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AMATITLÁN

Amatitlán Includes You: Reception, Management and Integration of Labour Migrants in the City

Implementing Partner: AVINA Foundation, in close coordination with the Municipality of Amatitlán and the Municipal Development Council (COMUDE)

Location: Amatitlán, Guatemala

Duration: November 2019 – November 2021

SUMMARY

Amatitlán Includes You: Reception, Management and Integration of Labour Migrants in the City takes an innovative approach to integrating the management of labour migration into the city's plans for sustainable territorial development. The approach includes: building the capacity of local authorities to capitalise on the opportunities of labour migration; developing municipal government mechanisms so that city stakeholders can build partnerships, engage in participatory dialogue, and establish a shared vision for their city; and producing analysis to help the city develop a labour integration strategy.



THE CITIES ALLIANCE GLOBAL PROGRAMME ON CITIES AND MIGRATION

The Amatitlán Includes You project is part of the Cities Alliance Global Programme on Cities and Migration, which focuses on migration management in secondary cities in low income countries and is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. . The project in Amatitlán is part of a global portfolio of nine cities that includes San Marcos, Guatemala; Jendouba and Kairouan, Tunisia; Arua and Jinja, Uganda; Adama and Jigjiga, Ethiopia; and Kakuma-Kalobeyei in Kenya.

CONTEXT

Guatemala is one of the most unequal countries in Central America. According to data from the National Human Development Report (NHRI) 2015/2016, 67% of the country's total population lives in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty, and 46% of Guatemalans aged 0 to 5 face malnutrition and/or hunger. Only 24.4% of people have access to diversified studies, and 70% of the economically active population works in informal employment without guarantee of sufficient income or labour rights.

This national reality is closely reflected in Amatitlán, a fast-growing city located about 30 km southwest of Guatemala City and one of seven cities that make up the *Mancomunidad Gran Ciudad del Sur* (MGCS), or Commonwealth of the Great City of the South in English. These commonwealth associations are formal frameworks that allow cities within a common region to work together to formulate policies, plans, and programmes; execute works; and provide services.

Amatitlán is characterised by several factors:

- **Internal migration.** Rural-urban migration caused by the lack of employment opportunities have brought many people to the city

- **Proximity to larger cities.** As a secondary city, Amatitlán's strategic geographic location translates into an economic dynamic that relies significantly on residents' daily commute to nearby cities including Villa Nueva and Guatemala City.
- **Returning migrants.** Tougher migration policies in neighbouring countries over the last few years have resulted in a wave of returning migrants to the city.

Due to these factors, Amatitlán has become an attractive place to settle and further develop economic opportunities arising from commerce, industry, tourism, construction and other services. The challenge is to find effective ways to provide suitable labour conditions for existing residents and newcomers, and to leverage migration to boost and capitalise on growth within the city. The Amatitlán municipal government is likely to take immediate action to address current demands and prepare for future opportunities and challenges. Potential actions include participatory governance strategies and institutionalising efforts for sustainability.

ANTICIPATED RESULTS

The following three components have been designed to work together to encourage all stakeholders in Amatitlán – municipal authorities, residents, the private sector, civil society and other partners – to look at labour migration as an opportunity for economic development and social cohesion, promoting an inclusive and sustainable Amatitlán in line with the principles outlined in Agenda 2030, New Urban Agenda and the Migratory and Refugee Pacts.

All activities will prioritise vulnerable groups, especially women and youth. The three main anticipated results are as follows:

Result 1: Greater institutional capacities of local authorities and key partners to capitalise on the opportunities labour migration can offer

The project will help build knowledge and capacity among Amatitlán's municipal staff and partners to proactively address needs related to migration. It will provide training focused on designing strategies, mechanisms and instruments for addressing the reception, management and integration of labour migrants with an emphasis on institutionalising the strategies.

Specifically, the project will:

- Train 25 municipal staff to design and develop territorial planning policy instruments;
- Provide knowledge to 60 representatives from different sectors (public, private, civil society, migrants, and other related organisations) so that they can propose mechanisms for managing migration;
- Certify 30 people from Guatemala's metropolitan region to introduce migration into the urban planning sphere, adding capacities to develop policies, tools and projects. This component will be coordinated with the Asociación Propuesta Urbana (Urban Proposal Association) and an academic institution; and
- Facilitate exchanges for 24 high-level and technical municipal staff from the MGCS to learn about initiatives and good practices.

Result 2: Municipal governance mechanisms to build a shared vision for managing and integrating labour migrants in the city

This project will support Amatlán's local authority in establishing several mechanisms for managing migration. The first is a Municipal Development Forum that will help residents build a shared vision for integrating labour migrants and social cohesion strategies, with a focus on rights and equity. The forum will provide space for collaborative dialogue among decision makers, migrants, technicians, academics and members of the media and lay the groundwork for long-lasting partnerships to undertake coordinated actions. They will also facilitate the formulation of three participative strategies (on local economic development, access to housing for influxes of migrants, and prevention of violence), with strong focus on gender and the attention to informal settlements where many migrants live. These strategies are expected to be integrated within territorial planning instruments.

A second mechanism is a multisectoral group at the municipal level for different sectors to actively participate in the dialogue and development of migration-related responses. A third, the Municipal Migration Strategy, will be embedded in the Municipal Development Plan, with correspondent action plan, resources and methodical approach for its implementation.

Result 3: Labour migration integrated into city development planning

The project will produce a socio-urban diagnostics of Amatlán that will clearly identify challenges and opportunities that arise from labour migration, as well as a stakeholders' map that identifies actions, resources and specific roles. These deliverables will provide information on labour migrants settling in Amatlán that the city can use to develop a labour integration strategy. They will also provide the basis for further actions to support the integration and development of migrants into the labour market, including psychosocial guidance, paperwork management, technical and soft skills certification, among others.

A BROADER IMPACT

Knowledge sharing with a goal towards broader impact is a key theme of this project. Amatlán's membership in the MGCS network means that the city is well positioned to share its experience throughout Guatemala. In addition, municipal representatives will participate in regional and international migration conferences to share the Amatlán experience and to learn from other cities going through similar challenges and help enrich the response to migration on a regional level.



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