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Special Edition on Migration

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Transnationalism, Foreign Assistance, Domestic Communities: New Opportunities and New Challenges for Canada and the United States

Carlo Dade

In recent years globalization has dramatically changed the social, political and economic landscape in the Americas creating new challenges for governments. For foreign and domestic development agencies the most serious of these challenges is the massive migration and concomitant rise of transnational communities that obscure national borders and blur the distinction between foreign and local. Economic and social development in these new transnational communities presents an unanswered challenge to traditional development strategies that view communities as being only domestic or foreign.

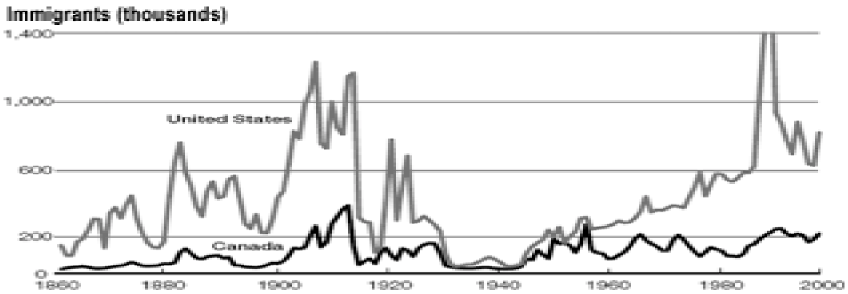
Defining Transnationalism

Massive migration flows to the United States beginning in the 1980s and to a lesser extent to Canada in the 1990s, combined with declining costs in telecommunications, travel and financial transfers creating a new type of "hyper connectivity" between migrants and their home communities. From 1991 to 2000 telephone traffic between the US and Latin America grew more than 250 percent and air travel by more than 50 percent. Migrants are now connected instantaneously, continuously, dynamically and intimately to their communities of origin. Today, finances permitting, one can speak daily with family back home, pay bills, buy groceries, read the same newspapers, return on daily scheduled flights and in some cases, vote abroad. This is a fundamental and profound break from the past eras of migration. As migrants act and interact in their communities of origin on a practically real time basis not only have barriers of distance and time been removed, but so too have barriers of national borders and governmental control. This is the essence of transnationalism and the challenge that it poses for governments.

Identifying the Challenge

Transnationalism has created new possibilities for interaction between migrants and their home communities and has opened these possibilities to a wider section of the migrant community. In communities where a significant percentage of the population is migratory (leaving or arriving) modern hyper mobility means that immigrant communities, their problems, inputs and outputs are larger than the confines of the traditional state. This has created new challenges for economic and social development in these communities. Social, health and education problems move within and with communities across borders at the speed of modern transportation, commercial and information exchanges. This applies to community development issues such as AIDS, literacy, leadership training and nutrition. So, how do traditional aid agencies – foreign and domestic – focused on geographically defined communities, work in an era of transnationalism?

Immigration to the United States and Canada, 1860-2000



Sources: US Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Statistical Yearbooks;* and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (www.cic.gc.ca, accessed January 9, 2002).

Transnationalism in Canada and the United States

In Canada, the transnational aspect of modern migration has been intensified by the government policy of multiculturalism as developed in the 1971 Multicultural Policy, the 1988 Multiculturalism Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Canada uses multiculturalism to insert migrant participation into the structure of bilingualism that governs social and political interaction. For migrants who do not identify with Anglophone or francophone cultures, multiculturalism provides an entry into discourse on participation and interaction with the state. Multiculturalism also strengthens immigrant identity vis-à-vis country of origin and encourages transnational identities and linkages. Though the intent of the legislation may have been to benefit Canadian society through enriching cultural diversity, there exists the possibility that benefits may be defined in terms of trade, diplomacy and knowledge.

On one hand, Canada uses multiculturalism to incorporate migrants into Canadian society; on the other hand, this policy has the obvious potential to weaken integration into Canadian society. This tension appears at the local level where integration occurs. The policy also impacts foreign relations as it creates opportunities for leveraging trade and foreign policy opportunities. But, as shown in a recent paper by Michael Szonyi of the University of Toronto, a 10 percent increase in immigration to the US will increase US exports and imports to the country of origin by 8.3 percent and 4.7 percent respectively. In Canada, given a similar increase in migration, imports rise only by 3.3 percent and exports by only 1.3 percent. Also, as recent events with Canadian dual nationals in Iran and Palestine have shown, these linkages also create new obligations and complications for the government. In short, transnational migration and the policy of multiculturalism create a host of potential, unrealized benefits and a host of problems for Canada.

