



IOM • OIM

MIGRATION IN THE AMERICAS

International Organization for Migration

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IOM is committed to the principle that orderly migration benefits migrants and society. IOM is an intergovernmental organization composed of 112 Member States and 23 Observer States.

Assistance for Stranded, Injured and Vulnerable Migrants

COSTA RICA – An IOM-administered fund is helping an increasing number of irregular migrants from Central America traveling north through Mexico.

With new requests coming in daily, in the past four months IOM has assisted more than 60 vulnerable migrants, the majority from Honduras and El Salvador, who had been assaulted, were injured or had become stranded on their way to the United States while crossing Mexican territory.

The Fund, created by the countries that form the Regional Conference on Migration (Canada, the United States, Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic), and similar funds established by IOM with the Governments of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, have allowed IOM to provide urgently needed assistance to unaccompanied minors, pregnant women, the injured or handicapped and the elderly.

Statistics compiled by the National Migration Institute of Mexico (INM), confirm that in the first six months of 2005, more than 120,000 irregular migrants from Central America were detained and



At Managua's international airport, family and friends greet a returning migrant who was injured during his journey through Mexico.

IOM Nicaragua 2005 Photo: Lissette Marañón

expelled from Mexico. For the year 2002 the number of irregular migrant detained and expelled reached 130,000, these numbers confirm the marked increase in the number persons making the journey north through Mexico, many times losing their lives.

In their effort to cross Mexico, a vast number of irregular migrants become victims of extortion, assaults and all forms of abuse; including the rape and sexual extortion of female migrants. The greatest risks to the migrants are the gangs or *maras*, groups of young men, many deported from the United States,

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who use the same migration routes to carry out criminal activities including assault, rape and murder. The gang members or *mareros* often assault trains where the migrants are hiding stealing their money and other possessions. If the migrants refuse to give in to their demands, they are stabbed, beaten, thrown off of the trains and even murdered.

But not all fall victim to the violence of the maras, many simply ignore the risks of irregular migration and attempt to jump on to moving trains to cross the border, and then jump off before the train comes to a halt to avoid detection at the border. Many have lost legs and arms in the process; some have been mangled to death.

The IOM-administered Fund has also assisted 11 unaccompanied minors to return home. Some are running away from desperate family situations, others are looking for relatives who have made the journey north. IOM has also assisted women victims of psychological or physical traumas, in some cases the result of rape by criminals who take advantage of their vulnerable situation during the migratory process.

In September 2004 the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) signed a protocol with IOM to create the Fund, as part of a pilot project so that vulnerable migrants from RCM countries could be helped to return home in a dignified, safe and orderly way.

Jorge Peraza
IOM San José

NEW IOM VIDEO NEWS RELEASE

COSTA RICA - A new IOM Video News Release (VNR) is alerting hundreds of thousands of potential migrants from Central America, Mexico and the Dominican Republic of the risks of irregular migration and smuggling.

The IOM Regional Office in San José recently launched the VNR as part of a regional information campaign aimed at providing vital information to the men and women who risk their lives every day while crossing international borders. In search of a better life for themselves and their families, many migrants fall victim to unscrupulous smugglers who have no regard for human life.

The VNR tells the story of a female migrant whose leg was amputated following a failed attempt to board a train - the most dangerous and commonly used way to cross international borders in Central America. The VNR is airing on international TV networks such as CNN and Telemundo, and on national television in all concerned countries. This project is funded by the US Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

Agueda Marin
IOM San José



One of the ways migrants attempt to cross borders.

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IOM and the Iraqi Ministry of Labor

UNITED STATES - The Iraqi Minister of Labor, Dr. Idris Hadi Salih, recently visited the IOM Regional Office in Washington. During his meeting with IOM Regional Representative Frances Sullivan, Dr. Salih explained his Ministry's work and the support they provide to youth, war widows and the disabled.

In 2003 IOM partnered with the Ministry of Labor to implement a workforce development program that built institutional capacity and strengthened outreach to provincial employment centers, funded by the United States Department of Labor. The Minister stressed the need to partner with IOM and other international organizations to increase Iraq's technical capacity and train its workforce.



