



# FIRST MILE: IREX'S FRAMEWORK FOR PROMOTING SAFER MIGRATION

## Background

As individuals look to find better work or quality of life, whether in their home country or abroad, the challenges of migration have led to increasingly complex dynamics for migrants and their families, communities, and governments. Migrants often leave home not knowing what to expect on their journey. They struggle to navigate government bureaucracies, to obtain essential documentation, to find trusted sources of information regarding their labor rights, and to obtain the skills they need to expand employment options. Where information is available, it is often scattered across sources, not accessible to those outside of urban centers or those who are not literate, and is rarely translated into migrants' native languages.

## IREX's First Mile Approach

The *First Mile* is the period when prospective migrants and their families have yet to make decisions about whether to seek work locally or accept employment away from their homes and what they need to prepare for a migration journey. Rather than focusing on destination communities, the First Mile approach provides local partners with tools to develop and disseminate accurate information and upskilling opportunities to potential migrants and their families and engage with governments to drive policy and legislation that supports safer migration before a journey begins.



The **Ambulantes** project in **Mexico**, funded by the Walmart Foundation, partnered with three local migrant-serving organizations and a network of trusted community leaders to **reach over 1 million people** through radio and social media messaging, printed pamphlets and brochures in Spanish and indigenous languages, and community murals to raise awareness about labor rights among migrant workers.



The **Navigator** project in **Nepal** reached **over 200,000 people** by investing in networks of trusted libraries and community centers to establish safe migration information centers. Funded by the Walmart Foundation, the project trained local librarians and community educators to share critical information with prospective migrants and their families to mitigate risk of fraud and trafficking.



The **Novateca** project in **Moldova**, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, **helped over 1,000 communities** upgrade their libraries through training and technology investments. The libraries provided information about applicable legal rights and support organizations, offered access to relevant e-government services, as well as facilitated networking with diaspora communities abroad to promote better decision-making about migration.



## The Key Elements of the First Mile Approach



1

### First Mile Analysis

Our approach to understanding specific areas of intervention integrates community-based research. This helps to determine local economic conditions, migration drivers, prevailing migratory pathways, and trusted information hubs to serve prospective migrants. We perform gap analyses to reveal the specific resources, services, and information that prospective migrants lack and to recognize which groups face barriers and challenges and ensure that First Mile initiatives are responsive to their needs.



2

### Information and Skills-Building

IREX partners with local organizations, media, community libraries, local businesses, and other trusted partners to develop and disseminate information in relevant languages to prospective migrants and their families. This includes safe migration information and industry-specific livelihood skill training, reaching communities with limited access through in-person outreach, pamphlets, radio public service announcements, social media, and community murals.



3

### Capacity Strengthening

In alignment with the development sector's growing focus on locally-led, sustainable solutions, and based on close consultation with our partners, IREX's approach prioritizes coordinating closely with local organizations and community partners to strengthen their capacities by developing fair and just policies, co-creating educational job-preparedness and risk-awareness content to share with migrants, strengthening their physical and digital security, and providing psychosocial support.



4

### Engagement and Advocacy

IREX partners with local organizations to advocate for policies that increase safety and services for people migrating and to host convenings of government officials and private sector actors to share evidence and promote stronger collaboration.



## First Mile Stakeholders

By working with communities, local partners, and governments, IREX's First Mile Approach fosters more resilient and self-reliant communities, and responsive and efficient government services working towards achieving safer migration outcomes.



### Communities

IREX's approach invests, first and foremost, in learning and listening to migrants and their communities to understand the unique challenges and risks they face. In coordination with trusted local partners, we establish relationships across communities to disseminate information and resources.



### Local Partners

IREX invests in and partners with local organizations, community-based organizations, local business leaders, and media outlets to support migrants, their families, and their communities well into the future.



### Government

IREX takes a thoughtful, gradual approach to government engagement when facilitating safer migration. This ranges from direct advocacy for policy reform and capacity development, to indirect engagement and dialogue led by local organizations.

