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New IOM Voluntary Return programme to meet the needs of Families and Children

Under a new IOM programme called **Assisted Voluntary Return for Families and Children (AVRFC)**, up to £3,000 worth of assistance will be available for one parent and each child under 18 years.

As Clarissa Azkoul, IOM UK's Chief of Mission explains: "Since 2007, when we started the Individual Return Plan, we have tried to assist every individual according to need, but we are conscious that the needs of families and children require a special focus.

"The Reintegration Assistance package relevant to a single man returning to set up a business will be very different from one of real, practical use to a single parent with three children. We hope that the new emphasis will offer greater reassurance to families about the support available after arrival at home and build greater trust and confidence about the voluntary return process as a whole."

Up until now, Reintegration Assistance was only available to returnees who have touched the asylum system in the UK. However, the new AVRFC programme applies equally and for the first time to both failed asylum seekers **and** irregular migrants.

AVRFC also introduces greater flexibility to Reintegration Assistance, which can now be used for housing, childcare, education and basic medical needs.



"In the past, 79% of all the people we have assisted have been single men and over 80% of them wanted to use the assistance available to help set up a small business. Of course a family may want to use some of their assistance in the same way, but they may be concerned about housing, childcare, education, post-arrival health checks and advice, and so on. We are determined to make the new programme as flexible as possible and ensure that family members are able to use as much of the assistance to which they are entitled for the benefit of themselves and the rest of their family."

- Clarissa Azkoul, Chief of Mission, IOM UK

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Trafficking: IOM helps assist and rehabilitate the victims

Round Table at IOM London

On 25 February 2010, IOM UK hosted a round table of experts on Counter-Trafficking. The meeting was chaired by Jonathan Martens, Senior Counter-Trafficking Specialist from IOM Headquarters, Geneva who gave a broad overview of IOM's counter-trafficking initiatives worldwide.

Representatives from key stakeholder agencies working on Counter-Trafficking such as the UKHTC, UKBA, Migrant Helpline, Anti-Slavery International, SOCA, Metropolitan Police, STOP UK, ECPAT and the Home Office attended the meeting which explored opportunities for partnership and collaborative working.

In this respect, discussions were held on provision of direct assistance to Victims of Trafficking in the UK as well as the collection and sharing of information on victim care and support among agencies in the UK for the purposes of piloting joint initiatives in prevention/protection/prosecution.



Round Table about Counter-Trafficking held on 25 February at IOM London © IOM 2010

Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference on Human Trafficking

Jonathan Martens, Senior Specialist on Counter-Trafficking was a guest speaker at the conference organised by the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union on 22-23 February 2010. Martens' presentation on IOM's **Buy Responsibly** campaign generated much interest among the parliamentarians and the audience. Join in and become a 'Responsible Buyer': www.buyresponsibly.org

IOM & UNHCR Framework to Facilitate the Protection of Trafficked Persons

IOM and UNHCR have produced a *Framework Document for Developing Standard Operating Procedures to Facilitate the Protection of Trafficked Persons*. This document seeks to enhance the protection of and assistance to trafficked persons by encouraging closer interagency cooperation through the development of standard operating procedures at the country level.



After the traumatic experience of trafficking, most victims suffer from various traumas. IOM assists them with professional psychological help. © IOM 2008

IOM and China Strengthen Measures to Help Victims of Human Trafficking

IOM hosted a two-day workshop in Beijing for senior Chinese consular and immigration officials to strengthen victim identification procedures and introduce safe and voluntary repatriation mechanisms for victims of human trafficking.

IOM Director General William Swing, speaking at the opening of the workshop said: "By combining Chinese and European expertise, we can facilitate the sharing of information on respective systems, promote mutual understanding, and take another step towards enhancing international cooperation to combat human trafficking."

Miss Ghana Joins IOM to Increase Awareness on Counter-Trafficking

The IOM Mission in Ghana, in collaboration with Miss Ghana 2009, has embarked on a sensitization and educational campaign programme to address communities on the Volta Lake about the pitfalls of human trafficking, especially child-trafficking.

