Temporary and Circular Labour Migration:
Experiences, Challenges and Opportunities

IOM SERIES OF RESEARCH INTO MIGRATION. No. 2

December of 2009
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Research Group on Human Mobility

Introduction

In principle, the Research Group on Human Mobility of Alma Mater wants the same possibilities of freedom of movement for people that the countries of the Northern Hemisphere seek and impose for their capital and goods, although it is realized that the temporary and circular labour migration programmes are currently operating within a framework of policies from the receiving countries that restrict that mobility. However, the authors accept that there is no Utopia and so they take a pragmatic approach vis-à-vis these migration programmes. The current system is better than irregular migration which leaves the users of such routes particularly vulnerable to having their rights denied and being legally defenceless in the destination States, where the current trend is for these people to be criminalized purely by virtue of their irregular immigration.

Therefore, the authors are for the time being setting aside the substantive discussion on the freedom to migrate and live in the place of choice, which is something that international declarations recognize but that is denied in practice. So, this document will examine the relative advantages that this programme of recruiting temporary workers at source that is promoted by the Unió de Pagesos⁴⁸ (Catalonia Farmers Union) represents for workers, their families and communities. There will also be a discussion of the adjustments that the programme needs for it to best achieve its objectives.

⁴⁷ www.migracionescolombianas.edu.co
⁴⁸ Which from now on we will refer to as the UP or Pagesos.
Nor will this document be using this opportunity to discuss the background to the recruitment at source or the temporary migration programmes that have preceded the Pagesos programme in various parts of the world. However please consult, among the abundant amount of existing literature, the publication of Durand (2007) on the Mexican case (perhaps the most important in the Americas, in 1917) and that of Agunias (2008) regarding the experience of the Philippines, a country that has been described as “an exporter of labour”. The authors also suggest consulting, in relation to the recent revival of temporary recruitment at source and its perspectives, the work of Ruhs (2005).

As sources, in addition to a due review of the available literature, this article took into account relevant documents that underpin the programme as well as a large number of direct interviews and comments in three areas of Colombia where temporary workers have been recruited. These areas were chosen for their heterogeneity in so far as socio-economic and cultural conditions as well as the idiosyncratic nature of the people living there, the time they have been linked to the actual programme and for the actors that have brokered the process. Account was also taken of primary information and analysis in respect of a fourth geographic area where the Human Mobility Group (Grupo de Movilidad Humana) had previously undertaken work on the same subject (Osorio et al., 2008), together with researchers from Javeriana University in Bogota.

Including the work carried out in this latter community and using different methods, a total of nearly 400 people were interviewed in the following municipalities: Valledupar, Curumaní and La Jagua Ibirico (Department of César); Pasto, Ipiales, Puerrés and Ancuya (Department of Nariño); Armenia, Calarcá and Córdoba (Department of Quindío); and Cali and Bogotá (areas of Suba, Usaquén and Sumapaz). The characteristics of those interviewed include the following: direct link to Pagesos, their operators or partners; temporary workers or their family members; social, community, political or religious leaders; local authorities, officials or teachers, among others. With one small sample of these people (32 temporary workers and their family members) a structured interview (“survey”) was used to evaluate the migration experience and we cite these results to reinforce some of the approaches used and to give an idea of the magnitude of the issues involved.

First, this article will focus on the benefits arising from recruitment in the country of origin (Section 1) and from its temporary and circular nature (section 2), which are common to other programmes, or even individual initiatives. Later on, Section 3 will cover the two basic components of the programme itself, which are of help to workers and co-development. These components have motivated the interest of the authors in this programme and have led them to consider that its implementation, with the appropriate measures to ensure consistency between practice and theory, can become a truly paradigmatic and beneficial model for everyone involved.
It should be emphasised that, because of the division of labour with the other academic bodies (University of Salamanca and the Pompeu Fabra University) that was established during the research, the focus in Colombia is on communities in the place of origin, while colleagues in Spain focused on the communities in the place of destination.

1. Benefits from recruitment in the country of origin

Within the context of the immigration restrictions in countries of destination, the recruitment of the workers in the country of origin is a good option for the management of the migration flows, with benefits for all parties involved, and particularly for States, employers and workers. This section looks at this type of recruitment and what it means for those who are associated with it in Colombia under the Pagesos model.