IOM Regional Representative Frances Sullivan (left) and Iraqi Minister of Labor Dr. Idris Hadi Salih

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Trata de mujeres para fines sexuales comerciales

PERU - La OIM apoya al Gobierno del Perú en la elaboración del Plan Nacional de Acción contra la Trata de Personas

La OIM colabora con el Gobierno peruano en la elaboración de un Plan Nacional de Acción para la Trata de Personas que tiene como fin presentar una política coherente e integral en la lucha contra este delito. La OIM atiende así a una solicitud de apoyo técnico formulado por los responsables del Grupo de Trabajo Multisectorial de Trata que, con representantes de ocho Ministerios y dos ONG, viene abordando esta problemática desde el pasado año.

El Plan de Acción, que será presentado a finales de año, está siendo diseñado incluyendo otros Planes relativos como son el Plan Nacional de Acción por la Infancia y la Adolescencia 2002-2010 o el Plan de Acción para la Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil, entre otros. Se están realizando numerosas coordinaciones con el fin de establecer lineamientos inclusivos que cuenten con el consenso de los sectores involucrados, teniendo en cuenta la importancia de las regiones en el país y la necesidad de articular modelos de intervención descentralizados.

La voluntad gubernamental de llevar a cabo un Plan Nacional de Acción refleja el creciente compromiso de las Autoridades del Perú en un tema que, según apunta el diagnóstico publicado por la OIM, es cada vez más visible y preocupante.

En marzo OIM presentó el primer diagnóstico sobre el tema

El diagnóstico

El informe Trata de mujeres para la explotación sexual en el Perú, llevado a cabo con la participación de una ONG local, se presentó el pasa-

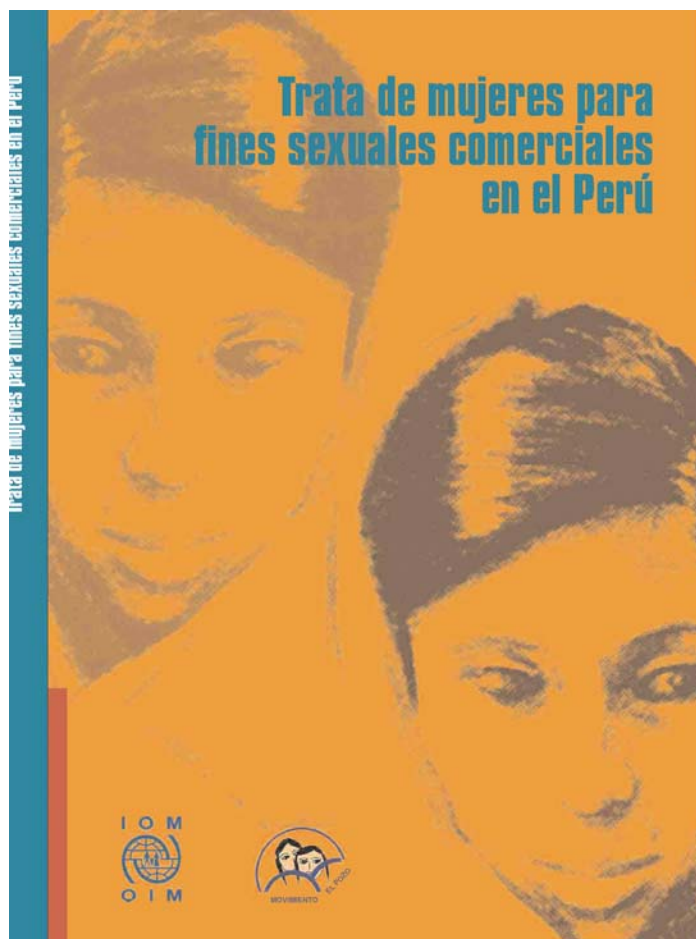
do marzo y es utilizado regularmente por los sectores que trabajan el tema como guía y referencia sobre el asunto.

El documento constata la existencia de la trata de mujeres en el país y establece que la mayor parte de los casos son internos, habiéndose, no obstante, identificado situaciones de peruanas llevadas a los Estados Unidos, Japón, España, Gran Bretaña, los Países Bajos e Italia para fines de explotación sexual en la prostitución.

