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Contact: Marcie Casas, GDC
210-236-5000
mcasas@gdc-co.com

MATT Releases Key Findings and Raw Data from First-Ever Study on the Factors Driving the Return of Mexican Immigrants to Mexico

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) — Mexicans and Americans Thinking Together (MATT) today at the Wilson Center shared the findings from its unprecedented research study which tells, for the first time, the other half of the immigration story. The study’s findings – The U.S. Mexico Cycle: The End of an Era – details the factors that are driving Mexicans to return to their home country in historic numbers, signaling a major shift in immigration. To prompt intense discussion on the immense impact this shift is having on the U.S. and Mexico, MATT is making the study’s raw data available and inviting individuals and organizations to further analyze its findings. The raw data is available for download at MATT.org.

The study was undertaken in mid-2013 by MATT, which is a bi-national non-profit with offices in San Antonio, Texas, and Mexico City that is dedicated to leading the conversation on the issues that are having a profound effect on the U.S. and Mexico. As 1.4 million Mexicans returned to Mexico between 2005 and 2010, MATT recognized a gap in the resources and services available to these migrants upon their return. In response, MATT created an initiative called Yo Soy Mexico, which works to match returning immigrants with job, education and investment opportunities in Mexico. It was as a result of its work with Yo Soy Mexico that MATT identified the need to learn more about this returning population in order to better assist them.

“Up to now, we knew why Mexicans were coming to the U.S. but not why they were choosing to go back to Mexico on their own. As we sought to grasp a better understanding on the motivating factors behind their return, we learned that no one had taken the opportunity to take a closer look and ask the very important question of ‘why?’,” said Aracely Garcia-Granados, Executive Director of MATT. “We decided then to undertake a study that would provide a first-ever look at a group of immigrants.”

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MATT launched its comprehensive study in mid-2013 in collaboration with Southern Methodist University and the Government of Jalisco, Mexico. The study captured data through in-depth, in-person interviews with 600 returning immigrants in the state of Jalisco. With its diverse mix of metropolitan, mid-size and rural cities, Jalisco served as a foundational model for future studies MATT is planning to conduct in additional Mexican states.

During the study, several important key findings emerged from the data including:

- Most immigrants from Mexico were part of a circular migratory system and never intended to permanently stay in the U.S. They stayed due to environmental factors.
- A full 89% chose to return to Mexico on their own despite the general belief that most returned through deportation.
- The three primary reasons for return migration centered on family matters that caused them to return, nostalgia for their country of origin and the inability to find jobs in the U.S.
- Most return migrants hold a very positive view of the U.S. and respect its system of laws and processes.
- More than half report that they will not return to the U.S. while 30% say they plan to return. Of those that plan to return, over 90% say they wish to return legally.
- More than half of return migrants left family behind in the U.S., signaling a continued bond between the U.S. and Mexico.
- Upon their return home, more migrants worked, more were self-employed and more made business investments in their communities as a result of their experience in the U.S.

More of the study's key findings can be found at MATT.org.

“In conducting the study, an invaluable look at the face of the return migrant was provided. We learned that this population is returning home, ready to apply their learned experiences and new talents. They need only the opportunity. This is where MATT, through Yo Soy Mexico, looks to provide this support to returning migrants and open up access to education and investment resources and jobs,” said Garcia-Granados.

An overview of the Yo Soy Mexico initiative can be found at MATT.org.

About MATT

Mexicans and Americans Thinking Together (MATT) is a bi-national organization focused on building cultural and economic bridges between the U.S. and Mexico. MATT works with and within government sectors, private organizations, academic institutions and other civic organizations to form strategic alliances. We initiate and guide this cooperation into the creation of public programs, policies and initiatives that empower people to thrive and become active members of their own community. Visit www.MATT.org for additional information.

About Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

The [Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars](http://www.wilsoncenter.org) is the national, living memorial honoring President Woodrow Wilson. The Wilson Center provides a strictly nonpartisan space for the worlds of policymaking and scholarship to interact. By conducting relevant and timely research and promoting dialogue from all perspectives, it works to address the critical current and emerging challenges confronting the United States and the world. Created by an Act of Congress in 1968, The Wilson Center is headquartered in Washington, D.C. and supported by both public and private funds.

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