

WORKING TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS



IOM International Organization for Migration

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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

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introduction

Burmese migrant working on a fishing boat in Thailand
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Filipino nurse at her work station

Introduction

Almost half of the total number of migrant workers in the world today are women. While women have always migrated as accompanying spouses and family members, contemporary migration dynamics have shown a considerable increase in the number of women migrating independently to pursue opportunities of their own. On a global scale, a significant number of women migrant workers are employed in low skilled occupations but they are also present in skilled welfare and social professions such as health, education and social services (traditionally female-dominated domains). Among these, most women migrant workers are found in the nursing sector.

Labour migration may benefit women through economic as well as socio-cultural empowerment. Unfortunately, the migration experience is not always safe for women migrant workers. Due to their dual vulnerability as migrants and women, they are still disproportionately affected by a variety of

risks arising from their mobility. During every stage of their migratory experience, women migrant workers may be more exposed to human rights violations compared to their male counterparts. They frequently have to deal with difficult living and working conditions, increased health risks, a lack of access to social services and various forms of abuse such as the confiscation of passports by their employers. Women migrant workers usually enter gender-segregated sectors that are largely informal and unregulated and therefore offer them little or no protection. These women often have limited or no bargaining power and few or no opportunities for establishing networks to receive information and social support. Irregular women migrant workers are particularly vulnerable to harassment, intimidation or threats as well as economic and sexual exploitation including trafficking and racial discrimination. Often times, they face incarceration and/or deportation if they attempt to leave their employer.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), through its gender mainstreaming policy, is committed to ensuring that the particular needs of all migrant women are identified, taken into consideration and addressed by IOM projects and services.

This translates, inter alia, to the Organization's commitment to address the issue of violence against women migrant workers in order to promote their physical, social and economic well-being in line with the United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/62/132. The Organization strongly believes that migration can function as a catalyst for setting off an empowerment process for women migrant workers, but acknowledges that actual empowerment is influenced by the context in which migration occurs, the type of movement, and the characteristics and status of the women involved. Empowerment is more likely to occur when migration engages women in employment outside the home, notably in formal sector occupations, and takes place within the legal framework for an extended period.

In order to create an environment conducive to safe and empowering migration, IOM recommends that women migrant workers have the same access to protection and safety at work and to legal redress mechanisms as the domestic workforce. Policy makers, practitioners and the public need to be better informed about the vulnerability of women migrant workers, including their vulnerability to discrimination, exploitation and abuse throughout all stages of the labour migration process.

IOM actively contributes to protecting women migrant workers from violence by implementing a range of activities in the following areas:

- Promotion of legal and safe migration for women migrant workers
- Promotion of policies that regulate the recruitment and deployment of women migrant workers
- Promotion and protection of women migrant workers' human rights
- Counter-trafficking activities including capacity building and direct assistance to victims
- Research and data collection on women and international labour migration
- Promotion of gender-sensitive international migration policies
- Fostering interstate dialogue and enhancing bilateral, regional, interregional and international cooperation

Selected examples of these activities implemented by IOM in these areas are described in the following sections.



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Haitian migrant selling flowers in the local market of Santo Domingo

promoting legal and safe migration for women migrant workers

Peruvian rural workers recently briefed by IOM on the dangers of irregular migration and trafficking
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Promoting legal and safe migration for women migrant workers

a. Fostering sustainable alternatives to migration in countries of origin

Expanding economic opportunity, and improving social services and community infrastructure in specific geographic areas prone to economically induced outbound migration, are important elements of migration management implemented by IOM in a variety of countries. For example, in former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, IOM implemented an income generating and self-employment assistance project to address human trafficking and irregular migration of women aged 18 to 35 residing in impoverished border communities. The project supported the establishment of 40 small enterprises through vocational training and micro grants assistance.



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Women vulnerable to human trafficking involved in duck husbandry training as part of an IOM livelihood programme in Indonesia

b. Promoting legal channels of migration, inter alia, in order to deter illegal migration

One of the main objectives of IOM's labour migration programme is to promote and facilitate legal avenues of labour migration as an alternative to irregular migration. For example, in Beitbridge, Zimbabwe, it has set up a labour centre where potential employers can link up with potential labour migrants to South Africa. This project is aimed at formalizing labour mobility between Zimbabwe and South Africa, thereby reducing risks of abuse and exploitation. Another example is IOM's recruitment facilitation of temporary foreign

workers from Columbia, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mauritius who are bound for Canada.

c. Improving women's access to meaningful and gender-sensitive migration information and education

IOM works in close collaboration with countries of origin and destination to prevent misinformation of migrant workers through awareness-raising activities and provision of information. Potential women migrant workers are informed of procedures for legal migration, the costs and benefits of migration, the rights and benefits they are entitled to in the countries



of destination and employment as well as their obligations. The risks and possible consequences of irregular migration including trafficking and smuggling are also addressed. Two particularities of IOM campaigns are that they steer away from prevention campaigns that convince aspiring female migrants of the certainty that sexual and labour exploitation lie at the end of the migration road, and they also engage would-be migrant women as informed and pro-active protagonists and not as passive victims.

