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Return and Reintegration in Honduras

Follow-Up Report

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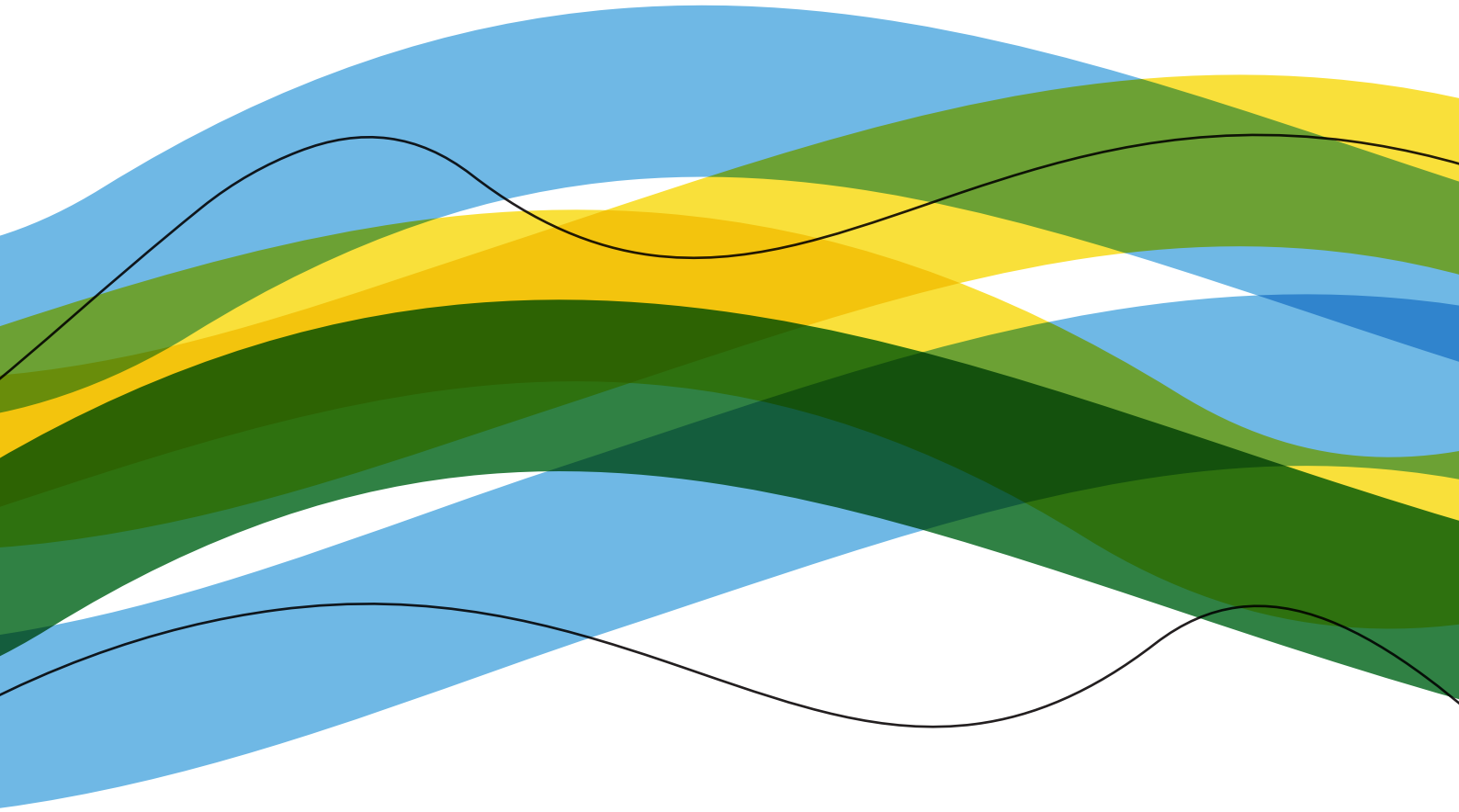

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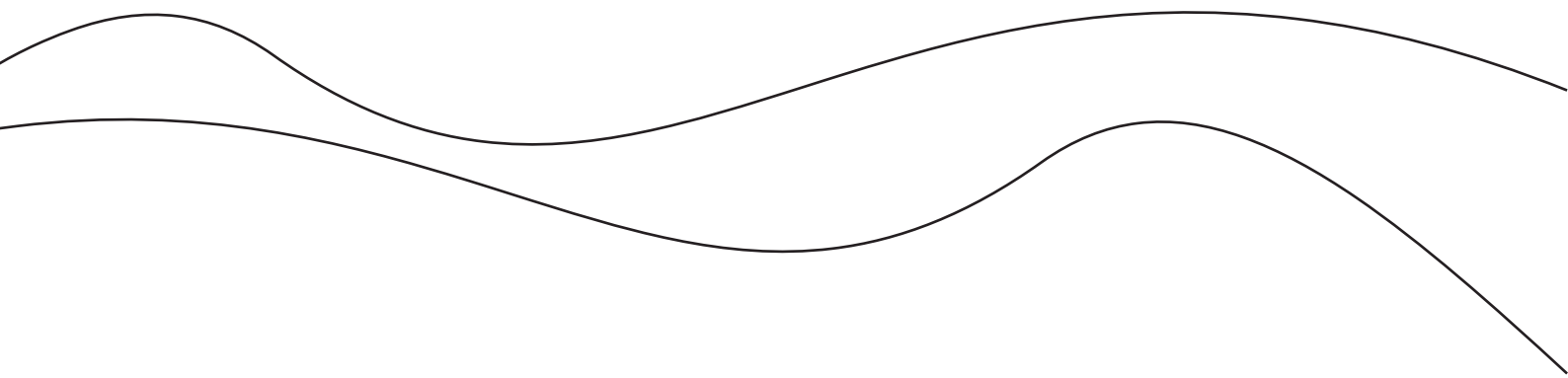

Return and Reintegration in Honduras

Follow-Up Report

Secretariat of Social Development – Honduras
Migration Unit – Inter-American Development Bank
October 2025

This report was prepared by Juanita Ruiz, Cynthia van der Werf, Andrea Velásquez, and Kimberly Zelaya. Juan Pablo Álvarez, Pablo Cortés, Sara España, Jeremy Harris, Rudy Martínez, and Felipe Muñoz also made valuable contributions. We want to express our sincere gratitude to Rider Calix, Wilber Escobar, Nitza Padilla, Tania Paredes, Josué Aguilar, and Allison Dávila for their dedicated support in accessing the SIAMIR data and for their guidance in understanding its structure and content. Their collaboration was essential to our analysis. Jennifer Paola González provided dedicated administrative support and we are very grateful. The team at Equilibrium deserves mention for the assistance they provided to the Social Development Observatory (ODS) during the follow-up phone surveys.

Finally, we would also like to thank the Japanese government, which provided funding under Technical Cooperation project HN-T1459.

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Acronyms

CAMR	Centros de Atención al Migrante Retornado / Returned Migrant Assistance Centers
CENISS	Centro Nacional de Información del Sector Social / National Center for Social Sector Information
DINAF	Dirección de Niñez, Adolescencia y Familia / Directorate for Children, Adolescents, and Families
FIM	Ficha de Registro de Atención al Migrante Retornado / Form for Returned Migrant Assistance
FOSMIH	Fondo de Solidaridad con el Migrante Hondureño / Solidarity Fund for Honduran Migrants
INFOP	Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional / National Institute for Professional Training
INM	Instituto Nacional de Migración / National Institute of Migration
ODS	Observatorio de Desarrollo Social / Social Development Observatory
SEDESOL	Secretaría de Desarrollo Social / Secretariat of Social Development
SEDUC	Secretaría de Educación / Secretariat of Education
SENAF	Secretaría de Niñez, Adolescencia y Familia / Secretariat for Children, Adolescents, and Families
SESAL	Secretaría de Salud / Secretariat of Health
SETRASS	Secretaría de Trabajo y Seguridad Social / Secretariat of Labor and Social Security
SIAMIR	Sistema de Atención al Migrante Retornado (SIAMIR) / Returned Migrant Attention System
SIRBHO	Sistema de Información y Registro de Beneficiarios de Honduras / Honduran Beneficiary Information and Registration System
SRECI	Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores y Cooperación Internacional / Secretariat of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
UMAR	Unidades Municipales de Atención al Retornado / Municipal Returnee Assistance Units

Executive Summary

* Acronyms are given in their original Spanish form. See page 8 for a full list.

This report presents an analysis of the situation of people returned to Honduras, based on a survey of 1,230 individuals carried out between one and four months after their return. The survey, implemented by the Social Development Observatory (ODS),* is the first of its kind in Honduras and a key input not only for guiding national public policies, but also for informing regional strategies. Given that Latin America and the Caribbean is expected to see an increase in return migration flows, this type of evidence is essential for designing effective, inclusive, and coordinated responses.

Although the sample is not representative of all returnees, the report provides a detailed description of the extent to which the survey respondents differ from the broader population of returnees contacted. On average, the respondents are more likely to be women, have spent less time outside the country, and have maintained closer ties with Honduras – reporting, for example, more children who currently live in Honduras than in the United States. These differences do not diminish the value of the findings, but they should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

Moreover, the profile of returnees has changed over time. Those who returned after December 2024 – the group that constitutes the main focus of this study – tend to have lived longer outside the country and are more likely to report English proficiency. These findings suggest that their migration trajectories differ from those of returnees in previous years. For this reason, the report includes a section devoted to the profile of returnees over time and how it has evolved in recent years. This comparison makes it possible to understand to what extent the group analyzed represents a new migration dynamic and helps to better anticipate their reintegration needs.

Collecting information during the initial stage of reintegration also makes it possible to understand critical aspects of the population of contacted returnees, who are often not reflected in traditional statistics. The evidence generated is key to designing targeted public policies that facilitate these individuals' transition toward a stable and productive life in Honduras.

The findings show that a significant share of contacted returnees managed to reenter the labor market quickly. However, the conditions of this reentry are often less than ideal. Eight out of ten returnees are working (formally or informally), and more than 75% live in households with incomes below the national average. Women report significantly lower incomes than men, and a considerably larger share of them report having received no income in the last month.

The spending of most returnees is focused on meeting basic needs, mainly food, health, and utilities. Despite these constraints, a portion of the population – particularly those who spent more time abroad – allocates a significant share of their resources to income-generating activities. This suggests an intention toward economic reactivation that could be channeled through employment opportunities and capacity-building.

The report also documents high levels of food insecurity and symptoms of anxiety. Nearly 70% of respondents reported concern about not having eaten enough in the two weeks prior to the survey, and one in three presented moderate or severe levels of anxiety. These findings highlight the immediate need for mental health support, social protection, and access to basic services in the first months after return.

The data reveal significant differences according to the time spent abroad. People with longer migration trajectories tend to show a greater capacity for investment and higher levels of consumption, which suggests that the type of migration experience shapes the reintegration process. These elements should be considered when designing policies differentiated by profile. Moreover, if the trend observed in 2025 continues, the share of returnees with longer stays abroad is likely to increase, which reinforces the need to adapt institutional responses to a changing profile of the returnee population.

In terms of residence, the data show that most returnees remain in the same department at the different stages of the migration trajectory (before migrating, at the time of return, at present) and plan to stay there in the future. However, some interesting patterns of internal migration can be observed in this analysis. Before migrating, many people had already moved to Cortés, and after return there continues to be a high concentration in that department (where 19.2% of returnees currently reside), as well as in Francisco Morazán (17.6%), Yoro (9.3%), and Comayagua (7.5%). This suggests a trend by which returnees settle in urban areas with greater economic opportunities.

Although the department-level analysis reveals a degree of consistency, a closer look at the municipal level shows far greater movement: more than half of returnees (53.9%) settle in a municipality other than their place of origin. This finding underscores the importance of considering more complex resettlement dynamics when designing reintegration policies and targeting the institutional response to this population.

As for children, the data show that virtually all children who returned to the country and are of age have been enrolled in school. Although this represents a positive step in the initial stage of family reintegration, it will be essential to follow these cases over time to ensure school completion and prevent educational gaps among the most vulnerable returnees. In addition, it is key to gain a better understanding of how the reintegration process unfolds within schools, including aspects such as academic adaptation, students' emotional well-being, and the capacity of the education system to address the specific needs of returnees.

This study highlights the importance of systematic and timely information on the returnee population. Building on this baseline, there is an opportunity to develop a longitudinal panel that will allow this population to be tracked over time. An approach of this sort would allow trajectories, persistent barriers, and enabling factors for reintegration to be identified, promoting forward-looking, efficient, and people-centered public policy.

This study highlights the importance of systematic and timely information on the returnee population.

1. Introduction

Migrants have been returning to Honduras consistently for more than a decade, in a regional context marked by persistent and varied migratory flows. Driven by a combination of factors such as the search for economic opportunities, family reunification, and other elements linked to well-being and living conditions, migration from Honduras to countries such as the United States has increased in recent years. Environmental shocks, such as droughts and floods, also play a role in migration decisions.

In light of the increase in return flows, greater efforts are being made to better understand this phenomenon and its implications. The creation of the Returned Migrant Attention System (SIAMIR) in 2014 represented an important step forward in the collection and organization of information on returnees. In the years since, the system has become a key tool in coordinating assistance for returned migrants.

Today, the SIAMIR is used by a wide range of actors – more than 20 public and private entities working with migrants – including key government institutions such as the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (SRECI), the Secretariat for Children, Adolescents, and Families (SENAF), the Secretariat of Labor and Social Security (SETRASS), the Secretariat of Health (SESAL), and the Secretariat of Education (SEDUC), as well as municipal actors such as the Municipal Returnee Assistance Units (UMARs). It functions as a tool for the coordination of service provision, a planning instrument for social programs, and a vital data source for international agencies working with returnees. In addition to its role in service delivery, the SIAMIR also supports research and public debate by making statistical information available through reports, bulletins, and the REDATAM platform.

This report presents Honduras's first longitudinal follow-up of returnees, drawing on information collected through the SIAMIR. To date, one of the main obstacles to analyzing reintegration processes has been the lack of systematic tools to track individual trajectories over time. Using existing records to develop a longitudinal panel offers an unprecedented opportunity to move forward in this regard.

The analysis provides insight into how reintegration has evolved over time in terms of employment, access to services, education, and living conditions. It also identifies some of the main barriers returnees face. This study constitutes a first step toward a more comprehensive understanding of return and reintegration processes and seeks to contribute useful evidence to support interventions designed with the needs of this population in mind.

2. History of the SIAMIR

Launched in 2014, the Returned Migrant Attention System marked a milestone in the government's response to return migration in Honduras. A humanitarian emergency – a rise in the number of unaccompanied children and adolescents returning to Honduras – prompted its creation as an institutional mechanism to organize and strengthen that response. That same year, the Law for the Protection of Honduran Migrants and Their Families was passed, providing a legal framework for protection and reintegration actions. The law established the Solidarity Fund for Honduran Migrants (FOSMIH) to support social and employment reintegration programs and to strengthen consular services abroad.

In its early years, the SIAMIR faced challenges related to the fragmentation of records among the different institutions that provide services to returnees. To address this, in 2015 a single form was designed: the Form for Returned Migrant Assistance (FIM). It now constitutes the core of the system. Information is collected at the three main Returned Migrant Assistance Centers (CAMRs) – La Lima, Belén, and Omoa – where returnees are registered, receive immediate assistance, and complete the FIM with the assistance of technical staff from the Social Development Observatory, the entity currently responsible for the system.

Since then, the SIAMIR has become a key tool for the design of public policies and the coordination of services at the national level. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provided technical assistance in the development of the SIAMIR. These agencies have contributed to building institutional capacities, integrating new modules, and launching platforms like REDATAM for microdata analysis. This has laid the groundwork for a deeper understanding of return migration and has opened up new opportunities to monitor the impact of SIAMIR and improve public policy.

The SIAMIR has become a key tool for the design of public policies and the coordination of services at the national level.

3. Form for Returned Migrant Assistance (FIM)

The return process for Hondurans begins with their arrival at the CAMR, where they receive initial assistance that includes their entry check, registration in the SIAMIR, and food, health screenings, and psychological/mental health counseling (as needed). Completed at this stage, the FIM is a key tool for migration management and social policy in Honduras. Its integration into the SIAMIR has made it possible to improve interinstitutional coordination, tailor programs more effectively, strengthen reintegration processes, and provide the support returned migrants need.

The FIM is a dynamic tool that is in the process of being expanded. Recently, the Social Development Observatory has spearheaded the incorporation of new modules and questions to better capture the diversity of profiles and needs. Because the SIAMIR is integrated with the Honduran Beneficiary Information and Registration System (SIRBHO), a search can be performed to automatically link returnees with the National Registry of Persons (RNP), which facilitates data validation and interoperability with other social protection systems. To date, the system's records are concentrated in six key areas:

1. **Entry control:** Name, household composition, contact information, border entry point, and date of entry.
2. **Personal information:** National identification number, sex, age, ethnicity, marital status, names of family members, children in Honduras or abroad, and original destination.
3. **Health:** Current state of health, pregnancy, and disabilities (if any).
4. **Education:** Highest level of education attained and English proficiency.
5. **Work experience and training:** Profession or trade, previous occupation, work experience, and willingness to participate in job training programs.
6. **Migration drivers and trajectories:** Place of residence before migrating, reasons for migrating, experiences of violence, fear of return, asylum applications, country of destination, experiences of detention and deportation, and intention to migrate again.

Building on this solid foundation, the country has begun to take important steps toward a more comprehensive system that not only gathers information about migrants at the time of return, but also makes it possible to track their reintegration trajectories over time. This report represents a milestone in that effort, presenting the results of the first systematic follow-up with returnees, using the SIAMIR database as a starting point. This new evidence offers an opportunity to better understand the living conditions, employment and work history, and well-being of returnees after their arrival and can serve as a basis for strengthening public policy design, guiding support programs, and enriching dialogue with international organizations interested in supporting this process.

This report represents a milestone in that effort, presenting the results of the first systematic follow-up with returnees, using the SIAMIR database as a starting point.

4. First Contact Upon Return

1. All returnees to Honduras who come through the reception centers for returnees are registered in the SIAMIR.

With the aim of generating evidence on the living conditions and reintegration processes of people who return to Honduras through the CAMRs, 7,597 people registered in the SIAMIR who re-entered to the country between December 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025, were contacted by phone.[1] The outreach was conducted at the ODS call center with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) as part of an effort to expand knowledge on short-term reintegration trajectories.

The follow-up calls were made between April 1 and May 31, 2025. In order to ensure data comparability and reduce potential biases associated with the time elapsed since return, calls were randomly assigned within groups stratified by date of arrival in the country. This approach made it possible to achieve a balanced representation of returnees who had been back in Honduras for different lengths of time.

The follow-up questionnaire was organized around five themes that capture different aspects of the reintegration process and living conditions after return:

1. **Housing situation:** Current location, type of dwelling, household composition, and number of children.
2. **Situation upon arrival:** Whether they have identity documents, type of support received at the time of return, and access to government services at the CAMR – such as SENPRENDE and SIEMPLEO – as well as access to education services for children.
3. **Well-being and consumption:** Main categories of expenditure, levels of food insecurity, and self-reported mental health.
4. **Employment status and work history:** Current employment status, barriers to finding work, previous work experience in Honduras and abroad, and level of job-related skills.
5. **Migration intentions:** Expectations regarding whether they will stay at their current dwelling, medium-term housing plans, and whether they have concrete plans to migrate again.

In terms of the scope of the study, information was successfully collected from 1,230 people, which represents a solid initial baseline for analyzing the factors that influence reintegration and living conditions after return. The contact rate was 16% of the total number of registered persons. However, considering that 33% of the returnees in the period analyzed did not provide a telephone number in the SIAMIR (see Figure 1), the actual contact rate rises to 26%.