Given the serious nature of a programme such as that of Pagesos\(^49\) recruitment in the place of origin implies the elimination or lessening of the uncertainty surrounding key aspects such as: employer, wages, type of work, rights, conditions of accommodation, travel documents and length of stay, and the first to benefit are the workers and their families.

Apart from the peace of mind that knowing such details can bring, which in itself reduces the level of stress that comes with the migration process, this type of recruitment provides legal certainties in the destination country, and for the workers it avoids the risk of becoming victims of migrant traffickers, fraudsters, or human traffickers. Those workers who seek to migrate irregularly are exposed to these risks and are also vulnerable to being exploited in the work place in the country of destination, and other types of risks.

In terms of costs, recruitment in the country of origin, and particularly in the areas where the workers live, represents important savings for them in relation to the ordinary migration process. These saving come from, inter alia, the following: not having to travel to Bogotá (where the only visa issuing Spanish Consulate in Colombia is located) to obtain a visa as the employer is responsible in these cases; lower settling-in costs in Spain, given the hostel arrangements provided for them from the moment of their arrival in Spain; and not having to spend money looking for employment; they do not need funds or only need a minimum funding for travel, as some of this is paid for by the programme or the temporary workers can pay for it from their future wages.

2. Particular effects of temporary and circular migration

In general, migration is a quest for better current and future living conditions both for the migrants and their families and, to some extent, this depends on the character of each

\(^{49}\) In this respect it is worth mentioning that in some of the zones of the study there were reports of a lack of confidence in the programme. At first this was because it was thought that it was related to people trafficking or organ trafficking or some other illegal activity. This was perhaps due to prevention harvest season programmes that have taken place in Colombia.
individual and the social and cultural responsibility that migrant workers as individuals feel (or that is imposed) often at their own expense, towards the welfare of their families and people to which they direct all their energies.

However, irrespective of the achievement or not of such objectives, migration is, almost always, an enriching experience for people who go through it as they come across different social spaces with which they can compare and assess their own environment, and widen their vision of the world. This, coupled with the fact of being capable of breaking the umbilical cord that tied them to their land, seems to strengthen the feeling of self-esteem (more than half of the temporary workers that took part in the survey, said that personal growth was one of the things they most valued from their migratory experience), and migrants receive greater recognition within their communities of origin (Appadurai, 1996).

But the possibilities of both positive and negative migration experiences, as well as its preliminary costs and possible consequences are, among many other factors, directly related to the characteristics of such movements, including temporary and circular ones. These characteristics themselves intensify or alleviate the possibilities, costs and consequences and for the purposes of this analysis we have referred to them as “aspects” and classified them as psychosocial, economic and cultural.

2.1 Psycho-social aspects

Migration means separation, sorrow and absences, affecting individuals and their social and family environment as well as relations with and between the various members of that same environment (Conradson and McKay, 2007). However, the work carried out in the communities surveyed, weighed with other experiences, suggests that when the movement is previously defined as temporary and periods of time of separation are only counted in terms of months, such effects tend to abate, although we are unable to what extent compared with the affect of indefinite but supposedly lengthy migration.

In the survey carried out, one in four people reported that among the negative feelings that affected them during the trip was sadness, while two out of every five of those surveyed spoke of loneliness, as a result of the lack of loved ones or being in a foreign land.

The certainty or approximate idea of the date of return can lessen the impact of the separation and make it more bearable, for both those who leave and for those who remain. Counting the time remaining until being together again is an obligatory topic of conversation during the frequent telephone calls or the contact on the Internet that the temporary Colombia workers normally have with their family and friends in Colombia, and this keeps hopes alive and according to many people in interviews, strengthens the

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50 Within the same survey, it was found that two thirds of the temporary workers identified talking on the phone with their relatives in Colombia as the main activity carried out during their time free in Spain.
emotional bonds. For the migrant, who normally has an inner voice saying “any sacrifice made for the family is worth it”, the fact of being able to visualize the end of the journey seems to give the individual a greater inner strength to overcome the absence of their loved ones and the difficulties encountered in the destination and that, for many, do not prevent them repeatedly enlisting for new “harvest season programmes” and saying “this is the last time.” They display an almost addictive attitude, which is the result of a cost-benefit analysis, usually done within families, and suggests that a high value is put on the money as a goal, or rather perhaps as a way to achieving a better life.

