



IOM London
June 2004

Report of Activities



IOM International Organization for Migration

IOM London • www.iomlondon.org
21 Westminster Palace Gardens • Artillery Row • London SW1P 1RR
Freephone: 0800 783 2332 • Tel: 020 7233 0001 • Fax: 020 7233 3001



IOM International Organization for Migration



Contents

	Page
Going Home from the UK	2-10
Coming to the UK	11
Coming through the UK	12
Migration and Development	13-14

Introduction

Dear Reader,

IOM London's activities reflect those of the Organisation world-wide, but with a particular focus on those programmes of most benefit to migration to, from and through the United Kingdom. The British Government also supports IOM activities in other countries designed to improve migration management, and increase understanding of the lives and aspirations of migrants. This brochure gives a brief account of our current programmes.

UK interest in migration has expanded substantially in recent years, and this is reflected in IOM's increasing activities. We have grown from a one-man office to one that employs thirty-five people.

IOM is the principal intergovernmental organisation in the field of migration. Established in 1951, one hundred and five countries are currently IOM members and a further 29 hold observer status, as do numerous internal governmental and non-governmental organisations. IOM's world-wide programme budget for 2004 exceeds US\$550 million, funding over 800 programmes, more than 3,400 staff members, and 160 field offices in over a hundred countries.

IOM promotes humane and orderly migration by serving the needs of governments and migrants through the provision of services and advice. IOM's mandate is to help ensure the orderly flow of international migrants; to promote international co-operation on migration issues; to aid in the search for practical solutions to migration problems; and to contribute to international solidarity by providing humanitarian assistance to people in need.

IOM's world-wide activities correspond to the four main areas for managing migration: migration and development, facilitating migration, regulating migration, and forced migration. A number of cross-cutting activities relevant to each of these four pillars cover technical cooperation and capacity building, protection of migrant rights, promotion of international migration law, information gathering and research, policy debate and guidance, regional and international cooperation, public information and education, migration health, the gender dimension of migration, and integration and reintegration.

IOM London will continue to develop programmes in these fields which are of interest to Her Majesty's Government and migrants travelling to, through and from the United Kingdom.

Jan de Wilde

Chief of Mission

Going Home from the UK



Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP)

The VARRP began as a pilot scheme in 1999, in response to the increasing number of asylum seekers coming to IOM London for specialised advice, information and assistance to facilitate their return to their home countries. The full VARRP programme started in September 2000, and has shown a continual increase in the number of asylum seekers assisted. VARRP 2003 assisted 2634 people to return to 87 countries around the world. The VARRP is co-funded by the Home Office and the European Refugee Fund.

What is VARRP?

IOM offers assistance for asylum seekers who want to return permanently to their country of origin. The VARRP is open to asylum seekers of any nationality, whose asylum claim is under one of the following criteria:

- Waiting for a Home Office decision
- Refused by the Home Office
- Appealing against an asylum decision
- Withdrawn asylum application
- Given ELR (Exceptional Leave to Remain)

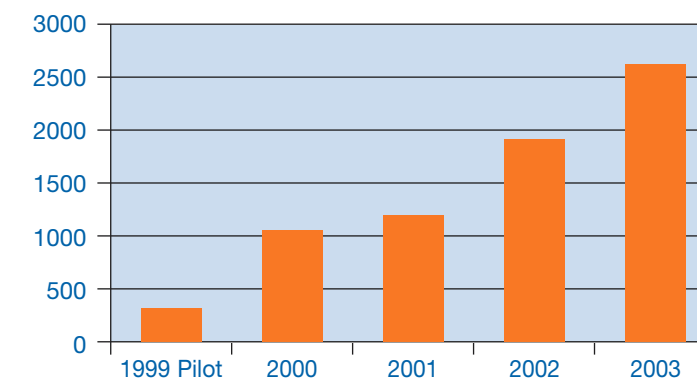
IOM offers a wide range of services to returnees, assisting in the process from beginning to end. All applicants who apply to return home under the VARRP programme are given the option of applying for reintegration assistance to help them upon their return.