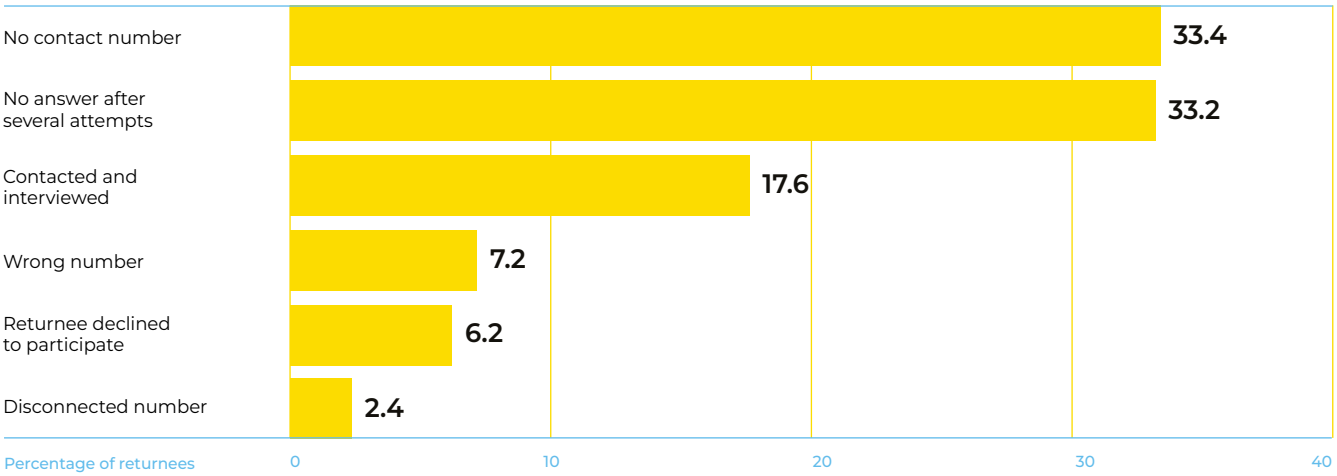


Figure 1. Contact Outcomes

The distribution of call outcomes shows that a significant share of registered persons did not have a contact number, which prevented any follow-up attempt: 33% of records were classified as "No contact number." Seventeen percent of cases fall into the "Contacted and interviewed" group, that is, people who were successfully reached and completed the survey. However, there were no answers to the calls made to 33% of the sample, reflecting the difficulties in reaching a substantial portion of the target population. Additional barriers were identified: 7% were wrong numbers, 2% were disconnected, and 6% of those contacted declined to participate in the study.

Figure 2 presents the results of the telephone follow-up with returnees by reception center: Belén, La Lima, and Omoa. Once again, it is important to note the number of returnees who were unable to provide a telephone number upon arrival at the CAMRs, thus limiting the possibility of getting in touch with them. The problem was particularly pronounced at CAMR-Omoa and CAMR-La Lima.

Returnees registered at CAMR-Belén show the highest share of completed interviews, suggesting that the ODS call team was able to reach this population more easily during follow-up. This suggests a greater willingness to provide contact information at the time of providing information for the SIAMIR. This pattern is consistent with the profile of the population that arrives at this center, where families with children and adolescents predominate, which may motivate adults to provide more complete data. In contrast, for people registered at CAMR-La Lima and CAMR-Omoa, fewer follow-up contacts were made, mainly because a substantial share did not provide a contact number upon arrival.

For all three CAMRs, communicating with returnees proved difficult even when a number was available (between 31.1% and 45.5% of unsuccessful attempts), whether due to disconnected or wrong numbers, frequent SIM card changes, or the person's limited availability to answer calls after their return.

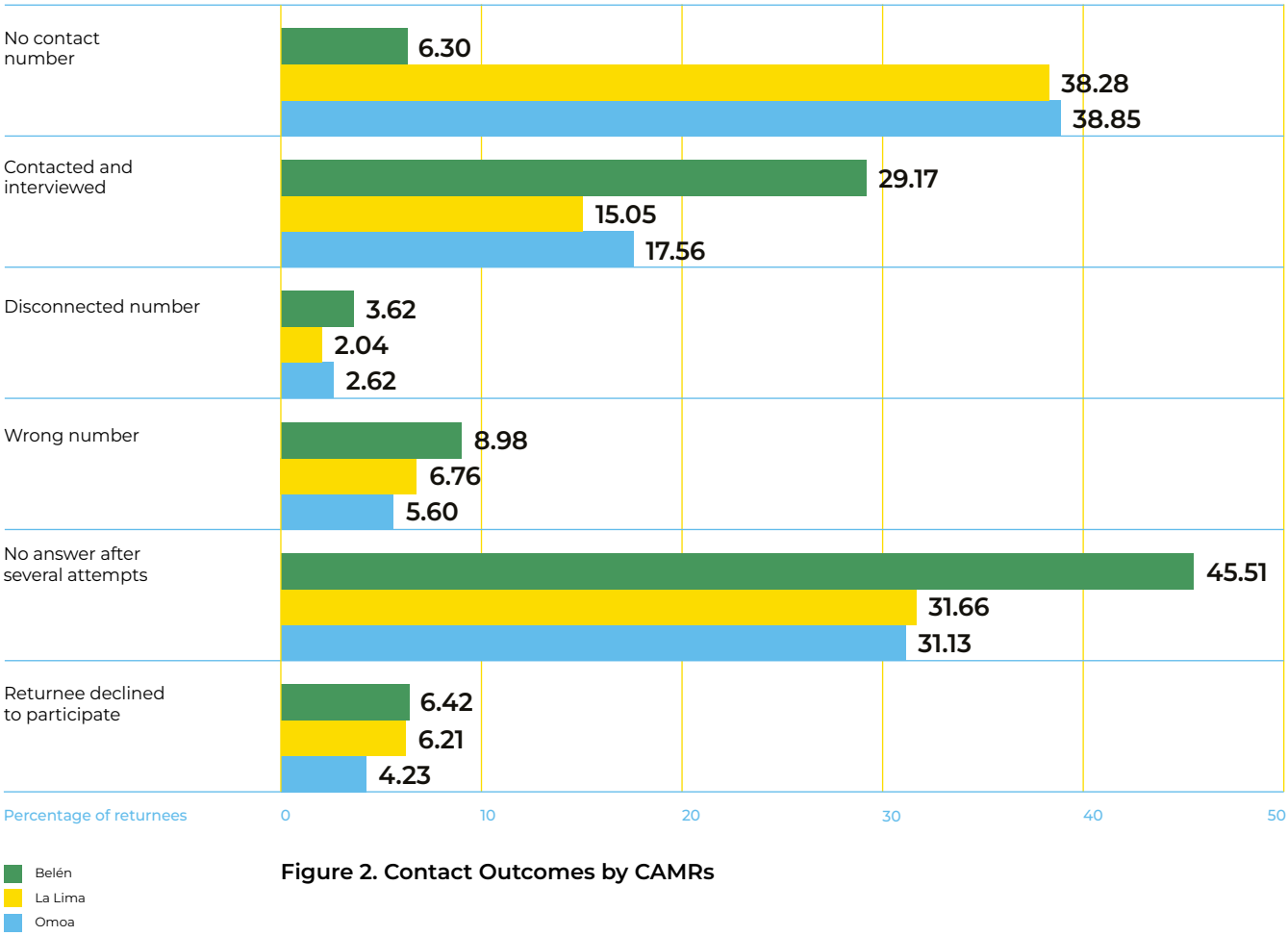


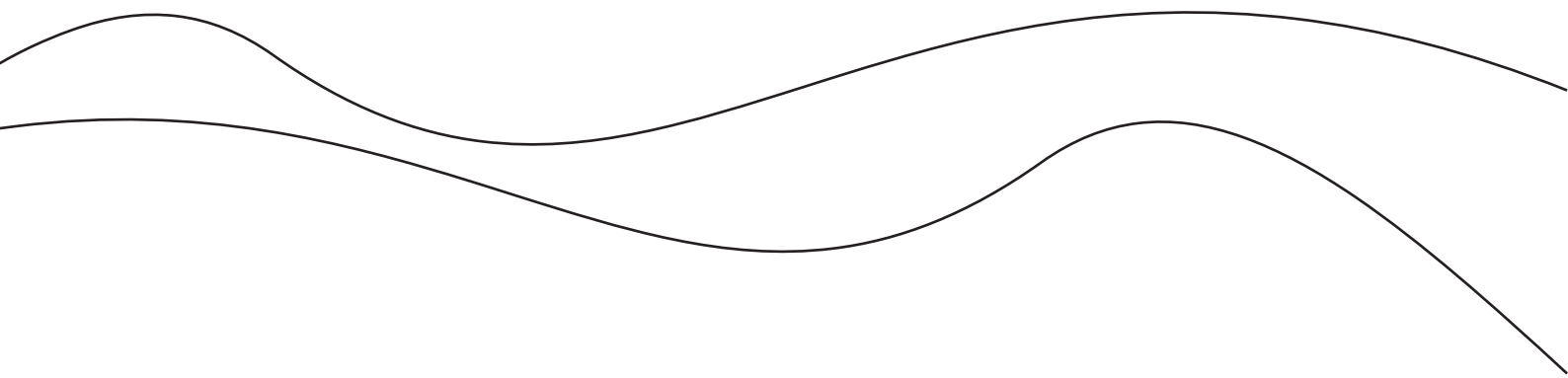
Figure 2. Contact Outcomes by CAMRs

These results show both the potential of telephone follow-up with returnees and the practical challenges of reaching them. The analysis highlights the importance of exploring additional ways to improve how contact information is gathered and updated in order to support future follow-up rounds. The next section describes in greater detail the characteristics of people who were successfully contacted, making it possible to reflect on the scope of the study and identify opportunities to expand coverage in similar efforts.

PART I

Who Are the People Behind the Data?

Characteristics and Representativeness of the Sample



The target population of this study comprises all people who returned to Honduras between December 1, 2024, and March 30, 2025, and who were registered in the Returned Migrant Attention System. During this period, attempts were made to contact those who had provided a contact number by telephone. However, as explained above, not all responded. For this reason, although the sample is drawn from the universe of returnees in those months, the characteristics of those contacted do not exactly coincide with the typical profile of those registered in the SIAMIR between 2016 and 2025.

The differences can be attributed to two main reasons. First, migration profiles – age, marital status, and whether returnees have children – may have changed over time. Second, there are factors that influence whether a person answers a telephone survey, such as their family situation, whether they are still using the same number, or whether they answer calls from unknown numbers. In the next section we focus on differences associated with changes over time, while in the following section we further explore possible differences linked to response patterns.

1. Comparison Between the Study Population and the SIAMIR Dataset

PTo better understand how the characteristics of returnees have changed over time, we use information from the FIM, a form completed by all individuals upon arrival in Honduras. Table 1 summarizes this comparison between the SIAMIR data for the full period (2016–2025) and the population eligible for this follow-up survey. The first column presents information from the SIAMIR, while the second shows the characteristics of those who returned to the country between December 2024 and March 2025, regardless of whether they answered the follow-up call.

Panel A (Table 1) shows that the average age of returnees has risen over time. Between 2016 and 2024 it was around 27; in 2024, it rose to 30; and in this more recent sample, it was almost 32. The same has occurred with the share of women: between 2016 and 2021, women accounted for around 20% of returns, but between 2022 and 2024 this share increased to approximately 27%. However, in the population we surveyed, women account for 19.4%, a percentage closer to that of previous years.

There have also been changes in marital status. Fewer single people and more married or cohabiting people are returning, especially since 2021. In our sample, 40.4% report being married or living with a partner, which is higher than the 35.6% average for 2016-2025.

In terms of family situation, the data show a clear upward trend in the share of returnees who report having children in Honduras, especially among women. Between 2021 and 2024, this share increased from less than 19% to more than 61% for women, and from approximately 34% to 41% for men. In our sample, 43.5% of respondents report having children in Honduras, which is consistent with this recent shift in the profile of returnees.

An increase is also observed in the percentage of people with children in the United States. For men, this figure rose from less than 10% in 2016 to about 20% in 2024; for women, it grew from less than 5% between 2016 and 2021 to almost 10% in 2024. Overall, 29.7% of respondents report having children in the United States, which may reflect changes in migration trajectories and transnational family ties.

In terms of educational attainment, changes have been less pronounced. Over time, most people have reported having only primary education, although the share with secondary education has increased slightly since 2020. The same trend is observed in our sample, where there is a slight decrease in the share of people with only primary education (51.6%) and an increase in both people with lower secondary education and those with upper secondary education.

Finally, in our sample the share of people reporting English proficiency (6.93%) is almost double that of all SIAMIR returnees for 2016-2025 (3.65%). This difference is noteworthy and may be associated with changes in migration trajectories, such as longer stays abroad and longer exposure to the English language, indicating that the profile of returnees is changing.

With regard to migration characteristics, Panel B (Table 1) shows important differences between all returnees registered in the SIAMIR from 2016 to 2025 and those who returned more recently, between December 2024 and March 2025. Those who returned in this latter period report longer migration trajectories: only 14.5% spent one month or less abroad, compared with 60.7% in the full SIAMIR population. At the same time, 33.6% of the recent group spent more than three years outside the country, vs. just 9.2% in the full SIAMIR population. In addition, a higher share of recent returnees report having ties in the destination country (88.9% vs. 79.2%), which may be related to more consolidated integration processes or to the existence of previously established family networks. As for the destination country, the majority in both groups had migrated to the United States, though this share is even higher among the more recent population (99% vs 94.9%). Migration drivers also show some variation: although economic reasons remain predominant in both groups, their weight is slightly lower among those who returned recently (86.9% vs. 92.4%). In contrast, the share of people who migrated for family reunification (8.9% vs 12.3%) and for violence or lack of safety (9.7% vs 5.5%) increased. These changes again seem to reflect a shift in the profiles of returnees.

Table 2 shows that, in terms of the distribution by department of origin, geographic patterns remain largely consistent between all returnees in the SIAMIR and the study's target population. The departments with the highest share of returnees in all three groups are Cortés, Francisco Morazán, and Yoro, suggesting that the returnees are most concentrated in these territories. Cortés accounts for about 15% of returns in both the SIAMIR records for the full period and for December through March, while Francisco Morazán accounts for 13% and Yoro for 10%.

In short, the study's target population tends to be slightly older, more likely to be living with a partner, and more likely to have children both in Honduras and in the United States. Although the share of women and the level of education are similar to the average in SIAMIR, important differences emerge in migration trajectories: those who returned more recently spent more time abroad, had more ties in the destination country, and migrated more frequently for family reunification or violence-related reasons. By contrast, no significant differences are identified in the geographic distribution of returnees, indicating that these profile changes are not associated with shifts in settlement patterns across departments. Taken together, these differences do not stem from the study design but rather reflect a transformation over time in the profile of people returning to Honduras.[2]

2. For more information on changes in the profile of returned migrants, see the SIAMIR report for 2016–2025.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Returnees Registered in the SIAMIR for 2016–2025 vs. the Survey Sample

			(1) SIAMIR (%) 2016–2025	**(2) Survey sample** (%) December 2024-March 2025
Panel A: General Characteristics	**Age at return**		28.47	31.78
	Female		20.70	19.40
	Marital status	Single	64.14	57.98
		Married or cohabiting	35.60	40.37
		Divorced or widowed	0.27	1.65
	Children	Has children	44.73	65.82
		Has children in Honduras	39.04	43.53
		Has children in USA	8.03	29.74
	Education	None	4.42	4.11
		Primary	55.37	51.55
		Lower secondary	21.32	22.29
		Upper secondary (*bachillerato*)	16.31	19.37
		Tertiary or university	2.56	2.57
	Skills	English proficiency	3.65	6.93
Panel B: Migration	**Time abroad**	0–1 month	60.69	14.49
		2–3 months	14.11	15.87
		4–6 months	6.67	12.35
		7–12 months	4.29	9.78
		1 to 3 years	4.12	13.62
		More than 3 years	9.15	33.59
	Migration trajectory	Destination country USA	94.87	99.01
		Had ties in destination country	79.21	88.90
	Migration drivers	Economic reasons	92.43	86.85
		Family reunification	12.29	8.87
		Violence or lack of safety	5.52	9.65
N			472,531	7,597

Note: This table presents the sociodemographic characteristics of the full SIAMIR dataset (2016–2025) and of those who actually responded to the follow-up survey.
All the values are percentages, except for age, which reflects the average.

Table 2. Returnees by Department of Origin: SIAMIR vs. Eligible Sample

	SIAMIR (%) 2016–2025	**Survey Sample** (%) December 2024-March 2025
Atlántida	6.53	6.91
Choluteca	4.77	5.27
Colón	5.42	5.61
Comayagua	7.37	6.74
Copán	6.59	5.41
Cortés	15.29	15.76
El Paraíso	3.53	4.34
Francisco Morazán	12.82	13.83
Gracias a Dios	0.17	0.72
Intibucá	2.82	2.49
Islas de la Bahía	0.25	0.36
La Paz	1.52	1.34
Lempira	4.50	3.80
Ocotepeque	1.99	1.86
Olancho	7.52	8.21
Santa Bárbara	6.16	5.25
Valle	2.55	1.95
Yoro	10.21	10.15
N	513,252	7,597

Note: This table shows the percentage of returnees by department of origin for the full SIAMIR dataset (2016–2025) and for those who were contacted and took the follow-up survey.

2. Characteristics of the Sample and Representativeness

This section compares the characteristics of all returnees who were reached by telephone with those who actually took the survey. The objective is to determine whether there are differences between the two groups that could affect the interpretation of the results.

In terms of sociodemographic characteristics (Table 3), a higher share of women is observed among those who took the survey (27.5%) compared with the total number of eligible individuals (19.4%), indicating an overrepresentation of women. There are also differences in marital status: there are fewer single people among those who took the survey (51.8% vs. 58%) and more people in a couple (married or living with a partner). Those who took the survey tend to have more children (71.1% vs. 65.8%) and, in particular, more children living in Honduras (57.1% vs. 43.5%). They also have fewer children in the United States – a notable difference, since having children abroad is often associated with a higher intention to migrate again.

In terms of educational attainment, the differences are small but striking. Those who took the survey have, on average, a slightly higher level of education, with fewer people with no formal education or only primary education and more people with secondary or higher education. This is interesting because in many studies, it is the people with higher levels of education who are usually harder to contact, whereas the opposite occurred in this case.

With regard to migration experience, respondents tend to have spent less time outside the country than the overall sample contacted. For example, 22.7% of respondents spent more than three years abroad, compared with 33.6% of the total. At the same time, the share of people who reported very short stays (0 to 1 month) is higher among respondents (18.4%) than in the total sample (14.5%). These differences suggest that survey participants have shorter migration trajectories. In addition, a smaller share of this group reports having had ties in the destination country (87% vs. 88.9%), which may indicate a weaker bond with the destination country.

In terms of migration drivers, patterns are largely comparable. Both those who took the survey and those who did not report similar drivers: most migrated for economic reasons, followed by family reunification and, to a lesser extent, violence or lack of safety.

Regarding the distribution by department of origin, Table 4 shows that geographic patterns between the target population of the study and survey respondents are generally very similar. In both groups, the three departments with the highest share of returnees are Cortés, Francisco Morazán, and Yoro. However, among those who actually answered the calls, there is a slight overrepresentation of people from Francisco Morazán and a lower share of returnees from Yoro.

In summary, a larger share of survey respondents are women, have children in Honduras, and have slightly higher levels of education and shorter migration trajectories than the universe of people contacted. These characteristics are often associated with a lower likelihood of migrating again, which suggests that the study's results are more likely to reflect the experiences and needs of people who intend to remain in the country. As for geographic distribution, no relevant differences were observed by department of origin, indicating that the sample remains geographically representative of the departments from which returnees come. These aspects should be taken into account when analyzing and interpreting the study's findings.

A larger share of survey respondents are women, have children in Honduras, and have slightly higher levels of education and shorter migration trajectories than the universe of people contacted.

