



SYSTEMATIZATION OF GOOD PRACTICE

**“PEPITA” DISSEMINATION OF PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL  
MESSAGES THROUGH THEATER AND GAMES**



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**Guatemala**

# CREDITS

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# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CNRG</b>	Shelter: Casa Nuestros Raíces Guatemala
<b>IGM</b>	Guatemalan Migration Institute (IGM by its Spanish acronym)
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration.
<b>IRM</b>	Integrated Response on Migration in Central America Program
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and evaluation.
<b>MHPSS</b>	Mental health and psychosocial support
<b>PGM</b>	Attorney General's Office (PGN by its Spanish acronym)
<b>SBS</b>	Secretariat of Social Welfare in Guatemala (SBS by its Spanish acronym)
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals.
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development

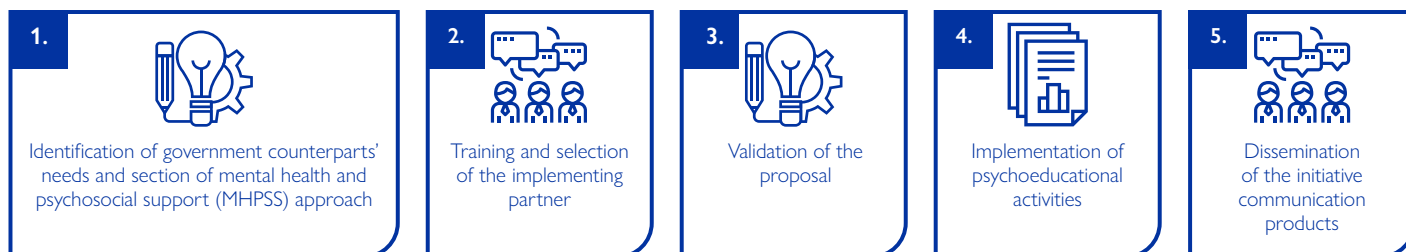
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# GOOD PRACTICE SUMMARY

<b>Good Practice</b>	“Pepita” Dissemination of psychoeducational messages through theater and games
<b>Description</b>	From January to December 2021, 63,808 people returned to Guatemala, of which 7,840 were unaccompanied children and adolescents. Under this context, IOM Guatemala’s team provided technical support to strengthen the efforts of government counterparts on family reunification and assistance of populations in vulnerable situations. To this end, in coordination with implementing partners, they carried out psychoeducational activities <sup>1</sup> through theater and games <sup>2</sup> to generate emotional safe spaces for both unaccompanied returned children and their families, so they could symbolically elaborate on their return experience and at the same time talk about the future from a resilience perspective.
<b>Objective</b>	Contribute to the psychosocial support processes implemented by the Secretariat of Social Welfare in Guatemala (SBS by its Spanish acronym) aimed at unaccompanied children and adolescent returnees and their families (suitable family resources) <sup>3</sup> through the dissemination of psychoeducational messages using recreational and theatrical tools.
<b>Place</b>	Returned Migrant Reception Center “Casa Nuestras Raices” (CNRG by its Spanish acronym)
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	Returned unaccompanied Guatemalan children, legal tutors, and families

## MAIN ACTIONS



<sup>1</sup> Psychoeducation is a therapeutic approach to address everyday life situations and as a tool for change that involves cognitive, biological, and social processes particular to each individual to ensure their autonomy and improve their life quality. It is a helpful technique to provide information and practical tools to improve the understanding of people’s emotions, feelings, experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and thoughts; to strengthen individual and community resources that each person has to face with resilience the different experiences of life.

<sup>2</sup> Using theater and games facilitates the dissemination of information and expression, rest, reworking, and symbolic transformation of situations perceived as painful. Performing activities through these methods can also activate processes that are at the same time healing, educational, social, and cultural, rooted in structured and recognizable forms that also allow individual, subcultural, and collective changes and transformations. IOM (2021). [Manual on Community-Based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support \(MHPSS\)](#). Geneva, IOM.

<sup>3</sup> A suitable family resource is any adult with a proven kinship relationship with the children and whom the Office of the Attorney General of the Nation (PGN) determines to be viable for family reunification.