In the United States the challenges posed by the rise of transnational communities arises in the recent surge in migration to non-traditional migration areas. The communities into which these immigrants and migrants are landing face accelerated strains in integrating new arrivals because transnational ties enhance mobility of new arrivals and provide competing sources of attention and news. Providing services for and incorporating migrants was easier when the government did not have to compete as hard for their attention and when health and social issues impacting these communities were localized as opposed to globalized as they are today.

In foreign assistance, US agencies are just beginning to fully grasp the impact and involvement of immigrants and migrants in their communities of origin. For example, Dr. Manuel Orozco of Georgetown University in Washington D.C. has estimated that Mexicans in the US invest approximately $US 30 million in small-scale development projects in their communities of origin. Based on interviews in Brooklyn, Dr. Orozco estimates that Haitian Hometown Associations (HTAs) invest an average of $US 10,000 each per year for clinics, schools and small-scale infrastructure projects in their home communities in Haiti. In addition to financial resources, immigrants and migrants are transferring skills and knowledge that are likely more useful and important to support development projects in their home communities. Some US foreign aid agencies, such as the Inter-American Foundation, have had great success in incorporating similar types of financial and non-financial resources from the private sector in support of community development. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is also devoting considerable and increasing amounts of new spending in this area as there exists a strong potential to assist immigrants and migrant organizations and to incorporate them into the development process.

Policy Challenges and Opportunities

The challenges and opportunities for foreign and domestic development agencies presented by transnational migration point to the need of reviewing and reconciling foreign and domestic development priorities to find synergies and rationalize work programs and investments. For example, foreign aid agencies have invested substantially in literacy, basic education, health and citizenship programs in communities that are sources of migration to the US and Canada. These investments in materials and training could be leveraged to support community work with migrants in receiving communities. Further, financial literacy programs in the US and Canada can be extended to countries that are sources of migration. Development of migrant organizations and hometown associations in receiving communities strengthens civic participation by immigrants in these communities and also creates partners to work with foreign aid and trade promotion agencies. Maintaining contact with Canadian and US local and federal government agencies throughout the transnational spectrum would help integrate these communities in both domestic and foreign development processes. In addition, Canadian and US agencies can work together, share resources and reduce costs in developing outreach and assistance programs for target communities - Mexico and Central America in the US and India, the Philippines, China and the Caribbean in Canada.

The initial priority for aid agencies and governments in addressing transnational issues, however, will be in financial interventions to lower remittance transfer costs. Transfer fees represent the “low lying fruit” of transnational issues. Financial reform, enhancing competition and micro-finance are all areas in which aid agencies have experience and this can serve as a bridge into the broader field of transnational work. Even though work on reducing remittance transfer costs is seen and is being advocated as a *foreign* assistance initiative, reducing transfer fees will have a domestic impact as these will result both in higher remittance levels and in savings that are kept and spent in domestic immigrant communities.

Clearly, dealing with the impacts and exploiting the benefits of transnationalism will require a re-conceptualization, realignment and perhaps a reconstitution of foreign and domestic aid agencies. Yet, despite early experimentation by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), USAID and community foundations, this is not and will not prove to be an easy task. Our current understanding of community, and hence of community development, is rooted firmly in a pre-globalized, pre-transnational worldview. As such, foreign development agencies have strict mandates to carryout and finance projects outside of national borders while conversely community development foundations and their municipal counterparts have even stricter mandates to work in even narrower geographic areas. Globalization has wrought a fundamental change in the physical nature of community and eventually institutions will have to adapt to this shift. The key to managing this shift is incremental change and experimentation. For Canada the best opportunity appears to be to work through nascent institutions and bureaucracy of multiculturalism while for the US the best opportunity is developing alliances between foreign aid agencies and domestic community foundations.■

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Migration and Development in the Caribbean

Keith Nurse

The literature on migration and development suggests that remittances and other flows associated with the diasporic economy are not an unqualified success from a developmental standpoint. In effect, the contribution and potential of diasporic relations to growth, development and poverty reduction requires an assessment of impact and multipliers effects, opportunity costs and social investment.