IOM will:

- help returnees to get the travel documents they need
- arrange and pay for the flight to the home country
- meet returnees at the airport and help them with departure and arrival formalities
- assist with domestic transportation to their final destination
- offer reintegration support to establish a livelihood at home

In 2003, the majority of applicants were for single returnees, with 2185 individual applications being made out of 3687 applications in total. There were 457 group applications for between 2 and 9 people. 78% of applicants in 2003 were men. The average age of principal applicants was 32 years, the youngest being 9 years old (unaccompanied minor) and the oldest 85.

VARRP Returnees





Going Home from the UK

Nationalities of Returnees 2003

Country	Total				
		Azerbaijan	10	Chad	2
		Georgia	10	Egypt	2
Albania	736	Romania	10	Eritrea	2
Czech Republic	332	Tanzania	10	Guatemala	2
Sri Lanka	206	Bolivia	9	Indonesia	2
Iran	199	Chile	8	Myanmar	2
Iraq	165	Macedonia	8	Senegal	2
Kosovo	125	Mongolia	8	Serbia and Montenegro	2
Poland	110	Nigeria	8	Togo	2
Latvia	55	Armenia	7	USA	2
Afghanistan	52	India	7	Benin	1
Zimbabwe	48	Botswana	6	Central African Republic	1
Pakistan	44	Estonia	6	Gambia	1
Ecuador	39	Israel	6	Ghana	1
Lithuania	38	Jamaica	6	Guinea	1
South Africa	31	Yemen	6	Hong Kong	1
Algeria	27	Brazil	5	Jordan	1
Russia	26	Ethiopia	5	Kyrgyzstan	1
Colombia	25	Bangladesh	4	Libya	1
Turkey	23	Congo DRC	4	Malaysia	1
Croatia	17	Ivory Coast	4	Mexico	1
Lebanon	17	Kazakhstan	4	Morocco	1
Moldova	15	Somalia	4	Palestine	1
Slovak Republic	15	Vietnam	4	Paraguay	1
Ukraine	15	China	3	Saudi Arabia	1
Sierra Leone	14	Hungary	3	Seychelles	1
Angola	12	Liberia	3	Sudan	1
Uganda	12	Zambia	3	Syria	1
Cyprus	11	Bosnia	2	Venezuela	1
Kenya	11	Cameroon	2	TOTAL	2634

Going Home from the UK

IOM assists with voluntary returns to Iraq

IOM is currently assisting small numbers of Iraqis in non-neighbouring countries wanting to return home for special and urgent reasons, for example relating to family, medical or other humanitarian concerns. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and the UN are not promoting large-scale returns for the moment, therefore IOM is not yet operating a full scale Iraq-specific return programme, and is restricting its assistance to those applicants insisting on going back now who have a place to return to. IOM is assessing the conditions to enable future larger scale returns and reintegration support.

Assisting Return in Special Cases

In addition to the established voluntary return programmes, IOM London assists people in special circumstances to return home. Here are some examples of people who have been assisted by IOM London:

Medical Cases

To ensure the dignified and safe return of all returnees, IOM London ensures that the most appropriate assistance is available, and in particular, that the specific needs of vulnerable groups are met through agreed procedures with relevant partners. These cases usually require a longer timeframe for travel arrangements due to the specific procedures that need to be followed involving other partner agencies both in the UK and the countries of origin. (e.g. UNHCR, Refugee Action, Red Cross, Refugee Council, Social Services and the Department of Health). IOM's offices in the country of origin play a crucial role in liaising with relevant local agencies to ensure that the returnee is assisted and met on arrival and that any special needs are taken into consideration for a safe and appropriate voluntary return.

Unaccompanied Minors

When assisting unaccompanied minors, IOM follows special procedures in addition to the general procedures for voluntary returns and reintegration. The main principle is to ensure that the voluntary return is in the best interest of the child, i.e. long term/welfare needs and care. In order to respect this principle, IOM works closely with the responsible social worker/ carer of the child and different partner agencies (NGOs, statutory bodies, international organisations).

