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# The Resource Centre for Migrant Workers in Tijuana, Mexico



**SUCOMM**  
SINDICATOS UNIDOS CON MÉXICO MODERNO



Centro de Recursos para  
Trabajadores  
Migrantes  
TIJUANA





# The Resource Centre for Migrant Workers in Tijuana, Mexico

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## Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) and the Global Compact for Migration (2018) point out the benefits of regular migration for the countries. In particular, migrant workers contribute to the society and economy of their destination countries by working in crucial sectors for development, such as services, construction, and agriculture, as well as positively influencing culture. Migrant workers also contribute to their communities of origin by sending remittances that boost local economies and putting into practice the skills they acquired abroad. However, migrant workers and their families often face difficulties in accessing decent work and are exposed to exploitation and abuse during the recruitment stage and in the exercise of their work (ILO 2021a).

For the International Labour Organization (ILO), the insertion of migrant workers into the informal labour markets and the lack of migratory regularity and prevailing factors in the migratory corridors of Central America and Mexico are connected. These have a direct impact on migrant workers' access to both basic services and labour rights, as well as their social security contributions and future pensions. Female migrant workers in particular, whose numbers have increased steadily in recent years, are overrepresented in sectors such as the domestic work sector and are especially vulnerable to abuse (ILO, 2020). People who are victims of abusive and fraudulent practices lack protection and have little access to labour justice.

This situation also jeopardizes the rights of children and adolescents and has detrimental effects on their well-being and development by increasing the risk of their exposure to a lack of family protection, child labour or other forms of exploitation.

In that context, trade union organizations play a crucial role in protecting the rights of workers against the negative consequences of inequality in migration and recruiting practices.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, they should actively participate in the social dialogue on migration in order to influence the formulation of national laws and policies on fair recruitment. On the ground, their contribution focuses on raising the awareness, protection, orientation and organization of workers, as well as the identification and reporting of the abuses that they face during the recruiting processes, in their work and in seeking access to justice.



<sup>1</sup> For further information on the role of workers' organizations in the protection of migrant workers, see ILO (2020); and ILO, "Guide to Labour Rights and Obligations, with a Focus on Labour Migration, Decent Work and Fair Recruitment", 2020.

In line with this responsibility, in March 2022, the Sindicatos Unidos con México Moderno (SUCOMM) union with the support of the ILO, launched the Resource Centre for Migrant Workers (RCMW) in Tijuana, Mexico, a physical space that serves potential migrants, people in situations of human mobility, their families and other members of the community, by providing them with information and assistance that allows them to enjoy their labour rights and access justice if these are violated.

This document aims to systematize the experience of the RCMW, with the purpose of generating learning that guides the improvement of the service it provides and allows its replication in other key transit, destination and return spaces occupied by migrants, refugees and other displaced people in Mexico and the Central American countries. The objective and methodology of the systematization is explained in depth below, and the experience is summarized after an explanation of the migratory and labour context of Mexico, as well as the results, lessons learned and recommendations resulting from the analysis of the experience in question. Finally, the elements of the RCMW that have the potential to be replicated in other migratory and socio-labour contexts are highlighted.



# 1 | Purpose of the systematization

Systematization is a process of building knowledge based on practice – that is, it collects and orders the knowledge of the people who participated in the experience. Its main objective is to extract lessons and contributions from the experience observed, as well as to transfer them to the people participating in the experience and other relevant actors.<sup>2</sup>

Although the ILO has technical experience in accompanying unions and other governmental and non-governmental actors in the provision of related services through the RCMWs, this has been concentrated mainly in the Asian continent.<sup>3</sup> In addition, despite the fact that there are physical spaces for the assistance of migrants in Central America and Mexico, they lack a specialized labour focus and/or are not managed by unions. Due to the above, the availability of analysis of similar experiences in the Latin American and Caribbean region is very limited; therefore, this systematization will contribute to generating knowledge about effective strategies for providing union-led assistance to migrant workers in Mexico.

In order to focus the object of analysis, the systematization defines the construction process of the RCMW as an entry point for access to labour rights, especially labour justice. It should be noted that this process can be studied from different perspectives. In order to guarantee the sustainability of the care model, it is considered convenient to focus the analysis on knowing how the construction of this entry point for access to rights and services has contributed to the strengthening of the institutional commitment and capacities of unions for the protection of the rights of migrant workers.

**In turn, this systematization will provide inputs that will be useful for optimizing the services of the RCMW Tijuana and for encouraging other unions and new development partners in the implementation of similar care models in key areas of the migratory corridors in Mexico and Central America.** In this way, migrant workers will be provided with timely, comprehensive and continuous access to information and labour justice throughout their origin, transit, settlement and return processes.