On the other hand, the hard work, about which there are many opinions probably associated with earlier experiences of the workers, is always considered to be just occupational hazards, where you do not lose your life, for which there is a choice and because the memory fades with time.51 The Coordinator of one of the grass-roots organizations most related with the program in Nariño described the situation thus: “they arrive tired because their body has spent so much time in the same position while working, [but] they arrive with money in their pocket and get medical treatment to recover physically”.

The stories of the break-up of couples due to temporary migration process are more the exception than the rule; people speak of a renewal of relations as result of the value that is placed on the other during the separation, where this might offer the possibility of assuming opposite gender roles (Levitt, 2001).

There were also reports of changes in the attitude of men on their return, that have arrived in a mood to share the domestic responsibilities and chores, which they had been forced to do under the “camp-type” regime in their living accommodation in Spain. On the social significance of such changes, beyond the casuistic, no evidence was found during this research and Kraft and De Larrard (2007: 9) do not paint an optimistic picture when they say: “We are sceptical about this effect: if some men help more, for most the effect is the opposite: ‘they suffered so much in Spain that on their return to Colombia, their wives do not let them lift a finger’”.

In the same way, there are other men who, in the absence of their temporary working wives, assumed some of their roles, such as caring for the children, about which one of them said: “it is hard to be keeping an eye on whether they have already arrived from school, whether they eat, do their homework, and I have to cook…” However, this situation does not seem to be a general one, seeing that, in most cases of maternal migration,

51 In the same survey which is referred to in the previous footnote, all of the temporary workers valued their work experience in Spain as better in relation to Colombia, in the sense of enabling a higher income, that brought them closer to fulfilling the goals proposed before the journey. On the other hand, although a third of them considered that the demands were high and most complained about the climate, two out of every three assessed the experience as a very important opportunity for moving ahead, while one in three considered it involved a high degree of sacrifice.
the children are left with other women of the family, mostly mothers, mothers-in-law and sisters of the temporary women workers.

With regard to the women, it was noted that, when they are the ones who have migrated and temporarily become the providers in the home or make investments on their return, they increase their self esteem and social recognition, gaining the ability, not always turned into fact, of negotiating a fairer relationship both within the home and in the community. This perhaps helps to explain the increasing female leadership in several fields in some of the places that were studied. Although this can also be linked to the opportunities that open up for a woman whose husband migrates, as she assumes responsibilities or risks that the husband would assume himself if he were present.

The impact on the children seems to be moderate, with few accounts of a loss of authority, indifference shown to the migrant parents, significant changes in behaviour, under performance, or dropping out of school, among the other evils that are usually blamed on migration because of the absence of parents. Some parents even came to see greater a autonomy, character and maturity in their children from the migration process and others felt that the reunion (related, above all, to the youngest children with the gifts) becomes an incentive to alleviate the pain of separation or improve academic performance and generally it contributes to preventing depressive situations or feelings of abandonment from turning into a crisis. It should also be taken into account that three out of every four temporary workers surveyed considered that one of the important factors in assessing their participation in the program positively was the fact that the income received through the migration process had contributed to the education of their children.

It must be understood that the family structures and the gender of migrants also play an important role. These circumstances define the levels of psycho-emotional support received by those who stay and the reconfiguration of roles required to maintain the dynamic of the home and there is also support, according to reports, through the assiduous use of the phone or Internet. In many cases, there is more communication between the couple and their children than before the migration took place and this even allows the sharing of important decisions more frequently than before. Within the survey group, a quarter spoke of an improvement in relations with their children after the migration; less than half said the same thing about their partner; and three in five expressed the same feelings with regard to their social relationships in general.

In respect of the impact on the grassroots organizations, whose leaders tend to be included among the migrants, on the one hand there is recognition of the learning opportunities and the widening of horizons which improve their leadership skills, but on the other hand, particularly in the case of Nariño, where there has been a longer experience with the TCLM model, the constant circularity and return of the migrants overseas can end up
affecting those very grassroots organizations. That is why several of those interviewed recommended that the time away be short and with little repetition.

A community that does not assume mutual responsibility for achieving shared goals cannot aspire to a significant social change (Fals Borda, 1986). In the areas studied it has been possible to identify cases, presumably related to the implementation of the programme, of changes in the views and actions of some communities in which new alliances and organizations have emerged and where many feel able to participate and contribute to the discussion and in the activities.

