Columbia University

SIPA Capstone 2022

STRENGTH IN RESILIENCE: ASSESSING CRITICAL GAPS IN CARE FOR MIGRANTS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

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Authors & Acknowledgements

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Definitions of Terms Used

- **Accompaniment** - Comes from Spanish, "acompañamiento." This is the act of accompanying clients to medical or legal appointments to support them and ensure that their legal rights are being respected.
- **Albergue** - See "Shelter"
- **Asylum seekers** - A group of people who are in the process of applying for asylum, a form of legal protection that allows a person to stay in a host country rather than being removed to their country of origin where they fear persecution or harm.
- **Coyote** - See "Trafficker"
- **Cisgender** - A person whose gender corresponds with their biological sex at birth.
- **Darien Gap** - The geographic region between Panama and Colombia.
- **Deportee** - See "People turned away"
- **Extra-continental migration** - Migration that originates outside of North, Central, and South America. For the purposes of this report, we use this term to refer to migration from Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean.
- **Femicide** - A hate crime that constitutes the killing of women and girls because of their gender. A form of gender-based violence.
- **Forcibly Returned Individuals** - See "People turned away"
- **Gender-based Violence** - Harmful acts directed towards an individual based on their gender.
- **Gender non-conforming** - People that express their gender in ways that do not conform to societal norms.
- **Internally-displaced people** - People that are forced to leave their homes often as a result of armed conflict or generalized violence, but remain within their home country's borders.
- **Interpersonal violence** - Behavior used to establish control and power over another person. Can be physical, sexual, or psychological. Often referred to as intimate partner violence or domestic violence.
- **Migrants** - A person that leaves their place of usual residence, permanently or temporarily, within their home country or across an international border for many different reasons.
- **Northern Triangle Countries** - This term refers to Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.
- **People on the move** - Used interchangeably with "migrants and asylum seekers."
- **People turned away** - This term is utilized somewhat interchangeably with "Deportee" and "Forcibly returned individuals" throughout the report, for lack of better terminology. It refers specifically to people who have been turned away at the border, expelled, deported, or otherwise rejected by the United States.
- **Repatriated populations** - This term is used in the report to encompass both people turned away and voluntarily returned individuals. While these groups of people are distinct, in some circumstances they face similar challenges or needs and thus are occasionally discussed together.
- **Refugee** - A person who has been forced to leave their country of origin due to war, violence, conflict, or persecution; seeking safety across an international border in another country.
- **People facing intersecting vulnerabilities** - all people on the move are vulnerable to violence and discrimination. This term refers to people who face additional vulnerabilities due to their

gender and gender expression, sexuality, race, language, religion, indigeneity, and country of origin. It is important to note that these groups face differentiated marginality; xenophobia, anti-Blackness, Islamophobia, and transphobia create different sets of vulnerabilities and require different responses. We also want to note that the vulnerable groups outlined throughout our report are neither mutually exclusive nor do they represent a comprehensive set of the intersecting vulnerabilities people on the move face. We chose to focus on these groups because multiple interviewees pointed out vulnerabilities specific to them.

- **Service Providers** - In this report, "service providers" refers to an organization that provides health, mental health, accompaniment, or legal services to people on the move.
- **Shelter** - A shelter is a place where people on the move can stay temporarily during their journey.
- **State violence** - Violence that is funded, approved or carried out by a government, often targeting marginalized groups.
- **Trafficker** - A person that is paid to transport migrants and refugees through Mexico and/or across the US-Mexico border.
- **Transgender** - A person whose gender is different from their biological sex at birth.

Acronyms

BAJI	Black Alliance for Just Immigration
CAI	Centro de Atención Integrada
COMAR	Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados)
COVID-19	Coronavirus 2019
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CURP	Unique Population Registration Code (Clave Única de Registro de Población)
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender-based violence
IGO	Inter-governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
INM	National Institute of Migration (Instituto Nacional de Migración)
IMUMI	Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer
OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
MPP	Migrant Protection Protocols
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières / Médicos Sin Fronteras
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SIPA	School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University
UN	United Nations
UNAM	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
U.S.	United States

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Introduction

In January 2021, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a team of graduate students at Columbia University began a research project in consultation with Médecins Sans Frontières that aimed to "better understand the legal, situational, and service landscapes surrounding migration from Central America to Mexico and the United States."[1] They focused their research on five major themes: 1) Albergues (Shelters), 2) Service Delivery, 3) Violence, 4) Unseen and Vulnerable Populations, and 5) Communication and Information Sharing.

Despite the challenges of remote work, they completed a comprehensive report that shed light on gaps in service provision and provided important recommendations. They interviewed key informants, surveyed organizations throughout the region, and compiled their quantitative and qualitative findings into a 57-page report.

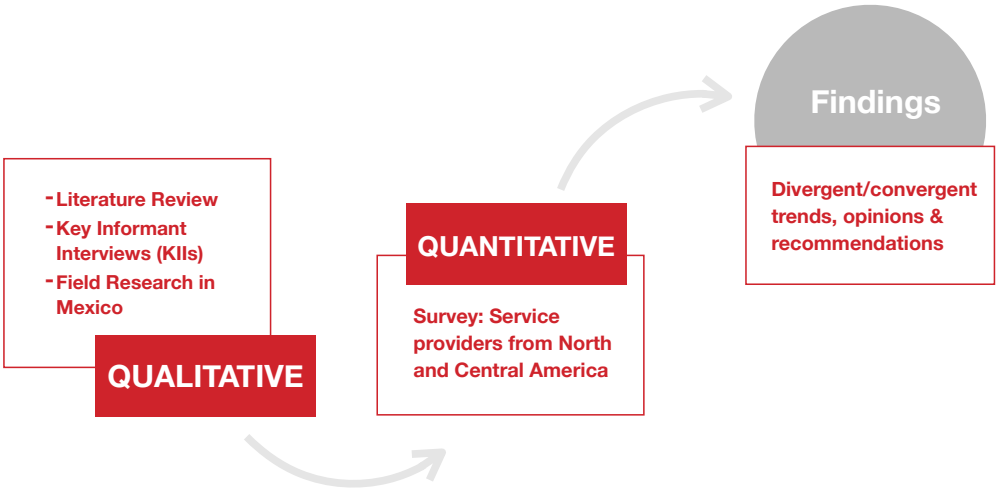
In January 2022, our team sought to build upon their work. Using their recommendations to guide our research, we determined five focus areas centered around the following research questions:

- **Gaps in service provision**: What are the current gaps in service provision, and how can support services be improved for people on the move to ensure continuity as they make their journey? In particular, what are the barriers to accessing services for people facing intersecting vulnerabilities?
- **Legal aid**: What does the framework of legal service provision look like in practice? What are the critical areas of legal aid that need improvement for people on the move?
- **People turned away:** What services are available to people upon ending up in Mexico or Central America after having been turned away at the border? What specific vulnerabilities and challenges do they face?
- **Violence documentation:** What are the current approaches to violence documentation in Mexico and Central America? How are they changing over time?
- **Advocacy:** What advocacy actions should organizations implement to enact change? Who are the targets of the advocacy?

Each of these focus areas is an opportunity to expand upon the work done in 2021 to identify how best to support people on the move throughout Mexico and Central America. This report presents findings from our analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected primarily through key informant interviews and a survey of service providers. We lay out our findings regarding the above research questions across the broader categories of **Migration Trends, Key Challenges, Gaps in Service Provision, and Advocacy.** We conclude with recommendations for organizations working in the region and suggestions of areas for further research.

Methodology

Our team used a mixed methods approach that included a literature review, semi-structured interviews, a service provider survey, and in-person visits to organizations and facilities in Mexico. All quotes and other research findings have been de-identified to protect the anonymity of project participants. A list of named project participants is available in ***Appendix A***, and a detailed breakdown of the final sample of survey respondents is included in ***Appendix B***.



Literature Review

The sources of our literature review primarily consisted of reports from international NGOs alongside government data, academic articles, and news pieces. The analysis covered a total of 51 sources, focusing on scholarly and gray literature published in the last year.

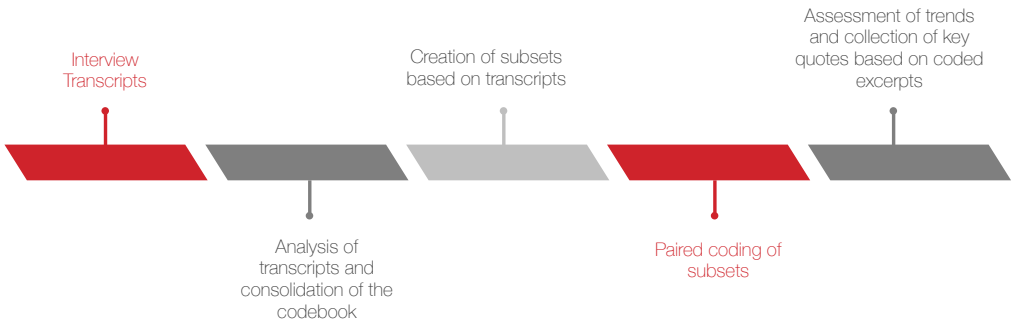
Semi-structured interviews

The team conducted 35 semi-structured interviews with direct service providers and issue area experts. Interviewees were chosen based on recommendations from the MSF team, desk research, and referrals made during interviews. We aimed to hear perspectives from organizations with different geographical coverage, types of services provided, target populations, partnerships, and sizes. Our interviewees were based throughout the region, with Mexico overrepresented in the sample.

Informed consent was obtained verbally from all interviewees. Participants were briefed on the objectives of the research, how their information and responses would be stored and used, and how the report would be publicized. Interviewees received no incentive of any kind to engage in interviews.

Interviews were held remotely via Zoom and in-person, both in English and Spanish. When authorized, interviews were audio and/or video recorded. The team transcribed the interviews using Amazon Transcribe, Happy Scribe, Otter.ai, Panopto, or Zoom.

Finally, the team conducted a coding process of all transcribed interviews, which were divided into five subsets. The coding process had two objectives: 1) to obtain key quotes of interviews; and 2) to identify thematic trends and potential areas of future research. Our team used Dedoose 9.0.46 to code all transcripts, and the codebook is available in Appendix C. The fluxogram of the coding process is depicted below:



Survey

A Qualtrics survey was distributed to 496 contacts from Mexico and the Northern Triangle from MSF's database. Mexico was also overrepresented in the survey sample. The survey included 31 questions across the following categories: general organization information, violence tracking, continuity of care, people turned away, policy and advocacy, legal aid, populations with intersecting vulnerabilities, and extra-continental migrants. In total, the survey received 39 complete responses, a 7.86% response rate. The highest concentration of respondents was in Mexico City, but they also came from a wide range of locations throughout Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and the United States. This survey sample was not randomized and is not representative of the entire population.

Field Research

Our team traveled to Mexico City in March 2022 to conduct in-person research. The trip included visits to the Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados (COMAR), MSF's Centro de Atención Integrada (CAI), researchers at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), and service providers. We engaged with staff from MSF Switzerland, MSF Spain, and other NGOs through a total of twelve meetings and interviews. The trip allowed us to bolster our research and obtain a direct understanding of the situation on the ground.

Limitations

The research process faced five key limitations. First, the short project duration (January to April 2022) limited our ability to obtain a more representative sample for our interviews and surveys, though this was mitigated by the opportunity to engage in a field visit. Second, the short duration may have affected our ability to deepen our analysis of each core thematic area. Third, we were unable to travel to border areas due to university travel restrictions, reducing the reach of our field research. Fourth, our team had limited capacity to conduct desk research in Spanish, which may have led to an overuse of English-based sources. We did have sufficient Spanish-speaking team members to be able to conduct interviews and meetings in Spanish, but we may have missed out on some desk research sources in indigenous languages, Haitian Creole, or other languages. Fifth, we were not able to engage directly with people on the move, and thus all research findings are based on the perceptions of organizations and experts.