Table 3. Sample and Demographic Characteristics of Returnees Registered in the SIAMIR

			(1) **Survey Sample** (%) (December 2024-March 2025)	(2) **Completed Survey** (%) (December 2024-March 2025)	(3) **P-Value**
Panel A: General Characteristics	**Age at return**		31.78	31.73	0.852
	Female		19.40	27.47	0.000
	Marital status	Single	57.98	51.83	0.000
		Married or cohabiting	40.37	46.70	0.000
		Divorced or widowed	1.65	1.47	0.575
	Children	Has children	65.82	71.07	0.000
		Has children in Honduras	43.53	57.13	0.000
		Has children in USA	29.74	22.09	0.000
	Education	None	4.11	2.69	0.001
		Primary	51.55	48.04	0.007
		Lower secondary	22.29	23.08	0.473
		Upper secondary (*bachillerato*)	19.37	22.27	0.007
		Tertiary or university	2.57	3.75	0.014
	Skills	English proficiency	6.93	5.55	0.024
Panel B: Migration	**Time abroad**	0–1 month	14.49	18.42	0.000
		2–3 months	15.87	19.15	0.001
		4–6 months	12.35	15.08	0.003
		7–12 months	9.78	10.59	0.308
		1 to 3 years	13.62	13.45	0.843
		More than 3 years	33.59	22.74	0.000
	Migration trajectory	Destination country USA	99.01	98.61	0.180
		Had ties in destination country	88.90	87.04	0.032
	Migration drivers	Economic reasons	86.85	87.20	0.685
		Family reunification	8.87	9.29	0.579
		Violence or lack of safety	9.65	8.23	0.052
N			7,597	1,227	

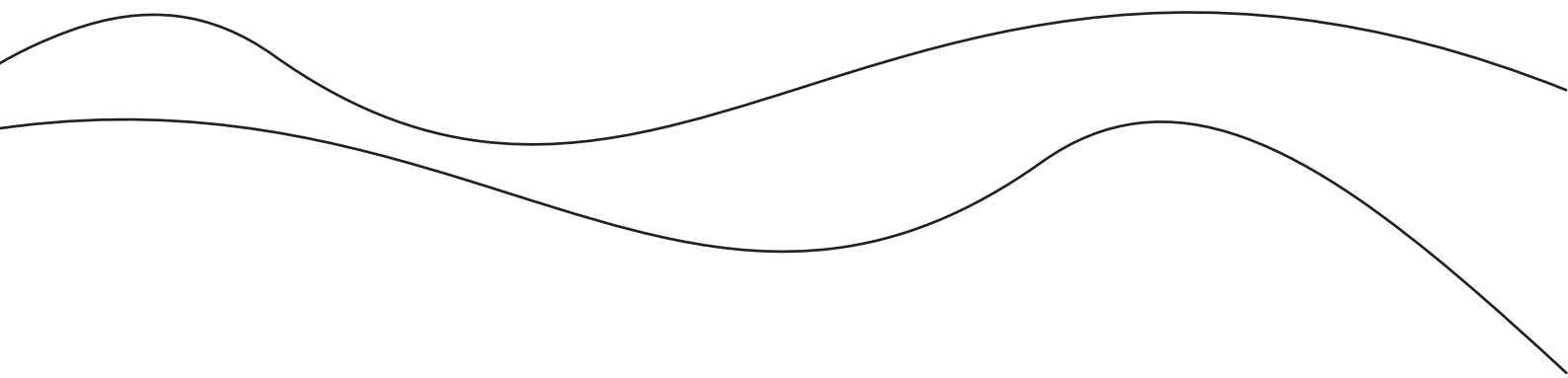
Note: This table presents the sociodemographic characteristics of the full sample of returnees, the universe eligible for the follow-up survey (December 2024 to March 2025), and those who actually responded to the follow-up survey. All the values are percentages, except for age, which reflects the average. The P-value corresponds to a difference-in-means test between the full sample selected for the survey and those who actually responded to the survey; a value below 0.05 indicates that the difference is statistically significant.

Table 4. Returnees by Department of Origin: Survey Sample vs. Survey Respondents

	Survey Sample (%)	Survey Respondents (%)	P-Value
Atlántida	6.91	7.01	0.883
Choluteca	5.27	5.22	0.933
Colón	5.61	4.97	0.269
Comayagua	6.74	6.85	0.872
Copán	5.41	5.22	0.739
Cortés	15.76	14.51	0.178
El Paraíso	4.34	4.97	0.264
Francisco Morazán	13.83	16.71	0.003
Gracias a Dios	0.72	0.81	0.695
Intibucá	2.49	2.04	0.232
Islas de la Bahía	0.36	0.33	0.845
La Paz	1.34	1.30	0.897
Lempira	3.80	2.36	0.001
Ocotepeque	1.86	1.30	0.073
Olancho	8.21	8.96	0.311
Santa Bárbara	5.25	5.87	0.312
Valle	1.95	2.61	0.105
Yoro	10.15	8.96	0.117
N	7,597	1,227	

Note: This table shows the distribution by department of origin for the full sample selected for follow-up and for those who actually completed the survey. The P-value corresponds to a difference-in-means test; a value below 0.05 indicates that the difference is statistically significant.

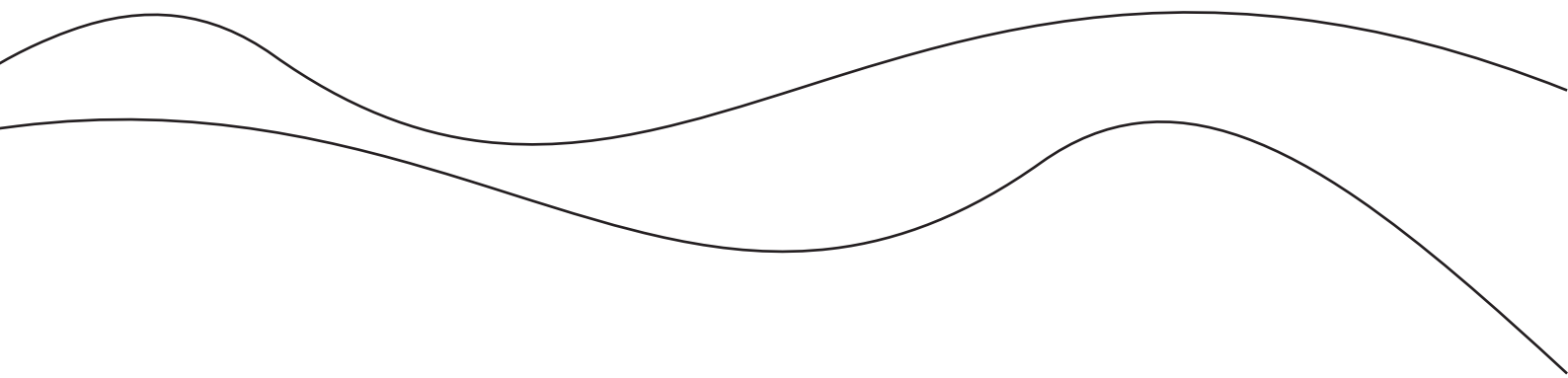
Most migrated for economic reasons, followed by family reunification.



PART II

How Are the Respondents Doing?

Living Conditions
and Reintegration Process



1. Migration Trajectory

This section provides a comprehensive view of the migration process of the survey respondents, spanning from their situation prior to migrating through the experiences they had while abroad and their current situation after returning to Honduras. The aim is to better understand the factors that influence their trajectories, as well as the challenges and opportunities they face in their reintegration. Through this information, we seek to generate evidence that can inform more effective responses centered on the needs of returnees.

1.1 Economic Situation Before Migrating

Figure 3 presents the distribution of total household income in the month prior to migration. Overall, there is a high concentration of people in low-income households: around 80.68% reported monthly income below 10,000 lempiras, that is, less than the average monthly wage of salaried workers in the country (INE, 2024). When the data are disaggregated by sex, important differences emerge. Men reported an average income of 6,723 lempiras, while women averaged 5,201 lempiras. This difference is also reflected in the percentiles: the median was 5,000 lempiras for men and 4,000 lempiras for women. In addition, 33.5% of women reported having had no income during that period, compared with 22.8% of men, a difference that reflects a higher share of women with no income before migrating.

33.5%

of women reported having had no income during the period.

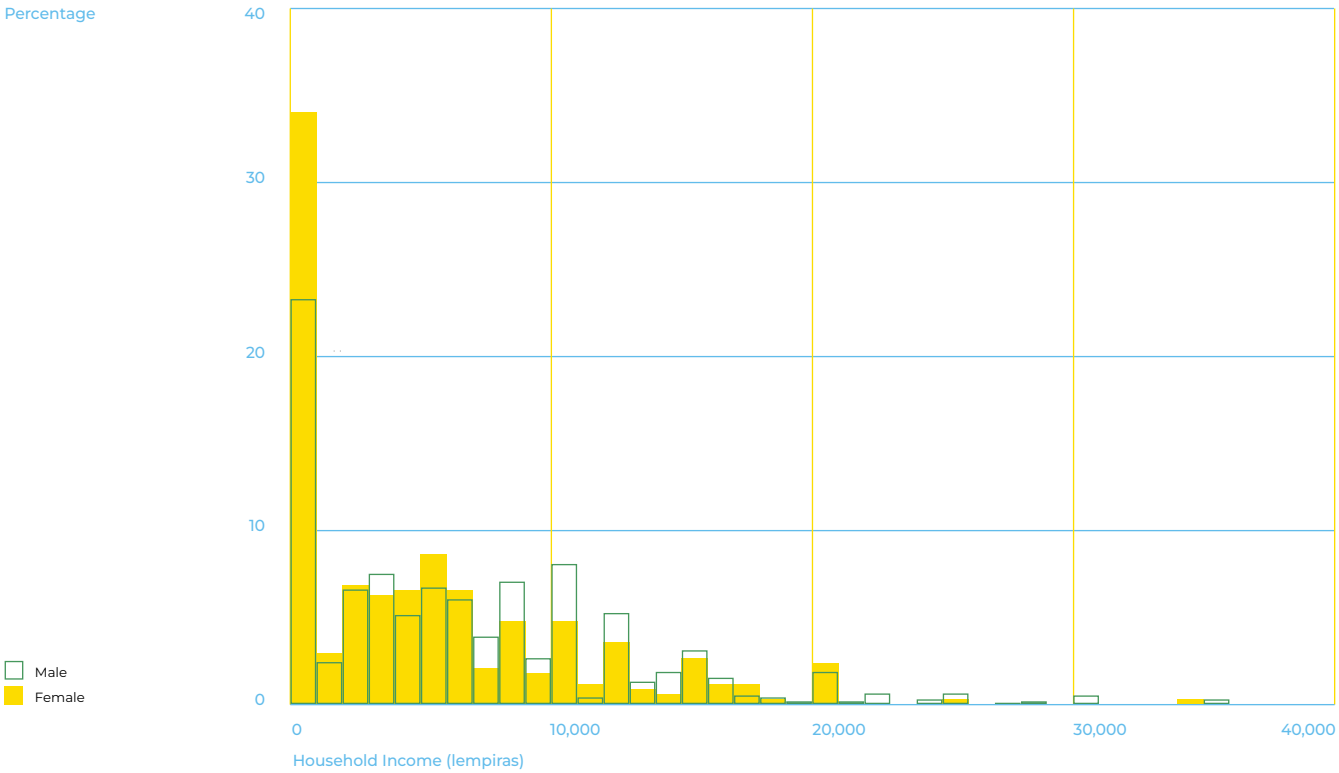


Figure 3. Household Income Before Migrating by Sex

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Note: Full distributions are not shown. Key figures of the distribution for men: Obs: 890 / Mean: 6,723 / P25: 1,500 / P50: 5,000 / P75: 10,000. Key figures of the distribution for women: Obs: 337 / Mean: 5,201 / P25: 0 / P50: 4,000 / P75: 8,000.

Figure 4 supplements this information by showing the share of people who owned different types of assets before migrating. Despite limited income, a significant share of households had some physical capital: 20.5% owned a home, 18.8% a vehicle, 7% land or property, and 3.3% a business. In terms of sex, in all cases men were more likely to own assets than women. For example, 22.5% of men reported owning land or property, compared with 9.2% of women; and 17.5% of men reported having a vehicle, vs. 7.9% of women. The gap is also evident for other assets such as housing and businesses.

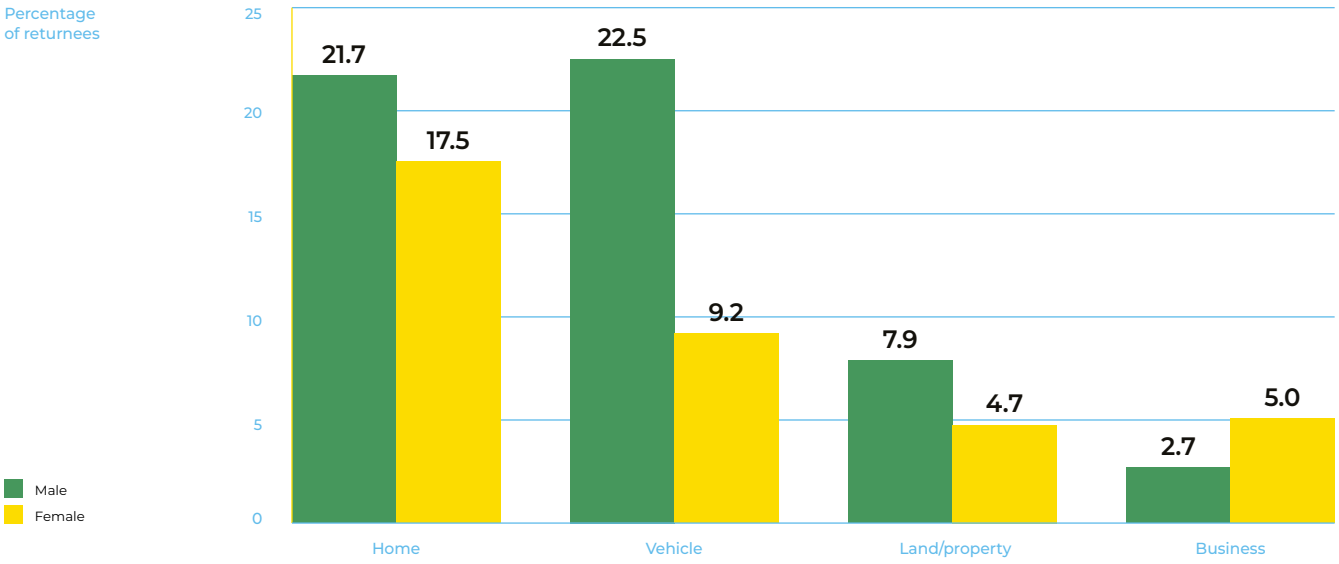


Figure 4. Assets Before Migrating (Ownership of Home, Vehicle, and Other Assets)
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

In line with what Clemens and Mendola (2024) have documented in Honduras, Guatemala, and other countries, these data suggest that the most disadvantaged members of society are not necessarily those who migrate. For some, migration is more about investment than survival, especially when individuals already possess assets that can help finance the journey or support expectations of future earnings.

1.2 The Migration Experience

The vast majority of survey respondents (99%) migrated with the goal of reaching the United States, driven mainly by economic reasons (Table 3). As mentioned in the previous section, the average length of stay abroad – calculated from the self-reported date of last departure and their date of arrival at the CAMR – varies by subsample: it is higher among those who returned between December 2024 and March 2025, and lower among those who actually answered the follow-up calls.

Looking at the full distribution of time spent outside the country, a marked gender difference emerges: the share of men who spent more than three years outside Honduras is almost seven times that of women (Figure 5). In contrast, women are overrepresented in short- and medium-duration stays, suggesting shorter migration trajectories. This difference is closely linked to a recent decline in the share of women within the returnee population. While in previous years women represented around 25% of all returnees, in the period analyzed this figure fell to 19.4%, pointing to a shift in both migration profiles and return patterns.

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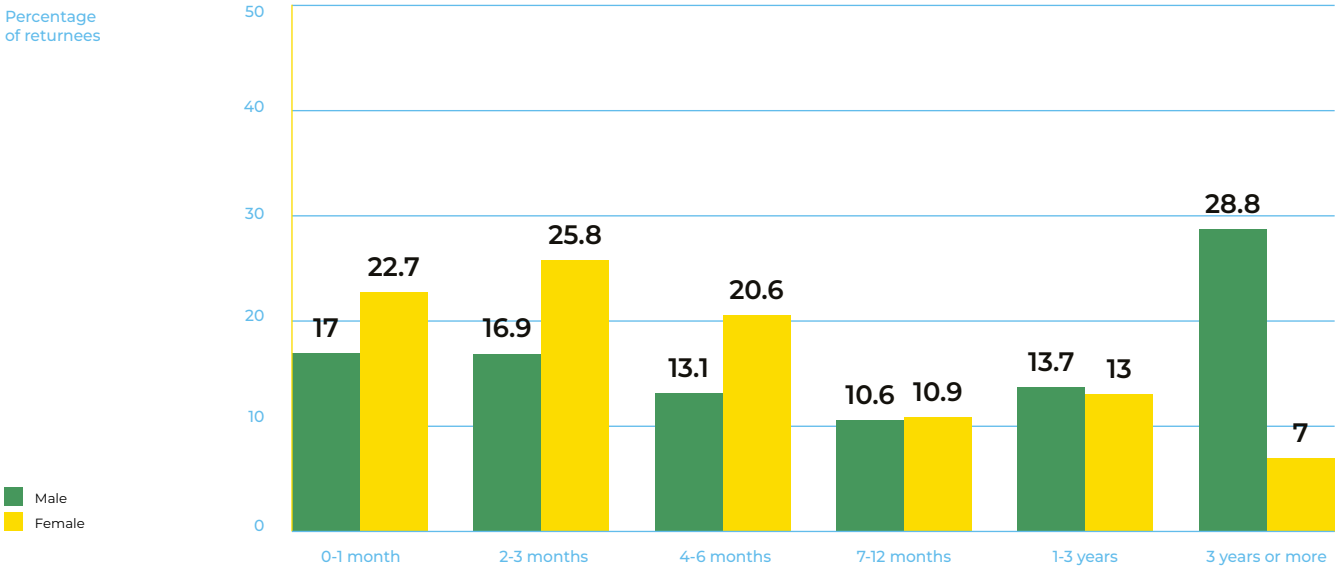

Figure 5. Time Spent Abroad by Sex

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

1.3 Return

Following the migration process, returnees have settled across all departments of the country. Figure 6 shows the geographic distribution of the current residence reported by survey respondents. This information makes it possible to identify the main places where returnees resettle and is a key input to tailor services and institutional support in territories with a higher concentration of returnees.

