

Supporting the strengthening of Government institutions and civil society capacities to improve the protection of vulnerable migrants in transit



UN Trust Fund for Human Security



Fast Facts

Country: Mexico

Duration: January 2013 to September 2015

Implementing UN Agencies: IOM; UNDP; UNFPA; UNHCR; UNODC

Other Implementing Partners: Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Interior; Commission of Aid to Refugees; National Migration Institute; migrant shelters; CSOs

Budget: \$3,121,707

Key Words: Migrants; health; empowerment; capacity-building; personal security

BACKGROUND

Over the past 15 years, states in the southern border region of Mexico have become an important transit destination for thousands of irregular migrants. Most travel from Central America driven by persistent poverty, food insecurity, natural disasters and violence in their home countries. On their journey, these vulnerable migrants face extreme hardship and

physical insecurity as they travel with limited access to basic shelter and essential social services. Many fall victims to organized criminal groups who prey on their vulnerable situation. They suffer violence and sexual abuse and are increasingly victims of kidnapping, human trafficking, extortion and even murder.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the programme is to improve the human security of migrants in transit through southern Mexico. This is to be achieved by building the capacity of government institutions and civil society organizations to provide essential services, while promoting peaceful coexistence between migrants and host communities. To this end, the programme is centered around three objectives: (i) strengthening the capacities of federal and state government institutions to enhance the effectiveness of their assistance to

migrants in transit; (ii) improving the capacities of civil society organizations, specifically shelters, to provide improved assistance to migrants in transit, especially vulnerable migrants and potential refugees; and (iii) through dialogue on the rights of migrants and cultural events, promoting greater engagement with host communities, thereby breaking barriers and reducing fears and prejudice of migrants by the local population.

BENEFICIARIES

The programme targets approximately 300,000 vulnerable migrants in the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Tabasco. At the same time, close to 800 federal

and state government officials and 14 migrant shelters and civil society organizations will be directly engaged through capacity building activities.



APPLYING THE HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH

The unique situation of people on the move presents a significant challenge in providing solutions that comprehensively respond to the complex and multifaceted insecurities faced by these groups. Through consultation with civil society organizations and working closely with migrants in southern Mexico as well as relevant national and local government authorities, the human security approach was identified as the most effective tool to strengthen and consolidate ongoing efforts. By combining the protection and empowerment needs of vulnerable migrants, the human security approach provides the needed mechanisms to integrate the work of government institutions responsible for the protection of migrants with civil society organizations attending to their basic needs. Together such a comprehensive approach bolsters the capacity of federal and state government institutions as well as civil society organizations to provide the essential services needed to transit migrants and to equip vulnerable migrants with the skills and the knowledge needed to migrate in a dignified and secure manner.

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, the programme promotes training on standardized operating procedures for the identification, assistance

and referral of vulnerable migrants; supports greater sensitization and training on the health needs of transit migrants, especially sexual and reproductive health; and strengthens improvements to the existing shelters available to vulnerable migrants. Meanwhile, as knowledge is the most effective way to empower transit migrants, the programme acts as a vital source of information on security issues, legal entitlements and available shelter and support. At the same time, through dialogue and joint cultural events, receiving communities engage in activities that help foster peaceful co-existence and garner greater understanding of the rights of migrants in transit.

Lastly, migratory challenges require multi-sectoral and integrated actions by all actors responsible for ensuring a more people-centred response to the protection of vulnerable migrants. The programme is therefore based on a participatory framework that brings the United Nations system together with the local government departments, relevant national ministries and civil society organizations. Such an approach is critical in providing a sustained level of comprehensive assistance to ensure the survival and dignity of vulnerable migrants.