The growth of the economy of remittances in the last decade has sparked much enthusiasm within the development establishment that these flows are contributing to poverty reduction and economic development beyond individual’s income and country’s foreign exchange reserves. For example, it is argued that international migration and international remittances have a strong, statistical impact on reducing poverty in the developing world. It is also argued that remittances are a “free lunch” in financial terms because they do not carry any costs for the receiving countries and that the positive network effects of remittances more than offset the negatives arising from the brain drain.

Can remittances redress the negatives effects of this wave of migrants to the north? Does emigration go beyond securing an improved standard of living for some migrants and their families to contribute to national and regional development? What does the evidence from the Caribbean tell us?

The Caribbean has shifted from being a net importer of labour to being a net exporter of labour in the last fifty years. The Caribbean, in proportion to its population, has one of the largest diasporic communities in the world. It is estimated that Cubans and Dominicans in the United States are equivalent to 8 percent of their respective populations of origin (ECLAC 2002). In some of the mini-states in the region like St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada and Belize annual labour migration accounts for as much as 1 to 2 percent of their population, thereby transferring their population growth.

The economic significance of the diaspora to the region is further underscored by the fact that some territories in the region receive more monies from financial remittances than from foreign direct investment (FDI) and international aid. In countries like Jamaica and the Dominican Republic remittances account for 10.8 percent and 8.5 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) respectively (ECLAC 2002). Additionally, it is estimated that approximately $US 5 billion in remittances were sent to the Caribbean in 2002. Remittances have become the largest and most stable source of external capital to the region outstripping FDI and official development assistance (ODA). The value of remittances is also very significant when compared to tourism earnings and total exports, including agricultural, in terms of foreign exchange earnings.

There is no doubt that the tremendous growth in remittances since the 1990s has expanded the development options for the region. Remittances are a major source of income for many lower income households around the region. In many respects remittances are filling the gaps that the state and other development agencies have been unable to plug. For instance, they are being used to fund small business investments albeit small in value.

On the other hand, remittances and other transfers (i.e. consumer goods) increase external dependency, promote Western consumption styles and cause inflationary pressures. After spending on food, education and housing there often is not enough to be invested in productive assets thereby limiting the multiplier effect of remittances. Therefore, rather than decreasing the tide of migrants, remittances tend to encourage new recruits. The problem then is that traditionally the flow of external capital has low levels of retention and is unlikely to generate new business and employment in the sending societies.

The growth of a Caribbean diaspora plays a valuable role beyond remittances as markets for tourism as well as ethnic, specialty and niche exports. For example, the Caribbean diaspora has long been the key market for the cultural industries and generates annual cultural exports worth over $US 100 million in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and the Dominica Republic (Nurse 2003a). Festival tourism is another source of export earnings that is positively impacted by the diaspora and that accounts for as much as 12 percent of tourism arrivals and expenditure in Trinidad and Tobago during carnival season (Nurse 2003b). The growth of diasporic exports is also reflected in the migration of professional sports players, such as baseball players from the Dominican Republic and track and field athletes along with football and cricket players from the Anglophone Caribbean.

Remittances and diasporic exports are only one side of the diasporic economy and though it is an expanding source of income and resources to otherwise impoverished countries, there is no clear evidence that these inflows outweigh the cost associated with migration. Migration has presented new security and health risks with the deportation of criminals from the US and with the spread of HIV/AIDS from mobile populations like tourists, sex workers and migrants.

The main negative associated with migration is the problem of the *brain drain*. The brain drain from the Caribbean is the highest in the world. The share of total migrants with tertiary education ranges from 22 percent in the case of the Dominican Republic to as much as 46 percent in Trinidad and Tobago. In Guyana, the migration rate among professionals is estimated at over 70 percent. Similarly, the shift in labour markets in core economies towards services also signals the 'feminization of migration' as women out-number men from labour exporting countries like Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.

