



# United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security

# MEXICO

## Strengthening Government Institutions and Civil Society in Mexico to Improve the Protection of Vulnerable Transitory Migrants



**UN implementing agencies:**  
IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNODC

**In partnership with:**  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of the Interior  
Ministry of Health  
Commission for Aid to Refugees  
National Migration Institute  
State Governments of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Tabasco  
Migrant Shelters and Civil Society Organizations

**Duration**  
January 2012 - September 2015

**Total Budget**  
\$3,121,708

**Beneficiaries**  
420,000

### Background Information

In the past two decades, states in the southern border region of Mexico have become a major transit area for hundreds of thousands of migrants. Most travel from Central America, driven by persistent poverty, food insecurity, natural disasters and crime. These migratory populations face hardship and physical insecurity as they travel under hazardous conditions with limited access to basic shelter and essential social services. During their journey northwards, many of these migrants fall victim to organized criminal groups that prey on their vulnerabilities. They experience violence and sexual abuse and are increasingly victims of kidnapping, human trafficking, extortion and even murder. At the same time, their security is further compromised by the tense relationship between local communities and transitory migrants. Accordingly, the human security of vulnerable migrants in transit through Mexico can only be enhanced through partnerships between diverse stakeholders at the local, national and international levels that incorporate the full range of development, human rights and security perspectives.

### 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 transitory migrants and local communities. To this end, the project is centered around three objectives: (i) strengthening the capacities of Mexican federal and state government institutions to enhance the effectiveness of their assistance to migrants in transit; (ii) improving the capacities of civil society organizations, particularly migrant shelters, to provide improved assistance to migrants in transit, especially vulnerable migrants and potential refugees; and (iii) promoting and strengthening protection networks for migrants in host communities.

### 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.

(i) The programme effectively capacitated over 800 local authorities to tackle the fluid and often misunderstood issue of migration through training platforms and workshops to streamline efforts and align migration policies with development plans. Through the implementation of the programme, human security was able to shape Mexican immigration policy to have a stronger people-centred focus.

(ii) Civil society organizations and migrant shelters in particular received technical assistance to improve the services they offer migrants and were capacitated to mobilize resources independently. This led to a sustainable first line of assistance to people on the move. The success of these shelters led to the replication and scale-up of this model to other states of the country. This highlighted the importance of an integrated approach for more informed, dynamic and efficient interventions that truly benefit migrants and addressed their security needs.

(iii) The programme also addressed previously overlooked issues affecting migrants such as health and wellbeing. Better access and quality to healthcare especially for migrant children was achieved through the sensitization of local health officials and the improvement of referral and follow-up systems. A holistic approach informed more comprehensive initiatives that addressed the real needs of migrants.

(iv) At the same time, the programme combatted the prejudice against migrants through a broad communications strategy at the local and national level. This also facilitated greater awareness among migrants on accessing basic services and shelters and facilitated the implementation and mainstreaming of more preventive approaches that reduced the exposure of migrants to insecurities in transit.

The unique circumstances of migratory people presents a significant challenge in providing solutions that comprehensively respond to the complex and multi-faceted insecurities they face. Through consultation with civil society organizations and working closely with migrants in Mexico as well as relevant national and local government authorities, human security was identified as the most effective tool to strengthen and consolidate on-going 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 by transitory migrants, and equips vulnerable migrants with the skills and knowledge they need to migrate in a safe and dignified manner.

The programme enhanced the standardized procedures for the identification and assistance of vulnerable migrants; supported greater sensitization and training on the health needs of transitory migrants; and provided improvements to the existing shelters available to vulnerable migrants. Meanwhile, the programme acted 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, local communities were engaged in activities that helped foster peaceful co-existence and 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 safe, orderly and people-centred response to migration. The programme is therefore based on a participatory framework that joins efforts by the United Nations system with policies and interventions from 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 all migrants, especially those most vulnerable.