There were 18 applications from unaccompanied minors from March 2003 until February 2004.

Assisting Victims of Trafficking to Return Voluntarily

IOM London can assist victims of trafficking who have claimed asylum to return voluntarily to their country of origin. IOM also receive funding on a case to case basis for victims of trafficking that are being supported by Eaves Housing regardless of their immigration status.

The return assistance is tailored according to the need of the individual. We assist with obtaining travel documents and providing air tickets and negotiating transit assistance if needed.

In the country of origin, IOM or local networks of partners, provide reception assistance upon arrival and reintegration assistance. The reintegration assistance most often consists of shelter, medical and social/ psychological counselling, vocational training, training etc. The reintegration differs from country to country.

Before departure, we provide country information to the victim of trafficking in order for him/ her to be able to make an informed decision about returning voluntarily.



Going Home from the UK

Return to Afghanistan Programmes

IOM has been working in Afghanistan since 1992. IOM can assist Afghans who would like to make visits back to Afghanistan and decide whether or not they would like to return permanently (Explore and Prepare). Afghans with status in the UK can return for up to one year, depending on their leave entitlement, without their immigration status in Britain being affected.

Afghans who decide to return permanently back to Afghanistan can return through the Voluntary Return to Afghanistan Programme (VRAP) or the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP). Under these programmes, IOM can pay for travel back home, assist with travel documents and help returnees re-establish themselves back in Afghanistan. A small amount of financial assistance is available under the VRAP.

Once in Afghanistan, if returnees choose to take up reintegration assistance, IOM can offer them a range of options for income generating activities starting with the provision of information and counselling sessions. The activities include referral services in the existing job market, vocational training to prepare returnees to enter the job market, on the job training and apprenticeship opportunities.

A popular option amongst returnees is to become self-employed. In these cases, IOM's assistance primarily goes towards buying equipment that is necessary to set up small businesses. IOM regularly visits the business to support returnees and ensure their businesses are as sustainable as possible.

Skilled Afghan nationals who wish to return to Afghanistan to help re-build the country can be assisted through the Return of Qualified Afghans Programme (RQA). Applicants are selected to take up available positions within the public and private sector. Qualified Afghans who wish to start up their own business receive a financial grant to help them as well as advice and support.



Mr. R returned from England under IOM's Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Program (VARRP). Upon his arrival, Mr. R submitted a business plan for the establishment of his own carpet-weaving workshop.

Mr. R has extensive work experience in carpet weaving and marketing in addition to proven competence in this field. He decided to join with a long-time co-worker to establish a joint partnership in carpet weaving and marketing.

Today, Mr R is happily occupied with his newly established business and is happy with its success which allows him to be self sustainable and cater for his family's needs.

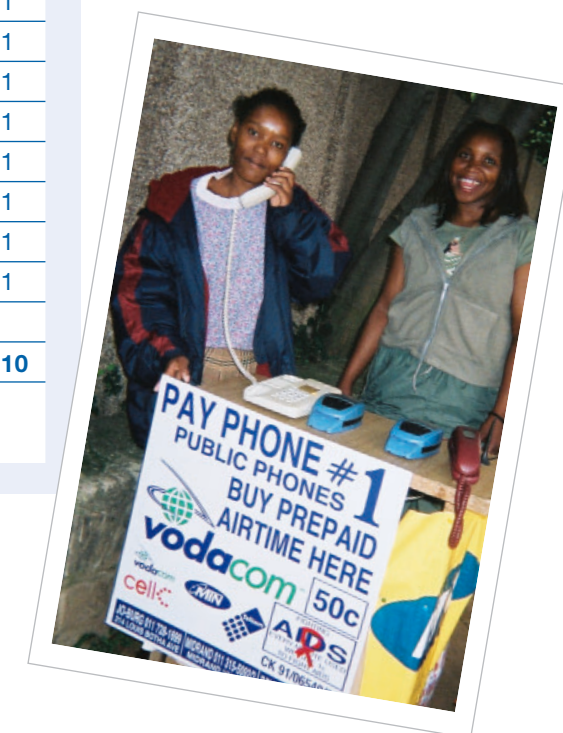
Through IOM, Mr R has socially and economically reintegrated into the society, as well as having created employment for six unemployed Afghans. IOM Afghanistan continues to assist Mr R with his reintegration into Afghan society.