The general view expressed was that the specific learning gained in Spain from the work and courses offered by Pagesos, in spite of the pride of doing them, contained little that was new or applicable in Colombia due to the different means used or the non-availability of resources. However, it would seem that in the medium or long-term, the experience as a whole, and some of the more general learning acquired, such as how to organize work, together have the capacity to end up having a positive effect on communities. There are also different visions of the world and new topics for discussion. Concepts such as productive projects, associativity and investment, acquire different associations that make them more understandable or provide them with new meanings as happens with values such as solidarity, patience and thanks. Similarly, in the more deprived communities, the achievements of those who travel make them think about law-abiding activities and the possibility of goals that go beyond the simple requirement of satisfying basic needs.

Finally, it could be said that the feeling of self-esteem, the strengthening of the national psyche, the nostalgia for the things which are lacking during the repeated absences, constitute incentives to contribute to the success of community projects.

2.2 Economic aspects

Taking into account that the daily wage actually received by a farmer in Colombia scarcely amounts to three Euros, despite the fact that legal minimum wage is twice that figure, and when this is compared with the four to five Euros per hour in Spain, it is easy to understand the economic significance of the migration for the temporary workers. It is also easy to understand why the possibility of accessing these wages through being recruited in your place of residence and through a reliable programme, is seen by almost 90 % of those surveyed as the economic opportunity of a lifetime.

A monthly money order of 100 Euros to the family in Colombia far exceeds their usual income, and 200 or 300 Euros represents the possibility of a significant improvement in their living standards during the period in which this money is received. Discounting the money sent as remittances and the money for living costs in Spain, the temporary worker has the possibility of saving a sum that on average amounts to two thousand Euros which
in their conditions of poverty represent real capital. These savings (after the first trip the income of which is normally used for paying off personal debts) is sufficient to embark on projects they have dreamt of such as: obtaining their own home; improving their existing home; the acquisition of a plot of land with some livestock; opening a store; acquisition of a public transport vehicle, among many others. With some degree of certainty, these projects can be scheduled to be completed in the medium-term if the worker is recruited on successive occasions. In fact, nine out of every ten temporary workers surveyed stated that participation in the programme had enabled them to undertake or strengthen productive projects that were almost all individual or family ones. That possibility, linked to the direct control by the migrant over the investment during their periodic trips back to Colombia, does not exist in the same way for the migrant who is in Spain for an indefinite time.

However, not all projects come to fruition because the person does not have the level of savings required or the person does not have the skills necessary, and in these cases all the money earned in Spain becomes “pocket money” which is used for living expenses until the next recruitment opportunity arrives which is sometimes never. This leads to a programme dependency and periods of unemployment, because the wages usually paid in the area are no longer considered as acceptable or because those who are offering the few jobs available prefer to recruit others who are “more in need” of employment.

Information was also collected on failed projects such as in Quindío, where several investments were aimed at acquiring public transport vehicles, something in which the workers had no experience (Mejía, 2007). Just such a case occurred in Puerres involving fish farming, where insufficient technical knowledge resulted in the death of the fish. A different situation, but with equally poor planning, was the quinoa project also in Puerres, that failed for the lack of a market to sell the produce, which was only discovered at harvest time. In relation to these issues, Kraft and Larrarde (2007: 11) found that “49.5% of the productive projects which the temporary workers invested in are unprofitable or unsustainable owing to the lack of accompaniment at the time of making the investment or lack of business training and because of the difficult local economic situation”.

It is obvious that the programme provides, with some limitations, direct economic benefits to the temporary workers and their families that immediately result in better living conditions in the home during the period of the contract and even afterwards, depending on how any savings are used. All this can come to define the future of the family, if the temporary worker manages to be recruited various times and invests his savings in a project that produces an income.

But beyond the family, the income of the temporary workers for spending or investing, plays an important role in the economic revitalization of their places of origin, when it comes to small communities that in this way receive benefits from the Programme, as has been the custom until now.
In economic terms, there were some examples in Nariño and Quindío of the strengthening of associative productive projects occasionally linked to the same programme, in which the temporary workers or their families participated thanks to the experiences acquired abroad and the new, periodic resources that can support them.

