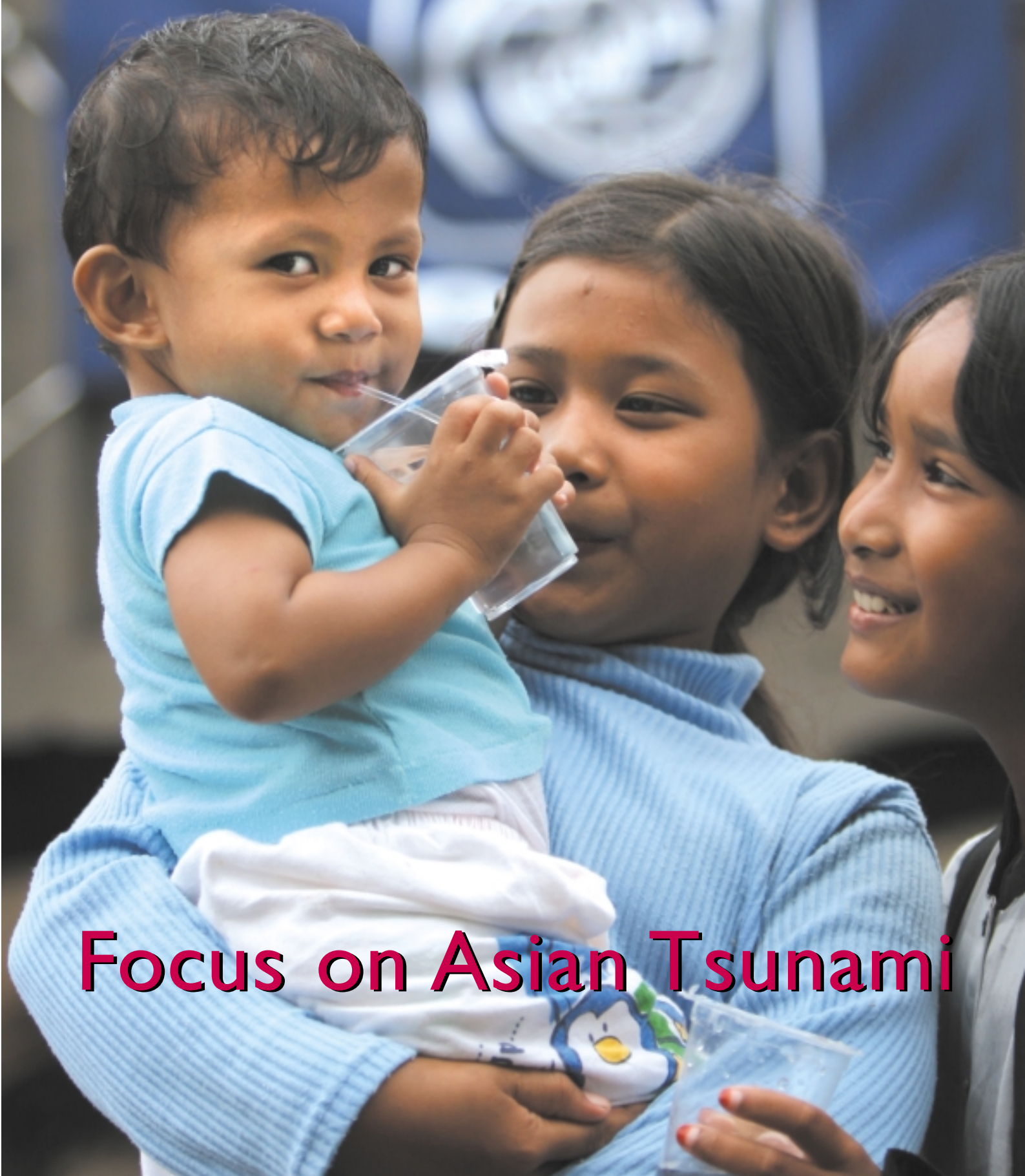


International Organization for Migration



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MIGRATION



Focus on Asian Tsunami

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A young boy drinks a cup of fresh water delivered by IOM to an IDP camp near Banda Aceh.

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

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Out-of-country voting in Canada, one of 14 countries where Iraqis cast their vote for a new and democratic Iraq.

IOM Responds to Crisis and to Request for Migration Services

In the first weeks of 2005, the news was dominated by the catastrophic effects of the tsunami in Asia and by the election in Iraq. IOM has been heavily involved in both of these.

Part of IOM's reputation has been built on our ability to respond quickly and effectively to a crisis or to a request for migration services. As the reports in this edition of *Migration* will demonstrate, we believe we have done this, both in the case of the tsunami and in the Iraq Out-of-Country Voting programme.

In two of the places most affected by the tsunami – Indonesia and Sri Lanka – IOM was already present and working before the disaster struck. We were able to swiftly switch our resources to assist the victims, with the confidence of central and local government structures and of the local people.

In the pages that follow, you will see what assistance IOM has provided in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. In the medium to long term, there is a need to continue work on restoring livelihoods and addressing the migratory effects of the disaster, which will be significant for years to come. Many who lost their livelihoods might look for work overseas. To these will be added many others working in sectors such as tourism where the economic impact of the tsunami will also be dramatic and affect an area far greater than that actually physically damaged by the tsunami. We will be working on these issues in the months and years to come.

The decision to enable Iraqis living abroad to take part in the elections at the end of January for Iraq's Transitional National Assembly left

IOM with 67 days to organize 74 registration centres in 36 cities in 14 countries. As a result, 265,148 expatriate Iraqis representing 93.6 per cent of registered voters took part in the out of country voting. While the numbers are significant, it was the enthusiasm and excitement of the individuals who took part, in many cases travelling substantial distances, which left a lasting impression. Nationals living abroad form an important constituency for many countries and programmes enabling them to take part in elections are an increasing part of IOM's work with migrants overseas.

Brunson McKinley
Director General

Foreword



Aceh Survivors Struggle to Rebuild Lives Shattered by Tsunami

When the tsunami struck Indonesia's northernmost province of Aceh on the morning of Sunday 26 December, it left almost a quarter of a million people dead or missing, presumed dead.