Going Home from the UK

Reintegration Assistance

The VARRP programme assists asylum seekers residing in the UK who wish to return home. Established in 1999 as the Voluntary Assisted Return Programme (VARP), it later expanded in 2002 to include reintegration assistance. In addition to helping individuals and families with the cost of their flight, the VARRP provides reintegration assistance in the form of education, training, and the establishment of small businesses in their home country. Today, the reintegration programme has provided assistance such as setting up carpentry shops, grocery shops, equipment to farm, IT training, schooling to children and adults, to over 500 beneficiaries in more than 30 countries throughout Africa, Asia, South America, and parts of Europe. 1532 returnees applied for reintegration during in 2003. The largest numbers of returnees were from Czech Republic (14.75%), Albania (14.36%), Sri Lanka (10%) and Iran (9%). The total number of returnees assisted in 2003 was 310, although many of those applicants will be assisted in 2004, particularly those who left the UK towards the end of last year.

Country	Assisted	Country	Assisted
		Pakistan	4
		Ethiopia	3
Sri Lanka	66	Latvia	2
Albania	36	Nigeria	2
Iran	31	Zambia	2
South Africa	29	Angola	1
Kosovo	24	Armenia	1
Afghanistan	14	Azerbaijan	1
Ecuador	14	Bangladesh	1
Sierra Leone	12	Bosnia	1
Czech Republic	11	Croatia	1
Zimbabwe	11	Georgia	1
Poland	10	Russia	1
Slovakia	9	Serbia	1
Bolivia	6	Ukraine	1
Colombia	5		
Uganda	5	TOTAL	310
Botswana	4		





Going Home from the UK

Some Examples of Reintegration Assistance



Ms M returned to Zimbabwe and requested assistance from IOM to set up a small Hair & Beauty Salon. She had previous experience in the beauty industry and used the additional skills she had acquired in the UK to make her business a success. IOM assisted Ms M in buying hairdressing equipment and hair chemicals. She employs people to work with her and her business is expanding. She is happy with the progress she has made so far and the business provides her with a good income.

"The IOM assistance is helping us now to expand the business and to improve our financial situation"
Slovakia – family who was assisted to set up a small construction company

IOM provided a single woman and her small son with equipment and goods to establish a grocery shop in an economically deprived area in Ecuador. Although the woman is currently living with relatives, the income generated from the shop enables her to economically support herself and her child.

"The reintegration activity helped me to have a job right away and to have money to help support my family. I have great appreciation for the IOM reintegration programme."

Vietnam – male who is currently running a water drilling business to enable homes to have access to running water



Mr. B is a 35 year old man who was residing in the UK for 4 years. His family wanted him to return to Iran to help establish an ostrich breeding farm. There is great potential for this type of business and the Governor of the area where he is currently living supports this initiative. The family purchased the ostriches but needed assistance in building a fence to ensure the security of the birds. The programme assisted Mr. B to purchase the material to build a fence around the property. The family will employ members of the local community to help build it. It is hoped that the family will start earning an income from ostrich breeding next year.

"The support of IOM meant...not only the opportunity of returning to my country, but also the possibility of fulfilling the dream of finishing my career and then being able to find a job".
Colombia – woman taking a university course in occupational therapy

Mr J returned back to Sri Lanka in April 2003. IOM assisted him in setting up a poultry farm at his residence in Jaffna. Financial assistance was provided to him to build sheds and fencing. IOM also purchased the birds and provided help towards the maintenance of the farm. Mr J has now expanded the farm from 50 birds to 300 and is receiving a good income from this business.

