



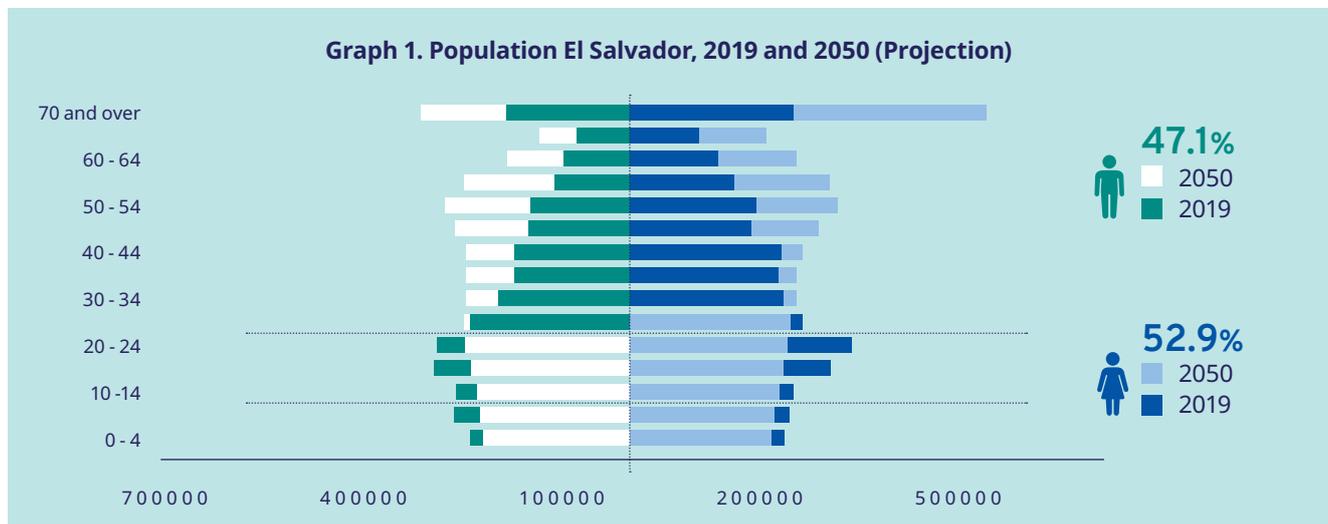
# FACT SHEET EMPLOYMENT AND MIGRATION EL SALVADOR 2021

## 1 DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC DYNAMICS

The population structure of El Salvador in its demographic transformation towards 2050, presents a regressive population pyramid, which will configure the behaviour of the labour supply in the labour market.

### 1.1. Composition of the Working Age Population

As shown in Graph 1, 27.7% of the population is between 10 and 24 years old, representing a demographic bonus that will be able to support the country's economic and social development.



Source: author's own compilation based on information from the General Directorate of Statistics and Census (DIGESTYC)

The demographic dynamics of El Salvador, with respect to the year 2050, show changes related to the aging of the population, related to the increase in the average age of the population and its life expectancy at birth. The proportion that adults will represent (42.0 %), requires an effective social protection system with the necessary resources for income generation in old age, given the increase in the aging index (121.2%) and the reduction of the dependency ratio (49.9%), as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic indicators 2019 and 2050**

Demographic Indicator	2019	2050
<b>Age groups (%)</b>		
Children (0 - 14)	23.8	17.6
Youth (15 - 29)	27.6	19.0
Adults (30 - 59)	35.0	42.0
Senior Adults (60 and over)	13.6	21.4
Dependency Relation (%)	50.7	49.9
Population median age	31.2	40.2
Sex ratio (%)	88.9	89.6
Aging Index (%)	57.4	121.2
Gross birth rate (%)	16.8	11.7
Global fertility rate (%)	1.8	1.8
Gross mortality rate (%)	6.9	8.6
Life expectancy at birth	73.5	78.3

Source: author's own compilation based on information from the General Directorate of Statistics and Censuses (DIGESTYC)

In 2019, according to data available from the Household and Multiple Purpose Survey (EHPM) of the General Directorate of Statistics and Censuses (DIGESTYC), an increase of 0.8% is observed in the employment-work ratio, which refers to the capacity of the economic system to create jobs and absorb contingents of people, who are of the capacity and age to access a job opportunity (see Table 2).



**Table 2. Labour market Indicators, 2018 and 2019. (Percentages)**

Indicator	2018	2019	Var.
Labour force participation rate	61.3	62.2	0.8
Employment-population ratio	57.4	58.2	0.8
Unemployment rate	6.3	6.3	0.0
Underemployment rate	36.8	35.8	-1.0
Informality rate	42.5	43.1	0.7
Inactivity rate	38.7	37.8	-0.8

Source: author's own compilation based on information from the General Directorate of Statistics and Censuses (DIGESTYC)



Given the variation in employment between 2018 and 2019, there has been a certain stability in the unemployment rate. However, there was a slight increase in the number of unemployed people, due to the entry of people into unemployment (40,707) and the entry of a new contingent into the labour market (58,378), or a combined effect (791).

As shown in Table 3, according to DIGESTYC data, in 2019, 34.8% of the Working Age Population (WAP) was between 16 and 29 years of age. However, when distributed by occupational status, 36.8% of the Economically Inactive Population (EIP) is aged between 15 and 19 years, and over 70 years.

