

# 15 YEARS IN ARMENIA: MANAGING MIGRATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL

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YEREVAN - 2008



International Organization for Migration  
the migration agency  
ARMENIA



## About the International Organization for Migration

**The International Organization for Migration (IOM)** is an inter-governmental organization with 125 Member States and 16 Observer States (July 2008). Established in 1951, IOM has become the principal intergovernmental organization in the field of migration. After half a century of worldwide operational experience the Organization has assisted over 11 million migrants.

IOM's structure is highly decentralized and service-oriented. Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, IOM currently operates in over 400 offices worldwide, managing more than 1,770 projects. IOM has 5,600 operational staff and a programme budget of over US\$ 783.8 million.

IOM is committed to the principle that human and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. IOM works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners, as well as the research community and the private sector, to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, be they refugees, displaced persons or other uprooted people.

While not part of the United Nations system, IOM has Observer status at the United Nations and maintains close working relations with UN bodies and operational agencies.

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IOM helps governments and civil society through:

- ❑ rapid humanitarian responses to sudden migration flows,
- ❑ post-emergency return and reintegration programmes,
- ❑ assistance to migrants on their way to new homes and lives,
- ❑ facilitation of labour migration,
- ❑ assisted voluntary return for irregular migrants,
- ❑ training and capacity-building of officials,
- ❑ measures to counter trafficking in persons.

IOM's activities also cover a wide range of *areas*:

- ❑ Migration and Development (Migration and Economic/Community Development; Capacity Building Through Qualified Human Resources and Experts)
- ❑ Migration Health (Migration Health Assessment; Migration Health Assistance and Advice; Post-Emergency Migration Health Assistance)
- ❑ Facilitating Migration (Labour Migration; Migrant Processing and Assistance; Migrant Integration)
- ❑ Movement, Emergency and Post-Conflict Migration Management (Resettlement Assistance; Repatriation Assistance; Emergency and Post-emergency Operations Assistance)
- ❑ Regulating Migration (Return Assistance to Migrants and Governments; Counter-trafficking; Technical Cooperation on Migration Management and Capacity Building)
- ❑ Claims Programmes (German Forced Labour Compensation Programme; Holocaust Victim Assets Programme; Iraqi Property Claims Programme; Humanitarian and Social Programmes)
- ❑ General Programmes (Migration Policy and Research; Stranded Migrant Facility; International Migration Law)

IOM activities that cut across these areas include the promotion of international migration law, policy debate and guidance, protection of migrants' rights, migration health and the gender dimension of migration.

### IOM in Armenia

The Republic of Armenia (RA) became an IOM Member State in 1993. IOM activities in the country are grounded on a number of official documents signed with the RA Government, including “Co-operation Agreement on Privileges and Immunities” (1994) and “Memorandum of Understanding” (2001).

IOM activities in Armenia are conceived as part of a regional strategy with common programmes in the South Caucasus Region and are in line with Armenia's international, regional and bilateral agreements, and in support to Armenia's Government Program, relevant National Action Plans, Strategies and conceptions as well as the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan for Armenia.

As an intergovernmental organization IOM in Armenia works closely with the Armenian Government and implements projects prioritised by the RA Government and various Armenian ministries and state agencies. The IOM Mission in Armenia mainly works in the following fields: Technical Cooperation on Migration and Capacity Building; Labour Migration; Counter-Trafficking; Migration and Development; Mass Information on Migration; Movements and Assisted Returns. The Mission is expanding its portfolio to cover Migration Health area also.

As the central player in migration management, IOM is the chair of the Migration Management Coordination Group of International and Foreign Organizations, which is part of the larger Donor Coordination system in Armenia. IOM Armenia is also the co-

chair of the International Organizations' Working Group on Counter-Trafficking (together with UNDP and OSCE).

Funding for IOM activities in Armenia has been provided mainly by the Governments of USA, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, as well as the EU, OSI, UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, and other donors.

The IOM office in Yerevan was opened in 1993. It comprises Project Development and Implementation Unit and Finance, Administration and Resettlements Unit. Its Micro-Enterprise Development Project offices in Yerevan and Giumri were set up in 1997 and 1998 respectively. The Migration Resource Centre opened in September 2006 in Yerevan. The IOM Mission in Armenia reports to the IOM Regional Office for the Nordic and Baltic States, and the European Neighbourhood countries (East), located in Helsinki, Finland, and to the Headquarters.



*IOM Mission in Armenia,  
situated in the UN House.  
Photo by IOM.*

## Technical Cooperation on Migration and Capacity Building in Migration Management

### Policy Reforms

Through its technical cooperation programmes, IOM has been offering advisory services on migration or migration-related issues to the RA Government to assist it in the development, implementation, and management of migration policy and legislation to prevent irregular migration, facilitate regular beneficial migration, and provide assistance with various aspects of migrant processing.

Thus IOM has collaborated with RA Government on “Capacity Building in Migration Management Programme” (CBMMP). Initially CBMMP aimed at establishing a [unified migration policy](#) of the Government of Armenia and strengthening the [legislative basis for migration management](#) in the country. At the second stage of its development CBMMP focused on strengthening the administrative and operational mechanisms and structures for migration management. As an outcome of CBMMP, in 2004 the Armenian Department for Migration and Refugees (DMR), the predecessor of the Migration Agency (MA) adopted the “Concept Paper on State Regulation of Population Migration.”