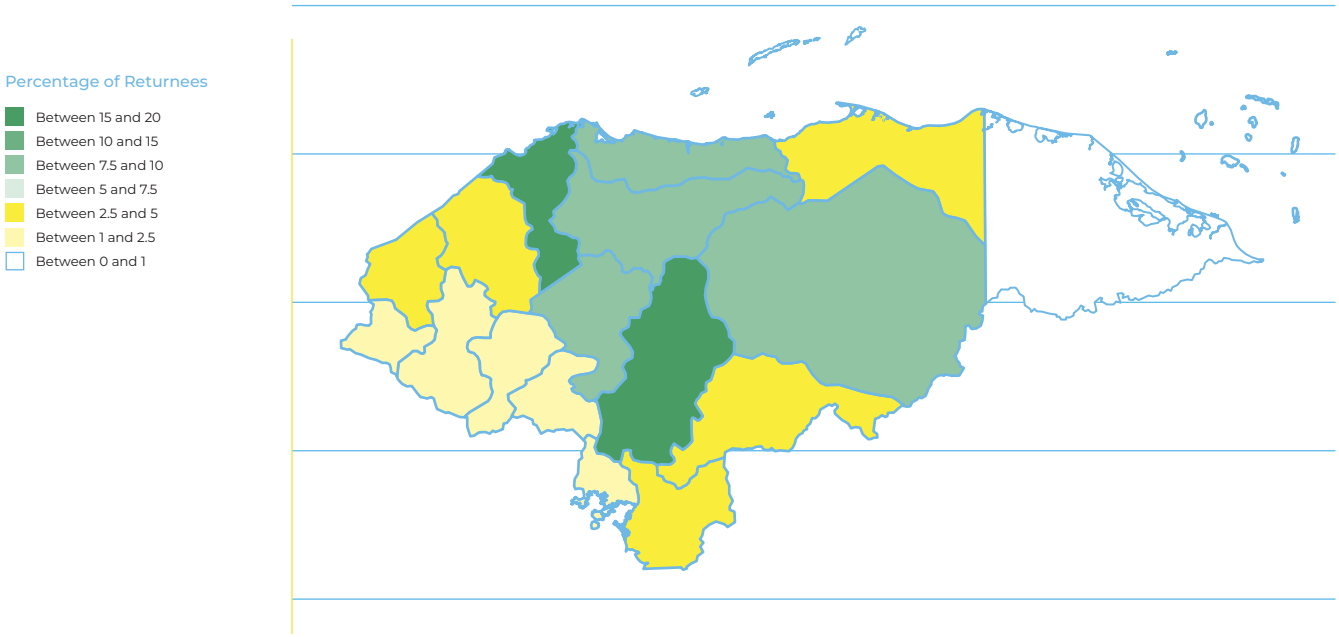

Figure 6. Department of Current Residence

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Most returnees in the sample report currently living in the departments of Cortés (19.6%) and Francisco Morazán (17.7%), which are also the country's main urban centers. These are followed by Yoro (9.35%) and Comayagua (7.6%), suggesting a concentration of returnees in areas with greater economic activity or better services. This distribution largely coincides with the destinations reported at the time of reception at the CAMR, suggesting that most returnees end up settling where they initially said they would.

To better understand these settlement patterns, the survey collects geographic information at five key stages of the migration trajectory. First, the place of origin and the department to which the person requests the transportation subsidy is noted on the SIAMIR form.

In the follow-up call, information is collected on the destination indicated upon arrival at the CAMR and on current place of residence. In addition, respondents are asked about their department of residence before migrating. This makes it possible to trace movements within the country more accurately and assess whether people stay in the same place or move again after returning to the country.[3]

3. Changes in location relative to the department of origin reported in the SIAMIR upon arrival in Honduras.

Table 5. Internal Migration by Department

	Panel A: Percentage of Returnees by Department and Stage Relative to Return				
	SIAMIR		Follow-Up		
	Department of origin reported (%)	Department of destination reported (%)	Department of residence before migrating (%)	Department of destination requested (%)	Department of current residence (%)
Atlántida	7	7.4	7.6	8.1	7.6
Choluteca	5.2	4.7	4.5	2.7	4.3
Colón	5	5.1	5.4	4.7	4.6
Comayagua	6.8	6.6	7.1	7.3	7.5
Copán	5.2	4.4	4.3	4.3	4
Cortés	14.5	19.1	18.4	22.2	19.2
El Paraíso	5	4.4	3.9	2.6	3.8
Francisco Morazán	16.7	17.4	17.8	22.4	17.6
Gracias a Dios	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3
Intibucá	2	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4
Islas de la Bahía	0.3	0.7	1.0	0.2	0.8
La Paz	1.3	1	1.1	0.5	1.1
Lempira	2.4	2.1	2.0	1.4	2
Ocotepeque	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.1	1.4
Olancho	9	7.6	7.5	4.7	7.5
Santa Bárbara	5.9	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.8
Valle	2.6	1.6	1.6	1.1	1.7
Yoro	9	9.3	9	9.2	9.3

Table 5. Internal Migration by Department (cont.)

Panel B: Changes in the Percentage of Returnees by Department and Stage Relative to Return

	SIAMIR		Follow-Up		
	Department of origin reported (%)	Department of destination reported (%)	Department of residence before migrating (%)	Department of destination requested (%)	Department of current residence (%)
Atlántida	7	0.4	0.6	1.1	0.6
Choluteca	5.2	–0.5	–0.7	–2.5	–0.9
Colón	5	0.2	0.4	–0.3	–0.3
Comayagua	6.8	–0.2	0.3	0.5	0.7
Copán	5.2	–0.8	–1	–0.9	–1.2
Cortés	14.5	4.6	3.9	7.7	4.7
El Paraíso	5	–0.6	–1.1	–2.3	–1.2
Francisco Morazán	16.7	0.7	1.1	5.7	0.9
Gracias a Dios	0.8	–0.6	–0.5	–0.5	–0.5
Intibucá	2	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4
Islas de la Bahía	0.3	0.3	0.7	–0.1	0.5
La Paz	1.3	–0.3	–0.2	–0.8	–0.2
Lempira	2.4	–0.2	–0.4	–1	–0.3
Ocotepeque	1.3	0.1	0.1	–0.2	0.1
Olancho	9	–1.4	–1.4	–4.3	–1.5
Santa Bárbara	5.9	–1.5	–1.4	–1.2	–1.1
Valle	2.6	–1	–1	–1.5	–0.9
Yoro	9	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.3

Table 5 is divided into two panels that present the geographic distribution of returnees. Panel A shows the share of people currently living in each department, according to five points in time when a place of origin or destination was recorded or reported. The first column presents the distribution by department according to the municipality of origin the returnees reported at the point of return. The following columns show: the department of destination as it appears in the SIAMIR; the department of residence before migrating (as reported by the returnee during the follow-up call); the destination given when requesting bus transportation at the CAMR (also reported during the call); and finally, the department of current residence (as stated in the call).

Panel B again shows the distribution by department of origin in the first column and, in the subsequent columns, the difference between that baseline value and the percentages corresponding to the other points in time. This comparison provides a clear view of the extent to which places where returnees actually reside differ from those declared earlier at the CAMR, thereby identifying settlement patterns after return and possible gaps between initial intentions and final destinations.

While the mapping of current residence offers an initial look at the territories with the highest presence of returnees, the detailed breakdown in Table 5 reveals a key finding: the geographic distribution by department remains relatively consistent across the different stages of the migration trajectory. In particular, Cortés (19.2%), Francisco Morazán (17.6%), Yoro (9.3%), and Comayagua (7.5%) account for more than half of all returnees. This consistent pattern at the department level suggests that many returnees tend to resettle in the same territories where they lived before migrating or where they have prior ties. However, as discussed below, this apparent consistency conceals a significant shift toward municipal capitals within those same departments.

When comparing the department of origin reported at the point of return with residence before migrating and current residence (in Panel B), several relevant patterns emerge. First, Cortés stands out as a recurring destination: although it accounts for only 14.5% of places of origin, it accounted for 18.4% of residences before migration and maintains a similar share as the current residence of returnees (19.2%). This suggests that many migrants had already moved to Cortés before leaving the country and that, after returning, they tend to settle there again. By contrast, Olancho, which accounts for 9% of places of origin, falls to 7.5% as a place of residence before migration and does not regain that share as a current residence, which may be related to its geographic distance or to fewer economic and reintegration opportunities.

Other departments such as Atlántida, Comayagua, and Yoro show a relatively consistent distribution at all three stages, suggesting more consistent settlement patterns among their returnee populations. By contrast, Choluteca and El Paraíso show a steady decline between previous and current residence, which could reflect a lower willingness or ability to resettle there. These patterns underscore the importance of understanding internal migration trends before and after return when designing more effective reintegration policies.

Regarding the destinations returnees cited, important differences emerge between what was initially reported at the CAMR (recorded in the SIAMIR) and what was later stated during the follow-up call. It is important to bear in mind that the SIAMIR reports on where returnees stated that they planned to go at the time of their return before becoming aware of the logistical constraints of the transportation subsidy, such as the need to travel to their destination that same day. These limitations often make it impossible for bus tickets to be issued to more distant departments such as Olancho, especially when the returnees arrive later in the day. This may explain

the initial concentration in more accessible destinations such as Francisco Morazán, which then decreases as people find ways to travel to their places of origin or to other destinations where they intend to settle.

Table 6. Internal Migration by Sex and Department

	Departament of Origin			Department of Current Residence		
	Women	Men	Difference	Women	Men	Difference
Atlántida	8.9	6.3	2.6	11.3	6.2	5.1
Choluteca	4.2	5.6	−1.5	2.7	4.9	−2.3
Colón	4.7	5.1	−0.3	4.7	4.6	0.1
Comayagua	3.9	8	−4.1	4.2	8.8	−4.6
Copán	3.6	5.8	−2.3	3.6	4.2	−0.6
Cortés	19	12.8	6.2	22.8	17.8	5.1
El Paraíso	5.6	4.7	0.9	4.2	3.6	0.6
Francisco Morazán	16.9	16.6	0.3	19.3	17	2.3
Gracias a Dios	1.5	0.6	0.9	0	0.4	−0.4
Intibucá	1.8	2.1	−0.4	2.1	2.6	−0.5
Islas de la Bahía	0.9	0.1	0.8	0.6	0.9	−0.3
La Paz	1.5	1.2	0.2	1.2	1	0.2
Lempira	2.1	2.5	−0.4	1.2	2.4	−1.2
Ocotepeque	0.6	1.6	−1	0.6	1.7	−1.1
Olancho	8.3	9.2	−0.9	5.9	8.1	−2.2
Santa Bárbara	3.9	6.6	−2.8	3.9	5.2	−1.3
Valle	3.9	2.1	1.7	2.4	1.5	0.9
Yoro	8.9	9	−0.1	9.5	9.2	0.3

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Once residential patterns have been identified at the five stages of the migration process, it is useful to explore whether these trajectories vary by gender. This comparison makes it possible to identify potential inequalities and gender-differentiated preferences in the geographic distribution of returnees.

Table 6 compares the distribution of returnees by gender, both by department of origin and by current residence. For each case, the table shows each group's share of the total – women in the sample as a share of all female returnees and men in the sample as a share of all male returnees – and calculates the difference between the two. This information therefore makes it possible to observe whether there are more pronounced differences in where women settle compared to men across departments.

Several relevant patterns emerge with respect to returnees' place of origin. First, a higher share of women come from the country's main urban centers. In particular, a significantly higher share of women is concentrated in Cortés and Francisco Morazán. For example, 19% of women name Cortés as their department of origin, compared with 12.8% of men, a difference of more than six percentage points. In the case of Francisco Morazán, though smaller, there is also a higher share of women (16.9% vs. 16.6%). The fact that more women returnees come from major urban centers may be related to gendered migration patterns, prior access to urban networks, or specific conditions driving female migration from these territories.

By contrast, a higher share of men come from departments that are more rural or have a lower population density, such as Olancho, Copán, Santa Bárbara, and Comayagua. These differences may reflect distinct migration trajectories by gender, shaped by factors such as economic opportunities, family structures, or the labor mobility dynamics prior to migration.

Moreover, the comparative analysis of place of origin and current residence by gender reveals a particularly interesting pattern: women show greater geographic mobility after return. This is particularly evident in departments such as Atlántida, where the difference in current residence between women and men is more pronounced than at the point of origin. This finding suggests that women returnees are not only more concentrated in urban areas, but also tend to relocate more frequently after returning, which may respond to gendered reintegration strategies, searches for support networks, or access to specific services. This greater female mobility after return reinforces the need to incorporate a gender perspective in resettlement and reintegration policies.

Although the analysis by department reveals certain patterns – such as stability in some areas and a concentration in departments like Cortés – these shifts are generally moderate. However, when the information is disaggregated at the municipal level, differences become much more pronounced. This suggests that return often involves a more complex process of internal migration that is not fully captured by movements between departments.

Women show greater geographic mobility after return.

Table 7. Municipal-Level Mobility by Sex

	Municipality at Return		
Sex	Another municipality (%)	Municipality of origin (%)	Total (%)
Men	48.48	51.52	100
Women	50.60	49.40	100
Total	49.06	50.94	100

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Table 7 shows that 49.06% of returnees settled in a municipality other than their place of origin, while 50.94% returned to the same municipality. This indicates that, in roughly half of all cases, return does not mean going back to one's place of origin. The result suggests that moves within the country after return may be associated with individual or family decisions, resource availability, support networks, or local conditions. This pattern has important implications for reintegration policies, especially where it is assumed that returnees will resettle in their municipality of origin. If a significant share of returnees settles in other areas, support strategies must adapt to respond to broader resettlement dynamics.

In terms of the main destinations, Table 8a presents the 15 municipalities with the highest share of returnees, expressed as a percentage of all surveyed returnees. The municipality with the greatest concentration is Distrito Central (Francisco Morazán), which accounts for 12.47% of the total, followed by San Pedro Sula (Cortés) with 8.48%. Both are highly populated urban centers, suggesting that returnees tend to settle in metropolitan areas with more infrastructure and economic opportunities.

The municipality with the greatest concentration is Distrito Central, which accounts for

12.47%

Table 8a. Main Municipalities at Return

Department of Current Residence	Municipality of Current Residence	Returnees (%)
Francisco Morazán	Distrito Central	12.47
Cortés	San Pedro Sula	8.48
Atlántida	La Ceiba	3.50
Comayagua	Comayagua	3.18
Yoro	El Progreso	3.18
Cortés	Villanueva	2.69
El Paraíso	Danlí	2.44
Cortés	Puerto Cortés	2.36
Olancho	Juticalpa	2.36
Choluteca	Choluteca	2.20
Cortés	Choloma	1.87
Yoro	Yoro	1.79
Atlántida	Tela	1.79
Yoro	Olanchito	1.63
Colón	Tocoa	1.63

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Other municipalities with shares above 3% include La Ceiba (Atlántida), Comayagua (Comayagua), and El Progreso (Yoro), which are all important urban centers in their respective regions. At the department level, Cortés stands out because several of its municipalities appear on the list (San Pedro Sula, Villanueva, Puerto Cortés, and Choloma), indicating a strong concentration of returnees in that area of the country.

Table 8b presents the distribution of returnees is disaggregated by sex and current municipality of residence, showing the shares of women and men in the 15 municipalities that concentrate the highest number of returnees in each group.

Table 8b. Main Municipalities at Return by Sex

Department of Current Residence	Municipality of Current Residence	Women (%)	Men (%)	Diference %W-%M
Atlántida	La Ceiba	5.93	2.58	3.35
Francisco Morazán	Distrito Central	14.54	11.69	2.85
Cortés	Villanueva	4.15	2.13	2.02
Cortés	Puerto Cortés	3.56	1.91	1.65
Colón	Tocoa	2.67	1.24	1.43
Cortés	San Pedro Sula	9.50	8.09	1.41
Atlántida	Tela	2.67	1.46	1.21
El Paraíso	Danlí	3.26	2.13	1.13
Colón	Sabá	1.78	0.67	1.11
Copán	Santa Rosa de Copán	1.48	1.35	0.14
Yoro	El Progreso	3.26	3.15	0.12
Olancho	Juticalpa	2.37	2.36	0.01
Olancho	Catacamas	1.48	1.57	−0.09
Yoro	Olanchito	1.48	1.69	−0.20
Yoro	Yoro	1.48	1.91	−0.43
Choluteca	Choluteca	1.78	2.36	−0.58
Cortés	Choloma	1.19	2.13	−0.95
Comayagua	Comayagua	2.08	3.60	−1.52

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Several patterns emerge that add nuance to earlier findings on place of origin. First, women returnees tend to concentrate in the country's major urban centers, where their share consistently exceeds that of men. Municipalities such as La Ceiba, Distrito Central, Villanueva, Puerto Cortés, and Danlí show notably higher shares of women, with differences that in some cases exceed two percentage points. By contrast, men have higher shares in municipalities with significant industrial or agricultural activity – such as Comayagua, Choloma, and Yoro. This may reflect a gendered labor re-entry linked to migration trajectories associated with traditionally male sectors, as well as a greater propensity for men to settle in rural or semi-urban contexts.

Taken together, these patterns indicate that return does not result in a uniform redistribution of migrants across the national territory, but is instead gendered. Resettlement strategies appear to be influenced by factors such as support networks and labor opportunities in the place of destination.

1.4 Settlement and Housing Arrangements

The housing arrangements of survey respondents vary greatly after returning. A significant majority (52%) currently live in the homes of family members at no cost to themselves, underscoring the central role of family networks in the reintegration process. Another 24.6% live in rental homes, while 18.3% reside in a home they own. Less frequent arrangements include housing lent by friends (1.6%), ceded by third parties free of charge (2.2%), or provided as part of a job (0.8%). Only 0.5% reported living in another type of dwelling not specified. These data show that most returnees depend on family networks to access housing, although a non-negligible share manage to rent or live in their own property..

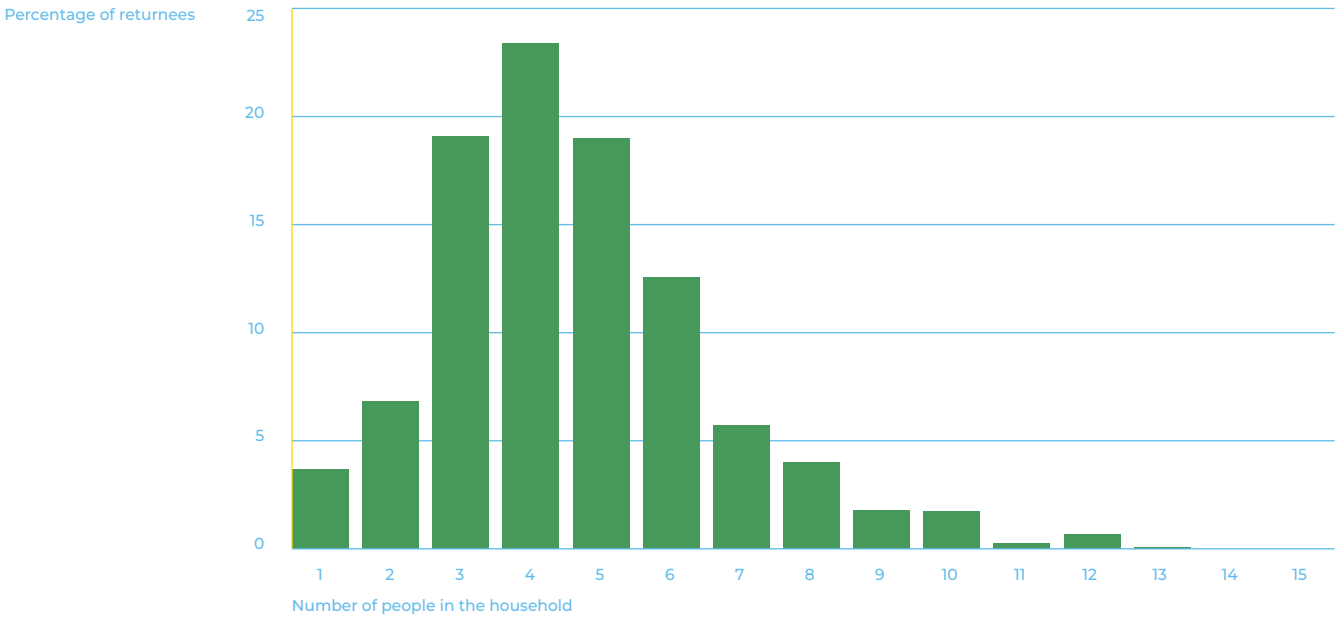

Figure 7. Household Size of Survey Respondents

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Beyond housing tenure, the data show that returnees tend to live in large households. More than 70% of respondents share their home with at least three other people, and nearly one quarter (24%) live in four-person households. Nineteen percent live in households of five people and 12% in six-person households. There are even larger households: 4.2% report living with eight people and 1.6% with ten. Only 4.8% live alone or with one other person. This information reveals the importance of family and community networks as support systems after return, but could also point to challenges related to space, privacy, and adequate living conditions. It is important to note that more precise conclusions on the degree of overcrowding experienced by this population cannot be drawn from the survey.