The precise numbers of dead, perhaps 10 per cent of Aceh's population, will never be known. Three or four huge waves, dwarfing comparable man-made cataclysms like Hiroshima or Dresden, obliterated a 200-kilometre strip of coastline to a depth of between 2 and 5 kilometres.

The dead bodies that weren't swept out to sea were left scattered, sometimes buried, amid the desolate mud, rubble and stagnant pools that had once been the pretty, bustling towns of Banda Aceh and the west coast.

A month later, teams of masked volunteers are still rooting among the stinking debris and ruined buildings to extract decaying corpses. Trucks loaded with black, blue and orange body bags still cruise the streets in the rain, dumping their loads in roadside mass graves.



Opposite: IOM doctor Yoko Ratnasari treats a patient in Fakina Hospital in Banda Aceh.

© Jonathan Perugia/IOM/OnAsia 2005

Above right: IOM's Kristin Dadey and a US Navy pilot help a wounded man off a helicopter.

© US Navy 2005

When IOM Dr Yoko Ratnasari arrived in Banda Aceh as part of an IOM/UNOCHA advance team two days after the disaster, she found that the deluge had stopped about 100 metres short of the IOM office.

Aftershocks registering above six on the Richter scale were still rattling the city and survivors had fled

inland, leaving the streets deserted. "Communication was really difficult, the telephone was not working, there was no electricity, no fuel and no food," she says.

But as one of the few international agencies present in Aceh before the tsunami, due to the long running conflict between the Indonesian govern-



Children play on boxes that have been delivered by IOM to a camp for internally displaced persons near Banda Aceh.

© Jonathan Perugar/IOM/OnAsia 2005

ment and Acehese separatists, the chance survival of the IOM office proved a boon for the first aid workers to arrive on the scene.

The office became a base for disaster relief teams from agencies including USAID, AusAid and ECHO, allowing them to support the Indonesian military and civilian disaster response as it swung into action.

On 30 December, four days after the disaster, the first IOM road convoy carrying fuel, water and generators left Medan, the provincial capital of neighbouring North Sumatra, for Banda Aceh. At the same time, the first Indonesian and international relief flights began to arrive at Banda Aceh's Sultan Iskandar Muda airbase.

Kristin Dadey, an IOM counter-trafficking programme officer from Jakarta, worked with the Indonesian military and the US navy to unload the planes and coordinate the first US navy helicopter drops of food and non-food items to the devastated west

coast, cut off by the tsunami. "There was no heavy machinery, so every plane had to be unloaded by hand. We had to break down these pallets of food, literally by hand. It was really labour intensive," she says.

Pierre King, a veteran IOM operations officer who arrived in Aceh on 3 January to take over the operation, says most of the work is still done by hand, but volumes have expanded exponentially. A raffish figure in IOM baseball cap, shorts, cartoon T-shirt, Cambodian krama scarf and plastic sandals, he directs his 40-strong team with a radio handset, bellowing above the deafening roar of the helicopters.

Mud, heat and swollen feet from walking 20 kilometres a day around the airbase forced him to jettison his boots within a week.

"By ten o'clock, the runway is pretty filled up. I would guess we get at least 30 to 40 aircraft (a day) coming down to offload food and non-food (relief) items," he says.

When King's team are not breaking up pallets delivered by transport aircraft and transferring their contents onto helicopters, they provide logistical support, mainly in the form of free trucking services to dozens of NGO and foreign military relief teams arriving in Banda Aceh.

"I have 15 trucks at the airport doing short hops to move their people and goods. But we also help them set up their base camps, laying gravel and giving them pallets to stop them sinking in the mud," he grins.

The airport trucks are part of a larger IOM fleet of over 300 trucks now linking Jakarta with Medan and Medan with Banda Aceh and the devastated west coast town of Meulaboh. During January, IOM brought over 5,500 metric tonnes of relief supplies into Aceh.

Part of the cargo was distributed by local authorities and NGOs, part of it went onto helicopters and ships for distribution on the west coast, and

part of it was distributed directly by IOM to the small camps dotting Banda Aceh and the neighbouring district of Aceh Besar.

IOM Jakarta programme assistant, Arista Idris, who heads a distribution team of volunteers from the Muhammadiyah Muslim Association, says that in the first days of the emergency, needs were easy to identify. "We would just go with our trucks and when we saw a small pocket of IDPs, we would stop and ask them how many households they had. Then we would decide on the spot how much we should give them in terms of noodles, rice, water and so on," she says.

But with the arrival in Aceh of UN specialized agencies and ever larger numbers of local and international NGOs in support of the relief effort, coordination with the international community is emerging as perhaps the greatest single challenge to planners at Bakornas, the Indonesian disaster management agency.



Above: Nurse Rose Marie Baguios injects a young girl as part of an IOM immunization programme against measles throughout Aceh province.

© Jonathan Perugia/IOM/OnAsia 2005

Below: IOM operations staff, US sailors and marines, break up C-130 pallets of relief supplies and load them onto IOM trucks for trans-shipment to helicopters.

© IOM 2005 (Photo: Christopher Lom)

IOM has closely coordinated its activities with Bakornas and its provincial counterpart, Satkorlak, since the beginning of the emergency, building a relationship by immediately responding to government requests to "supply and distribute humanitarian aid" and "facilitate all surface cargo transportation and distribution of humanitarian aid throughout Aceh".

As early as 14 January, Bakornas asked IOM for help with the construction of temporary shelters for families made homeless by the tsunami. IOM responded by agreeing in principle to construct some 11,000 pre-fabricated houses for survivors. Work on the first 1,000 of the "semi-permanent" structures has already started.

IOM has also agreed to build and equip five community health centres. It will also train staff for the centres, which will support satellite health posts in villages. Each centre will provide health care for between 10,000 and 30,000 people – replacing some of the 77 similar centres destroyed by the tsunami.

