

IOM in the Caribbean



"Migration will be one of the major policy concerns of the 21st century. In our shrinking world, more and more people will look to migration--temporary or permanent--as a path to employment, education, freedom or other opportunities."

*IOM Director General
Brunson McKinley*



As the leading inter-governmental organization dealing with migration issues, IOM provides expertise in migration health, migrants rights, migration management, and knowledge on migration dynamics throughout the world. Over the last 10 years, IOM has focused its cooperation in the Caribbean on activities to support the diverse migration and development efforts of States. This support was focused on four core areas:

- ◆ Technical cooperation to strengthen migration management systems;
- ◆ Promotion of dialogue and information exchange about migration;
- ◆ Return & reintegration of highly skilled migrants;
- ◆ Movement assistance



In keeping with these core service areas, the following are examples of programs carried out by IOM in the Caribbean up to 2002:

- ◆ Haitian Technical Assistance Project (HTAP);
- ◆ The Haitian Migration Management Program (MMP);
- ◆ Regularization and Repatriation of Haitian Nationals from the Turks and Caicos Islands;
- ◆ Third Country Return;
- ◆ Return and Reintegration of Qualified Jamaican Nationals;
- ◆ Counter-Trafficking Assistance in the Dominican Republic;
- ◆ Regional Seminars on Migration Policy and Practice.

Priority Strategies for 2003

Taking into account recent exchanges with Governments and partners in the Caribbean, IOM will concentrate its activities in three priority areas throughout 2002 and 2003:

- ◆ facilitating labor migration, especially in the area of health experts;
- ◆ combating irregular flows including different forms of smuggling and trafficking of persons;
- ◆ promotion of migrant rights, including migrants' access to adequate health care and the relation between mobile populations and the spread of infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

A key tool for achieving sustainable results in these areas is technical cooperation and capacity building at the national level, so that governments can enhance their migration management capabilities, reinforce their own structures or create new ones as needed, and modernize existing legislation. In this way, relevant institutions and skilled personnel can play a role in facilitating the free and orderly movement of Caribbean nationals, as highlighted in CARICOM agreements.

In this respect, IOM proposes to establish a Technical Cooperation Center for the Caribbean region in 2003. Such a center will allow IOM to provide training in migration matters to national governments, within an integrated approach. IOM will thus be able to mobilize experts to respond to specific training needs, assist in legislation review, and facilitate modernization of relevant institutions.

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IOM International Organization for Migration



Examples of Current IOM Projects in the Caribbean Region

Regional initiative for the Caribbean on HIV/AIDS and mobile populations

Mobility is an inherent characteristic of Caribbean life. There is significant internal movement within the region and, to a lesser extent, migration out of the region as well. The flows are not uni-directional. Couple this fact with the knowledge that HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death for Caribbean citizens between the ages of 15 and 44, and that the Caribbean has the second highest HIV prevalence in the world, and the need for both data and action around the nexus between HIV/AIDS and mobility is clear.

To address this need, IOM will implement, starting in November 2002, a regional initiative to examine HIV/AIDS and mobile populations in the Caribbean. The project will encompass two main areas of work. The first step will be to conduct a baseline assessment focusing on migrant populations in the Bahamas, Barbados, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, that are at risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS. Both existing data and data obtained from a survey among mobile populations in each country will be compiled and analysed. Funding for this component has been received by the U.S. State Department.

After completion of the baseline assessment, it is hoped a better understanding of the following issues will be obtained:

- ♦ The characteristics and dynamics of population movements within the region
- ♦ Factors that promote vulnerability and resilience to HIV in order to understand risk and health seeking behaviours.
- ♦ The level of knowledge and awareness with regard to sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS among mobile populations, including tourists
- ♦ Migration policies and health policies in the areas of origin and destination.

This information will then be used to determine the detail of potential intervention strategies. In the second phase of the project suitable intervention strategies, as determined by the research, will be delineated to prevent further spread of HIV/AIDS among mobile populations in the Caribbean. IOM will develop and test a replicable model of intervention for HIV prevention and access to health care specifically targeted at the migrant populations in one of the selected countries by means of a general education program and group counselling services, in addition to individual counselling. The overall objective is to contribute to the reduction of sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis among mobile populations in the Caribbean and improve their access to prevention, care and support.

Counter-trafficking: A Strategy for the Dominican Republic

IOM began working closely with governmental and nongovernmental actors to facilitate a comprehensive counter trafficking program for the Dominican Republic in 2000. By April 2001, an agreement between the Dominican Republic's State Secretariat for Women (SSW) and IOM was signed, cementing a close working partnership and commitment to progress on the issue.

Trafficking is not a new phenomenon to the Dominican Republic. IOM estimates that over the past fifteen years some 50,000 Dominican women have been trafficked to the Dutch Antilles, Europe and more recently Argentina and Central America through false employment offers or marriage promises. Many have ended up in debt bondage, abused and exploited in the commercial sex industry, domestic service, or working in bars and restaurants. The majority of these women are between 17 and 30 years of age. They are poor and have little education.

As providing baseline information is a first step in any strategy to effect change, IOM first published a study on the Trafficking of Women from the Dominican Republic for Sexual Exploitation Purposes and disseminated this information throughout the country. Following this dissemination phase, a seminar was then organized by the





Dominican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State Secretariat for Women and IOM to bring together both government and civil society to discuss the roles they play, and encourage potential interactions. By focusing on the roles of State and civil society, the groundwork for more effective outreach and action had begun.