With new developments in the country and in anticipation of new reforms of migration management in Armenia, the RA Government requested IOM to conduct an [assessment of the migration management in Armenia](#), including for the Migration Agency at the Ministry of Territorial Administration of the Republic of Armenia (MA); Ministry of Labour and Social Issues and other relevant government agencies (such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Police) on existing migration management capacity. The assessment was conducted with the Swedish Migration Board, and looks at the current policies, legislative bases, structures, procedures, technical capacity and equipment. The main purpose of the assessment was to develop recommendations for a new management



structure capable of dealing more effectively with migration issues and challenges facing the country. Additionally a preliminary review of the existing migration related legislation was also carried out.

The assessment can be used as a baseline analysis study, which will provide guidance for designing parts of the RA National Plan of Action for Migration and Asylum, currently requested by the EU, in the ENP framework. "The Review of Migration Management in Armenia Assessment Mission Report" launched in Spring 2008 and builds into future projects where more concrete recommendations will be formulated.

IOM aims to assist the new waves of reforms of migration management, including Introduction of the System of Electronic Passports and Identification Cards with Biometric Parameters and the creation of the new Centralised body on migration management and establishment of migrant accommodation centres complying with international best practices and humanitarian standards.



*Discussion of the Review of Migration Management in Armenia at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Photos by the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs*



*RA Government Officials at a Study Visit to Sweden. Photos by IOM.*

## Capacity Building

In order to respond to the Government's needs to develop coherent responses to migration challenges in a changing international environment, IOM's technical co-operation also focused on capacity building for officials dealing with migration management and working towards solutions for emerging migration issues. Since 1993 IOM has done extensive capacity building for MA / DMR, National Security Service (NSS) and its Border Guards Troops, Interpol Armenia National Central Bureau (NCB), Police and its Department of Passports and Visas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its Consular Services, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, etc. In particular the Training Centre of the Border Guards Troops was established and extensive training programmes have been organized for border guards and police on legislation, human rights, examination of identity and travel documents and fraud detection, counter-smuggling and counter-trafficking, as well as English language and computer skills, including the use of border control and management technologies. As part of its various projects, IOM has equipped the Border Crossing Control Points, the Training Centre of the Border Guards Troops with various equipment. IOM aims to continue further institutional development of the Border Control Detachment.



*Border Guards' Boots at the Yerevan Zvartonts Airport Renovated and Equipped with IOM's Assistance (2001). Photos by IOM.*

IOM has also built the capacities of local NGOs dealing with issues of migration and facilitated the creation of the regional networking and dialogue among NGOs in the three South Caucasus states. Thus IOM funded the Armenian Sociological Association to establish a centre for humanitarian and logistical assistance for voluntary returning migrants.



*Participants of Training in CT and Smuggling for Border Guards.  
Photo by IOM.*

### Border Management

IOM has assisted the RA Government in **border management reform**. IOM is supporting the RA Government in expanding its border management reform through expansion of the Border Management Information system to border crossing points.

In 2000 IOM conducted an Assessment on border management in RA and in 2004 IOM undertook an independent technical evaluation of the Border Management Information System (BMIS), which was installed at Yerevan Zvartnots International Airport in 1999. Following the Assessment and Technical Evaluation in 2004 and 2005 as part of US Government funded “Expansion of Border Management Information System”, BMIS Project was expanded to the Bagratashen land border with the Republic of Georgia.

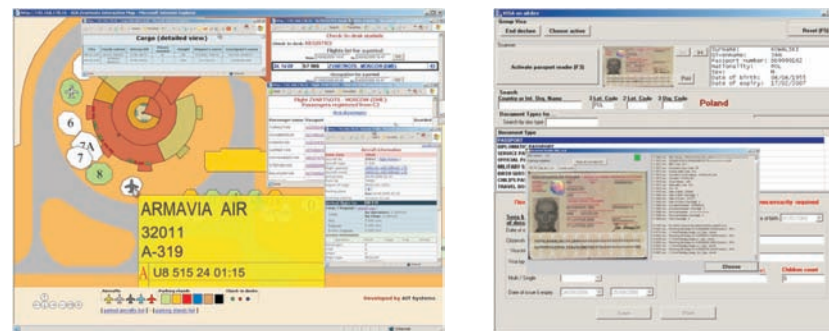
In 2007 – 2008 within the scope of IOM “Further Expansion and Establishment of the Network of Border Management Information System: Republic of Armenia” Project, funded by the US Government, RA Government and AviainfoTel CJSC, the BMIS was expanded to the Meghri land border with Iran, Giumri Airport, and Bavra, Gogavan land border and Airum railway station (last three borders with Georgia).

The information system via a centralised data storage, retrieval and analysis will provide information on traveller flows, asylum seekers, irregular migrants, human trafficking and unaccompanied minors, and will monitor the data against watch-lists.

IOM is exploring possibilities for establishment of a comprehensive and effective data exchange system between law enforcement bodies in Armenia and countries of destination, on migrants who experience difficulties being abroad and seek assistance.

In 2007, at the request of the RA Government, IOM conducted an assessment of Security standards at Yerevan Zvartnots International Airport, which resulted in the “Report on National and Aviation Security Standards at Zvartnots International Airport,” which gave recommendations as to improving security standards at the facility.

As a follow-up, IOM is exploring possibilities for assisting the RA Government with integrated border management (cooperation and coordination among border management agencies).



