

Flow monitoring of people on the move across the Americas

Locations of high transit and migrant presence in Costa Rica

Cantons: Alajuela, Cartago, Corredores, Desamparados, Escazu, Heredia, Los Chiles, Upala, La Cruz, Liberia, San José, Santa Ana, Santo Domingo y Tibas.



Situation report: September 2024

KEY FINDINGS

To characterize and understand the needs and migratory trends across the Americas in specific locations within Costa Rican territory, various tools from the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) were combined to create this report. These tools include Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR), Emergency Events Tracking (EET), and Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) from the Mobility Tracking and Flow Monitoring components, respectively¹. The results of this report present information collected between 1 – 30 September 2024.

FLOW MONITORING REGISTRY



25,964 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ENTERED COSTA RICA FROM PANAMA IN JULY 2024



25,661 PEOPLE MOBILIZED BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION THROUGH COSTA RICA

Source: Projection from IOM Costa Rica, based on previously published monthly data².

Source: General Directorate of Migration in Costa Rica (DGME), 2024.

EMERGENCY EVENT TRACKING IN MONITORED LOCATIONS



1,115 INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN MONITORED PUBLIC SITES
Average stay: 3 days



357 INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN **4** MONITORED SHELTERS
Average stay: 11 days in shelters in the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM), 3 days in the EMI Sur Shelter (CATEM) and 2 days in 1 shelter in Los Chiles.

Source: DGME and estimation from IOM Costa Rica, based on key informants and direct observation.

FLOW MONITORING SURVEY: LOCATION OF HIGH TRANSIT AND MIGRANT PRESENCE

(862 individuals surveyed and 1,244 group companions)



44 % FEMALE | **56 %** MALE
30 % CHILDREN UNDER 18

MAIN NEEDS*

Food and nutrition (59 %)
Income (15 %)
Shelter (9 %)
Other (17 %)



83 % OF INDIVIDUALS TRAVEL IN GROUPS

Source: IOM, 2024

¹ For more information, visit: www.dtm.iom.int

² The estimation of people is calculated with the data published by the DGME. For more information, visit: www.migracion.go.cr/Paginas/Centro%20de%20Documentaci%C3%B3n/Estad%C3%ADsticas.aspx



Costa Rica, like other Central American country, has been distinguished for being a **migratory corridor** for the Flow of **People on the Move across the Americas**, with migrants crossing by land the border between Colombia and Panama through the Darién crossing, destined for the northern countries of the Americas. According to data published by the Republic of Panama³, between January and September 2024, 277,876 entries to Panama were recorded through the Darién crossing. Specifically, in September, 25,111 entries were recorded: 48 per cent were adult men, 29 per cent women, 12 per cent boys, and 11 per cent girls. 79 per cent came from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, four per cent from Colombia, three per cent from Viet Nam, two per cent from Ecuador, two per cent from Nepal, and another 10 per cent from more than 31 countries³.



In 2024, the migratory flow showed a downward trend since February, with an increase in September, where 25,964 people were estimated, representing a 57 per cent increase compared to August. This fluctuation breaks the downward trend observed since June and contrasts with previous years, especially 2023, which experienced much higher migratory peaks, reaching its highest point in August. This behavior in 2024 can be attributed to external factors such as changes in migration policies or conditions in the countries of origin.

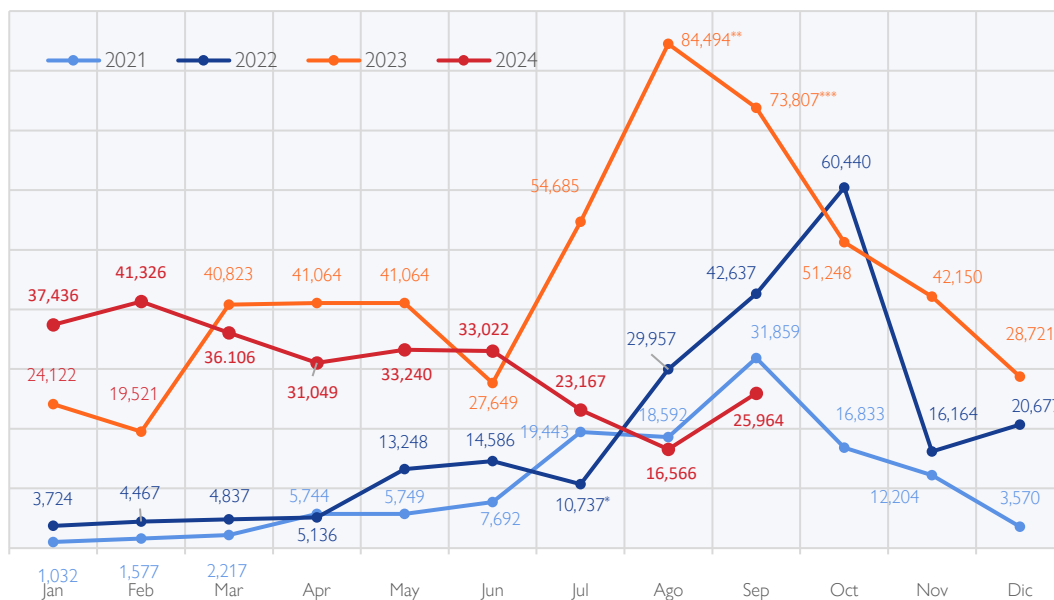


In September 2024, 1,115 stranded people were identified in monitored public places, representing a 28 per cent increase compared to August. In contrast, 357 people were registered in shelters, marking a 37 per cent increase from the previous month. The rise in the stranded population in transit and those remaining in shelters is due to the increase in migratory entries into Costa Rica during September, putting continued pressure on local resources.



In September, a shelter began operations in the canton of Los Chiles, located at the northern border. This opening responds to the significant increase in migrants passing through the region, creating the need to expand the capacity for care and temporary accommodation, provide safe and dignified shelter for migrants in transit, as well as basic services such as food and emotional support. This shelter is an effort to alleviate the pressure on local resources, facilitating better management of the migratory influx in the canton.

Figure 1. Estimated number of migrants entering Costa Rica, per month and year



277,876
Migrant individuals in
January and August
2024

529,348
Migrant individuals in
2023

226,610
Migrant individuals in
2022

126,512
Migrant individuals in
2021

*In July 2022, not all data was collected due to road closures in Panama. Source: Government of Panama, 2023.

** Data for August 31, 2023, was not available, so a weekly moving average was used.

*** As of September 2023, data correspond to estimates with a confidence level of 95 %.

³ For more information, visit: www.migracion.gob.pa

At the request of key informants (KIs), starting in October 2023, IOM Costa Rica calculates the potential entries of migrants into Costa Rica, considering historical data on the outflows of people from the Temporary Migrant Reception Station (ETRM) in Los Planes, Gualaca until August 30, 2023, and the inflows to Panama that are published on the website of the National Migration Service (SNM) of Panama⁴. In addition, since November 2023, the General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs (DGME) of Costa Rica publishes a daily report of people mobilized by public transportation from the EMI Sur and the number of people who remain stranded in CATEM⁵.