Individual assistance to candidates for migration is also part of IOM's activities. For example in Zambia, IOM supports individuals

seeking information on the validity of jobs and educational opportunities with a Talk Line in operation 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. In Kenya, with IOM's support, the Ministry of Labour now provides information on employment agencies on its website. Ensuring that aspiring migrants have access to valid and official travel documents is also an important step in encouraging legal migration. In Zimbabwe, IOM builds the capacity of key government departments responsible for the provision of birth certificates, ID, passports, emergency travel documents and visas to ensure Zimbabweans, including women, have access to official travel documents. In addition, women and girls have received information on procedures to obtain these documents.



A group of migrant workers' spouses preparing their action plan to disseminate information on safe migration in the community — Bangladesh

promoting policies that regulate the recruitment and deployment of women migrant workers

Albanian migrant worker in Italy
© IOM 2001 - MIT0010



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Promoting policies that regulate the recruitment and deployment of women migrant workers

IOM policy advice and capacity building activities in countries of origin include assisting governments in developing and adopting policies, legislation and structures that promote efficient and effective foreign employment of their workforce. IOM moreover builds the capacity of countries of destination seeking ways to better manage their labour inflows and the integration of labour migrants.

a. Improving laws and policies governing recruiters, employers and intermediaries

Increasingly, governments as well as private sector entities have sought IOM's assistance to establish transparent, equitable recruitment schemes ensuring that migrant workers are placed in decent working conditions, particularly within the framework of bilateral arrangements. IOM's specific areas of focus include information dissemination, database set-up and registration of potential migrant workers, matching skills with demand, selection and pre-departure orientation, transit and post-arrival assistance, complementary orientation in the receiving country, job placement, return and reintegration in the country of origin.

IOM is also actively involved in making sure that practices such as fraudulent recruitment, exorbitant recruitment fees, phony employment contracts and discriminatory recruitment practices, especially for women, are addressed by countries of origin through the improvement of national laws. For example, in Bangladesh, IOM assisted civil society organizations in drafting the Overseas Employment Policy which was later adopted by the parliamentary Cabinet. In Thailand, IOM has developed policy recommendations for relevant ministries and has produced the "Employer's Package" (handbook and VCD) to educate employers and enable fair and better employment practices, including pregnancy-related rights.

Thailand: The Employer's Package

This package (booklet and video) targets employers who hire migrant workers with a view to enhance their awareness of migrant rights in the workplace and provide them with practical legal guidance.

This gender-sensitive tool focuses on women workers' rights. It details women migrant workers' right to be protected from work considered hazardous to their health and safety.

A section is devoted to pregnancy-related rights. For example, a pregnant worker should not be asked to work between 22.00 and 6.00 hours, or to work overtime or on a holiday.

In addition, the booklet specifies that women workers are entitled to up to 90 days of maternity leave for each pregnancy and underscores that an employer is not allowed to terminate a woman employee on grounds of her pregnancy.

The video, through a series of interviews with selected employers, highlights how migrant workers had considerably contributed to the Thai economy and therefore deserve equal opportunities and treatment. It calls for the peaceful and harmonious co-existence of migrants and the host society.

b. Supporting the adoption of penal and criminal sanctions to punish perpetrators and intermediaries of violence against women migrant workers

IOM is regularly requested to provide assistance to governments in the framework of the enactment and/or conclusions of legislation, drafting of action plans and strategies, constitution of national task forces, working groups, appointment of national special rapporteurs. The Organization provides the necessary technical assistance to ensure that the rights of women are duly incorporated into such documents and strategies. For example in Timor-Leste, IOM has made recommendations regarding the criminalization of human trafficking in the draft

penal code currently being considered by the government. In Haiti, the Organization provided technical assistance to the government to draft comprehensive legislation that aims to effectively address issues of prevention, protection and prosecution of trafficking in persons, with a gender perspective. The bill has been endorsed by the government and is currently awaiting adoption by the Parliament. In Thailand, IOM supported the review of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act as well as the drafting of implementing regulations.

HAPARA TRAFIKU UMANU

Ita bo'ot nia moris labele fa'an!

Labarik, mane ho fetu hotu-hotu bele sai vitima ba trafiku umanu, obriga atu servisu iha kondisaun ida nebe la justu atu halo buat ruma nebe sira rasik lakohi atu halo. Proteje ita bo'ot nia aan hodi hatene lolos ita bo'ot nia direitu antes atu aceita servisu ruma ka eskola ka viagen ruma mak ema oferece ba ita bo'ot. Hein no hanoin halo didiak: ita bo'ot nia kontribuisaun ba trafiku hodi usa ou selu atu servi ema sira ne atu sai vitima ba trafiku?

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promoting and protecting women migrant workers' rights

Women migrants working in salt pans in India
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Promoting and protecting women migrant workers' rights

a. Protecting women migrant workers' human rights

IOM participates in the work of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. It provides the Committee with comments on States Parties' reports and shares information regarding relevant IOM activities, including activities targeting women migrant workers and women members of migrant workers' families. Activities to protect women migrant workers' human rights are also implemented in IOM field missions.

