



IOM Guatemalan Repatriates Project: Best Practices Report

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About MANAUS

MANAUS provides consulting services to companies and organizations working in the areas of corporate social responsibility and international development. MANAUS works with businesses, nonprofit organizations, and multilateral institutions to help them understand the impact their programs and initiatives have on beneficiaries and communities.

MANAUS was commissioned to evaluate the Guatemalan Repatriates Project and to prepare this report on good practices to assist repatriates. A MANAUS team member visited Guatemala and San Marcos to observe the implementation of the project and understand the scope of its results. The visit took place in July 2013 and included interviews with 22 members of the project team and general IOM staff, 16 partners of the project in Guatemala, and 24 beneficiaries.

Executive Summary

Guatemalan migration to the United States of America (U.S.) has increased exponentially in recent years, increasing by 78% between 2000 and 2010. At the same time, the number of Guatemalans who are repatriated from the U.S. has grown significantly from 4,778 to 40,647 between 2002 and 2012.¹ Guatemalan repatriates face many challenges upon their return to Guatemala, such as debt, lack of work opportunity, family separation, and psychological problems, among others. In order to respond to this reality and provide adequate assistance, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) launched the Guatemalan Repatriates Project (GRP) between September 2010 and October 2013 with the support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The following objectives were set forth for this project: providing basic assistance and services for socioeconomic reintegration to repatriates, promoting the development of national policies on migration, and strengthening public institutions that deal with preventing and combating trafficking in persons.

This document summarizes the practices, methodologies, and processes used, as well as lessons learned by the IOM during the three years of implementation of the GRP. This report is geared toward the Government of Guatemala and any organization dedicated to assisting repatriated Guatemalans. The practices presented in this report are the minimum services that IOM identified as effective to properly assist repatriates and help them reintegrate into Guatemalan society.

The following are the most relevant lessons learned and best practices derived from the project:

- **Provide psychological assistance upon arrival to Guatemala.** Repatriates often arrive in a fragile emotional state that not only affects their physical and psychological health, but also limits their ability to adapt and effectively reintegrate into society. This situation is even more serious in the case of migrants who have been victims of trafficking. The GRP identified the need to involve a team of psychologists prepared to handle severe cases of emotional distress, identify victims of human trafficking, provide support for cases that require prolonged psychological care, refer cases to the competent institutions, and provide guidance on social reintegration. This basic assistance proved to be a successful method to provide attention upon arrival.
- **Facilitate communication and transportation services.** The GRP team identified the need of repatriates to communicate with their families and to be transported to their communities of origin. In response to these needs, the GRP implemented a service that provided repatriates with national and international phone calls. Additionally, a shuttle service to the main bus terminals and financial support to reach their home communities was established. These practices proved effective in reducing the vulnerability and risks repatriates face upon arrival to Guatemala.
- **Provide support to temporary shelters.** The need to provide temporary shelter for those repatriates who have nowhere to go was identified as essential. Having somewhere to stay for at least the first 24 hours allowed repatriates to partially recover from the process of repatriation and gave them time to communicate with their families, receive money, and plan for their near future.
- **Provide support for processing basic documents for socioeconomic reintegration.** Many repatriates enter the country without the proper identification documents to return to life in Guatemala—such as a driver's license. The GRP team viewed guiding repatriates through the various document application processes as important steps for reintegration. The GRP also

¹ General Directorate for Migration (2013). Immigration Statistics: Guatemalans deported by land from Mexico and from the U.S. by air in 2012. Retrieved on August 1, 2013 from the [General Directorate for Migration](#) website.

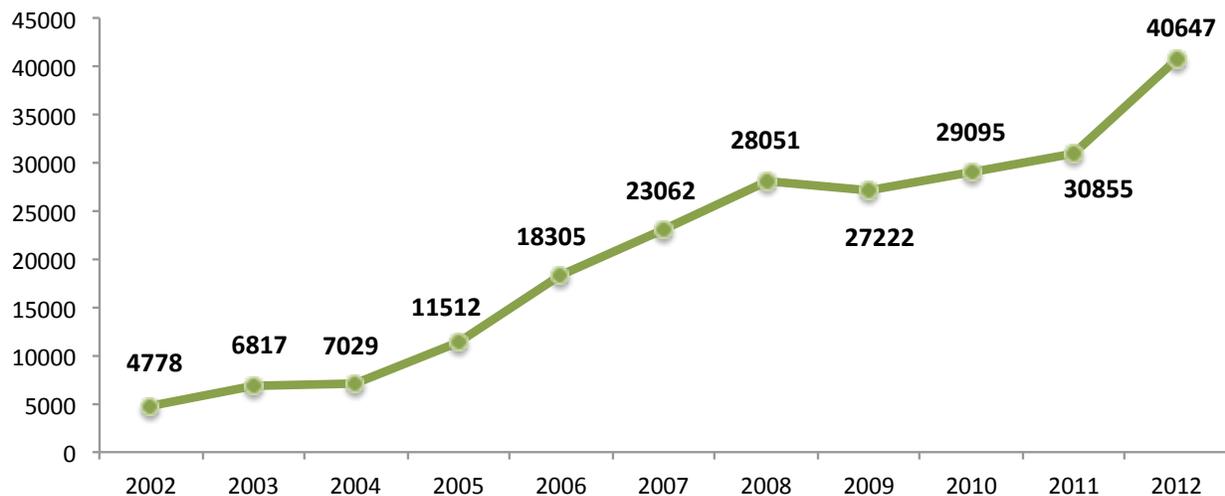
identified the need to provide financial support to cover the administrative and transportation costs associated with processing these documents. These services facilitated civil and labor reintegration of repatriates.