During September 2024, **862 valid surveys** were obtained (99 per cent response rate and one per cent non-response rate), collecting information on 2,106 migrants (862 surveyed and 1,244 group companions). The Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) data collection method consists of in-person surveys conducted with migrants on the move across the Americas in Costa Rica, in the cantons of Corredores, San Jose, and Los Chiles. The surveys are applied voluntarily to adults who represent groups or travel alone to gain an in-depth understanding of the profile of migrants. In addition, the surveys are translated into Spanish, English, French, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole.

The flow monitoring points are locations with high mobility and concentration of migrants, which allows **differentiating between those stranded in shelters and those in transit sites**. Sixteen per cent of the surveys were conducted with migrants stranded in CATEM (Corredores canton) and in two shelters in the San Jose canton, using a non-probabilistic convenience sampling technique, while the remaining 84 per cent were carried out with people in high migratory transit sites, such as the bus terminal at EMI Sur and the bus terminal in Los Chiles (see Map 1). This is because most migrants prefer to stay in transit areas where they have greater access to resources and transportation. Additionally, the logistics and security in shelters often limit the frequency and number of surveys that can be conducted in these locations.

At the bus station at **EMI Sur**, a **non-probabilistic sampling** was implemented, which is an objective way of selecting a sample as it avoids inconsistent selection biases and aims to reflect the characteristics of the migrant population that passed through this site. Because it is a mobile population and its size is unknown, a large population is assumed. Under the assumption of simple random sampling, the sample size is estimated to include at least 386 people, assuming a response rate close to 100 per cent (based on historical data at the site), a confidence level of 95 per cent, and a maximum margin of error of five per cent.

In the shelters of **San José**, efforts are made to survey as many people as possible. For the surveys at high transit migrant sites **Los Chiles** and **EMI Sur**, a **non-probabilistic sampling method** was implemented, however for the month of September no surveys were carried out at the new Los Chiles shelter. Although the data collected at these sites cannot be extended to the entire population, efforts will be made to increase the reliability of the profiling by taking as a reference the figure of 386 monthly surveys. Non-probabilistic sampling was chosen due to the specific conditions of these sites, which may include the mobility and geographical dispersion of the migrant population, making random sampling unfeasible. This type of sampling allows for more flexible and rapid data collection in contexts where the application of probabilistic methods is not practical.

Parallel to the quantitative information presented, descriptive information on the migratory dynamics of the flow through Costa Rica was also obtained through the Emergency Tracking Tool (EET), which allows tracking sudden movements and providing recent updates through interviews with key informants, direct observation, and compilation of secondary sources. This section will be represented in the report by a blue box, the same as this section of the methodology.

LIMITATIONS: Although the Government of Costa Rica implements an official registration system for those who travel the EMI Sur-Los Chiles route and counts the number of people who stay at CATEM, these data are not published daily, and there are still flows through unofficial routes far from these controls, making it impossible to keep a complete record of all entries into the country. Additionally, the publication of these data is carried out through daily reports on the number of people mobilized by public transport and the people at CATEM. Another current limitation would be the changes in the internal dynamics of CATEM that have made it difficult to conduct surveys with the people in the shelter.

Language and cultural barriers, temporary stays at monitoring points, geographical complexities, and irregular migration dynamics, including human trafficking networks, also represent additional challenges.

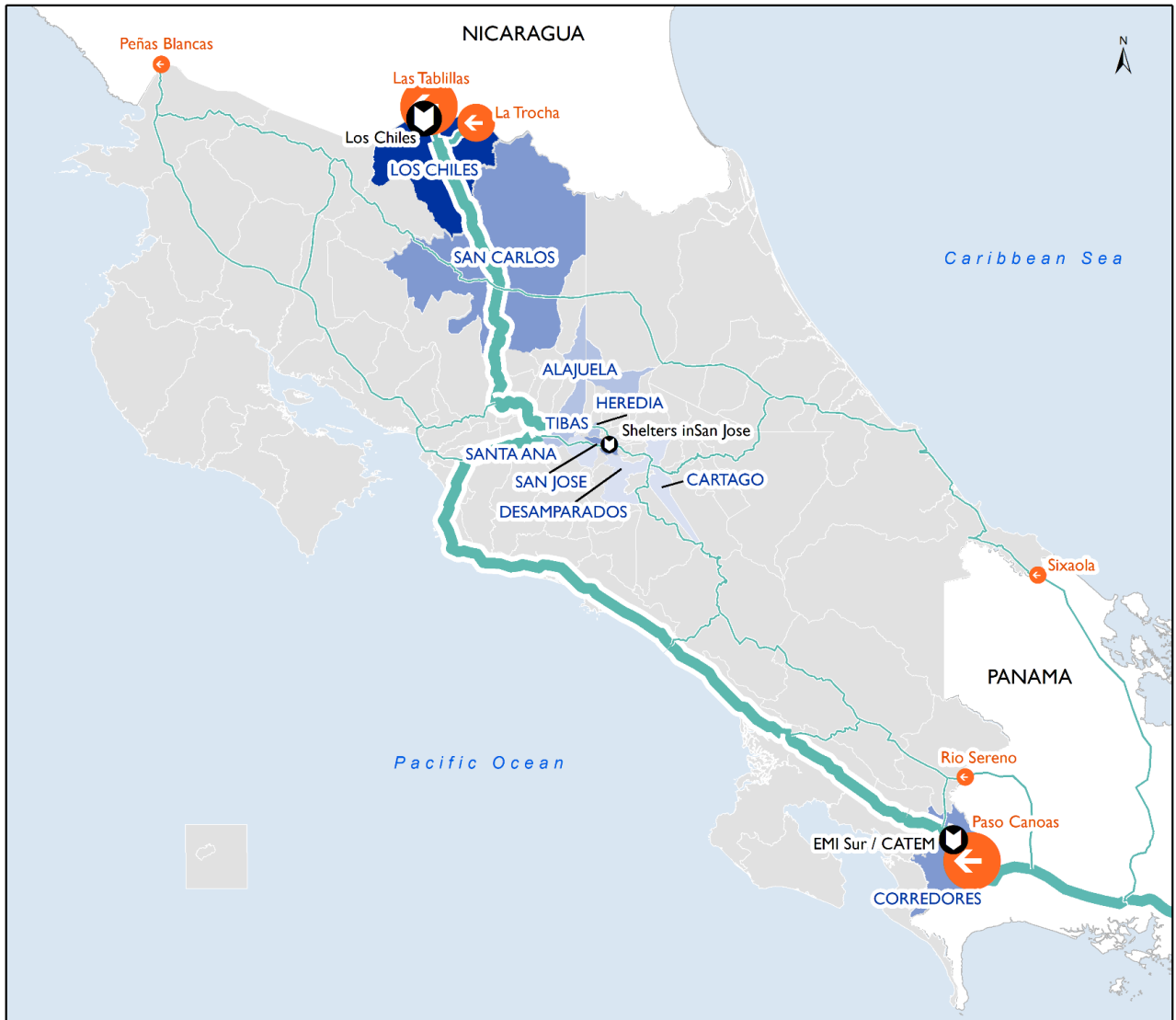
⁴ For more information, visit: www.migracion.gob.pa

