



At a shelter home run by a national NGO in Bogra District in Bangladesh, a group of survivors of trafficking learn embroidery. Teaching survivors life skills help them change their lives after being victims of human trafficking. © IOM 2007 - MBD0009 (Photo: Bashir Ahmed Sujan)

IOM and Migrant Assistance

Human Trafficking: IOM's Response

HUMAN TRAFFICKING: IOM'S RESPONSE

While the global scale of human trafficking is difficult to quantify precisely, as many as **800,000 people may be trafficked across international borders annually**, with many more trafficked within the borders of their own countries.

Organized criminal groups are earning billions of dollars in profits from trafficking and exploiting people - many of whom are victims of severe human rights violations.

Trafficked persons are often victims to abuse such as rape, torture, debt bondage, unlawful confinement, and threats against their family or other persons close to them as well as other forms of physical, sexual and psychological violence.

The demand for cheap labour, sexual services and certain criminal activities are among the root causes of trafficking while a lack of opportunity, resources and social standing are other contributing factors.

At IOM, we operate from the outset that trafficking in persons needs to be approached within the overall context of managing migration. Our broad range of activities is implemented in partnership with governmental institutions, NGOs and international organizations. The approach is based on three principles that govern all our counter-trafficking activities:

- Respect for human rights
- Physical, mental and social well-being of the individual and his or her community
- Sustainability through institutional capacity building of governments and civil society

IOM conducts both quantitative and qualitative research as an essential information source to improve our - and others - fight against human trafficking. Specific areas of focus have included human trafficking routes and trends, the causes and consequences of human trafficking both for the individual trafficked person and for society as well as the structures, motivations, and modi operandi of organized criminal groups. While much of this work has been done at national level, we increasingly collect and analyze data on human trafficking from a regional perspective to better support cooperation between states to combat cross-border trade. To support these efforts, we carry out considerable research in the areas of legislation and policy.

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OUR VISION:

BUILDING ON OUR INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENT AND GLOBAL PRESENCE, IOM STRENGTHENS THE CAPACITIES OF ITS PARTNERS IN GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY AND SETS OPERATIONAL STANDARDS TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE RESULTS THAT WILL:

- PROVIDE PROTECTION AND EMPOWER TRAFFICKED WOMEN, MEN, GIRLS AND BOYS;
- RAISE AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUE; AND
- BRING JUSTICE TO TRAFFICKED PERSONS.

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IOM International Organization for Migration

Trafficking of persons shall mean:

“[T]he recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat, use of force or other means of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the receiving or giving of payment... to a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”

(Article 3 of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime)

Counter-Trafficking Module Database

For more than a decade, IOM has developed and maintained a standardized counter-trafficking data management tool, the Counter-Trafficking Module (CTM), which is the largest global database with primary data on victims of trafficking.

The CTM facilitates the management of all IOM direct assistance, movement and reintegration processes through a centrally managed system, as well as mapping victims' trafficking experiences. In return, the database strengthens research capacity and the understanding of the causes, processes, trends and consequences of trafficking. It serves as a knowledge bank from which statistics and detailed reports can be drawn, and information be provided for research, programme development and policy-making on counter-trafficking.

In all cases, IOM ensures that no information which could compromise the privacy or identity of trafficked individuals is released: strict controls designed to ensure confidentiality and security of all data have been established.

For more information on the CTM, please contact us at CTS-db@iom.int

IOM has been working to counter the trafficking in persons since 1994. In this time, we have implemented more than 800 projects in over 100 countries, and have provided assistance to approximately 20,000 trafficked persons. Our primary aims are to prevent trafficking in persons, and to protect victims from the trade while offering them options of safe and sustainable reintegration and/or return to their home countries.

Prevention is better than cure, and IOM carries out information campaigns in both source and destination countries to educate the general public about trafficking in persons, encourage people to report suspected cases, and equip vulnerable populations with the information necessary to better protect themselves from the recruitment tactics of traffickers.

Our use of mass media ensures that the information reaches large populations quickly, while we also work with local media, such as community theatre, posters, and interpersonal communicative methods, to target particular populations with bespoke messages.

Our **technical cooperation** activities build capacities of both government and civil society institutions to better address the challenges posed by human trafficking. This includes training non-governmental organizations and government officials, such as police, technical support in the development of counter-trafficking legislation, policies and procedures, and infrastructural upgrades.

We offer **direct assistance** to victims of trafficking in collaboration with our partners. 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 estimates that as many as one third of trafficked persons are minors, and adheres to a policy of offering specialized protection to this most vulnerable group. All our counter-trafficking activities are developed and implemented within a framework centred on the well-being of the trafficked person.

IOM recognizes that each victim is unique and requires and desires bespoke assistance. Likewise, the nature of trafficking differs from area to area and keeps evolving, requiring changing responses.

The **IOM Handbook on Direct Assistance for Victims of Trafficking** is not meant to provide a single methodology for the provision of assistance to victims of trafficking. Rather, it offers suggestions and guidance based on IOM's many years of experience. We intended to produce a helpful tool to all organizations providing such assistance, but especially to those who are just beginning to develop victim assistance programmes and can benefit from IOM's experiences.

This Handbook provides guidance and advice on effectively delivering a full range of assistance to victims of trafficking - from the point of initial contact and screening to the social reintegration of the individuals concerned.



Find out more

For more information about IOM's counter-trafficking programmes, activities and publications, please visit www.iom.int or contact us at MigrantAssistanceDivision@iom.int