# INTRODUCTION

The IOM and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) signed an agreement to implement, in six countries in the region, the Integrated Response on Migration in Central America (IRM) program. This program develops activities intending to contribute to the reduction of irregular migration and the promotion of orderly, safe, and regular migration processes.

IOM Guatemala, with an implementing partner implemented twice-a-week from June to September, awareness-raising activities of psychoeducational messages through theater and games in the CNRG shelter managed by SBS. From now on, this experience will be described throughout this document as Good Practice.

Through this experience, IOM Guatemala contributed to strengthening the following guiding principles, transversal and interdependent of the Global Compact for Orderly, Safe and Regular Migration: people-centered, human rights, gender-responsive, child-sensitive and whole-of-government approach; it also contributed to the promotion of the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Good health and well-being (SDG 3), Gender equality (SDG 5) and Reduced inequalities (SDG 10).

# CONTEXT

According to official data provided by the Guatemalan Migration Institute (IGM by its Spanish acronym), the SBS, and compiled by the IOM Information Unit (2021)<sup>4</sup>, from January to December of 2021, 63,808 people were returned to Guatemala, of which 7,840 were unaccompanied children. A high percentage of returned children identified job search as a driver for irregular migration, followed by seeking educational opportunities and family reunification in the destination country (IOM, 2021)<sup>5</sup>.

Children are returned by air and land, and are received in the reception centers of returned populations located in Guatemala City and the municipality of Ayutla, San Marcos; then they are transferred to the shelters in charge of the SBS to receive post-arrival assistance and carry out the family reunification process, according to the guidelines of the National Protocol for the Reception and Care of Migrant Children and Adolescents in Guatemala (Government of Guatemala, n.d.)<sup>6</sup>.

IOM (2020)<sup>7</sup> has increasingly perceived return migration as an essential instrument for migration management, since this is an integral part of human mobility. Although it is a complex phenomenon with various associated challenges, in recent years, it has been the subject of greater recognition.

Within this migration management framework, promoting the integration and sustainable reintegration at the individual, community, and structural level of returned migrants; is the

purpose of the second outcome of the IRM program. According to IOM's integrated approach to sustainable reintegration, in which psychosocial, economic, and social factors are addressed in an integrated manner. For this reason, the project team designed, planned, and implemented the Good Practice from a mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) approach.

The psychosocial dimension of IOM's integrated approach to sustainable reintegration identifies MHPSS activities at the individual, community, and structural levels, in order to provide services that promote the protection<sup>8</sup> of returned migrants. Strengthening these factors allows them to face the future with resilience, reestablish family and social ties and adjust to a new life; in safe spaces where their personal migratory experience is validated.

Family reunification is part of the migratory experience of returned unaccompanied children and their families. The SBS and the Attorney General's Office (PGN by its Spanish acronym) has adopted measures based on respect for the higher interest of the child to ensure that the rights of the returned children and their family can be restored in a safe and culturally relevant manner<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> IOM. (2021). Information Unit. IOM. More information at [this link](#).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Gobierno de la República de Guatemala. (s. f). Protocolo nacional para la recepción y atención de niñez y adolescencia migrante en Guatemala. Comisión para la atención integral de niñez y adolescencia migrante. Guatemala.

<sup>7</sup> IOM. (2020). [Reintegration Handbook - Practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance](#). Geneva, IOM.

<sup>8</sup> According to Amar, Llanos and Acosta (2003), "protective factors are resources or conditions that people have as defense mechanisms against situations of risk or emotional vulnerability, favoring the management of emotions, the regulation of stress and allowing them to potentiate their human capacities". Pontifical Bolivarian University. (2018). Protective factors in mental health. Blog center. More Well-being. Available in [this link](#).

<sup>9</sup> Although there is no exact definition for the concept of culturally relevant, Guatemala's national base curriculum approximates this definition by describing it as the extent to which education is increasingly based on the socio-cultural characteristics of the subjects of the process and on their historical and ecological context; that is, in the recognition, appreciation, and reassessment of the language, culture, needs, and expectations of people. National Base Curriculum. (2020). Part One: What does cultural relevance refer to? CNB. Guatemala. Available in [this link](#).

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