The departure of highly skilled migrants reduces productivity in specific sectors of the economy and creates labour gaps in a context of high unemployment. This is exemplified in the loss of human resources that are not easily replaced, as is the case with the migration of teachers and medical professionals from the Caribbean. Countries like Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago have seen a large outflow of nurses and teachers to the US and the United Kingdom in the last decade. As a result, doctors and nurses from countries that have a surplus in these sectors such as Cuba for instance have been imported to fill labour gaps in specific sectors.

In effect, the brain drain subsidizes the labour reproduction costs of affluent economies. The problem becomes more acute as the income gap between the sending and the receiving countries widens. The exodus of valuable professional skills compromises broader development goals as governments and development agencies find it difficult or expensive to recruit local professionals because the 'best and the brightest' have migrated. Ultimately these agencies have to resort to employing expatriates and so local capacity is often not upgraded.

A long-term and more sustainable solution would be to enlarge training facilities to meet the expanding demand in labour importing countries. The important question that arises is who will actually pay for this investment. Caribbean governments are unlikely to make these social investments because the returns, in this case remittances, do not go into national coffers, except in terms of tax revenues on local expenditures, where it applies. The alternative is bilateral or multilateral agreements that would encompass some investment by labour importing countries. A regional approach on the part of Caribbean governments would also be crucial to counter unilateralism and would also improve the leverage and negotiating power of Caribbean migrants in specific fields.

Most countries in the region have undergone a process of de-industrialization in the last two decades and have become net importers of food. In tandem there has been a dramatic increase in unemployment, poverty and hunger and an equally spectacular decline in the provision of social services in health and education (not just as a result of migration). These are the conditions that have propelled mass migration from the region in the late twentieth century. Can migration and remittances reverse these conditions? If it is to have a chance of doing so the development establishment must not assume that the flow of external capital will, by itself, make this happen. There is a high level of leakages associated with remittances and it is not a suitable replacement for government or market failure in the provision of social services and business investment. The facilitation of industrial deepening and export expansion in the diasporic economy is an absolute necessity to reduce the external dependence of sending societies. To do otherwise is to maintain the status quo and to accept a future of non-viable and unstable nation-states at the periphery of the global system.■

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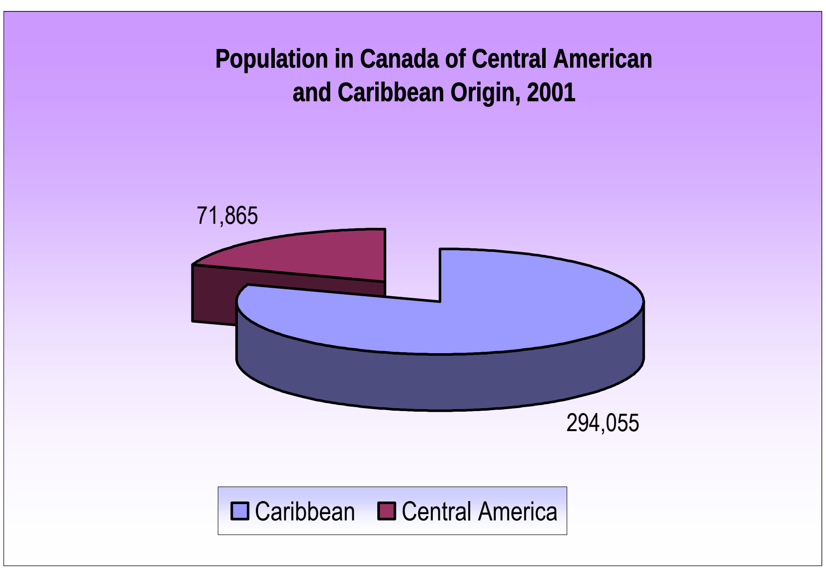

Source: Census 2001, Statistics Canada

Remittances: A Preliminary Research

Luis Monzón & Emina Tudakovic

The following is a summary of the work in progress that the authors are conducting with the assistance of Barnabé Ndarishikanye from CIDA's Analysis and Research Division on the topic of remittances.

Introduction

Emerging as the most reliable source of foreign currency and capital for developing countries, remittances are of increasing interest to government, foundations, multilateral institutions, researchers and banks. With estimates in 2002 of $US 80 billion, remittances to developing countries are a crucial source of foreign exchange. By definition, remittances are generally held to be money and goods that migrants earn while working and living abroad and send back to families in their countries of origin.