- **Provide technical and financial support to entrepreneurship initiatives.** Establishing small businesses is a viable alternative for the economic reintegration of repatriates. For many, however, lack of access to credit and other financial products brings to a halt any attempt to embark in small business opportunities. Many repatriates are unable to access credit due to the lack of basic personal documents, credit records, a stable job, and/or steady income. Therefore, the GRP team provided training and financial resources to repatriates interested in starting their own businesses. These activities helped with the economic reintegration of repatriates.
- **Train civil servants in key agencies in charge of combating human trafficking.** Regulations and agencies established to respond to human trafficking in Guatemala are fairly new. Many public officials are not appropriately trained to identify and address this problem. The GRP team provided training to civil servants of relevant government agencies for the prevention, assistance to victims, and prosecution of trafficking cases.
- **Promote the creation of a national migration policy and greater collaboration among relevant institutions.** To this date, Guatemala does not have a comprehensive public policy that adequately responds to the causes of irregular migration and to the socioeconomic and cultural consequences that repatriation brings about. The GRP designed a series of activities to facilitate the development of a national migration policy that responds to the reality of the situation and promotes the proper functioning and collaboration among existing institutions.
- **Raise awareness among Guatemalans of irregular migration and human trafficking.** There is widespread misinformation about the realities and needs of migrants in Guatemala. This makes the overall prevention of irregular migration and socioeconomic reintegration efforts difficult. Also, the lack of awareness of human trafficking facilitates its occurrence and limits the ability for reintegration of victims. In response, the GRP team implemented information campaigns on the risks of irregular migration and the prevention of human trafficking.

BACKGROUND

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that the number of Guatemalans living in the U.S. exceeded 1.5 million in 2010. The repatriation of Guatemalans from the U.S. has increased significantly in the last ten years. In 2012, over 40,000 Guatemalans were repatriated from the U.S. and another 38,000 were repatriated by land from Mexico. It is expected that this year the number of repatriates from the U.S. will reach 50,000. Guatemalan repatriates face many challenges upon arrival. They are returned to the families and communities that depend on their remittances and face many difficulties, such as personal debt, an underdeveloped labor market, and psychological problems. Others face family separation, often having left spouses and children in the U.S.

Figure 1. Number of Returnees from the U.S. (2002-2012)



Source: International Organization for Migration (2013). Guatemala Migration Profile 2012.

Inadequate assistance and reintegration of repatriates can generate adverse social and economic consequences for the country. Many repatriates end up working in the informal sector, which means they do not contribute to public services provided by the State of Guatemala. Others may try to migrate through irregular channels again, while other repatriates may join organized crime. This certainly does not improve the social conditions of a country already struggling to respond to high levels of poverty and violence.

Guatemala is also a country of origin, transit, and destination for men, women, and children affected by human trafficking, mainly for sexual and labor exploitation. Although irregular migration does not necessarily lead to human trafficking, these two issues are closely linked. When people are in a situation of irregular migration, they have specific needs (food, shelter, money, protection, etc.), which make them vulnerable to false offers or to be left in the hands of organized crime by those who facilitated their irregular migration.

The Government of Guatemala's ability to respond to the migratory phenomenon and human trafficking is limited. In the case of irregular migration, this limitation is due to the lack of a national policy that responds adequately to its causes or its socioeconomic consequences. As for trafficking, regulations and specialized agencies were recently created, about four years ago, for which reason their capacity to respond to this problem is still developing.

In this context, IOM launched the Guatemalan Repatriates Project to assist Guatemalans repatriates.

Through technical assistance, provision of materials, and reintegration services, the GRP aimed to prevent the violation of the rights of Guatemalan repatriates and to support their social and economic reintegration into society. The project incorporated additional activities related to human trafficking and focused on improving the capacity of the Government of Guatemala to combat this problem.