For example, in Thailand, IOM promotes and protects the human rights of migrants by familiarizing various stakeholders on the rights and obligations of migrants and enhancing their understanding of migration issues through trainings, handbooks, newsletters, public campaigns and media. In each activity, a particular focus is given to vulnerabilities and risks faced by women migrant workers.

b. Protecting women migrant workers from sexual and gender-based violence, domestic violence, abusive labour practices and discrimination

In Zambia, IOM manages a migrant support centre (75% of the beneficiaries are female) that offers ongoing awareness-raising activities on violence against women. Beneficiaries include migrants and the local community. The mission has also conducted baseline studies in two sites with high levels of labour migration (a copper mine and a cotton ginnery) to investigate sexual and gender-based violence perceptions and experiences among migrants. Findings from the studies have been used in programmatic responses at the sites.

Zambia: Researching Migrant Workers' Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

In 2008, IOM Zambia conducted baseline studies in two sites characterized by high levels of labour migration: a copper mine in north-western Zambia, close to the DRC border, and a cotton ginnery in Katete, located on the main road linking Zambia's capital Lusaka with Malawi and Mozambique. In addition to an analysis of migrant workers' sexual behaviour and health-related knowledge, the baselines investigated gender attitudes and experiences of SGBV among migrants.

At both the mine and the ginnery, nearly a quarter of men have given money in exchange for sex at some point in their life. At the mine, 15 per cent report that they have "forced", someone to have sex, a third of whom forced a stranger. In the Katete ginnery, 25 per cent had been forced to have sex – 56 per cent of them were forced by someone they were/are in a relationship with and 36 per cent were forced by a stranger.

At the ginnery almost half of the respondents (46%) thought that men should have control over decisions made in relationships, for example whether to marry, have sex, or have how many children. At the mining site, 35 per cent of respondents thought that it was okay for a man to beat his wife/girlfriend if she disobeys him, compared with 15 per cent at the ginnery (where half of the respondents were women). At the same site, over a third of people (37%) think that women should not be able to hold the same jobs at the same pay as men; a fifth think it is "okay" for a man to have more than one sexual partner, compared with 7 per cent who think it is "okay" for a woman to have more than one sexual partner.

In Cameroon, IOM has recently started the implementation of a project on the protection of domestic workers (most of whom are women and girls) in order to strengthen the government's capacity to protect domestic workers' labour rights and fight trafficking for domestic servitude.

c. Addressing women migrant workers' disproportionate labour market discrimination

In Latvia, IOM implements a project that provides opportunities for women to integrate into the labour market, limits gender segregation in the workplace, promotes balance between family life and work, creates effective support services, and defuses social and national tensions. Women migrants who do not speak Latvian are able to improve their language skills and upgrade their skills and knowledge.

d. Addressing gendered forms of racism and xenophobia against women migrant workers

In Ukraine, IOM participates in the Diversity Initiative, a coordination system and network of over 50 organizations from civil, corporate, government and diplomatic sectors, to promote the human dignity and well-being of migrants, refugees and minorities. In this framework, IOM maintains a centralized and standardized database to record incidents suspected to be racially motivated, in coordination with NGO monitoring groups and government counterparts. IOM also analyzes trends and provides ad-hoc medical assistance for victims of racially motivated attacks, while partner organizations provide legal assistance as needed.

In South Africa, IOM has completed a baseline report entitled "Towards Tolerance, Law, and Dignity: Addressing Violence against Foreign Nationals in South Africa" in order to contribute to the government's efforts to reduce xenophobic attitudes and related violence targeted towards migrants and to facilitate their socio-economic integration. The study found that while foreign

nationals, particularly Somalis, are vulnerable to xenophobic violence, women in particular, especially Somali women, are one of the most vulnerable groups.

Addressing Violence against Foreign Nationals in South Africa

Following the large-scale violence against foreign nationals in South Africa in May 2008, IOM has published a baseline study, "Towards Tolerance, Law and Dignity: Addressing Violence against Foreign Nationals in South Africa".

The study shows that one of the reasons behind the violence was the perception that foreign nationals were "taking away" South African women from their men. Some South African women were critical of the violence; however, others were actively involved, for instance, by pointing out houses where foreign nationals lived in the townships.

The report also points that Somali nationals, particularly Somali women were extremely vulnerable and dozens of rape cases against them were reported.

Based on the findings and recommendations of the baseline report, IOM launched in 2008 a comprehensive counter-xenophobia programme, ONE Movement. Under the patronage of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the ONE Movement engages the public, government, and international and civil society organizations in a joint campaign to promote a culture of tolerance, respect, human dignity, and unity in diversity across South Africa and Africa.

Key messages are specifically tailored to ensure that messages reach women, youth/school children, as well as migrants themselves.

e. Promoting the physical and mental health and well-being of women migrant workers

IOM is particularly concerned with providing the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for migrants in general and for women migrant workers in particular. It is involved in the delivery of direct health assistance to migrant populations, through interventions and prevention strategies to combat ill health among migrants and their host communities and through the integration of migrant health concerns into public health policies globally. For example, in Zimbabwe, IOM provides voluntary, counselling and testing (VCT), HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), emergency contraceptives and counselling for gender-based violence survivors. Survivors with severe mental breakdown are referred to mental health institutions. The Organization is also engaged in an advocacy campaign to prevent the deportation of women in advanced pregnancy stages or those who have recently delivered.