Christopher Lom,
IOM Banda Aceh



As part of the UN Flash Appeal, IOM is appealing for US\$73.8 million to provide emergency assistance to tsunami victims in the region. As of 14 February 2005, US\$ 37.2 million have been pledged by Australia, Canada, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States as well as private sector and individual donations.



Shelters Bring Hope to Victims of Tsunami

This is the true nature of home – it is the place of peace, the shelter, not only from injury, but from all terror, doubt and division.

John Ruskin



Above: Construction of temporary housing, designed by Indian architect, Premendra Raj Mehta.

© IOM 2005 (Photo: Virginia Moncrieff)

Opposite: The disaster has changed every aspect of daily life.

© IOM/Natalie Behring/OnAsia 2005

Vijayasara is thirty-one years old. He has a wife and a baby daughter and he says he counts his blessings that they both survived the tsunami. This Sri Lankan fisherman used to live in a house that hugged the east coast – right outside his front door was the Indian Ocean. Now he is inland, in the sprawling Panichchenkerni camp of tents and emergency shelters where he says stoically, “I am simply eating and staying here but this is not a good life for my family.”

Vijayasara is not alone. More than 500,000 Sri Lankans are still homeless after the 26 December 2004 tsunami.



Building IOM emergency shelters in Matara Community College.

In the immediate aftermath of the natural disaster, the first priority was getting roofs over heads – whether the roof was plastic, tarpaulin or corrugated iron.

The term “emergency shelter” would indicate instant construction. But even emergency housing takes time to build. Consider the issues that have to be addressed – finding the land and dealing with its owner, getting the materials, finding the labourers. Where do the homeless live while the shelters are being built?

After the Asian tsunami, families flocked to the security of buildings like temples and school halls. In areas of Sri Lanka like the Dickwella region in the south coast district of Matara, IOM modified school buildings to give families independent space. Such indoor partitions usually consist of wooden barriers with plastic sheeting for privacy.

The weeks after the tsunami saw temporary camps spring up all over the disaster-affected areas of Sri

Lanka. At IOM camps, site development started with land levelling, followed by the laying of concrete slabs as shelter bases. The shelters are constructed like a giant rectangle measuring 6 by 7.3 metres, divided into four independent “units” of 3.6 by 3 metres. Galvanized tin sheets, wooden poles to support the roof and a covering of sturdy tarpaulin sheeting, form the skeleton. Every dwelling is provided with a small outdoor covered area leading to its entrance. Each unit is designed to house a family for up to a year.

But rebuilding houses and entire villages takes time – usually much more than a year. Resources have to be procured, materials located, building of permanent houses undertaken. As a result of the tsunami, Sri Lankan villages and houses lying close to the shoreline will not be rebuilt – land must be found that can keep communities within the same area but away from the coast.

The psychological impact of being stranded in an emergency shelter, in a temporary village is an issue of which the IOM is fully aware. Re-establish-

ing the structured, orderly routine of every day life is vital to the recovery process.

For this reason, IOM advocates a new approach to re-housing displaced people – an intermediate step after the emergency shelter and before final settlement.

This scheme – christened “transitional housing” by IOM Director General, Brunson McKinley – was first used by IOM after the 2001 Gujarat earthquake. Indian architect, Mr. Premendra Raj Mehta, developed an idea for semi-permanent housing designed on traditional Asian building structures.

“This type of house traditionally existed for hundreds of years in coastal area of Sri Lanka and India,” Mr. Mehta says. “Locally available materials were used and local craftsmen built it on their own. But human nature is such that when new construction methods came in and new technology arrives, people tend to move towards that. But this traditional



IOM has built emergency shelters for more than 100 families on the playground of Matara Community College.

method is quick and easy, uses readily available resources and is environmentally friendly.”

A major component of the housing will be walls made from ecologically sound mud plaster mixed with *kajin* (a Sri Lankan woven palm tree sheet). Roofs will be made of Anton Shelta – red mud tar corrugated sheets that are excellent for tropical climates and popular in Sri Lanka. The only metal will be nails and the only concrete, the floor base. All other materials will be biodegradable.

Another advantage, says Mr. Mehta, is that when natural disasters occur, the buildings won't kill anyone.

“It's important that where we have a vulnerable situation in nature, we should build with nature,” he says. “It is okay to lose the building, but the building should not be responsible for losing a life. When earthquakes occur, it's the buildings falling down which cause loss of life and not the earthquakes.”

Emergency shelters usually rely on communal latrines, showers and cooking facilities. The transitional housing that IOM will build will have two rooms each measuring 3.3 by 2.7 metres with an outdoor cooking area measuring 1.8m by 1.2m. Separate bathroom and toilets measuring 1.5m by 1.2m each, will also be included.

The house will be built on a block at least 8.5m. by 5.4m.

The transitional houses provide what Mr. McKinley says is a secure environment that is vital for people trying to reclaim their lives. “It's an important psychological step. You cannot underestimate its value,” he says. “You clearly signal to people that this is not where they will live forever but it's a real house that will last

a few years and get people out of living in schools, halls, temples or temporary shelters.”

Indeed, the buildings can last longer than four years if a family wants to stay longer. According to Premendra Raj Mehta, with only a few building modifications and upgrades, the house will last for many years. If a family wants to re-locate, the house is fully transportable “on a truck”, says Brunson McKinley.

The secret to the transitional house is that it can be built fast, thus reducing the cost of the finished unit. “With locally available skills and materials, people can quickly learn to build their own house,” says Mr. McKinley. “The design is simple enough. It doesn't require a lot of technical skill or sophisticated tools.”

Typically those tools would be hammers, saws and drills. Many of the men displaced by the tsunami – fisherman, labourers – would already have the ability to construct their own house and teach others the skills.

For displaced people all over Sri Lanka, transitional housing could mean the beginning of the return to normal life. For the patient Vijayasara on the east coast, that normal life cannot return soon enough.

Virginia Moncrieff, IOM Colombo



In this emergency camp at Devinuwara district in Matara on the south coast of Sri Lanka, families were keen to move into IOM emergency shelters often before they were completed.

Mental Health: The Inside Story of the Tsunami



© IOM/Natalie Behring/OnAsia 2005

Children were among the ones most affected by the tsunami.