A country of immigration, Canada's diversity and varied diaspora lends itself to remitting. For Canadian citizens, permanent residents or temporary migrant workers, ties – whether they are familial, cultural or economic – prompt the remittance of money and goods back to homelands. From the Canadian government's perspective, the amounts of remittances are small, but for the receiving countries, and the individuals who received them, they are of extreme importance, in particular where remittances represent large proportions of gross domestic product (GDP) and exceed levels of official development assistance (ODA) and outweigh export earnings.

For source countries, such as Canada, the increasing significance of remittances leads to a need for a better understanding of process, size, scope and development impacts of remittances on receiving countries. Recipient country governments seek ever-greater levels of hard foreign currencies and remitting individuals have a need for high quality, accessible and inexpensive transfer services. On the other hand, commercial banks and remitting companies desire to maximize profit from the global exchange of goods and funds.

As such, the Canadian federal government, through an intra-departmental working group composed of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Citizenship and Immigration (CIC), decided to begin a crucial, albeit exploratory, first look into remitting behaviours from Canada. The main objective of this ongoing research is to explore whether or not Canadian government policies can be enhanced to influence development programs and assistance and perhaps guide future research in this area.

The Population Sample

For the purpose of this study, the intra-departmental working group selected seven target countries, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Haiti, Jamaica and Guyana, and several others in the Americas for comparison reasons. The decision to focus on Central American and Caribbean countries was prompted by the featuring of remittances at the January 2004 Summit of Americas and the membership of some of these countries in the Regional Conference on Migration or the Puebla Process.

According to the 2001 Census, there are approximately 294,055 and 71,865 people of Caribbean and Central American origin, respectively, in Canada. Roughly 211,000 people identify themselves as Jamaican, 82,000 as Haitian, 60,000 as West Indian, 52,000 as Guyanese, 50,000 as Trinidadian & Tobagonian, 37,000 as Mexican, 27,000 as Salvadoran, 9,500 as Guatemalan and 3,000 as Honduran. As with all immigrant populations, those from target countries are overwhelmingly found in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. However, smaller Ontario cities, such as Ottawa, Hamilton and Kitchener, have significant numbers as well.

Transfer Process and Data

The money transfer market to Haiti, Jamaica and Guyana is dominated by remitting companies with Canadian banks playing a minor role in the industry. Informal transfer mechanisms including cash remitted through families and friends account for an unknown share of remittances, which can only be estimated by a thorough household survey.

Western Union Money Transfer is the world's leader in money transfer services. In 2001, transfers channelled through Western Union amounted to $US 52 billion. It is estimated that approximately US$ 5.2 billion (10 percent of total worldwide) originate from Canada and that 65 percent (or the equivalent of US$ 3.38 billion) of this total are sent to Central American, Caribbean and South American countries. It is worth noting, however, that transfers through Western Union are not necessarily remittances and that only a portion of the funds transferred are likely to be remittances.

The cost of sending money through remitting companies varies from one company to another. Rates express themselves in two ways: fixed fees and hidden costs. Remitting companies charge fees for fixed amounts between certain thresholds where as hidden costs are found in currency conversion rates. Although there are no estimates on the amounts earned by remitting companies, most of their earnings come from exchange rate differentials. (See Table 1).

Canadian banks, perhaps given the small quantities involved, are not significantly involved in remittances. Money transfer services through banks are normally charged fees ranging from $25 to $100, taking a minimum of 48 hours for the transferred amount to reach the final account destination in another bank. Money orders costing around $15 are another option for sending money, but they are usually not very reliable as it takes weeks or months for the funds to clear up.

For seasonal agricultural workers, the Bank of Nova Scotia and the Caisse Populaires Desjardins have set up a remitting program tailored to their needs. At present, the Bank of Nova Scotia has over 200 branches in the Caribbean and controls Inverlat in Mexico with over 400 branches.

Data Availability

The Canadian government does not prepare official estimates of remittances. Statistic Canada's Household Survey found that Canadian households send, on average, $89 per year in gifts of money, pensions and charitable donations to the rest of the world. This figure is not indicative of remittance totals, but does suggest the possibility of questions on remitting behaviours on the next Census.