Migration in Guatemala

Migration from Guatemala to the U.S. started in the 1960s and was driven by various pull factors. The opportunities for education, the strong demand for labor in certain economic sectors (such as domestic service, restaurants, landscaping, construction, and agriculture), better wages, and the relative ease to emigrate ignited this first wave of migration. The 1976 earthquake, which had a significant impact in the social and economic landscape of the country, increased this first migration flow. The number of Guatemalans in the U.S. increased from 14,357 in the early 1960s to 23,837 in the 1970s. In the 1980s, Guatemalan migration significantly increased as a result of the economic crisis and the intensification of the armed conflict. During this time, Guatemalans entered the U.S. under new immigration statuses, including refugee, asylum seekers, and exiled status—and the number of Guatemalan immigrants in the U.S. rose to 137,418.²

Guatemalan migration intensified significantly during the 1990s. During this decade there was widespread deterioration of social welfare in Guatemala, including lack of access to housing, education, and healthcare. On the other hand, the U.S. experienced significant economic growth and an increase in labor demand in construction, agriculture, and other sectors. But it was from 2000 to 2010 when Guatemalan migration to the U.S. grew exponentially, increasing from 225,739 in 2000 to 1,044,209 in 2010—about 7% of the total population of Guatemala in 2010.³

In 2012, the number of Guatemalans that were repatriated by air from the U.S. reached 40,647. Another 38,514 Guatemalans were repatriated by land from Mexico in the same year.⁴ In the first seven months of 2013, the number of Guatemalans repatriated by air from the U.S. reached 29,210 and this figure is expected to reach 50,000 by the end of the year.⁵

In general, Guatemalan migrants have the following characteristics:⁶

- They are mainly from the departments of San Marcos, Huehuetenango, Quetzaltenango, Quiché, and Guatemala City.
- Most have low levels of education: elementary school (20%), middle school (18%), high school (11%), and university (1%).
- Most are men—only 7% of migrants are women.
- Their main reasons for migrating are: improving their economic conditions (52%), looking for a job (37%), and family reunification (3%).
- The majority (58%, 2010 est.) travels to the U.S. through Mexico using the services of a smuggler (*coyote*) and paying approximately US \$ 5,000⁷ for these services.

² International Organization for Migration (2013). Guatemala Migration Profile 2012.

³ Idem.

⁴ General Directorate for Migration (2013). Immigration Statistics: Guatemalans deported by land from Mexico and from the U.S. by air in 2012. Retrieved on August 1, 2013 from the [General Directorate for Migration](#) website.

⁵ Statistics provided by José Zaldaño, Head of the Operations Division of the General Directorate of Migration on July 30, 2013.

⁶ International Organization for Migration (2013). Guatemala Migration Profile 2012.

⁷ As a point of comparison, the Gross Domestic Product per capita of Guatemala is US\$ 3,368 (2012 est., World Bank).

Current Process of Receiving Repatriates in the Guatemalan Air Force

Guatemalans repatriated by air from the U.S. arrive at the base of the Guatemalan Air Force in Guatemala City. The Guatemalan Air Force receives two to four daily flights from the U.S. Each flight usually arrives with up to 135 repatriated Guatemalans. Upon arrival in Guatemala, repatriates are received by staff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Directorate for Migration (DGM). Authorities welcome repatriates to the country, provide them with a small snack, and explain the registration process to record their arrival back into the country.

Repatriates can then exchange currency through an authorized exchange agent located within the premises. Repatriates can also make local calls with telephones made available by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides free transportation to major bus terminals and departments of origin. It is important to mention that most of these services are relatively new and are usually not sufficient for the number of repatriates arriving every day.

The National Registry of Persons (RENAP) is also at the Guatemalan Air Force to facilitate the processing of the Personal Identity Document (DPI). This service was created due to the high number of repatriates returning without any form of identification. The most common cases are repatriates who had a DPI but left them behind in the U.S.; repatriates whose identification was lost during the migration and/or repatriation process; or repatriates who lived many years in the U.S. and never went through the process of applying for a DPI.⁸ Like phone calls and currency exchange services, providing personal identification documents was a recently established service and is not always enough to serve all repatriates that arrive at the airport.

Another government agency present during the arrival of repatriates is the Ministry of Health. The role of this institution in the Guatemalan Air Force is to attend to those repatriates who require medical attention. However, many of the organizations that work at the Guatemalan Air Force, including other government agencies, explained that the presence of the Ministry of Health is not permanent and is limited to provide medication for simple health problems (headaches, stomach pain, etc.).