In the emergency shelter camps of Sri Lanka every visitor is greeted warmly. Emerging from identical tents lined up in identical rows under the harsh sun, men and women smile, and say, “Welcome! Welcome!” Hundreds of children race around yelling “Hello! Hello! What is your name?” – the only English many of them know.

It is a point of pride in Sri Lankan culture that visitors are welcomed with a smile and good cheer. “Being hospitable is the right thing to do, no matter what circumstances you are in,” says Sri Lankan psychologist,

Marsha Cassiere-Daniel. “It doesn’t matter if you have a broken heart, you do not show your feelings to a visitor. It would be considered rude.”

So, in the tents, camps and communities, people get on with their lives and show a proud face to outsiders. But what is really going on inside? Is there depression, stress, and trauma that can and should be treated?

The World Health Organization has guidelines for mental health that takes into account the psychological and social effects of an emergency. By

concentrating not only on the individual emotions and behaviour, but also on families, households, village and community support, culture and traditions, a more holistic approach can be applied to a population exposed to extreme stress.

Statistics indicate that only between 2 and 5 per cent of the population will develop severe mental health problems after major trauma.

Even so, tsunami losses are immense. Lives. Families. Houses. Possessions. Livelihoods. Skilled



© IOM/Natalie Behring/OnAsia 2005

An IOM emergency officer addresses the concerns of tsunami survivors.

labour. Community. Defining the problem is the simple part, but finding a way of discussing it and treating it is easier said than done.

According to Cassiere-Daniel, who works with the Psychosocial Support Programme of the International War Related Trauma and Humanitarian Intervention Trust (IWTHI) in the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, the diagnostic problem starts with language. "There are very few words here to describe feelings," she says. "Whole concepts have to be translated, not just words."

Sri Lanka's main languages – Tamil and Sinhalese – have only two words for emotions. You can't be glad or glum. Ecstatic or suicidal. Just "happy" or "sad".

Marsha Cassiere-Daniel says that that poses a problem for identifying who is genuinely suffering from a severe trauma reaction because translators have to interpret abstract concepts. But she also believes that the nature of communication in Sri Lanka keeps the risk of such reactions low.

"A person here doesn't really function individually. Family is important and they deal with all issues together.

Sorting things out alone is not possible. It's very normal to talk about quite personal issues with everyone in quite a lot of detail. A lot of things will seem just like gossip but it's an exchange of information. It's part of our culture," she says. "There is so much close contact here – you work together in the field, you go fishing and bathe together, you talk across the fence. There's a constant chatter, which is a coping mechanism."

When normal people experience a highly abnormal event, the best thing for most is to return to normal as quickly as possible, says Sri Lankan Isaac Jacob, a child protection officer with UNICEF in Colombo. It makes little sense to crash into communities offering counselling, advice and solutions, he says. Practical assistance is needed. A return to routine and normal life is the indicator that life will go on.

"Get into the community and get working with them," Jacob says. "If I said to someone here 'you are traumatized and you need help', he will slap me on my face. He needs a house. He needs to work. He needs information. He needs to know what's

happening in his life. Just concentrating on the trauma would be kind of ridiculous. If you don't give a person food to eat, it simply doesn't matter about trauma."

"You have to get activity going," agrees Marsha Cassiere-Daniel. "Make space for cooking, getting people involved – sharing child care time, working together on projects in the camp while being sensitive to those that don't want to be involved. Even if language is a problem, you can organize activities. It's a way of showing that life can move on from where you are – getting away from people just sitting down, which you see a lot in the camps."

Christina Moore, an American mental health consultant based in IOM's Bangkok office, says that there are some universal benchmarks that can be applied to trauma.

"For a long time we talked about a 'fight or flight' response," she says. "But now we recognize there are real gender differences in reactions. Women cope not by 'flight or fight', but what is described as 'tending and befriending'. They tend to look for ways to re-establish social links, to



© IOM 2005

Children show IOM field staff their drawings.

look after more vulnerable people, to help and communicate.”

While natural disasters claim the lives of more women and children than men, mainly because, Christina Moore says, women take time to gather children and the elderly, she is concerned that men are often left behind when it comes to psychosocial welfare.

“Hardly anyone talks about a systematic programme for helping men. We judge them harshly, even in situations of natural disaster or upheaval,” she claims. “We see men as violent, as hurting women and children, as dealing with stress by drinking or behaving badly, as gambling away whatever money they have. If we regard men with some respect as burdened decision makers for the family, as having strength on which the family relies, if we listen to their reasoning for their decisions and offer them support, then we are way ahead of the game. This prejudice against men in disasters really worries me and undermines what counsellors are trying to do. It creates greater separations in

families rather than help families function well together.”

Healing traumatized people is made harder by the lack of resources in the field. According to Marsha Cassiere-Daniel, there are few mental health workers in Sri Lanka and this has created an urgent need to train locally. The Psychosocial Support Programme has run six workshops teaching problem solving, listening skills and objectivity.

At UNICEF, Isaac Jacob has helped train 70 medical graduates from the southern University of Ruhuna in counselling techniques. “We will be giving them six months on-going training. They spend four days in the field and one day in workshops on listening and communication skills,” he says.

IOM will implement psychosocial activities aimed at strengthening the resilience of survivors by keeping them active and involved in their communities. Up to 20,000 people, living in camps in the south and east of the island will be helped.

Along with the World Health Organization and other agencies, IOM will also address increased mental health problems among individuals. Strengthening the capacity of local health services in dealing with this smaller percentage of the population is part of IOM’s long-term plan.

As for the youngest survivors of the tsunami, the long-term outlook is good. “Children are the most resilient,” claims Isaac Jacob. “In some of those affected communities where facilities are very few, they grow up strong and determined. They are definitely affected, but they are strong. They recover very quickly.”

The provision of cricket bats, soccer balls and tennis equipment by IOM among camps on the eastern coast, is also helping towards that recovery. So much so, that a group of under-18s in a camp in Ampara district had no qualms about roundly beating a much older IOM staff team in a game of the national favourite – cricket.