Regarding expectations of future moves, the vast majority of returnees in the sample plan to settle permanently in their current place of residence: more than 80% state that they intend to stay there for at least the next two years. By contrast, only 2.9% report plans to move within the next six months, suggesting low geographic mobility in the short term and pointing to a stage of greater residential stability that may facilitate social and economic reintegration in destination communities. Figure 8 shows the expectations of future moves by sex. In particular, it suggests that women are slightly more likely than men to intend to remain in Honduras for a longer period.

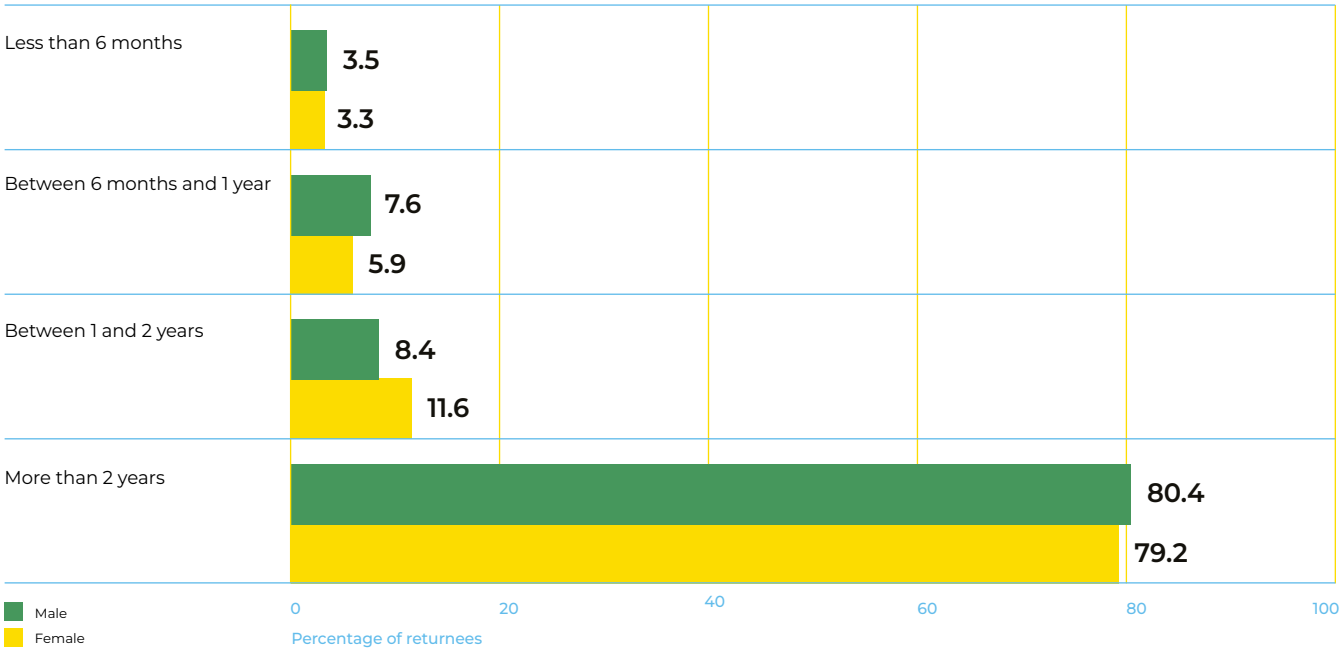

Figure 8. Intended Length of Stay in Current Dwelling by Sex

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

2. Employment

2.1 Labor Force Participation and Employment

Figure 9 shows that most returnees who participated in the study are economically active, which suggests a high readiness to re-enter the Honduran labor market after returning. This pattern is consistent with evidence on international migration that shows labor force participation rates above 80% among migrants, reflecting strong economic motivation and high engagement in economic activities. However, it is important to underscore that these figures include both formal and informal employment, so job quality and stability may be limited. When disaggregated by sex, men show higher participation levels: 91.6% are in the labor force and 86.3% are employed. In contrast, women face greater difficulties, with an unemployment rate of 30.1%, an indication of other potential barriers to their economic reintegration.

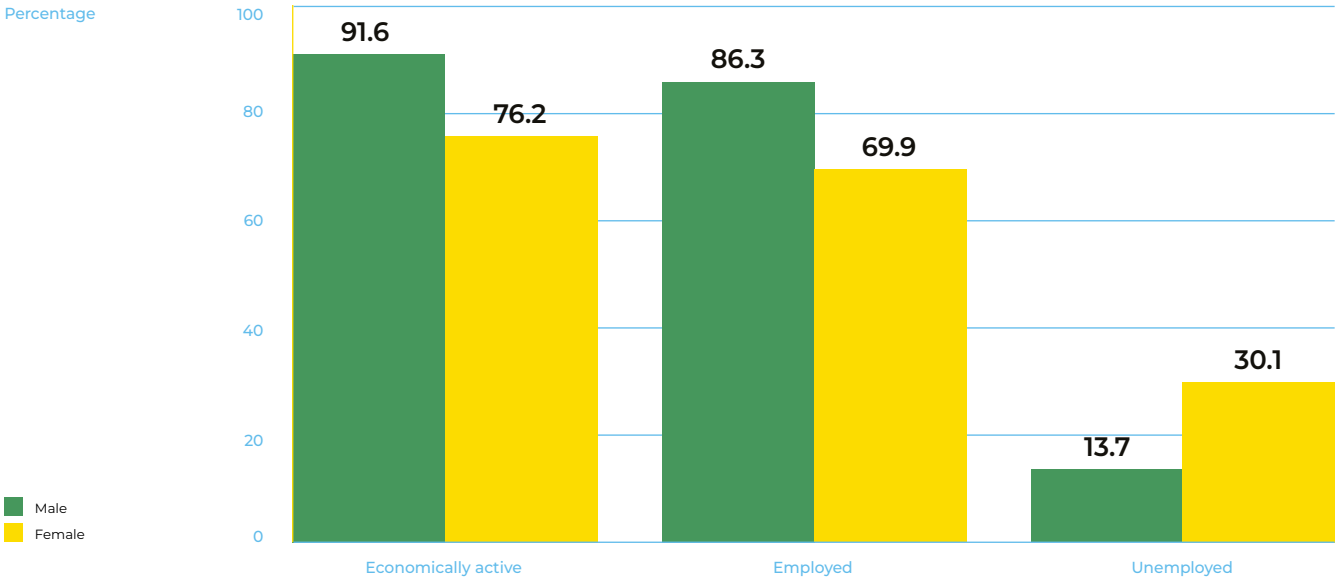

Figure 9. Labor Status by Sex

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

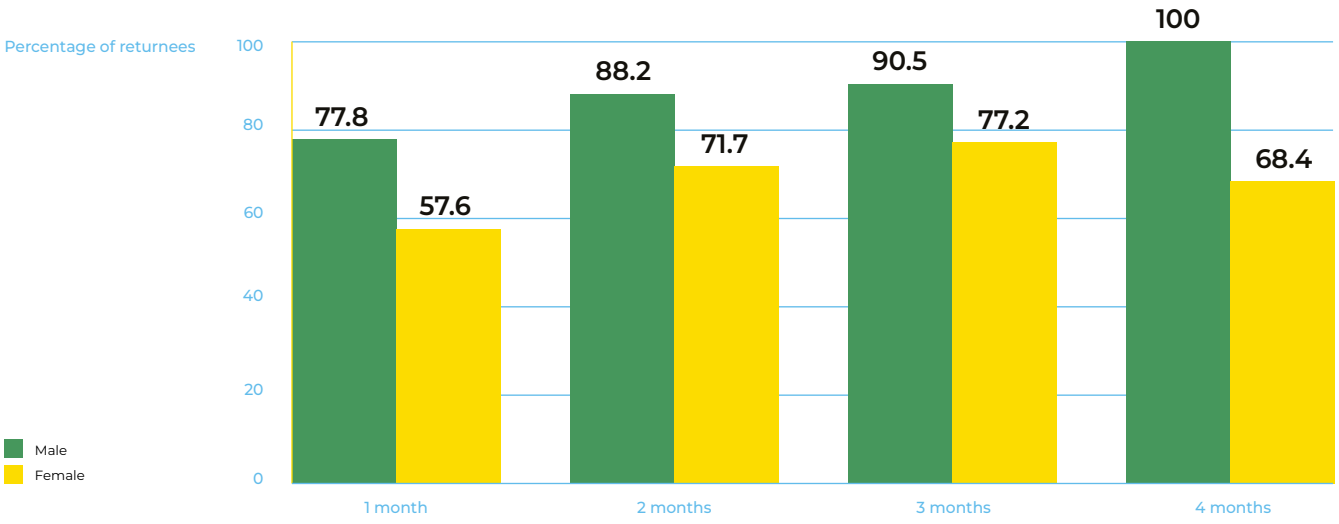

Figure 10. Percentage of Employed Returnees by Time Since Return to Honduras

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

With respect to employment, 68% of respondents report being employed at the time of the interview. The data show almost immediate labor entry after return: 56% of those who came back in March 2025 are already employed, a share that rises to 69% among those who arrived in February and reaches 70% for those who returned in December 2024 and have been in the country for four months. Large gender gaps are observed: while 76.1% of men are working, only 46.85% of women are employed. As Figure 10 shows, this gap remains fairly constant over time since return, with female employment rates ranging between 57% and 77%, which also suggests persistent barriers to labor reintegration among women returnees.

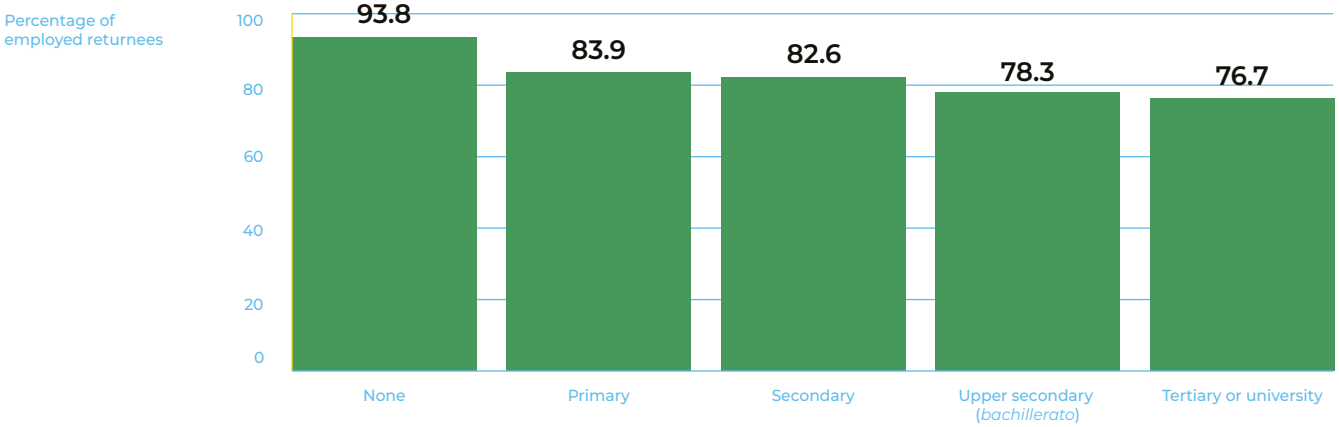

Figure 11. Percentage of Employed Returnees by Educational Attainment

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Employment rates vary by educational attainment, though this finding should be interpreted with caution given the small size of the groups at the lower and upper ends of the distribution – specifically, those with no schooling or tertiary education. For example, Figure 11 shows that the group with the highest employment is those with no schooling (93%), although this group comprises only 33 individuals. Among those with primary education, 83% are working, whereas employment rates are somewhat lower for those who completed secondary (82%), upper secondary (78%), or tertiary/university (76%).

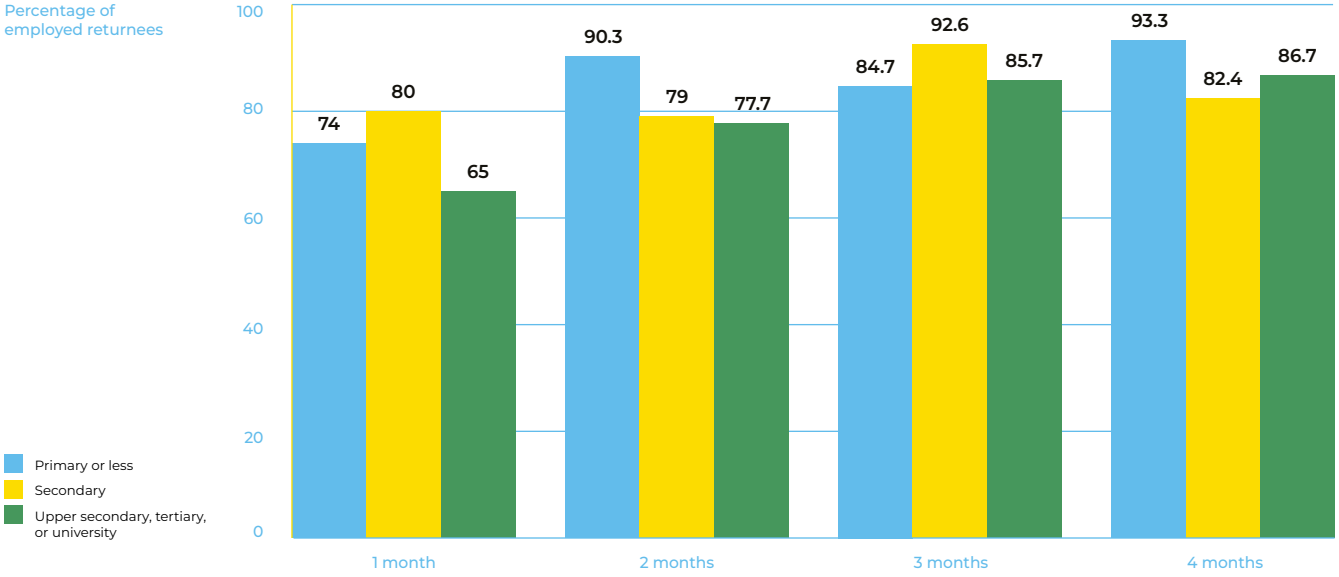

Figure 12. Percentage of Employed Returnees by Time Since Return to Honduras and Educational Attainment

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

The patterns shown in Figure 12 may reflect a series of different factors: on the one hand, people with lower education levels may be compelled to enter the labor market quickly out of economic necessity; on the other, those with higher levels of education may choose to wait for jobs that better match their profile, delaying their entry. In particular, Figure 12 shows that the share of employed returnees is higher from the onset and that the employment gap by education level narrows as time since return increases. It is worth noting that the patterns might be attributable to other factors that can also affect labor reintegration opportunities, such as place of residence or access to support networks.

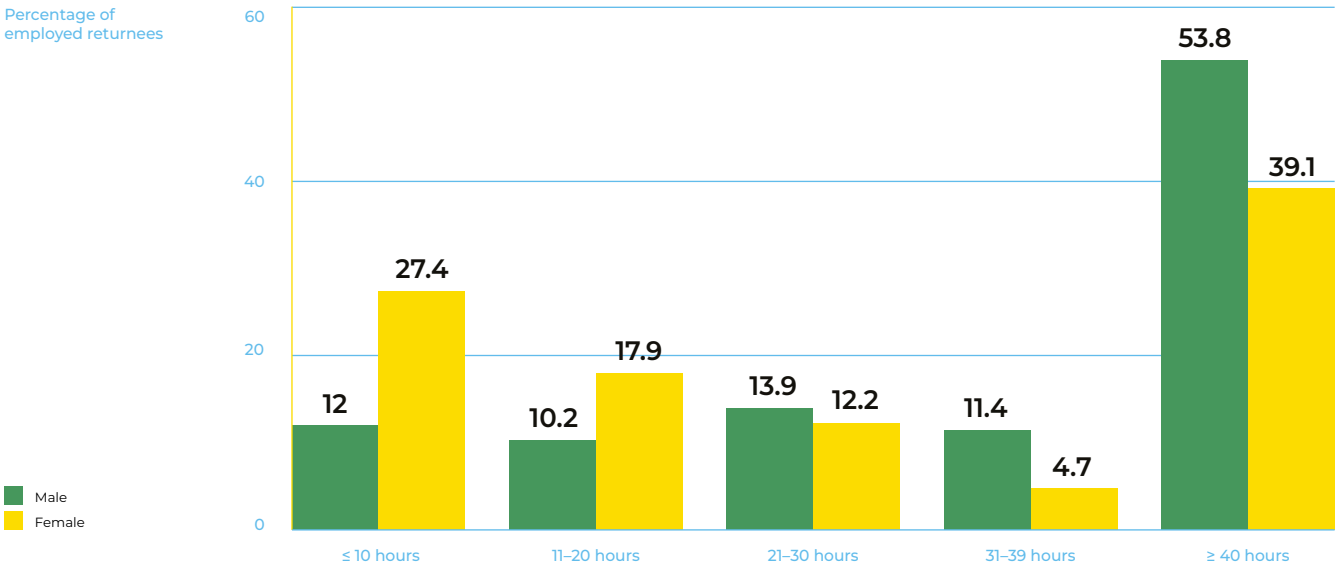

Figure 13. Working Hours among Employed Survey Respondents by Sex

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

In terms of workload (Figure 13), the distribution of weekly working hours among employed respondents shows a high concentration of full-time schedules. More than half of employed men (53.8%) and 39.1% of employed women work 40 hours or more per week. Gender gaps persist across the intermediate categories of hours worked. For example, 17.5% of women work between 10 and 20 hours, compared with only 10.3% of men. In addition, a significant share of women reports very short workweeks: 27% work 10 hours or less, vs. 12% of men. This pattern suggests a higher prevalence of part-time work or underemployment among women returnees. By contrast, men tend to report longer workweeks, which may be related to the types of jobs available to each group.

Regarding the jobs currently held by returnees, the information collected reveals the most common occupations among those who are employed. The data show a high concentration in sectors such as services, construction, and agriculture, particularly manual and technical trades. The most frequent occupations include agricultural work (12.2%), masonry (11.3%), and general laborer positions (10.9%).

In addition, 52% of those who reported employment work in a variety of other occupations in agriculture and construction, as well as in manual and low-skill technical jobs. This trend suggests that many returnees engage in economic activities with high local demand and a substantial impact on the national economy.

A 2022 study by the IDB found that increased production in agribusiness, construction, and tourism (including many manual service jobs) has a particularly strong impact on economic recovery due to the large volume of inputs they demand from other sectors. At the same time, two of these sectors – construction and tourism – are characterized by high demand and hiring difficulties, while agribusiness is important in terms of employment volume, as it is the main employer (30.5% of the labor force). This represents an opportunity to strengthen returnees' skills and facilitate their stable integration into high-employment sectors in Honduras.