*The BMIS System. Photos by AviaInfoTel.*

In 2007, the IOM Mission in Armenia, in cooperation with Interpol General Secretariat and Interpol Armenia National Central Bureau (NCB), implemented “Integrated Solutions to Directly Access Interpol Criminal Information” project, with the help of which the NCB's network has been enhanced and some central units at Police Headquarters, such as the Department of Passport and Visas, were connected to the [Interpol I-24/7 telecommunication database](#) system thus providing direct access to the international police information databases containing information on persons in the international search, including terrorists, missing persons, persons involved in trafficking and money laundering; lost or stolen passports and travel documents; stolen vehicles; lost or stolen works of art, etc.

In parallel the project provided training for users in English language, computer skills and on the system itself.

The collaboration between IOM and Interpol was presented as a success story at the 36th ICPO (International Criminal Police Organization) – Interpol European Regional Conference in Bulgaria in May 2007.

As a follow-up, together with Interpol Armenia NCB, the IOM Mission in Armenia will collaborate to link the regional police departments, the remaining border crossing points and other concerned law enforcement authorities (Customs Service, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, Tax Service) to the database.



*The presentation by the Head of Interpol Armenia NCB on the joint IOM / Interpol Project at the 36th Interpol European Regional Conference (Bulgaria, May 2007). Photo from Interpol Armenia NCB.*

## Migration Policy and Research

As the leading inter-governmental organization that works with migrants and governments to meet emerging migration challenges, IOM provides information, advice and support for the development of effective migration management policies and strategies.

IOM conducts research on migration issues and disseminates research results through publications worldwide. At certain occasions IOM Armenia also carries out research in migration-related fields and contributes to research by IOM Headquarters or other IOM Units and Missions.

In 2008 IOM Armenia has contributed to the “Overview of Legislative Practices in the Area of Citizenship” and to the preparation of the Migration Profile for Armenia.

Other important publications covering Armenia include, among others, “Analysis of the Institutional and Legal Framework and Overview of Cooperation in the Field of Counter-trafficking in Eastern Europe and Central Asia”; and “Migration Perspectives: Eastern Europe and Central Asia; Planning and Managing Labour Migration”. “Return and Reintegration of Migrants to the South Caucasus, An Explanatory Study” carried out in 2002 looked at return and reintegration process of migrants (including people returning with IOM's assistance, persons returning on their own initiative and deported migrants) and assessed the impact of returned migrants on their families and communities. The study was the first in its kind and

provided valuable examples of the problems migrants face when returning to their countries of origin.



*Selected Publications by IOM Armenia. Photo by IOM.*



## Labour Migration

IOM's labour migration activities focus on the regulation of labour movements and programmes to assist governments and migrants in the selection, recruitment, cultural orientation, training, travel, reception, integration and return of labour migrants.

### Inter-Regional Policy Dialogues

Since 2001 IOM has assisted and involved Armenia in the inter-regional migration and asylum management dialogue (the “Cluster Process”) between the sending and transit countries of the South Caucasus, and receiving EU Member States. Through the Cluster Process mechanisms and policies to reduce irregular migration are being promoted while simultaneously strengthening the South Caucasus' institutional capacity and systems to promote legal migration and sustainable return and reintegration practices and policies.

The first three cluster process meetings were held in Tbilisi, Georgia in 2001 – 2002. As a follow up to these meetings, IOM assisted in the establishment of a Migrant Support Unit at the Migration Agency (then DMR), which operated a hotline. The centre continues to provide consultations to migrants.

In 2002 IOM launched a vast public awareness campaign to inform migrants of the threats of irregular migration. The campaign's message was publicized by major newspapers, television and radio stations, territorial administrations, and NGOs. Within the framework of the campaign, DMR started publication of Quarterly Informative-Analytical periodical “Labour Emigration.”

The second generation of cluster process meetings were organized Belgium, Georgia, and Germany under the auspices of EU funded “Informed Migration – An Integrated Approach to Promoting Legal Migration through National Capacity Building and Inter-Regional Dialogue between the South Caucasus and the EU” regional project. The discussions had a particular focus on information exchange and expert consultation, information dissemination

programmes to prevent irregular migration, technical cooperation and capacity building, readmission agreements, and reintegration assistance to returning migrants. A focus on the promotion of legal migration and the importance of bilateral [readmission agreements](#) was introduced into discussions. When the Project began, RA had bilateral readmission agreements with Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, and Switzerland. In the course of the Project, a readmission agreement with Germany was ratified, and agreements with the Benelux states, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Sweden, and Ukraine are being negotiated. Triggered by the Cluster Process Meetings, Armenia and Sweden established a country team in 2007 to increase cooperation on migration management and return, as part of which IOM conducted the aforementioned Assessment of Migration Management.



*The Armenian Delegation to the Cluster Process Meeting in Tbilisi, 2007. Photo by IOM.*

To raise the [public's awareness](#) on threats of irregular migration and the benefits of legal labour migration, the IOM Mission in Armenia has established a Migration Resource Centre (MRC) in Yerevan which provides free consultations to potential migrants and disseminates information on possibilities for legal migration abroad. The MRC is a “mobile information unit” which travels to different regions of Armenia to provide residents with free consultations. To date MRC has provided free consultations to 2,500 potential migrants. MRC also operates a database of potential migrants to

whom it has provided consultations in person and over the telephone. MRC will soon be handed over to the RA Government and will continue its activities as a unit under the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues. Several information campaigns to raise public awareness on migration issues have been conducted by IOM nationwide using brochures and booklets, posters and TV public service announcements. MRC has also prepared a series of documentaries on the threats of irregular migration, for which the Armenian rock band Bambir has composed a song.