Students Raise Funds for Victims of Tsunami



© H.W. Smith School 2005

Students from H.W. Smith School in Syracuse collecting bottles and cans to help tsunami victims.

That penny on the street that everyone takes for granted will mean a lot to people in need. Everything has meaning," Trudy Baylis, a teacher at H.W. Smith School in Syracuse, New York, encourages her students.

But it was the students who decided to start the drive to collect bottles, cans and what they call "Tsunami Cents" to help IOM help the victims of last December's tsunami.

So far they have collected 11,000 bottles and cans, and have figured that they can fit 1,000 in their teacher's car to transport to the recycling centre. For each bottle and/or can they receive 5 US cents.

Fifth grader Arianna Sposato says, "As soon as we heard about the tsunami, we wanted to help."

And Cameron Isaac adds: "Everyone wanted to help because, hey, that could have been us. So we wanted to help."

The students of H.W. Smith School are collecting bottles and cans, along with "Tsunami Coins" to help raise money for IOM tsunami relief efforts.

When asked what message they would like to send to those kids in tsunami-affected countries, Cameron says: "Stay strong, there are kids who want to help you."

School principal, Sharon Birnkrant, says: "We held an assembly and the kids put up posters. The students called the issues facing children a 'scandal'. We're so excited to be able to make a donation of over US\$ 1,000, although the money raising isn't finished."

Arianna says, now that they know about human trafficking, especially of children, they want to plan for future fund-raising drives. "We're going to keep it up," she says. And Cameron chimes in: "We gotta keep going!"

The H.W. Smith School hosts more than 750 students of more than 40 origins including Indonesian, Nepalese, Indian, Kosovar, Bosnian, Sudanese, Somali, Afghan, and Ivorian to name a few.

In Kingston, Jamaica, students of St. Hugh's Preparatory School also carried out a fund-raising drive to help IOM relief efforts for victims of the tsunami.

The group, led by 4th grader Maria Clarke, and encouraged by parents and teachers, wrote an appeal to families asking for assistance for those affected by the tsunami.

To inform families and students about IOM relief efforts, Maria and her classmates placed a poster on the notice board, provided information on IOM and its relief efforts, and on how their donations would be used.

The students of St. Hugh's decided to become involved in the relief efforts after participating in the annual Earthquake Awareness Week. This year, the teachers put special emphasis on the recent tsunami and the devastation. The disaster hit very close to home for students and teachers as the kindergarten teacher, Annette Gooneratne, a Sri Lankan native, returned home with her family before the tsunami. The school staff has had no news of her whereabouts.

These students are setting an example for others in the community and their teachers are proud. IOM is pleased to acknowledge their effort and support.



© IOM 2005

Students from St. Hugh's Preparatory School in Jamaica.

The Impact on International Migration in the Wake of the Tsunami

How will the tsunami disaster in Asia affect international migration in the years to come? While it is still too early to answer this question, signs that the tsunami is affecting international migration trends and, as a result, the migration policies of a number of countries can already be seen. While at present major attention is, quite rightly, focused on the relief effort and the disaster's impact on internal migration, policymakers are faced with the need to think about some of the wider and longer-term implications for international migration. This article, therefore, shall briefly explore how international migration is likely to be affected by the disaster.

Diasporas

The first point to make is that not all the effects are likely to be negative. Indeed, the tsunami disaster has highlighted the ways in which migrants around the world can be a resource during times of emergency. Following the earthquake, Asian migrants around the world were quick to rise to the challenge posed by the devastation and organized different kinds of assistance and relief actions in aid of their home countries. For example, the "Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America" made funds available in support of the victims in India. Other diaspora communities, such as the Thai Welfare Association in Australia, are offering counselling services for those who lost family

members.¹ In South Africa, the "Tamil Federation" launched a special fund in aid of the millions left homeless by the tsunami onslaught.

The contribution by diasporas in support of the relief work and reconstruction in the devastated areas is potentially huge. In Canada and Australia, about one-third of immigrants are from Asia, and in the USA they represent about a quarter of the immigrant population. The rapid mobilization of diaspora groups around the world in the wake of the disaster is an indication of the contribution migrants can make in emergency situations. Beyond that, it is a powerful reminder of the vast economic resources that diasporas can muster and – if given appropriate opportunities and incentives – apply to sustainable development purposes in their countries of origin.

Migrant workers – the nameless and forgotten victims

Many of the victims of the tsunami were migrants. But, in terms of rescue and relief efforts, they fell far behind foreign tourists and the nationals of the respective countries hit by the disaster. News reports from Thailand suggest that thousands of labourers from Myanmar had been living in the now totally destroyed resort area of Phang Nga, where they had been working mainly on construction sites and fish-

ing boats. According to the Law Society of Thailand, more than 100,000 Myanmar migrants work in southern Thailand, but only around 7,000 workers are actually registered.²

There has been little information or publicity concerning these Myanmar migrant workers and they have been almost totally forgotten.³ These migrants were especially vulnerable as they lived in flimsy, makeshift shelters in areas that were completely destroyed by the tsunami. As Thailand and Myanmar have no agreements regulating the recruitment of labour migrants, migrants are vulnerable to exploitation and have to rely on private "brokers" to find jobs. They enter the lowest levels of the Thai labour market.

There have been reports that some of these migrants may have been deported. Others have requested assistance to return home. For example, immediately after the tsunami, 600 surviving workers from Myanmar contacted immigration officials in order to return home. These workers are also likely to need reintegration assistance on their return to Myanmar. However, most assistance is targeted at the tsunami-affected countries.

For those who remain in Thailand, accessing long-term help is proving to be difficult. The migrants fear arrest, discrimination or deportation.