Migration Trends

From the 1970s to 2010, the majority of people crossing the U.S. southern border were single men from Mexico.[2] Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, this picture was quickly changing, with a notable increase in Central Americans and families traveling through Mexico and crossing the U.S. border.[3] Then, the economic fallout from COVID-19 led to an increase in people seeking better employment in the U.S., resulting in more single adults once again heading for the border. The year 2021 had a record 1.66 million encounters at the border, more than any previous year.[4]

Fluctuations in migration flows as a result of U.S. policy changes

So far, the Biden administration has made a few important policy changes that affect migration into the U.S. at the southern border, but many pro-immigration activists in the U.S. believe his efforts have fallen short of his campaign promises. The administration has raised the number of refugee admissions to 125,000 per year, yet the government is still working on building the operational mechanisms that allow for processing that many applications. Biden has also used executive action to maintain deportation relief for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, recipients. However, he has also reinstated the Migration Protection Protocols (MPP) or "Remain in Mexico" policy following a court order in December 2021, which forces asylum seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border to stay in Mexico while their claims are being considered.[5]

As a main priority, many activists have been advocating for the end of Title 42, a policy implemented by the Trump administration in March 2020 that authorizes the expulsion of migrants and asylum seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border due to COVID-19-related public health concerns. Since it was put in place, there has been a re-emergence of repeat border crossings by single adults, with fewer families on the move. Title 42 is scheduled to end on May 23, 2022 and increased migration flows are expected as a result. The U.S. government has predicted a possible scenario where as many as 18,000 migrants per day reach the U.S. border, which is three times the current flow.[6] There will also likely be an increase in families making the journey. The recommendations we make in this report to address service provision for people on the move in Mexico and Central America will only become more urgent in the face of a potential drastic surge in migration.

Mexico becoming a destination country

The record number of applications for asylum in Mexico confirms that Mexico is gradually moving from being primarily a transit country to a destination country, especially as more people are turned away from or returning from the U.S.[7] Today, there are far more charity service providers than other actors willing to provide services that support integration. Interviewees told us that more efforts should be made to strengthen collaborations with the private sector to offer work and integration opportunities.[8] 38% of respondents to our survey listed support to find work as a service needed by repatriated people that does not yet exist. As an increasing number of people on the move stay in Mexico permanently or for an extended period of time, service providers are considering introducing programs to support longer-term

stays, for example through economic support.[9] Non-Mexicans on the move also experience intense discrimination and racism within Mexico, which is a barrier to integration into Mexican society. As Mexico becomes more of a destination country, it is critical to address the societal rejections of non-Mexicans who stay in Mexico, especially when they are rooted in xenophobia and nationalism.[10]

Migration from outside of the Americas

The last few years have seen a massive increase in the numbers of people from outside of the Americas making the journey into Central America and Mexico.[11] This is due to a myriad of factors. As European countries have heightened restrictions on African migration, and the dangers associated with the journey across the Mediterranean Sea are becoming more widely known, many African refugees have been choosing to seek asylum in the Americas instead.[12] Following the U.S. Muslim ban, many people from Muslim-majority countries, most notably Somalia, began traveling through South and Central America into Mexico.[13] Finally, ongoing COVID-related visa restrictions have pushed many refugees to take the dangerous journey through Mexico and Central America rather than waiting for a visa in the U.S. or Canada.

Most extra-continental migrants enter the Americas through Brazil, Ecuador, or Chile due largely to their more liberal visa policies for African and Asian countries.[14] From 2014 to 2019, the number of African and Asian migrants recorded journeying through the Darien Gap increased by an astounding 715 percent.[15] By 2019, there were more apprehensions of Cameroonians in Mexico than in Europe.[16] In Reynosa, Mexico about 40 percent of asylum seekers are from African countries.[17]At the same time, there have been more Indian detainees at the US-Mexico border than people from any other country outside of Latin America. In 2019 (the last year on record besides 2020, which was an anomaly year), over 8,000 Indians were detained by U.S. Border Patrol, up from a mere 77 in 2008.[18] While there were declines in migration in 2020 due to the pandemic, migration levels have since rebounded and increased past 2019 levels.[19]

Over the past three years, the majority of extra-continental migrants and asylum seekers in Mexico and Central America have been from Haiti and Cuba. The next most common countries of origin were Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Somalia, Ghana, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Romania, and Turkey.[20,21] Recently, there has also been a large increase in migration from Ukraine and Russia.

Indigenous people on the move from Central America and Mexico

Movement of Indigenous people within the Americas is poorly recorded, due largely to the fact that most data on migration is collected based on nationality. Additionally, many displaced Indigenous people try to hide their identities in order to escape discrimination and are therefore often undercounted.[22] Still, Indigenous rights organizations contend that numbers of Indigenous people on the move have increased in recent years due to a multiplicity of factors. Environmental degradation, the privatization of forests, the proliferation of extractive industries, mineral deposits, and aquifers, and state violence against Indigenous peoples have increased forced migration, both within and outside of Latin America. Asociación Pop No'j, an Indigenous-rights organization in Guatemala, asserts that the majority of Guatemalan migrants and

asylum seekers are Indigenous.[23] Additionally, the majority of Indigenous people on the migrant route are from Guatemala. However, it is still important to keep in mind that increases in Indigenous movement from all over the world are driven by similar factors—climate change, privatization, and mass dispossession.[24]

Oaxaca Mixtecs

In the 1980s, economic restructuring in Mexico led to dramatic increases in unemployment levels and precipitous drops in wages and social welfare, particularly in areas with large Indigenous populations. This led significant numbers of Mixtecos and Zapotecos of Oaxaca, Totonacas of Veracruz, Nahuas of Guerrero, and Purépechas of Michoacán to make the journey along the migration route to the US-Mexico border. These communities comprise a large portion (between 5-7 percent) of the agricultural labor force in California.[25] Mexico is the country in Latin America with the widest wealth gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, with over 75 percent of the Indigenous population living in poverty as of 2010 (compared to approximately a third of the total population).[26] Continuing declines in small farmer subsidies, unprotected employment, and large-scale dispossession has continued to exacerbate these issues.[27]

Displaced LGBTIQ people

LGBTIQ people throughout the Americas face systemic discrimination, domestic abuse, and increased rates of violence. COVID-19 lockdowns increased domestic violence rates manyfold across the globe, with women, children and LGBTIQ people bearing the brunt of increased familial violence.[28] Compounding this, over the last two years, examples abound of violence and legislative discrimination against LGBTIQ people that have resulted in increased rates of migration and internal displacement.

LGBTIQ people have also experienced increased violence outside the home. In one week in 2021 in Guatemala, three LGBTIQ people – two transgender women and one gay man – were killed, including a prominent activist from a trans-rights organization.[29] In the same year, founders of organizations in El Salvador and Nicaragua sought international protection due to threats and violence.[30] In several countries, including Panama and Colombia, COVID-19 curfews were differentiated by gender; men and women were designated different days on which they were allowed to leave their homes. This put gender non-conforming and trans people at risk of punishment and police violence for violating pandemic rules, and led people to fear leaving their homes.[31]

Migration of women and children

Women have been on the move in greater numbers in recent years. In 2021, 69 percent of asylum seekers in Mexico were women and children (45 percent were women).[32] Some research associates this increase with trends in gender-based violence in the region, arguing that the region's long-standing

"femicide epidemic" has led to a new wave of migration by women in search of safety and protection from violence.[33]

Service providers and experts in the field made clear in interviews that a gender perspective within the migration context is severely lacking in the region. According to one advocate, a specific lens exploring gender's impacts on migration is not extensively covered by CSOs in Mexico, and the feminist movement is not well integrated into issues of migration.[34]

One particular challenge is that many services are provided by religious groups, who do not allow for a gender discourse in their work.[35] Another service provider described this as a failure of the support system to attend to the needs of migrant women from a feminist perspective, neglecting to actively integrate considerations of gender rights into the practice of providing care to migrants.[36] This failure of the support system to consider the specific needs of women and gender non-conforming individuals leads to gaps in services and obstacles to achieving the full realization of their rights.

> "The gender approach has not been transmitted in clear political actions in civil society, nor in the government."

Interviewees also pointed out that women are largely responsible for children while in transit, as they are usually the primary caregiver and thus have specific needs and responsibilities in this regard.[37] This not only leads to extra burdens of care, but also to additional psychological trauma under certain circumstances. According to one service provider, "because of gender roles, mothers being separated from their kids… it's the worst thing that could ever happen to you. Motherhood is gendered."[38] She has observed that when something happens to a child, women experience mental and emotional trauma in a distinct manner from men,[39] and thus migrating with children, caring for them, and protecting them can be extremely burdensome for women.

People turned away at the border

The number of people who have been turned away by the United States and are now residing in Mexico has grown over time. While from 2010 to 2019 the rise in repatriated populations in Mexico was due to both large-scale deportations and voluntary return of individuals because of the Great Recession's economic impacts,[40] in recent years U.S. policies such as Title 42 have increased the number of people turned away immediately at the border. In 2021, border apprehensions grew to record levels, with Border Patrol carrying out more than one million expulsions and deportations, largely under Title 42.[41] This means more and more individuals whose goal was to end up in the U.S. have found themselves in Mexico or Central America, often with very limited services and resources at their disposal and vulnerable to various types of violence.

The experiences of people turned away vary widely depending on their circumstances. For instance, one service provider noted that toward the beginning of the Obama administration they noticed higher numbers of people deported after living in the U.S. for many years, whereas in later years they saw more people who had been turned away immediately upon reaching the border.[42] These differences present challenges for service providers in determining integration needs of those planning to stay in Mexico, given the vastly different experiences with separation from family members in the U.S., lack of knowledge of Spanish, lack of support networks established in receiving countries, and more. This is one area in which more attention to specific needs of these different groups of people is needed.

A more recent trend identified by service providers that presents challenges to their work is the unpredictability of U.S. deportation flights. While organizations used to be able to predict the cities where most deportees would be sent within Mexico and set up response services there, some service providers told us that the U.S. now tends to change flight destinations at the last minute, making it difficult for providers to adapt.[43] This trend has increased during the era of Title 42. Another expert said that the government now often takes people from the border cities they cross into, flies or buses them to a different border city, and returns them across the border there, without notifying service providers of these changes.[44] An article from NPR in 2021 confirms this trend, and reports that the pattern of taking people to different border cities under Title 42 – largely because of overcrowding and capacity issues at shelters on the Mexican side of the border – creates great confusion among migrants, who end up sometimes 800 miles from where they began their border crossing.[45] Another interviewee mentioned that due to the oversaturation issues in the border cities, the U.S. has even begun flying people all the way to southern Mexican cities like Tapachula. This may also be an intentional dissuasion strategy to discourage people on the move from attempting to make it further North, in fear of having to go through the process all over again.[46]

Key Challenges Facing People on the Move

Interview after interview, we heard that discrimination and violence against groups of people with intersecting vulnerabilities stopped many from accessing services, particularly Black, Indigenous and LGBTIQ migrants. This was repeatedly cited as one of the most pressing issues for organizations working with people on the move. These groups were far more likely to be indiscriminately harassed by authorities and denied needed services and care.