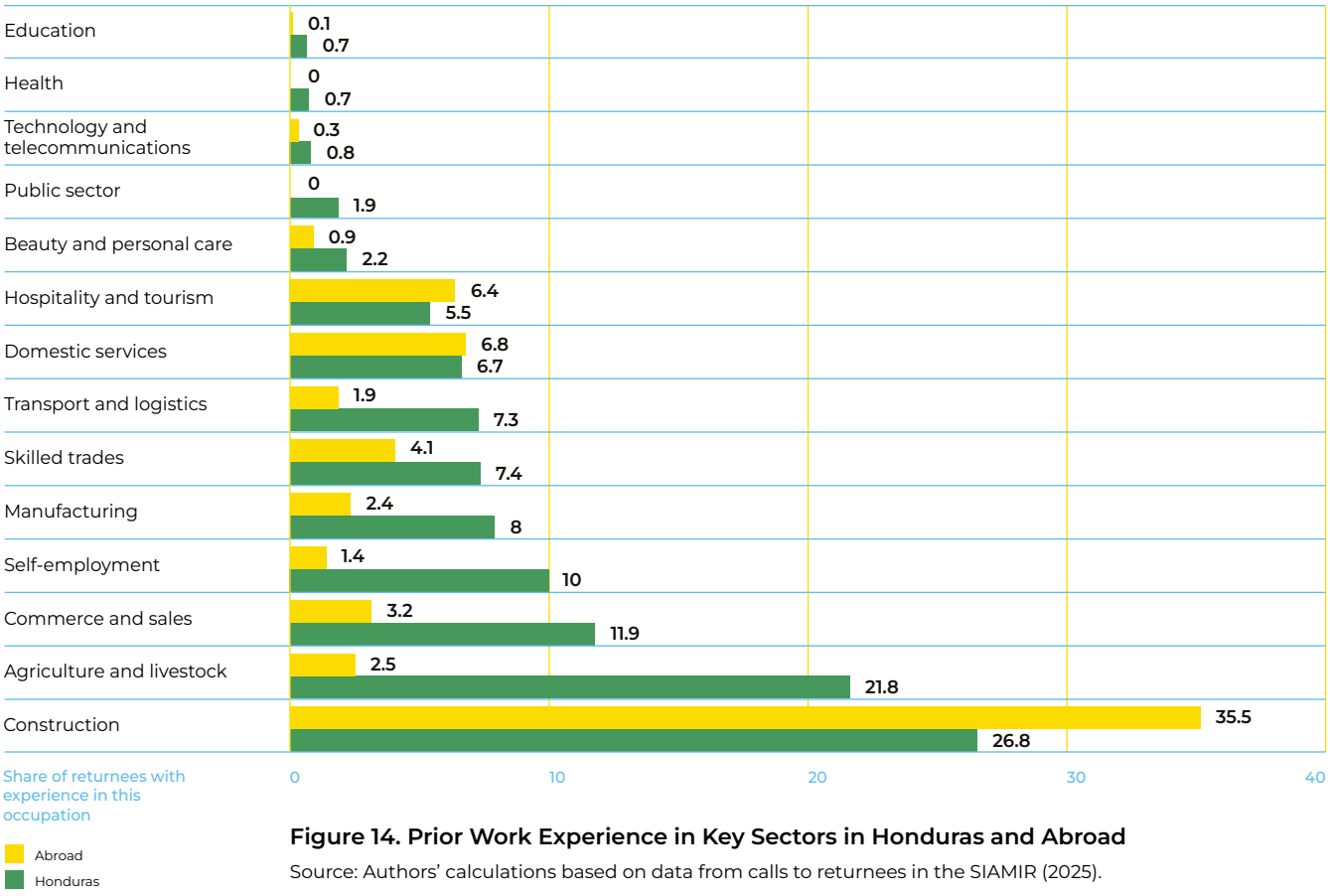

Figure 14. Prior Work Experience in Key Sectors in Honduras and Abroad

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

With regard to cumulative work experience, Figure 14 presents the share of returnees who report having previously worked in each sector, either in Honduras or abroad. This information is based on a question about whether they had ever worked in those occupations, regardless of the duration of employment, which ranged from a single day to several years. Work experience is most common in construction and agriculture and livestock, sectors where percentages are significantly higher among those who worked in Honduras. As for experience abroad, construction (35.5%), domestic services (6.8%), and hospitality and tourism (6.4%) stand out. It is important to note that respondents had the option to report experience in more than one sector, so the percentages do not sum to 100.

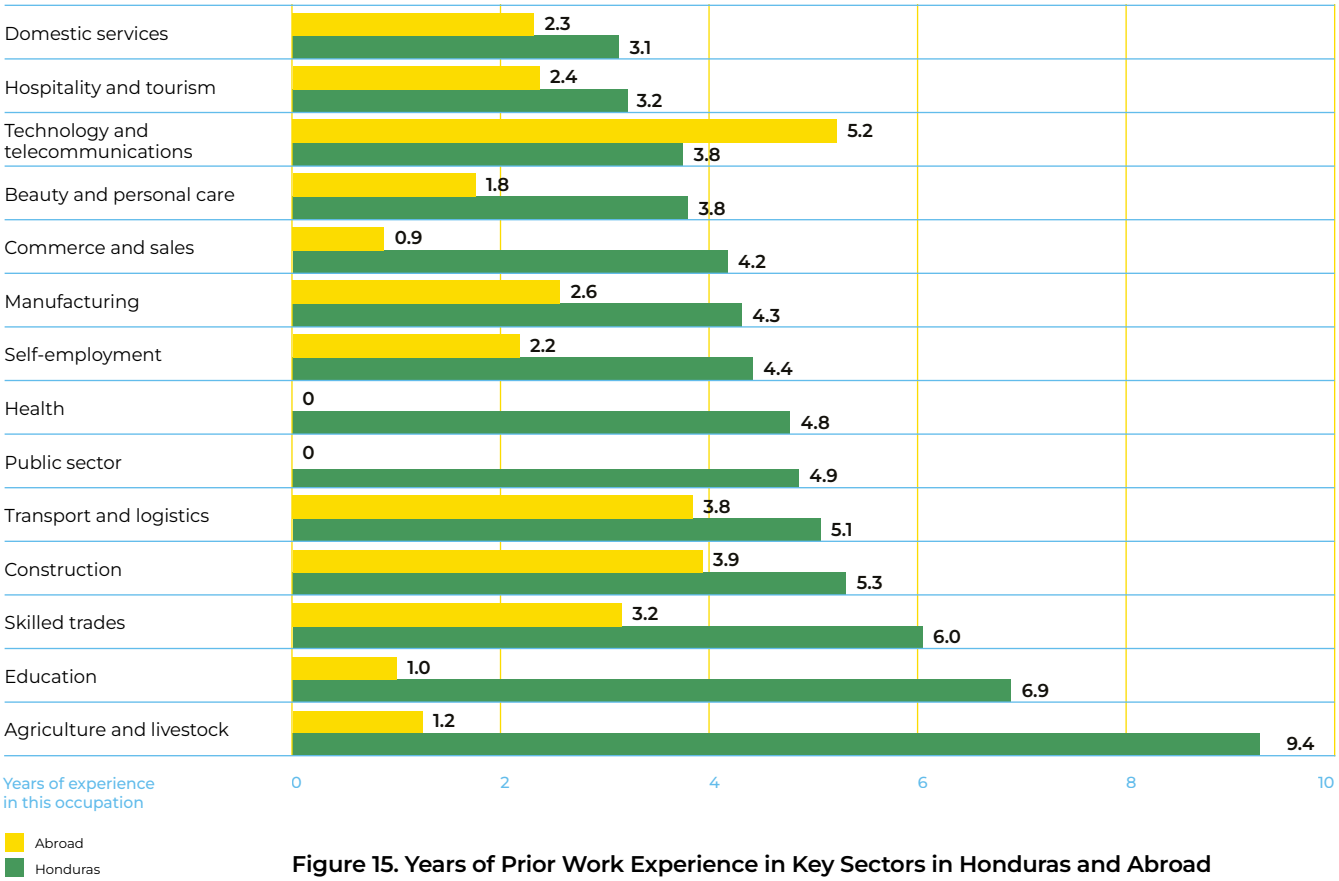

Figure 15. Years of Prior Work Experience in Key Sectors in Honduras and Abroad

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Figure 15 shows the average years of cumulative experience in Honduras and abroad among those who reported having worked in each sector. Since returnees may have experience in both contexts, the data are not mutually exclusive. Taken together, the results provide an overview of previous work trajectories and of the types of skills that returnees bring with them.

The sectors with the highest cumulative experience are construction, agriculture and livestock, and skilled trades, with averages exceeding five years in one or both countries. For example, in agriculture and livestock, respondents report an average of nine years and five months' experience in Honduras and one year and two months abroad, while in construction they report more than five years in Honduras and nearly four years abroad. Sectors such as technology and telecommunications also stand out, where the average years of experience abroad (five years and two months) exceed those in Honduras (three years and ten months), reflecting employment opportunities in other areas outside the country.

2.2 Unemployment

Understanding the circumstances that returned migrants encounter in their job search is essential for identifying the factors that hinder their economic reintegration. This section analyzes two key dimensions of unemployment in this population: the reservation wage (i.e., the minimum rate or salary a worker is willing to accept for a given job), and perceived obstacles that hinder their entry into the labor market. The evidence presented makes it possible to identify patterns in wage expectations and the obstacles faced when attempting to re-enter the Honduran labor market. These findings can help guide active labor policies and training or job placement programs adapted to the needs of returnees.

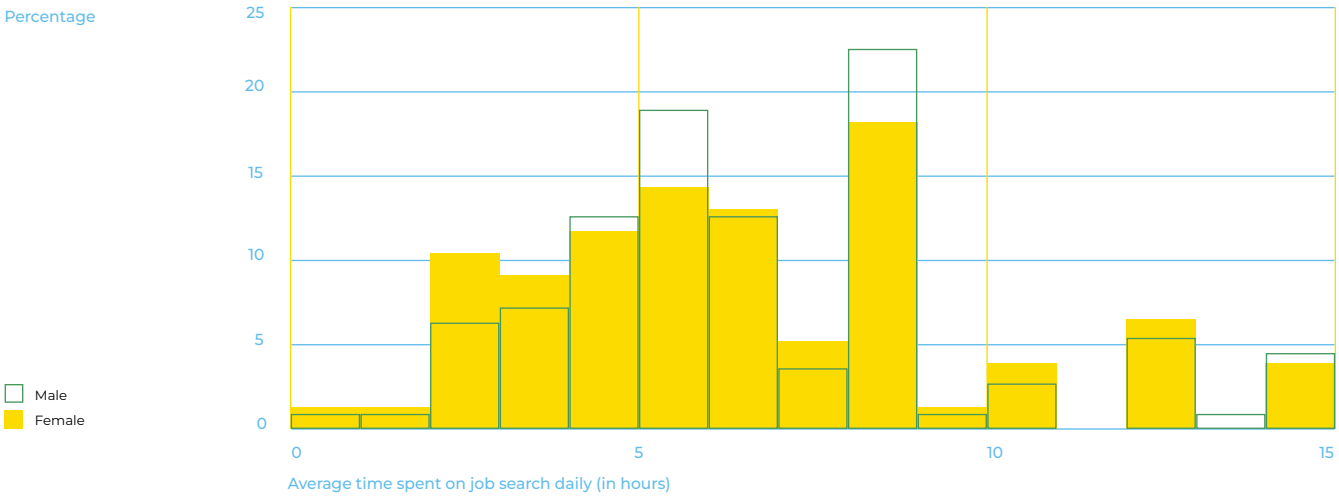

Figure 16. Hours per Day Spent Searching for Work by Sex

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Note: Full distributions are not shown. Key figures of the distribution for men: Obs: 111 / Mean: 6 / P25: 4 / P50: 6 / P75: 8. Key figures of the distribution for women: Obs: 77 / Mean: 6 / P25: 4 / P50: 6 / P75: 8.

Figure 17 shows the distribution of perceived obstacles to the job search among unemployed returnees. The results indicate that 68.1% see the lack of job opportunities as a major barrier to their reintegration. In addition, 38.8% report that the mismatch between their skills or experience and the requirements of available jobs represents a substantial challenge. Likewise, 45.2% of respondents mention limited access to information on job vacancies as a significant obstacle.

By contrast, other obstacles – not having the time to search for jobs or discrimination on the basis of age or gender – are perceived as less relevant. Taken together, these findings suggest that the main challenges to labor reintegration among returnees stem from structural problems in the Honduran labor market, as well as from the gap between returnees' skills and local employers' demands.

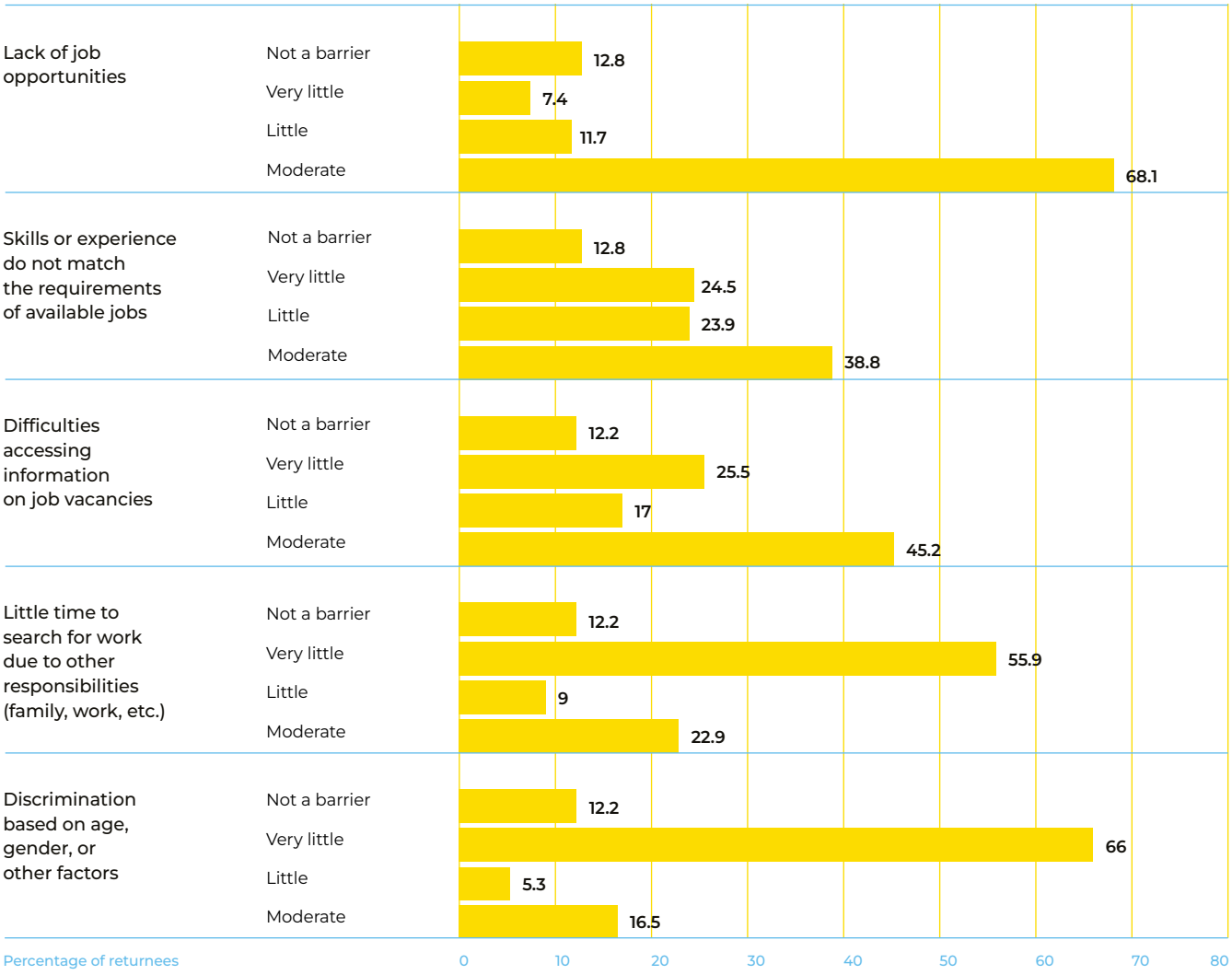

Figure 17. Self-Reported Impact of Job Search Obstacles among Returnees

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

These difficulties do not affect all returnees equally. Analysis of the data reveals variations in unemployment levels according to the length of time people spent abroad and the time elapsed since their return. For example, those who spent three or more years abroad have a higher unemployment rate (22%). One possible explanation is that this group was able to accumulate more savings during their stay abroad, thus enabling them to cover basic needs upon return without having to take the first job available. This gives them greater leeway to search for better opportunities. In turn, unemployment is higher among those who have been back for one month or less (26%), which may be due to the short time they have had to adapt and re-enter the local labor market.

3. Income and Well-Being

This section presents an analysis of the well-being of returnees based on three key dimensions of reintegration: income, consumption, and mental health. These indicators make it possible to assess how material conditions and mental health factors affect the stability and sustainability of the reintegration process. The information gathered can be used to inform the design of public policies that promote effective reintegration, taking into account not only access to income, but also quality of life and the emotional well-being of returnees.

3.1 Household Income

The analysis of household income among returnees allows for a more precise understanding of their immediate economic conditions and the challenges they face in the reintegration process. Figure 18 shows the distribution of total household income in the last month. The data reveal a high concentration of returnees in low-income households: approximately 83.3% reported monthly income below 10,000 lempiras, that is, below the average earnings of wage workers in Honduras (INE, 2024).

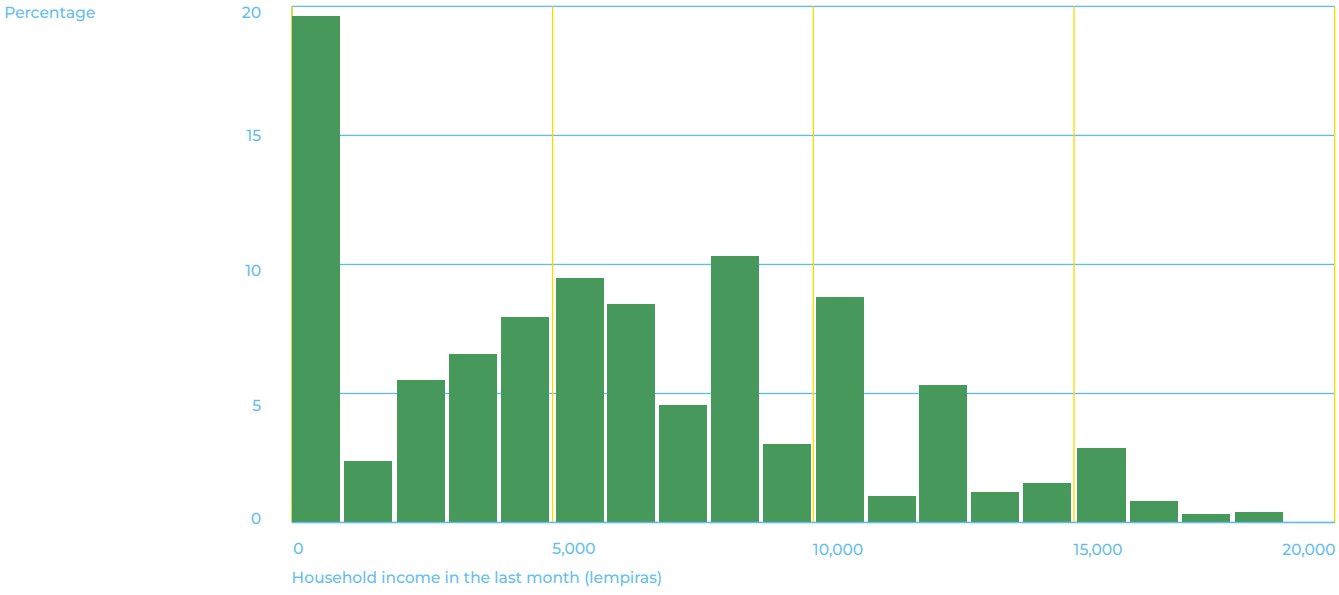

Figure 18. Monthly Household Income

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Note: The figure shows only part of the full distribution. Relevant percentiles of the full distribution: P25 = 2,500, Median = 6,000, P75 = 10,000, P90 = 13,000, P95 = 16,000.

When disaggregated by sex, Figure 19 shows significant gaps. Men reported an average monthly household income of 6,723 lempiras; women, 5,201 lempiras. This difference is also reflected in the median, which is 5,000 lempiras for men and 4,000 lempiras for women. In addition, nearly one quarter of women reported having no income in that period. These results highlight gender disparities in access to income after return, which poses a major challenge for economic reintegration policies.