Once the registration process within the Guatemalan Air Force is over, repatriates can exit to the parking lot area where the GRP team and Casa del Migrante—a project counterpart that provides temporary shelter to repatriates—carried out their operations. A small part of the repatriates remain in this area to make phone calls and find transportation. Apart from the support given during the admission process to the country and the aforementioned basic assistance, no government agency is properly following up on repatriates. Once repatriates leave the premises of the Guatemalan Air Force, the State does not know what happens to them, where they go, or if they find employment. This is where the GRP acted to complement basic assistance and provide the support that repatriates need for reintegration into life in Guatemala.

⁸ In Guatemala, the identification card called “cedula” was the main identification document of Guatemalan citizens. This document was replaced by the Personal Identification Document (DPI).

GUATEMALAN REPATRIATES PROJECT (GRP)

The Guatemalan Repatriates Project (GRP) began in September 2010 with the main objective of preventing the violation of human rights of Guatemalan repatriates. A second phase of the project was added in early 2012 to incorporate a response to the issue of human trafficking. In order to achieve these objectives, the project established five areas of action:

1. Provision of basic services to repatriates upon arrival in Guatemala. These basic services included hydration and nutrition, psychological care, communication services, and transportation to home communities.
2. Provision of training and reintegration services. This line of action included the development of public-private partnerships, financial support for training and skill certification, support for obtaining and preparing necessary documentation to apply for jobs, support for establishing small businesses, among other activities.
3. Promote and strengthen national policies and migration laws of the Government of Guatemala. This included promoting national dialogue among government agencies, multilateral organizations, and civil society; training authorities on migration and human trafficking issues; preparing an updated profile on migration; and strengthening civil society organizations.
4. Map and disseminate best practices and methodologies for successful reintegration of repatriates. This line of action included the identification and systematization of processes and activities employed and lessons learned during the project to adequately assist and reintegrate repatriates into society.
5. Improve the capacity of the Government of Guatemala to prevent human trafficking cases, provide better assistance to victims, and prosecute trafficking cases. This line of action incorporated activities such as training judges and prosecutors, supporting prevention campaigns in high-risk communities, and strengthening civil society organizations directly working with human trafficking.

As of June 2013, the GRP assisted 84,224 repatriated Guatemalans—of which 94% were males and 6% were females. This ratio is consistent with the actual proportion of men and women who are repatriated from the U.S. annually, 93% and 7% respectively.⁹ Of the total assisted repatriates, 5,752 people received services for economic and social reintegration. In the case of human trafficking, the GRP provided basic care and/or legal assistance to 140 victims (mostly through financial support to El Refugio de la Niñez, a project counterpart that provided direct assistance to victims of trafficking) and helped put 33 trafficking cases under the investigation of the Public Attorney's Office (data from June 2013).

The practices presented in this report are the methodologies, processes, and lessons learned the GRP accumulated over the three-year project. These practices have been identified as the minimum activities that must be implemented to provide appropriate and timely assistance to Guatemalan repatriates.

⁹ International Organization for Migration (2013). Guatemala Migration Profile 2012.

LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

I. BASIC ASSISTANCE

Basic assistance was an essential service offered to repatriates upon arrival in Guatemala. Based on the experience of the GRP team, the points below are the minimum practices that should be implemented to provide comprehensive first assistance.

The provision of refreshments helps repatriates to safely reach their home communities. Most repatriates receive a small portion of food during their transfer from the U.S. to Guatemala. Many have to take more than one flight, as the plane can stop in several U.S. states to collect migrants in different detention centers. Refreshments provided included water and some food and were donated by various food companies through their Corporate Social Responsibility programs. Although basic, the provision of refreshments had two main purposes:

1. Ensured that repatriates are sufficiently hydrated and fed to continue their trip to their home communities.
2. Allowed the GRP team to speak briefly with repatriates to identify their needs—for example, if there was a need for temporary shelter or some type of specialized medical or psychological care. This activity also allowed the GRP team to gather repatriates' contact information to refer them to other services, such as socioeconomic reintegration initiatives.

Through this activity, the GRP was able to serve more than 84,000 repatriates and provide them anything from basic care to employment reintegration assistance.

Psychosocial attention soothes the fragile emotional state in which repatriates arrive. Certain migration experiences and human trafficking can generate high levels of uncertainty, anxiety, insecurity, risk, and exploitation. These conditions tend to affect the physical and psychological health of migrants, which in turn dampens their ability to be productive members of society and to become reintegrated to their country of origin.¹⁰

The IOM team identified these conditions of anxiety and vulnerability among repatriates who arrived at the Guatemalan Air Force. The project team identified the need to incorporate psychologists that are prepared to handle these situations. The psychosocial team provided assistance including therapy sessions for repatriates and referrals of major psychological problems. For example, the GRP team identified a case of schizophrenia that was referred to the National Hospital for Mental Health.

The team of psychologists also identified cases of physical problems. Because most migrants use trains through Mexico to reach the U.S., some return with injuries to their limbs. The GRP team referred cases of amputees to the hospital or to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) that has a program for the provision of prostheses.