In Zimbabwe, a mother posing with the IOM project nurse who escorted her and her newborn baby

Zimbabwe: Advocacy Campaign to Prevent Deportations of Women in Advanced Pregnancy and Those Who Have Recently Delivered

In Zimbabwe, IOM manages two Reception and Support Centres at Plumtree (on the border with Botswana) and BeitBridge (on the border with South Africa). Between June 2008 and May 2009, 467 women in advanced pregnancy have passed through the Plumtree Centre and 11 through the BeitBridge Centre. The centres also receive deported mothers with newborns, some of whom are only a day old.

This poses great danger to the pregnant mothers who run the risk of delivering in transit without the assistance of a professional service provider. Mothers who have recently given birth also run the risk of developing puerperal infections, while the babies risk getting neonatal infections.

At BeitBridge, three of these returned pregnant migrants went into labour upon arrival at the centre. They were assessed by IOM staff and referred to the district hospital. IOM settled their bills upon discharge and provided baby layette.

IOM also assists with medical escorts to the mothers' rural homes, which can be as far as 525 km away from the centres.

The Organization advocates delaying deportation until after the early neonatal period is over, using ambulances, and escorting by qualified health personnel, as well as special holding cells for this vulnerable category of detainees.

Through the Partnership on HIV and Mobile Populations in Southern Africa (PHAMSA), IOM addresses the HIV vulnerability of labour migrants in southern Africa. PHAMSA strengthens partnerships among organizations working on these issues, with the goal of enhancing the quality of HIV responses in the region. IOM organizes regular regional workshops on HIV responses and has fostered networks to share best practices. In the PHAMSA framework, IOM took an integrated biological and behavioural survey among farm workers in Limpopo Province (South Africa) which concluded that gender was a major factor in HIV vulnerability among farm workers. Female employees, especially those under 30 years old, appeared to be particularly vulnerable to infection. Young female employees (18 - 24 years old) were three times more likely than males to be infected.

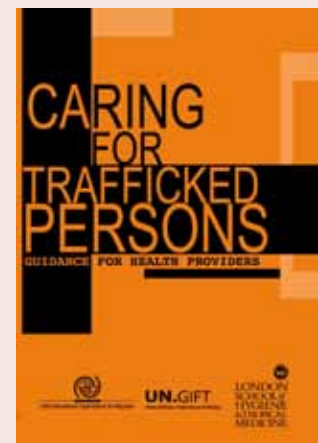
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Caring for Trafficked Persons: Guidance for Health Providers

In 2008, in the framework of the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Trafficking (UN.GIFT), IOM convened leading experts in health and human trafficking to gather existing research and grassroots experiences on managing the health consequences of trafficked persons.

The resulting forthcoming handbook provides practical, non-clinical advice to help health providers understand the phenomenon of human trafficking and related exploitation, recognize some of the associated health problems, and consider safe and appropriate approaches to providing healthcare for trafficked persons.

The guidance included is also useful for meeting the health needs of women migrant workers who are victims of abuse.



f. Women migrant workers' empowerment and reduction of their vulnerability to abuse

IOM offers a variety of migration services and assistance to governments and individuals, which in turn facilitate the migration process and enhance women migrant workers' chances of succeeding in their new environment. One of these services is Migrant Training, which teaches life skills and attitudes that both prepare and empower the migrant for her new life abroad. This training is generally delivered before the migrant's departure, and is designed based on the specific needs of the target population. IOM's training activities have taken place in over 50 countries worldwide. Currently, they have a combined programme value of approximately USD 7.5 million, serving some 46,000 participants annually.

Training for migrant workers, including skilled and non-skilled labour migrants and their family members, covers aspects such as pre-employment orientation, cultural orientation, language and technical/vocational training, as well as coping skills to deal with difficult situations. The training constitutes an unparalleled opportunity for women migrant workers to get employment-specific information concerning contracts, benefits, rights and responsibilities, remittances, banking systems, investment opportunities and accreditation. IOM is now expanding its services to include post-arrival information dissemination.

For example, in Kenya, IOM provides Cultural Orientation Training for Qatar, Kuwait and Iraq-bound



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Soon-to-be migrants attending a language seminar in the Philippines

Kenyan labour migrants. Thanks to IOM's intervention with the Youth Development Enterprise Fund (YDEF), a branch of the Ministry of Youth, female participants joined the programme for the first time in March 2009. In Thailand, IOM organizes a weekly one-day training session for women migrant detainees from Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. The curriculum includes information on safe migration and trafficking, legal channels to enter and work in Thailand and basic rights of migrant workers. In South Africa, IOM

trains Minister of Foreign Affairs consular officials prior to their departure to postings overseas, in order to empower them with the necessary knowledge to protect migrants including women migrant workers.

In Ghana, IOM implemented a project to identify and outline the various investment opportunities for Ghanaian migrant women residing in Italy with the goal to help economically empower them.