**Table 3. Participation in the labour market by ages, 2019. (Percentages)**

Ages	WAP	EIP	EAP
16 - 19	10.5	18.1	5.8
20 - 24	13.4	13.9	13.1
25 - 29	10.9	7.6	12.9
30 - 34	9.3	5.6	11.6
35 - 39	8.6	5.1	10.8
40 - 44	8.7	4.7	11.2
45 - 49	7.2	4.3	9.0
50 - 54	7.3	5.3	8.5
55 - 59	5.8	5.2	6.1
60 - 64	5.0	5.5	4.7
65 - 69	4.0	6.1	2.7
70 and over	9.3	18.6	3.6

Source: author's own compilation based on information from the General Directorate of Statistics and Census (DIGESTYC)



With regard to the Economically Active Population (EAP), 26.0% are young people aged between 20 and 29 years, representing the highest proportion of employment, unemployment and underemployment, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Labour market indicators by ages, 2019. (Percentages)**

Ages	Employed	Unemployed	Underemployed	Informality
16 - 19	5.2	15.1	6.0	5.7
20 - 24	12.3	25.1	13.2	10.9
25 - 29	12.7	16.4	12.0	10.2
30 - 34	11.6	11.2	9.8	9.9
35 - 39	11.1	6.5	9.9	10.8
40 - 44	11.6	4.8	9.9	11.8
45 - 49	9.3	3.6	8.5	9.6
50 - 54	8.8	4.5	8.7	10.1
55 - 59	6.3	3.3	6.8	7.0
60 - 64	4.8	3.2	5.9	5.9
65 - 69	2.7	2.2	3.9	3.5
70 and over	3.6	4.1	5.5	4.5

*Source: author's own compilation based on information from the General Directorate of Statistics and Census (DIGESTYC)*

In Table 4, it can be observed that as people age, they represent a lower proportion of the occupation in the labour market, and are more likely to be part of the informal sector or to be underemployed. In relation to this situation, 22.5% of the people who are in the informal sector are between 35 and 44 years old; while 25.2% of underemployment corresponds to the age range of 20 to 29 years, showing that young people are prone to being underemployed and adults to be part of informality.

Therefore, the adoption of public policy initiatives aimed at improving working conditions and creating jobs for people, should seek to take advantage of the demographic bonus in the coming years, to guarantee an effective development process, promoting the improvement in labour conditions and the transition from informality to the formal sector in the economy.



## 1.2. Migration Flows<sup>1</sup>

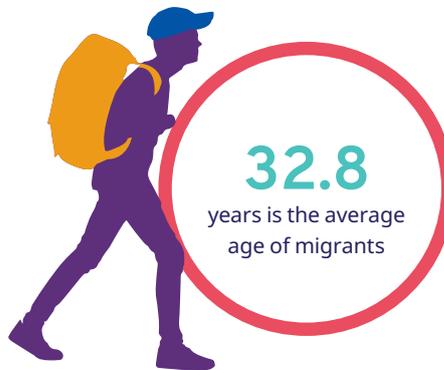
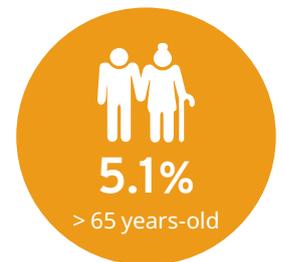
### General information (2020)



**42,767**  
persons entered  
the country



**1,599,058**  
persons left the  
country



#### Countries of origin

Honduras	Guatemala	Nicaragua	Other
<b>27.8%</b>	<b>21.1%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>32.5%</b>

#### Destination countries

USA	Canada	Guatemala	Other
<b>88.2%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>

The **countries of origin** shown in the Migratory Flow correspond to the nationality of the foreign population that migrates to El Salvador. On the other hand, the **countries of destination** refer to the countries where the Salvadorian population migrates abroad.

<sup>1</sup> The information used for this section was obtained from the following sources: a) Generalities of the Stock of international migrants of the year 2020, of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Organization, b) Persons returned, from the Initiative of Information Management of Human Mobility of the Northern Triangle (NTMI), of the International Organization of Migrations (IOM).

## Return migrants (2020)

 MEN  
8,100

 WOMEN  
1,601

ADULTS  
9,701

CHILDREN  
1,139

 BOYS  
665

 GIRLS  
474

UNITED STATES	MEXICO	OTHER COUNTRIES
Men: 6,199	Men: 1,800	Men: 101
Women: 1,005	Women: 552	Women: 44
Boys: 357	Boys: 292	Boys: 16
Girls: 253	Girls: 201	Girls: 20