El documento dibuja un perfil de la víctima joven, muchas veces adolescentes o niñas, provenientes de sectores pobres y de familias con problemas que son engañadas con falsas promesas de empleo. Asimismo, establece un mapa de rutas que coincide con zonas de prosperidad económica señalando que las mujeres de la región de la Amazonia son especialmente demandadas debido a sus rasgos exóticos y los estereotipos relacionados con su rendimiento sexual.

Incluyendo otras formas de trata

Tras la publicación del informe, la OIM centra sus esfuerzos en la construcción de redes de información y asistencia de víctimas. Es por ello que establece como planes próximos la instalación de una línea telefónica que atienda a las víctimas de trata en el sentido amplio que estipula el Protocolo de Palermo. Es decir, trata con fines que van desde los sexuales, laborales a otros. Para ello espera realizar una campaña de información de este servicio que tendrá como



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destinatario principal todas aquellas personas que sean engañadas, privadas de libertad y explotadas.

Finalmente, la Oficina de Lima espera poder continuar, mejorar y profundizar en la capacitación en el tema de los grupos implicados.

Dolores Cortés
OIM Lima

El informe en Español puede ser descargado de la página Web de la OIM: http://www.iom.int/en/PDF_files/pbn/peru_ct_rep_0305.pdf

Eradicating Child Labor and Improving Adult Labor Conditions

ARGENTINA - New IOM/UNICEF research sheds light on the appalling working conditions of the *cartoneros*, children and adults who search in garbage dumps for recyclable materials as a means to survive, and leads to new initiatives.

In the city of Buenos Aires alone, the IOM/UNICEF research team counted 8,762 people gathering recyclable materials from garbage bags on the city streets, and from garbage dumps and landfills. Nearly half of the informal recyclers or *cartoneros* in Buenos Aires are minors; 39% are families who migrated from rural areas. The families earn an average of US\$21 per week.

The research confirms that while the children and their families suffer, other people benefit from their work. For example, the cities pay less for the disposal and treatment of waste in landfills; large companies profit by buying these materials to recycle and resell at much higher prices; and fewer natural resources are extracted.

At nightfall, 17-year-old Roxana, her mother, and her six-year-old nephew travel by foot and train from the Cárcova slum where they live to the city of Buenos Aires to fill their cart with recyclable materials. They walk the streets plunging their hands into plastic bags searching for paper, plastic or cardboard. At the end of each night's filthy work, they lug the heavy cart up and down the steep train station ramps to return home. That same night and the next morning, they separate their findings before selling them to a warehouse located in their slum.

Roxana's family migrated to Buenos Aires Province from a rural area in Corrientes Province where they



A child at a garbage dump in Argentina.

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farmed a small plot of land. She was 13 when her single mother started collecting recyclables after losing her job. At that time, many families in Roxana's neighborhood were adopting this survival strategy due to high unemployment and economic recession. Roxana eventually quit school and also went to work helping her mother.

Their neighborhood is close to one of the country's largest landfills, and many people, especially youth, sneak into the landfill to search for both recyclables and foodstuffs. This is even more dangerous because the materials are highly toxic, the ground is unstable, and the air is contaminated. Entering the landfills has resulted in serious injuries and illnesses to children and adults.

In October 2004, the IOM and UNICEF offices in Buenos Aires teamed up to conduct research on the perilous living and working conditions of children,

youth, and adults whose principal survival strategy is informal waste collection. The research was undertaken in diverse localities throughout the country in order to achieve a countrywide perspective.

The quantitative component of the research measured the number of individuals involved in informal recycling in each locality, and also surveyed hundreds of families to obtain general information on this activity and the risks involved. The qualitative component of the research consisted of in-depth interviews with families of informal recyclers like Roxana's and key informants that work with children and youth. It also included research on existing initiatives linked to the prevention of this type of child labor and on efforts by the Government, NGOs and/or informal recyclers themselves to try and formalize and organize this activity.

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The final report of the research, published by IOM and UNICEF, explains the risks these children face, such as health problems; low education levels and a high incidence of school dropout; troubled family life; precarious housing conditions; and neighborhood insecurity.

IOM and UNICEF are working together to inform the government, groups of informal recyclers, local companies, NGOs, and the public at large about their findings. IOM's goal is to encourage all of these actors to work together so that children like Roxana and her nephew can stop working, stay in school, and have access to other services that will keep them safe while their parents work. IOM is also advocating

for improved working conditions for adults so that work with recyclable products will become safe and dignified.