Due largely to discrimination, shelter restrictions, and lack of knowledge, many people with intersecting vulnerabilities do not stay in the formal shelter system, but instead stay in hotels on their own or acquire housing and services through coyotes. Survey respondents noted that the people most likely to avoid formal services were survivors of violence, LGBTIQ people, and people with language barriers.[47] This leads to potential exploitation, as traffickers often charge migrants money for free services and shuttle people along specific routes where they may not have access to services that they otherwise would. Exacerbating this issue, LGBTIQ people tend to travel on their own and without family support (monetary or otherwise), and stay in hotels or on the streets. Additionally, organizations working with Haitians reported that due to discrimination, many were overpaying for dilapidated housing in Tapachula.

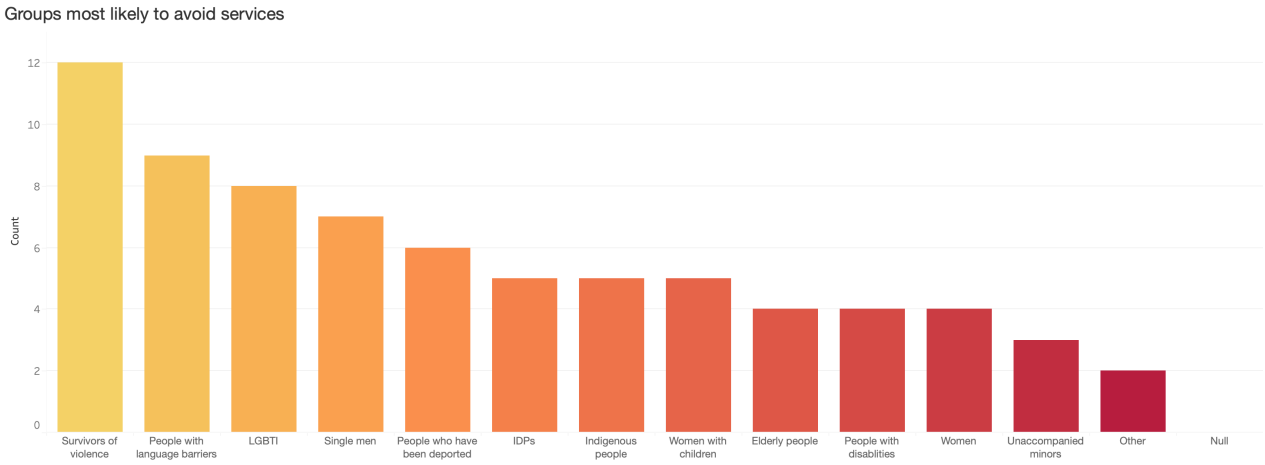


Figure (above) : groups most likely to avoid services, according to survey respondents.[48]

In addition to the challenges faced by people with intersecting vulnerabilities based on identity, deportees and other people who have been turned away at the border face unique challenges in the region, particularly when it comes to risks of violence and integrating or reintegrating into their new communities. Government services geared toward their specific needs are lacking, and the government services that do exist in Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador – according to one expert – are focused solely on the initial reception of returnees and not necessarily on reintegration.[49] The Center for American Progress confirms that the Mexican government's attempts to address these specific needs, such as its *Somos*

Mexicanos initiative of 2014 that aimed to facilitate the reintegration of Mexican nationals, have fallen short and "done little to ease the transition of many returnees, who continue to struggle with emotional trauma and lack access to employment, educational opportunities, and the long-term support they need to navigate life in Mexico."[50] On top of integration challenges, these populations must also deal with particular vulnerabilities to violence and exploitation facing them due to their specific situations, especially when they have just been turned away at the border and are targeted by various armed actors. These particular vulnerabilities are explored later in this section.

Anti-Blackness, xenophobia and language barriers

Service providers and advocacy organizations working with Black migrants and asylum seekers, including Haitians, people from various African countries, and Afro-Latinx people, repeatedly reported that these groups faced higher rates of violence and discrimination at the hands of state authorities. The Black Alliance for Just Immigration noted that Black migrants and asylum seekers were often arbitrarily arrested, detained, and held for weeks. In some cases, people were even denied water, food, and medical care. Multiple organizations have reported that Black migrants and asylum seekers are forced to remain in Tapachula, and that those who attempt to move elsewhere in Mexico are detained and sent back to Tapachula.[51] Indigenous people, on the other hand – many of whom do not speak Spanish – are often deported back to Guatemala by bus, as this is an inexpensive exercise for Mexican immigration officials.[52]

> "All Black people are detained for at least 21 days, including babies, children, and sick people. Also, if we attempt to leave Tapachula, then we are detained again. Some people have been detained up to five or six times... Mexican officials are much harsher inside the detention centers than they are outside in public."
>
> - Sierra Leonean migrant interviewed by the Black Alliance for Just Immigration

Many people from outside the Americas also face language and cultural barriers to accessing shelter and care. Language barriers exacerbate existing difficulties accessing shelter, health care, and legal services, especially for those with little knowledge of Mexican systems. Cultural barriers are compounded for migrants from religious communities that are less prevalent in Latin America, particularly Muslims from Africa and Asia. Frequently, shelters and service providers do not allow migrants and asylum seekers to prepare their own food, leaving few options for those who have religious dietary restrictions.[53]

In which languages do you currently provide services?

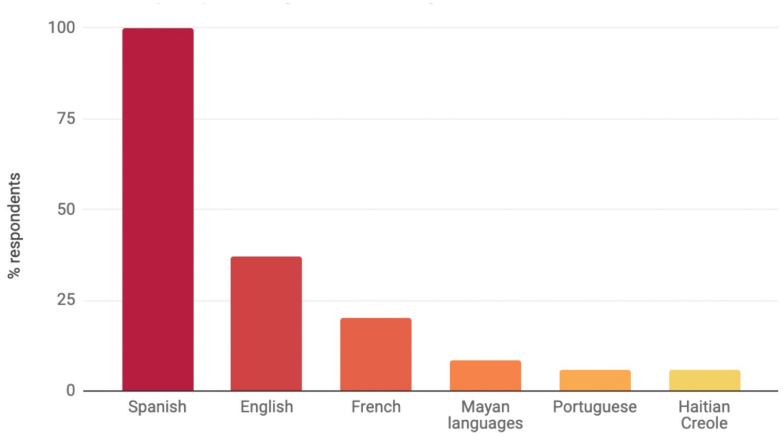


Figure (above): Languages in which service providers offer services [54]

Innovative Language Services

A small number of service providers are using WhatsApp as a digital translation service for migrants who do not speak Spanish or other languages spoken by the provider. The app enables the client to text in their language and the provider to read the message in Spanish, providing the translation instantaneously.[55] This could also be used virtually as a service that MSF, or another service provider, offers within designated times to provide information and support to clients.

One interviewee cited another border setting in Europe with groups of people on the move with different language capabilities, where they made announcements over a loud-speaker that were automatically translated into other languages.[56] Giving people on the move the opportunity to hear announcements in their language through automatic translation would be very impactful.

Transphobia, gender-based violence, and discrimination

Like other vulnerable populations, both cis and trans women face discrimination throughout their migratory processes, largely due to patriarchal cultural norms present throughout their routes. This discrimination manifests in various ways. In some cases, according to multiple service providers, women are not permitted to interact directly with service providers because of patriarchal cultural norms, which leads to men making decisions and, almost certainly, circumstances in which domestic violence situations within migrating partners get hidden from view.[57] According to one service provider who put it frankly, "we are not well-equipped to deal with that."[58] Another service provider pointed out the impacts of gender discrimination in employment, arguing that it gets coupled with age discrimination such that older women have significant barriers to finding employment along their routes.[59]

According to a 2022 report by the Women's Refugee Commission and the *Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración* (IMUMI), women on the move frequently experience gender-based violence (GBV) during their journeys and "face heightened barriers to report these crimes and receive support services."[60] Furthermore, many of these women are still processing violent traumas from which they fled in the first place, meaning these experiences of violence during the journey exacerbate and compound upon prior traumas.[61]

> **The experience of having to accompany migrants to their health appointments is shared across care providers throughout Mexico; we know a health coordinator in Tapachula who is constantly having to go with people to their appointments and push health providers to offer services equally to Black migrants.**
>
> Interviewee from an LGBTIQ shelter

According to service providers in Mexico, most women who migrate say they know that GBV is a risk, but are willing to take it because they want to provide better lives for their children.[62] Then, when they do survive violence, they rarely prioritize addressing their needs afterward, which leads to post-traumatic stress that follows them throughout their journey, lack of access to justice, and trends in underreporting. Research also shows that the failure to report and address GBV when it happens leads survivors to have greater health complications later in life, which often do not get associated with the GBV experience and thus are rarely treated effectively.[63] One service provider explained that when working with a population in transit, it is nearly impossible for them to prioritize violence response. When a woman experiences violence, filing a criminal complaint or seeking medical treatment is her last priority – falling far in line behind paying off debts, worrying about children, getting to a safe space, and more.[64] And the fact that she is not staying in the same places only increases the challenges of seeking legal justice in any location. Survey data confirmed this, with respondents indicating their perception that survivors of violence are the group most likely to avoid accessing services during their journeys.

LGBTIQ people on the move, particularly trans women and gender non-conforming people, are at a heightened risk of robbery, sexual assault, murder, and trafficking because they often travel alone and are therefore more visible targets. Sex workers, many of whom are LGBTIQ, are also particularly vulnerable to acts of violence and assault. A history of arbitrary arrests and violence at the hands of police forces also makes these groups less likely to seek help from government authorities or report abuse.

It is particularly difficult for LGBTIQ people to find shelters that are accommodating to their needs. There are very few shelters that cater specifically to LGBTIQ people, and most migrant shelters are sex-segregated. Trans and gender non-conforming people are then often forced to sleep in rooms where they are at risk of violence or that do not match their gender identities.[65] Additionally, largely because many shelter networks are run by churches, many LGBTIQ people are turned away due to outward queerness or engagement in sex work outside of the shelter. LGBTIQ service providers told us that some shelters

have even asked trans women to cut their hair or dress in more masculine clothing as a prerequisite for accessing services.[66]

Lack of organizational support for people with intersecting vulnerabilities

All of these issues are exacerbated by the fact that few organizations specifically work with or are led by populations facing intersecting vulnerabilities, and those that do are severely under-resourced and underfunded. Service providers often rely heavily on government funding, which is often not as readily available to smaller community organizations that work with vulnerable populations. The lack of organizations led by marginalized people then also manifests in a failure to report data disaggregated by gender, sex, and related factors. Instead of reporting how many pregnant women, women survivors of violence, or women who experience poverty migrate, for example, they report solely the number of women migrating and generalized assessments of violence, poverty, and other trends. Thus, disaggregated analysis of migration's effect on women is lacking.

> **There's a lot of communication between LGBTQ+ organizations and individuals. So there's this route of care throughout the regions… They're able to locate people who need help.**
>
> Interviewee who works with LGBTIQ organizations

Additionally, non-specialized organizations often do not have the resources to cater specifically to the needs of groups with intersecting vulnerabilities. For example, most service providers do not have the capacity to translate, and there is a general paucity of translators available, particularly for groups with smaller representations.

However, many communities of people with intersecting vulnerabilities in the region have formed their own networks of care, which can be tapped in order to reach and partner with these groups. For example, communication between LGBTIQ organizations in the region is strong, such that an under-resourced, small network of organizations are still able to provide some degree of continuity in the care that they offer.