**19.1%**  
of return migrants are girls and women

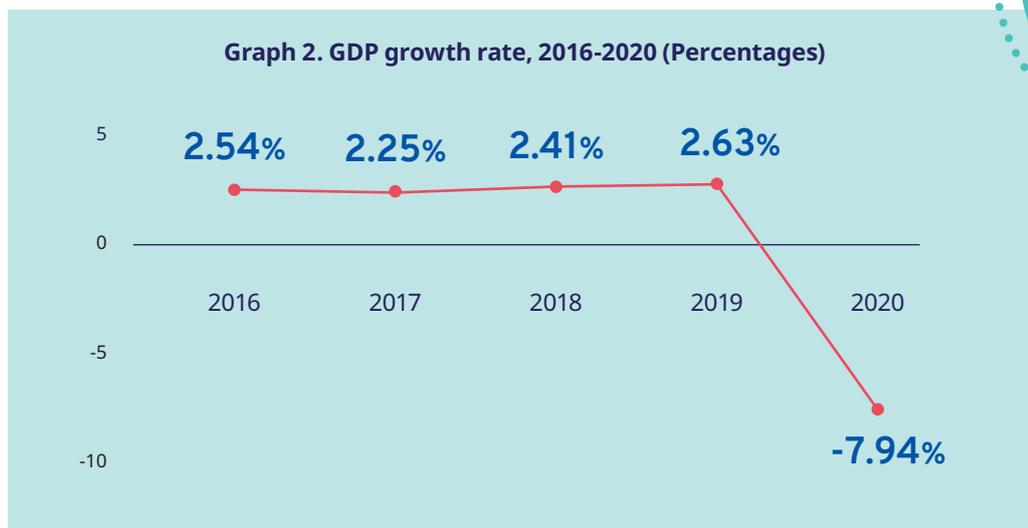
According to data from the Northern Triangle Human Mobility Information Management Initiative (NTMI) of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), these are the departments of origin of return migrants in 2020: San Salvador (14.8%), San Miguel (10.3%), La Libertad (9.3%), Santa Ana (8.5%), and Usulután (8.3%); which concentrate 51.3% of the return migrants who come mainly from the United States and Mexico.

In 2020, the highest proportion of returns occurred during the months of January and February, concentrating 41.0% of return migrants, who mainly came from the United States.



### 1.3. Macroeconomic context

During 2016-2020, there has been some economic stability in the growth rates of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This was on average close to 2.45%, with the highest rate in 2019, as a result of the acceleration of private consumption related to the volume of remittances that entered the country, as well as the expectations and private investment derived from the change of government in 2019 (ECLAC, 2020). The exception was 2020, when economic growth was reduced to -7.94% due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy.



Source: Author's own compilation based on data from Central Reserve Bank of El Salvador.

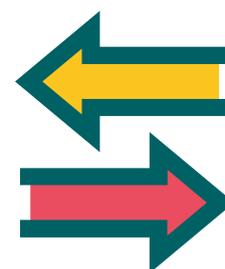
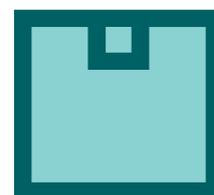
In Table 5, a reduction in the behaviour of exports and imports with respect to GDP is observed, which presents a variation of -3.0% and -0.5% respectively, showing a decrease in trade openness of 3.4%, due to the lower dynamism of foreign trade, related to the closure of borders as a measure to contain the spread of COVID-19, within countries.

Likewise, in this period there was an increase of 5.3% in the participation of international remittances in the economy, growing from 18.8% in 2016 to 24.1% in 2020, making them an important external flow for economic growth and development processes.

**Table 5. Macroeconomic Indicators, 2016-2020. (Percentages)**

Indicators	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Exports/PIB	28.5	29.0	28.9	29.7	25.5
Imports/PIB	44.4	45.3	46.7	46.3	43.9
Remittances/PIB	18.8	20.0	20.7	21.0	24.1
Tax burden	17.2	17.6	18.0	17.7	18.5
Fiscal Deficit/GDP	-1.0	-0.3	-1.3	-1.8	-9.0
Total Debt/GDP	52.2	52.2	51.4	51.7	66.6
Foreign Debt/GDP	36.5	37.2	35.5	35.8	43.6

Source: Author's own compilation based on data from Central Reserve Bank of El Salvador.



Regarding the behaviour of public finances of the Non-Financial Public Sector, according to data from the Central Reserve Bank (BCR), the country's tax burden increased by 1.3%, from 17.2% to 18.5%, in the 2016-2020 period, despite the initial reduction of tax revenues and the extension in the payment of taxes during confinement. However, the fiscal deficit with respect to GDP was relatively stable in that period, unlike the year 2020, when the value was 9.0%, due to the economic support provided to the population to reduce the effects of COVID-19.