IOM and UNICEF are designing a new project that includes micro credit schemes to improve working conditions for the adults while providing alternatives for their children.

Jessica Koehs
IOM Buenos Aires



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Mother and child roaming the streets of Buenos Aires in search of recyclable materials.

PILAS or An Alliance for Success



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Internally displaced in Colombia.

COLOMBIA In colloquial Colombian-Spanish, pilas or batteries, means fast, active, or alert. But one day it may even be synonymous for a new alliance. For the moment, PILAS is the name of the new alliance between IOM and the Pan American Development Foundation *(PADF) called "PADF-IOM Long-Term Alliance and Synergies".

In June, an IOM/PADF proposal presented to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was selected and a grant of

more than US\$ 100 million was awarded to assist Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) and other vulnerable groups in Colombia.

PADF and IOM will soon sign an agreement detailing their partnership for the next five years. The main areas of focus are: strengthening national and local capacity, reducing levels of displacement, alleviating trauma, facilitating access to basic social services, providing economic opportunities, enhancing productivity, promoting self-sufficiency

and facilitating the reintegration, resettlement and return of displaced families.

The PILAS alliance will cover the entire country with 10 regional field offices providing assistance to more than one million beneficiaries (847,742 IDPs and 267,708 vulnerable persons) with a particular focus on the most vulnerable such as Afro-Colombians, the indigenous population, women, children and the elderly.

Projects to be implemented under the PILAS alliance include health, education, shelter, sanitation, food security, and income and employment generation. The aim of the projects will be to help the beneficiaries move from crisis conditions to stability and on to longer-term self-sufficiency, while at the same time strengthening Colombia's institutional capacity.

According to government figures, as of June 2005, 1.6 million persons are internally displaced. NGOs, such as CODHES (Consultoria para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento), believe the number of internally displaced Colombians could reach 3 million.

Rocio Sanz
IOM Bogota

* PADF is a US non-profit organization

Measuring the Dimension and Impact of Haitian Migrants



College of the Bahamas surveyor.

THE BAHAMAS- As part of its multi-faceted, on-site technical assistance program, IOM is partnering with the College of the Bahamas (COB) in a project to learn more about the dimension and impact of the Haitian migrant presence in The Bahamas.

Though significant numbers of nationals from various other countries are also present (Jamaica, the United States, Canada, Guyana, and, to a lesser extent Cuba) Haitians by far constitute the largest migrant community in The Bahamas, with a distinct linguistic, cultural, and social tradition.

Multiple crises in Haiti, one of the largest countries and poorest in the Caribbean, have resulted in continuing massive emigration to countries in the region. The comparative wealth and accessibility of The Bahamas act as a pull factor for the destitute migrants from Haiti.

As an archipelago with a total land

mass of 5,400 square miles spread out over an area of 100,000 square miles of ocean, The Bahamas faces difficult challenges in monitoring and regulating migration flows. Given the limited territorial size of the Bahamas, even relatively small numbers of Haitian migrants can have a disproportionate impact.

Existing migration patterns have taken place over decades; but there remain significant gaps in information and research in this area. The IOM-COB effort, carried out in coordination with the Government of the Bahamas and with the cooperation and support of the Embassy of Haiti and the local Haitian community, involves data collection and analysis of existing information, accomplishing a media review spanning several years, and conducting surveys of some 500 Haitian migrant households on various islands.

The findings will contribute updated data and research to the scarce and fragmented information currently available; offer additional perspectives on this sig-

nificant migration phenomenon; and supply fresh information to policy makers for future planning, to the public at large and the Haitian migrant community.

According to Gerry Pascua, IOM's program manager in Nassau, this data gathering activity is the most comprehensive undertaking by a non-government activity in some 31 years. And given the scope and scale of the survey, it can even be considered unprecedented. Data collection has now been completed for inclusion into a database for subsequent processing, interpretation, and analysis. Preliminary results are expected in the fall.

This activity is made possible in large part by a grant to IOM from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

IOM Nassau

Building Peace, One Rock at a Time

HAITI – High above the hills of St. Marc, residents of the volatile La Scierie neighborhood find short-term employment working to protect their community from deadly landslides.