Challenges to integration or reintegration for people who have been turned away

For those people who either decide to or end up staying in Mexico upon being turned away, challenges to their integration into society are significant. Deportees face distinct challenges as compared with individuals who return voluntarily. A 2021 study found that both groups experience challenges finding work, enrolling children in school, and accessing health and social services, but deportees face greater stigma and discrimination "because they are assumed to have criminal records in the U.S. or to have mental illness, or they can experience discrimination based on personal features, such as skin tone or Spanish fluency."[67] When added to the racial and language-related discrimination that most people on the move experience, this presents particular challenges to finding employment.[68]

The challenges to integration, or reintegration, also stem from the uncertainty of the situations of forcibly returned individuals. Those who have been rejected at the border once do not necessarily give up on trying to enter. Thus, a service provider pointed out that it is particularly challenging to provide integration programming for this population because the longer someone is residing in a country for an uncertain period of time, the less likely they are to try to actively integrate, such as through taking a language course or participating in another program.[69] This presents a challenge to service providers in addressing the needs of these populations, particularly those who have been turned away under Title 42 and thus feel like they have not had their opportunity at asylum yet.[70]

Finally, more logistical issues regarding the integration process involve the fact that repatriated migrants face barriers to accessing the Mexican system. Many do not have a *Clave Única de Registro de Población* (CURP) – an ID needed in order to work – and many face extreme difficulties in getting their education credentialled and transferring their knowledge and skills to their new environment.[71] This results in barriers to accessing employment and therefore higher rates of re-migration as a consequence.

Vulnerabilities of and Violence Faced by People Turned Away

While all people on the move are vulnerable and experience high rates of violence, people who have been turned away face particular risks because of their circumstances. Just after people are deported, specifically, they are extremely vulnerable. This is because the police know who they are, which puts them at risk of extortion, violence, or fraud.[72] Another interviewee confirmed a similar risk, noting that particularly people on the border who have been expelled under Title 42 or MPP are, upon crossing the international bridge into Mexico, immediately vulnerable to kidnapping, because cartels assume they might have connections in the U.S. and thus will target them for extortion. Then, if the individual does not have the money, he or she might be tortured or raped.[73] A Human Rights First report notes that forced returns to Mexico in 2021 resulted in "at least 1,544 publicly reported cases of murder, rape, torture, kidnapping, and other violent assaults."[74] Even worse, as experts told us, access to services along the border is severely limited by the dangers present in certain border cities. For example, Tamaulipas is largely under "control by the cartels," so there are fewer NGOs willing to operate there.[75] Even UN agencies only do remote work there.[76] Thus, people turned away at the border who end up back in Mexican border cities face extreme vulnerabilities to violence with limited resources for protection.

Another interviewee confirmed that she has noted similar targeting of repatriated people in El Salvador and Guatemala as well, where this population is either viewed as having more money or might be returning to a community that has rejected them in some way.[77] They face particular risks of violence simply because of their circumstances.

> In general, violence is under-reported. We know that it's very much under reported mainly because people on the move fear authorities. So even if an event of violence occurs, it's unlikely that they would go and seek justice or even for health care. There is fear of authorities and of course, fear of reporting.[78]

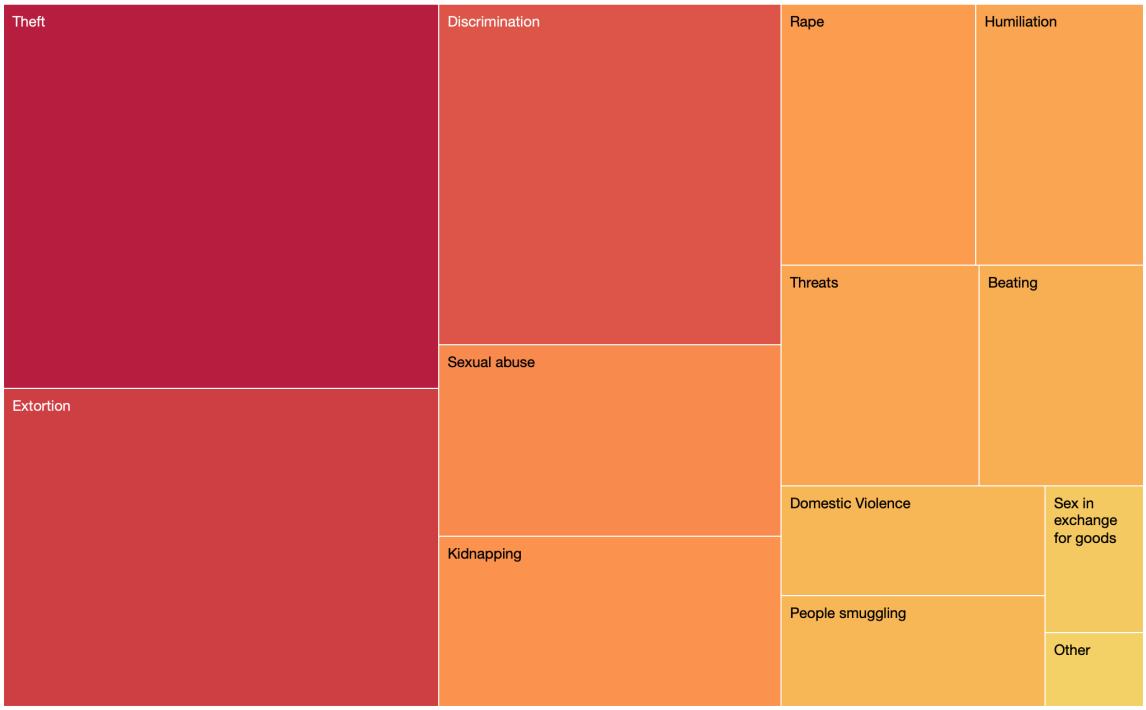
Violence faced and need to improve documentation

People on the move face a wide spectrum of types of violence throughout their journeys, and the task of documenting it presents specific challenges. A key barrier that comes with documentation of violence is trust of and access to affected populations. Interviewees underscored this as especially true with state-affiliated documentation efforts.[79] Interviewees also outlined the difficulty of defining violence in the first place. They described how conventional understandings of violence as a single physical act fail to account for the disparate forms of violence that along migration routes. Others noted that it is important to record more information than just the symptoms of violence.

An improved understanding of the violence faced by people on the move can help service providers program and tailor care and support services. Additionally, disaggregated data on violence could provide service providers and advocacy organizations with a better understanding of how violence affects people with different vulnerabilities.

It is thus important to examine existing approaches and methodologies of violence documentation. There are diverse types of violence (direct physical violence, disappearances, gender-based violence, etc.), diverse perpetrators of violence (state officials, traffickers, domestic partners, etc.), and a wide range of geographies (points along the US-Mexico and Mexico-Guatemala border, urban hotspots etc.) along the route.

Most common types of violence against migrants reported



Innovative Approaches to Violence Documentation

Along the route, various initiatives and organizations record testimonies or otherwise collect data on violence against people on the move, including more than half of the service providers in our survey. Survey respondents described that their organizations track several categories of violence, most commonly associated with beating, theft, rape, and threats. Respondents more commonly tracked violence from state authorities than other perpetrator categories.

Approaches to violence documentation are diverse. Existing quantitative approaches to violence documentation come mainly from IGOs (e.g. IOM's Missing Migrant Project), academia (e.g. Migrant Border Crossing Study), state agencies (e.g. National Human Rights Commission) and international NGOs (e.g. medical data recorded in MSF's own Health Information System). Complementing these efforts are qualitative approaches that are usually conducted by NGO groups and activists (e.g. Physicians for Human Rights' "Forced into Danger"; IMUMI's "En la boca del lobo"; and MSF's "No Way Out").

Organizations and initiatives outside of Latin America have conducted important programming on violence documentation that can provide useful references for expanding existing initiatives in Mexico and Latin America. The work of the Protecting Rights at Borders initiative and the Border Violence Monitoring Network, both active along the EU's external borders in the Balkan Region, are particularly noteworthy. In particular, the use of a standardized reporting methodology across regions and working groups to collect data and testimonies on border violence is promising.

Gaps in Service Provision

Over the last two years, it has become increasingly difficult to move both within and across countries on the migration route, due to visa restrictions, U.S. border policy, and Mexican authorities increasing restrictions near the US-Mexico border, pushing people farther south. At the same time, migration has been increasing, particularly from places that have not had historic migration, and already overstretched Mexican systems are not set up to handle these populations.[80] All of this leads to dual marginalization of people already facing intersecting vulnerabilities and discrimination; these populations are then often turned away from overcrowded and overtaxed systems, and specialized care that is needed is not available.

In this context, we looked closely at gaps in service provision and care along the migration route in Mexico, particularly for people with intersecting vulnerabilities based on identity and for deportees and other people who have been turned away. We identified several major barriers faced by people on the move, including gaps in legal aid representation, health care provision, and labor and economic services.

Legal representation

Legal representation was consistently identified as one of the key gaps in service provision along the migration route, and was cited as the most needed legal service by 41 percent of survey participants.[81] According to research from the International Refugee Assistance Project, asylum seekers that have access to legal aid services are five times more likely to be granted asylum in the US.[82] Still, there are few organizations that provide legal services, and even those that do remain difficult for many asylum seekers to access, particularly for those placed into MPP.[83] Only 7 percent of asylum seekers in MPP had access to legal counsel, resulting in asylum granted in fewer than 0.1 percent of total cases.[84] The primary legal

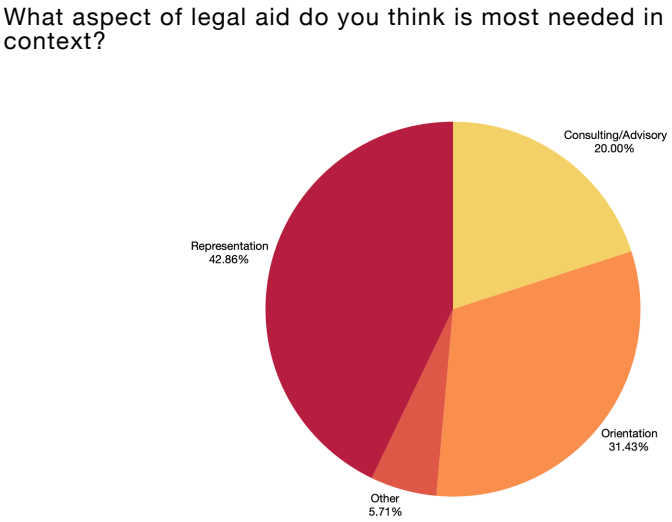


Figure: Most needed aspects of legal aid, according to survey respondents[85]

barriers that people on the move face are difficulty navigating asylum proceedings and the inability to assert legal rights due to lack of knowledge.

According to survey respondents, the aspects of legal aid that were the most needed were legal representation to access rights and strategy development, as well as orientation, or the provision of general information regarding migrants' rights.

Difficulty Navigating Asylum Processes

For non-Spanish-speaking migrants and asylum seekers, many of whom are Black and/or Indigenous, already complex legal systems and changing policies across borders are rendered even more confusing due to language barriers. Many non-Spanish-speaking migrants and asylum seekers, particularly those who also do not speak English, are forced by Mexican immigration officials to agree to outcomes that they did not understand or want. Many sign paperwork without translation.[86] Many others enter into asylum proceedings in Mexico not knowing that this would preclude them from applying for asylum elsewhere. In 2019, when thousands of African migrants refused to apply for asylum, Mexico chose to stop recognizing many of their claims to citizenship, rendering nearly all of the Africans that they apprehended stateless, a status that they were unable to challenge due to a lack of embassies from African nations in the country.[87]

Complicating matters, the UNHCR mandate only allows legal aid organizations that it funds to work with people who have already submitted an asylum application.[88] This limits access to legal aid for those who either have yet to file for asylum or, for a myriad of possible reasons, choose not to apply for asylum in Mexico. Migrants and asylum seekers who follow less-traveled routes through Mexico, such as those trying to avoid Tapachula, also have difficulty accessing legal services due to a paucity of organizations providing services in areas outside of traditional migration routes.