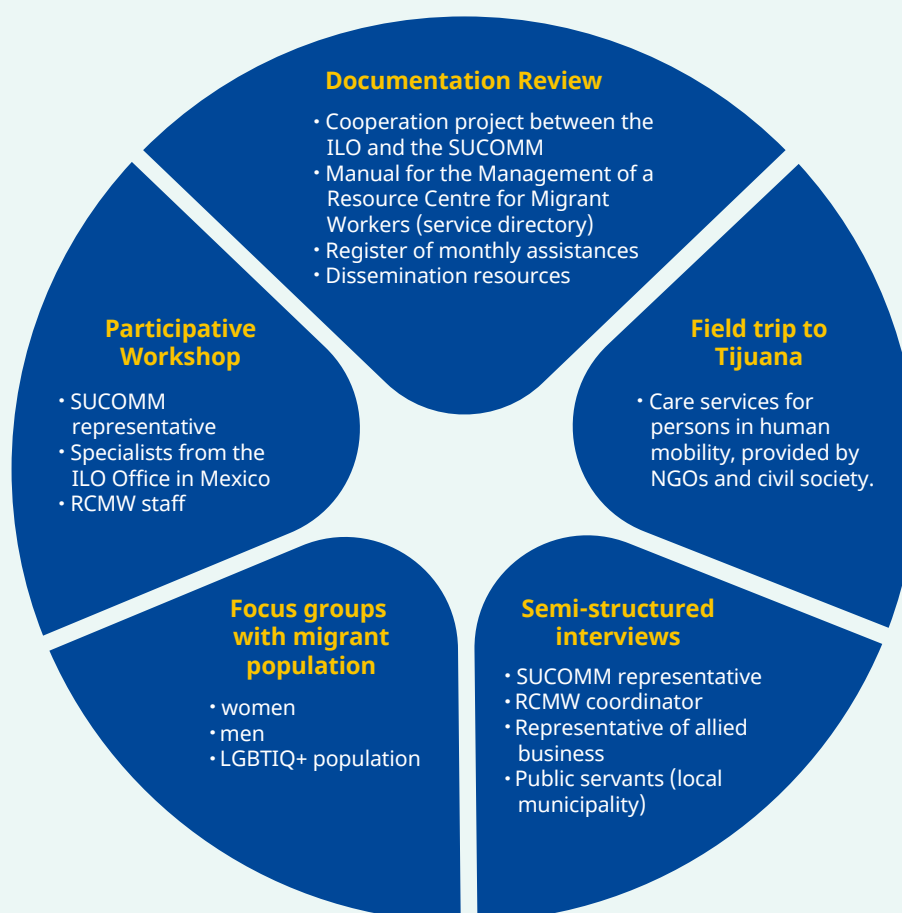
<sup>2</sup> For the development of this systematization, the following sources were used as a methodological guide: ILO (n.d.) and UNDP (n.d.).

<sup>3</sup> See ILO, *Trade Union-Led Migrant Worker Resource Centres in ASEAN and Jordan: Case Studies for Protecting and Organizing Migrant Workers* (2022). This publication systematizes the experience of the RCMWs managed by the unions and supported by the ILO in the countries of the Asian region. It collects the practices of the RCMWs and analyses how to promote them in order to organize migrant workers and optimize the provision of legal and social protection. It includes good practices and recommendations in this regard.

## 2 | Methodology

The systematization is based on a qualitative research methodology, which draws on primary and secondary information sources. Primarily, the methodology was supported by recording data from primary sources and comparing the testimonies of the actors involved. For this, tools such as documentation reviews, field visits, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and a participatory workshop were used. The systematization involved RCMW Tijuana personnel, representatives of the SUCOMM, specialists from the ILO Office in Mexico, allied organizations of the RCMW (public farms at the municipal level, companies, and non-governmental organizations) and migrant workers (see figure 1).

► Figure 1. Information tools and sources

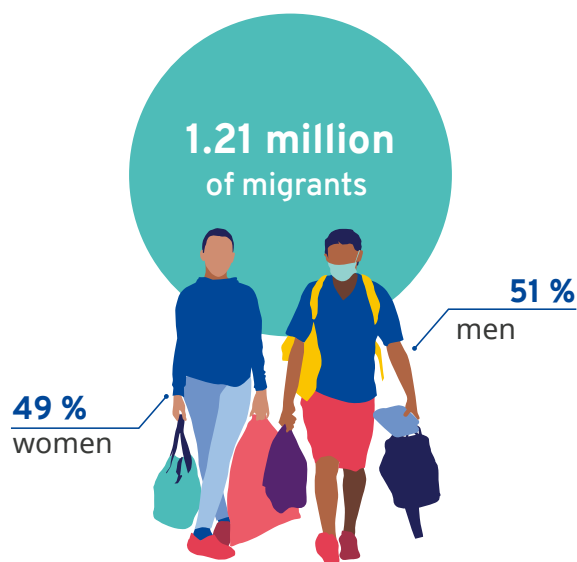


**Source:** author's own elaboration, based on the methodological proposal for the systematization.

### 3 | The mexican context

Mexico has historically been a country of origin, transit, and return, with high levels of informal and irregular migration, and it is gradually consolidating itself as a country of destination. This is how high migratory flows are registered, particularly in the countries of the North and South American continents, primarily in the United States, Guatemala, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Honduras, Colombia, and El Salvador (Mexico 2020). The total number of international migrants in Mexico is 1.21 million, of whom 51 per cent are men and 49 per cent are women (Migration Data Portal 2020). In addition, it was found that the unemployment rate is 1.9 percentage points higher in migrants than in nationals.

In keeping with the trends identified in the Latin American and Caribbean region as a whole, the foreign population in Mexico is mostly concentrated in the capital city and in the border states. Such is the case of **Baja California, a border state north of Mexico (see map 1), which has traditionally been the recipient of migrants, refugees and other displaced people, both foreign and national** (Mexico 2022). Of the municipalities in Baja California, **Tijuana is the most populous, with 1.9 million people; 59.6 per cent of the migrant population in Baja California reside there.**



► Map 1. Mexico, by states and municipalities



Mexican workers are drawn to this state by the jobs offered by the *maquiladora* industry, particularly in Tijuana. There are also migrants who try to transit to the United States, including people seeking better economic opportunities and people who have been forcibly displaced due to insecurity and/or violence in their communities of origin and who intend, presumably, to access asylum in the United States (Mexico 2022). Baja California also welcomes Mexican people involuntarily returned by the United States, some of whom repeatedly attempt to cross the northern border.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Mexico (2022) projected that by the end of 2022, Baja California would have received more than 50 per cent of the involuntarily returnees from the United States.