*MRC Townhall Meetings in Giumri, Shirak Region. Photos by IOM.*

IOM also works on **Capacity Building** in labour migration. So far 12 trainers have been trained, in addition to government officials from the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, and its State Occupation Service Agency, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and its Migration Agency, Police, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, representatives of the Confederation of Trade Unions, the Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen, private recruitment agencies and NGOs involved in labour migration have also received training. The trainings have been successful, with participants requesting follow-up trainings and the central role IOM plays in reforms of migration management strategies and policies in Armenia noted.



*A training programme in labour Migration for Armenian Migration management officials and representatives of private recruitment agencies.*



*Participants of National Labour Migration Trainings in Yerevan. Photos by IOM.*

IOM will continue facilitating the inter-regional dialogue between the EU and the South Caucasus, involving the countries of the Black Sea Region, and also facilitating the negotiations of mobility partnerships for Armenia and EU member states.

In parallel to the Cluster process, IOM also works in **prevention of irregular migration** from Armenia through vocational training for under-aged students at the Armenian boarding schools. IOM implemented a Project entitled “Prevention of Irregular Migration from Armenia through Vocational Training and Creating Job Opportunities” with funding from the Czech Ministry of Interior. The project contributed to the reduction of irregular migration and the vulnerability of this group through vocational training, and by supporting economic integration and creating job opportunities for potential migrants.

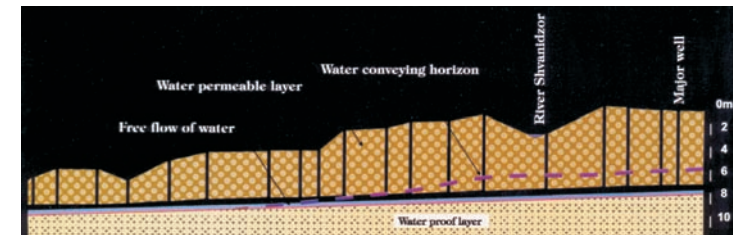
As a result of this Project, ten Special Boarding schools in Yerevan, Artik, Gavar, Goris, Kapan, Sissian, Spitak, and Vanadzor were equipped with training classrooms/workshops for continued vocation training for further generations of pupils, and 450 schoolchildren were included into the vocational training activities covering the following specializations, hair-dressing; carpet-making; dress-making; knitting and crocheting; as well as computer trainings and English language courses. The skills obtained and the products made were also used for the needs of the boarding schools. After completion of the training, participants can work as trainers for younger generations.

To address increasing massive migration pressure in the Southern Armenian settlements, which occurred due to the lack of potable and irrigation water in Siunik region and weakened agriculture, IOM implemented “Revitalization of Shvanidzor, South Armenia: A Pilot Project on Rehabilitation of Water Systems” with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in 2004-2005. Within the Project's framework, IOM mobilised the local community of Shvanidzor to rehabilitate and reutilise traditional underground water systems, which are called Chahrez, Kariz, or Chaheriz and have been built in Armenia since 720 BC. A hydro-geological survey was conducted, all four Chahrezes were mapped and renovated, a new Chahrez was built, and water quality was analysed. The water system became fully functional, making potable and irrigation water available to villagers. Seven local masons were trained and a community-based Water Users Association established to keep the system in working order, to generate awareness the residents and help develop skills for local youth in well renovation. The historical water systems were documented in a video documentary and book. Regional links with IOM offices in Iran and Azerbaijan were established to harness regional knowledge and expertise on construction, restoration and maintenance of Chahrez. IOM is now exploring new possibilities for continuing similar assistance to other communities in Siunk Region having Chahrezes.

<sup>1</sup> Chahrez or Kariz or Chaheriz is a system of horizontal tunnels with vertical ventilation shafts dug along sloping land that exploits the groundwater. Chahrez is an eco-friendly technology, which requires no energy. These man-made canals are used to collect water and bring it to the surface for household and irrigation use.



The village of Shvanidzor in Siunik Region. Շվանիձորի բնակավայրի համայնքը



The System of Chahrezes in Shvanidzor.

## Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Armenia

IOM has been active in counter trafficking activities in Armenia and has lobbied for the inclusion of an article criminalizing human trafficking into the Armenian Criminal Code, for ratification of the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols, and has contributed to the development of the National Plans of Action to Combat Human Trafficking. IOM was an observer member of the RA Inter-Agency Commission on Human Trafficking Issues and its successor Council and actively participated



in preparation of the 2004-2006 and 2007-2009 National Action Plans to combat human trafficking. IOM is the co-chair of the International Organizations' Working Group on Counter-Trafficking (together with UNDP and OSCE).

IOM has implemented seven large counter-trafficking projects in Armenia ranging from research and capacity building to victim assistance and public awareness. Working with its partners, IOM offers [direct assistance to victims of trafficking](#) (VoTs). This includes accommodation in places of safety, medical and psychosocial support, skills development and vocational training, reintegration assistance, and the options of voluntary, safe and dignified return to countries of origin, or resettlement to third countries in extreme cases. IOM has provided medical, psychological, legal support and shelters to more than 125 victims of trafficking; foreign victims in Armenia have assisted to voluntarily return to their home countries.