The psychosocial team also uncovered cases of human trafficking. This is especially important considering that it is not easy to identify a victim of trafficking, mainly because:

- a) Victims of trafficking are often not aware they experienced human trafficking, so they cannot be simply asked if they have been trafficked;

¹⁰ IOM Colombia (2012). Guidelines for improving the psychosocial well-being of populations and vulnerable migrants. Retrieved on August 1, 2013 from the [website of IOM Colombia](#).

- b) Even in cases where the victim is aware that he/she was trafficked, trafficking is an issue that is not easily accepted;
- c) If the person was identified as a victim of human trafficking in the U.S., they are admitted into a special protection program. When they return to Guatemala, these victims may have already started their recovery process. This could make it more difficult to identify victims and, although they have received previous attention, it is important to continue medical and/or psychological support after their arrival;
- d) A protocol to identify a victim of human trafficking should be implemented to avoid re-victimizing the victim. This can only be done by an individual with proper training and preparation. If the questions become uncomfortable, the victim may not want to give additional information or to be assisted.

Providing psychosocial care has proved to be an essential activity in the proper assistance of repatriates upon arrival in Guatemala. While providing this assistance is certainly not sufficient, it serves as a preliminary filter to identify and refer repatriates to more comprehensive treatments in public institutions and facilitate their reintegration into the country.

The provision of phone calls, national and international, reduces the levels of vulnerability of repatriates. The availability of phones to make national and international calls is an important service that helps reduce the risks that repatriates may face once they leave the Guatemalan Air Force. Repatriates' families are often in the U.S. and do not have anyone to contact in Guatemala. In other cases, repatriates have family members in their home communities but it is the family or friends in the U.S. who are able to send money.

Similar to the provision of refreshments, communication services gave the psychosocial team time to engage with repatriates. During this time, they could identify cases of extreme anxiety or other more severe psychological conditions, cases of human trafficking, or simply take note of the contact details of repatriates to refer them to other services, such as social and economic reintegration.

Transportation services ease the process of returning to home communities. Many repatriates do not live in the capital and need to be transported to their home communities. In response to this, the GRP team provided transportation services to the most common bus terminals, like El Trébol, and financed bus tickets to the most requested departments.

The GRP had up to \$125 per flight to accommodate the transportation needs of repatriates. Because some repatriates could afford their own tickets, the GRP team assessed the level of need of each person in order to use their resources more efficiently. Although the transportation budget was often not enough to meet the demand, this activity proved to be successful in reducing the vulnerabilities of repatriates when arriving to Guatemala.

Temporary shelters lessen the levels of anxiety and risks repatriates face upon arrival. Many repatriates have nowhere to temporarily or permanently stay upon their arrival in Guatemala. The GRP worked with partner organizations to temporarily accommodate repatriates. Among these partners is Casa del Migrante, which provides temporary shelter to repatriates in Guatemala City and San Marcos, a city near the Mexican border. This shelter offers accommodation for up to 72 hours, food, basic medical care, local and international calls, and receipt of remittances.

Although brief, this temporary shelter allows repatriates to begin to recover from the reality of being back in Guatemala and the experience of repatriation. It also gives them an opportunity to communicate with their families, receive money, and plan for the near future. The shelter also provides education on the risks of migration and the alternatives repatriates have when returning to Guatemala.

The provision of temporary shelters to migrant minors helps protect their human rights. Unaccompanied minors are more vulnerable and should receive specialized care and protection. For such cases, the GRP provided assistance to unaccompanied minors through Casa Nuestras Raíces, an organization experienced in this type of care. Casa Nuestras Raíces is a shelter for children and adolescents who are repatriated and are unaccompanied. This shelter provides safe accommodations for minors while their families are located in their home communities. Casa Nuestras Raíces also provides medical and psychological attention, food, cleaning kits, and clothing, among other things.

Supporting organizations like Casa Nuestras Raíces proved essential for the proper care and protection of unaccompanied minors. Without these organizations, unaccompanied repatriated children are exposed to human rights violations, to be re-victimized, and/or to migrating again.

II. SOCIOECONOMIC REINTEGRATION

The socioeconomic reintegration of repatriates is a complex process. The term reintegration means more than securing food and shelter. Reintegration entails restoring family links, acculturation, employment, and economic stability, among others. Therefore, the successful reintegration of repatriated Guatemalans depends on many factors, some that only take hold in the long term. Reintegration activities implemented by the GRP led to the following lessons:

Knowledge of the process to obtain basic documents facilitates the civil reintegration of repatriates. As previously explained, many repatriates return to Guatemala without valid national identification documents. Having these documents is essential to access many basic services in Guatemala, from activating a phone line to applying for a job. The process of applying for these documents can take four weeks or more.