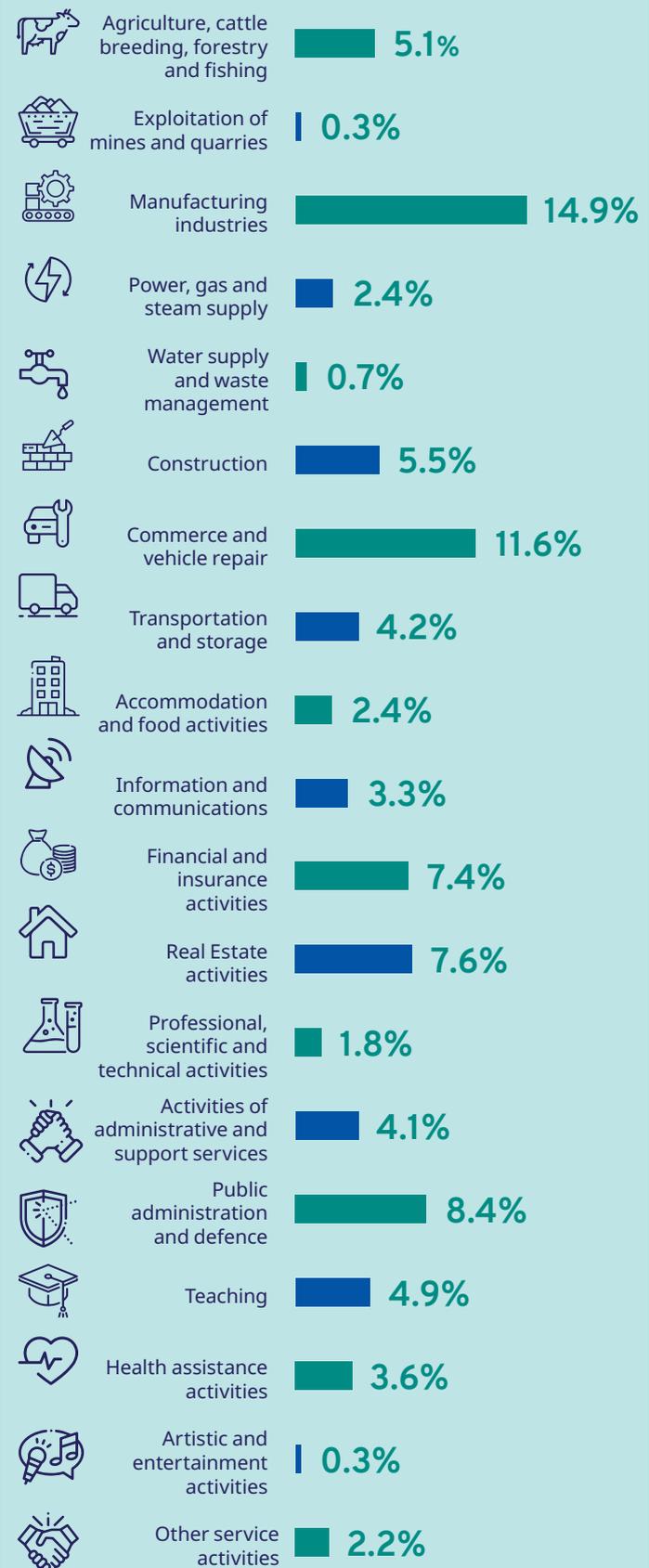
Based on the above, the financing of the fiscal deficit has increased the volume of total public debt of the Non-Financial Public Sector as a proportion of GDP, which in the period 2016-2020 presents a variation of 14.4%, growing from 52.2% to 66.6%, which has been backed in a greater proportion by external debt, with an increase of 7.1% for this period.

Analysing the productive structure of the country, in the year 2020, the sectors that Contributed most to national production and economic growth were the following: manufacturing industries (14.9%); trade and repair of vehicles (11.6%); public administration and defence (8.4%); real estate activities (7.6%); and financial and insurance (7.4%) (See Chart 3)

Together, these sectors contribute approximately 49.8% of national production, showing a predominance of economic activities related to the tertiary sector (commerce and services). Therefore, it could be expected that the distribution of employment in the different branches of economic activity is related to this structure.

According to data from the EHPM, in the period 2016-2019, there is a reduction in the number of people living in poverty; in 2015, 32.7% were below the national threshold of poverty, and 7.9% were in extreme poverty. For the year 2019, these indicators were 22.8% and 4.5% respectively. However, during this period there has been a decrease in the Gini Index, from 0.36 in 2016 to 0.35 in 2019.

**Graph 3. GDP Distribution by branch of economic activity, 2020<sup>1/</sup> (Percentages)**



2 Poverty data of 2020 are not included, given that at the moment of writing this note, the EHPM 2020 had not been published.

Source: Author's own compilation based on data from the Central Reserve Bank of El Salvador.  
1/ This information was calculated based on GDP data at current prices.

# 2 MAINSTREAMING FORMAL EMPLOYMENT

This section presents information about the distribution of people employed in the labour market, under the main categories of economic activity, occupation, education, and access to and use of technology. In addition, it includes information about the coverage in the social security system, based on affiliation and contribution to the health and social security system.

## 2.1. Work and technology

The composition of the employed population by branch of economic activity, occupational groups and educational level is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6. Generalities of the labour market, 2019**

Categories	Quantities	Percentages
<b>Activity Branch</b>		
Trade, hotels and restaurants	901,818	31.0
Agriculture, cattle breeding, hunting and forestry	432,906	15.4
Manufacturing Industries	448,099	14.9
<b>Occupation Groups</b>		
Services and trade workers	874,593	30.1
Non-qualified workers	680,694	23.4
Officials, artisans and operators	421,536	14.5
<b>Education level</b>		
None	252,338	8.7
Basic Education	1,395,161	48.0
Middle Education	823,763	28.3
Higher Education	436,857	15.0
<b>Condition and occupation sector<sup>3</sup></b>		
Fully employed	1,172,219	64.2
Underemployed	653,232	35.8
Formal Sector	1,037,826	56.9
Informal Sector	787,625	41.3
<b>Total employed persons</b>	<b>3,979,762</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Author's own compilation based on information from the General Statistics and Census Directorate (DIGESTYC).



<sup>3</sup> This information corresponds to the employed persons in the urban areas, so that it excludes the sub-employment and informality in the rural area.

