



### Miss Ghana 2009: Beauty with a Purpose

Dear Readers,

I am happy and honoured to introduce you to the first edition of IOM Ghana's Newsletter.

Migration, as a global phenomenon, is fast becoming one of the foremost development topics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and globally the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been at the forefront of managing migration for the benefit of migrants and society since its founding in 1951.

IOM Ghana was established in 1987 and started its programming by supporting the institutional capacity-building needs within the country through the Return of Qualified Nationals (RQAN) programme, which assisted highly qualified Ghanaian nationals in the diaspora to return home and contribute to the development of their country. Since that time, the office has grown to address a variety of migration management challenges, including labour migration, diaspora, migration and development, counter-trafficking, assisted voluntary returns, information campaigns on the risks and realities of migration, health and movement assistance for various migrant groups, and pre-departure orientation.

In the years ahead, I look forward to working with all our partners — Government of Ghana, UN agencies, civil society, and donors – to strengthen our relationships and work toward addressing migration challenges in Ghana.

I wish you happy reading!

Dyane Epstein  
Chief of Mission, IOM Ghana

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The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Ghana, in collaboration with Mimi Areme, Miss Ghana 2009, embarked on a sensitization and educational campaign to inform communities in the Lake Volta region about the pitfalls of human trafficking, especially child trafficking. Her efforts have resulted in the successful release of trafficked children and sensitized numerous fishing communities.

Since 2002, IOM has rescued, rehabilitated, reunited and reintegrated children who were trafficked to work with fishermen along the Volta Lake in the Kete-Krachi and Yeji fishing communities. Children between the ages of 5 and 15 years have been trafficked along the Volta Lake since the lake's creation. Their impoverished families send them to the fishermen in exchange for approximately 20 to 100 Ghana Cedis (US\$ 15 – US\$ 80). The number of years these children are “leased” ranges from two and six and is agreed upon by the parents and fisherman. Their duties include diving and disentangling nets, casting out and pulling the nets, as well as scooping water from and paddling the canoe. The parents often believe the children will be adequately fed, educated and taught a useful trade; however, some children eat only once a day and are made to work under hazardous conditions for long hours.



Ms. Areme is passionate about child trafficking and approached the project manager to support IOM's efforts to combat child trafficking. She remarked “When I look into the eyes of these children, all I see is the pain and torture. I promised myself to do all I could during my reign to make a difference in the lives of these children. I will continue the fight against child trafficking in Ghana.”

IOM plans to continue collaborating with Miss Ghana 2009 in order to rescue, rehabilitate, and reintegrate trafficked children and provide them with the opportunity to go back to school and fulfil their dreams.

## From Seeds to Oil: Community Development and Sunflower Production



As part of its voluntary assisted return and reintegration programme, IOM Ghana provides support to Ghanaian nationals in the diaspora who wish to return home and are interested in establishing a small business, engaging in training, or furthering their education. IOM assisted a group of 35 Ghanaian nationals who returned from Libya to Nkoranza to form a cooperative union and provided them with the necessary training and tools to start producing sunflowers. Participants were taken through 10 practical-oriented modules, including planning and commencement of business, effective ways of crop cultivation, weather patterns and planting seasons, harvesting and storage, commercial aspects of business and formation, organization, and benefits of cooperatives. The facilitators of the workshop were Mr. Issah Sulemana from Tropical Agricultural, Marketing and Consultancy Services (TRAGRIMACS) and Mr. Paul Aliba from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA).

The workshop led to the birth of the Sunflower Project, which allowed participants to put into practice the theoretical concepts acquired during the workshop. Each of the 35 participants was assisted to cultivate an acre of land for sunflower production, which they harvested and then sold to the market. Immense benefits accompany the cultivation of sunflowers - not only are they used for oil but they also have the added benefit of being used for bio-diesel. There is a great need to address the root causes of migration by supporting income-generating activities in major migrant sending areas and IOM Ghana's future plans include rolling out support to other communities affected by migration.



## Fishing Communities Receive Information and Education on HIV & AIDS Prevention

Large numbers of fisherman migrate from one village to another, spending much time away from their partners. Fishing areas often have high levels of poverty and health facilities are woefully inadequate. Consequently, many residents rely on traditional healers, ill-informed drug retailers or self-medication whenever they are unwell. Coupled with lack of access to information on prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS, poverty increases the likelihood of risky behaviours such as commercial sex work, compounding the problem and contributing to the spread of HIV infection.