In 2001, IOM was the first organization to conduct a [research](#) on human trafficking. “Trafficking of Women and Children from the Republic of Armenia” looked at the incidence of and provided and assessment of the conditions contributing to trafficking in migrants, with recommendations for national policy, legislation and operational measures, and further programming, and an assessment of the existing policy and legislative basis for protecting trafficked victims and punishing criminals. The research was done as part of IOM's “Trafficking in Migrants from the Republic of Armenia” project funded by the Government of the Netherlands.

In 2002, again with funding from the Government of the Netherlands, IOM conducted the study “Irregular Migration and Smuggling of Migrants from Armenia.”

Both studies provided a comprehensive picture of the nature and incidence of irregular migration in Armenia in order to suggest a sound basis for policy and programme intervention. The reports provided recommendations, including the need to raise awareness, provide reintegration assistance, and drafting of legislative amendments, among other things.

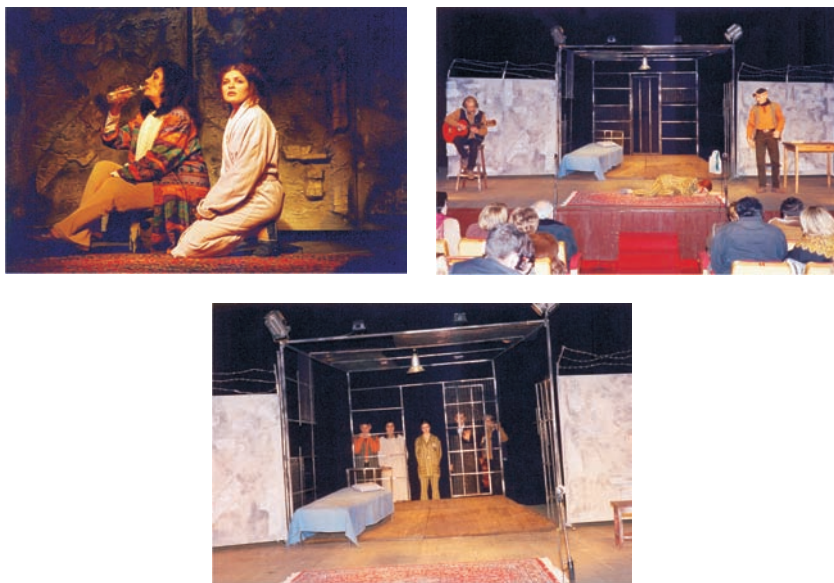
As a follow-up, IOM contributed to the efforts of RA authorities to combat trafficking in women and children by reinforcing prevention activities, promoting the further criminalization of trafficking and introducing measures for the reintegration of victims of trafficking. Thus a wide-ranging [public outreach campaign](#) was designed and launched, journalists were trained on proper coverage of human trafficking issues; a database on trafficking with profiles of the victims and the type of reintegration assistance provided was compiled; new legislation was drafted addressing human trafficking, as well as amendments to Government decisions on the operations of tourism, job placement companies, and marriage agencies were developed; Interagency co-ordination processes and procedures were reviewed; mechanisms for exchange of information between the competent government agencies and NGOs were put in place; NGOs were trained in re-integration support and services to trafficked victims; Government officials were trained to promote the application of legal provisions against trafficking.

Armenian Government officials are familiarised with counter-trafficking related operations of Turkey, UAE and Ukraine through networking visits.

Further assistance to the Government included specialized expertise and practical skills to law enforcement agencies and Border Guard troops to more effectively detect, investigate and prosecute traffickers, in line with efforts to combat trafficking in persons. The capacity of consular staff to assess and recognize potential and actual victims of trafficking in the countries of destination and to provide them with swift, appropriate and professional assistance was enhanced and a Manual on “Trafficking: Current Issues” to provide consular officers with information on Armenia's fight against trafficking and to advise officers on how to handle and guide cases involving victims of trafficking. Networking visits to Ukraine and a study tour to UAE were organized for MoFA officials.



In parallel, with funding from the US Government, IOM worked to strengthen the ability of civil society to provide **protection and reintegration support to victims of trafficking**. As part of this initiative, IOM strengthened the capacity of the local NGO “Hope and Help,” to assist potential and actual victims. A toll-free Help Line (0-800-801) was set up and is operated by the NGO. Thirty-one victims received medical and social support, and legal counselling, five received social rehabilitation (vocational training) for further reintegration into society, and eight victims, citizens of other countries, who had been trafficked to Armenia, were returned to home country with IOM assistance.



*“The Burning Candles,” a play on the topic of trafficking, staged by the Hamazgayin Theatre in Yerevan. Photos by IOM.*

As art of its public awareness on the crime of human trafficking, a play was written and its theatre performance toured Armenia in 2004-2005. Public support and involvement in combating

human trafficking in Armenia was strengthened and anti-trafficking Resource Centers (RCs) were established in Giumri, Goris, Vanadzor and Stepanavan to provide local population with relevant information and advise on human trafficking and ways to combat it; a guidebook for NGO-s “How to organize counter-trafficking activities in communities” was published; 10 journalists were trained and a series of TV shows on human trafficking (Mardavors, Manhunt) were broadcast. The coalition, “Attorneys Against Trafficking” was founded and 12 attorneys were trained on providing legal support and representation to victims of trafficking. For the first time in Armenia, the court ruled in favour of labour trafficking victim's appeal for damages compensation in the amount of US\$ 6,000.

Currently IOM is working with UNDP and the RA Migration Agency (MA) to train the staff of the newly-established Labour Migrants Support Points (in Yerevan, Artashat and Giumri) to deal with potential and factual labour migrants and to raise the public's awareness for the LMSPs.