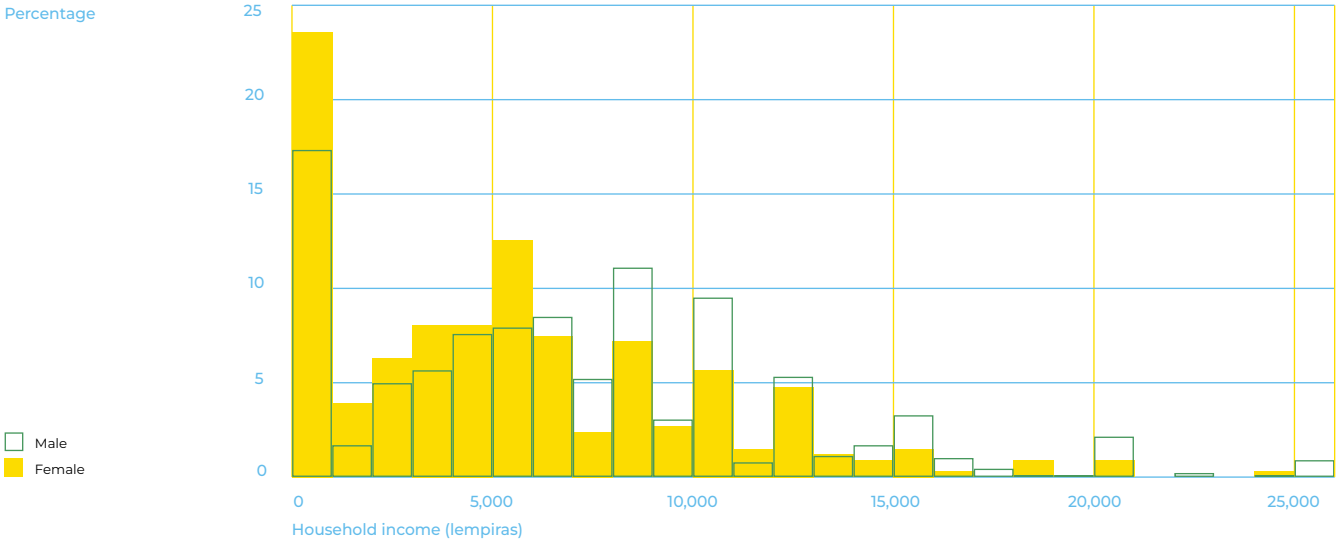

Figure 19. Monthly Household Income by Sex

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Note: Full distributions are not shown. Key figures of the distribution for men: Obs: 890 / Mean: 6,953 / P25: 3,000 / P50: 6,000 / P75: 10,000. Key figures of the distribution for women Obs: 337 / Mean: 5,390 / P25: 1,000 / P50: 5,000 / P75: 8,000.

Household income appears to increase gradually as time passes after returning to Honduras. This improvement is visible not only in average income levels, but also in the households with the lowest incomes. For example, in the first months after return, both the median income and the income of the bottom 25% rise steadily. This suggests that even families returning with fewer financial resources see their situation improve over time, likely reflecting progressive entry into the labor market and greater economic stability after return.

Household income also varies substantially by education level. On average, people with higher levels of education report higher incomes. Those with a high-school diploma or tertiary education have an average monthly income of around 7,800 lempiras, compared with 6,200 lempiras among those with a secondary education and 6,000 lempiras among those who only completed primary school or have no schooling. However, even among the most educated, average income remains below 10,000 lempiras, the national average for salaried workers. According to recent data from the National Institute of Statistics (2024), public sector workers earn on average

17,381 lempiras, while in the private sector the average is 9,007 lempiras and among self-employed workers, 8,305 lempiras. These differences underscore not only the role of education, but also the limited access to higher-quality jobs among returnees.

3.2 Consumption

This section presents descriptive evidence on total expenditure by returnees in the two weeks prior to the survey, disaggregated by month of arrival, time abroad, and spending categories. The results help identify segments of the returnee population that may face higher levels of economic vulnerability, and they provide inputs for targeted reintegration support programs. Expenditure analysis offers a more direct measure of material living conditions than income, especially in the face of labor informality or economic instability after return. The histogram of total expenditure (Figure 20) shows a right-skewed distribution, with most returnees reporting expenditures of below 10,000 lempiras in the two weeks prior to the survey. Median expenditure is approximately 6,000 lempiras, and the 75th percentile is around 9,500 lempiras, indicating that even among those at the upper end of the sample, spending levels remain relatively low. This pattern reflects a population with limited financial resources immediately after return.

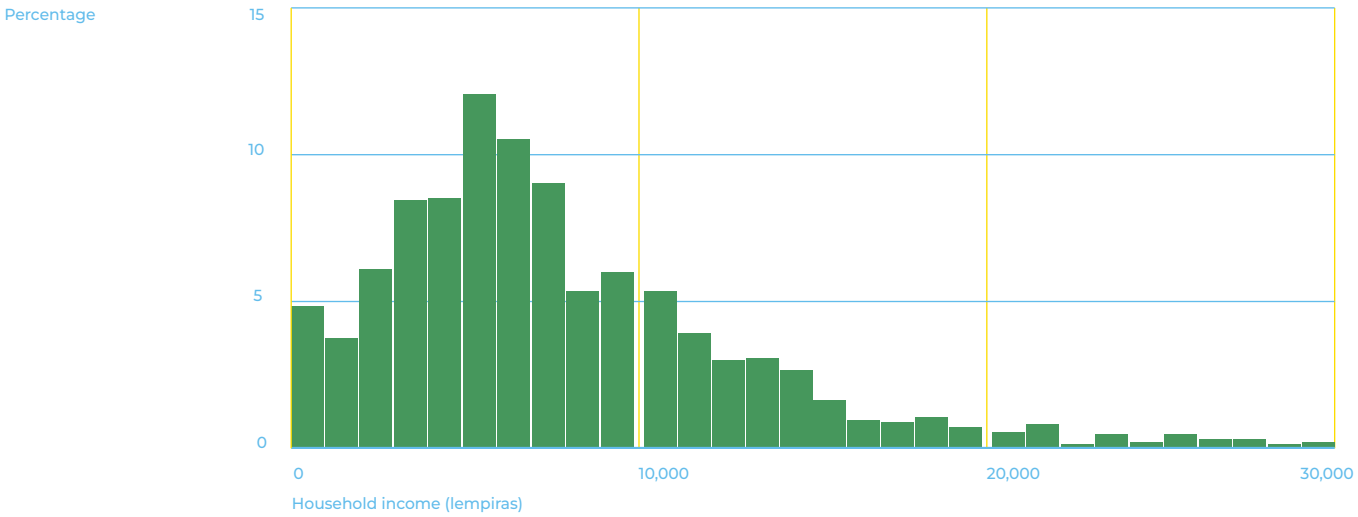

Figure 20. Total Expenditure in the Two Weeks Prior to the Survey

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Note: The figure shows only part of the full distribution. Relevant percentiles of the full distribution: P25 = 4,200, Median = 6,700, P75 = 10,350, P90 = 15,300, P95 = 21,350.

The analysis of average consumption by time spent abroad reveals noteworthy differences between groups. People who spent more than three years outside the country report the highest level of expenditure, with an average of 10,887 lempiras. By contrast, those who were abroad between six months and three years show somewhat lower consumption levels, between 8,517 and 8,650 lempiras. These results suggest that longer stays abroad may be associated with greater consumption capacity at the time of return.

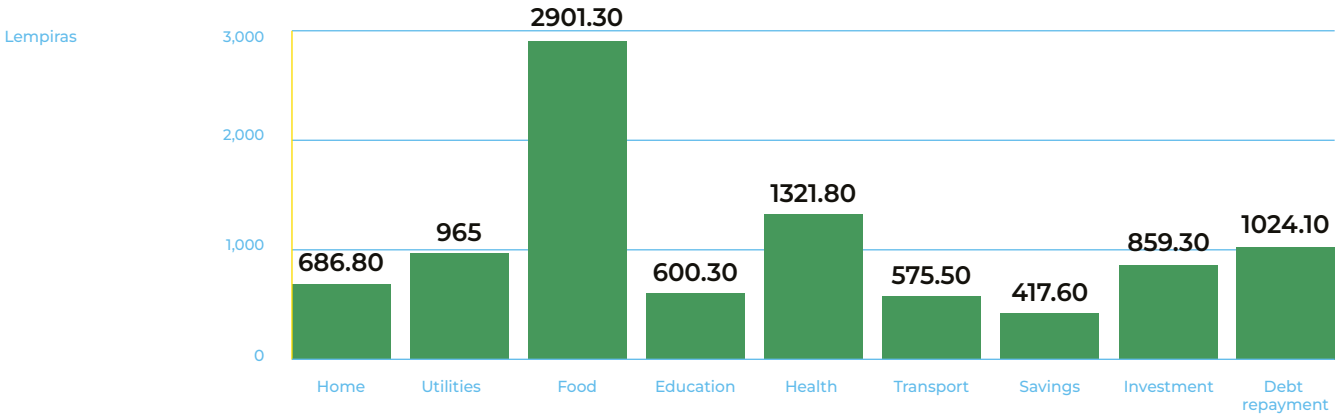

Figure 21. Total Expenditure

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

The breakdown of expenditure in the two weeks prior to the survey shows that returnees allocate most of their financial resources to basic needs. As shown in Figure 21, the category with the highest spending is food, with an average of 2,901 lempiras, followed by health and utilities (1,322 and 965 lempiras, respectively). There are also substantial amounts allocated to debt repayment (1,024 lempiras) and investment (859 lempiras), suggesting that some returnees are using their financial resources to repay debts or rebuild livelihoods. By contrast, spending on transport and education and the amounts allocated to savings are comparatively lower. These patterns reflect both the priority given to essential spending and the need for financial stability in the initial stage of the reintegration process.

When total household expenditure is broken down by time spent abroad, marked differences are revealed in returnees' spending priorities. Those who were abroad for more than three years allocate a significantly higher share to investments (57.4% of total household spending), suggesting a focus on rebuilding livelihoods or acquiring productive assets. In contrast, among those who were away for less than six months, spending is concentrated on immediate needs: food (33.4%), basic services (11.6%), and debt repayment (10.1%). This final group also shows the highest share of expenditure devoted to paying off debts, which may reflect greater short-term financial pressure.

3.3 Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is one of the main challenges to returnees' well-being, reflecting both the availability of resources and the stability of their households after return. Figures 22 and 23 provide an overview of food insecurity among Honduran returnees in the two weeks prior to the survey.

In total, more than two-thirds of respondents (70.9%) reported feeling worried at least "sometimes" about not having enough food. In particular, 30% said they were "always" worried and 15% reported being worried "frequently." Only 16.4% responded that they "never" experienced this concern. These data suggest that anxiety about food availability is widespread, even if it does not always translate into concrete deprivation. Figure 22 shows the distribution of this question disaggregated by sex. On average, women report having worried about not having enough food more frequently than men.

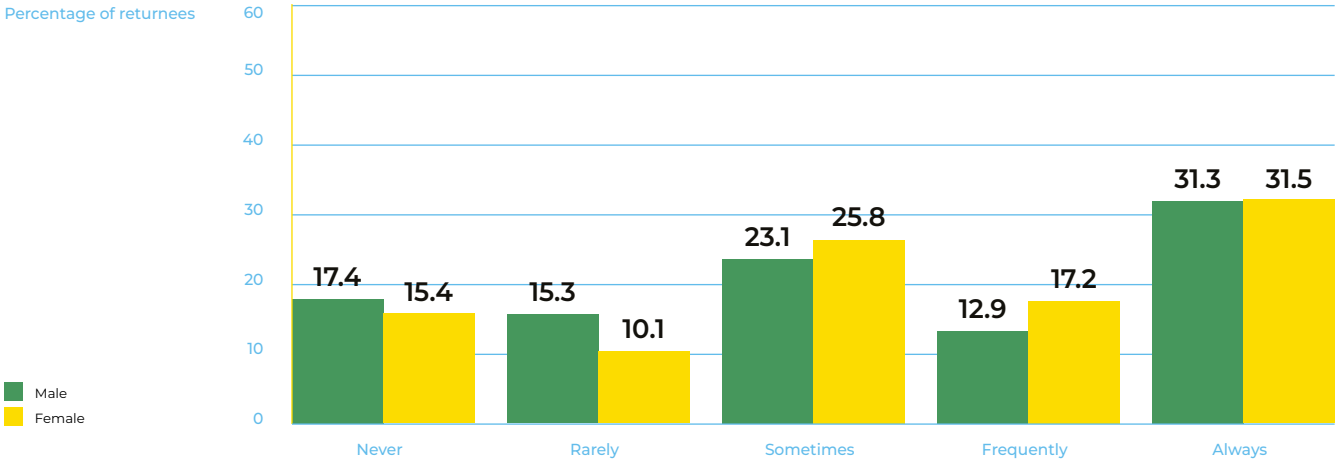

Figure 22. Self-Reported Food Insecurity

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

A more severe indicator of food insecurity is the frequency with which people skipped a meal in the previous two weeks because there was not enough money for food. Overall, 51.3% reported not skipping meals for this reason, while 48.7% indicated that they did so to some extent. Figure 23 shows this indicator by sex; on average, women report having had to skip meals more often. These results indicate that, for a substantial share of returnees, food insecurity is not only a source of concern but also a material reality.

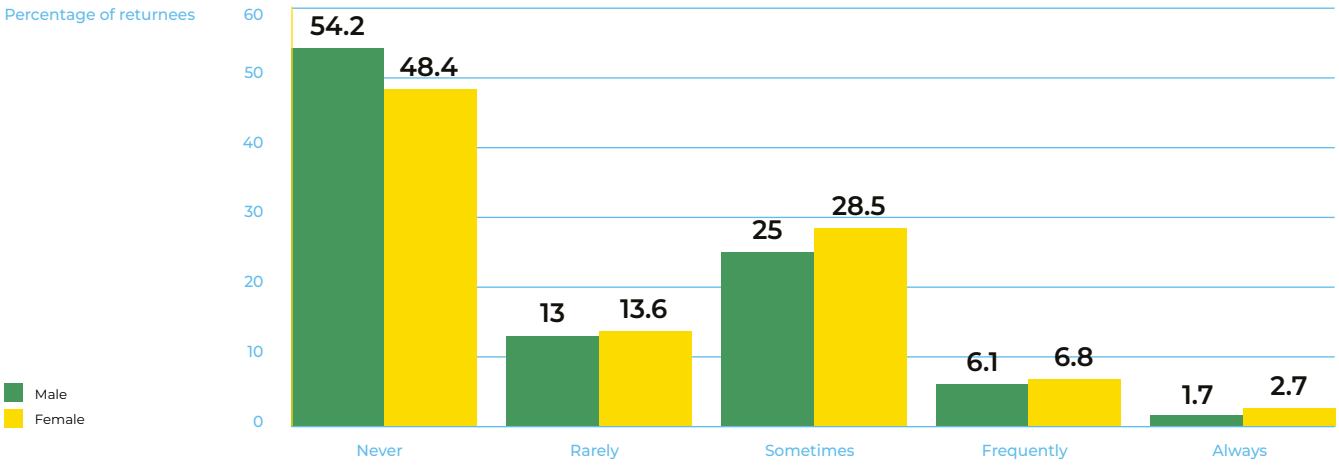

Figure 23. Food insecurity

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Since food insecurity may be influenced by the degree of labor and social integration of returnees, it is important to examine this indicator by time of arrival. Figure 24 shows the evolution of food insecurity among returnees by month of arrival. The figure reveals a downward trend, with a decreasing share of returnees reporting food insecurity from December 2024 to March 2025. This suggests that those who returned in November and January faced greater food-related challenges, possibly due to the initial difficulties of resettlement after their return. By contrast, those who returned in February and March reported comparatively lower levels of food insecurity.

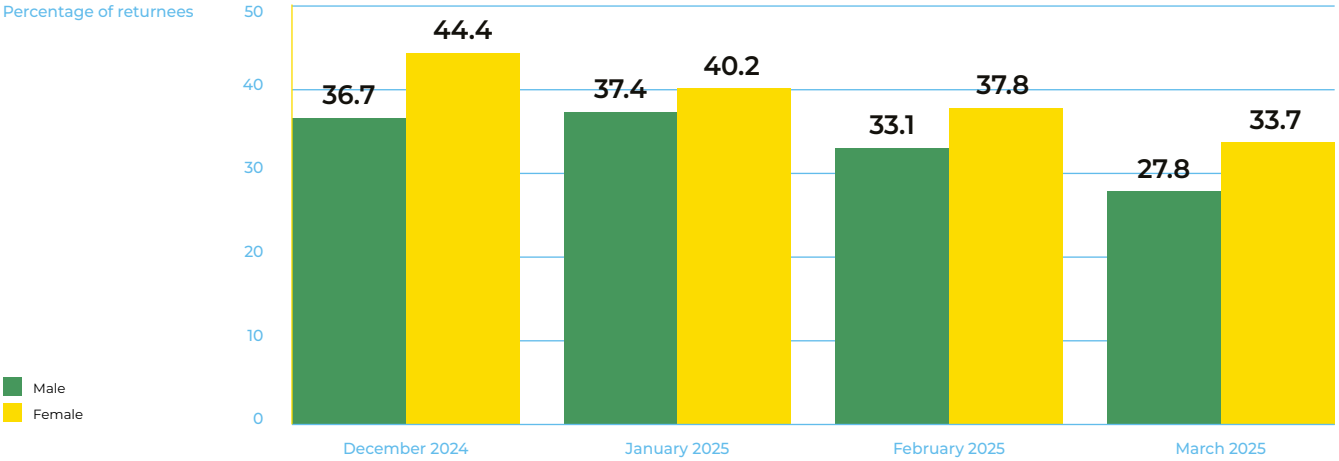

Figure 24. Food Insecurity by Month of Arrival and Sex

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

3.4 Mental Health

A validated and internationally recognized questionnaire, the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Assessment (GAD-7), was used to assess anxiety symptoms and returnees' emotional well-being. The GAD-7 consists of seven questions about the frequency of symptoms such as nervousness, the inability to control worrying, and restlessness over the previous two weeks. Each item is scored on a scale from 0 to 3, where 0 means "not at all" and 3 "nearly every day," with a total score ranging from 0 to 21. According to clinical standards, results can be classified into four categories: none or minimal anxiety (0–4), mild anxiety (5–9), moderate anxiety (10–14), or severe anxiety (15–21). This information makes it possible to identify the level of psychological distress among returnees and to guide mental health assistance and social support efforts during reintegration.