The GRP team assisted repatriates with the processes and requirements necessary to apply for these documents. The GRP also provided support to repatriates who needed help covering the costs of issuing these documents or the costs of transportation to the relevant institutions. This activity facilitated the social and economic reintegration of repatriated Guatemalans.

The availability of economic and education opportunities tailored to the realities of repatriates contributes to their labor reintegration. Seeking and obtaining employment is a fundamental step to the reintegration process of repatriates. As mentioned above, one of the main reasons for migrants to leave for the U.S. is the pursuit of better employment opportunities. Many repatriates do not find jobs in their home communities and when they do, it is a job that does not pay enough to cover their expenses. This makes the possibility of emigrating an attractive alternative to find better employment opportunities.

There are many factors that limit the ability of repatriates to get a job upon their return to Guatemala, but they are usually related to: low levels of education, the fact that repatriates tend to be 35 to 40 years of age or older and considered unfit to work,¹¹ difficulty to demonstrate work experience accumulated in the U.S. or the inability to obtain letters of recommendation from previous employers, lack of access to credit and other financial products to start their own businesses, among others.

In this context, the GRP implemented the following activities:

¹¹ In Guatemala, there is a general preference for hiring young people, even if an older person has more professional experience. Repatriates who are 35-40 years old or older face the difficulty of being discriminated against solely because of their age (Source: Information collected through focus groups and interviews with repatriates as well as government and private sector counterparts).

Trainings and certification of skills programs. The GRP provided financial support to repatriates to continue their studies or learn new skills through institutions like INTECAP. These trainings included computer courses, sewing, baking, and auto mechanics. Support was also provided for processing titles and certifications through the Ministry of Education in the cases of repatriates who completed some schooling before migrating to the U.S.

Partnerships with the private sector. The GRP established alliances with various companies, like Smart Talent,¹² to refer repatriates to viable job opportunities. Likewise, the GRP established relationships with companies that provide services in which repatriates are skilled at, such as construction, culinary, loading and transportation, heavy machinery, and communication (e.g. call centers).

Support for small-business startups. The GRP provided financial support to those repatriates who wanted to start businesses related to the skills they acquired or strengthened in the U.S. This support included training on how to develop business plans and the purchase of industrial equipment. This activity proved to be successful in the reintegration process of assisted repatriates.

Creation of self-help groups for migrants. The GRP created Club Migrantes, a series of self-help workshops to give repatriates the opportunity to share their experiences about the process of repatriation and discuss the challenges of reintegration into Guatemalan society. In these sessions, repatriates also shared their success stories, for example, how they went about obtaining a job or establishing their own businesses.

III. PREVENTION AND COMBAT OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is defined as the transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons by threat, use of force, abuse of power, or deception for the purpose of exploitation.¹³ Although irregular migration does not always lead to human trafficking, these two issues are closely linked. Guatemalans migrating irregularly, particularly the most vulnerable groups, including women, children and adolescents, have a variety of needs (food, shelter, money, protection, etc.) that make them vulnerable to false offers or to be left in the hands of organized crime. The principal forms of human trafficking in Guatemala are sexual and labor exploitation.¹⁴

The counter-trafficking activities implemented by the GRP led to the following lessons:

The support of specialized centers and shelters for victims of trafficking is essential to adequately address this problem. It is important to give immediate attention to people who have been trafficked, particularly medical and psychological care. The GRP provided direct assistance and protection to victims through El Refugio de la Niñez. El Refugio is an organization that serves children and adolescents who are at risk or have been victims of sexual violence, exploitation, and human trafficking. The GRP supported the creation and operation of the shelter *Amor sin Fronteras* in Guatemala City, which is exclusively dedicated to assisting victims of human trafficking.

El Refugio de la Niñez provides temporary shelter and medical and psychological attention. Additionally, this institution provides assistance to facilitate the social and economic reintegration of victims, including

¹² Smart Talent is a recruitment agency specialized in finding human resources for call centers.

¹³ UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2000). Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons ([The Palermo Protocol](#)). Palermo, Italy.

¹⁴ International Organization for Migration (2013). Guatemala Migration Profile 2012.

education and job training services. El Refugio de la Niñez also offers legal assistance to victims¹⁵ and implements advocacy campaigns at the regional and national levels. *Amor sin Fronteras* serves approximately 75-80 people a year and has helped put to trial 14 cases of human trafficking (including 12 that led to convictions) in their four years of operation.¹⁶

Supporting El Refugio de la Niñez proved to be successful to provide proper immediate attention to victims, ensure their social reintegration, and prevent them repeated exploitative situations.