*Participants of the Training for LMSP-s. Photo by IOM.*

IOM is planning to implement a regional project aimed at developing and piloting educational materials that will increase the understanding of the dangers of human trafficking, the realities of irregular migration and to inform about available prevention support

mechanisms amongst secondary school students, their teachers, and parents in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

IOM has plans to implement more projects in the field of Counter-Trafficking in Armenia to support the Government, civil society's and IOs in their efforts to combat this crime.

## Return and Reintegration

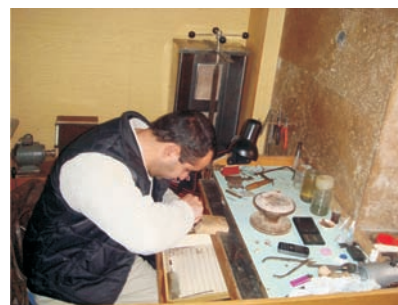
Many people migrate to other countries looking employment, a better life and hoping to integrate in the host society. Unfortunately, only few irregular migrants succeed in regularizing their status in order to legally live and work in the destination country.

**Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR)** is one of many migration management services IOM offers to migrants and governments. IOM's AVR programmes aim at providing orderly, humane and cost-effective return and reintegration of migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in host countries and wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin. AVR avoids the stigma of deportation and legal exclusion from future entry in the country of destination. AVR is a dignified, safe, and cost-effective return option in which voluntariness is an important prerequisite. Voluntariness means that the return is based on a decision freely taken by the individual. A voluntary decision embraces two elements: freedom of choice, which is defined by the absence of any physical, psychological or material pressure; and an informed decision, which requires having enough accurate and objective information available in order to make the right decision. IOM is **not** involved in forced returns.

Since its inception, IOM has been involved in the **voluntary repatriation** of refugees, mainly in support of the repatriation activities of the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). Such returns are achieved in accordance with protection concerns and procedures, which take into account the specific status of returnees. Transport, sometimes combined with reintegration

assistance or airfreight, is provided to refugees on their voluntary repatriation to their home country.

Since 1994 IOM Missions in West and Central European states have assisted more than 5,000 migrants who returned to Armenia. Typically, potential returnees are referred to IOM by authorities of the host country, such as the immigration service, local asylum centres, or NGOs. The assistance provided to returnees varies broadly and ranges from return assistance which includes pre-departure information and counselling and the organization of voluntary return, to schemes that include help with long-term reintegration and economic viability of the migrants once they are back in their countries of origin.. In recent years IOM Armenia assisted 118 cases of voluntary return. IOM Armenia provides financial assistance to returnees for medical treatment and other rehabilitation activities (**Rehabilitation Assistance**), as well as reintegration grants allocated by the governments of the countries from where the migrant returns to start up their businesses or pursue studies, as per individual needs (**Reintegration Assistance**).



*Small business started within the framework of IOM's AVR Component: a goldsmith's workshop in Armavir and a pig farm in Masis. Photos by IOM.*

## Migrant Integration

IOM facilitates successful integration of migrants and refugees in host societies. Migrant Integration focuses on the dissemination of information on rights and obligations of migrants and refugees in home and host countries, the provision of advisory services and information on services available to them, and the reinforcement of their skills which enhance their prospects for quick and successful integration.

Within the framework of the “Self-reliance and Integration through [Micro-enterprise Development](#)” project implemented by IOM in Armenia since 1997, IOM helps individuals (including asylum seekers, VoTs, refugees and displaced persons) to become self-sufficient through micro-credit schemes, including micro-enterprise training, credit and employment opportunities. The aim is to reduce their dependence on humanitarian, poverty reduction and effective reintegration. More than 2,100 persons have completed training in micro-business management and business planning. Over 8,300 loans, amounting to more than US\$ 4.9 million have been extended, impacting the lives of 3,791 direct beneficiaries, including loan recipients as well as persons employed. Over 2,700 businesses were supported, with some 25 per cent of the loans used to create production and service businesses and the balance for trade. A total of 480 persons in Yerevan and Giumri benefited from the “Food for Training and Micro-enterprise Development Assistance for Vulnerable Groups” programme supported by IOM, UNDP and WFP. Ninety per cent of loan recipients monitored reported a positive change in their quality of life resulting from increased income or assets. Close to 55 per cent of the beneficiaries were women. The funds for MED were provided by UNDP, UNHCR, and the United States and Japanese Governments.

Now the MED will be offering integration assistance to Iraqi refugees who fled to Armenia.



*Small businesses set up with MEDP loans by the beneficiaries of MEDP. A, stationery and gift stores and a hairdresser's in Giumri, a car wash in Giumri, and a wood-carving workshop in Giumri. Photos by IOM.*

## Facilitated Movements and Resettlement

Transporting persons in need of assistance is key to IOM's overall mission of meeting global migration challenges. IOM organizes the safe movement of persons for temporary and permanent resettlement or return to their countries of origin. IOM is also able to provide medical screening migration documentation assistance and cultural orientation prior to departure. IOM operates the [Migrant Management and Operational Services Application \(MIMOSA\) software](#), which strengthens IOM's capacity to track and manage operational activities and including statistical information.



Activities include: the movement of (a) refugees resettling in new countries; (b) returning qualified nationals; (c) scholarship holders; (d) war victims requiring medical evacuation.