2.3 Cultural aspects

The coming and going of the temporary workers together with the short length of their stays results in a low level of integration with the destination communities. Account also has to be taken of the priorities of the temporary workers which are to work as many hours as possible and make as much money as possible. In addition the workers are concentrated in encampments that are often located on the premises of where they are working with limited possibilities of mixing with the local population. This would explain why the temporary workers do not have much chance of observing new ways of doing things or learning about new cultures (beyond what has already been mentioned) which would be a natural assumption because of their participation in the program.52

However, although the socialization with temporary workers from other nationalities or other regions of Colombia tends to be limited to work and to take place through collaborative activities, in the cases where those surveyed have had to share accommodation, this has given rise to interesting and enriching spaces for intercultural exchanges and learning processes. On their return, these experiences become obligatory topics of conversation where there is talk of the existence of “others”, with all the positives that arise from this (Hannerz, 1996), and may influence partners (Appadurai, 1996; Nuñez, 2007), although no new cultural practices derived from these intercultural exchanges have so far been identified.

In any case, it is an undeniable fact that the temporary workers do not view their new cultural experiences as a waste of time. Just the hint of another world, and a new kind of relationship with their Spanish employers and with their co-workers from other places all have a great personal impact on them to the extent that virtually all of the temporary workers say that on their return home they are not the same person.

It should also not be forgotten that this same migration process and its products generate imagination, discussions, narratives, social recognition and the strengthening (or weakening) of bonds (Levitt, 2001) that help build ideas about migration and also help to define the future of other movements.

52 This can be seen in the communities of origin that have a longer link with the programme and in locations with the largest proportion (in relation to its population) of temporary workers, as in the particular case of Puerres.
3. The added value of the Unió de Pagesos (UP) programme to the TCLM

In principle, there are two key components that the programme adds to the traditional recruitment in the place of origin of temporary workers. These are: the perspective of “co-development”, under which it is understood that for the contribution that the temporary workers make to Spain, mainly through their work, there must be corresponding activities from within the same programme that promote development in the communities of origin of these workers; and in addition, the idea of accompaniment for the temporary workers from the moment of their recruitment until they return to their communities, as a form of commitment to their well-being and linked also to the previous idea. To implement both these aspects, the UP created the Fundació Pagesos Solidaris (FPS) also referred to as the Fundación de Agricultores Solidarios (Mutual Farmers Foundation).

3.1 Accompaniment of temporary workers

In respect to the accompaniment, apart from the actual recruitment guidance process that includes the visa procedures with the Spanish Government, there has also been a wish to provide a range of support aimed at reducing the difficulties, fears and risks for the temporary workers and to make it a more positive experience. This support takes the following form: an induction course on the conditions of travel, work and surroundings that will be encountered; accompaniment at the departure airport; meeting on arrival at destination and accompaniment to the place of accommodation allocated by the employer; tourist activities and socialization during spare time in the destination; and most importantly, access to people responsible for responding to any eventuality that might arise during the time in Spain. However, following an assessment of this accompaniment and support process it has been found to have its limitations in the place of origin and the final destination, and that its objectives are only partially being met as is explained below.

The training/preparation for the journey from Colombia, when there is any (there were complaints from some who said nothing took place), consists of just a two-day workshop with one of the days dedicated to work aspects and the other to psycho-emotional issues (to which the families are also invited). In fact, time constraints impose restrictions on the contents and many participants report that the emphasis seems to be on the working conditions and the need to obey the Spanish employers. In respect of the latter, the workers are advised to ignore the abrupt manner of Spanish employers that is apparently a cultural trait that is supposedly prevalent among them and which is something that Colombians are generally not accustomed to.

A basic element about which the temporary workers have insufficient information is related to the contents and precise meaning of contracts, as well about the agreements which act as the framework for the contracts, and about whose existence there was absolutely no knowledge. The majority of complaints heard were about these points.
Therefore, it is necessary to provide greater transparency and information during the recruitment process and not just simply refer to the general aspects of Spanish labour laws, which is what seems to happen at present. It would be very useful to issue a booklet to each temporary worker which details their rights and obligations, especially with reference to: hours of work; overtime payments and extra payments for working at night; breaks and rest time; conditions and cost of accommodation; payment for hours not worked because of weather conditions or other force majeure; possibilities of changing job/employer; sick pay; payment of travel tickets and other travel expenses; as well as many other issues that create problems but which sometimes are more related to ignorance about the terms of the contracts than a real failure of the contract.

