

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICERS INFORMATIONAL SHEET

Protection Model for Unaccompanied Children and Adolescents

Given the particular vulnerability of unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents, and owing to the urgent need to respect and protect their human rights as well as ensure their well-being, an effort to adequately address this phenomenon is critical.

With this in mind, the National Migration Institute foresees seeking an attention mechanism with the following objectives:

- Undertake consular notification immediately after the minor is placed under the protection of the National Migration Institute and once it has been established that the minor is not a possible asylum seeker
- Provide special attention to the needs of this vulnerable group.
- Expedite the transfer of such children to the Department of Family Development Shelter in Chiapas or to the Migratory Station depending on the particular characteristics of each case in accordance with the agreement between the National Institute for Migration and the Department for Family Development – Chiapas.
- The Child Protection officer is responsible for informing the minor in appropriate language, of his or her rights and for responding to all of the child's questions and concerns regarding migration procedures.

Based on the above, the following actions are suggested:

1. Create the post of "Child Protection Officer" – this person will receive integrated training on how to assist unaccompanied minors. There should be at least two Child Protection Officers in each delegation of migration officials, who will be part of the operational personnel of the National Migration Institute, and whose duties will not be exclusively devoted to Child Protection.
2. The integrated training plan for CPOs was agreed upon with National System of Family Development, in which the participation of the National Human Rights Commission, the International Organization on Migration, the Mexican Commission for Assistance to Refugees, Youth Integration Centres and other specialists in the field, was foreseen.
3. Update the mechanism for attention to unaccompanied minors through the following actions:
 - a. At the moment that a minor comes under the protection of the National Institute for Migration, the migration agent is to inform the Child Protection Officer on duty, so that the CPO can attend to the minor's needs.
 - b. The child will be channeled by this officer in order to make a proper determination of the child's situation and needs.

- c. The international protection needs of the child will be evaluated, whether as an asylum-seeker, victim of intrafamilial violence, human trafficking or for other reasons, and the child will be channeled to the corresponding institutions.
 - d. Consular notification will be effected by fax immediately, advising the consulate of the approximate date that the child will be returned to the country of origin (depending on nationality, age, particular characteristics, and place of holding, the child will be taken to the migration station in Iztapalapa, the migration station in Tapachula, the Department of Family Development Shelter in Tapachula or another shelter.
 - e. The CPO should also channel the child such that a medical certification can be issued in the shortest time possible.
 - f. With the assistance of IOM, the child will be transported to his or her final destination accompanied by a migration official, preferably a CPO, throughout the entire journey.
 - g. In the case of asylum-seekers, once the minor is situated in the place where he or she will reside during the adjudication of the case, an effort will be made to assign a guardian to that child. The role of the guardian will be to orient and accompany the child, as well as advocate on behalf of the child.
 - h. When appropriate, repatriation will be undertaken in conformity with the criteria that observe the protection of the minor's interests.
 - i. The minors' countries of origin should put into place the necessary mechanisms to re-insert the minors in their communities.
4. Create a mechanism for the supervision and monitoring of the CPOs.

Integrated Training Plan for the CPO's

With the objective of taking the first step towards operationalizing the model for attention to unaccompanied children and adolescents, it was necessary to train the functionaries of the National Institute for Migration who would be serving as Child Protection Officers, as they will be charged with responding in an integrated way to unaccompanied minors.

Number of Participants: 68 CPO's divided into two groups

Date: First Course: 4, 5 and 6 March 2008

Second Course: 11, 12 and 13 March 2008

Duration of the Course: 24 hours divided into three sessions of eight hours each

Recognition: Certificate of Course Completion for each attendee with a Child Protection Officer insignia