The foreign population that moves through Baja California is made up of people who seek to transit to the United States and others who, for different reasons, decide to stay longer in the state of Baja California. In the case of the latter, the 2020 Population and Housing Census shows that they are young people and therefore have the potential to join the productive life of the state. It should be noted that some foreigners do not have the migratory documentation required for regular transit or may have international protection needs, which increases their risk of exposure to violence, migrant smuggling, human trafficking, and other forms of exploitation present in the border area. On top of this social dynamic in Baja California, there is a regular cross-border movement of Mexicans and Americans who work and/or study in the neighbouring country.

Although the majority of foreign persons who move through the state of Baja California have the initial intention of transiting to the United States, the data on the issuance of temporary residence cards and permanent residence cards, particularly for persons of United States, Haitian and Colombian nationality, as well as those of Venezuelan, Cuban and Chinese nationality, **indicate that more foreigners spend a significant amount of time in Baja California, which represents a challenge in terms of socio-labour insertion for multiple governmental and non-governmental actors** (Canchola 2020,14; Mexico 2022).

**Mexico has made notable efforts to guarantee the exercise of the migrant workers' rights of in its territory.** Due to its history of being closely linked to human mobility, the state of Baja California has played an especially active role in the development of regulations, policies and initiatives to respond to the context of human mobility (Mexico 2022). This is how in this state, strategies and protocols for the protection of migrants have been implemented, such as the integration centres for migrants, which receive and attend to migrants' basic needs, as well as the socio-labour and educational integration of people sent to Mexico who are awaiting asylum in the United States. Also, due to the growing number of people applying for refugee status, an office of the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance was established in recent years in Tijuana.

These state efforts have been complemented by that of other organizations, making Baja California the state with the largest number shelters for migrants, refugees and other displaced people that are managed mostly by civil society (Mexico 2022). **Despite the efforts at the federal, state and municipal levels, a number of challenges are remain to guarantee the protection and labour integration of migrants, refugees and other displaced people.**



**First**, people who lack immigration documentation are unaware of their rights and current immigration and labour procedures, and some of them are harmed by the lack of regulations and procedures that facilitate a path towards a more permanent immigration status (ILO, unpublished). This immigration irregularity can be prolonged and limit their access to decent work and social benefits, as well as other rights and public services, particularly due to fear of being penalized for their immigration status. This situation contributes to their feeling more attracted to informal work.



**Second**, despite the fact that there are different modalities of temporary and longer-term residence for foreigners that open up opportunities to obtain work permits, institutional barriers persist for the recruiting of foreign personnel by public and private employers. According to article 7 of Mexico's Federal Labour Law, **90 per cent of the workers of a private company must be of Mexican origin, and in addition it is necessary to justify the recruitment of a foreigner to a technical position by demonstrating the lack of that expertise in the national population.** This last requirement also applies to contracts in the public sector.

Another challenge that affects the rights of the migrant workers is the **operational delay in the application processes for labour procedures**, in particular the Federal Taxpayer Registry, for which only people who have a visitor card for humanitarian reasons are able to access a more expedited process.

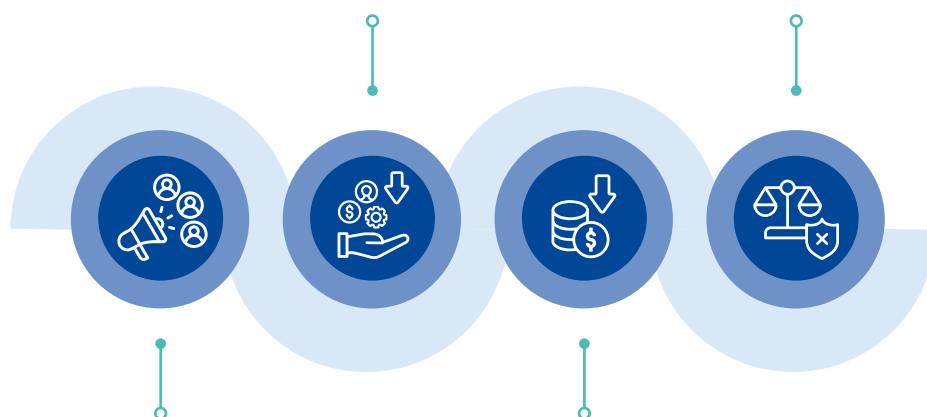


**Finally**, the social and economic vulnerabilities of migrants, refugees and other displaced people, exacerbated by labour deficits, push families to implement negative survival strategies, such as begging and child labour, which prevent the full exercise of the rights of children and adolescents. In turn, these vulnerabilities increase their exposure to being victims of gender-based violence and criminal networks linked to migrant smuggling, human trafficking and other types of exploitation. In particular, the lack of a unified public policy aimed at combating human trafficking limits the coordination and articulation of efforts among the relevant actors to deal with this scourge (IOM 2022).

**Specifically in Baja California and Tijuana, it was possible to identify political and social conditions, as well as specific labour challenges, that influence the exercise of labour rights of migrant workers. These include:**

The limited allocation of public resources to the local state council responsible for the welfare of migrants, refugees and other displaced people.

The ignorance of employers concerning the rights of migrant workers and the procedures for recruiting migrants, a situation that limits the offer of jobs aimed at this population.