In respect to the local entities associated with the process of selection and preparation in Colombia of the workers, either in the role of operator or as mere facilitators of the process, there is a suggestion that these entities should take greater account of the psycho-emotional risks when selecting workers. For example, home visits could be undertaken to better evaluate candidates and to accompany the families the departure and return of the temporary worker is approaching and which could be requested by the families in question. Equally, it would be worthwhile to promote self-help groups to address potentially conflictive situations in households caused by household members joining the programme; as stated previously, there does not seem to be much evidence of this problem which would therefore make the introduction of these groups that much easier.

In so far as the quality of the accompaniment in the country of destination, this very much depends, quite logically, on the specific destination, where there are differences in the quality of services offered and provided with, for example, small communities offering fewer services. Access to officials in the FPS that are responsible for providing support is not always easy and some of them see their role as one of authority and control rather than one of accompaniment; in addition, given its relationship with the employers, the FPS is tended to be seen as an untrustworthy partner for processing complaints because there is a fear that complaining will hinder further recruitment opportunities to which most temporary workers aspire.

3.2 Promotion of co-development

Beyond just learning on the job, temporary workers receive training in the place of destination so that this training serves as a means to promote development in their country of origin; this was a central part of the first approach to co-development in the migration flows (Nair 1997). In order to achieve this objective, the temporary workers are offered courses on a wide variety of topics that they can access free of charge during their free time. One such course is “co-development agent” that seeks to train those who take part in such a way that on their return to their communities they can promote projects of common interest, and for whose co-financing Pagesos are committed to consider alternative methods.
In practice, according to the Pagesos model, co-development is achieved through improving the human capital of temporary workers. This enables them to start or strengthen their own individual, family or associative productive projects made possible by the small amounts of capital collected through saving their wages during the harvest season programmes. Complementary to this would be the projects emerging from the activities of “the co-development agents” and that are considered as the cornerstone of co-development (more precisely development in the country of origin). These projects would correspond to the needs of the communities and would not necessarily be productive projects, or ones only aimed at temporary workers.

The actions aimed at combining training and projects, be they individual or associative type projects that are productive or social, are an interesting proposition with potential for contributing to local development, but unfortunately these are actions whose synchronization is now only being thought about. What is learnt while on the job or when receiving training has generally been of little use and, on the few occasions when something has been applicable, this has been more by luck and generally restricted to individual projects and, as will be seen below, associative or community projects have not had much focus.

3.2.1 The well trodden path

The achievements by the programme for local development may be better because it uses recruitment in the place of origin, is temporary and circular in nature, and because of the stated co-development component which depends on temporary workers trained in Spain being co-development agents. In this sense, workers have not been able to take on the heavy burden placed on them when assigned the task of “promoters in their communities of origin, acting as intermediaries between two different communities, and developers, implementers and project managers together with the community”.

This is why, with respect to the length of time the programme has been running and the number of communities and people that have taken part, only fourteen associative projects have been started and the results of these have still to be assessed. Taking this into account, in nine out of more than 40 communities where temporary workers have been recruited (Agricultores Solidarios, 2008), those who have been running this program in Colombia have been looking for alternative strategies, one of which has been to require people who want to join the programme to be part of an associative project.

In the case of Puerres (Colombia), for example, the above seems to help explain the current presence of more than 40 associations in various productive projects. However, this figure can be misleading when taking into account that many of these associations are just pieces of paper and do not really exist or that the projects are non-viable or unsustainable created solely for the purposes of meeting the demands of those recruiting temporary workers. This situation, although worrying, does not mean ignoring the fact that
in a number of other associations (pre-existing or created because of the requirement) the programme has had some kind of effect of revitalizing the collective spirit and has contributed to creating a more integrated community, thereby enriching the social capital, and increasing development potential. Specifically, the projects that the programme has launched in the municipality are: innovative production in a women’s bakery and cake shop; peasant farmer organization for growing and marketing of quinoa (with dubious results as already mentioned); and a pilot trout farm project by a group.

A strategy that perhaps is more secure and which has more impact has been that of seeking direct links with and commitments from local private or government institutions. These, in addition to financing the selection, assist with the recruitment and preparation process, as well as with travel costs, contributing to planning larger projects. These projects are not necessarily productive but are of social benefit in which the temporary workers participate using the program as a vehicle to strengthen implementation by providing financial or human capital for the projects in the form of savings from wages or specific skills obtained in Spain.

During the studies the authors became aware of partnerships, which were in line with the new strategy, with the Mayors of Bogotá and La Jagua Ibirico, and in the Department of Cesar with the Government, the Committee of Coffee Growers and the CARBOANDES Foundation which is where the authors think that the best conceived and perhaps the project with the greatest impact is located.