In Viet Nam, IOM supported the formulation of self-help groups to empower migrant women who have experienced violence. Migrant women were offered counselling and training to become facilitators of self-help groups for other migrant women. The training component included such topics as women's rights, human rights and domestic legislation on gender equality and domestic violence.

Viet Nam: Empowering Migrant Women through a Rights-Based Approach

Through the 18-month project "Violence against Women: A Rights-Based Approach to Empowering Migrant Women Affected by Violence", IOM identified migrant women, themselves survivors of violence, to act as facilitators and use their social networks to recruit peers to participate in the initiative. In total, 11 peer facilitators and 128 women participated in the self-help groups, which provided a safe and trusting environment to share experience, receive information and provide mutual support.

Building the capacity of the group facilitators, and the partnering NGOs, was

an essential component of the project activities. For women who often lack access to services, the self-help groups provided a basis for referrals to professional health and social services.

The women involved were able to articulate their needs and priorities to the government, mass organizations, media, and the wider community, through awareness-raising activities such as an exhibition, quiz events, singing and drama performances and the distribution of information and education materials. The project established an effective model that is replicable in other areas with large numbers of migrants, and women in general.



Young women during one of the self-help group sessions in Viet Nam

In the Philippines, funded by the EU, IOM and the government produced a video series specifically designed to increase the empowerment of women migrant workers entitled “The Power to Choose: Self-Defence for Women Migrant Workers”. The video provides tips on how to avoid and deal with abuse, interspersed with martial arts instructions and basic self-defence techniques. The video is available in English, Filipino, French and Spanish.

Philippines: The Power to Choose: Self-Defense for Women Migrant Workers

In the Philippines, the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE), the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), as well as non-governmental organizations, have documented many cases of abuse against Filipino women migrant workers. Realizing the magnitude of this problem, the Philippine government sought IOM’s assistance to produce a video aimed at not only raising awareness of the issue but also equipping women with knowledge and skills to more effectively recognize and deal with threats to safety and security in their migration experiences.

The video features typical stories of migrant women workers who find themselves falling victims to various forms of abuse, but remain silent for fear of losing their jobs and consequently their capacity to provide financial support to their families. It highlights the common scenario of women migrant workers employed in households and therefore isolated from the community, which increases the risk of abuse and impunity. For those women who find themselves in actual danger, the video provides a demonstration of basic self-defence techniques.

The video project, which was implemented in 2004, reiterates that women migrant workers have indeed the power to choose success in their lives by educating and preparing themselves mentally and physically for the challenges of life abroad.

In Bangladesh, IOM developed an English language training manual for nurses and hotel workers, as well as a training manual on housekeeping activities for female migrant workers, which covers language skill development, cultural orientation, negotiation skill and protection issues.



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Skills training in Bangladesh

g. Protecting the human rights of migrant girls, including unaccompanied girls

IOM is committed to the protection of migrant girls, including unaccompanied girls. For example, in Zimbabwe, it provides shelter to unaccompanied minors deported from South Africa and Botswana while tracing of their family is ongoing. Skills training is also provided. IOM has also recently published “The Rights of Migrant Children”, International Migration Law Series No. 15.



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Involving girls in counter-trafficking programmes through games and play in Cambodia

In Ecuador, an Internships Initiative has been developed and facilitates placements for youth victims of trafficking. These personalized internships have achieved the dual goal of providing important professional experience and learning opportunities, as well as allowing the victims to experience a pre-reintegration into society while still receiving the full support of the professional staff of the shelter.

Ecuador: The Internships Initiative

This initiative was created as a transitional and follow-up mechanism to support the successful reintegration of youth victims of trafficking (VoT). Through the project, a database of 30 private sector organizations committed to corporate social responsibility and willing to host these adolescents was created. Notable alliances included: Animal Protection of Ecuador, the Fire Fighters' Association of Quito, Marriot Hotel, the Academy of Dance, the Ecuadorian Red Cross, the Ciudad Mitad del Mundo arts and design shop, and the Garden Project of the Our Youth Foundation.

The internship placements were closely monitored to ensure empowerment of the adolescents and respect of their rights and interests. Fifteen VoTs participated in internships in private companies. Thirty-one VoTs worked within the shelter itself as assistant at the computer centre, assistant to the social workers, assistant to the administrative department, assistant at agricultural/gardening workshops, assistant at the medical care area, assistant at the child care centre and instructor in jewellery making workshops.