Since December 2003, some Canadian financial institutions have expressed growing interest in remittances. The Royal Bank of Canada and CIBC are presently assessing the involvement of their local branches in migrant transfers in order to focus their next steps. The Bank of Nova Scotia intends to begin a remittance program tailored to the needs of Caribbean clients. The Credit Union Central of Canada is looking at reducing the cost of sending funds by designing programs, which involve community credit unions. The remittances research team at the Banque Nationale du Canada is pursuing a money transfer program to Haiti, China and Bangladesh.

Table 1: The Cost of Sending Money				
	< $100	$101 - $200	$201 - $300	$301 - $400
Western Union	17	13	17	20
VMBS	10	15	20	25
JNBS	10	14	14	22
CAM Transfert	10	10 – 16	16 - 24	24 – 32
Bobby Express	12	12 – 24	24 – 36	30 – 48
SOCA Transfert	8	8 – 16	16 – 32	32 – 48
Meli Melo Transfer*	3	0	0	0
Laparkan	10	15	20	25
*There is no charge for amounts over $US 100, which are delivered in Haitian Gourdes				
Source: Interviews with company managers conducted by CIDA				

Conclusions

For Canada, the amount of remittances outflows is small in relation to its economy; but their impact is not to be underestimated for developing countries. In fact, as people migrate for economic reasons, the possibility of sending money back to home countries is strong, not only for the migrants and their families, but for the government as well. Thus, while the direct role of the government of Canada may be limited, there is room for greater understanding of remitting behaviours and amounts from Canada.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that remittances are person-to-person transfers and the receivers alone are to determine how to use these funds. This income, in the poorest households, may be used to fulfill the needs of daily consumption, which include food, clothing, education and health care. Remittances may also be used to buy land or homes, invest in small business or set aside as savings – an area that governments may want to encourage.

The developmental impact of remittances is clear. Remittances spent on goods or services domestically generate positive multiplier effects on an economy. The value added for improved nutrition, education and health care is a long-term investment that will increase social and economic benefits in a country.

Finally, remittances are acting, not only to change consumption patterns of receivers, but internal government policies of receiving countries. In efforts to increase and encourage the flow of remittances, governments must reach out to their nationals abroad with policies such as dual citizenship that cater to their diaspora. Internationally, this also prompts a more activist role for governments in the human rights of their migrants abroad.■

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Transnationalism and the Emigration Exodus

Sharon O'Regan

The emigration exodus in the region is a symptom of the failed social and economic policies in the hemisphere. The origins of this wave lie in injustice and inequality causing economic despair and increased level of inequality. People no longer migrate in search of a better life, but instead as a consequence of failed opportunities in their home countries. Those who leave are vulnerable both politically and economically as the majority suffer from exclusion and poverty. More than half a million people a year leave Latin America and the Caribbean with no intention of returning, thus creating a new cultural enclave in the north with their own challenges. These migrants remitted over $US 23 billion in 2002 (UNICEF) and in 2003 the amount was estimated at approximately $US 40 billion (IADB). It is time to recognize the positive aspects and benefits of migration as a factor contributing to economic growth and national and regional development.

Transnationalism has significant and somewhat encouraging effects that link economies through the interaction of migrants and their country of origin. This suggests that new inter-state relationships have emerged, not only in trade and investment but also in labour mobility. Mexican, Central American and the Caribbean diasporas have significantly interconnected their regions in part through labour migration. Canada has had a bilateral agreement with Mexico since the 1960s for a temporary worker program. Worker remittances are but one example of an important source of foreign exchange. In some cases this income can generate up to thirty-five per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). Although, the transaction costs to send remittances remain high, some countries are implementing innovative projects to reduce these costs. Both the governments of El Salvador and Mexico are leaders in creating and implementing matching funds programs for local and community development.

Throughout the Americas, remittances constitute a growing and significant source of financial flows to and within the region. The cost of transfers remains high, particularly for the working poor who often lack access to bank accounts. Financial authorities should be encouraged to consider ways to lower the cost of remittance transfers, and at the same time facilitate the linkages of remittances to opportunities to promote greater growth and the inclusion of marginalized populations in the formal economy.