The residents of La Scierie have long felt neglected by the government. Prior to the February 2004 departure of former President Aristide, the incident dubbed "La Scierie Massacre", galvanized their anger. Now, on the same hillsides where government helicopters shot at protesting residents, the community has built anti-erosion protection walls and planted hundreds of trees with help from IOM's Haiti Transition Initiative Program (IOM/HTI).

The IOM/HTI program, funded by USAID/OTI, began in May 2004. Since then it has committed over US\$4.3 million in small grants to improve the stability of Haitian communities.

This type of IOM/HTI project is not only helping to protect high-risk neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince from deadly landslides, but it is contributing to the stabilization of violence-prone communities by employing more than 1,500 persons,

and fostering dialogue with the government.

Working with a local youth NGO and the Haitian Ministry of Interior, the project is providing valuable alternatives to gang involvement for residents of all neighborhoods that have seen a lot of violence since the departure of President Aristide.

Heavy tropical rains, deforested hillsides and overcrowding combine to form a fatal cocktail as seen in Gonaives, where mudslides after Hurricane Jeanne left 2,000 people dead.

After heavy rains, the ground gets saturated and if there are no trees to absorb it, the mud slides right down to the neighborhoods below. Retaining walls make up for the lack of trees by terracing the earth and keeping it from flowing down the mountainside.



Moving rocks to form a retaining wall.

IOM 2005 Photo: Daniel Pepper

Philippe Branchat, IOM/HTI Program Manager says, "Labor-intensive programs in politically sensitive areas are absolutely critical, especially in this pre-election period, as "spoilers" try to derail the democratic process with violence. By bringing projects and government attention to neglected areas, IOM/HTI projects are removing the lever that the "spoilers" use to mobilize violent demonstrations. And by providing short term employment, residents have an alternative source of income, which increases the stability needed for free elections to take place. Bringing the government to work in these areas and share responsibilities with the communities, helps residents to become active partners in the transition."

Stephanie Broughton,
IOM Port-au-Prince



IOM 2005 Photo: Daniel Pepper

Teamwork helps facilitate the formation of a retaining wall.

The American Red Cross Supports IOM Tsunami Relief

UNITED STATES - IOM has received a US\$ 20 million grant from the American Red Cross to build 5,000 transitional housing units in Aceh Province, Indonesia for Tsunami Survivors.

The IOM-built housing units are produced from local materials and are built by local laborers (80 percent of those employed were affected by the tsunami). The units offer living space with the capacity to house up to seven people and are prepared for water, electricity and sanitary facilities. The earthquake resistant structures are designed to provide temporary shelter for two years.

In Washington, IOM Regional Representative Frances Sullivan said, "This agreement will provide housing for approximately 35,000 people. IOM has worked with the International Federation of Red

Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the past, but signing this agreement with the American Red Cross begins an elevated level of collaboration and ensures a continued commitment to those displaced by the tsunami. IOM thanks the American Red Cross for their commitment to the people of Aceh and for the generous contribution from people in America."

The American Red Cross, in close coordination with IOM and national Red Cross counterparts, will provide water and sanitation facilities for the 5,000 housing units funded by the American Red Cross, and for an additional 6,000 also built by IOM with other funding.

The 11,000 transitional housing units—including the 5,000 being funded by the American Red Cross—will provide housing for some 77,000 people left homeless by last December's tsunami who are currently living in camps for the displaced, public buildings and with host families.



Construction of transitional housing in Banda Aceh.

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Mixed Migratory Flows in the Caribbean

UNITED STATES- IOM in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), is organizing a four-day seminar for 20 Caribbean nations; including Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Immigration, and Justice. The joint regional seminar will focus on Mixed Migratory Flows in the Caribbean: Promoting Orderly Migration and Protecting Vulnerable Populations. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago will host the seminar in Tobago 24-27 October.

IOM, UNHCR and Caribbean States are all concerned, from differing perspectives, with the appropriate management of mixed migratory flows in the region, which by its very nature includes attention to human rights and refugee protection. The goals of safeguarding national security, ensuring orderly management of migratory flows, and identifying and providing adequate protection to persons in need of it who may be part of these flows are not mutually exclusive. This Joint Regional Seminar is made possible through the support of the US State Department, Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration. Past IOM/UNHCR Joint Regional Seminars were held in Barbados December 2003 and The Bahamas November 2004.

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