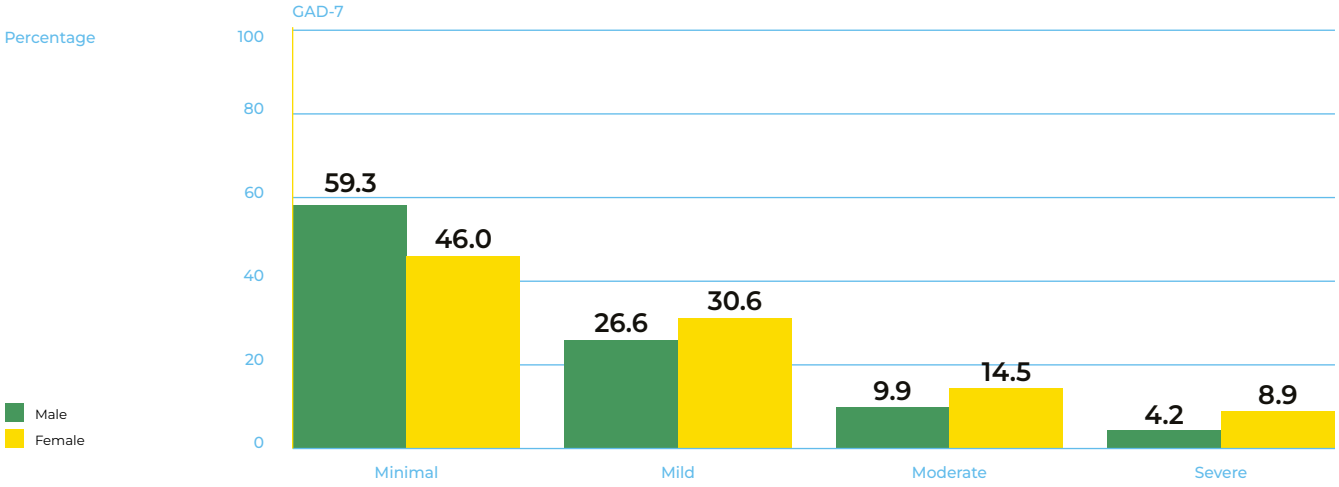

Figure 25. Anxiety Levels by Sex

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Figure 25 shows the distribution of anxiety levels among returnees, measured using the GAD-7 instrument. A total of 59.3% of men and 46.0% of women present minimal anxiety levels, although a considerable share does report clinically relevant symptoms. Specifically, 26.6% of men and 30.6% of women present low anxiety, while 9.9% of men and 14.5% of women report moderate anxiety. Severe anxiety affects 4.2% of men and 8.9% of women. These figures reflect a level of emotional distress that is present but heterogeneous in the post-return period. Women show a higher prevalence of anxiety at the upper severity levels than men. These results underscore the importance of incorporating psychosocial components into reintegration programs.

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4. Access to Government Services

Access to government services after return can play an important role in reintegration processes. This section examines the reach of the main programs offered by the Honduran government to returnees through the CAMRs, and services provided by the SETRASS. These services include transportation to their destination in Honduras, cash transfers, food vouchers, hygiene kits, phone calls, and access to employment and entrepreneurship programs such as SIEMPLEO and SENPRENDE.

Figure 26 shows that the services most commonly reported by surveyed returnees were transportation to their destination (78%), food vouchers (76%), and cash assistance (74%). As shown in the figure, not all returnees received food vouchers and cash assistance, because the study includes people who returned between December 2024 and March 2025, some of whom arrived before the "Hermano, Hermana vuelve a casa" program was launched. By contrast, a smaller share of respondents reported having received hygiene kits or being allowed to make phone calls. These data suggest that, despite significant institutional support, coverage varies by type of service. These differences may be associated with variation in operational capacity and resource availability across CAMRs, particularly for complementary services such as hygiene kits or phone calls.

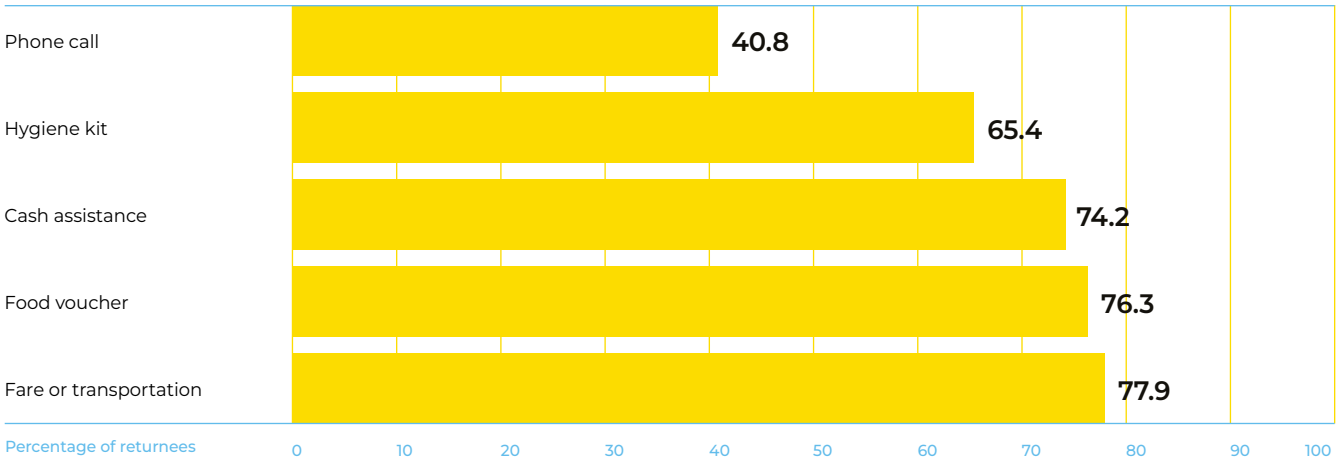

Figure 26. Services Received at the CAMR

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Note: The figure shows the services that returnees received. It is important to note that the centers only began providing cash assistance and food vouchers on 31 January 2025.

Figure 27 examines access to SENPRENDE and SIEMPLEO, showing information provided about these programs and enrollment by sex. In the case of SENPRENDE, a higher percentage of men report having received information on the program. However, among all those who received information, women have a higher enrollment rate. In contrast, for SIEMPLEO, women were more likely both to receive information and to enroll in the program.

These patterns may be linked to different levels of interest or perceived usefulness of the programs. While SENPRENDE focuses on entrepreneurship initiatives and provides support of up to $1,000 for eligible entrepreneurs, SIEMPLEO facilitates job placement. In addition, the differences observed may also reflect how information is shared within the CAMRs, as well as the guidance strategies used by program staff.

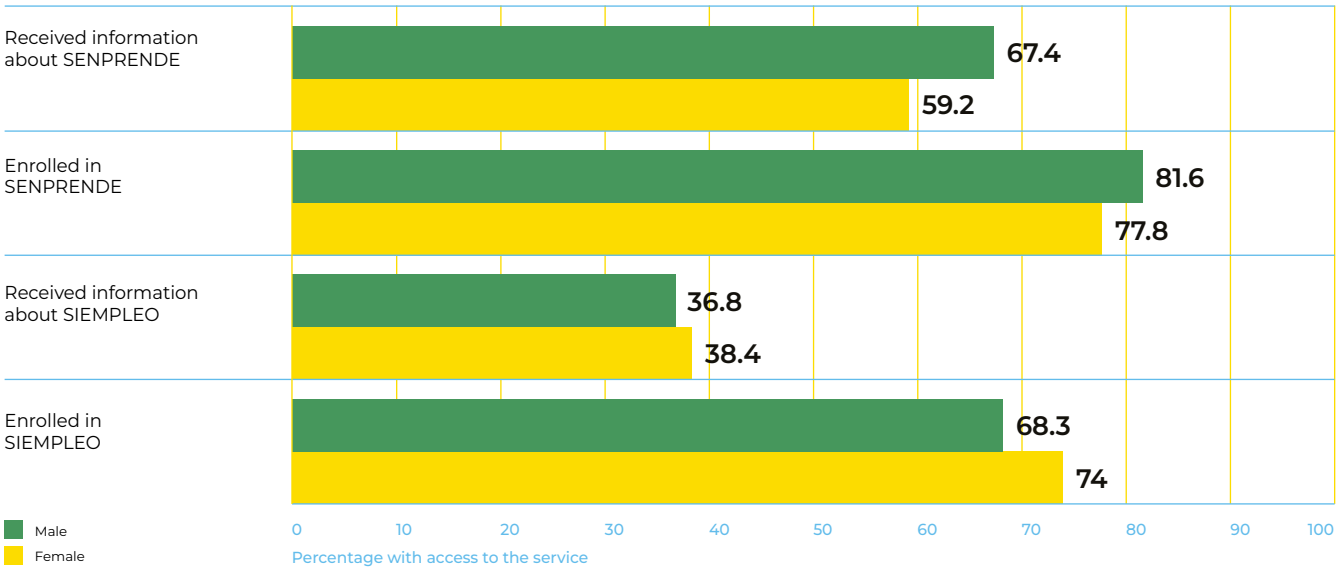

Figure 27. Awareness and Use of Government Employment Services Offered at the CAMR by Sex

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Note: For enrollment, the percentage is calculated only among those who reported having received information about the service.

Finally, Figure 28 shows the level of knowledge, use, and perceived usefulness of the employment services offered by SETRASS, by sex. Overall awareness of these programs is relatively low: 9% of women and 13% of men said they knew of at least one of the SETRASS services or programs. In addition, among those who know of the services, only 15% of men and 28% of women have requested assistance from public employment offices, and only 3% of men and 2% of women have actually participated in one of the programs. A positive aspect worth highlighting is that,

despite the limited awareness and participation in these programs, expectations of their usefulness and effectiveness are high: 84% of both women and men believe that public employment offices can provide useful and effective assistance.

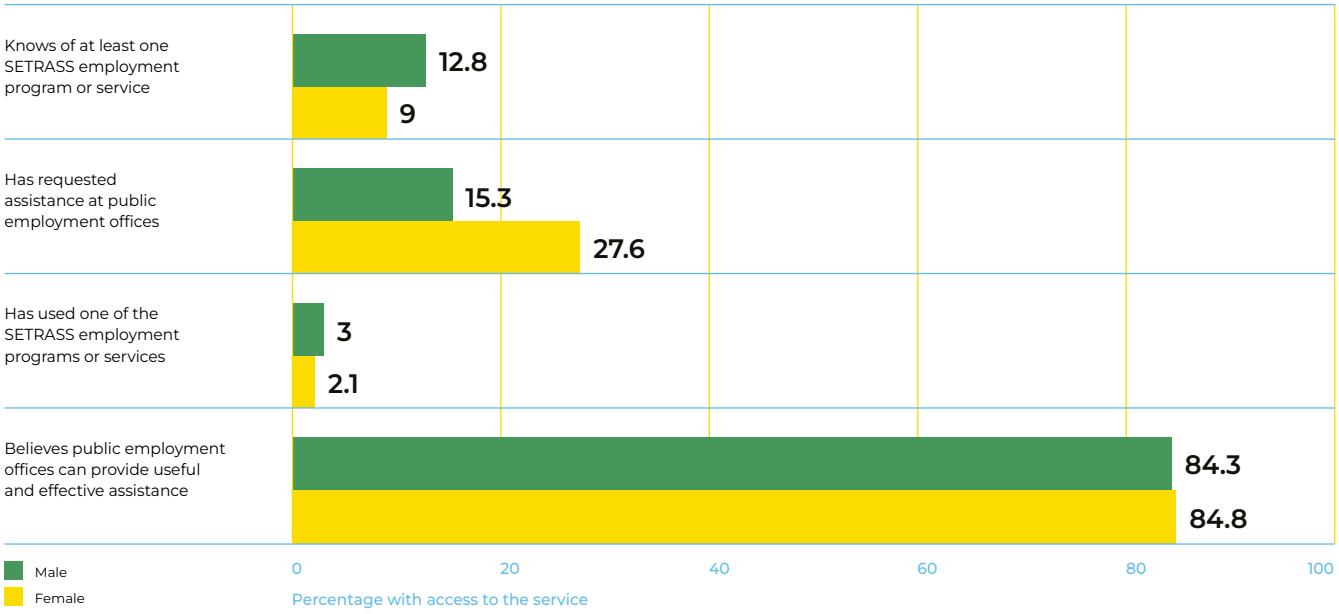

Figure 28. Awareness and Use of Government Employment Services by Sex

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Note: For use of services, the percentage is calculated only among those who reported knowing of at least one SETRASS program.

5. Returned Children and Adolescents

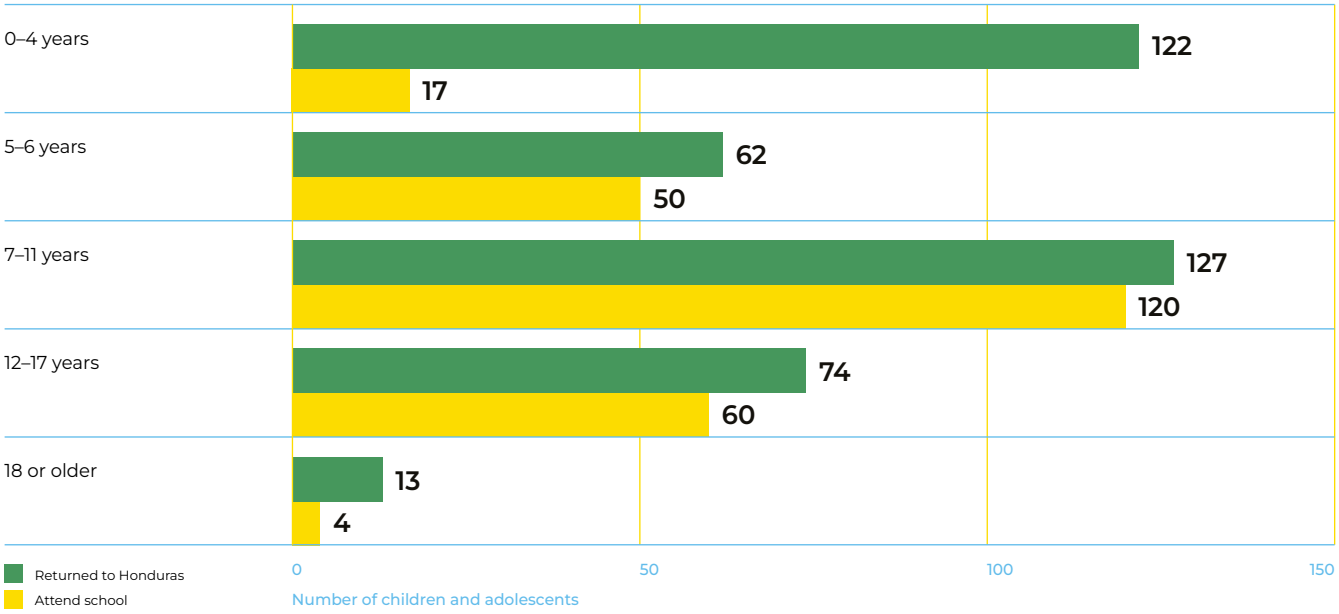

Figure 29. School Attendance among Returned Minors

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from calls to returnees in the SIAMIR (2025).

Figure 29 is based on the information provided by the interviewed adults, who were asked about each of their children under eighteen who returned to Honduras with them. In total, information was collected for more than 300 children and adolescents. Respondents were asked whether each of their children was currently attending school, allowing for an assessment of educational reintegration patterns across age groups. The results show relatively high school attendance rates, especially among children ages seven to eleven, among whom 120 of the 127 children reported are enrolled. High attendance is also observed among five- to six-year-olds (50 of 62) and among adolescents ages twelve to seventeen (60 of 74). By contrast, attendance is considerably lower among children ages zero to four, for whom formal education is not compulsory. These results reflect significant progress in re-enrollment in the education system, while also underscoring the need to support school retention, particularly at ages where educational gaps are more pronounced.

Conclusions

This report is an important contribution by the ODS to building systematic evidence on the situation of returnees in Honduras. Through a survey implemented a few months after return, it captures critical information that is often lost in the early stages of the reintegration process. This information is essential to document whether returnees manage to access stable employment, whether they face food insecurity, and how they interact with services such as housing, education, and health.

Furthermore, in a context where migration trajectories are becoming longer – as reflected in SIAMIR records – it is even more pressing to document how these experiences vary by the time returnees spent abroad.

The findings presented in this report provide an initial snapshot of the reintegration process, highlighting progress and challenges in key dimensions such as employment, income, consumption, well-being, and food security. However, this information represents only a single point in time. To truly understand reintegration trajectories, it is essential to build on the efforts of the ODS and continue following up on this population, documenting how these indicators evolve over time. The dynamic nature of return – shaped by the length of stays abroad, local support networks, and economic conditions – demands a longitudinal perspective that can identify not only persistent barriers, but also factors that facilitate sustainable reintegration.

Developing a panel of returnees that can be monitored periodically would not only enhance the impact of this pioneering study, but also help consolidate a unique evidence base on returnees in the region. Although this entails logistical and financial challenges, there are substantial benefits to having systematic, high-quality data over time. A longitudinal study would make it possible to move from isolated interventions to more strategic, evidence-based reintegration policies tailored to the real and changing needs of returnees, thereby strengthening the capacity of the national government and its partners in addressing the challenges of this population.

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List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

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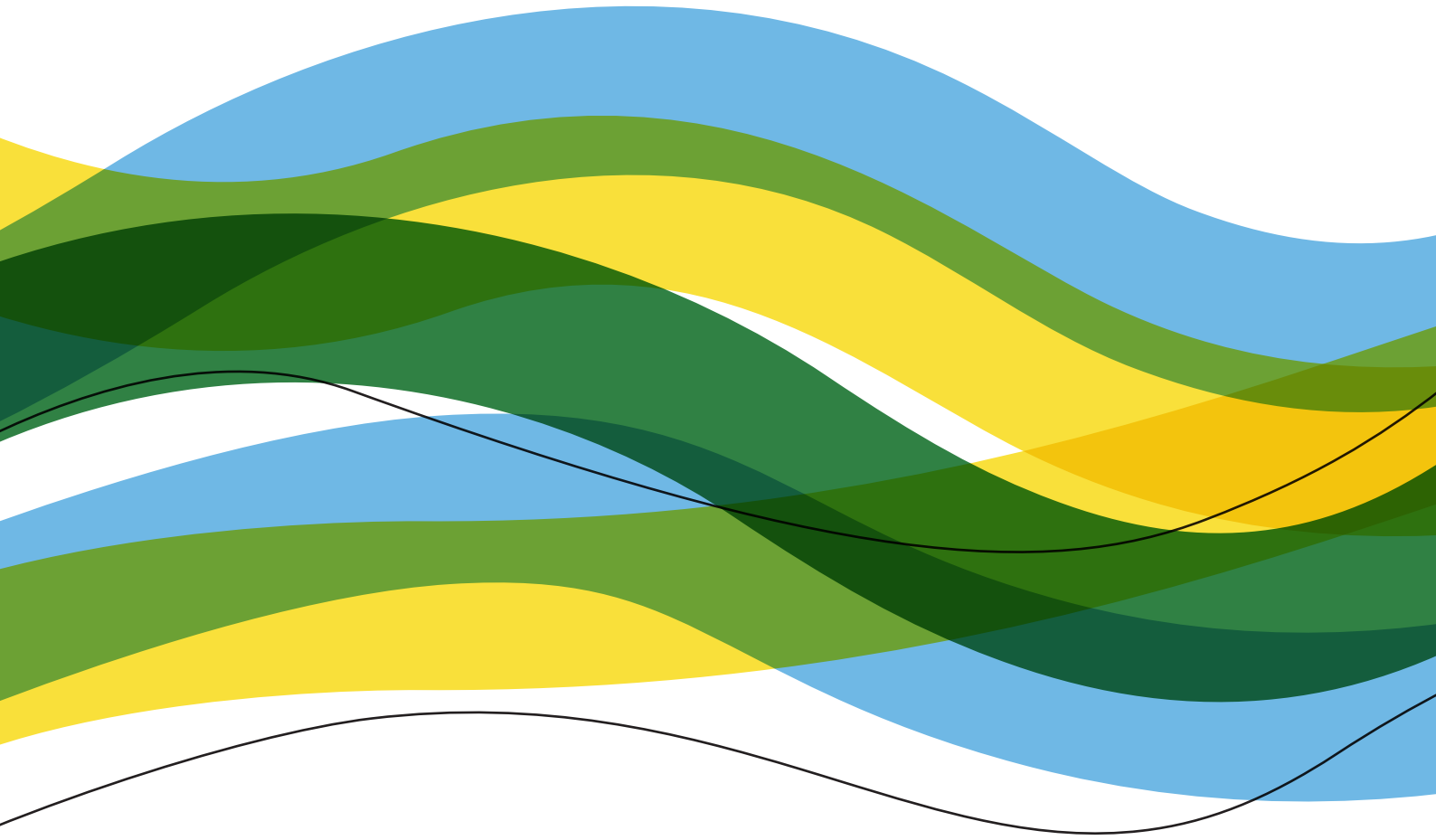

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