⁵ For more information, visit: www.migracion.go.cr/Paginas/Centro%20de%20Documentaci%C3%B3n/Estad%C3%ADsticas.aspx






TREND DISPLACEMENT IN COSTA RICA

Map 1 Sites of high presence and transit of migrants in mobility through the Americas, and their movement through Costa Rica. September 2024






Legend



Border Crossing

-  < 130
-  8,568
-  17,136 - 25,704

Surveys

-  37
-  285
-  540

Route

-  Direct Route EMI Sur - Los Chiles
-  Alternative Route

Stranded individuals per canton

- | | |
|---|---|
|  < 15 |  205 - 256 |
|  16 - 40 |  625 |

Note: This map is for illustrative purposes only. The boundaries, names and designations used do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. September 2024





25,964

Estimated number of individuals entering Costa Rica. In September 2024

↑ 57 % crease compared to the estimates of August 2024 (16,566)



25,661

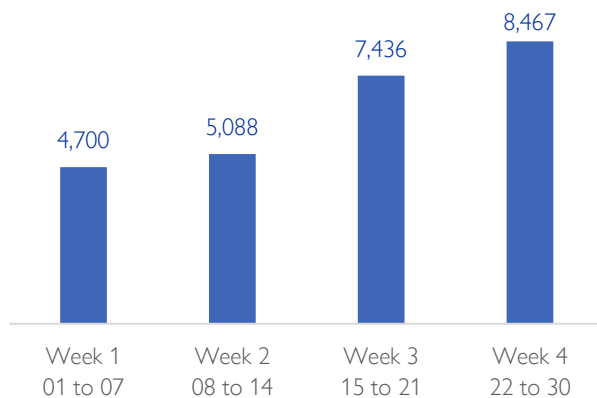
Individuals using direct public transportation from the southern to the northern border. September 2024

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Costa Rica, it is estimated that approximately **25,964 people from the migratory flow across the Americas entered the country in September 2024**, with an **average daily influx of about 865 individuals**. Nearly 99 per cent of these entries occurred through Paso Canoas, on the border with Panama.

The primary route identified was directly from EMI Sur (southern border) to Los Chiles (northern border), carried out by bus, costing approximately 30 US dollars (\$30 USD) per person and lasting less than a day.

This month, it is estimated that about **25,661 people moved through this route, equivalent to 99 per cent of the total flow entering the country** (Figure 2)⁶. The presence of stranded individuals in public spaces in the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM) and areas distant from Los Chiles indicates that alternative routes remain active.

Figure 2. Estimated number of individuals traveling on direct route (EMI Sur - Los Chiles), per week, September 2024



ROUTES AND MOBILITY SCHEDULES

In September 2024, the mobility of migrants presented distinctive characteristics across different regions of the country, marked by variations in routes and transit times.

MOBILITY IN SOUTHERN CANTONS: At EMI Sur, the mobility of migrants was variable, partly due to heavy rains in areas of Panama that made river crossings difficult. Most of the buses transporting people from the southern area operate in the morning hours. Additionally, **it has been observed that some migrants have chosen to return to EMI Sur after staying in different cantons of the country, although there is no precise data on the reasons or the scale of these movements.**

MOBILITY IN CENTRAL CANTONS: The main route to the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM) is generally taken gradually, moving from community to community in the southern cantons, although direct routes are also used in some cases. It has been recorded that some migrants return from the northern zone in search of economic resources to continue their journey. Most of these movements occur during the day, taking advantage of the availability of buses at that time. Shelters in the area provide essential support, offering rest, food, and the opportunity to plan the next steps of the journey, as well as to collect the necessary money to continue.

MOBILITY IN NORTHERN CANTONS: The route from the southern zone to the northern zone continues to be the main corridor for people in transit. During the night, a higher proportion of buses has been recorded compared to the daytime, although the total number of buses has not varied significantly. It has also been observed that many people choose to use taxis or get off at unauthorized stops to head to unofficial border crossings, such as La Trocha. The constant presence of migrants in the northern cantons is related to the need to gather economic resources before continuing their journey. Key informants indicate that migrants resort to both local hotels and public spaces to rest.

⁶ The estimation of people is calculated using the data published by the DGME. For more information, please visit: www.migracion.go.cr/Paginas/Centro%20de%20Documentaci%C3%B3n/Estad%C3%ADsticas.aspx



INDIVIDUALS STRANDED AT MONITORED SITES

In September 2024, **1,115** migrants were identified as stranded in **public sites (an increase of 28 % compared to August 2024)** in monitored cantons and **357 stranded in four shelters (increase of 37 % compared to August 2024)**. In September, the average stay in shelters in the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM) remained between **6 to 11 days**, which is related to internal changes in the conditions of the shelters, allowing for longer stays. Meanwhile, in CATEM, public spaces, the average stay remained at 3 days and shelter Los Chiles in 2 days,

According to key informants, the presence of stranded people in the GAM and the northern zone is due to the search for resources to continue their journey.

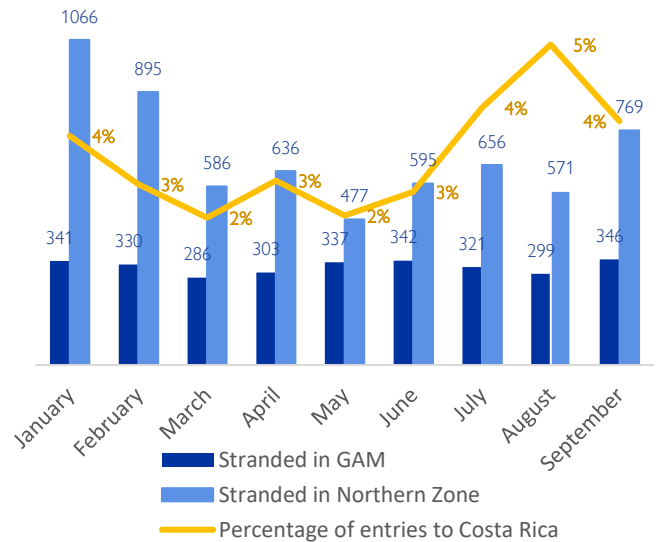
INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN SOUTHERN CANTONS: The number of people transiting through Costa Rica has increased, as have the numbers of stranded individuals. According to reports issued by the DGME regarding stranded people at CATEM, it is estimated that **205** people were sheltered in September 2024, making it still the most utilized shelter. Cooperation between non-governmental organizations and government institutions has been crucial for effectively managing the accommodation and necessary services for these individuals.

INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN CENTRAL CANTONS: In September 2024, **346** migrants were identified stranded in monitored public places in various cantons of the GAM, with San José standing out with **207**. On the other hand, in the monitored shelters of San José, **49** people were registered; this figure has slightly decreased compared to previous months in 2024 (Graph 4).

INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN NORTHERN CANTONS: Although the number of stranded migrants in the northern zone decreased from July to August 2024 (656 and 571 people, respectively), in September **769** stranded people were identified in public places, more than double the number in the GAM (346 people). Starting this month, **103** people were recorded in the monitored formal shelter in Los Chiles. Key informants have noted the presence of informal shelters in the northern zone, which, although providing basic support, face serious challenges in terms of sanitary conditions and limited resources. The September data highlight the urgent need to strengthen cooperation in this region, especially in Los Chiles, where 3,571 stranded people have been recorded since January 2024, in contrast to the 2,508 recorded in San Carlos.

1,115
Individuals stranded in public monitored sites

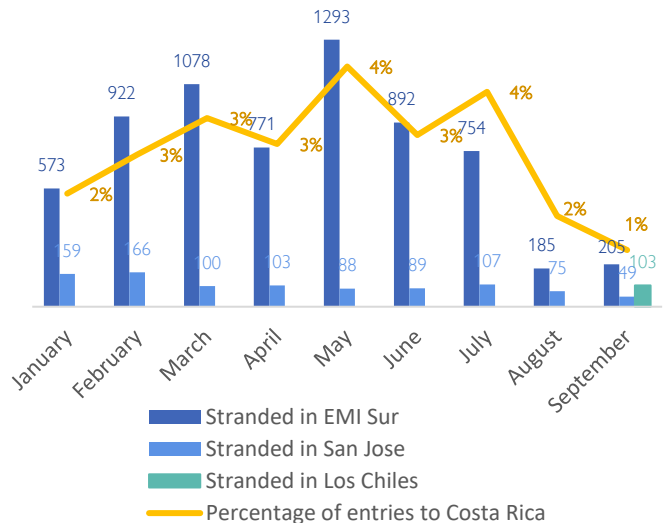
Figure 3. Monthly distribution of stranded individuals in public monitored sites



Note: The percentage of entries to Costa Rica is calculated based on the number of people who entered the country during each of the indicated months. For a more detailed visualization of this data, see Graph 1.

357
Individuals stranded in monitored shelters

Figure 4. Monthly distribution of stranded individuals in monitored shelters



Note: The percentage of entries to Costa Rica is calculated based on the number of people who entered the country during each of the indicated months. For a more detailed visualization of this data, see Graph 1.

The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. September 2024

FLOW MONITORING SURVEY

(Individuals surveyed: 862 | Group companions: 1,244)

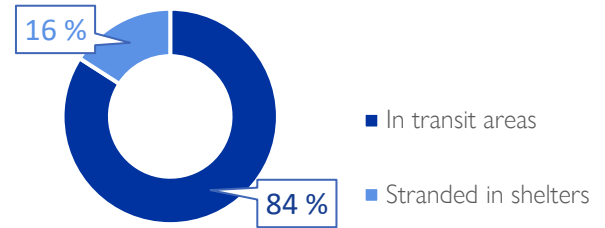
Data collection: September 01-30, 2024

This flow monitoring was carried out through individual surveys of persons of legal age (18 years or older) stranded in **two shelters in San Jose and in EMI Sur**, and surveys to people in transit in **Los Chiles canton, in the northern zone following a non-probabilistic sampling methodology**. This means that the results obtained **cannot be generalized and they are not representative** to the total number of people moving through the Americas. Nevertheless, while the results cannot be generalized, they do allow us to describe the migratory profile of the people surveyed during this period. In total, information was obtained on **2,106 migrants** (862 respondents and 1,244 group companions).



It should be noted that, for the purposes of this report, **the data on the left side or in dark blue represent the surveyed individuals who were in high concentration and transit points (EMI Sur Terminal and Los Chiles Terminal)**, while the data **on the right side or in light blue represent the surveyed individuals who were in the monitored shelters**.

Figure 5. Surveys by type of movement of surveyed individuals (n=862)



723

Individuals surveyed in **high-traffic transit areas** throughout Costa Rica (bus station at EMI Sur and Los Chiles).



139

Individual surveyed persons surveyed **stranded in shelters** in Costa Rica (2 shelters in GAM 1 in southern border)

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF PEOPLE SURVEYED

Percentage of individuals in transit by nationality (n=723)



Percentage of individuals stranded in monitored shelters by nationality (n=139)



NIVEL EDUCATIVO DE PERSONAS ENCUESTADAS

Figure 6. percentage of individuals surveyed in transit by sex and highest level of completed education (n=723)

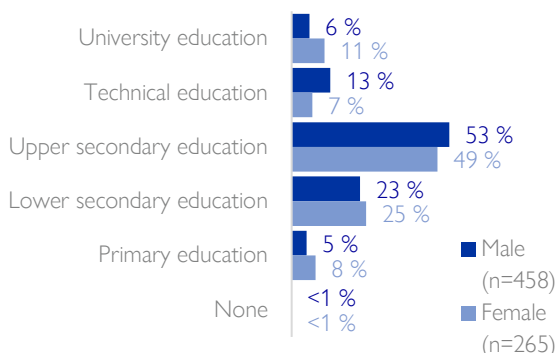
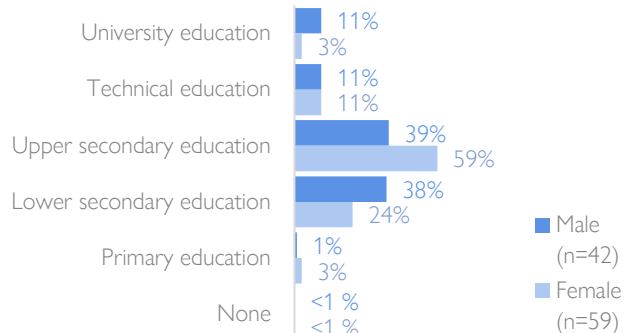


Figure 7. percentage of individuals surveyed in shelters by sex and highest level of completed education (n=139)



The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. September 2024



Out of 723 surveyed individuals at **transit locations**, data was collected on 944 travel companions, resulting in a total of **1,667 group companions and surveyed individuals**. Among the analyzed groups, 19 per cent were individuals traveling alone (30 % of the surveyed male and 7 % of the surveyed female) and 16 per cent were couples. The larger groups (3 or more individuals), representing 65 per cent of the total (figure 8). The average travel group size was 3.3 people (excluding individuals traveling alone).

Regarding the distribution by sex and age, 57 per cent of the people within the travel groups, including surveyed individuals and their group companions, were male, while 43 per cent were female. Minors (17 years old or younger) made up 30 per cent of the total number of individuals, and the average age of the adults was 31 years, with minors averaging 8 years old (Figure 9).

Out of the 139 surveyed individuals in **3 shelters**, information was collected on 300 families making a total of **439 group companions and surveyed individuals**. Of the analyzed groups, eight per cent were individuals traveling alone (14 % of the male and three per cent of the female), and eight per cent were couples. The larger groups (3 or more individuals), representing 84 per cent of the total, The average travel group size was 3.9 people (excluding individuals traveling alone).