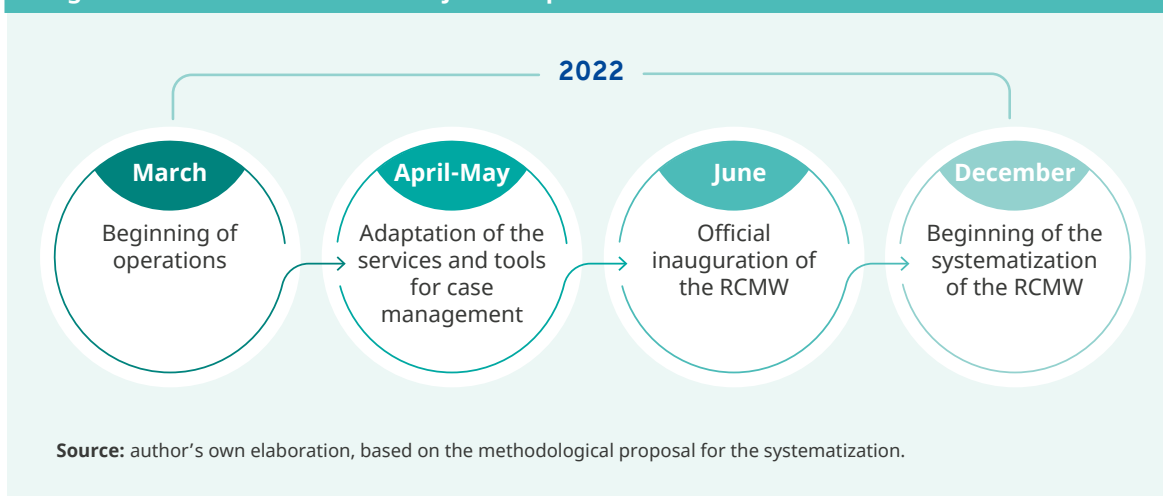


The need to strengthen the convening capacity of the government of Baja California to lead the coordination and articulation of efforts with other actors to respond to migratory flows.

The insufficient commitment and allocation of financial resources on the part of unions to incorporate the priorities of the migrant workers into their institutional objectives.

## 4 | Summary of the experience

► Figure 2. Timeline of the RCMW Tijuana implementation



The RCMW Tijuana, which is managed by the SUCOMM, aims to assist potential migrants, migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, as well as their families, with services that facilitate their access to decent work and justice for any violations of their labour rights. The RCMW represents **an entry point for the exercise of labour rights by the migrant workers**, since it provides a series of essential and complementary services, directly or through channels to other organizations, which contribute to their social integration, the improvement of their living conditions and the restitution of their rights.

Through its two assistance modalities, the RCMW provides different services (see figure 3) based on person-centred care, gender-sensitive and culturally relevant approaches, which seek to empower migrant workers by attending to their needs, priorities and interests.



**The RCMW is based at the SUCOMM** premises in Plaza Centenario, in the north of Tijuana. For the activities of the RCMW,

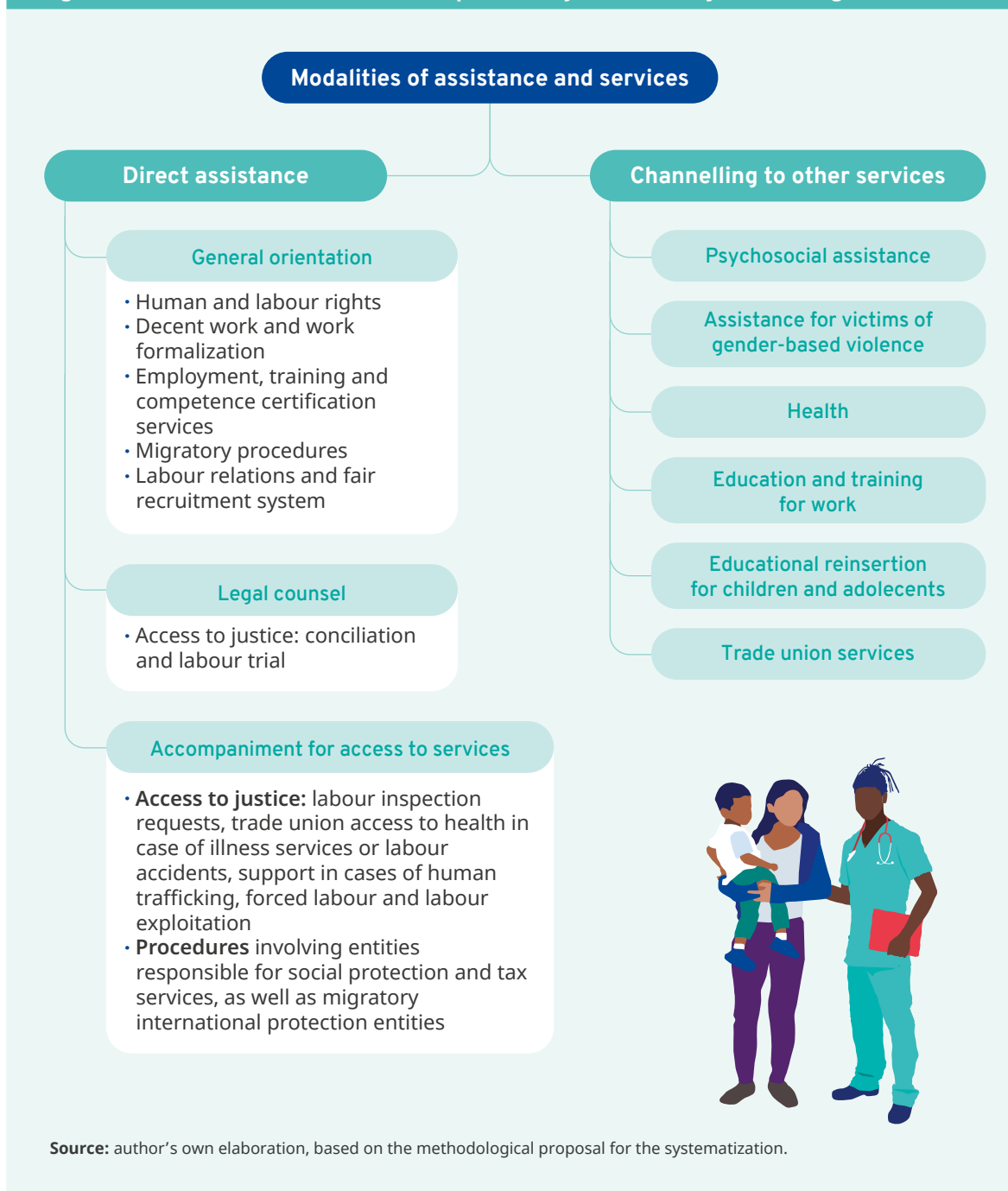
the union has provided a reception room, a space for meetings and interviews that require privacy, and a workspace for the staff.