At the 2004 Summit of the Americas in Monterrey, Mexico, the topic of remittances was discussed for the first time in plenary meetings. Hemispheric leaders agreed in the Declaration of Nuevo Leon that remittances are an important source of capital in many countries of the hemisphere and committed themselves to creating the necessary conditions in order to reduce the average cost of sending remittances by no later than 2008. Leaders agreed to adopt measures such as: the promotion of competition between the providers of these services, the elimination of regulatory obstacles and other restrictive measures that affect the cost of these transfers, as well as the use of new technologies, while maintaining effective financial oversight. It is expected that a progress report will be delivered at the next Summit of the Americas in Argentina in 2005.■

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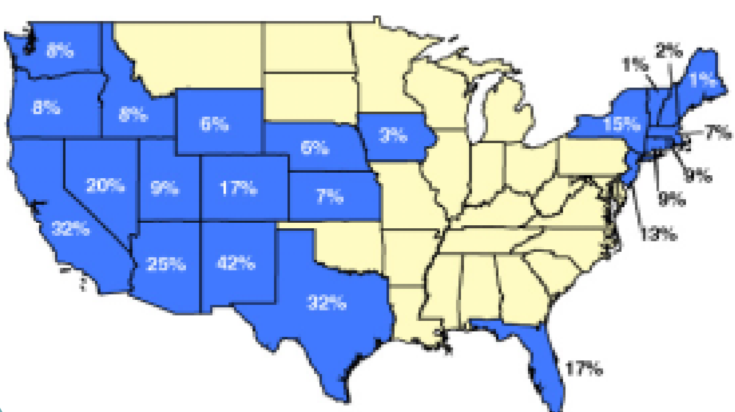
Latino Experience in the US

According to the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute (www.trpi.org) the Latino population of the United States reached 32 million in 2000. This number is expected to top the 50 million mark in about 15 years and by 2050 could reach 96.5 million. While a good portion of this growth will be attributable to second and third generations, the impact across a range of sectors is estimated to be significant. In that year, Latinos are expected to comprise one quarter of the entire US population. According to the 2000 US census the Latino population is concentrated in the southwest and north-eastern portions of the country, but migrating to non-traditional states. Researchers and policy institutions on migration and remittances are identifying a number of policy interventions that can be taken to enhance the development power of remittances. Dr. Manuel Orozco of Georgetown University has estimated that a 50 percent reduction in the transfer costs of remittances could increase the flow of such remittances between 7 and 10 percent. In some cases, this could result in increased foreign currency earnings of between one half of a percent to four percent of some countries total gross domestic product (GDP). He also points out that perhaps one in ten migrants begin some form of commercial exchange between their new cpuntry and country of origin, leading to increased trade linkages between the US and the Latin America and the Caribbean.



Remittances to Central America and the Caribbean, 2002

Country	Remittances
Barbados	$84,150,000
Costa Rica	$196,000,000
Cuba	$800,000,000
Dominican Republic	$1,935,000,000
El Salvador	$1,932,000,000
Guatemala	$1,579,000,000
Guyana	$120,000,000
Haiti	$800,000,000
Honduras	$720,000,000
Jamaica	$1,200,000,000
Nicaragua	$600,000,000
Trinidad & Tobago	$50,000,000
Total	**$10,016,150,000**

Source: FOCAL Policy Paper March 2003

Migrant Communities in Canada

Canada is a country of immigrants. The first immigrants started arriving in 1860 and in 2001 there were approximately 3.9 million immigrants in Canada – 12 percent of the total population. The number of immigrants coming to Canada in relation to its total population, which stands under 32 million, has been increasing steadily through the years - from 12.7 percent in 1951 to 18.4 percent in 2002 - with an average of 180,000 arriving every year.

Under Canadian law, a person can immigrate to Canada under the following categories:

- **Family class immigration**: refers to foreign nationals selected for permanent residence on the basis of their relationship as the spouse, common-law partner, child, parent or other prescribed family member of a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident.
- **Business and skilled worker class immigration**: business immigrants are people who can invest or start businesses in Canada. Skilled workers are people whose education and work experience will help them become economically established in Canada.
- **Refugee class immigration**: Canada offers a safe haven to people with a well-founded fear of persecution, as well as those at risk of torture or cruel and unusual treatment or punishment in their country of nationality or habitual residence. (www.cic.gc.ca).

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