From October 2001 to August 2002, the program to Prevent and Combat Trafficking of Women in the Dominican Republic ran its first phase. During phase one the project achieved three key results:

- ♦ increased public awareness;
- ♦ enhanced interest and willingness from governmental institutions to face the issue of trafficking and the traffickers;
- ♦ the strengthening of an inter-institutional structure that has identified trafficking as a primary focus.



IOM allocated special funds to support the formal information campaign (TV, radio and press) which took place during this phase. These public information and education activities addressed trafficking both inter-

nally and abroad. The second phase of the project will consolidate the results and groundwork in phase one and move forward to take concrete actions to address the problem. As such, phase two of the project has a four-pronged approach.

- ♦ Legislation
- ♦ Reintegration of victims
- ♦ Education
- ♦ Information exchange

These four areas of activity aim to strengthen national capacities to prevent and combat trafficking of women in the Dominican Republic, both internal and international, and promote respect for migrant women's rights. These activities are supported primarily through a grant from the U.S. State Department.

Managing Migration and Promoting Migrants Rights

In cooperation with the Government of the Dominican Republic, IOM has developed a program to promote migrants' rights within the framework of an overall approach to migration management in the Dominican Republic. The project is a first step in a wider comprehensive IOM strategy and program towards strengthening governmental and civil society structures dealing with migration in the country, to ensure both improved migration management and the respect of migrant and citizen rights. Information and education activities will target governmental institutions at the central and local levels, community leaders, decision makers and other civil society sectors at the local levels.

Supported by contributions from the Governments of the Dominican Republic and the United States, IOM is distributing a national survey to assemble information on the Haitian population living in the Dominican Republic. Data gathered will serve as a sound base for a regularization program and other policy actions related to migration and labor markets. Additionally, it will strengthen civil society institutions and provide information and training to civil society leaders and Haitian migrants in order to enhance their commitment to the promotion of migrant rights and the fight against discrimination and racial prejudice. Initial discussions on the project and its design started in 2001, with the Dominican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), NGOs and IOM.

The preparation and implementation of the survey will produce quantitative data and a qualitative analysis on Haitian illegal residents in the country, including demographic information, geographic distribution, sectors of economic activity, educational and labor background, time of residence, children born in the country, access to health and education services, etc. The survey will be designed and implemented in cooperation with FLACSO, several Haitian-focused NGOs and a U.S. academic expert from Trinity College. This joint effort will



contribute to the development of a culturally appropriate questionnaire. It will also identify geographic distribution points, which will cover up to 4,000 Haitian households. Information obtained from the questionnaire will be compiled within a database and analyzed in a final report presenting the first comprehensive picture of the Haitian population living in the Dominican Republic.

In addition, the Canadian Government has extended funds for a series of interconnected activities to pursue sensitisation, education and political support for migrants rights at different levels of society in the Dominican Republic. IOM will combine different approaches, including public information campaigns, educational events, lobbying and advocacy activities targeted at specific audiences. Using formal and informal tools, the program will focus efforts on government institutions at the central and local levels, community leaders, decision makers, media, and the population at large. Education and sensitisation will be centered on the dissemination of international agreements on migrant rights and information pertaining to racial prejudices and discrimination. Special attention will be paid to gender sensitive situations and women's rights. The project will also link issues of migrants' rights and the combat against discrimination and racial prejudice with ongoing activities to promote citizens' participation in civil society.

LOOKING AHEAD

Building on the outcomes of policy and program discussions in late 2002, IOM will continue its efforts to meet the migration challenges of governments and migrants in the Caribbean region. As example, discussions are underway with the Government of Jamaica and the U.S. Government to strengthen policies and practices in migration management through targeted program activities:



Capacity Building in Migration Management in Jamaica

Targeted at technical cooperation and capacity building at the national level, IOM is developing a program to partner the Government of Jamaica in dealing with its migratory challenges by enhancing migration management capabilities and reinforcing technical infrastructure through modernization. The two main components of the project are:

- ◆ Improvement of border management systems through the provision of appropriate and necessary technical inputs in the main Jamaican air and sea-ports, as well as through a targeted training program for technical and end-user staff.
- ◆ Institutional strengthening through technical cooperation assistance in policy matters, legislation and regulations, coupled with specific training in various areas, including:
 - 1) risk profiling for combating smuggling and trafficking,
 - 2) documentation fraud prevention,
 - 3) improving criminal intelligence capability related to migration management, and
 - 4) improving responses to transnational organized crime.

IOM's strategy for implementing the proposed changes is to utilize a comprehensive, holistic approach that deals with technological and knowledge-related gaps, and policy and legislative gaps that will enable the Government of Jamaica to effectively deal with their increasing migratory challenges.

PARTNERS

As an intergovernmental institution, IOM works closely with the Caribbean governments, at their request for cooperation. IOM also works with agencies of the United Nations System, particularly with those closely related to IOM's mandate such as UNHCR, UNFPA, UNDP and ILO. In matters regarding migrants' health, IOM has signed cooperation agreements with WHO/PAHO and UNAIDS which are translated into joint actions. IOM's activities in the Caribbean receive support from the Canadian Government, the United States Government, the European Union, and other bilateral sources.

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