivals and Departures, Population Censuses, Household Surveys	Tables Charts	From To

List of Products (Tables and/or charts)

www.siemca.iom.int

Slide 1

SIEMCA
Statistical Information System
on Migration in Central America

IOM · OIM

| Institutional Framework | Statistics | Methodology | Publications | Site Map | Related Sites | Contact us |

Introduction | Thematic Tree | Introduction
What is IOM | Statistics access | The System
What is SIEMCA | Help about access | Concepts and Definitions
Migration Directorates | | Data sources
Statistic Institutes
OCAM and RCM
CELADE

What´s new
The latest statistical tables from Population Censuses conducted in Belize, Costa Rica and Panama are displayed in this section.

Welcome to SIEMCA

Our main objective is to bring you information that will facilitate the study and monitor the magnitud and characteristics of international movements taking place both within Central America, as well as beyond the Region.

The changes taking place in international migration movements and in the international and regional sociopolitical and economic contexts have given rise to the urgency for adequate, and timely information readily available for designing and implementing migration-related policies and actions in the new setting of Central American integration.

Within this context, the consolidation of a System with these characteristics that will also endure for the future* has acquired particular relevance. In Central America international population movements have increased and diversified notably during the past 30 years. Thus, the issue of migration is presently a constituent element of the Central American scenario, and remains closely linked to its possibilities for transformation and development.

The information comprised in SIEMCA results from meshing and making the data generated by the various sources compatible, i.e. Records of International Arrivals and Departures, Population Censuses, and Household Surveys. Through a whole set of tables and charts, SIEMCA illustrates the leading indicators characterizing migration processes.

SIEMCA is implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) with cooperation from the Latin American and Caribbean Center for Demography (CELADE), ECLAC's Population Division. It was launched in January 2001 and covers all Central American countries: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

Thank you for visiting SIEMCA's Web site. Our site is expanding with more information about different issues relating to international migration, so we encourage you to visit us regularly.

Institutional Framework
Visit Institutional Framework to learn about the organizations taking part in SIEMCA.

Queries
You may access tables and charts through various types of searches in our Queries section.

Methodology
The Methodology section includes details about the System, sources of data, and definitions of the variables and indicators used by SIEMCA.

Publications and Studies
Visit Publications and Studies to access analytical documents about international migration, as well as conceptual and methodological aspects of the Project.

Contact us
You may also ask questions and send us your suggestions. We are particularly interested in establishing direct communication with users, with the goal of improving the site.

Slide 2

SIEMCA
Statistical Information System
on Migration in Central America

IOM · OIM

| Institutional Framework | Statistics | Methodology | Publications | Site Map | Related Sites | Contact us |

Statistics Access

Country/Region: All countries
Period: From: 1970   To: 2003
Source: International arrivals and departures records
Population Censuses
Household Surveys
Format:

Indicator: rate
Activity rate and unemployment rate
School attendance rate

Search Indicator
Search per Topic

Group by: All

Select the product (table or chart)

C-BLZ. Population 15 years and over. Activity rate and unemployment rate by age groups, sex and country of birth. 2000.
G-BLZ. Activity rate among population 15 years and over by sex and country of birth. 2000
C-CRI. Population 15 years and over. Activity rate and unemployment rate by age groups, sex and country of birth. 2000.
G-CRI. Activity rate among population 15 years and over by sex and country of birth. 2000
C-PAN. Population 15 years and over. Activity rate and unemployment rate by age groups, sex and country of birth. 2000.
G-PAN. Unemployment rate among population 15 years and over by age groups, sex and country of birth. 2000.

File type: ○ HTML ○ Excel   Order: ○ Alphabetic ○ Thematic
Countries: **BLZ:** Belize, **GTM:** Guatemala, **HND:** Honduras, **SLV:** El Salvador, **NIC:** Nicaragua, **CRI:** Costa Rica, **PAN:** Panama
Example: **C-BLZ** is a table of Belize and **G-HND** is a chart of Honduras

View Product   Reset   Help

🏠 Main Page   Back to Top