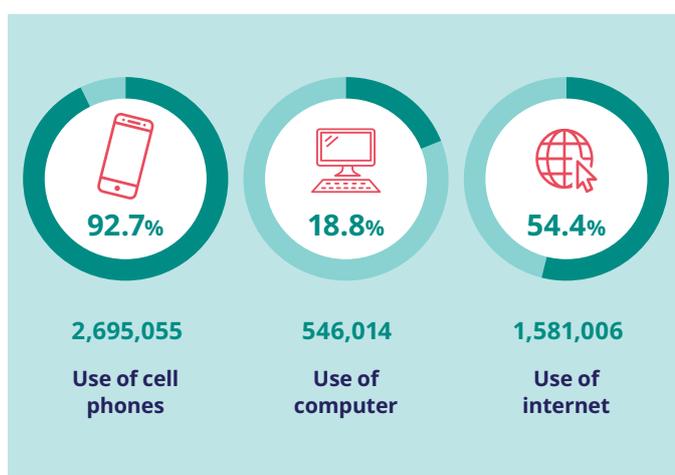
By focusing the analysis on occupational groups, it is possible to characterize people, based on their ages and educational levels to outline the current technical skills in each one, and the concentration of people in these profiles, as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7. Technical Characterization of the occupations, 2019**

Occupations	Characterization
Service and trade workers	In particular, people between 20 and 24 years of age who have a level of secondary education, and those between 40 and 44 years of age who have a level of basic education.
Non-qualified workers	People who mostly have a basic education level, and are between 20 and 24 years old.
Officials, operators and artisans	Concentrates mainly people between the ages of 35 and 44, who have a basic education level.
Machinery operators and assemblers	Concentrates people who have a basic education level, who are between the ages of 35 and 39 years. In addition, it includes people between 25 and 29 years old, with a high school level.
Farmers and agricultural workers	Predominance of people with a basic education level, who are aged 70 and over.
Middle level technicians and professionals	They are regularly people with a higher education level, and are between 35 and 44 years old.
Office employees	Prevalence of people with high school education aged 25 to 29 years.
Professionals, scientists and technicians	Predominance of people with a higher education level, whose ages are between 25 and 29 years old.
Directors and managers	In particular, they are people with a higher education level, who are in the ages of 40 to 44 years.
Military occupations	Mainly, they are people between 20 and 24 years of age, who have a secondary level of education.

Source: author's own compilation based on information from the General Directorate of Statistics and Census (DIGESTYC).

**Table 8. Access and use of technology, 2019**



Source: author's own compilation based on information from the General Directorate of Statistics and Census (DIGESTYC).

Given the characterization of people by type of occupation, it is possible to establish a link with their access and use of technology, and to identify the occupational profiles that correspond to the use of electronic devices and the Internet, as shown in Table 8.

Based on information from the DIGESTYC, it is determined that of the total number of employed people who access the internet, they do this mainly from their mobile phones (60.4%), followed by their homes (33.1%). The purpose for which they used the internet is to communicate by email and chat (78.1%).

The frequency with which employed persons use the internet is at least once a day (57.3%), for a maximum of 14 hours, with the most representative occupations being: service and trade workers (30.6%); non-qualified workers (13.9%); and officials, operators and artisans (13.6%).