This project provides for the peasant farmers to return to their traditional work on the land which to a large extent has disappeared because of the agricultural land now being used for coal mining; this is without counting the dramatic effects which the intense internal conflict in Colombia has had in the region. In particular, thought has been given in this area to the creation of a fruit producing and processing factory given the agricultural history of this area and the favourable local conditions and the availability of the temporary workers to participate as partners. In addition to contributing their labour and skills obtained in Spain in similar businesses, they would contribute part of their savings in order to become partners in the project, together with locally linked institutions that would also include private landowners or other interested businessmen. In order to expand the social base of this project and others which have also been suggested, thought is being given to limit the number of harvest season programmes which each temporary worker would have access to, thereby allowing a greater number of people in the area to link in to the benefits of the program.

3.2.2 Possibilities of the programme in Colombia

As a process that is being developed and from the perspective of the communities of origin in Colombia, the Pagesos programme has been an experience that almost all tem-
Temporary workers consider to be personally positive, but this does not mean ignoring the difficulties referred to earlier and which must be overcome.

At the social level, it is an enriching experience in many ways, but according to what was found during the studies, it requires and deserves important adjustments so that its purpose of contributing to local development becomes a reality. In this regard, it should be noted that the programme is going through a process of rethinking, with important conceptual developments as well as in terms of direction but there is still a lack of consistency when being put into practice.

First, it is necessary to modify the criteria for selecting communities to participate in the programme. The communities that have predominated so far come from very different situations such as: those affected by natural disasters or violence and have been randomly selected because of negotiations by community leaders; the zone of origin of managers of the process; prior contacts of the latter with local leaders. Instead there must be the introduction of clear criteria that are consistent with the objectives of co-development, such as those defined by the IOM on its entry into the programme as operator and which are: linking of local governments or recognized private entities and the existence of or the possibility of creating high impact, associative or community projects that are viable within the specific community and in which the temporary workers form a substantial component; incidentally, these temporary workers must be offered the possibility of investing their savings - or part of them - as an alternative or complement to the implementation of micro projects executed spontaneously or promoted by the same programme.

The participation by municipal and even departmental governments merits reconsideration in the interests of maintaining the programme in their jurisdictions and, consequently, the sustainability of projects linked to the programme. This is because there have been many cases seen where a change of government has led to the disappearance of the commitment by government. In this respect, thought must be given to mechanisms that ensure the continuity of the linkage with the territorial authorities, because of the institutionalism that they represent; at the same time efforts must be made to promote partnerships with well established private actors that can also contribute to the same continuity.

In larger urban localities as Suba and Usaquén in Bogotá, given the low representation of temporary workers in their population as a whole and the complexity and size of the economies, there should be an insistence on a geographical targeting of specific communities for recruitment and projects that are promoted. Thus, the impact of the programme, although limited spatially, can be significant and measurable. In these same places the programme represents a special opportunity to alleviate the situation of people displaced from rural areas by the internal conflict and link it to projects for returning these people to the land.
There must also be a consistency between the selection of temporary workers and the objectives of co-development and particularly with high impact projects on the basis of which communities are defined (assuming continuity of the last mentioned strategy in the previous section). It is essential that, contrary to what was noted during the fieldwork study, temporary workers in addition to knowing about those projects (something that according to what we found was at a worryingly low rate), have an interest in them and hopefully prior work experience in the role that they would play in them.

On the other hand, taking into account that training in the destination country, particularly through work experience, is a stated and important element and an interesting alternative to technology transfer, it should be properly coordinated. This is something which until now has been incipient, between the operators of the programme in Colombia and Pagesos. This coordination could even take place with individual employers to ensure the placement of workers in activities suitable for the projects in question and enable the temporary workers to gain knowledge about other activities beyond the very limited knowledge that they would normally gain as labourers.

Research Group on Human Mobility of Alma Mater hopes that the Pagesos is a model which, with the proper adjustments, can fully achieve its objectives.

Therefore that it is worth considering its potential for replication, as set out below.

4. The replicability of the Pagesos TCLM model

The programme under analysis, particularly vis-a-vis the recruitment standards of temporary workers in the country of origin, corresponds to a sovereign decision by the Unió de Pagesos and to its commitment to corporate social responsibility, motivated by its nature as a trade union and its links to the peasant farmer family economy. This means that its replication by others is conditional, in principle, to them having the same type of commitment as the Unió de Pagesos.