"I would not have come back without IOM's assistance and I wouldn't have been able to take a training course without my son attending nursery".
South Africa single woman who was assisted to take a computer course in PC Support





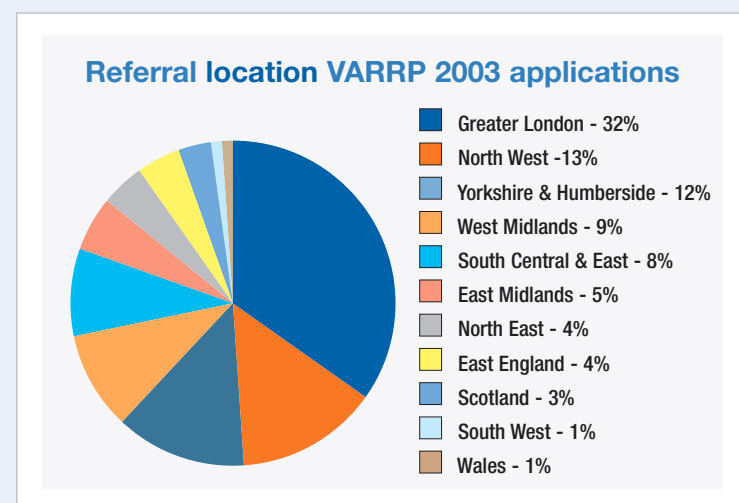
Going Home from the UK

Outreach activities by IOM

IOM London has increased its information activities since the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP) began. As well as distributing written material, we also undertake outreach visits to different organisations across the UK. Participants in the outreach meetings include refugee agencies, refugee community organisations, housing providers, solicitors, local councils and many more. The aim of this work is to:

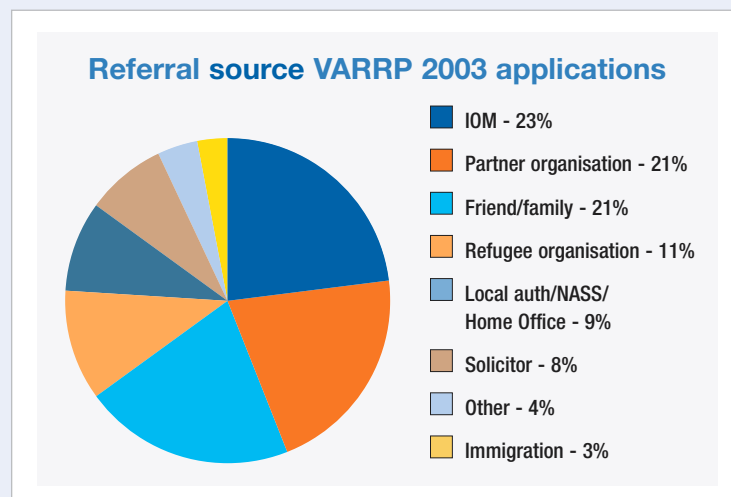
- Raise awareness on voluntary return
- Increase and develop regional networks
- Address misconceptions about the VARRP
- To increase confidence in the programme.

Below are two pie charts detailing from whom we get our referrals and from which part of the UK.



Compared to 2002 there was an increase of 58 % in the number of applications to the VARRP in 2003. The chart clearly shows the importance of refugee organisations and agencies making referrals to the project; over 60 different refugee organisations and community groups made referrals in 2003. The significant group of friend/family, which constituted the largest referral source to the VARRP in 2002, has reduced in percentage in 2003 due to an increase in referrals from partner agencies, refugee organisations and local authorities.

Greater London still continues to be the main location for applications to the VARRP, however all other regions play an important role in making referrals. In 2003 particular increases in applications were seen from Yorkshire and Humberside, the North West, Scotland, West Midlands and the East Midlands, reflecting the positive impact of the outreach meetings conducted and the outreach work of our partner agencies.