Haitians in Mexico

Mexican immigration law allows for asylum claims and humanitarian visas, but provides few alternative avenues to residency. Instead, Mexican immigration authorities continue to push refugees back to Guatemala, restrict movement to the US-Mexico border, and conduct mass deportations. As the number of Haitians seeking asylum in Central America and Mexico has increased, they have been particularly marginalized by the policies of Mexican authorities. Anti-Blackness exacerbates existing discrimination against all migrant populations, and authorities usually refuse to consider Haitians for refugee status, citing the Cartegena Declaration requirement that refugees seek asylum in the first place that they are able.[89] Meanwhile, Haitians are unlikely to seek asylum in countries where they lived previously—namely Chile and Brazil—due to a range of issues, including difficulties navigating asylum systems, expiring job assistance, job insecurity, and increasing xenophobia and discrimination.[90,91]

> **Migrants at the border speak up for themselves confidently against unlawful practices when they know what rights they have, and find the power to say something that is being done is not in the law.**

Inability to Assert Legal Rights

Interviewees noted that people on the move often lack knowledge of legal rights and asylum processes in the countries that they pass through, a problem complicated by changing laws and multiple border crossings. Many organizations provide "know your rights" guides, though several interviewees asserted that there was a need for wider translation and dissemination of such guides, particularly by trusted organizations and sources. Many migrants and asylum seekers lack access to verified information sources, and there is rampant misinformation and manipulation of information, by traffickers, government authorities, and people on the move themselves.[92] 57% of survey respondents shared that at least half of the people they encounter lack internet access, making the dissemination of information doubly important.[93] Language barriers increase vulnerability to misinformation, and many non-Spanish speaking migrants and asylum seekers, particularly Indigenous peoples and extra-continental migrants are often unable to access even existing "know your rights" programming.

Innovative Practices for Information Sharing

Misinformation and lack of information is a major problem for people on the move traveling through Mexico. Traffickers are active on Facebook and WhatsApp, often promising a safe journey and easy asylum process.[94] A number of interviewees provided creative ideas of how truthful information could be spread more easily. For instance, given the fact that U.S. and Mexican migration policies frequently change and shelters cannot always stay up to date when providing policy advice to people on the move, one interviewee suggested the creation of a methodology (e.g. a government program, technology tool, newsletter, or WhatsApp group) to inform shelters about policy changes in real time so they can remain current.[95] Any method should try to take advantage of the vast network of shelters in Mexico, which are a trusted source of information for people on the move.[96]

Research has proven that in some settings, flyers are seen as reliable sources of information, compared to other sources.[97] Flyers could be printed with current information, and QR codes could be added to flyers to invite people on the move to join WhatsApp groups that a service provider maintains to share accurate information.[98]

MSF employees already visit shelters to provide health checks and protection information. Some experts shared that "know your rights" information, protection resources and policy information made available to people on the move during these visits could be reinforced through training, communication tools, or partnerships with other NGOs.[99] This would be especially valuable outside of shelters, in locations where authorities are present and people on the move would benefit from this accurate information.[100]

Health care provision

People on the move have disproportionately high levels of serious health needs and disabilities, including neurological and physical disabilities as a result of violent attacks. Distrust in public healthcare and medical systems compounds the risk of serious illness, as many people on the move avoid public hospitals and official health care centers, particularly those likely to face discrimination at the hands of state officials.

Mexican law – specifically *Artículo 77* of the *Ley General de Salud* – guarantees free and equal access to health care services regardless of immigration status.[101] Still, several service providers noted that many people on the move, particularly non-Spanish speakers, are unaware of their rights to access public health care, and are often turned away from hospitals for lack of documentation, in spite of this practice being illegal. One interviewee shared a story of a pregnant woman who was turned away from a hospital and forced to go to another health facility three miles away.[102]

Sexual and reproductive care

There are very few health care providers that cater to the specific needs of populations with intersecting vulnerabilities. Service providers said it is particularly difficult to access testing and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases,[103] even though Mexican law makes it legal to request sexual and reproductive health services without providing national identification.[104] Additionally, trans and gender non-conforming people are often unable to access gender-affirming care, including hormone replacement therapy.[105] Due to the nature of the migration route, chronic illnesses that predate the journey are often difficult for health care providers to assess and document. Interviewees noted that people on the move are often unable to access ongoing treatment for chronic conditions, such as diabetes, epilepsy, and HIV.[106]

Reproductive health services are also difficult to access. Research shows that, despite it being an illegal practice, pregnant people without documentation have been denied medical care and turned away by local hospitals in the country.[107] Service providers we spoke with confirmed similar trends. One interviewee said that, in general, access to reproductive and sexual health services is often only given to migrants and asylum seekers when they are visibly sick. So, for example, if they are pregnant they might only receive treatment if they are bleeding but will be denied access to other necessary prenatal care.[108]

Lack of access to health care can often have dangerous outcomes. Abortion is extremely difficult to access, despite recently becoming decriminalized in certain Mexican states. It remains illegal or practically illegal in all of the Northern Triangle countries. Ongoing efforts to criminalize abortion throughout the Americas exacerbate health risks.[109,110] Even where access to abortion care exists, people often do not know where to access it, leading to potentially dangerous health outcomes.[111] Some service providers noted that, due to a lack of access to hormone treatments, trans and gender non-conforming people on the move often perform unsupervised hormone treatments – sometimes two separate hormonal treatments at once – which can affect their health in dangerous ways. Service providers also noted that

several people undergo unprofessional gender-affirming surgeries, implanting dangerous substances in their bodies that could prove fatal over time.[112]

Additionally, service providers noted that it is difficult to continue care across the US-Mexico border. For example, many people are able to start HIV treatment at centers in Tijuana but have difficulty finding and accessing this care on the U.S. side of the border.[113]

Mental Health Care

Many interviewees noted a lack of access to and assessment of mental health needs. In the survey administered by our team, mental health and psychosocial support were identified as the weakest areas of service provision, where migrants and asylum seekers' needs were not being met.[114] Even where access to mental health care exists, many are unable to access it meaningfully due to a lack of care in their first language or fears of discrimination from mental health professionals. Additionally, there is a need for mental health providers who are trained or specialized in care provision for LGBTIQ people, as these groups are often unable to access appropriate mental health care.

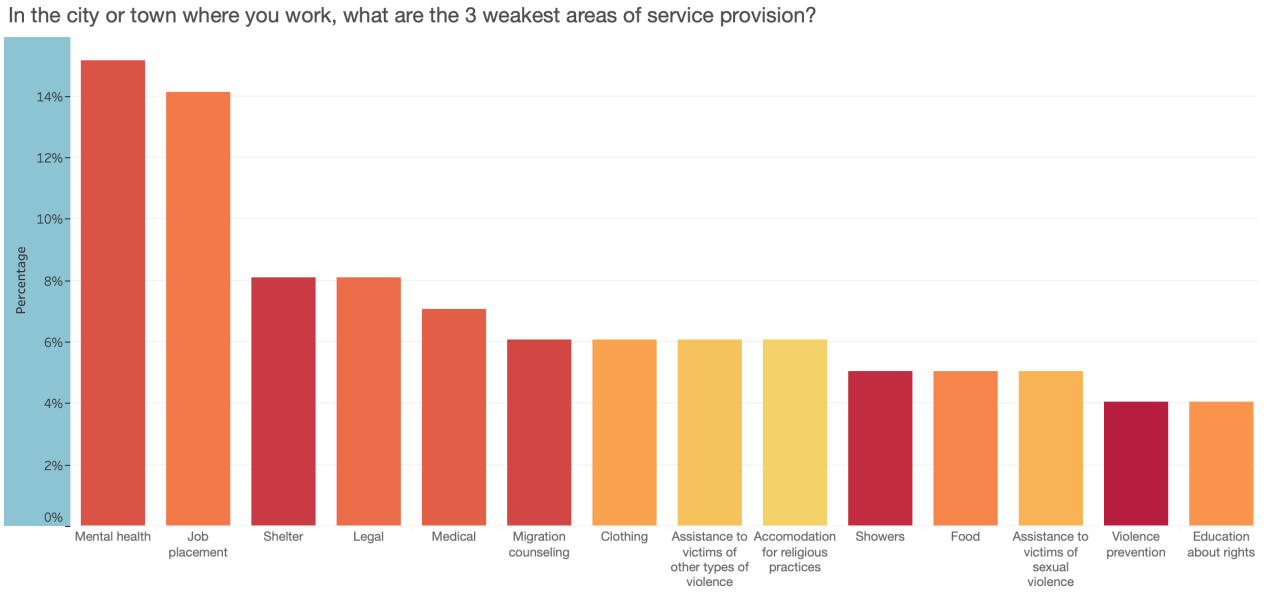


Figure: Weakest areas of service provision, according to surveyed service providers[115]

One expert suggested that service providers increase training in psychological first aid.[116] Any medical professional would be able to evaluate needs for mental health care and make referrals from there, but currently this practice does not happen, largely due to cultural norms. Increased psychological first aid training for service providers would partially bridge this gap, and allow for more appropriate referrals to medical professionals.

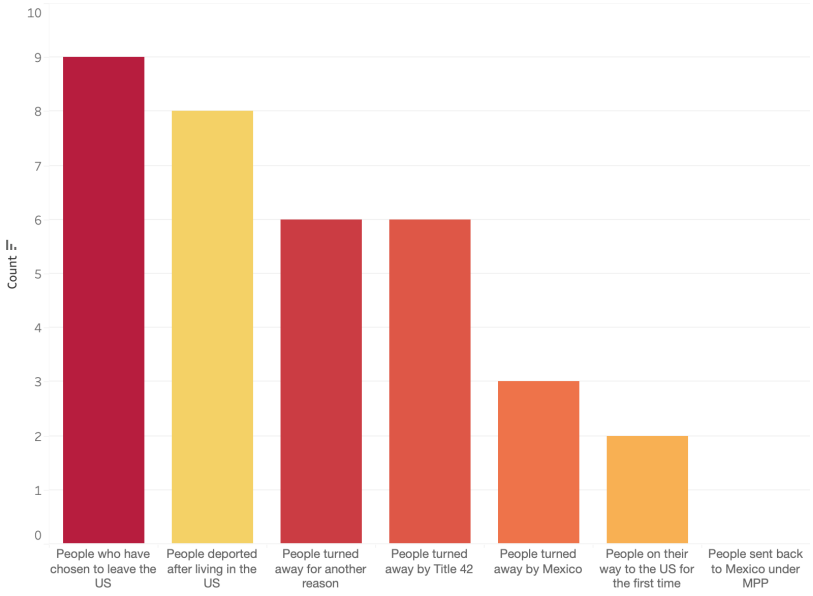
Mental health care for people turned away

> **Humanitarian organizations are addressing the immediate need, which is seen, which is maybe they're sick, or maybe they're struggling, but I don't think many organizations are figuring out a way to provide financial resources to families.**

Research shows that repatriated migrants – particularly deportees – present greater needs for psychological and economic services, and conversations with key informants and service providers confirmed this. According to a 2019 study from the National Library of Medicine, although people on the move tend to be healthier prior to departure than those who are not, they are far more likely to need psychiatric services upon return.[117]

Experts in the field note that, upon being turned away, people experience trauma from having been detained, separated from families, or deported; stress from the arduousness of their journeys; disappointment and anguish from their failure to cross successfully; humiliation from having been treated like criminals and even placed in solitary confinement; and fears of being discriminated against or hated by the community into which they are reintegrating.[118] They usually experience symptoms of stress, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, hopelessness and generalized fears, and even suicidal tendencies.[119] Additionally, when deported, they are often dropped off in places that are entirely unfamiliar to them, which only exacerbates their stress and confusion.[120]

People with greatest need of mental health/resettlement support, according to surveyed service providers



Yet despite these particular needs, mental health services tailored to these populations are lacking. Survey respondents noted that all populations who have been repatriated to Mexico or Central America (voluntarily returned, deported, or turned away for some other reason) are more in need of mental health services and resettlement support than those on their way to the US for the first time, with those who have returned voluntarily in greatest need.[121] Service providers in the field generally agree that there should be specialized psychological services provided to repatriated populations as soon as they arrive in their host communities, but that currently these services hardly exist. Despite recognizing this need, most of the direct service providers we interviewed said that they do not currently distinguish between the

populations of their clients who have been turned away or have otherwise returned and those who are in transit for the first time.[122]

> **There are ways to understand if a person is a victim of trauma or not, and really this sensibility could bring a better identification and assessment of persons in need of mental health care.**

The psychological needs of people turned away are compounded by the lack of economic resources and assistance available to them. One expert pointed out the significant amount of debt that people on the move must incur in order to make their journeys, which continually burdens them when they do not succeed and then must determine how to pay it off.[123] Another expert explained that while those in transit for the first time are often supported by their families back home, in hopes that their "investment" will succeed, when the person has failed in the journey there is no longer any reason to "invest" in them.[124] Economic woes often lead directly to physical and mental health problems including anxiety, and are important to address in tandem with mental health care.