1. <http://smh.com.au/articles/2004/12/29/1103996615213.html?oneclick=true>

2. The Star online. Thousands of Myanmar migrants are the forgotten Tsunami victims. 03 January 2005.

3. Ibid.

Return of irregular migrants

There are also signs that the tsunami disaster is having an impact on irregular migration and on countries' return policies. For example, Malaysia recently postponed the planned mass deportation of irregular migrants to the affected countries. Indonesians make up the bulk of the estimated 1 million migrants working illegally in Malaysia, many of them from Aceh Province that bore the brunt of the tsunami. Nationals from India, the Philippines and Bangladesh also work illegally in Malaysia, drawn by jobs in the construction, plantation and service industries. Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi announced that the amnesty that had been due to expire on 31 December 2004 had been extended until the end of February 2005.⁴ The Malaysian Home Secretary, Azmi Khalid, recently told the BBC that at this stage they were simply checking documents and advising illegal workers to leave.

Other states have suspended the return of rejected asylum seekers to countries affected by the tsunami. UNHCR recommended on 12 January 2005, that all countries suspend, initially for a period of three months, all involuntary returns to affected areas in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India and Somalia.⁵ The Federal Office for Migration in Switzerland informed that the deportation of rejected asylum seekers from Sri Lanka, India and Somalia is to be postponed until further notice.⁶ The Canadian government also delayed the deportation of approximately 4,000 individuals from Sri Lanka, the Maldives, the Seychelles, India, Indonesia and Thailand. The US government temporarily stopped the deportation of people from Sri Lanka and the Maldives, allowing them to stay in the

United States until 7 April 2005. Non-criminal immigrants from other affected countries will be allowed to file a petition in order to remain in the United States. The US Citizenship and Immigration Department will also verify options to allow students from the affected countries to work and stay in the United States under a temporary protected status, even if they are there illegally.⁷ It will be interesting to see whether this softer approach to return will have a longer-term impact on return policies to the Asian region, with more consideration being given to the economic conditions awaiting returnees.

Resettlement of victims

A number of traditional immigration countries have adjusted their immigration and visa policies to make it easier for victims of the tsunami to be accepted as immigrants. For example, the government of Canada announced that it would expedite immigration paperwork from victims who have relatives in Canada if their applications were already in the system. Up to now, they have fast-tracked 1,000 applications for landed-immigrant status from tsunami victims.⁸ In addition, the Immigration Department will also fast track the procedure for Canadian citizens and permanent residents who plan to sponsor family members from the affected areas.⁹ Canadian immigration officials also met 12 groups whose native lands were destroyed by the tsunami in order to hear their concerns. In Toronto, a panel of immigration officers met members of the Sri Lankan, Indian, Indonesian and Somali communities to determine the role of these communities in helping to resettle people. Australia is also putting high priority on processing

temporary visas for victims and fast-tracking existing applications.¹⁰ Nevertheless, shortly after the catastrophe and despite these offers of resettlement, the Indonesian Ambassador to Australia rejected Australia's offer to take in refugees from tsunami hit areas such as Aceh. Ambassador Imron Cotan stated that he did not believe that taking them to Australia would help, but would cause them even more distress owing to the foreign environment, language and lifestyle.¹¹

These examples show the willingness of countries to adjust their immigration policies in favour of persons with family members overseas, or orphans and last surviving members. A facilitated immigration procedure or temporary visa is only the first step, victims of the tsunami disaster resettled in other countries will need to be provided with special pre-departure assistance and post-arrival assistance to help them rebuild their lives and settle in a new country.

Trafficking of children

The tsunami left thousands of children orphaned or separated from their families. UNICEF has warned that these child survivors will face major risks from malnutrition, diseases and human traffickers.¹² John Budd, spokesman for UNICEF in Indonesia, confirmed the case of a child being trafficked from Aceh to the nearby city of Medan. There were also a number of unconfirmed reports of children being trafficked to Malaysia and Jakarta. In addition, UNICEF became aware of an SMS message that was sent widely around Asia advertising the sale of 300 Aceh orphans.¹³ In response, UNICEF has set up registration schemes around Aceh for all orphans or children separated from

4. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/426281.stm>

5. <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/rsddocview.pdf?CATEGORY=RSDLEGAL&id=41e653294>

6. www.bfm.admin.ch, 21.1.05

7. http://www.asianewsnet.net/level3_template1.php?l3sec=4&news_id=34334

8. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/ArticleNews/TPStory/LAC/20050108/TSSGRO08/TPNational/>

9. www.cbc.ca/storyview/AOL/canada/national/2004/12/30/sgro-tsunami041230.html

10. www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200501/s1276007.htm

11. *Ibid.*

12. www.hindustannews.com/news/181_1183568,001301540000.htm

13. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4145591.stm>

their families. The Indonesian and the Sri Lankan governments have also issued bans on the adoption of children, and the travel of children under 16 years unless accompanied by their parents.¹⁴

It is essential to develop counter-trafficking measures specific to the prevailing situation, including information campaigns to raise awareness of the problem among survivors and aid workers, as well as the registration of children. IOM counter-trafficking specialists have actively assessed the situation on the ground as part of the organization's overall emergency operations. To date, confirmed cases of actual trafficking remain minimal, but there is a need for the authorities to remain vigilant because the tsunami-affected populations may be particularly vulnerable to trafficking. IOM's ongoing trafficking prevention and protection activities in the Asia region are already increasing their focus on those areas directly affected by the tsunami.

Internal displacement and international migration

Finally, tens of thousands of people have been forced to move from their local areas as a result of the tsunami disaster. They have lost their homes and their livelihoods. It is likely that some of the uprooted people will decide to seek opportunities elsewhere if adequate and timely measures cannot be taken to reconstruct their communities. The relationship between internal migration and international migration is not always straightforward, but internal displacement may be followed by international migration. Given that legal channels for migration remain limited, there is a risk that the tsunami disaster may contribute to an increase in irregular migration in Asia and beyond. This means that those responsible for designing development policies in the tsunami-affected areas will need to be sensitive to the possible migratory effects of their programmes in the coming years.

Frank Laczko, IOM Geneva

14. www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_asiapacific/view/125835/1/html, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4152257.stm



Scenes of devastation on the streets of Banda Aceh in the aftermath of the tsunami.