[click here to read more](#)

'No to Human Trafficking' Campaign in Colombia publicised in public places

In December 2009, the Colombian Ministry of the Interior and Justice, the European Union and the IOM launched an information campaign in Colombia about human trafficking. Called **Con la Trata de personas no hay trato** (or **No deal with trafficking in persons**), the campaign is now being publicised at bus stops throughout the country.

EUCOL SA, a company committed to this cause, has donated the posters which refer to the trafficking in persons through various methods such as sex or labour exploitation, forced begging, and forced marriage, which are some of the categories of trafficking in persons which the victims are exposed to.

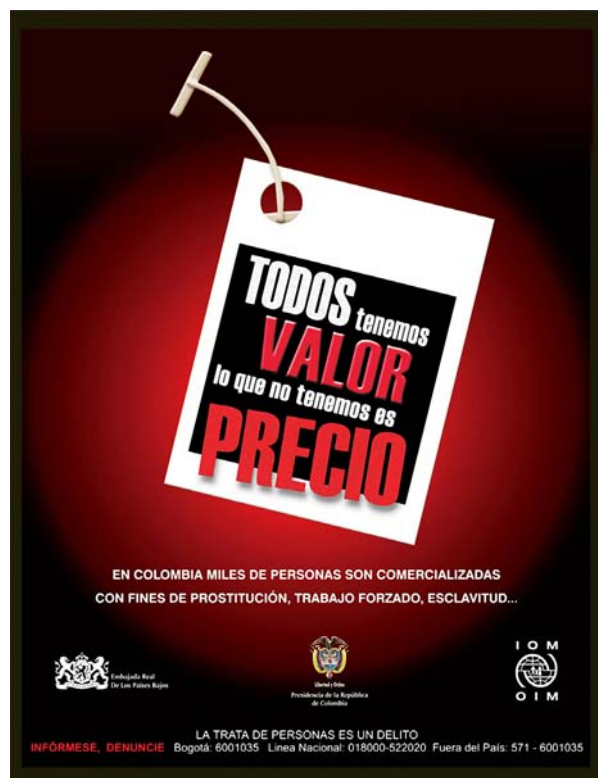
"We have joined the campaign because there are often spaces available for posters which could be used by organisations such as IOM, especially for a campaign as interesting as this one which serves the entire community," said Viviana Sandoval, Executive Commercial EUCOL SA.

The campaign can be seen by everyone from 24 February 2010 in fortnightly periods and on 120 advertising spaces at bus stops in cities like Bogotá, Cali, Ibagué, Medellín, Armenia, Pereira, Manizales, Bucaramanga, Cartagena and San Andres.

Undoubtedly, the partnership with EUCOL SA will enable this campaign to reach a wider audience and will provide a clear and precise message about trafficking in persons to the most vulnerable populations in the different cities of Colombia.

Moreover, the campaign offers a concrete prevention tool - a free telephone helpline (01 8000 52 20 20) which enables callers to obtain information and assistance on this crime. It has been established as a way of providing information on possible cases of or situations where trafficking in persons is suspected.

Media such as television, radio and the internet are also being used to publicise the campaign, which is aimed at men and women between the ages of 12 and 35.



MADRID MEETING

IOM UK facilitated the participation of two civil society Counter Trafficking experts at the 3rd National Networking Meeting which was held on 5 March 2010 in Madrid.

The main objective of the meeting was to contribute to the implementation of the Action Oriented Paper (AOP) on strengthening the EU external dimension on action against Human Trafficking. The AOP aims to strengthen the commitment and coordinated action of the EU and the Member states in the prevention and fight against Human Trafficking to encompass all forms of exploitation in partnership with third countries, regions and organisations at international level.

International Women's Day

Migration policies must offer equal opportunities to migrate to both women and men to reduce women's vulnerability during migration and to optimize the positive development impact of migration in communities of origin.

Although migrant women – representing 105 million people, close to half of the migrants worldwide – are increasingly involved in labour migration flows independently and as main income-earners, they are still not offered the same opportunities for legal migration as their male counterparts and are therefore still often disproportionately affected by risks arising from mobility.

IOM Deputy Director General Ambassador Laura Thompson says: "Although labour migration policies in countries of destination may appear gender-neutral, they continue to be biased and based on a model that focuses on skilled, traditionally male-dominated jobs. Those are the types of occupations mostly covered by permanent labour schemes."