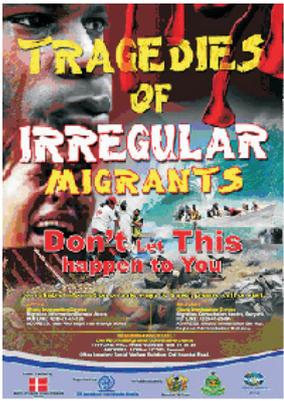
IOM Accra's Migration Health Department recently implemented an HIV and AIDS awareness project in Mfantseman West District, which is inhabited primarily by remote and underprivileged fishing communities along the Central Region coastline. Using the Peer Education Model, the aim was to prevent further transmission of HIV through increased education, awareness, and dissemination of HIV information to four communities in the district.

Peer education operates on the principle that young people are more likely to be influenced by others from a similar age group, background, culture and social status than by outsiders, particularly adult authorities. Several studies have shown that peer educators are central to HIV awareness activities.

Eight peer educators were selected, trained and provided with the necessary materials to organise 169 group and 782 individual information sessions on HIV and AIDS, display posters, distribute leaflets and condoms and assist in organising voluntary counseling and testing services for project beneficiaries. Real-life stories of people infected with HIV were shown and a total of 2,242 people were able to benefit from the videos. The results of a questionnaire indicated that a majority of respondents were aware of HIV and AIDS, but had low in-depth knowledge of prevention measures or modes of transmission. Furthermore, only a third of the respondents said they use condoms consistently. The findings thus confirmed the need for HIV preventive activities in the four communities.

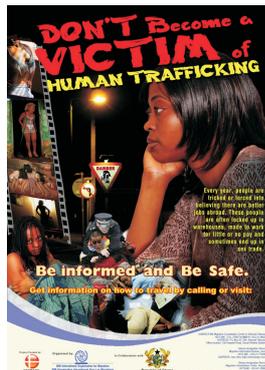
Along with advocating abstinence and faithfulness to one's sexual partner, consistent condom use was promoted and female and male condoms were distributed to adults within the project communities.

## Safe Migration: More Migrants Reached



As millions of people move across borders each year, the need for information has become fundamental to all migration decisions. Distorted perceptions and insufficient information about the realities in the countries they are trying to reach increases the need for migrants to have access to information. Most migrants are unaware of the practical, legal, social and economic

consequences involved in moving to another country. This lack of awareness puts migrants at risk and undermines orderly migration. It is in this regard that IOM, through funding from the Government of Denmark, implemented a capacity-building and awareness-raising project to combat trafficking in persons from and through Ghana. In partnership with the Government of Ghana and NGOs, IOM facilitated comprehensive campaigns in the Greater Accra and Western Regions of Ghana, provided extensive training on counter-trafficking issues to the Ghana Police Service, Ghana Immigration Service, Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General's Department, Customs, Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS), Ghana Navy and the Judicial Service of Ghana. The project also established a Migrant Hotline and Migration Consultative Centre (MCC) in Sekondi. As migrants and victims of trafficking face increased health risks, two Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centres (VCT) were created in two major migrant-sending areas.



The awareness-campaign has so far staged 10 theatre performances and conducted 73 programmes for communities/schools and churches within the two regions. The campaign spread messages through various outreach campaign tools, including family and social networks and discussions and programmes on television, radio jingles, mounting of billboards, and printing of flyers, posters, and information booklets on "passports to safe migration". With the establishment of the MCC, hundreds of persons have called the hotline and visited the Centre. The establishment of the hotline means that the information is reaching the general public and potential migrants, increasing their knowledge about the issues of irregular migration and human trafficking and encouraging them to migrate safely.



## Circular Labour Migration: A Model for Well-Managed Migration

Since January 2008, IOM Accra has implemented a regional labour migration project, funded by the European Commission and the Italian Government, to promote legal migration and prevent irregular migration. The project coordinated the implementation of a number of activities in Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Libya and Italy.

Key amongst these activities is the Job-Matching Scheme (JMS) training, which was conducted during a series of five workshops over a period of six months (September 2009 to February 2010). The principal aim of these workshops was to lay the foundation for the entry of Ghanaian, Nigerian, and Senegalese migrant workers into the Italian labour market.