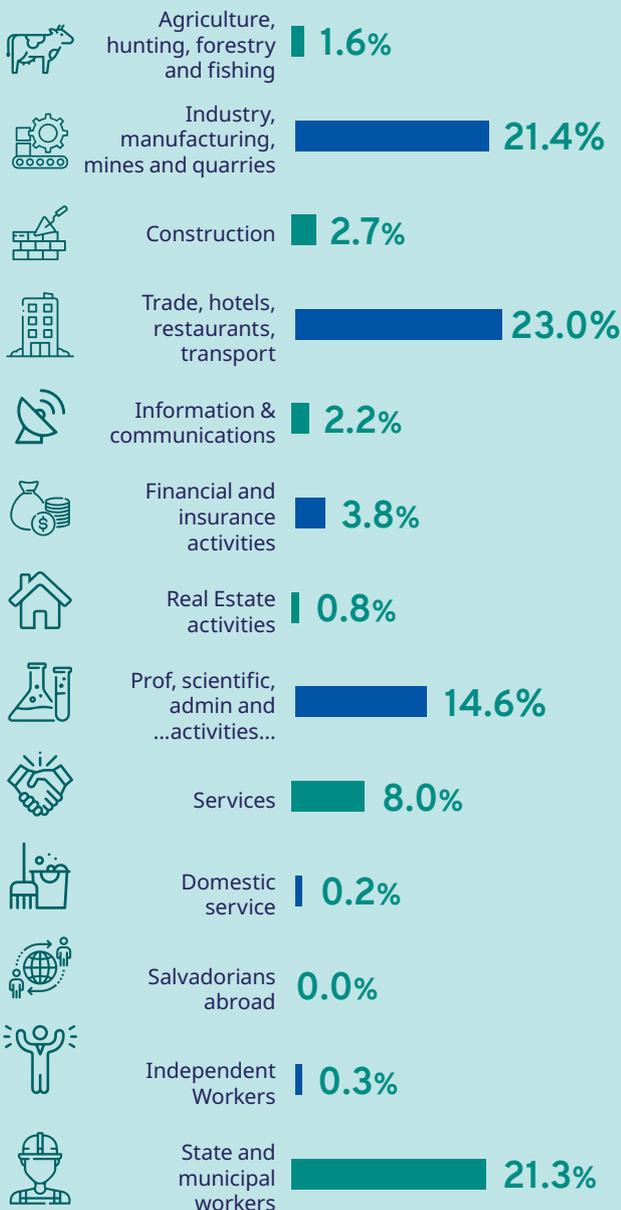
## 2.2. Social Protection

El Salvador has a (public) health regime made up of the Salvadoran Social Security Institute (ISSS) and the Salvadoran Institute of Teacher Welfare (ISBM); and a social security system (public and private) made up of the Pension Unit of the ISSS (UPISSS), the National Institute of Public Employees Pensions (INPEP), the Social Security Institute of the Armed Forces (IPSA) and the Administrators of Funds of Pensions (AFP).

According to statistical information from the ISSS and ISBM for the year 2020, 917,156 people contribute to the health system in both institutions. The distribution of this population group by economic activities<sup>4</sup> is presented in the Graph 4. When disaggregating ISSS contributors by sex, it is estimated that 60.3% are men and 39.7% are women, mainly concentrated in trade, hotels, restaurants, transport and storage.



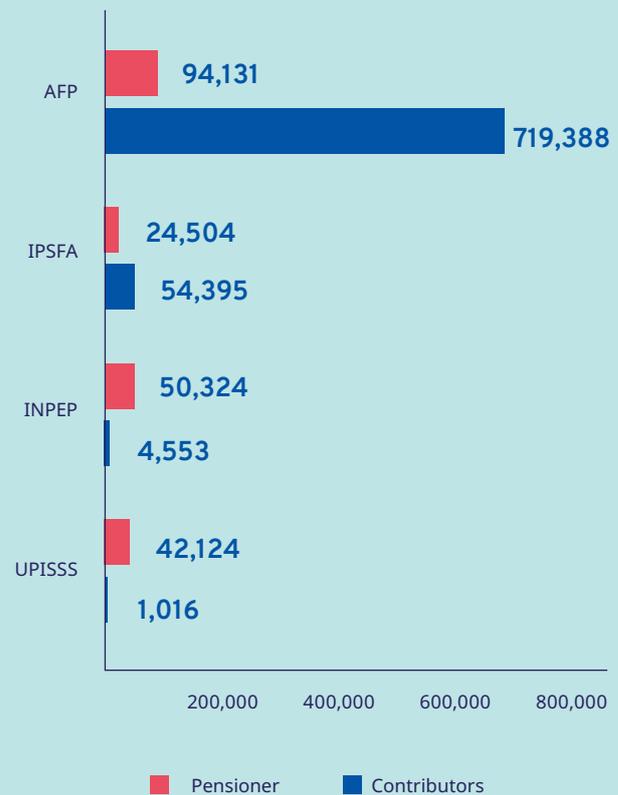
**Graph 4. ISSS Contributing persons, 2020. (Percentages)**



Source: author's own compilation based on information from the Instituto Salvadoreño del Seguro Social (ISSS).

On the other hand, information from the Superintendence of the Financial System (SSF)<sup>5</sup> and the IPSFA shows that 779,352 people contribute to the social security scheme; and that there are 211,083 pensioners, as shown in Graph 5.

**Graph 5. Contributing persons and pensioners of the social provision regime**



Source: Author's own compilation based on information from the Superintendencia of the Financial System (SSF) and the Institute of Social Welfare of the Armed Forces (IPSA).

<sup>4</sup> This graph does not include the data corresponding to the ISBM, since the information disaggregated by sex, geographical area, among others is not available.

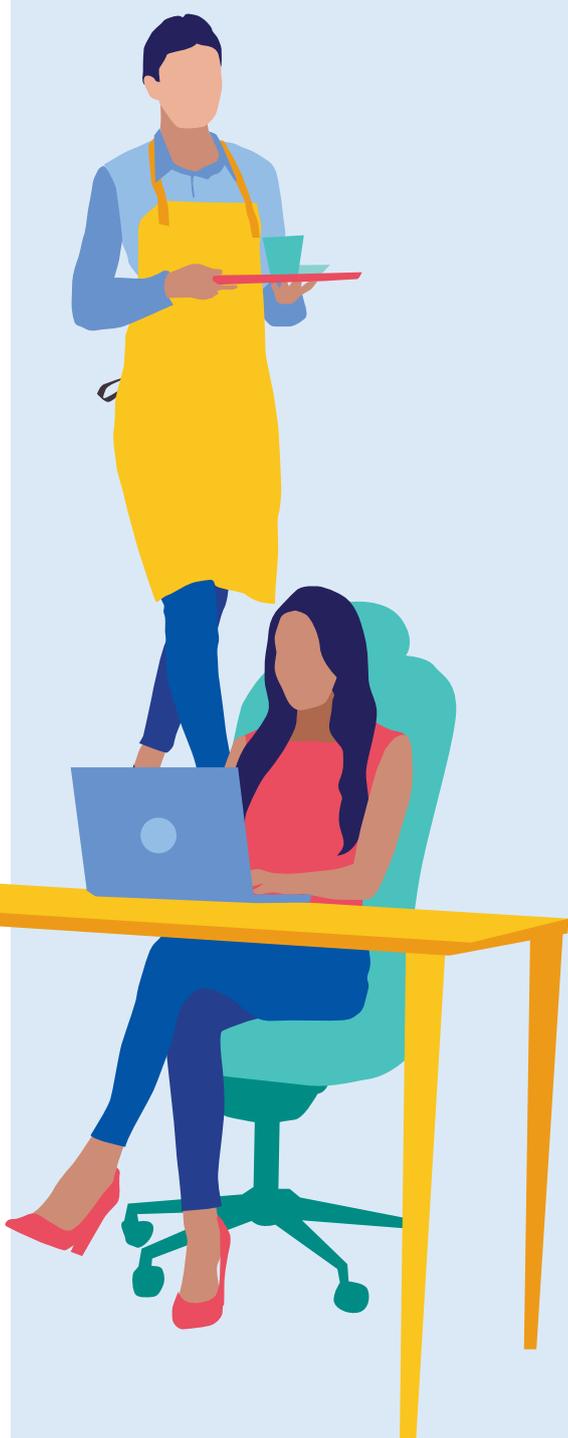
<sup>5</sup> The information compiled by the SSF includes data from INPEP, UPISSS and the AFP.