Strengthening the institutional capacity of El Refugio de la Niñez was key to improving the organization's ability to receive external funding. The IOM hired a consulting firm to conduct an assessment of the administrative capacity of the institution. As a result, El Refugio de la Niñez, in coordination with the consulting firm, produced an Institutional Strengthening Plan. The implementation of the plan increased the possibilities of El Refugio to become accredited and qualify for direct funding from USAID, which is an important contribution to the long-term sustainability of the organization's programs.¹⁷

Ongoing training of government agencies improves their capacity to effectively prevent and combat human trafficking. As in other Latin American countries, there is a significant gap between legislation and its effective implementation in Guatemala. In the area of human trafficking, this problem was even more acute because there was no specific legislation to prevent and combat the problem. It was not until 2009 that the Law Against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Trafficking in Persons (LVET) was created and a specialized agency, the Secretariat Against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Trafficking in Persons (SVET), was established. At the same time, the Public Attorney's Office did not have any prosecutors specialized on human trafficking cases until the creation of the Trafficking in Persons Unit in 2012.

Due to the recent creation of this legislation and relevant government agencies, public institutions have significant limitations when responding to the problem. In response, the GRP conducted the following activities:

Providing staff trainings. The GRP hired an international consultant to train 229 judges (almost half of all judges) on trafficking in persons and the application of the LVET. The project also provided logistical support to carry out such trainings—including hotel costs, refreshments, and training materials.

Additionally, the GRP hired another consultant to train three prosecutors and eight auxiliary staff of the Trafficking in Persons Unit on forensic speech.¹⁸ The purpose of the training was to strengthen their capabilities to present and defend trafficking cases before judges. Furthermore, the GRP provided training on how to systematize trafficking cases, both successful and unsuccessful cases, to identify weaknesses and strengths in the process that prosecutors could learn.

Creating departmental networks on human trafficking. The GRP also hired a consultant to create regional networks to share information on prosecution of trafficking cases. This model of departmental networks was based on the network created by the Departmental Working Group on Migration and Human Security facilitated by the IOM sub-office in San Marcos. Key entities

¹⁵ El Refugio has the capacity to accompany and provide technical advice to the Public Attorney's Office in criminal investigations of human trafficking cases.

¹⁶ Data provided by Leonel Dubon, Executive Director of El Refugio de la Niñez on August 19, 2013.

¹⁷ El Refugio is currently working with another organization to continue this process of strengthening its administrative system. El Refugio expects to receive direct funding from USAID by February 2014.

¹⁸ Forensic Speech refers to the ability to successfully and correctly communicate what is known. Prosecutors often had enough evidence for trafficking cases but did not have the ability to present such evidence properly.

participated in these departmental networks, including the SVET, the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDH), the Public Attorney's Office, representatives of local governments, the National Police (PNC), the Presidential Secretariat for Women (SEPREM), the National Institute of Forensic Sciences of Guatemala (INACIF), the Ministry of Labor, and the Ministry of Health, among others. Initially, three networks were established in the departments of Izabal, Quiche, and Huehuetenango—priority areas for SVET due to their level of risk. Subsequently, two new networks were created in the departments of Solola and Sacatepequez. These networks facilitated coordination of local and national actions to combat human trafficking.

Strengthening capacity for monitoring and evaluation. The GRP hired two consultants to prepare a series of documents for the Monitoring and Statistics Unit of the SVET. These documents include technical guidelines and strategic plans for adequate monitoring of statistics related to human trafficking. The purpose of this support was to build the capacity of the SVET to gather consistent information on the issue and on the application of the LVET.

Promoting inter-institutional cooperation. The coordination of inter-agency meetings between Guatemalan authorities and agencies of other countries was another activity the GRP identified as key to strengthening public institutions. This activity gave Guatemalan institutions an opportunity to observe and learn from other countries' prevention and response mechanisms to human trafficking. The GRP team is planning a trip to Costa Rica with the SVET, the DGM, the PNC, and the Institute of Public Defense as part of this inter-institutional cooperation.

Disseminating information in high-risk areas. The GRP also participated in and provided support to the prevention campaign *No me Dejo Engañar* (in English "I will not be fooled") carried out by the SVET. The purpose of the campaign was to educate teachers about human trafficking and give them the proper tools to relay the information to their students. This campaign included everything from informational materials—such as posters, pens, t-shirts and games—to talks in schools.

These activities proved successful in strengthening the capacity of government agencies to prevent and adequately respond to the human trafficking problem.

Strengthening and increasing the participation of civil society is fundamental for fighting against human trafficking. The involvement of civil society in preventing and combating human trafficking was also a key activity to address this problem. In Guatemala, there is widespread misinformation about this issue. Therefore, the GRP looked to promote greater cooperation among civil society organizations and implement informational campaigns in high-risk communities. To this end, the project implemented the following activities:

Creating a network against human trafficking. In coordination with organizations such as End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography & Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT), a network against human trafficking was organized to influence legislation and government action on trafficking. The network is comprised of approximately 19 organizations including United Nations agencies, international, and civil society organizations.