Technical support for the sessions was provided by the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, which is the government entity responsible for monitoring the need for foreign workers and for setting the annual entry quota in Italy.

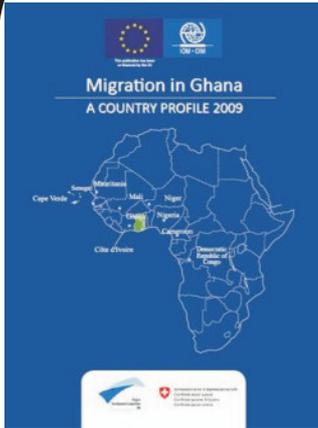
The sessions provided the necessary interviewing and data entry skills for relevant government officials from Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Libya and for the establishment of a mechanism for the identification, registration, and selection of potential migrant workers to match job opportunities between Ghana and Italy. As a result of the sessions, an electronic database for candidate migrant workers was established at the Labour Department in Accra. Participants also had the opportunity to interact with prospective employers and visit a public employment centre in Italy to acquire knowledge on its operations through firsthand interactions with staff.

Additionally, as a result of the project national labour migration assessments were conducted, roadmaps were devised, national legal instruments governing labour migration were analysed, and selected government officials were trained on migration policy development. Project outcomes are envisaged to serve as a foundation for future labour migration programmatic interventions that can promote the socioeconomic development of the participating countries.



Photo: Fourth job matching scheme training workshop with officials from the Labour Department in Ghana and the Government of Italy

## IOM Publication: Migration in Ghana



**M**igration in Ghana: A Country Profile was compiled with the financial support of the European Commission, the Swiss Federal Office for Migration, and the Belgian Development Cooperation. The research provides a comprehensive overview of international migration and socio-economic development trends and explains some of the key factors underlying current migration patterns in Ghana. The publication also serves as an important resource for the establishment of a data collection system and for the formulation of a migration management and development policy for Ghana.

Below are some key findings from the research.

- There has been an acceleration of skilled migration from Ghana, especially to developed countries in the North since the 1990s. Ghana has an emigration rate of 42.5 percent, one of the highest in West Africa. In the medical professions, it is estimated that more than 50 percent of doctors and nurses trained in Ghana live and work abroad (Black et al, 2003; Twum-Baah, 2005; Carrington and Detragiache, 1999).
- Officially recorded remittance flows to Ghana have increased dramatically from USD 32 million in 2000 to USD 105 million in 2007 (WB, 2008). In light of the economic downturn in migrant-receiving countries in the developed world, remittance flows are likely to decrease.
- Traditionally, Ghana has been a net immigration country with migrants coming mainly from Togo, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire. Although this trend has been gradually reversed since the 1990s, with more people emigrating rather than immigrating, Ghana continues to be an important country of destination, especially for migrants from neighbouring countries.
- As more young people enter Ghana's labour market than ever before, the pressure to migrate may increase unless employment opportunities for young labour market entrants improve. Ghana's labour force is expected to grow faster than its population over the next decade.
- Skilled emigration has created severe labour market shortages in the educational and health sectors. Ghana is ranked as the African country with the largest cumulative loss of tertiary-educated emigrants (Manu et al, 2005). Although reliable data on the actual scale of skilled emigration within the education sector is lacking, universities and other institutions of higher learning are struggling to retain staff, partly due to emigration. Over 60 percent and 40 percent of the faculty positions at polytechnics and public universities, respectively, are vacant.
- The contribution of Ghanaians abroad in mobilizing and transferring resources with the aim of improving welfare of their counterparts at home is enormous. They constitute a key stakeholder in national development through the various community-level development projects. There are many diaspora-supported development projects channeled through the decentralized local government system or chieftaincy institutions in the areas of health, education, skills training, etc (Send, 2004). Unfortunately, these efforts have not yet been formalized.

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IOM Ghana project activities are made possible through donor support from the governments of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, European Commission, and UN Agencies

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**Watch for the next newsletter, which will include articles on:**

- ***Pre-Departure Orientation: New Beginnings for Refugees***
- ***Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Ghanaian Nationals***
- ***Migration for Development in Ghana: Health Professionals in the Diaspora***



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