# 3 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

This section briefly presents the main labour market indicators for vulnerable population groups such as women and young people.

## 3.1. Participation of vulnerable groups in the labour market

### Women (2019)

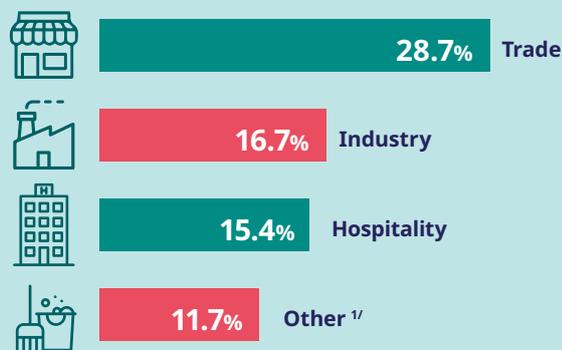


#### LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS ON WOMEN

General indicators	%
Participation rate in WAP	46.8
Ratio employment-population	44.3
Unemployment rate	5.4
Underemployment rate	37.4
Informality rate	48.5
Inactivity rate	53.2

Source: author's own compilation based on data from the DIGESTYC.

#### EMPLOYMENT IN THE MAIN BRANCHES OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY



Source: author's own compilation based on data from the DIGESTYC.  
<sup>1/</sup> This category includes the activities of households as employers of domestic service.

#### EMPLOYMENT BY MAIN OCCUPATIONAL GROUP OF WOMEN

Occupation Groups	%
Service and trade workers	45.9
Non-qualified female workers	19.8
Officials, operators and artisans	10.4
Technicians and mid-level professionals	6.9
Office employees	5.1

Source: author's own compilation based on data from the DIGESTYC.

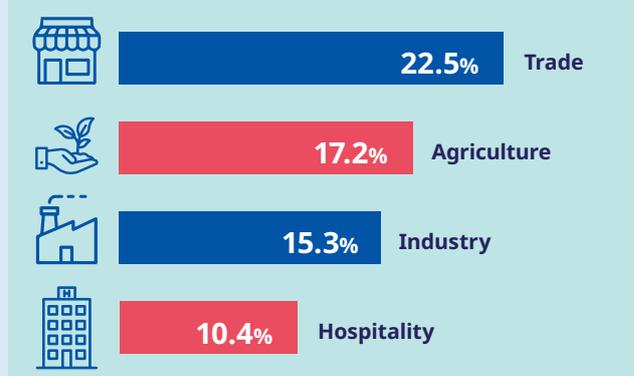
## Young persons (2019)

### INDICATORS OF THE YOUTH LABOUR MARKET

General Indicators	%
WAP participation rate	56.9
Ratio employment-population	50.5
Unemployment rate	11.3
Underemployment rate	40.1
Informality rate	41.7
Inactivity rate	43.1

Source: author's own compilation based on data from the DIGESTYC.

### OCCUPATION IN MAIN BRANCHES OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY



Source: author's own compilation based on data from the DIGESTYC.

### OCCUPATION YOUTH BY MAIN OCCUPATIONAL GROUP

Occupation Groups	%
Service and trade workers	29.8
Non-qualified workers	29.2
Officials, operators and artisans	12.6
Machinery operators and assemblers	7.6
Office employees	7.0

Source: author's own compilation based on data from the DIGESTYC.



### 3.2. Approach

Based on the analysis of the economic, migratory and labour market behaviour of El Salvador, the efforts of the International Labour Organization (ILO) support the design and formulation of public policies aimed at creating work opportunities based on decent work and the promotion of regular and fair migration for all people.

The approach to tackle the root causes of migration considers the entire migratory cycle, as well as the creation of new job opportunities (national and regular migration) to generate the conditions that reduce the propensity of people to migrate irregularly.