Preparing technical guidelines and providing training for government agencies. With the support of the GRP, ECPAT drafted two best practices guides on criminal investigation and litigation of trafficking cases for the Public Attorney's Office. A system of indicators and standards related to human trafficking was also developed to monitor the implementation of the LVET. The indicators are intended to measure and validate the data produced by the SVET and allow for the development of alternative reports from a civil society perspective.

Additionally, three workshops were provided for representatives of civil society organizations that

assist victims on how to act alongside the Public Attorney's Office in criminal investigations of trafficking cases. Among the institutions that participated in these workshops were ECPAT, Plan International, El Refugio de la Niñez, La Alianza, PDH, Sobrevivientes Foundation, the Institute of Social Protection, and PGN.

Disseminating information for prevention and reporting efforts. Through the network against human trafficking, several radio campaigns in border communities were broadcasted to disseminate information on the subject and on mechanisms of prevention and reporting. Additionally, the IOM San Marcos implemented informational campaigns at the municipal level involving the participation of institutions such as the Municipal Offices for Women (OMMs), SEPREM, and schools in municipalities of priority.

These activities proved effective in educating the public on the issue of trafficking, particularly regarding its existence, how to prevent it, how to identify it, and what to do when a case of human trafficking is identified. Likewise, these activities empowered and strengthened the advocacy capacity of civil society organizations to demand policies, programs, and actions from the State to combat the issue.

IV. PUBLIC POLICY

Drafting and implementing a comprehensive immigration policy is essential for the protection of fundamental rights of migrants and the prevention of irregular migration. At the same time, creating adequate public policies is closely related to the availability of current and reliable information about the characteristics of this phenomenon. Therefore, the GRP compiled consistent and reliable statistics and qualitative information to promote the formulation of informed public policies adequate to the reality of migration in Guatemala.

In this area, the project implemented the following activities:

Generation of knowledge to promote informed public policies. The GRP conducted a national study intended to diagnose, analyze, and systematize different migration variables. The study led to the development of the Guatemala Migration Profile 2012—a document primarily meant to inform the formulation of comprehensive public policies that are consistent with the reality of the phenomenon in the country. The profile analyzes migration trends, the driving factors of these trends, and the social and economic impact of migration. The document also provides recommendations to strengthen the capacity of public institutions, improve information systems on migration, and develop new migration profiles.

Provision of technical and financial support for the promotion of new policies. The GRP coordinated meetings with the Guatemalan Congress, the main actor in legislative matters. The project fostered a relationship with the Migrant Commission to discuss new immigration policies, particularly Initiative 4126 that seeks to amend Migration Act 95-98.¹⁹ This activity aimed to provide technical assistance to the agency so that current and new policies are based on updated migration information.

These activities proved successful in providing a better understanding of migration, its causes and impact, as well as highlighting the importance of having up to date knowledge on this phenomenon. The activities were also important to give greater prominence to the issue of migration, particularly irregular migration, nationwide.

¹⁹ Migration Act 95-98 of Congress is the current Immigration law.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the Guatemalan Repatriates Project allowed for a better understanding of not only the causes of Guatemalan migration, but also the immediate needs of repatriates upon their return to the country. Beyond assisting 84,224 Guatemalan repatriates during the three years of implementation, the project generated valuable lessons about the processes that must exist to adequately serve this population. The project also highlighted the limitations of governmental institutions and regulations in their ability to prevent and respond to the problems of irregular migration and human trafficking.

In the area of basic assistance, the most relevant lessons learned from the Guatemalan Repatriates Project were the need to provide psychological care at the point of arrival, the importance of ensuring minimum services for communication and transportation, and the need to have temporary shelters. In the area of social and economic reintegration, the most important results were providing support for repatriates to obtain basic identification documents, facilitating training and certification of skills, and providing economic and educational assistance for entrepreneurship.

Regarding public policy, the project highlighted the need to develop a coherent national policy with the causes and consequences of irregular migration. Moreover, the project emphasized the importance of providing training to relevant public authorities to prevent and respond to migration. The GRP also stressed the need for programs specifically designed to assist migrants—not only repatriated migrants, but also all types of migrants (emigrants, immigrants, migrants in transit, etc.).

As for human trafficking, the GRP identified the weaknesses that new institutions still have in responding to this problem and the need to strengthen these authorities through training and support materials. The project also highlighted the importance of greater coordination and participation of civil society organizations and the need to disseminate information as key strategies to prevent and combat human trafficking.

Through these various approaches, the project addressed the problem from multiple angles—repatriates, governmental institutions, and civil society—and served to test different methodologies and collect information on practices that are most effective to respond to the problem.