Going Home from the UK

Outreach through our partners



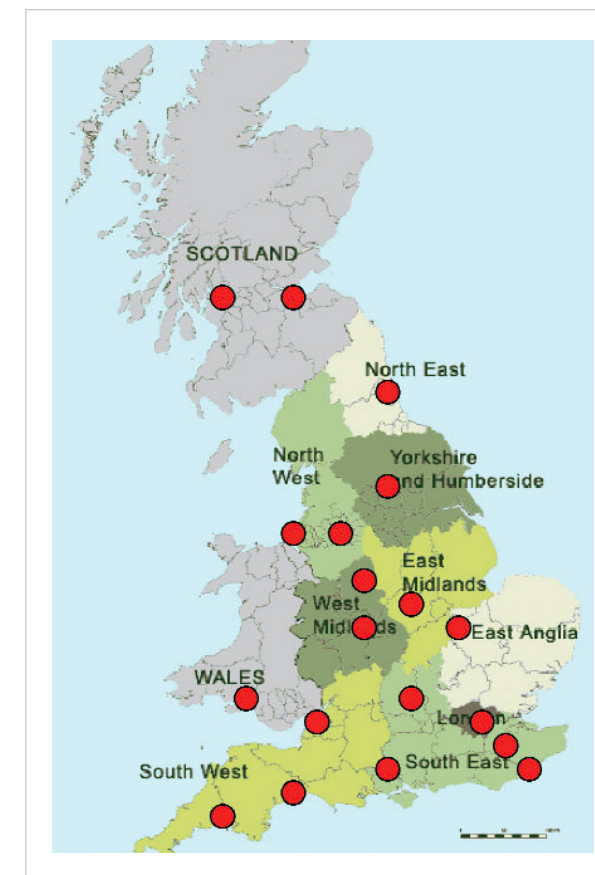
In implementing the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP), IOM London works in partnership with Refugee Action, YMCA Glasgow, Safe Haven Yorkshire and NERS (North of England Refugee Service). These organisations offer information, advice and support to asylum seekers and refugees who are considering return home or are exploring options to stay in the UK. This independent, confidential service can enable people to make an informed decision whether to stay in the UK or return home.

Outreach Meetings across the UK

31 outreach activities were held and attended by IOM across nationwide, 520 participants from 223 organisations attended. The areas visited are highlighted in the map on the right.

Media Outreach

IOM London has started a new strategy of placing articles and adverts in different foreign language media and information channels, for example newspapers, radio stations and satellite TV broadcasts. This is to enable us to communicate directly with potential applicants in their own language. An information video has been produced in 13 languages for wide distribution.





Coming Into the UK

Resettlement of Refugees into the UK

IOM plays an important role world-wide in the resettlement of refugees, working on health assessment, document handling, cultural orientation and transport.

In 2003, the UK government decided to receive and resettle 500 refugees from various parts of the world. IOM have been facilitating pre-departure medical screening, counselling, dossier preparation, transport and immediate arrival assistance for these refugees before they are helped into communities by local NGOs.

The programme aims to help refugees from different parts of the world and in this initial phase, refugees from West and East Africa have been identified and helped to settle in the United Kingdom. Due to the world-wide reach of IOM, refugees from all parts of the world can be helped to resettle in the UK.

This programme is funded by the UK Home Office and implemented under the umbrella of the *Gateway Protection Programme*, in partnership with the UK government, IOM, UNHCR, local authorities and an interagency partnership of 8 NGOs in the UK.



Regional Information Campaign – Clarifying the Myths and Realities of Immigrating to the UK

The International Organisation for Migration has launched an information campaign in four European Union accession countries - Poland, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic and Hungary. The objective is to give potential migrants in these countries reliable information on the rules associated with going to the United Kingdom after 1 May, in order to make informed decisions on whether to go to the UK or remain in their home country.

These four countries target the potential migrant population through a variety of information channels and outreach activities. Potential migrants are also informed about new restrictions on accessing social benefits.

The campaign is funded by the UK Home Office and is running from April until August 2004.

Information campaigns are one of the service areas of IOM, and the organisation has acquired much valuable experience in implementing information campaigns worldwide. The objective of an information campaign is to raise awareness of the target audience and tackle misconceptions potential migrants might have, allowing people to make informed decisions about legal, social and economic issues involved in moving to another country.