The work performed by women migrants, such as care and domestic services, although essential to the economies of destination countries, is frequently under-valued and poorly integrated in admission policies.

The lack of legal avenues for migration often forces women to resort to smugglers and other intermediaries, which greatly increases the risk of violence and abuse en route to their destination. In the receiving countries, stereotypes and discrimination also often lead women to work in unregulated or poorly regulated sectors exposing them to abuses including limited freedom of movement, withholding of wages and documents, low pay, physical violence and sexual abuse.

We advocate for more gender-sensitive labour migration policies, acknowledging that men and women have different needs and opportunities, before, during and after migration. More opportunities to migrate legally would prevent a lot of women from getting trapped in irregular, exploitative and abusive situations, including human trafficking.

IOM Deputy Director General Ambassador Laura Thompson

Sending and destination countries cannot continue to turn a blind eye to the plight of these migrant women, the need for whose labour is actually increasing.

"These women are meeting a growing demand for care and support services in destination countries – a demand that has been largely unaffected by the global economic downturn. Receiving countries therefore need to promote and sustain the opening of legal migration channels providing decent employment opportunities and access to benefits. This is the only way migration can



truly benefit both sending and receiving countries, as well as the migrants, their families and their communities," Ambassador Thompson observes.

Gender and Labour Migration in Asia

IOM's recently published "Gender and Labour Migration in Asia" highlights how families back home can benefit from women's migration.

It cites the case of Filipina domestic workers holding regular migration status in Italy who, through their remittances, are able to improve the housing, health and the socio-economic status of their family, and in particular, their children's school prospects back home.

Female migrants send approximately the same amount of money home in remittances as male migrants. But research suggests that they tend to send a higher proportion of their income, which is generally lower than that of men. They also usually send money more regularly and for longer periods of time, mostly to other women left in charge of their children.

- IOM Gender and Labour Migration in Asia study

Regular migration status would help reduce the social cost of women's migration by allowing them to return to visit their families more often, access decent work, earn more and send more money home to improve their families' future.

"As we celebrate International Women's Day, we need to reaffirm our commitment to women migrants and their empowerment. Our priority is to ensure that their migration experience is positive and a force for development. Let us all work towards achieving this goal," says Ambassador Thompson.

Extracts from IOM Press Briefing Notes

Two Million Internally Displaced Persons Have Returned to Southern Sudan since 2005

The latest IOM and Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) Tracking Report shows that an estimated two million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have returned to their places of origin in Southern Sudan since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January 2005. (...) The report reveals that 60% of returning families are headed by single women and 60% of all returnees are minors aged below 18. Only 8 per cent of returnees are aged 60 or more.

read more at www.iom.int

IOM-Managed Temporary Labour Migration Programme to Canada Assists More than 12,000 Guatemalans

The IOM Labour Migration Programme from Guatemala to Canada, which began in 2003 with 215 workers, recently assisted the 12,000th participant. Since 2003, the programme has become a success with employers as well as Guatemalans signing up to participate. In 2009 a total of 3,858 labour migrants worked travelled to Canada with IOM assistance to work on 341 farms.

read more at www.iom.int

Children in Remote Colombian Community Welcome New School

A group of 250 children from the indigenous Huitoto, Bora and Muinane populations in the La Chorrera settlement in the heart of the Amazon jungle now have a new school built and equipped with help from IOM and the Colombian Ministry of Education.

"The remoteness of the area was a challenge," explains IOM Chief of Mission in Colombia José Angel Oropeza. "To get construction materials to La Chorrera, it is a 15 to 20-day journey by river."

read more at www.iom.int

IOM Launches Powerful New Crisis Mapping Tool to Assist Haiti's Earthquake Affected Population

IOM has launched a powerful new interactive map in order to track the precise location of more than 414 spontaneous sites in and around Port-au-Prince, which currently shelter more than 603,000 earthquake affected individuals. The map (...) can be accessed by anyone with access to the internet. It is the first time a tool of such sophistication has been deployed by humanitarian actors after a major emergency.

read more at www.iom.int

Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) Outreach Activities & Young People



IOM UK participated in an annual event organised by the Unaccompanied Minors Team of the London Borough of Hounslow to showcase the availability of a range of services to young people.