Labor and economic services

Several interviewees noted that people on the move are increasingly either choosing to stay or being forced to stay in Mexico, rather than continuing on to the U.S. or Canada. Meanwhile, services for people who remain in Mexico have not increased comparatively. Most organizations that we spoke to work primarily with asylum seekers, leaving behind people who are migrating informally, as well as those who are internally displaced. This includes many LGBTIQ people and victims of domestic violence, who often try to flee within their own countries before seeking asylum elsewhere. Internally-displaced people often have vastly different needs than people traversing multiple countries; they have documentation and do not need services for asylum applications, but instead need connections to dignified work and housing. Increasingly, these services are needed even by migrants and asylum seekers planning to travel further along the migration route, as asylum claims take longer to process and people often remain on the move for years at a time. Organizations focused on employment and permanent housing services are few and far between, especially ones that work with populations facing intersecting vulnerabilities, such as LGBTIQ and Indigenous groups. Job placement services were cited by survey respondents as one of the most pressing needs in the region, second only to mental health and psychosocial care.[125]

Many migrants are pushed into the informal labor market, where they cannot file complaints about labor exploitation. The reasons for this are manifold and include: racism, discrimination, lack of documentation, language barriers, distrust in authorities, lack of knowledge about laws, and the threat of violence. Extra-continental migrants, especially those who are Black, are often deemed ineligible for jobs; even people with an education or training struggle to find stable employment because of language barriers and racial discrimination. Many are thus also pushed into homelessness.[126] The informal labor market is characterized by low-wage jobs, wage theft, and a lack of labor regulation, leading to increased exploitation. These issues have been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Migrants,

disproportionately employed informally, absorbed many socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and were often unable to access social security mechanisms tied to formal employment.

Trans and gender non-conforming people also face particular difficulties in accessing formal employment. Most countries in Latin America lack gender-identity legislation that would allow people to access documentation that reflects their gender identity. As a result, many trans and gender non-conforming people are forced into survival sex work in order to meet their basic needs. This in turn often leads to exclusion from shelters, as well as increased need for already difficult to access sexual and reproductive care.[127]

Deportees also face specific economic challenges, as they often need to get studies and skills recertified.[128] Targeted economic support and job training were identified by survey respondents as the second most needed service for people turned away, after mental health care.

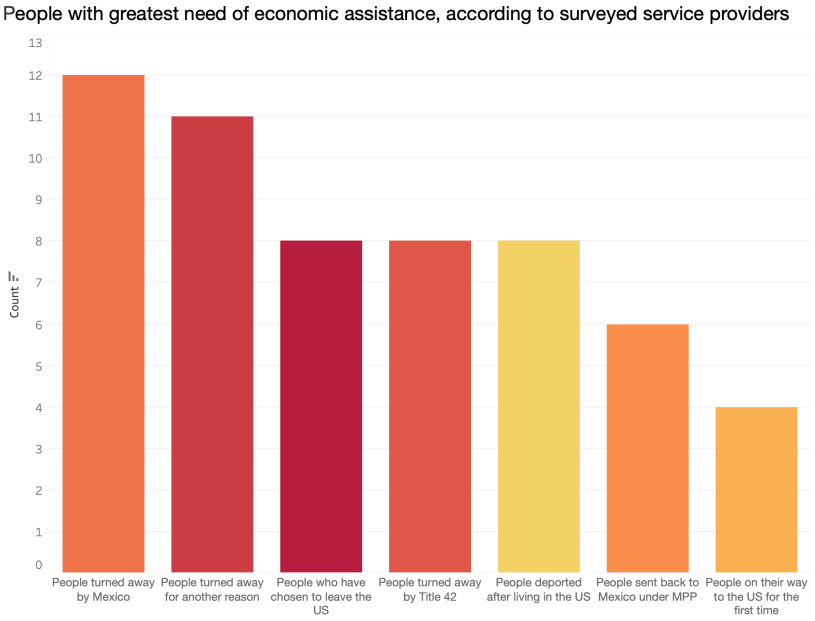
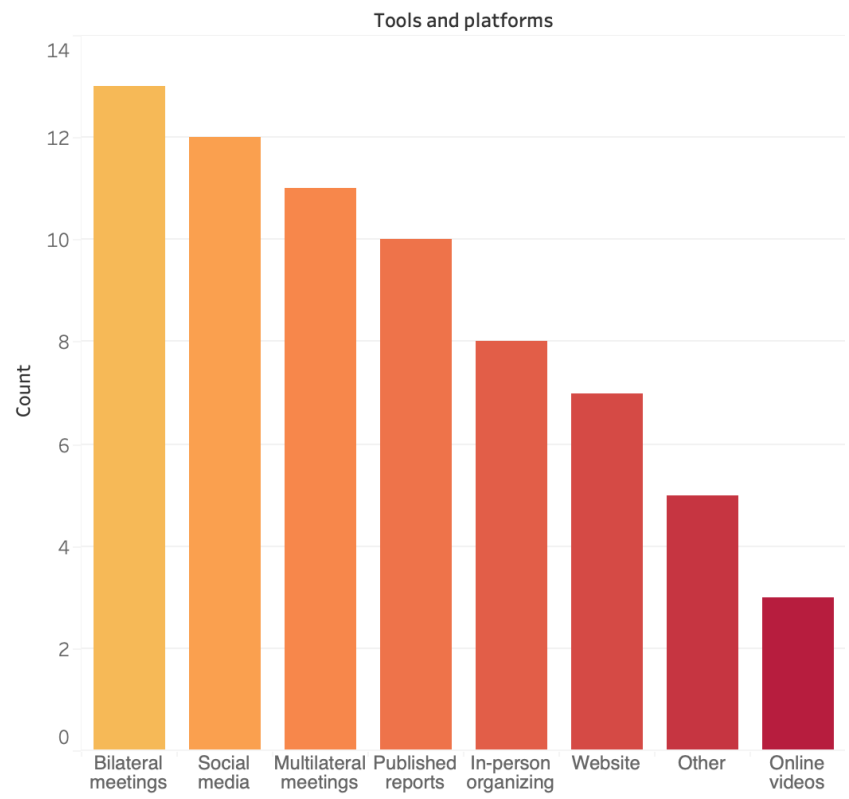


Figure (above): people with greatest need of economic assistance, according to surveyed service providers[129]

Advocacy

Advocacy is an important tool for affecting tangible change in the lives of people on the move. Many service providers focus significant efforts and resources on advocacy, and there is a real need for strategy.

When it comes to opportunities for change that can improve the experiences of people on the move in Mexico, one of the most pervasive challenges is the complicated power structure at play around migration that favors the status quo. Experts cautioned against only focusing on superficial recommendations that are helpful at a local level but do not recognize the massive structural problem that requires changes in power in order to fix it.[130] For example, while Mexican law is largely inclusive and supportive of people on the move, they are often unable to access services they are legally entitled to, such as health care, shelter and asylum processes.[131] There is also a reported degree of acceptance between the Mexican government and organized crime, where networks continue to operate with little fear of being shut down or regulated.[132] This provides potential opportunities for people on the move to pay traffickers to help them travel, but often at great personal risk. The threat of violence from organized crime is common and is a factor in most migrations.[133] According to one interviewee, organized crime does not dare to attack church institutions, which is why religious groups are one of the largest players that support migrants.[134]



Service providers and experts broadly reported a lack of trust in the Mexican government among people on the move, due to perceived and real risks of deportation and abuse. One of the reasons people remain wary is that Mexican migration policy is heavily influenced by U.S. policy and funding, which is often driven by a desire to deter people from coming to the U.S. Several interviewees pointed to a joint agenda shared by the U.S. and Mexican governments to deter immigration to the U.S. Migration is perceived as a

lever in negotiations which heavily influences the actions of the Mexican government.[135] Due to this relationship, the Mexican government invests heavily in border patrol, rather than resettlement or services.[136] Whether or not Mexico can be seen as an independent agent impacts the relevance of advocacy directed towards the Mexican government and whether it can be held accountable for policies that limit migration. [137]

Advocacy and Audience

Advocacy takes a variety of forms, so our team sought to better understand the advocacy tactics of service providers working in migration through qualitative and quantitative analysis. In our survey of service providers, nearly 70 percent of organizations reported advocating for change in policies or public opinion on migration-related issues. Of the surveyed organizations, 23 percent cited advocating for better protection and safety for migrants, while 19.5 percent of organizations reported carrying out policy advocacy, such as promoting changes in government policies and procedures in support of migrants. For example, a number of organizations we interviewed discussed advocating for a change in Title 42. Service providers also reported advocating for improved access to health care and mental health services and support of vulnerable populations. Only two organizations reported advocating for financial support for migrants.

> **One of the major gaps in what the campaign is trying to do, ... is to just increase more public support for asylum seekers generally… Republican politicians and other right-wing people have been really pushing this language about migrants being an invasion and many other false things about spreading disease … it's really impacted the view that people have about asylum seekers and migrants.[137]**

Advocacy can be targeted toward a variety of audiences. Our survey revealed that 62 percent of respondents engaging in advocacy work targeted their efforts towards governments – nearly 30 percent toward the Mexican government and 16 percent toward the Guatemalan government. A smaller number of service providers in our sample sought to influence the U.S. government (8 percent), the Honduran government (4 percent), the Salvadoran government (2 percent), and local governments (2 percent). By contrast, only 18 percent of organizations targeted public opinion in their advocacy efforts.

Fundamental changes in legislation and shifts in public opinion are still a long way out of reach, but a strategic approach to narrative could be a powerful method to support advocacy actions.

Importance of Narrative

Narrative is at the heart of advocacy. Compelling narratives have the power to influence personal and communal identities, emotions, beliefs, behavior, and even policy. Narrative can sway public opinion, shape how societies perceive threats and opportunities, and react to challenges.