Coming Through the UK

Transit Movement Assistance

As Heathrow Airport has become more and more important as an international and particularly trans-Atlantic airline hub, IOM London has been called upon to provide increasing transit assistance. Assistance is provided to people accepted for resettlement in Western countries, particularly in North America, and whose travel has been arranged as part of IOM's world-wide assistance to resettlement. Most of these migrants originate from Iran, Kenya, Pakistan and Uganda. In addition, IOM assists country-to-country movements for other kinds of migrants.

In 2003, IOM London assisted over 9,000 transits, and is likely to assist upwards of 30,000 in 2004.

Transit assistance includes obtaining transit visas as required, meeting flights, caring for special needs of migrants in transit, ensuring timely departures with notification to the receiving mission at the next destination, and full-time escort of groups over 20 in transit.

In response to increasing transit requirements, as well as increasing numbers departing through the VARRP, IOM London opened an office at Heathrow Airport in January 2004, and now has three full-time staff there. We work closely with Chapman Freeborn to provide assistance whenever flights arrive and depart.





Migration and Development

Since 1964, IOM has been implementing Migration for Development programmes aimed at improving the human capacity of countries worldwide through the migration of highly qualified nationals. More recently, IOM has developed the concept of the mobilisation of skills and other resources in the African diaspora for the development of countries of origin, within the framework of its MIDA (Migration for Development in Africa) programme.

Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) Programme

Currently, a large pool of African nationals reside in the European Union. Many of them have acquired homes and rights in their host country and, although they would like to contribute to the development of their home country, do not necessarily want to return permanently.

The UK Government, in collaboration with the Italian Government and the European Commission are funding a 18-month pilot project in order to address these needs. The project aims to assist qualified African nationals to return home temporarily: to perform an essential service, train others, conduct research, or transfer their knowledge or services via computer. Two African countries have been selected as part of this pilot project — Sierra Leone and Ghana — in view of testing how such transfers could benefit, on one hand, the reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts of a post-conflict country such as Sierra Leone and the poverty alleviation efforts of a developing country such as Ghana, on the other. The MIDA Programme for Ghana and Sierra Leone is due to begin implementation in Summer 2004.

Survey on Zimbabwean nationals in the United Kingdom and South Africa

IOM London, in conjunction with IOM Pretoria, has recently started the implementation of a six months survey project which will look at the Zimbabwean diaspora in the United Kingdom and South Africa. The focus will be especially on the educational and professional background of the diaspora and on if and how the diaspora is willing to contribute to the development of their country of origin. This project falls under the framework of migration research, which together with data gathering and analysis are key to understanding migration and developing new policy and sustainable practical approaches.

The original interest in a survey of the Zimbabwean diaspora came from Zimbabwean community groups in the UK, who were concerned about the impact of mass emigration of qualified and skilled nationals on all public services in Zimbabwe, in particular in the health sector. The project therefore aims to assess the skills and expertise that are available within the Zimbabwean diaspora, with the ultimate aim of evaluating how the diaspora could contribute to the recovery and capacity building of Zimbabwe.



Migration and Development

Migration Management in South East Asia

Migration Analysis and Investigations Unit in Indonesia

IOM London are working with IOM Jakarta on this project to strengthen and enhance Indonesia's migration management capacity to handle regular and irregular migrant flows through the establishment, resourcing and training of a Migration Analysis and Investigations Unit.



Migration Management in Cambodia

IOM London is working with IOM Phnom Penh on a project to combat trans border crime. The aim is to consolidate Cambodia's migration management capacity through information analysis, capacity building and intelligence-led law enforcement. This project recognises the need for concerted multi-lateral collaboration and hopes to boost cross-border cooperation – including information sharing – between countries in the South East Asian region.



IOM • OIM

IOM International Organization for Migration

Acknowledgments

IOM London receives funding from the following bodies:

- The Home Office
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Department for International Development
- European Refugee Fund
- European Commission