Prompted by a quiz arranged by the organisers (3 questions per stand) a lot of youngsters visited the IOM stall.

Helping them to answer the quiz questions gave IOM an opportunity to explain what assistance is available under the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP).

PLURAL+ is an initiative of the UN Alliance of Civilisations and IOM, in collaboration with 19 international partners. It aims to involve young people aged between 9 and 25 on a wide range of contemporary issues through a variety of media platforms and distribution networks (broadcast, video festivals, conferences, events, Internet, DVD). Last year, more than 150 videos from 36 countries were submitted.



This year, young people are again invited to submit short videos of between one to five minutes in length, sharing their thoughts, experiences, questions and suggestions on migration, diversity, integration, identity, social cohesiveness and the human rights of migrants, highlighting people's realities as well as their ideas on coexistence in diverse cultural and religious contexts.

A prestigious international jury will select three winners in three age groups (9-12, 13-17, 18-25). Winning videos will receive broad recognition and will be widely distributed through internet, broadcast, satellite, film festivals etc. Winners will also receive small cash prizes. Each winner will be flown to New York and honoured at an awards ceremony later in the year.

Subsequently, there will also be professional opportunities for them, which will include co-productions and a chance to gain international exposure by presenting their work at many audio-visual and media events around the world. Deadline for entries is 30 June 2010. For further information, please email Ann Kangas at: akangas@iom.int Tel: 020 7808 1069 or visit the website: www.unaoc.org/pluralplus/

Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) Outreach Activities in the North West

Vietnamese New Year

During the first quarter of this year, IOM North West has seen an unprecedented number of people seeking information about IOM UK's Assisted Voluntary Return programmes.

IOM drop-ins in Blackburn, Bury, Rochdale and at the Wai Yin Chinese Community Centre in Manchester continue with more planned around the region in 2010. As well as being busy in the office on the operations side, IOM North West staff have also been very busy on the communications and outreach front, attending events across the region.

In February the IOM North West team supported the Manchester Vietnamese Association to celebrate the Vietnamese New Year at an event attended by over 300 people at the Abraham Moss Theatre in the city. Also in February the team worked with the Federation of Chinese Associations of Manchester to wish everyone "Kung Hey Fat Choi" at their spectacular Chinese New Year event in China Town. Attendance was exceptional and many people visited the IOM stall on Nicholas Street.



Live Video Conference with Returnees in Pakistan

In March, the IOM North West team hosted a live video conference in Rochdale in conjunction with the IOM office in Pakistan to give members of the community an opportunity to talk to people who have returned with IOM's assistance and to find out more about Assisted Voluntary Return. This event was part of the ongoing work with the Pakistani community. Over 40 community members attended and asked many questions of the returnees in Pakistan.

March also saw the office take part in numerous International Women's Day events in the region, as well as host an Information Sharing Day about Counter-Trafficking and the work is still going on with the North West region.

For further information about IOM's drop-ins and work across the North West region please contact the Liverpool office on 0151 244 5641 or the Manchester office on 0161 2121 463.

Since 1999,
IOM UK
has assisted
more than

36,000

people to return
voluntarily
to some

140
countries

Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) Outreach Activities in Scotland

Last month, the **IOM office in Glasgow** (which covers Scotland and Northern Ireland) joined in the celebrations of Chinese New Year. Their participation again this year underlined the strong links they have developed with the large and industrious Chinese community in Scotland.

These events always provide IOM UK staff with an opportunity to talk about and discuss AVR with any interested parties while upholding their role as the leading international organisation committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society.



IOM PUBLICATIONS



IOM carries out ongoing research in many aspects of migration, for example, *migration and development*, *migration and health*, *migration and climate change*, etc and produces a very large number of reports. In addition, it publishes Country Profiles and continually issues Press Briefing Notes covering its humanitarian work worldwide.



IOM also publishes a glossy Migration Magazine. The latest edition of Migration Magazine (above) can be downloaded free at: www.publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/migration_autumn_09.pdf

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