Its **business hours** are Monday to Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



► Figure 3. Modalities of care and services provided by the RCMW Tijuana for migrant workers



**The institutional mandate of SUCOMM for the promotion and protection of the rights of migrant workers opens doors for the RCMW to carry out closer coordination and influence other relevant actors in the labour world** (governments, employers' organizations, and workers' organizations) for the protection of the rights of migrant workers and the search for solutions to the labour deficiencies that violate them.

For its operation, **the RCMW has a team of three professionals who perform the roles of Coordinator; Promoter; and Assistant Coordinator or Interpreter.** The last two roles assume functions related to orientation on labour rights and the accompaniment of migrant workers. By providing an interpreter, the RCMW guarantees the provision of services in the native language of the Haitian population (Haitian Creole), which represents the largest population group served. In addition to managing those functions, the coordinator is responsible for counselling for access to labour justice, the promotion of services and the establishment of collaborative alliances with other key organizations, as well as the supervision and monitoring of the activities of the RCMW.

**The implementation of the RCMW Tijuana has been technically and financially supported by the ILO, based on its methodological proposal for the operation of this care model.** In 2021, within the framework of the REFRAME project, which is financed by the European Union and implemented by the ILO, the SUCOMM a Directory of Labour Services and facilitated the preparation of a shared attention protocol (PAC) with the government of Baja California. The PAC is an instrument that establishes the procedures and institutional responsibilities for the fair and legal labour recruiting of migrant workers in the state of Baja California. Under the same project, the Migrant Workers Centre Operations Manual (ILO 2021b) was developed to specifically guide the provision of services in Tijuana.

After the start of its operations in March 2022 and following the guidelines of the **Manual**, the RCMW team carried out a **first exercise to define its action and monitoring and adjust the tools for case management.** Based on the identification of the violations linked to aspects of gender and sexual diversity, the services were adapted to include reference to gender-based violence care services and the training of the team for the promotion of safe spaces for the LGTBIQ+ community was prioritized.

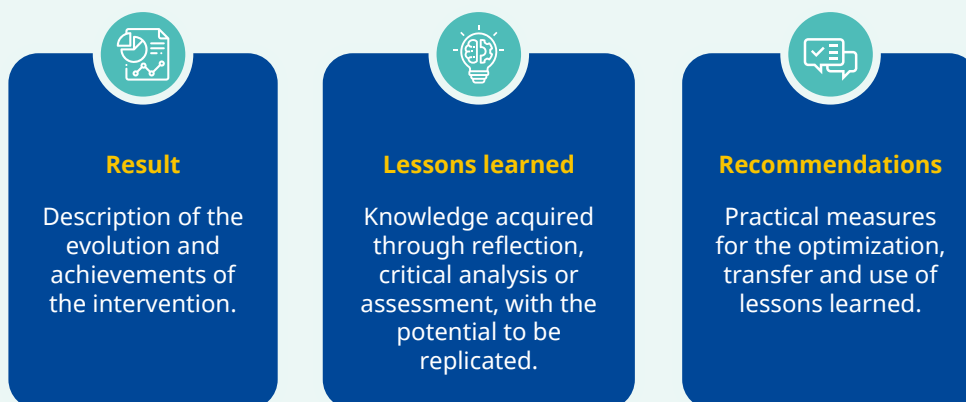
**In June 2022, the RCMW Tijuana was formally inaugurated** at an event that brought together the main actors related to the world of work, including Tijuana unions, business chambers and ILO specialists, among others. The SUCOMM representatives and RCMW staff consider that this milestone increased the visibility and legitimacy of the RCMW for the rest of the actors.



## 5 | Key takeaways: Results, lessons learned and recommendations

Based on the application of the methodology, this document identifies the results, lessons learned and recommendations for six areas (see figure 4). These takeaways will be conveyed to the ILO and SUCOMM to guide the improvement of the RCMW Tijuana and the replication of its care model in other key transit, destination and return areas for migrants, refugees and other displaced people in Mexico and Central American countries.