Regarding the sex and age distribution of the surveyed individuals and companions, 53 per cent of the members of the family, including surveyed individuals and their group companions, were male, while 47 per cent were female. Minors (17 years or younger) constituted 39 per cent of the total. The average age of the adults was 31 years and 7 years for minors (Figure 11).

Figure 8. Size and number of travel groups of surveyed individuals at transit sites (n=1,667)

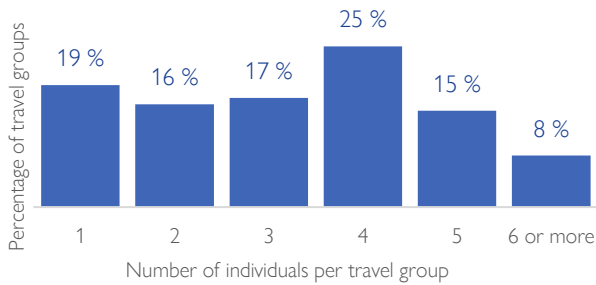
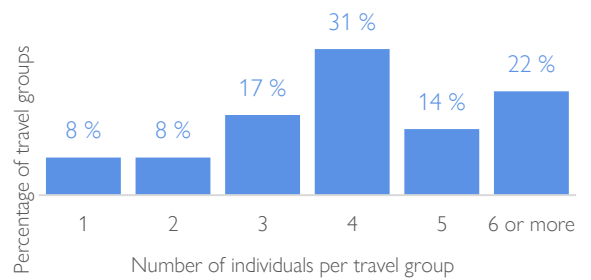
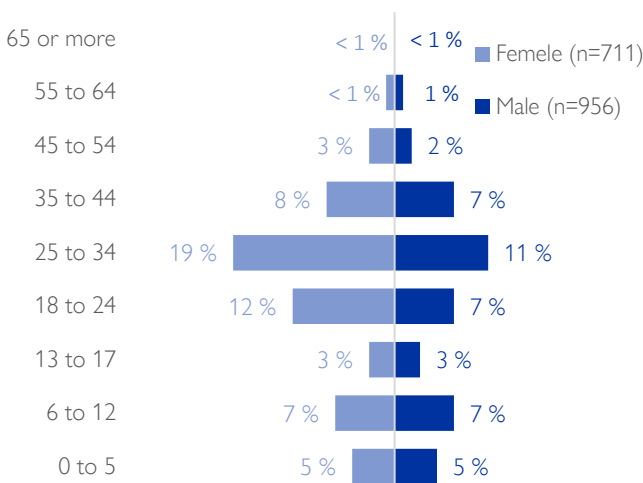


Figure 10. Size and number of travel groups of surveyed individuals stranded in monitored shelters (n=439)



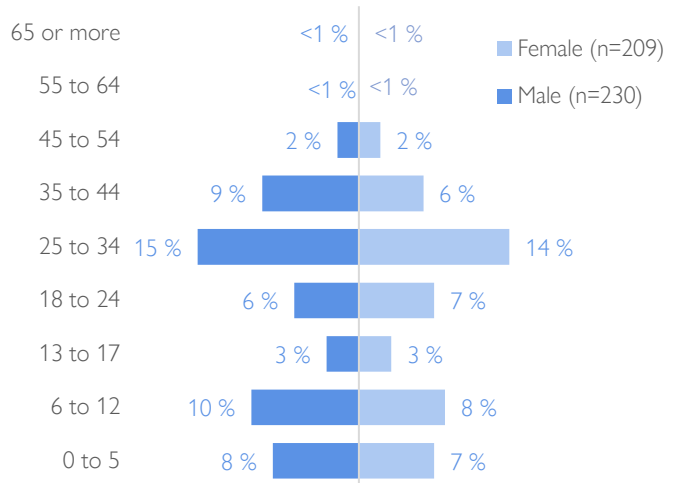
GENDER AND AGE COMPOSITION OF INDIVIDUALS IN TRAVEL GROUPS

Figure 9. Percentage of people in transit travel groups, by age and sex (n=1,667)



Note: This analysis does not include data on unaccompanied minors, as surveys are not conducted with individuals under the age of 18.

Figure 11. Percentage of people in monitored shelters, by age and sex (n=439).

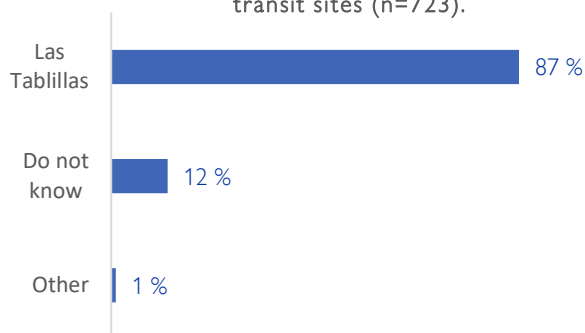


Note: This analysis does not include data on unaccompanied minors, as surveys are not conducted with individuals under the age of 18.

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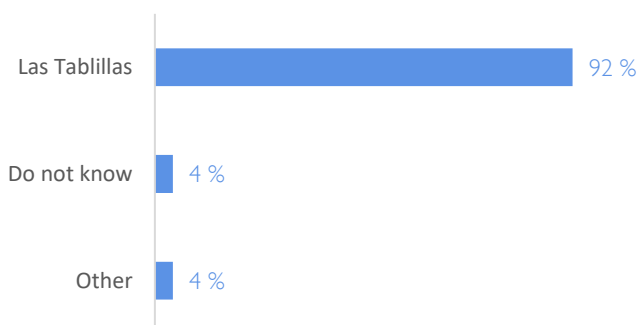
The main location where surveyed individuals in transit indicated they planned to leave Costa Rica was the **Las Tablillas border crossing in Los Chiles (87 %)**, while 12 per cent indicated they did not know where they would go (less than 1 % mentioned other border points, possibly associated with returns). Additionally, **none of the surveyed individuals indicated they did not have plans to leave Costa Rica.**

Figure 12. Percentage of surveyed individuals by planned departure location from Costa Rica in transit sites (n=723).



Similarly, the exit point identified by surveyed individuals in shelters for leaving Costa Rica was the **Las Tablillas border crossing in Los Chiles (92 %)**. Four per cent of respondents said they did not know where they would exit, while another four per cent mentioned other border points, possibly linked to the illicit trafficking of migrant people. Furthermore, none of the surveyed individuals indicated they did not have plans to leave the country.

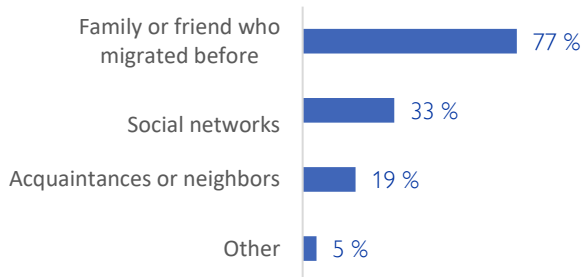
Figure 14. Percentage of surveyed individuals by planned departure location from Costa Rica in monitored shelters (n=139).