The ILO strategy to help mitigate the causes of irregular migration, as well as to promote safe, orderly and regular labor migration, with decent work at the centre, takes into consideration the following areas of action:



**Employment and labour rights.** Aimed at promoting the guarantee of the rights of workers, through the improvement of their working conditions and the strengthening of institutions to apply and comply with current legislation on the subject, promoting freedom of association and collective bargaining, based on the ILO's International Labour Standards.



**Development and productive transformation.** Focused on the diversification and transformation of the productive apparatus, which should be oriented towards the sustainability of the productive processes, promoting the emergence of sustainable companies. In addition, the creation and strengthening of productive enterprises (micro, small and medium enterprises) as energizers of economic growth, and encourage the transition from the informal economy to the formal economy. Furthermore, it is important to create investment environments and regulatory frameworks that attract national and foreign investment, to stimulate sustainable growth in productivity.



**Green jobs.** Adopt a sustainable vision related to employment, where the generation of green jobs will reduce the environmental impact of companies and economic sectors, facilitating their adaptation to climate change, allowing economic and social development in a sustainable way; through employment-intensive public policy initiatives aimed at resilience, especially in rural areas.



**Technification and social protection.** This approach has to take advantage of the demographic bonus, before its exhaustion. Therefore, the technification of the people who make up the workforce is important to strengthen their skills and capacities to ensure access to decent work. Similarly, coverage and affiliation with social security (health and pension system) must be sought and strengthened, with the aim of ensuring people's access to this type of services; as well as an effective reform of the pension system, which allows in the long term the provision of income and specialized care to working people in their retirement stage.



**Regular migration and labour mobility.** Addressing the root causes of migration implies the establishment of conditions and opportunities that allow linking labour market policies with regular migration. Therefore, the participation of actors of the world of work (government institutions, employers' organizations, and workers' organizations), as well as actors related to migration (government institutions related to the issue, recruitment agencies, among others), is important, as they support the design of public policies aimed at achieving fair recruitment, based on the ILO's International Labour Standards.



**Support for groups in vulnerable conditions.** Develop public policy initiatives aimed at strengthening labour market conditions, which allows access to paid job opportunities, or through the generation of productive enterprises that encourage the participation of women and young people, and the development of training and support processes that promote their roots and improve their family and community environments, and reduce their propensity to start the migratory cycle irregularly.



**Social and economic reintegration.** Aimed at promoting the integration of return migrants workers to their communities of origin, through public policies that allow the use and certification of labour skills and abilities (acquired abroad), in coordination with Employers' Organizations and other actors. This should be focused on the generation of conditions that promote the roots of return migrants, and reduce their propensity to start the migratory cycle again.



**Strengthening for the registration and generation of statistical information.** Focused on strengthening data records on migrants, with the aim of having the necessary statistics for the formulation and implementation of public policies aimed at this population group, from both household surveys and the reception of return migrants. In addition, it is important that statistical information is consolidated and published periodically and that other public and private actors have access to it, to provide support that benefits people, according to their needs and condition of vulnerability.

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## ANNEX 1. Distribution of the employed population by population groups, branches of economic activity and occupation groups, 2019.

Categories	Total	Women	Men	Young Persons
<b>Branches of economic activity</b>				
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	473,846	40,854	432,992	150,859
Mining and quarrying	1,922	73	1,849	450
Manufacturing industries	431,713	201,607	230,106	134,499
Electricity, gas and steam supply	7,745	1,198	6,547	3,180
Water supply and waste management	14,624	5,128	9,496	2,653
Construction	198,573	4,501	194,072	61,215
Trade and repair of vehicles	640,592	346,305	294,287	197,055
Transport and storage	116,785	10,540	106,245	31,409
Accommodation and food activities	248,345	185,926	62,419	90,760
Information and communications	25,673	7,489	18,184	12,965
Financial and insurance activities	32,633	16,158	16,475	10,963
Real estate activities	7,369	1,942	5,427	1,018
Professional, scientific and technical activities	36,207	15,327	20,880	12,688
Administrative and support service activities	98,619	25,486	73,133	35,145
Public administration and defence	114,984	31,756	83,228	23,254
Teaching	92,014	51,763	40,251	13,241
Health care activities	71,342	45,604	25,738	13,766
Artistic and entertainment activities	13,725	2,149	11,576	7,773
Other service activities	120,813	70,390	50,423	31,090
Household activities as employers	160,591	140,851	19,740	42,487
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,908,115</b>	<b>1,205,047</b>	<b>1,703,068</b>	<b>876,470</b>
<b>Occupational Group</b>				
Armed forces	11,249	1,116	10,133	7,498
Executive, legislative, directors of public and private administration	41,344	18,304	23,040	6,716
Professionals, scientists and intellectuals	133,138	55,767	77,371	29,879
Medium level technicians and professionals	167,828	83,597	84,231	41,636
Office clerks	135,831	61,657	74,174	60,932
Service workers and vendors in shops and markets	874,593	553,083	321,510	260,895
Farmers and skilled agricultural and fishing workers	218,750	12,263	206,487	36,198
Officials, operators and craftsmen of mechanical arts and others	421,536	125,756	295,780	110,101
Plant operators, machines and assemblers	223,155	55,326	167,829	66,590
Unskilled workers	680,694	238,175	442,519	256,026
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,908,118</b>	<b>1,205,044</b>	<b>1,703,074</b>	<b>876,471</b>