Specific advantages of IOM services are:

- Professional services in assisting refugees and migrants to complete applications for migration.
- Considerably discounted airfares (IOM has negotiated concession fares with a wide variety of airline partners).
- Increased luggage allowance.
- Departure, transit and arrival assistance.

IOM assists with the [resettlement](#) of persons accepted under regular immigration programmes through the processing of relevant documentation, performing medical screening and arranging safe, reliable and economical transportation. Language training and cultural orientation are also offered at the request of some receiving countries to facilitate the integration of migrants into their new host societies.

At the request of Governments, and working in close cooperation with organizations such as the UNHCR and joint voluntary agencies, IOM facilitates the processing and proper documenting of refugees and migrants selected by various countries for resettlement.

Through its [United States Refugee Programme](#) funded by the US Government, IOM facilitates processing of applications for permission to resettle in the United States as refugees. Between in 2001-2007, the programme assisted persons selected by the US Embassy in Moscow to emigrate to the US. The applicants included mainly nationals of the former Soviet Union applying under the “Lautenberg” refugee programme (Jews, Evangelical Christians, Ukrainian Catholics, members of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, amongst others.) as well as UNHCR referrals (i.e. foreign nationals determined by the local UNHCR office to be refugees in need of third-country resettlement). Applicants falling under specific categories identified by the US Congress as potential

targets of persecution, and having close relatives (spouses, parents, children, siblings, grandparents, and grandchildren ) legal US residents were granted scheduling priority. Assistance included counselling, medical screening, transportation, medical escorts, and administration of the loan fund (refugees resettled in the US were granted a travel loan).

Since 2002 IOM has assisted 213 refugees to resettle in the US, seven to resettle in Canada, 27 were resettled in European Union Members States, and 223 cases of family reunification (450 beneficiaries) were assisted to travel to the US.

### [Pre-Consular Services \(Canada\)](#)

The Canadian Government has signed an agreement with IOM for pre-consular services for Armenian citizens and residents applying to the Canadian Embassy in Moscow for non-immigrant visas, under the Canadian Government programme for legal immigration for qualified skilled workers . The applicants can receive assistance with temporary resident visa, work permit and immigration packet preparation (including consultation, translations, filling in the applications, verification, and full check of the kit); delivery of Temporary Resident, Student and Worker visa applications and fees; counselling of immigration applicants and delivery of immigration applications and fees under skilled worker category; delivery of documents relating to Immigrant Visa applications and providing an acknowledgement of receipt by the Embassy to the applicant; delivery and return of passports, assistance with the making the appointment with the Embassy. The agreement does not cover traditional IOM medical and travel services for immigrants and refugees. The decisions on visas and permits are made by the Canadian Embassy. Use of IOM's pre-consular services is optional – residents of Armenia are free to apply in person themselves at the Canadian Embassy in Moscow or to use other authorized third parties to make the application on their behalf.

Since 2003, IOM has assisted a total of 871 cases/applications from Armenia.



## Emergency and Post-emergency Operations

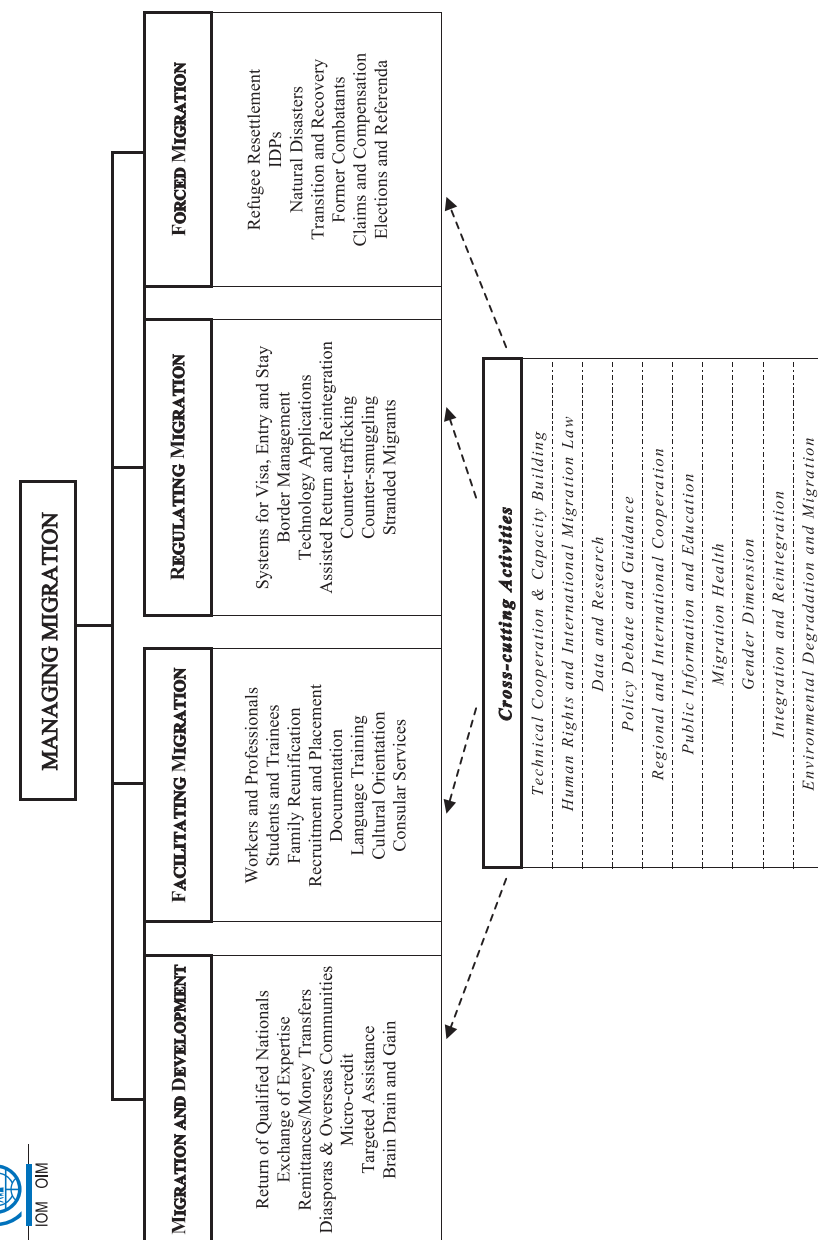
IOM provides transportation and emergency humanitarian assistance to persons requiring evacuation from emergency situations as well as post-emergency movement assistance. While evacuation assistance, including assistance to countries of temporary protection, may involve international movement, post-emergency movement assistance generally relates to domestic movements of internally displaced persons, demobilized soldiers and persons affected by natural disasters. Assistance is also provided for post-emergency reconstruction initiatives.