Narratives are shaped by a variety of actors including policymakers, politicians, international organizations, researchers, civil society, media, and people on the move themselves. Top-down narratives

are spread from governments and political leaders through speeches or organized messaging campaigns, while bottom-up narratives are shaped by the people through word-of-mouth, media, and social media.[138]

In an information- and technology-driven globalized world, narratives have become an increasingly important tool to advance the policy agenda on migration and have dominated the media, news, internet, and political debates. Prevalent narratives on immigration influence approaches to advocacy, lobbying and fundraising. Some popular narratives take a positive approach to migration, focusing on the benefits of migration or inciting pride in national history (e.g. "we are a nation of immigrants"). Others are negative, viewing migration as a threat or a security issue (e.g. "immigrants take jobs from native-born workers"). In recent years, negative narratives on migration have become an increasingly powerful tool for far-right political actors to advance their agendas and unify their political base.[139]

According to the IOM, in 2020 there were over 281 million[140] international migrants[141] in the world. Data shows this number has increased over the past five decades,[142] and that this trend will likely continue into the future.[143] Given the prevalence of migration and predicted future trends, the strategic shaping of narratives on migration has become increasingly urgent to encourage a hesitant public in host countries to accept migration.

Research by the Migration Policy Institute highlights three broad themes in narratives related to migrants[144]:

- **Narrative of Heroism -** People on the move deserve to be celebrated and welcomed due to the economic and cultural contributions they have made to their new societies.
- **Narrative of Vulnerability** - People on the move are vulnerable or victims who deserve support and protection from threats. These

The Power of Narrative: Title 42

In a divided political climate compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, narratives on migration have become especially relevant. COVID-19 has become the justification for many contentious actions taken by governments around the world. For example, by invoking the uncertainty and fear that the COVID-19 pandemic has provoked, the U.S. government has limited legal immigration to the United States by justifying the implementation of restrictive migration policies as an effort to curtail the rapidly spreading coronavirus.

In March 2020, the Department of Health and Human Services invoked Title 42, an emergency regulation to prohibit individuals from entering the country when it is believed that there is danger of introducing a communicable disease into the United States. Immigration advocates and public health officials agreed that this was a political maneuver to limit immigration to the United States. Title 42 was challenged in court, and will soon be lifted, more than two years after it was invoked.

narratives often emphasize traumatic experiences that people have lived in their home countries or the humanitarian needs of migrating people. These stories are often meant to elicit emotions such as empathy and inspire compassion and support.

- **Narrative of Threat -** People on the move are a burden or threat, compete with the native-born population for scarce resources (jobs, government benefits, etc.) or threaten safety, health, or culture of the host country. This angle tends to dehumanize and anonymize migrants and asylum seekers. A study of Austrian newspapers during the 2015 refugee crisis in Europe found this narrative tactic to be the most prevalent in mass media at that time.[145]

Challenging the Narrative of Vulnerability

A common theme in advocacy is the narrative of vulnerability. Advocates and organizations using this frame tend to have good intentions, attempting to inspire empathy and garner support. However, this narrative can become a one-dimensional portrayal of migrants as passive victims without agency, leaving little space for moments of resilience and strength.

These narratives can be problematic for other reasons as well. According to a study by Unbound Philanthropy,[146] connecting people on the move with traumatic events while attempting to highlight injustices may reinforce the association of negativity with migrant identities. In addition, this tactic transforms migration into an issue that is overwhelming or too difficult for audiences to discuss or face, and a problem that does not have a concrete resolution.

> "A lot of people are looking at the Dreamers as a model and having refugees, and asylum seekers tell their stories... But to get a bigger, broader change, that's not going to be enough. And it also puts a lot of the burden on people to tell their horror stories about what happened to them. We need... other ways of representing people and humanizing them rather than about asylum seeking or the fleeing or the dangers in Mexico, which is what we all do now.[147]"

Innovative Practices for Maintaining Agency and Community

Giving people on the move space for them to focus on themselves can help them maintain agency over their own journey and even regain some power in a context that is often dehumanizing. Some examples shared by experts were story-telling, art-making, and theater workshops.[148] Creating environments where these outputs can also be shared with Mexican communities can also slowly change the perceptions and narratives that locals have about people on the move.[149] These kinds of group spaces can also be considered a type of mental health care, when thinking beyond an individual, western-centered, and clinical approach to medicine.[150] Many people come from less-individualized communities where they rely heavily on people around them. Re-building a collective community can be a coping mechanism and enable people to regain some agency in this difficult journey.[151]

Reframing Dominant Narratives

The tactics employed thus far by pro-migration activists have not been effective at reaching new audiences. A survey and qualitative analysis published by Unbound Philanthropy found that many Democrats in the United States believe that immigrants do not have a right to be in the country. The same report argues that the migrant and immigrant rights movement makes too many assumptions without concrete data to back them up, leading pro-migration organizations to employ tactics that are not effective. In other words, the migrant and immigrants rights movement lacks a narrative strategy that employs narrative theory.

UN Agencies and think tanks like the OHCHR and the Migration Policy Institute are rethinking migration narratives. The OHCHR launched their #StandUp4Migrants campaign in 2020 to challenge the way we discuss migrants and migration, arguing that the way people on the move are portrayed impacts their human rights and that negative narratives such as the narrative of threat leads to discrimination, exclusion, and dehumanization. The OHCHR proposes adopting narratives of hope and inclusion in order to challenge dominant narratives of threat.[152]

Applying Neuroscience to Strategic Messaging

Heartwired is an initiative that applies both communication strategy and neuroscience to cause campaigns. This initiative argues that human decision-making is based on the intersection of identity, lived experiences, values, beliefs, and emotions. These factors could be barriers to persuasion, so taking them into consideration is critical when crafting messaging. In order to hasten the tipping point on social change issues, change-makers must develop a deeper understanding of how their target audiences think, feel, and respond to the issue. Empathy and listening in shaping messaging is critical to reaching new audiences.

Recommendations

Based on the desk research, interviews and surveys that the team has conducted, we have come up with a set of recommendations for improved service provision and continuity of care for populations on the move through Central America and Mexico.

1. **Take advantage of technological advances, particularly to facilitate access to psychosocial care.** Set up more telehealth services that can be offered at MSF sites. Increased psychiatric care and psychosocial support are especially necessary, particularly in the first languages of groups that do not speak Spanish. Telehealth mental health care and trauma care providers could also partner with smaller, local organizations to offer onsite services in places where there are fewer organizations specialized in working with vulnerable populations, including LGBTIQ people, sex workers, survivors of domestic violence, and survivors of state violence (including detention, police brutality, and discrimination).
2. **Improve language support and translation services.** Offer increased translation services for non-Spanish speakers. Set up digital connections to MSF sites in other countries for languages in which in-person translators are not available, and have designated times where people on the move are able to access translators. Additional translation services can also be accessed through technology, such as WhatsApp digital translation. Partner with smaller community-based organizations to offer as-needed translation services, either in person or digitally. Recommended languages: English, Kreyòl, French, Portuguese, Mayan Mam, Hindi/Urdu, and Bangla.
3. **Expand mental health care programming. In particular, offer and prioritize tailored mental health services for LGBTIQ people, victims of violence, and people who have been turned away.** Recognize the distinct types of trauma that people on the move have experienced, including state and interpersonal violence, detention, deportation, and humiliation. Provide specialized services and psychological first aid training so that any medical personnel can evaluate needs for mental health care based on particular traumas and make appropriate referrals accordingly.
4. **Expand "Know Your Rights" programming.** There are many existing resources providing information on migrant and asylum seeker rights, but these need to be accessible in multiple languages, updated regularly, and distributed more widely by trusted organizations. Support materials can also include pictures or copies of legal documentation that migrants can display to authorities. These can also be provided creatively through WhatsApp groups, flyers with QR codes, and informational kits distributed through shelters. Outreach should also target public hospitals and clinics that are required to provide health care regardless of documentation status. Finally, the number of case worker accompaniments to health care appointments should be expanded to ensure access to legally-mandated care and protect against discrimination.
5. **Increase support and programming for people staying in Mexico.** Develop mechanisms in transit countries to regularize access to temporary and permanent

employment for people who plan to stay in Mexico for an extended period of time, such as providing government permits and creating awareness programs for the private sector.

6. **Leverage the resilience and strength of existing communities.** Partner with and provide support for local organizations, particularly ones led by vulnerable populations. In this way, large organizations can leverage existing community strength and ties and local knowledge, as well as allow migrants to advocate for themselves and tell their own narratives. Networks of care among vulnerable populations are often strong and can be leveraged. For example, existing LGBTIQ organizations are well-networked and able to locate people who need care but are under-resourced.
7. **Connect to people on the move, improve continuity of care.** Offer a health screening to migrants and asylum seekers when they arrive at the border to check for pre-existing or chronic health conditions, distribute preventative care information, and administer COVID-19 vaccines. Provide follow-up through a social worker who supports their health needs and shares reliable information.
8. **Increase coordination across the US-Mexico border.** Connect organizations working across borders to one another, allowing people on the move to have continuous contact with service providers who will be working with them on the other side of the border. This would allow for the transfer of documentation, medical histories, etc. Large organizations could facilitate meetings with U.S. service providers over Zoom prior to border crossing as an introduction, particularly groups that work with populations with intersecting vulnerabilities.
9. **Focus on holistic care.** Organizations providing humanitarian support must be prepared to refer a person to other services (e.g., physical health, mental health, legal, protection, food security, financial) because the entry point service is likely not to be the only need. It is also important to provide spaces or programs that allow people to rebuild a sense of community. Additionally, take into account the specific needs of different groups of people. Offer culturally appropriate meal options for migrants from outside the Americas, taking into account religious dietary restrictions. Conduct regular trainings to increase knowledge and capacity to respond to the needs of displaced LGBTIQ people.
10. **Improve data collection on violence.** Explore opportunities for intra- and inter-organizational coordination on standardized methodologies of violence data collection. Always disaggregate data to as detailed a level as possible, e.g. not only by gender but also pregnancy, domestic violence, data on structural violence, etc.
11. **Collect violence data in a safer setting**. There is a pilot being run by one US-based service provider that is documenting violence that people on the move experienced on their journey once they are across the border, in a relatively safe situation, and may be more comfortable sharing information.[153] While many service providers gather information about violence that people on the move have experienced, people may not share this information because they fear for their safety or they do not want to recount a traumatic experience. These factors may be mitigated if data is collected after they have crossed into the US.
12. **Define target audiences for advocacy, understand them, and campaign for solutions.** A first step to employing narrative strategy is to define target audiences.

Materials (articles, reports, presentations) that present a difficult issue should always propose a solution that the audience can act on. A problem without a solution will make the audience feel hopeless, running the risk of disengaging them from the issue.[154]

13. **Collaborate on advocacy efforts.** When organizations are able to align on their goals and advocacy targets, collaborations and partnerships can be a powerful tool to bolster strategic advocacy efforts and support a more sustained advocacy agenda.

Areas for Further Research

End of Title 42: At the time of writing this paper, the Biden administration had announced plans to effectively end Title 42 by May 23, 2022. This decision will have huge implications for the situation on the ground. Research on the impact of the lifting of this restriction will be needed.

Services in Central America: Conduct a stakeholder analysis of migrant shelters and direct service providers in Central American countries.

Services in the United States: Conduct a stakeholder analysis of migrant shelters and direct service providers on the U.S. side of the US-Mexico border.

Internal Migration in Mexico: Evaluate the circumstances surrounding the displacement and international migration patterns of people within Mexico forced to leave their homes and relocate from violence.

Organizational cooperation: Evaluate patterns of organizational cooperation along the route and areas for improvement in joint-programming for the benefit of at-risk populations.

Impact on minors: Assess the risks encountered by children along the route - both unaccompanied and those traveling with families.

Appendices

Appendix A: List of organizations interviewed.

