

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 December 2014

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 important transit areas for hundreds of thousands of migrants. Most travel from Central America driven by persistent poverty, food insecurity, natural disasters and violence in their home countries. These on the move populations face extreme hardship and physical insecurity as they travel under inhumane and unsafe conditions, with limited access to basic shelter and essential social services. Moreover, on their journey northwards many of these migrants fall victim to organized criminal groups that prey on their vulnerable situation. They suffer

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 due to the tense relationship between receiving communities and transit 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.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the project 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 the local communities. To this end, the project 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) promoting and strengthening protection networks for migrants in host communities.

BENEFICIARIES

The project 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, 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 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 project 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 project 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 will be engaged in activities that can 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 project 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.