INFORMATION USED TO MAKE THE JOURNEY

In the surveys conducted, migrant individuals in transit highlighted the sources of information they relied on to prepare for their migration journey. Seventeen per cent received information from family members or acquaintances who had previously migrated, while 33 per cent used social networks. Additionally, 19 per cent mentioned other sources, and five per cent indicated they relied on a different source (figure 13).

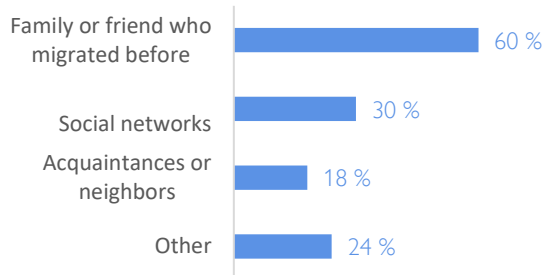
Figure 13. Percentage of surveyed individuals who used different sources of information to plan their migration journey in transit sites (n=723).



People had the possibility to choose more than one option.

In the surveys conducted, migrant individuals in shelters shared the sources of information they used to plan their migration. Sixty per cent received guidance from family members or acquaintances who had already migrated, and thirty per cent mentioned social networks as a key source. Moreover, 18 per cent relied on neighbors or acquaintances, and 24 per cent referred to other sources (figure 15).

Figure 15. Percentage of surveyed individuals who used different sources of information to plan their migration journey in shelters (n=139).



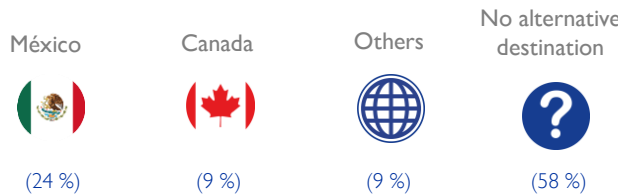
People had the possibility to choose more than one option.
Other: Independent advice, self-managed trip, without prior guidance, without detailed planning.

TRAVEL DESTINATION

The final destination reported by surveyed individuals in transit sites was the **United States of America**, accounting for **95 per cent of respondents**. Other notable destinations included Mexico (2 %) and Canada (1 %). Furthermore, two per cent of individuals indicated they had no specific destination in mind.

When considering the **main alternative destinations**, 24 per cent of individuals mentioned Mexico as an option, nine per cent cited Canada, and eight per cent noted other countries. Additionally, 51 per cent did not specify any alternative destination.

Percentage of surveyed individuals by alternative final destination country in transit sites (n=723)

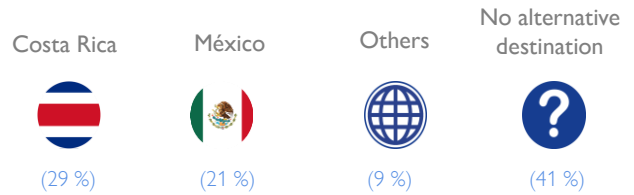


Other countries: United States of America, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Costa Rica.

Similarly, the final destination indicated by individuals surveyed in temporary shelters was **92 per cent for the United States of America**. Other key destinations identified were Mexico (6 %) and Costa Rica (2 %) among those in shelters.

In terms of **alternative destinations**, 29 per cent of individuals in shelters cited Costa Rica, while 21 per cent mentioned Mexico, and nine per cent noted other countries. Furthermore, 41 per cent did not identify an alternative destination at the time of survey.

Percentage of surveyed individuals by alternative final destination country in monitored shelters (n=139)

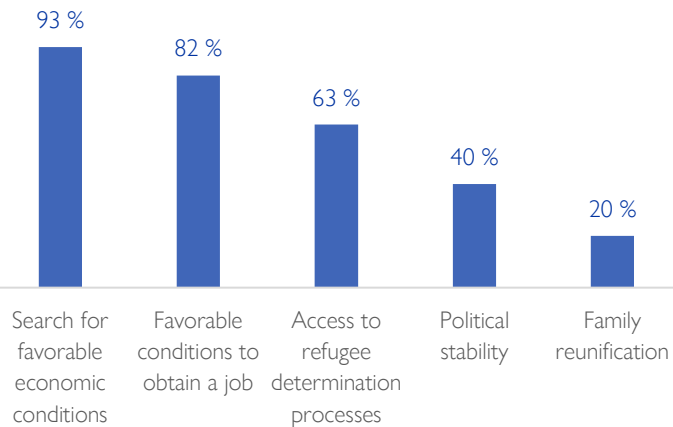


Other countries: United States of America, Canada, Colombia

REASONS FOR MIGRATION

Regarding the reasons for migration, individuals surveyed in transit primarily emphasized the search for better economic conditions (93 %) and the possibility of securing employment (82 %). Other factors, though mentioned less frequently, included political stability (63 %), access to refugee determination processes (40 %), and family reunification (20 %).

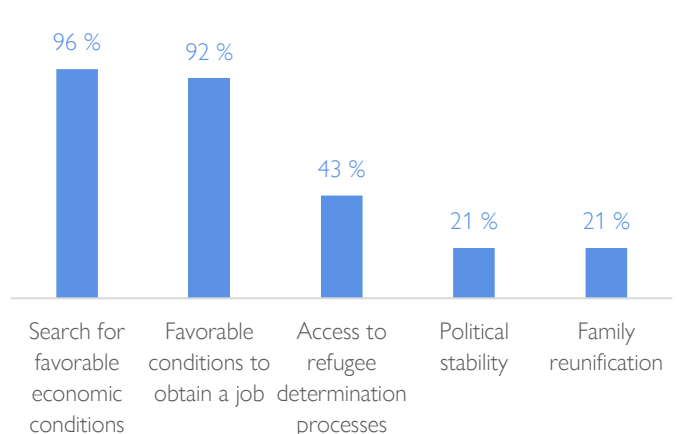
Figure 16. Percentage of Surveyed Individuals by Reason for Migration in Transit Sites (n=723)



Note: individuals could choose more than one option

The reasons for migration, as highlighted by individuals surveyed in transit, were primarily driven by the search for favorable economic conditions (93 %), and opportunities for employment (92 %). Other reasons, though less prominent, included the pursuit of political stability (43 %), access to refugee determination processes (21 %), and family reunification (21 %).