## Migration and Health

IOM's Migration Health Department responds to the health needs of migrants throughout all phases of the migration process, and to the public health needs of host and home communities, by strengthening health systems and migration policies and practices. The Department deals with control of infectious, emerging and re-emerging diseases, health activities in response to population movements caused by natural or man-made disasters, ecosystem change, chronic diseases, mental health and psycho-social health concerns, including culturally appropriate health services, the human rights of migrants and mobile populations, migration health management and many other issues that affect the health of migrants and the communities they live in or transit through. IOM in Armenia is expanding its portfolio to start migration health activities. The first planned activities include reducing the risk of HIV/AIDS and STIs among mobile populations and their families, which will include efforts to raise awareness amongst mobile population on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in destination countries, means of transmission, etc.



Migration Management Chart





IOM International Organization for Migration  
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations  
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

#### **IOM Mission in Armenia:**

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Tel: (374 10) 585692, 583786, Tel/Fax: (374 10) 543365  
E-mail: [iom@iom.am](mailto:iom@iom.am), [http://www.iom.int/armenia/about/iom\\_in\\_am.htm](http://www.iom.int/armenia/about/iom_in_am.htm)

#### **IOM MED Project Office in Yerevan:**

1 Proshyan str., Apt.9, Yerevan, Armenia, Tel: (374 10) 588957  
E-mail: [medp@netsys.am](mailto:medp@netsys.am), [www.iom.int/armenia/medp/med.htm](http://www.iom.int/armenia/medp/med.htm)

#### **IOM MED Project Office in Giumri:**

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#### **IOM Migration Resource Center:**

9A Marshall Baghramian Avenue 1<sup>st</sup> Lane, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, 0009 Yerevan, Armenia  
Tel.: (374 10) 544412, E-Mail: [mrc@iom.am](mailto:mrc@iom.am)

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#### **IOM Member States**

Afghanistan; Albania; Algeria; Angola; Argentina; Armenia; Australia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Bahamas; Bangladesh; Belarus; Belgium; Belize; Benin; Bolivia; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Brazil; Bulgaria; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Cambodia; Cameroon; Canada; Cape Verde; Chile; Colombia; Congo; Costa Rica; Côte d'Ivoire; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Denmark; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Egypt; El Salvador; Estonia; Finland; France; Gabon; Gambia; Georgia; Germany; Ghana; Greece; Guatemala; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Haiti; Honduras; Hungary; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Ireland; Israel; Italy; Jamaica; Japan; Jordan; Kazakhstan; Kenya; Kyrgyzstan; Latvia; Liberia; Libyan Arab Jamahiriya; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Madagascar; Mali; Malta; Mauritania; Mauritius; Mexico; Moldova; Mongolia; Montenegro; Morocco; Nepal; Netherlands; New Zealand; Nicaragua; Niger; Nigeria; Norway; Pakistan; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Republic of Korea; Romania; Rwanda; Senegal; Serbia; Sierra Leone; Slovakia; Slovenia; Somalia; South Africa; Spain; Sri Lanka; Sudan; Sweden; Switzerland; Tajikistan; Thailand; Togo; Tunisia; Turkey; Uganda; Ukraine; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United Republic of Tanzania; United States of America; Uruguay; Venezuela; Viet Nam; Yemen; Zambia; Zimbabwe

#### **IOM Observer States**

Bahrain; Bhutan; China; Cuba; Ethiopia; Guyana; Holy See; Indonesia; Mozambique; Namibia; Papua New Guinea; Russian Federation; San Marino; Sao Tome and Principe; The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Turkmenistan



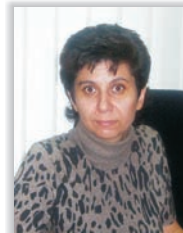
Ambassador William Lacy Swing, IOM Director General (USA)



Madame Ndioro Ndiaye, IOM Deputy Director General (Senegal)



Dr. Thomas Lothar Weiss, Regional Representative for International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Mission with Regional Function for the Baltic and Nordic States, and the European Neighbourhood countries (East) (Germany)



Mrs. Ilona Ter-Minasyan, Head of Office, IOM Mission in Armenia



The Staff of the IOM Mission in Armenia