The internship programme has been proved to strengthen VoTs' capabilities to assume their responsibilities once they leave the shelter.

counter-trafficking activities including capacity building and direct assistance to victims

A woman migrant worker evacuated from Lebanon after the conflict in 2006
© IOM 2006 - MLB0083 (Photo: Steve Bent)



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Counter-trafficking activities, including capacity building and direct assistance to victims



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The tortured hands of a victim of trafficking in Moldova

IOM has a broad approach to trafficking in persons, placing it within the context of international migration including labour migration. The Organization believes that treating trafficking in isolation and only from the angle of transnational crime runs the risk of diverting attention from the broader issue of exploitation of migrant workers. IOM is currently in the process of broadening its approach to include not only victims of trafficking, but also exploited migrants who may not have necessarily been trafficked. This approach stems from the difficulties inherent in the identification of victims of trafficking, as well as the increasing number of migrant workers in need of assistance but do not meet the strict definition set forth by the UN Trafficking Protocol. Migrant women are particularly vulnerable to trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation. Although trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation is an important aspect of the Organization's activities, IOM is increasingly involved in projects aimed at combating trafficking of women for labour exploitation purposes.

a. Providing victims of violence with the full range of immediate assistance and protection

In order to better protect and promote the rights and welfare of actual trafficking victims, IOM provides them with shelter, psychosocial, legal and medical counselling and voluntary return assistance to their countries of origin. Governments, NGOs and other stakeholders' participation in all IOM projects ensure national and local capacity building.

The Organization uses a “needs-based approach to assistance and protection” and therefore calls for service providers to assess the protection needs of vulnerable migrants in order to provide assistance based on their trauma, hardship or condition, as opposed to their migration category.

A current project, for example, aims to assist victims of trafficking and exploited cabaret workers



IOM psychologist listening to a victim of trafficking in a rehabilitation centre in Moldova

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(who may have not necessarily been trafficked) in Switzerland to return to their country of origin. In Thailand, IOM has supported the work of the national victim-screening unit to preliminarily screen potential trafficked persons among the detained migrant groups from Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Viet Nam before they are deported. The migrants, mainly women and children, are interviewed by trained officials and referred for further assistance if they are found to be potential trafficked persons. IOM also supports translation services for victims of trafficking during their stay in the shelters so as to facilitate their case preparation with social workers. This also enables the migrants to access other available services such as psychosocial rehabilitation, legal assistance and vocational training. As part of Thailand's national sub-committee to combat trafficking, IOM also supports the government to give temporary job placements to victims of trafficking in the shelters.

Services also target children of victims of trafficking. For example, in Ecuador, a Child Development

Thailand: Improving Migrant Screening Processes

As part of Thailand's national sub-committee to combat trafficking in persons, IOM provided its technical input to assist the Royal Thai Police develop the preliminary checklist for the VoTs, which is used by police and Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) officers throughout Thailand.

IOM also encouraged the capacity building of IDC officials who are in charge of the migrant screening process. The focal point officials from the Victim Screening Unit were supported to attend skills building workshops on interviewing and counselling victims of trafficking. These training workshops have enabled officials to apply the knowledge to their daily work and have built a network of practitioners from the Department of Social Development and Welfare, law enforcement officials, and NGO staff working with migrants, and victims of trafficking.

Centre provides therapeutic, educational and recreational space for the children of VOTs in order to facilitate the participation of young mothers in their children's education and well-being. Given the high security risks faced by some victims, the existence of an on-site child care centre also constitutes a risk reduction factor.

Ecuador: A Child Development Centre for Children of VoTs

The Child Development Centre is located within the Shelter for VoTs of the Youth Foundation in Quito. It is equipped and staffed to provide integral care for children of VoTs, while they participate in workshops and internships. In addition to health care services, medicine, clothing and personal hygiene supplies, the centre provides training and role modelling in parenting practices and early stimulation for the children. The equipment at the centre, including the wall decorations, playhouse, toys and didactic materials were developed by the shelter's staff and funded by IOM's Shelter Pilot Programme.

The children are provided with specialized child psychology services designed to cover their specific needs such as problems with language, social interaction and motor skills. For complex

cases, IOM works with the specialized child care centre Pueblito de la Ternura, which provides an independent and healthy environment for the children who need to be temporarily separated from their mothers. This measure provides a space for VoTs to grow and heal. The separation is closely monitored with regular visits from the mothers and professionals.

Services also target children of victims of trafficking. For example, in Ecuador, a Child Development Centre provides therapeutic, educational and recreational space for the children of VoTs in order to facilitate the participation of young mothers in their children's education and well-being. Given the high security risks faced by some victims, the existence of an on-site child care centre also constitutes a risk reduction factor.



Children in an IOM supported day-care centre

b. Establishing reintegration and rehabilitation schemes for returning women migrant workers

An important part of direct assistance to survivors and exploited workers is reintegration and rehabilitation upon return. In Serbia, IOM is implementing a project aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Serbian National Employment Service (NES) to support the economic empowerment of victims of trafficking. The project offers concrete professional orientation and job placement options through a service voucher system, and helps establish formal links between potential employers and project beneficiaries. It is expected that the project will open possibilities for other vulnerable groups such as women migrant workers to enter the labour market via NES.

Serbia: Integrating VoTs into Labour Markets

The project aims to strengthen the capacity of the Serbian National Employment Service (NES) to support the economic empowerment of victims of trafficking (VoTs) by: 1) addressing the root causes of to exploitation, including the feminization of poverty and high rates of unemployment of women, and 2) offering concrete professional orientation and job placement options. Project activities are multi-layered – from capacity building of NES staff to address the specific needs of this vulnerable group, to educational upgrading of project beneficiaries through a service voucher system and establishing formal links between potential employers and project beneficiaries. Project results are reflected at both policy and operational levels. At the policy level, a paper will be adopted establishing mechanisms for the referral of VoTs to NES services, and at the operational level, a group of 20 victims of trafficking will enter gainful and lawful employment. By creating an economic inclusion mechanism for VoTs, the project will have opened the possibility for other vulnerable groups to enter the labour market via NES. All efforts were made towards a poverty reduction strategy.