Figure 17. Percentage of Surveyed Individuals by Reason for Migration in Monitored Shelters (n=139)

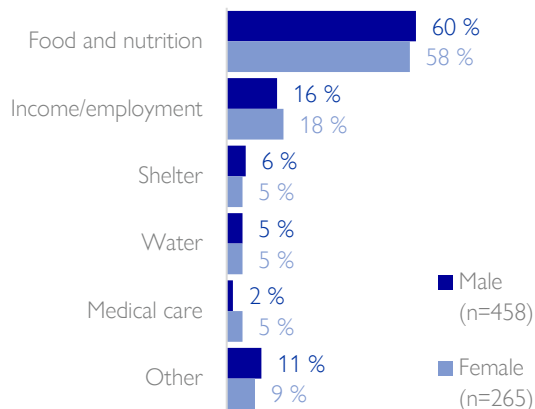


Note: individuals could choose more than one option

The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. September 2024

The most pressing needs of the respondents in transit sites were food and nutrition 60 per cent, income/employment 16 per cent and shelter 6 per cent. Additionally, 51 per cent of the respondents stated that they needed legal advice to learn about their migration options.

Figure 14. percentage of surveyed individuals in transit, by sex and main need (n=723)



Other needs: Non-food items (diapers, sanitation and hygiene items, feminine hygiene products), among others.



50 % indicated a need for legal advice to learn about migration options. (n=723)



Main non-food (NFI) need:

- 1- Soap (32 %)
- 2- Toilet paper (17 %)
- 3- Shampoo (13 %)
- 4-Toothbrush and toothpaste (12 %)
- 5- Others (26 %)



53 % indicated a need for legal advice to learn about migration options. (n=139)



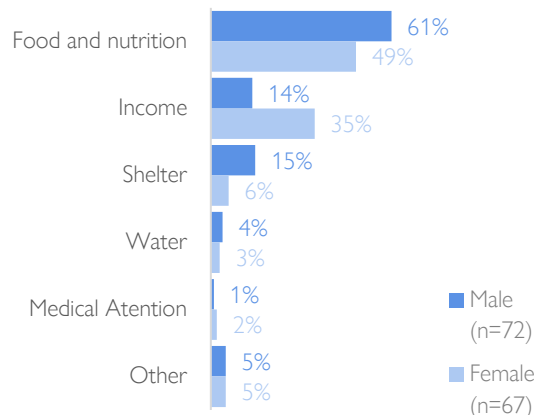
Main non-food (NFI) need:

- 1- Soap (19 %)
- 2- Toothbrush and toothpaste (17 %)
- 3- Toilet Paper (15 %)
- 4- Shampoo (12 %)
- 5- Others (37 %)

Note: The main non-food item (NFI) needs identified are detailed in the charts; other items are not among the primary needs.

Surveys conducted with migrants in temporary shelters revealed that the most urgent needs are food and nutrition per cent, shelter 24 per cent, and access to income or employment 11 per cent. Additionally, 53 per cent of respondents indicated that they required legal advice to better understand their migration options.

Figure 15. percentage of surveyed individuals stranded in shelters, by sex and main need (n=101)



Despite ongoing coordination efforts between humanitarian actors and authorities during September 2024, challenges persist in providing services, improving infrastructure, and addressing health issues. In the EMI Sur region, there is a highlighted need for non-food donations, including clothing (especially for children and babies), personal hygiene items, sanitary towels, diapers, blankets, bottles, and boiled water. Adequate food, constant electricity for charging mobile devices, free telephone lines, and maps of the countries along the migration route with information on support agencies remain crucial.

In the GAM region, difficulties continue due to the lack of accommodation, psychosocial, legal, and medical care, clothing, and essential items. Although various actors and local organizations are present in GAM, it is vital to strengthen humanitarian efforts. Collaboration between entities remains essential to provide effective support and assistance to migrants.

Additionally, an increase in the number of people seeking temporary economic resources before continuing their journey was observed, leading to a rise in demand for informal jobs and basic services in the area.

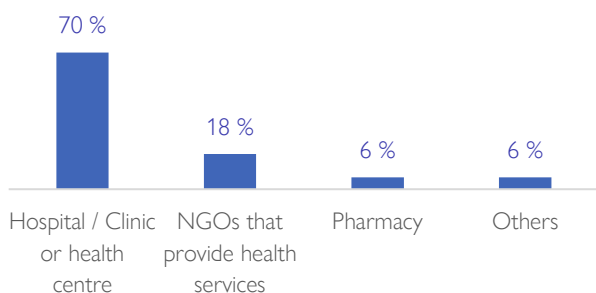
In the northern region, the needs of stranded migrants have increased, particularly for food, shelter, water access, medical care, information, and psychological support. Communities like Los Chiles and Ciudad Quesada experience a constant flow of stranded migrants due to a lack of economic resources to continue their journey. Protection risks for vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and people with specific medical needs, have been identified. Furthermore, the prolonged presence of migrants in these communities has created tensions with the local population. New non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have started offering services to migrants in transit, such as cell phone charging and internet services, as well as providing food (breakfast and lunch)



In the migration context, public hospitals and clinics in Costa Rica prioritize the care of emergencies, pregnant women, and minors. According to surveys conducted in transit sites, **70 per cent of individuals indicated that, in case of needing medical assistance, they would go to hospitals, clinics, or health centers.** On the other hand, 18 per cent stated they would seek care from NGOs that offer health services, while five per cent would opt for pharmacies (Graph 20).

Seven per cent of surveyed women and accompanying individuals in transit sites aged 15 years and older were pregnant, with an average age of 28 years.

Figure 20. Percentage of surveyed individuals by location where they would seek assistance if needed in transit sites (n=723).

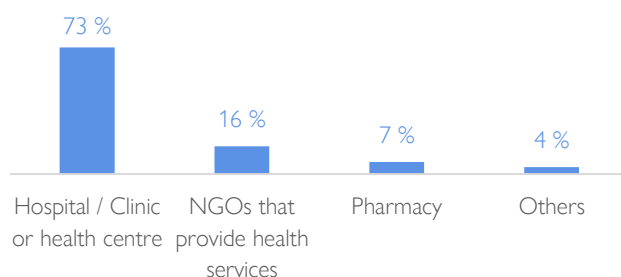


Otros sitios: Alternative medicine, Local medical or nursing professional.

Regarding the individuals surveyed in shelters, **72 per cent indicated that they would seek medical attention in hospitals, clinics, or health centers,** while 16 per cent stated they would turn to NGOs that offer health services, and seven per cent indicated they would go to pharmacies. These results reflect a predominant trust in the public health system, although a smaller group relies on non-governmental organizations to access health services, due to the vulnerability and specific needs of migrant individuals in transit (Graph 21).

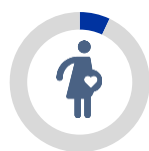
Eight per cent of women over 15 in shelters were pregnant, with an average age of 27 years.

Figure 22. Percentage of surveyed individuals by location where they would seek assistance if needed in transit sites (n=139).



Otros sitios: Alternative medicine, Local medical or nursing professional.