► Figure 4. Definitions



**Source:** author's own elaboration, based on the methodological proposal for the systematization.

## 5.1 Entry point for the exercise of labour rights



### Results

The RCMW Tijuana **served 372 migrant workers during March and December 2022**,<sup>5</sup> of whom 67 per cent were men and 33 per cent were women, originating from different countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The majority were Haitian (36 per cent), Salvadoran (17 per cent), Honduran (15 per cent) and Guatemalan (11 per cent). Due to the internal displacement of Mexicans towards Tijuana, they represented the fourth largest group of migrant workers (12 per cent). **For the Haitian population, services were provided in their native language.**

**The most requested service from the RCMW was guidance on rights in the workplace, labour procedures and formal job opportunities.** In particular, the RCMW facilitated understanding of the procedures required for access to formal work, which necessarily include immigration procedures, in a context in which uncertainty still persists regarding immigration and international protection policies, particularly concerning the renewal of the visitor card for humanitarian reasons.

**This orientation was complemented by the physical accompaniment of migrant workers by RCMW staff to carry out labour procedures, a service that differentiates the RCMW from other labour services.** The accompaniment of migrant workers by RCMW staff contributed to clarifying the procedures continuously for the person assisted, providing socio-emotional support throughout the procedure, influencing public authorities to respect the formal guidelines of each procedure, and promoting good treatment of the population on the move.

**The RCMW also guided and accompanied migrant workers in obtaining access to labour justice when their labour rights were violated.** In this regard, it primarily involved accompanying migrant workers in labour conciliation processes before the corresponding authorities, which resulted in expediting the issuance of remedies in accordance with national law.

Given the services provided, **RCMW personnel require a high level of thematic specialization**, a requirement that was favoured by SUCOMM's institutional mandate as a union for the promotion and protection of labour rights. In the same way, the recruitment of migrants or refugees in the RCMW contributed to the people served feeling welcomed by people who had had similar migration experiences and shared cultural closeness.

<sup>5</sup> This systematization contemplates the services from the start of operations in March until 5 December 2022.



## Lessons learned

- The institutional mandate of the unions implies a comparative advantage in providing labour services and contributed to the RCMW doing so in a more comprehensive and timely manner. As one of the leading actors in the world of work, unions have thematic specializations and resources, such as with respect to collective agreements, which allow them to promote the exercise of labour rights of migrant workers, as well as to influence the response to labour deficits in the framework of social dialogue with employers and governments.
- In a social context characterized by xenophobia and discrimination, the physical accompaniment of migrant workers by RCMW staff during access to labour services guaranteed respect for their rights and contributed to their receiving a more efficient service focused on the individual.
- The recruitment of personnel and the availability of interpretation services that facilitate the provision of the RCMW service in the native language of the population served makes it possible to reach populations that are usually excluded from other services and are therefore more vulnerable to different types of abuse.
- The recruitment of migrant workers to make up the RCMW team contributes to their empowerment as agents of change, and generates more affinity with and trust in the people served.





## Recommendations

- Update, organize and improve the dissemination of the services provided so that the RCMW can focus on its added value: accompaniment for labour procedures and for access to labour justice. Given the added value, it will be advantageous to incorporate a lawyer into the RCMW team to add to the interdisciplinary characteristic of care and to accompany, in particular, the processes of obtaining access to labour justice.
- Design and implement a monitoring and evaluation plan for the RCMW Tijuana, which will allow the monitoring of compliance with objectives and the identification of gaps and opportunities for improvement on a regular basis. This plan must include a strategy for accountability and feedback that includes the collection of the assessments and observations of the migrant workers who were provided with services.
- Implement other trade union strategies and instruments to influence respect for labour rights with other relevant actors in the world of work:
  - for employers, include in collective agreements clauses that mitigate the risks of violation of migrant workers' rights and establish mechanisms that respond appropriately to abuses; and
  - propose a joint strategy with other workers' organizations and non-governmental organizations to institutionalize a way to raise the problems identified and advocate for the development and implementation of coordinated solutions.
- Prepare and make use of friendly and effective communication resources that complement the guidance provided to migrant workers on gaining access to priority labour rights and services. In particular, it is necessary to have resources that explain complex immigration and labour procedures that require follow-up by migrant workers.

## 5.2 Services with a gender and sexual diversity approach



### Results

The identification of issues related to gender and sexual diversity that limit the exercise of labour rights by women and the LGBTIQ+ population led to a process of adapting the services provided by RCMW staff in mid-2022.

On the one hand, a mapping of care services for survivors of violence, including at the workplace, was developed, such as the Women's Justice Centre and the Municipal Women's Institute. Thereafter, the RCMW added the service of providing guidance on the right to a life free of violence, including at the workplace, to its care flows. In the event that signs of violence were identified against migrant workers and/or the revelation of abuses, the RCMW channelled those public services to the victims.

Similarly, from the beginning of its implementation and with the intention of guaranteeing people-centred service that promotes resilience, the RCMW practised fair recruitment of personnel of both sexes and took steps to train its staff on facilitating access to justice for survivors of gender violence, providing psychological first aid and promoting safe spaces for the LGBTIQ+ community.

Finally, based on this approach, the RCMW deployed different dissemination strategies to reach a population that is particularly vulnerable to labour abuses. To that end, it disseminated its services in shelters that welcome the LGBTIQ+ population, where part of this population remains temporarily until they are received by the United States authorities to request asylum.