Bangladesh: The Kafés Mukti

In Bangladesh, the Kafe Mukti (“mukti” means freedom) initiative brought together IOM, the government, local and multinational corporate houses and NGO partners.

The aim is to ensure the economic reintegration of the victims of trafficking and returnee women migrants through active involvement in trade.

The Kafés, each of which employs two women, sells tea and coffee from vending machines provided free of charge by Nestlé, as well as snacks and utility items like pens, notebooks and soap.



Two returnees working in a Kafé Mukti kiosk in Bangladesh

c. Training programmes for law enforcers, immigration officers and border officials, prosecutors and service providers

Training and capacity building are provided for law enforcement officials, such as judges, prosecutors and lawyers, as well as other governmental officials such as immigration officers, border guards, consular officers, police officers, health officials and labour inspectors. Media professionals are also targeted. They are trained not only on how to effectively detect traffickers, but also on the human rights of victims of trafficking and women migrant workers who are victims of abuse. IOM has vast experience in conducting these trainings in countries where it implements counter-trafficking activities. For example, in Ghana, IOM facilitated a study tour to the United Kingdom for law enforcement and judicial officers. The main aim of the visit was to acquaint them with various possible methodologies and tools available to combat trafficking.

In Thailand, IOM provided technical input for the development of the regional training module on “Victim Protection”, which is used in many trafficking-related trainings, such as those conducted by the Ministry of Labour, to train the labour protection network agencies about measures to protect both Thai and migrant workers in Thailand. In cooperation with the Nigerian Immigration Service, IOM supported the upgrading of immigration posts at international airports. The passenger registration system, installed and monitored centrally, collects data on all entry and exits and stores them. This capacity is an additional tool to enhance the detection and rescuing of trafficked women at the airports.



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Female border guards trained by IOM at Bina Airport — Azerbaijan

research and data collection on women and international labour migration

A poor woman migrant worker in Thailand
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Research and data collection on women and international labour migration

IOM regularly conducts research and data collection to improve its knowledge base in the area of women and international labour migration, so as to facilitate and improve its programmatic and policy action, as well as that of governments and other relevant actors.

The report “The Nature and Trend of Abuses and Exploitations in Trafficking in Persons and Labour Migration Processes from Bangladesh” was recently published. In Ghana, a study on female cross-border migration helped gain some insight into the dynamics of the phenomenon in the country so as to maximize its positive effects while minimizing the negative ones on the welfare of Ghanaian migrant women. The study concluded that Ghanaian female migrants are often young and fairly literate semi-skilled workers who are compelled to travel because of feminized poverty resulting from a combination of macro-economic and cultural factors. It also revealed that the issue of female illegal migration is not yet on the agenda of many NGOs. IOM Jakarta and the Harvard School of Public Health will soon undertake research on health and trafficking while placing special attention to women who have been trafficked for domestic work.

In terms of data collection, since 1999, IOM has been managing and operating a global human trafficking database. With over 15,000 trafficking cases recorded, mostly involving women, this information management system is the largest source of primary data on human trafficking in the world and serves as an invaluable tool for identifying, analyzing and better understanding the causes, processes, trends and consequences of human trafficking. Building on its expertise and experience developed in this field, IOM is currently strengthening the data collection and analysis capacity of interested governments and NGOs with an overall objective to harmonize approaches. IOM is also currently implementing a migration profiles programme in selected countries in West and Central Africa to help these countries build their migration data collection capacity, in view of policy planning that in the long run will better consider women migrant workers’ needs in policy planning.

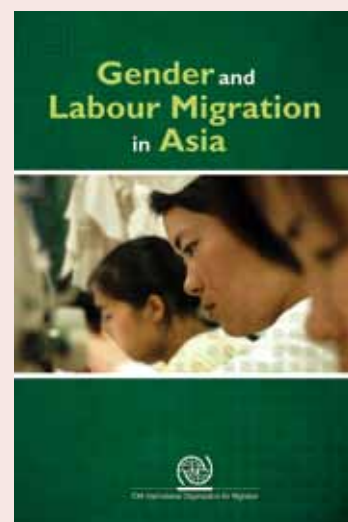
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Gender and Labour Migration in Asia

The upcoming “Gender and Labour Migration in Asia” aims to place gender on the labour migration and development agenda in Asia.

The publication includes six country studies, namely: “Gender roles and support networks of spouses of migrant workers in Sri Lanka”, “Impact of short-term male migration on their wives left behind in Bangladesh”, “Working in Italy: The experience of Filipino migrant workers and their families”, “Gender and migration from Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar to Thailand”, “The context of gender-based violence for Vietnamese migrant women factory workers in southern Viet Nam”, and “The impact of gender on rural to urban migration in China”.