- Acción Contra el Hambre
- Asociación Lambda
- Asociación Pop No'j
- Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)
- Cáritas Mexicana - Dimensión Pastoral del Trabajo
- Casa Arcoiris
- Center for Migration Studies
- Centro Constitución de 1917 Alcoholismo y Drogadicción A.C. (CECADRO)
- Centre on Migration, Policy and Society
- Childfund International USA
- Clinica Condesa
- Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
- Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados (COMAR)
- Columbia University
- El Buen Samaritano de la Iglesia Metodista de Mexico A.R.
- Formación y Capacitación A.C. (FOCA)
- Fundación Acción contra el Hambre
- Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)
- Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
- Human Rights First
- Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración (IMUMI)
- International Organization for Migration
- Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
- Médecins Sans Frontières
- Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD)
- Refugees International
- Scalabrinianas Misión con Migrantes y Refugiados (SMR)
- Secretaría de Salud – Gobierno de México
- Secretaría de Trabajo y Fomento al Empleo – Gobierno de México
- Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes (SJM)
- Sin Palabras
- Tierra Nueva
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Universidad Iberoamericana
- Uno de Siete Migrando A.C.
- Women's Refugee Commission

Appendix B: Characteristics of survey respondents

Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics, Service Provider Survey, March-April 2022

Service Providers (N=39)		
Key Variables	N	Frequency (%)
Primary Region of Work		
Mexico	24	61.54%
Guatemala	6	15.38%
El Salvador	1	2.56%
Honduras	1	2.56%
United States	1	2.56%
Multiple	6	15.38%
Estimated Reach		
0-50 people per month	15	38.46%
51-100 people per month	1	2.56%
101-300 people per month	3	7.69%
301-500 people per month	4	10.26%
>500 people per month	13	33.33%
Unknown (no response)	3	7.69%

Type of Organization

Government	10	25.64%
Local NGO	6	15.38%
International NGO	6	15.38%
International Organization	5	12.82%
Religious Institution	4	10.26%
Community-based Organization	2	5.13%
Health Facility	2	5.13%
Other	4	10.26%

Area of Work

Mental health and psychosocial support services	18	10.29%
Migration counseling	15	8.57%
Violence prevention	15	8.57%
Education about rights	14	8%
Food	14	8%
Legal Services	13	7.43%
Sexual violence response	11	6.29%
Shelter	10	5.71%
Violence response	10	5.71%
Advocacy	9	5.14%
Clothing / Showers	9	5.14%

Job Placement	8	4.57%
Medical services	8	4.57%
Other	21	12%
Target Population		
Women	16	11.85%
Women with children	15	11.11%
Indigenous populations	13	9.63%
People with disabilities	12	8.89%
Survivors of violence	12	8.89%
LGBTIQ	11	8.15%
People who have been deported	11	8.15%
Unaccompanied children	9	6.67%
Single men	8	5.93%
No target population	8	5.93%
Other	20	14.81%

Appendix C: Codebook

We identified common themes that were raised in our expert interviews and created these codes below. The research team then reviewed all interviews and two people coded each interview using the themes below, in order to perform a more objective qualitative analysis of the feedback we received.

	CODE	Definition	When to Use	When NOT to Use	Example from the transcripts
1	Populations with intersecting vulnerabilities	Describes characteristics of a migrant that makes them more at risk to experience violence, abuse, or other adverse outcomes during migration based on their demographic characteristics or identity	Demographic or identity-based characteristics of migrants (LGBTQIAP+ people, minors, people with disabilities, drug users, non-Spanish speakers, etc.)	Not used to describe vulnerabilities in a country of origin. (See *Drivers of migration*) Not used to describe abusive or oppressive practices by authority figures (Use either *Discrimination* or *Access to albergues*)	"(...) there are plenty of examples of LGBT people being denied a sound in Mexico" "I think it's easier for people to recognize, even if you're homophobic, that LGBTQ community is in danger everywhere. It could be in their home country, migrants in Mexico or Mexicans."
2	Discrimination	Describes instances where certain migrants are treated prejudicially or unfairly based on aspects of their demographic characteristics or identity	Specific descriptions of racism, sexism, xenophobia, colorism, homophobia from figures of authority, local communities, service providers, other migrants.	Do not use migrant characteristics that put them at-risk (use *Vulnerable population).*	"I think the discrimination is higher than for Central American or Latin people who are on the move. And also for Indigenous people."
3	Violence/abuse	Describes migrant's experiences with violence and threats to safety while migrating	GBV, sexual violence, kidnapping, extortion of migrants, human trafficking	Do not use when violence is discussed as a driver of migration (Use code *Drivers of migration/root causes* for violence in home country)	"We have seen clients who have been kidnapped by the cartels on more than one occasion and have new babies as a result of rape."
4	Access to shelter / populations who avoid shelter	References the challenges migrants face in accessing shelter	Specific instances when individuals are unable to access albergues or are denied access to albergues.	Not used to describe vulnerable populations broadly (use *Vulnerable population)*.	"The shelters that they have available are limited and not necessarily in the best conditions. Even if they are well intentioned, it is not the best option for many of the families there."

5	Collaboration	Describes organizations working with each other to serve and support migrant populations.	Includes referrals, partnerships, info sharing among different groups, joint advocacy, capacity building/ training. Also includes engagement with consular offices and government services.	Not used to describe organizations' engagement with police, border security, etc. For those instances use *Interaction with law enforcement.*	"Yeah, for our research, and we work closely with basically all of the organizations that operate along the US Mexico border"
6	Interaction with law enforcement	Describes actions (or inactions) by law enforcement.	Interactions with police, law enforcement, border security. (Interactions between law enforcement and either migrants and service providers.)	Not used to describe legal policies. Not used to describe interaction with government authorities like consulates.	"They're going to try to prevent a rush to the border. That's not good"
7	Direct service provision (besides shelter)	Describes services provided (or not) to migrants	Mental health services, healthcare, food, legal-aid, in-kind provision.	Capacity building trainings, etc. Services not provided directly to migrant populations. NOT used to describe access to albergues, which should be coded as *Access to Albergues*	"And, for the most part, what we do is a case management approach, like taking the person from Point A to Point B, working with them on their mental health, but also on a plan, for example, if they're going through a gender based violence situation at the moment."
8	Legal status	References the challenges faced accessing or proving a specific legal status, or differentiation between groups by their legal status.	Describing the experience of migrants specifically related to documentation or their legal category, regularization, papers, refugee/ asylum seeker/ economic migrant status, DACA	Policy discussions at a high-level that do not directly relate to migrants experiences. For those instances, use the geographically relevant *Policy* code.	"Then you have the challenge of status of patients. You have some with status of refugee and some waiting to be considered or validated as a refugee. So when they are not a refugee, they do not have access."
9	Gap between policy/law and reality	When an interviewee notes a discrepancy between policy (or law, like human rights law) and on-the-ground reality.	When policies that are in place are not being implemented or legal obligations are not being met	Talking about policies that SHOULD be implemented. This is about EXISTING policies. If they are recommending a policy change, code as *Recommendation*	"On the paper, every migrant can go to, to, to public health institution, and you will get he will get on reality. If he goes he can be arrested"

10	US Policy	References to US policies	Talking about the policy or US policy in general. ex. DACA, Biden administration policies	Talking about someone who has a specific status: A DACA recipient/ someone with legal status because of DACA Talking about gaps between US policy and reality When policy is referenced as part of a recommendation. Ex: “There should be more child-centered policies.”	"They have been impacted, as you know, by the MPP and by Title 42."
11	Mexican Policy	References to Mexico policies	Talking about the policy itself	When a policy is used to name a certain identity category or legal status When policy is referenced as part of a recommendation. Ex: “There should be more child-centered policies.”	"They just fired 1800 people from INM for corruption. They’ve done periodic purges but it’s a systemic problem." "The thing is, also in Tapachula, you see the same policies recycled."
12	Non-US/Mexico Policy	References to any policies outside the US and Mexico	Talking about the policy or policy in general. This could include policies in the NTCA, Canada, UN policies or human rights laws, etc.	When a policy is used to name a certain identity category or legal status When policy is referenced as part of a recommendation. Ex: “There should be more child-centered policies.”	"And it's because there's open visa policies in countries like Chile and Brazil and Peru, where these people on the move the refugees and migrants are arriving."
13	Drivers of migration/root causes	References to underlying root factors that are causing people to make the decision to leave home	Economic reasons, persecution and violence, organized crime, lack of work opportunities, moving to be near family members, harmful policies, etc.	References to deportation	"they have to leave the countries because they suffer violence, suffer violence by guns and the legislation again from the U.S so asylum to apply asylum"

14	Migrant communication/ access to information	References to methods/tools migrants use to access information about available services, dangerous parts of the route, shelters, etc.	Information-sharing, communication between migrants and between migrants and providers, networks, Whatsapp, Facebook, etc.	References to service provider outreach, orgs and agencies sharing information with migrants	"Both the shelter and legal projects have a lot of communication with people that are in route and a lot of times they need information about how do I get a permit to cross Mexico."
15	Data availability	Any references to availability of data that informs a particular issue, policy, or context	Lack of data, inaccurate data, data that is not up to date, data that hides a certain population, data collection, data sharing, etc. References to types of data that are over or underreported	References to connectivity/cell phone data.	"So yeah, there is underreporting on their own behalf."
16	Recommendations	Recommendations for improved service provision, policy advocacy, access, collaboration, etc.	When an interviewee is giving a specific recommendation for an improvement or necessary change	Anything that the interviewee is not framing as their recommendation. “Some people think that….”	"So within this bigger push to create better systems, better policies, better opportunities, there lies an opportunity also for pushing for more inclusive services for migrants, asylum seekers, etc. This is not necessarily connected to COVID-19 per se, but is connected to rebuilding, to this general reform, willingness to reform; and using this window of opportunity to push for certain general reforms and then possibly including migrants and asylum seekers and mixed migration issues into larger endeavors to reform, again, health systems, legal systems, etc."
17	Needs of migrants	Refers to specific things that migrants need (besides legal status)	Jobs, money, phones, access to their birth certificates	Not in reference to legal status, visas, etc (This should be tagged as *Legal Status)*. Also, not a reference to services provided to migrants (this should be tagged as *Direct Service Provision*.)	"OK, they need money to go home. They need maybe a small business loan to start something else"

18	Best practices	Examples of approaches or services (in the region or outside) that improve the experience of migrants	Language services, how information can be spread, services that improve access to health or protection	Do not use when someone is providing a recommendation of something that has never been done / tested before	"We switched to WhatsApp, phone, zoom as a means to provide services to the population who need them. So, yes, for the most part, remote services are available, and it is something that we do only for mental health, but even for GVB and for legal protection."
19	Advocacy	Refers to any mentions of advocacy for policies that help migrants in Central America, Mexico, US	Strategies, tactics, objectives, organizations, challenges	Recommendations for services for migrants or ideas for best practices. This code is more focused on policies.	"We'll do campaigns occasionally. Obviously, events, social media. Our main model is doing reporting, shorter reports, or longer reports, and then we do a lot of private advocacy meetings with the US government or with regional governments, following those reports. We do letter writing campaigns occasionally."
20	Deportation, returnee, people turned away	Examples of situations and impacts of non-direct routes to the US border	Impacts of waiting, services for integration or reintegration, problems with processing mechanisms	Does not refer to legal misinformation or case management issues. Does not refer to Mexico as a destination country.	"There are always people that have already been deported, but hard to tell exactly who it is because they don't share that info right away"
21	Mexico as a destination country	Mentions of Mexico shifting to be a country where migrants stay for long periods of time or permanently, rather than a transit country	Services that need to adapt to this change, what a "destination" country means for advocacy, reaction from Mexicans	Does not refer to discrimination against migrants, lack of access to asylum in Mexico.	"There is a lot of criticism of migrant rights movement in US, rightfully so. Some legit, some illegit, but not prepared to challenge state/Mexican society as far as, we need to resettle people."

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