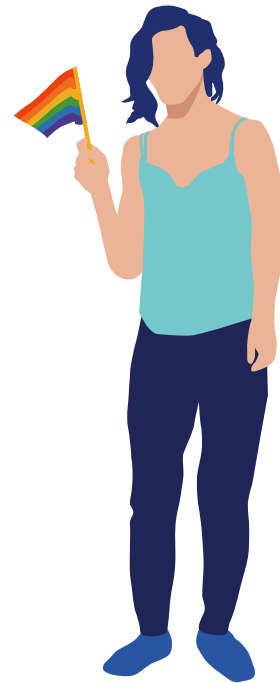
### Lessons learned

- The incorporation of an intersectional analysis of the vulnerabilities of the migrant workers contributed to the definition of more effective care strategies for those who face greater limitations to the exercise of their labour rights, such as women and LGBTIQ+ people.
- In the context of high levels of gender-based violence, having trained personnel to identify the risks of violence and channelling these cases to services facilitated comprehensive attention being given to the needs and priorities of the affected population.



## Recommendations

- Prepare an internal capacity-building plan on an annual basis, which should include basic technical capacities and soft skills for the provision of services by the RCMW, such as case management with a rights-based approach; protection risk mitigation and responses to gender-based violence, child labour and forced labour; and communication, negotiation and advocacy skills.
- Map the services that address the particular needs and priorities of women and caregivers that could enable them to exercise their labour rights, such as care alternatives for children and adolescents, and include them in channelling flows.
- Establish alliances with companies to raise awareness and train them on the promotion of safe environments free of violence and discrimination in order to increase job opportunities for women and the LGBTBIQ+ community. Complement this action with collaboration agreements with companies that offer flexible work opportunities for mothers and caregivers of children and adolescents, who are attracted to informal work because it allows them to fulfil multiple responsibilities and roles.
- In the collective labour contracts that unions negotiate with companies, include clauses that commit the latter to the prevention and mitigation of risks of violence, abuse and discrimination in the workplace, and that guarantee transparent, anonymous and reliable processes for complaints and access to justice in such situations.





## 5.3 Services that mitigate risks of child protection



### Results

The services provided by the RCMW Tijuana show the predominance of children and adolescents and their families in the migratory flows in Tijuana, as well as migrant workers who seek family reunification once they settle in their destination.

Given the social and economic vulnerability of families, the RCMW identified protection risks for children and adolescents, and made appropriate referrals to support services for them and their families. Specifically, the RCMW consulted families about the schooling situation of children and adolescents in order to identify potential risks of child labour and hazardous work for adolescents of working age. In cases of absenteeism and school dropouts, the RCMW referred families to the Binational Migrant Education Programme in order to facilitate the reintegration of children and adolescents into school, as well as for parents and caregivers to receive guidance to improve educational support.

Faced with the search for family reunification, the RCMW advised migrant workers on their rights related to family unification, with the aim of contributing to safe and dignified migration for family members and avoiding the lack of protection of girls, boys and adolescents during their displacement.



### Lessons learned

- The RCMW contributed to mitigating child protection risks by identifying them within the framework of its action and channelling families to other support services, particularly for the coverage of unmet basic needs and for educational reinsertion, which guarantee appropriate cognitive, psychological and emotional development for girls, boys and adolescents.



## Recommendations

- Strengthen the child protection approach in case management in order to standardize the identification and approach of child protection risks, including with respect to lack of protection or parental care, begging, child labour, forced labour and other modern forms of exploitation. To that end:
  - complement the initial interview form with questions that make it possible to identify these risks;
  - periodically update support services and humanitarian assistance for families in situations of greater social and economic vulnerability, and include them in channelling flows ; and
  - standardize key sensitization and awareness messages about child protection risks and reporting mechanisms for violations of rights, so that the people served have tools that allow them to play an active role in protecting the rights of girls, children and adolescents.
- Expand the scope of RCMW services to adolescents of working age in order to guide them on their rights and channel them to services that mitigate the risks of falling into hazardous work. To that end, identify gathering spaces for migrant youth and adolescents, and define relevant dissemination strategies.



## 5.4 Multi-actor cooperation



### Results

The RCMW established a two-way cooperation arrangement with organizations that provide services for migrants, refugees and other displaced people in Tijuana. This cooperation was supported by the signing of institutional agreements, mainly with non-governmental organizations that provide other essential labour services for the migrant workers, such as the strengthening of job skills through training sessions.

In addition, the RCMW coordinated with other organizations, including United Nations organizations, to attend to the other needs of the population, some of them closely related to the exercise of labour rights. For example, migrant workers were channelled to legal accompaniment services for the resolution of immigration procedures and for the coverage of unsatisfied basic needs, such as food, health, and shelter. Finally, the cooperation also led to the development of capacity-building processes based on the specialized technical areas of the organizations present in Tijuana.



### Lessons learned

- Cooperation with other organizations in Tijuana was essential to meet the multiplicity of needs of migrant workers and contributed to the RCMW not only facilitating the exercise of labour rights but also promoting the conditions for the comprehensive improvement of the living conditions of migrant workers.



## Recommendations

- Strengthen the position of the RCMW vis-à-vis other organizations by building a narrative that highlights its added value and links it to its management by a trade union. Although RCMW's allied organizations in Tijuana know and value their work, they do not link the RCMW to SUCOMM or have a negative view of unionism. For this reason, it is essential that SUCOMM and the RCMW staff recognize and make visible the differential contribution that the service can provide to enable labour rights and facilitate access to labour justice, based on its mandate as a union.
- The ILO's technical support is key to formulating the strategic planning and sustainability of the RCMW's activities and in turn to installing project management, advocacy and negotiation capacities in the union.



## 5.5 Dissemination of services



### Results

The RCMW Tijuana used different strategies to disseminate both its digital and face-to-face services. On social media, it has an institutional Facebook page, where it regularly posts information about its activities. In turn, based on an institutional agreement with a non-governmental organization, the contact information and an explanation of RCMW services are included in a digital directory of services aimed at the migrant workers.

