

Overview

Ambulantes is IREX's program supporting agricultural workers and their communities in Mexico. Now in its third phase (2025–2027), building on work begun in 2021, the program operates across communities in four Mexican states — Oaxaca, Veracruz, Guerrero, and Morelos — where poverty and lack of economic alternatives constrain livelihood opportunities. Working with local organizations, community leaders, and government actors, Ambulantes strengthens their capacity to provide trusted information and services for agricultural workers while generating evidence and data to drive improvements in agricultural labor practices and internal mobility. Since 2021, Ambulantes has reached over 10,000 agricultural workers and family members directly and trained 300+ community leaders across 70+ institutions while reaching more than 1 million people through radio and social media. Learn more at [Proyecto Ambulantes](#).



Photo: Proyecto Ambulantes, "Vas a regresar" Documentary

Project Objectives

In collaboration with local and national community partners, Ambulantes aims to achieve three main objectives:

Objective 1

Local organizations and governments are better equipped to provide and sustain quality services and information for agricultural workers and their communities.

Objective 2

Agricultural workers and their communities have the information and skills necessary to reduce the economic and social vulnerabilities that affect their work-related decision-making.

Objective 3

Key stakeholders, including local authorities, communities, and government, are drawing on program insights to strengthen protections for agricultural workers.

Key Issues

Agricultural workers in Mexico face persistent obstacles to exercising their rights and securing safe and dignified working conditions. The obstacles Ambulantes targets include:

'Informal' Recruitment

Ambulantes operates in agricultural labor contexts where employment is often informal, with no written contracts or clear relationships between recruiters and employers. These conditions increase risks of exploitation, wage and hour abuses, poor living conditions, and limited access to redress for workers and their families.

Limited Oversight and Enforcement

While recent reforms have broadened protections for agricultural workers, enforcement remains limited. Workplaces often lack adequate oversight from labor and health authorities, leaving workers with inconsistent access to services. These gaps affect workers and their families.

Information Gaps

Labor conditions and workforce dynamics in Mexico's agricultural sector remain poorly documented, limiting the evidence available to policymakers, employers, and service providers. Without reliable data on labor conditions and community impacts, efforts to address systemic vulnerabilities remain under-resourced and uncoordinated.

Program Activities



Photo: Fomento Cultural y Educativo

Dashboard and Local Research

Ambulantes and its partners conduct community-level research across all four target states, building on work started in Phase I.

Research topics are tailored to regional realities and have included the closure of local schools, cost-benefit analyses comparing agricultural work with local livelihood options, and the connection between drug use, addiction and worksite conditions.

These findings directly inform community outreach and Ambulantes' information campaigns. Interview and research data is also summarized in the program's interactive dashboard, providing an evolving picture of labor mobility dynamics, community needs, and service gaps.



Photo: CECIG-Isabel Margarita Nemesio Nemesio

Information Campaign

Ambulantes conducts information campaigns through radio outreach in indigenous languages, print and digital infographics, mobile messaging platforms, and workshops to spread awareness of labor rights and options for legal redress.

All materials are adapted to reach indigenous-language communities where language barriers increase vulnerability to exploitation. Ambulantes also partners with community radio stations across program states to reinforce messaging and extend reach into remote areas.

To date, the program has reached over 10,000 agricultural workers and family members through direct outreach and over 1 million people through radio and social media.



Photo: Caminos Centro de Acompañamiento a Migrantes

Capacity Building

IREX provides targeted training and technical assistance to its local community partners, strengthening their capacity to deliver services to agricultural workers and sustain that work beyond the program.

Partner-selected capacity strengthening areas include labor law; monitoring, evaluation and learning; digital and physical security; strategic communications; fundraising; and AI tools for organizational efficiency.

Partners in turn work directly with over 300 community leaders across more than 70 institutions, ensuring that knowledge and capacity stay rooted in the communities that need them most.

Donor & Partners

We work hand-in-hand with local and national partners, and with the generous support of Walmart Foundation.

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About IREX

IREX partners with communities and institutions in the United States and around the world to cultivate leaders, create employment opportunities, and expand access to education, delivering measurable, cost-effective results. For nearly 60 years, IREX has been committed to creating value for individuals and communities through practical, enduring impact. For more information, visit <https://irex.org>.