Organizing Out-of-Country Voting for Iraq: A Democratic Election on a Truly Global Scale

As part of the process leading to a new future for Iraq, democratic elections were held in January 2005. IOM, acting under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI), made it possible for a large number of Iraqis living outside of Iraq to register and vote. Out-of-Country Voting (OCV) was organized in 14 countries where up to 1.2 million Iraqis were estimated to be potentially eligible to vote. In the end, after nine days of registration and three of voting, 265,148 Iraqis had cast their vote for a new and democratic Iraq.

The opportunity to participate in deciding Iraq's future was new to Iraqis. During the period of registration and voting, scenes of joy and celebration were commonplace at many OCV locations as expatriate voters expressed their excitement with their first-ever electoral experience. While final debriefings and evaluation of the programme by various stakeholders still lie ahead, IOM is pleased to have been able to help empower Iraqis across the globe to participate in this democratic election for their country and to have helped encourage hopes for a better Iraq.

In late October 2004, IOM's international election experts travelled to Baghdad at the request of the United Nations to brief the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq on the feasibility of enfranchising Iraqis residing outside of the country to vote in the Transitional National Assembly election.

Three months later, over a quarter of a million Iraqis cast their ballots at 36 locations in 14 countries around the world – from Sydney to London, from Los Angeles to Tehran.

Out-of-Country Voting programmes have been implemented in other post-conflict environments where large parts of a country's population have fled as a result of the domestic humanitarian or political situation. IOM has been active in this area for nearly a decade, running OCV programmes for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, East Timor and, most recently, Afghanistan.

After being presented with the options and risks involved in such an operation, the IECI decided that due to the nature of the election and the fact that much of the diaspora had fled the Ba'ath regime, it was important they should take part in the country's first democratic election on 30 January 2005. Due to the widespread nature of the Iraqi diaspora, the undertaking would be the most expansive out-of-country voting effort ever attempted.

On 11 November 2004, the IECI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IOM, authorizing the organization to conduct an OCV Programme.

Programme phase-In: negotiations and demographics

Within the first weeks of receiving the mandate, the OCV programme

quickly established its headquarters in Amman, Jordan, and deployed teams to open offices and start negotiations with governments in the 14 countries identified by the IECI for operations – Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Iran, Jordan, Netherlands, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, UAE, UK and USA.

The primary task in becoming operational was to obtain the host governments' agreement on the status of the programme. To run an OCV operation, support was required from national and local authorities for security, customs clearance for election material, as well as input to ascertain demographic information. The programme also had to receive guarantees that sensitive voter information would be protected.

The first formal agreement was finalized on 9 December 2004, when Denmark signed a MoU with the OCV programme addressing such issues. Discussions moved at different paces in different locations, with some countries expressing concerns over issues such as security, insurance and the legal status of those who would register to vote. Despite some obstacles which made it temporarily unclear whether the programme would be feasible in all countries, by 2 January 2005, all countries had agreed to host the programme.

Demographic data also had to be consolidated before operations could be fully established. There had to be an accurate estimate of the Iraqi

population in each country in order to place offices in the correct areas and ensure they were the correct size. Such data was not easily available, and in some places it was nearly non-existent. With the support of host governments, and through meetings with representatives from various Iraqi civil society organizations, the OCV programme was able to put together a population estimate for the Iraqi diaspora in the 14 countries. It estimated that there were over 2 million Iraqis in the 14 countries, and up to 1.2 million were likely to be eligible to vote.

Registration

In order to participate in the Transitional National Assembly election, Iraqis first had to register and prove their eligibility. To be considered eligible, voters had to prove their identity, Iraqi nationality and have been born on or before 31 December 1986.

On 17 January 2005, 67 days after signing the MoU with the IECI, 74 centres in 36 cities opened their doors to register Iraqis with a capacity for 1.2 million registrants. After extending the registration period for two additional days, 280,303 Iraqis had been registered.

In only 67 days, OCV had recruited, trained and deployed 7,000 staff members, of whom almost 90 per cent were Iraqi.

As is always expected in an embryonic process, adjustments had to take place as issues arose during the implementation. All of these were resolved in time and hence had no serious impact on the smooth implementation of the registration. Issues resolved included cases of lack of acceptable documentation, special needs access and attempts at proxy registration.

"My wife and I came from Brisbane – we travelled about a thousand kilometres just to register. We are going back today but we will be in Sydney again for the elections. We are ready to come back for a third time, if necessary! This is the first time we have the chance to vote and I want to vote for my country's future!" exclaimed Ahmed Saber, an expatriate Iraqi living in Australia.

"Today, I registered to vote in this historic event. Through the registration process I felt chills throughout my body. It was an experience I will not forget. No matter if we agreed or disagreed in our opinion in the past couple of years, what counts now is our country's future and the prosperity of the Iraq people," said George, an Iraqi expatriate residing in Canada.

Polling

At 07:00 local time on 28 January in Sydney Australia, the first ballot was cast in Iraq's first election since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. When the polls closed three days later with the last polling station in Los Angeles completing the process, a total of 265,148 Iraqis, or 93.6 per cent of the total registered voters, had voted through the OCV programme. Polling was organized in more locations than had originally been planned. It took place in 75 locations, in 36 cities across 14 countries.

"I haven't gone to Iraq in the last 20 years. Seeing this election material, hearing about the election, and knowing that we have the right to be part of it – it is like being in Iraq! It gave me my homeland back," commented an Iraqi woman in Turkey.

"I left Najaf 25 years ago, leaving two murdered sons. I've never gone back. It's too hard for me. Three of my sons are in London, two in Paris. They are also registering – all our scattered family is. These elections are the chance to get my life back. I'll return home. I want to die in my country," said Agi Assum, a 79-year-old Iraqi living in Iran.

There was a festive air during the three days of polling with tears of joy and dancing a common sight in and around the polling centres. Many Iraqis arrived in traditional dress, accompanied by family members, and were very emotional about the process.

"I've been in Britain for 26 years [and] have never been back to Iraq. This election for the National Assembly is like a dream coming true after all these years. I'll be voting for a new Iraqi generation, for a peaceful and democratic society. It's going to be a great festive celebration, like Eid

or Christmas!" said Kasim from Wales, UK.