However, recently the programme has shifted its costs from Pagesos to its partners (territorial entities and non-profit making organizations), that end up assuming the financing of the process of selection and preparation, and even the costs of looking after the workers in Spain and the outward journey costs, an obligation that initially was the responsibility of the employer. In addition, international institutions or international co-operation organizations have provided assistance to Pagesos. This makes it possible for any company, even without a social commitment, to make use of the model, especially given the emergence of the concept of “operators” that in exchange for a payment from the resources contributed by the partners, take on functions such as pre-selection and training of the temporary workers.
Under the aforementioned conditions, the model is replicable, even in the midst of a recession, given the economic benefits for employers and without prejudice to the benefits for workers, their families and communities. However, it is beginning to dawn on people that the model’s extension on a large scale, with the special features of accompanying the temporary workers and the promotion of co-development, will not be possible through the management of private intermediaries. Among these private intermediaries those who work for a profit will certainly end up being dominant, and the maximization of profit implies that the special features mentioned above will be abandoned or subordinated meaning that the programme just becomes one of labour intermediation. There will be no proper control and this will jeopardize the fulfilment of the rights of those involved in it.

The *Pagesos* model represents an interesting alternative for the design of a TCLM national plan that can take advantage of the lack of temporary labour by developed countries and the temporary surplus of such labour in Colombia. This enables the formation and strengthening of individual, family and associative businesses by combining training and technology transfer, the savings of the temporary workers, international cooperation as well as national resources. It would also aim at facilitating the matching of supply and demand of manpower, as well as looking after the rights and welfare of the temporary workers and providing the possibility of contributing to the development (not only in economic terms) in their communities of origin. It would also have an impact on the places or regions where recruitment would take place in line with the national interests.

The bases for the beginning of this plan can be found in the labour agreement signed between Colombia and Spain, whose implementation along the proposed line can be fostered by invoking the Spanish co-development policy (see: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005a and 2005b). This policy would not only promote the same plan (which in theory is its raison d’être), but also lend support to the temporary workers and carry out other activities co-financeable by the Colombian State, as in fact is happening in the Pagesos programme through territorial authorities (Mayors’ Offices, Department Governments and the authorities in Bogota) that are participating as partners. Obviously, the details need to be worked out through discussions and bilateral agreements with the initiative led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

The implementation of the proposal would mean, on the Colombian side, the involvement of other institutional actors that would enable integration and consistency with the territorial plans at a local and national level; this would take place under the direction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the advice and support of the IOM, which currently provides significant knowledge and experience for the model. The other actors should at least include the following: National Planning Department (*DNP*); National Learning Service (*SENA*); Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation (*Accion Social*); Ministry of Social Protection, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and
the Ministry of Environment, Housing and Development. As complementary actors and under the coordination and supervision of the State there should be universities and non-profit organizations that could play an important role, especially if their participation was seen as an opportunity for social projection rather than as a source of resources.

The institutional conditions of knowledge and experience exist for the large scale implementation in Colombia of the *Pagesos* TCLM model and its use as a lever for the development of rural areas, and not just simply as a resource for the “exportation of manpower” which is a just concern of many people. Nevertheless, the global economic situation raises doubts about the possibility of taking the matter forward at this moment.
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The interest aroused among the different governments, the private sector, international organizations and civil society by the growing flow of labour migrants that increasingly opt to seek better work opportunities in other countries, reflects the importance of regulating the migratory flows through innovative mechanisms that benefit both the countries of origin as well as of destination, with concrete results in the relationship between labour migration and local development.

In this context, the consolidation of the Temporary Circular Labour Migration (TCLM) model between Spain and Colombia realized with resources from the AENEAS Programme of the European Union is examined in this book from different academic and social perspectives, in order to contribute new elements that provide the possibility of replicating it in different economic and social contexts.

The IOM simultaneously worked with the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, the University of Salamanca in Spain and the Alma Mater Network of Public Universities in the Coffee Zone in Colombia in order to systematize the experience of the Catalan Unión de Pagesos (UP) and to present to those who read this book the different aspects of the TCLM model, its strengths, weaknesses and impacts on the local development.

In addition, different entities, linked to the process of consolidation of the TCLM model in Spain and Colombia, were invited to present their experiences and thus enrich the analysis of the TCLM model.