

## EVALUATION BRIEF

### EX POST PROJECT EVALUATION “STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF THE MERCOSUR MEMBER STATES AND THE MEDIA TO PROMOTE THE POSITIVE

This evaluation brief presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluator (s) for use by key stakeholders, including internally by IOM staff and externally by project partners. More details can be found in the full evaluation report.

**Evaluation type:** Internal independent ex post evaluation

**Evaluator(s):** Andrés Gutiérrez, Lead Evaluator | Tarina Amaguaña, Evaluation Assistant

**Field visit dates:** 23 April - 04 May 2021

**Final report date:** 29 November 2021

**Commissioned by:** IOM Regional Office in Buenos Aires

**Managed by:** Juliana Quintero, Project Manager

**Evaluation purpose:** To identify the overall level of project performance and the factors that explain it. Obtain evidence-based recommendations to improve performance throughout the project cycle. Promote learning in the Regional Office team on media and communications projects.

**Evaluation criteria:** The following five criteria were used: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability.

**Evaluation methodology:** A non-experimental design was used with qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The information sources were: documentary review (10 documents) and qualitative information (11 semi-structured interviews).

## PROJECT SUMMARY

IOM's daily monitoring of news in South America shows that the information reported about migration is often very limited in terms of concepts, approaches, terminology and sources. The lack of data and evidence on the positive contribution of migrants in journalistic content leads to stereotypes about migrants.

In this framework, on June 1, 2017, during the regular meeting of the Permanent Commission on Discrimination, Racism and Xenophobia at the XXIX Meeting of High Authorities on Human Rights of Mercosur, IOM was mandated to conduct training in the promotion of rights, visibility, and recognition of migrant communities, aimed at the media.

To respond to this request, the IOM Regional Office for South America obtained funding from the IOM Development Fund (IDF) for the Project "Strengthening the capacity of Mercosur governments and the media to promote the positive contributions of migration" (USD 39,236). The objective of this 12-month project was to "contribute to increasing the capacity of Mercosur governments and the media to promote the positive contributions of migration, with a human rights approach". Two effects were defined for this initiative: 1) Mercosur country representatives incorporate a gender and human rights perspective in their migration policy discourse,

### Project information:

Geographical coverage: Mercosur Countries

Project type: IM - International Migration Law

Project code: IM.0045

Gender marker: 2a

Project period: December 2017 - November 2018

Donor: IOM Development Fund (IDF)

Budget: USD 39,236

recognizing the potential contribution of the media, and 2) Journalists and social communicators in South America reflect the human rights perspective in their journalistic work.

To accomplish these effects, the following products were established: 1.) Human Mobility Module in XL Mar del Plata Course for officials from Mercosur countries, 2.1) Virtual Course on Migration and Human Rights, and 2.2) the first edition of the South American Journalism Award.

The project was implemented between December 2017 and November 2018 by the Regional Office in partnership with the "Instituto de Políticas Migratorias y Asilo" (IPMA, Universidad Tres de Febrero) and the "Instituto de Políticas Públicas en Derechos Humanos" (IPPDH) from Mercosur.

### KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

**Relevance.-** The theory of change does not consider critical assumptions that are necessary conditions to achieve the expected results. Specifically, a workload that allows balancing labour activities with training processes is not addressed as an assumption. The participants agree that it was challenging to be trained and to deepen course contents due to work responsibilities.

**Effectiveness.-** The training offered by the project had large female participation and a lower presence of participants from countries with small IOM Missions. Problems to pass the virtual course were identified, this in a context with challenges to harmonize workload with training processes.

**Efficiency.-** Although the virtual modality training resulted in a reduction of costs, it also brought problems in the coordination of participants' attendance due to time differences, as well as in engaging the interest of students. No mechanisms were designed to follow up on the participants' journalistic work after the end of the project.

**Impact.-** The training and visibility through the South American Journalism Award were particularly appropriate in a context of an increasing Venezuelan migration regional arena. The participants highlight the conceptual and normative aspects learned and the application of knowledge with practical cases. Participants agree the training contributed to building a respectful approach with migrants as well as to demystifying stereotypes.

**Sustainability.-** There is no evidence that the contents of the project have been replicated by other institutions or formal spaces. However, the searching data instruments introduced in the training have been widely used as a very helpful tool for participants' journalistic research.

### GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS

**Practical tools of the virtual course:** The introduction of sources of migration statistical information for those who do not handle statistical information becomes a practice that can be replicated as part of a training process for both staff and other target audiences, such as journalists as in the case of this project.

**Participants follow-up strategy:** Program management did not have participants' contact information, other than email. This made the information collecting process challenging and the scope of the evaluation was limited. This is a lesson with negative effects that must be overcome in future interventions.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthen and replicate similar training processes with journalists that facilitate positive changes in knowledge and perceptions about migration, through the creation of a scholarship for journalistic production on migration, generation of a "Trainer of Trainers" strategy (knowledge transfer), and institutionalization of the South American Journalism Award as a meeting and training space.
2. Build a consultation platform or toolbox on migration data sources for journalists.
3. Replicate the generation of partnerships with institutions specialized in specific topics. Promote and design collaborative activities in an integral manner with other organizations from the technical to the budgetary level.
4. Support training participants in conducting local workshops to replicate the knowledge and skills developed by the project. Create the basis for a regional network of migration journalists to facilitate the exchange of information and experiences.
5. Review the methodology and courses length, especially those in virtual format, in order to harmonize training with participants' work activities.