The conclusions are already being used to support advocacy efforts and policy and programme development.





promotion of gender-sensitive international migration policies

Migrant women working in the textile workshop they have opened with IOM's assistance — Kazakhstan
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Promotion of gender-sensitive international migration policies

IOM is fully aware of the need to mainstream the specific issues raised by women's migration into all international migration policies. In the framework of its capacity building activities for policy makers, through which the Organization strives to provide government officials with the key elements needed to develop and implement a comprehensive policy framework for migration management, IOM promotes gender-sensitive migration policies. One of its main tools, "Essentials for Migration Management: A Guide for Policy Makers and Practitioners", includes a specific section on how countries of origin and destination can include gender analysis in their planning when formulating migration-related policies.

a. Support to states with regard to signature, ratification or accession of relevant international instruments

As a member of the International Steering Committee for the Campaign for the Ratification of the Migrants Rights Convention, IOM has contributed to the forthcoming "Guide on Ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW)", which specifies that norms presented in the ICRMW are applicable to both men and women migrant workers and that legislation adopted in conformity with this Convention should ensure that women migrants are fully protected. The guide also recognizes that the ICRMW does not specifically cover the particular risks and vulnerabilities of women migrant workers.

b. Support to countries of origin and destination to incorporate a gender perspective in legislation and policies on international migration and on labour migration

IOM in collaboration with ILO and OSCE published the "Handbook on Establishing Effective Labour Migration Policies in Countries of Origin and Destination" in both Russian and English

languages. A Mediterranean edition, in Arabic and English languages, also exists. These publications are designed to assist states in their efforts to develop new policy solutions and approaches for better management of labour migration and labour migration flows in countries of origin and destination, and to social partners, the media, non-governmental organizations, academia and the general public by providing examples, analysis and recommendations on existing labour migration policies and practices.

IOM also organizes five-day training courses on International Migration Law at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (IIHL) in San Remo, Italy. They involve government officials, lawyers, post-graduate students, representatives of non-governmental organizations. The training courses integrate gender considerations as a cross-cutting issue in all sessions, as well as a specific lecture on the Rights of Migrant Women and Children. In addition, the Organization manages a database on Migration Law that draws together relevant instruments regulating migration at the international, regional and national levels (approximately 1,870 legal texts in various languages), including instruments specifically addressing women such as CEDAW.

Activities related to this particular area are also conducted locally in field missions. For example in Ghana, IOM has led the national assessment of its labour migration policies, legislation and practices with the specific objective of ascertaining the extent to which gender-sensitive provisions are included in Ghanaian labour migration policies. The assessment concluded that the country lacks a gender-specific framework on labour migration but recognized that efforts are being made in this direction. It made several recommendations, including the development of pre-departure orientation and the inclusion of the protection of women migrant workers in consular staff's terms of reference.



បញ្ឈប់ ការជួញដូរមនុស្ស



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A counter-trafficking poster used in Cambodia

fostering interstate dialogue and enhancing bilateral, regional, interregional and international cooperation

A migrant woman returned to Mali after eight years in Libya. She has received two sewing machines and opened a tailor shop
© IOM 2008 - MML0003 (Photo: Michele Bombassei)



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Fostering interstate dialogue and enhancing bilateral, regional, interregional and international cooperation

International labour migration is a transnational phenomenon and therefore cannot be effectively managed or addressed only at the national level. IOM, through its extensive global network of missions, is able to bring together stakeholders from countries of origin and destination to introduce and establish labour migration projects, programmes, and mechanisms that balance different interests and particularities, with a special focus on addressing migrants' needs.

For example, in response to a request from several Asian countries of origin, IOM organized what is now known as the “Colombo Process” and constitutes a ministerial forum for Asian labour origin countries to share experiences, lessons learned, best practices, discuss common issues and identify steps for follow-up in the form of ministerial recommendations. The Abu Dhabi Dialogue, an offshoot of the Colombo Process and hosted by the United Arab Emirates and co-organized by IOM, brought together for the first time the Colombo Process countries with the Gulf Cooperation Council States plus Yemen, and Malaysia and Singapore. South Korea and Japan participate as observers. The Abu Dhabi Dialogue serves as a forum for both countries of origin and destination. The Colombo Process countries also initiated a dialogue on labour migration issues with EU member states. Other processes exist such as the Bali Process and the Puebla Process. The protection and welfare of migrant workers, including women migrant workers, is featured prominently in all of them.

In Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal and Libya, IOM assists the government in strengthening its capacity to establish labour exchange mechanisms which prevent the exploitation of migrant workers including women migrant workers. In Zimbabwe, IOM organizes regular stakeholder workshops for Zimbabwean, Botswana and South African officials to address human rights abuses. In Viet Nam, the Organization supports the government in the implementation of the Bilateral Counter-Trafficking Cooperation Agreement between Cambodia and Viet Nam. IOM also implemented a Regional Dialogue and Programme on Facilitating Legal Migration between Asia and the European Union.



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Beneficiaries of an IOM-managed temporary and circular labour migration programme to Spain working in their quinoa plantation in Colombia



“Caring for men and women migrants”



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