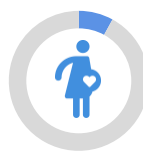
Figure 21. Percentage of women in transit aged 15 years or older by pregnancy status (n=485)



Yes: 7 %

No: 93 %

Figure 23. Percentage of stranded women in shelters aged 15 years or older by pregnancy status (n=139)



Yes: 8 %

No: 92 %



OBSERVED HEALTH ISSUES

Main health conditions observed in stranded migrants include:

- **Gastrointestinal disease:** Diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach discomfort.
- **Respiratory illnesses:** Flu, cough, and asthma.
- **Skin conditions:** Skin lesions and conjunctivitis.
- **Physical ailments:** Swollen feet, body aches, and headaches.
- **Infectious diseases:** Suspected cases of dengue. Others: Fever, dizziness, and dehydration.

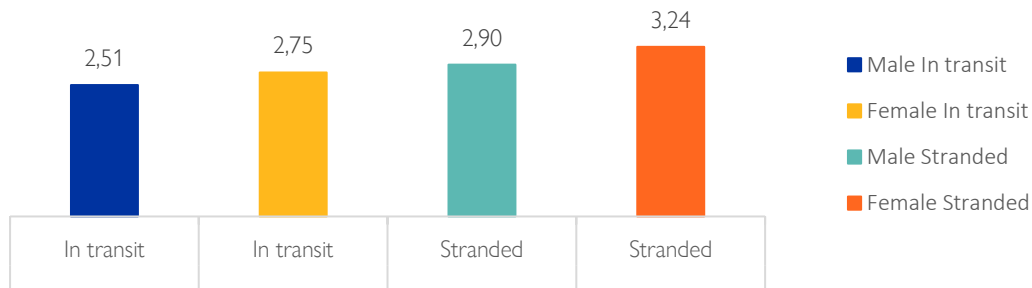
In September 2024, various health impacts were identified among migrant individuals in transit in Costa Rica, highlighting the need for a comprehensive approach to their care. Common issues reported included flu, general discomfort, and health complications that require medical assistance, both physical and psychological. The vulnerable conditions in which many migrant individuals find themselves, combined with their prolonged stay in shelters or public spaces, exacerbate their health situation. The lack of regular access to medical services, along with the need for emotional and psychological support, underscores the importance of ensuring accessible, continuous, and adequate health care for this population, addressing their immediate and long-term needs during their transit.

The composite indicator measures the level of vulnerability of travel groups on a scale of 0 to 5, **where 5 represents the highest possible vulnerability and 0 the lowest**. This indicator covers several critical dimensions: medical or psychosocial care, food and nutrition, shelter, economic income, access to water, the presence of minors traveling, and the number of people in the group. The indicator's methodology assigns an additional vulnerability point for each unmet need, considering the following criteria:

Table 1. Vulnerability indicator criteria

| Variable | Answers | Contribution to the indicator |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Most urgent need | Income; Shelter; Food and nutrition; Water; Health care; Medical care; Psychosocial care | 1 point |
| 2nd most urgent need | Income; Shelter; Food and nutrition; Water; Health care; Medical care; Psychosocial care | 1 point |
| 3rd most urgent need | Income; Shelter; Food and nutrition; Water; Health care; Medical care; Psychosocial care | 1 point |
| Minors in travel groups | >=1 | 1 point |
| Travel group size | >= 3 | 1 point |

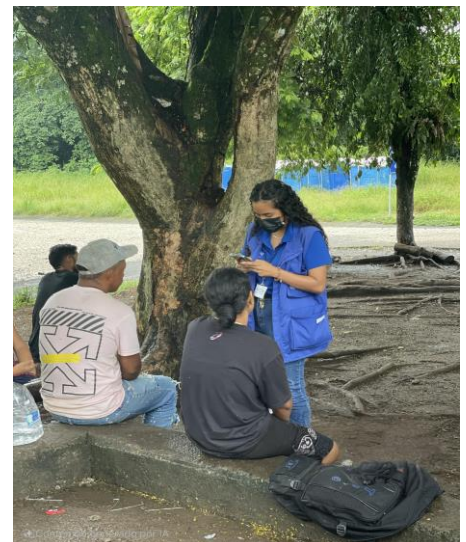
Graph 24. Level of vulnerability by sex and classification of migrants surveyed in September 2024



In general, **both stranded and in-transit women present higher levels of vulnerability than men**. The vulnerability index, which measures the level of risk and unmet needs, is 3.24 for women and 2,90 for men among stranded individuals. For people in transit, the index is 2.75 for women and 2.51 for men.

Between August and September 2024, an increase of 0.36 points was observed in the level of vulnerability among stranded women (from 2.88 in August to 3.24 in September) and a decrease of 0.14 points among stranded men (from 3.04 in August to 2.90 in September). This is associated with an increase in shelter, food, and income needs for women, but a decrease in these needs for men.

Migrant women continue to face more pressing challenges, risks, and needs compared to men, placing them in a situation of greater risk and vulnerability. Therefore, it is essential to adopt a differentiated approach in the humanitarian response, considering the specific needs of each group.



Interview with a migrant person, EMI Sur Bus station, Paso Canoas ©OIM 2024/ Rebeca CASTRO



CONCLUSIONS AND KEY FINDINGS



In September 2024, the flow of migrants increased by 57 per cent compared to August, rising from 16,566 to 25,964 people. This increase contrasts with the overall trend in 2024 (January-September), which has shown a 32 per cent decrease compared to the same period in 2023, with a total of 277,876 entries in 2024 versus 407,229 entries recorded in 2023. Although the increase in September could be influenced by external factors, such as political and socioeconomic changes in the countries of origin, the overall flow remains lower in 2024, suggesting a shift in the migratory dynamics of the region.



The direct route from the Southern Migration Station (EMI Sur) to Los Chiles continues to be the most used, with 99 per cent of people traveling along this route on public buses. The buses transported approximately 25,661 people during the month, with an estimated cost of 30 dollars per person. Additionally, EMI Sur continues to play a key role in managing this migratory flow, providing critical services such as healthcare, legal assistance, and shelter, despite persistent logistical challenges.



Regarding stranded migrants, an increase was observed in monitored public sites, with 1,115 people in September, representing a 28 per cent increase compared to August. In monitored shelters, 357 stranded people were reported, reflecting a 37 per cent increase compared to August. This rise in shelters is related to the opening of the new shelter located in the northern zone.



Surveys conducted with migrants reveal differences in demographic profiles between those in transit and those stranded in shelters. Larger groups (three or more people) represent 65 per cent of the total in transit, while in shelters, this percentage rises to 84 per cent. Additionally, it was observed that 19 per cent of people in transit were traveling without family members, compared to only eight per cent in shelters. This trend underscores the importance of strengthening resources and support in shelters, especially for vulnerable groups such as children.



In terms of health, in September 2024, an increase was reported in gastrointestinal diseases, respiratory problems, and skin conditions, as well as suspected cases of dengue and conjunctivitis among the migrant population. These data highlight the need to adjust available health services and address these emerging conditions, particularly in the face of additional challenges posed by weather conditions. The accumulation of solid waste in public spaces in Los Chiles, especially at the bus terminal and the municipal market, along with bird droppings, has been reported as a continuous cause of bad odors and a potential health risk.

To access our new product with historical information about the Study, go to the following [STORY MAP](#) or scan the QR code.



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