The polling process was conducted with no operational delays, procedural flaws or security incidents. Establishing this operation gave over a quarter million Iraqis abroad the opportunity to participate in Iraq's first democratic steps.

Post-election activities

After the final day of voting, all ballots were collected into local count centres established in each of the cities where polling had been carried out. The ballots were reconciled, counted and compiled into the provisional results. On 3 February, two days ahead of the due day, OCV presented provisional results to the IECI for final audit and certification.

Voter education campaign

Through extensive public awareness campaigns, Iraq OCV managed to inform Iraqis worldwide about their right to participate. The information and education campaigns included radio and TV broadcasts, newspaper adverts, billboards, meetings with local Iraqi community groups, as well as poster and pamphlet distribution.

To answer questions from the Iraqi diaspora about the registration and voting processes, an innovative Voter Information Centre was established. This information tool provided Iraqis around the world with a direct link to the Iraq OCV programme, throughout the entire registration and polling period. Contact could be made by phone, SMS text message, or email. An Internet site was also set up (www.iraqocv.org) to provide voter information and details for potential voters, the press and other interested individuals.

Iraq OCV established strong contacts with the Iraqi community in all 14 OCV host countries. National

An Iraqi woman living in Turkey reads election documents as she holds her baby before casting her ballot at an election centre in Istanbul, 28 January 2005. A total of 265,148 Iraqi exiles in 14 countries voted in the first election since the fall of Saddam Hussein in April 2003.



expatriate leaders and other community representatives were consulted on matters concerning the conduct of the Iraq OCV programme to ensure as broad a participation in the programme as possible.

Observers and media

A high level of interest and active presence of both political entity agents and observer groups were noticed in most OCV locations. In total, 59 international observer groups (including 51 diplomatic missions), and 120 domestic observer organizations were registered and accredited to observe the process throughout all 14 countries.

The IECI/UN monitoring teams, each consisting of one IECI Monitor and one UN International Election Expert, were present at all OCV locations and monitored and assessed the registration and polling process throughout its duration.

More than 2,800 individuals representing over 1,200 media agencies registered to observe the process. OCV implemented an intensive media campaign throughout the polling process, informing voters and media representatives on polling procedures. All Country Offices

proactively engaged local and international media to inform them of the progress made through the polling process.

Voter participation

The extent to which diasporas become engaged and participate in an election is affected by a complex set of issues ranging from the sense of belonging to one's own country, the level of political and civic awareness within the diaspora, and issues of data protection. In the current context, security concerns had a chilling effect on many potential voters. These complexities and other obvious limitations, such as geographical locations of registration and polling sites, although designed to suit the majority of expatriate Iraqis, impacted on the ability of all Iraqi expatriates to participate in the OCV.

Based upon an estimate of 1.2 million eligible Iraqi voters, the turnout of over a quarter of a million voters represented a 22 per cent turnout of the potential eligible voters. Against a benchmark of the 10 per cent participation which is common in expatriate voting programmes, the 22 per cent turnout obtained during the OCV programme rates very favourably.

Final product

With a 93.6 per cent turnout rate, virtually no security incidents and only minor operational issues, polling for the OCV programme in Iraq's Transitional National Assembly election successfully complemented the in-country election process.

The level of participation demonstrated a significant interest in the election process amongst the Iraqi expatriate community and is of great political importance. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis previously isolated from their homeland, persecuted and unwilling to return, had the opportunity to have a say in their country's future. This is a hope and a dream shared by the many that voted. Stories are common of Iraqis, young and old, travelling great distances to register. Buses of Iraqis travelling from Hungary to Germany and from Lebanon to Syria demonstrated that this process has been significant for many. Numerous thankful messages and letters from Iraqis around the globe, received by OCV offices throughout the election period, attest to this. IOM is pleased to have had the opportunity to be part of this historic process.

Sarah Tosh and Drew Hyslop,
IOM Amman



Iraqis in Jordan proudly participate in the out-of-country voting process.



"I left Iraq in 1995 and lived in Syria, Jordan, Germany and finally settled in the UK. I've never voted in my life so I can't begin to describe how happy I was when I heard that Iraqis in exile are allowed to vote. For the first time in my life, I can vote for people who I feel would represent me, people who have the ability to rebuild a democratic Iraq." – Mohammed Al-Khiat, Portsmouth



"I've been in Britain for 26 years [and] have never been back to Iraq. This election for the National Assembly is like a dream coming true after all these years. I'll be voting for a new Iraqi generation, for a peaceful and democratic society. It's going to be a great festive celebration, like Eid or Christmas!" – Kasim Murthada, Iraqi community in Wales

"I am very, very happy. There has been so much sadness in my country. It is rare that we as Iraqis have something to be proud about, something to make us smile about our country. I hope this is a new beginning." – Maaksoud Muayed, Syria

"When I look at the ink on my finger – this is a mark of freedom... I didn't think I would live long enough to see this moment." – Kassim Abood, Australia



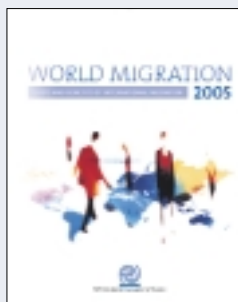
"I have lived in the UK for ten years. Voting in the election is the small participation I can make to my country since I am so far away. I called my uncle in Iraq and he is chairing a local election committee in his local area in west Baghdad. They are trying to encourage people to vote and provide some protection locally. That makes me very proud of our families who are struggling from day to day and I am more determined for this election to go ahead and succeed." – Ansam Al-Soltan, Portsmouth

"I got married in Iran, my three sons were born here, but I still feel I'm an Iraqi. I want to vote for my country, it's my duty... I want to see my new Iraq, and now I want to be part of these elections. Then I'll return home." – Ali, Iran

"We should not be thinking about successful elections at this stage. We should just go through the process. In Saddam's time we just ticked a yes box. If you didn't, your life was in danger, so let's make the most of this one." – Saadia Ali Saleh, London

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