



# 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, and to find trusted sources of information regarding their labor rights. 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 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 or accept employment away from their homes and what they need to prepare for a migration journey. Rather than focusing on destination communities or remediating the consequences of unsafe migration, the First Mile approach provides local partners with tools to develop and disseminate accurate information to 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** (2021 – present) partnered with three local migrant-serving organizations to **reach over 700,000 people** through radio and social media messaging, printed pamphlets and brochures in Spanish and indigenous languages, and community murals to raise awareness of labor rights and COVID-19 prevention among migrant workers.



The **Navigator** project in **Nepal** (2018 – present) **reached over 200,000 people** by investing in networks of trusted libraries and community centers to establish safe migration information centers. 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** (2011-2018), 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



## First Mile Stakeholders



### 1 First Mile Analysis

Our inclusive approach to understanding specific areas of intervention integrates community-based research. This helps to determine local 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, as well as Gender, Equality and Social Inclusion analyses to recognize which groups are particularly disadvantaged and ensure that First Mile initiatives meet the needs of marginalized populations.



### 2 Information and Skills-Building

IREX partners with civil society organizations, media, community libraries, and other trusted partners to develop and disseminate information in relevant languages to prospective migrants and their families – including those from marginalized communities – through 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 civil society organizations and community partners to strengthen their capacities by developing equitable and inclusive policies, co-creating educational and risk-awareness content to share with migrants, strengthening their digital security, and providing psychosocial support.



### 4 Engagement and Advocacy

IREX partners with civil society 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.

By working with communities, local partners, and governments, IREX's First Mile approach fosters more resilient communities, responsive civil society, and accountable governance 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 civil society organizations, community-based organizations, 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 civil society.