The RCMW also held informative talks about the services as part of the activities of other organizations and at locations where migrant workers congregate, such as in shelters and at events organized by the migrant community itself. Migrant community events expanded the reach of the RCMW to include migrant workers.

Finally, the RCMW made initial efforts to involve migrant workers affiliated with SUCOMM-allied unions in disseminating its services. To do so, it presented them with the RCMW services and invited them to disseminate them among their contact networks.





## Lessons learned

- The use of various strategies to disseminate services contributed to broader outreach to migrant workers, especially those who cannot easily travel to the RCMW due to caregiving roles and the distance and/or cost of transportation, among other reasons.
- The RCMW reached a greater number of persons of concern by making use of SUCOMM's resources, particularly to gain access to the migrant workers who are affiliated with its allied unions.



## Recommendations

- Analyse through which physical or virtual means women, young people and adolescents find out about services aimed at migrant workers. Based on this analysis, develop dissemination strategies focused on the different profiles of migratory flows, especially those who are most exposed to the violation of rights.
- Strengthen the dissemination strategy through a "word of mouth" approach that involves and empowers migrant communities in Tijuana. To that end, define an institutional strategy for engaging migrant workers who are affiliated with unions allied to SUCOMM in the dissemination of services and the referral of cases that warrant attention, particularly cases in which labour abuses are recorded.
- The outreach to migrant workers could be enhanced if migrant integration activities were developed, whereby spaces for the exchange of experiences and culture are generated. Based on the ILO experience in other geographical regions, these spaces represent opportunities for guiding and raising the awareness of migrant workers about their rights in safe environments and that strengthen their sense of community.

## 5.6 Sustainability



### Results

The factors that contribute to the sustainability of the RCMW are related to the institutional mandate of the union, as well as to the capacity established in it by the management of the RCMW.

SUCOMM's management of the RCMW facilitated the provision of labour services, given that they have the institutional mandate to promote and protect the rights of migrant workers. This is how it has the capacity to coordinate more comprehensive and timely responses with governments and employers' organizations on labour issues, as well as to influence public decision-making processes in favour of the rights of workers.

In turn, the management of the RCMW strengthened the institutional commitment of SUCOMM towards the migrant workers. This was evident in the leadership exercised by SUCOMM in mobilizing other unions in Tijuana to address violations of labour rights. In turn, the union participated in awareness-raising and capacity-building processes on the rights of migrant workers for employers and established alliances with them for the labour market insertion of the population served. Finally, SUCOMM provided proposals for solutions to labour rights issues in forums and spaces for social dialogue.

Similarly, having received the financial support of the ILO in the first months of intervention, the union contributed a percentage of the quotas of the workers affiliated to SUCOMM to cover the operational costs of the RCMW, a contribution that also accounts for the institutional commitment of the union and its affiliates to the protection of migrants, refugees and other displaced people.





## Lessons learned

- SUCOMM's management of the RCMW directly and indirectly strengthened its commitment and institutional capacity to protect the rights of migrant workers. The responsibility of managing this service led them to strengthen their skills in the area of labour migration and human mobility, committing national workers to the promotion and protection of the rights of migrant workers, as well as positioning them as benchmarks for the exchange of good practices for the attention of their priorities and their social integration.



## Recommendations

- Implement strategies for the mobilization of partners for the development and collection of complementary funds that allow the location of the RCMW in a central space and guarantee fair recruitment of its personnel, as well as expanding the team to guarantee the interdisciplinary spirit in addressing labour needs.
- The ILO can contribute to the strategic dissemination and presentation of the lessons learned from the RCMW Tijuana experience with a view to mobilizing development partners that are committed to strengthening the union movement and increasing attention to migrant workers in Mexico.



## 6 | Replicability

From the systematization, a number of lessons learned were identified that have the potential to be replicated in other migratory and socio-labour contexts in Mexico or other countries; among which the following stand out:

- The **management of the RCMW by a union** contributes to the comprehensiveness of its assistance to migrant workers and its facilitation of their access to labour justice, due to its thematic specialization, as well as to its resources and tools, which allow it to influence effectively and contribute to respect for migrant workers' rights on the part of governments and employers' organizations in a framework of social dialogue.
- The RCMW **encourages tripartite involvement** in the care of the migrant workers in order to address the multiplicity of labour deficiencies that affect them and integrate them into the labour market and their communities of origin.
- The **recruitment of personnel or the availability of interpretation services that facilitate the provision of the RCMW service in the native language of the population served** – particularly Haitians, who represent one of the main population groups on the move in the American continents – makes it possible to reach populations that are usually excluded from services and therefore more vulnerable to different types of abuse.
- **Planning on an annual basis for the strengthening of capacities based on the competencies and skills required for the provision of the service** (case management, protection risk mitigation, communication and negotiation skills) guarantees people-centred care that does not revictimize migrant workers and that responds comprehensively to their needs and priorities.
- The RCMW attention and dissemination strategies are based on a **periodic intersectional analysis of the vulnerabilities of the migrant workers** in order to mitigate protection risks and eliminate barriers to the exercise of labour rights, particularly of girls, boys and adolescents, women and people of sexual diversity.
- **Cooperation with other organizations** (non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies, civil society) contributed to the RCMW by not only facilitating the exercise of labour rights but also creating the conditions for comprehensive improvement of the living conditions of migrant workers.
- The use of **targeted strategies to disseminate services** facilitates a broader outreach to the migrant workers, especially those who are most excluded from services, such as caregivers of children and adolescents; single mothers and fathers; elderly people; and people who are victims of violence, abuse and other forms of exploitation.



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