



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

IOM Ghana Quarterly Newsletter

October - December 2017



DECEMBER

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY 2017



IOM Ghana celebrated International Migrants Day and 30 years of IOM in Ghana with a special appearance by our Goodwill Ambassador - Kofi Kinaata and unveiling of his song on the dangers of irregular migration, a photo exhibition and testimonies from migrants.

#IMD2017 #MigrantsDay #ForMigration



80 JOURNALISTS TRAINED IN INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM & ETHICAL REPORTING

The Minister for Information, Honourable Mustapha Hamid and the Deputy Regional Minister for the Western Region of the Republic of Ghana, Honourable Ms. Gifty E. Kusi, pledged their support to the Free Movements of Persons and Migration (FMM) West Africa project in Ghana that aims to train 80 frontline journalists on investigative journalism and ethical reporting on free movement of person and migration in West Africa.



Participants of the Investigative Journalism and Ethical Reporting Training.

Photo: IOM Ghana/Eric Akomanyi/2017

The three-day training workshop is part of a series of trainings on investigative journalism taking place in Accra, Takoradi, Kumasi and Tamale and is currently implemented under the Non-State Actors Fund component of the “Support to Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa” (FMM West Project) project, jointly funded by the European Union and the ECOWAS Commission. The three-day training covered modules on the concept and definition of migration, human trafficking, the ethics of investigative journalism, and investigative reporting.

The team held consultations with other local stakeholders such as the Ghana Journalist Association, the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association and Ghana Immigration Command Office in Takoradi.

Read more [here](#).

IOM & CANADA DONATE DOCUMENT FRAUD EQUIPMENT TO GHANA IMMIGRATION SERVICE

IOM Ghana donated document fraud detection equipment to the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) with funding provided by the Government of Canada. The equipment included 45 passport reference manuals, 50 compact magnifiers and numerous document verification devices.

The donation was made as part of the IOM counter-smuggling project, Addressing Counter-Smuggling and Protection Gaps in Ghana, Benin and Togo: Strengthening

National and Regional Mechanisms, which is being implemented with support from the Canadian Anti-Crime Capacity Building Programme (ACCBP). The project which started in July 2016 and will run until December 2017 is intended to reduce participating countries’ (Ghana, Togo and Benin) vulnerability to migrant smuggling by enhancing their national capacity to counter this transnational threat.

Addressing Counter-Smuggling and Protection Gaps in Ghana, Benin and Togo: Strengthening National and Regional Mechanisms is a partnership between IOM Ghana, GIS, Ghana Revenue Authority – Customs Division, Ghana Police Service, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority, Attorney-General’s Department, Ghana Maritime Authority, Ghana Navy and Bureau of National Investigations. Read more [here](#).



From left; IOM Ghana Chief of Mission, Ms. Sylvia Lopez-Ekra, High Commissioner of Canada to Ghana and Sierra Leone and Canadian Ambassador to Togo, H.E. Heather Cameron and Ghana Immigration Service Comptroller-General, Mr. Kwame Asuah Takyi. Photo: IOM Ghana/Olivia Matthews/2017

VOLUNTARY HUMANITARIAN RETURN & REINTEGRATION FROM LIBYA

On 29 November 2017, IOM Ghana together with the Government of Ghana and Airport Authorities facilitated the arrival of 127 Ghanaians from Libya via charter at the Kotoka International Airport. Upon their arrival, all returnees were screened by Port Health, registered by Ghana Immigration Service and were provided cash support by IOM for immediate needs. IOM also provided migrants with food and water, as well as buses to local transport hubs.

IOM's voluntary return assistance continues to remain one of the few viable humane options for migrants caught in these inhumane conditions. In addition to facilitating returns, IOM has also been engaging with Libyan authorities to create paths to avoid the detention of migrants and where not possible, to improve their conditions in ways that uphold their dignity and support their basic needs.

Most Ghanaians attempting to reach Europe travel irregularly through Libya, where currently, tens of thousands of the estimated 700,000 migrants living in the country, suffer horrendous human rights abuses at the hands of exploitative smugglers. Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers face extreme protection risks on route and upon arrival in Libya, as they cannot access services and live in fear of trafficking, exploitation, sexual violence, unlawful killings, capture and arbitrary detention in official and unofficial detention centres.

Between June and November 2017, IOM has helped facilitate the return of 350 Ghanaians from Libya under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative on Migrant Protection and Reintegration funded by the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. This is part of a regional programme to facilitate voluntary humanitarian return of migrants stranded and detained in Libya and other transit countries. The main goal of IOM's work in Africa under the EUTF is to strengthen mechanisms to protect and assist migrants along all routes through both advocacy and direct assistance.

As a part of the facilitation of charter flights from Libya and other transit

areas, IOM conducts pre-departure interviews and medical examinations for all returnees. Migrants are assisted upon arrival and have the opportunity to benefit from reintegration assistance which can include counselling, referrals to services including psychosocial and medical, and other support as needed.

Read more [here](#).



Ghanaian returnees from Libya being processed at the airport by IOM staff.

Photo: IOM Ghana/Olivia Matthews/2017

“Our number one priority is to work with the Government of Ghana to offer a dignified return home to Ghanaians in Libya, some of whom have gone through unspeakable ordeals. Our collective support also needs to go beyond their safe arrival at Kotoka International Airport but should facilitate their sustainable reintegration in their local communities once back home.”

Sylvia Lopez-Ekra, IOM Ghana's Chief of Mission

INAUGURATION OF PHERP FOR KOTOKA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

IOM Ghana and partners just launched a new Public Health Emergency Response Plan (PHERP) for the Kotoka International Airport (KIA) as part of the Global Security Health Agenda (GHS) project.

The PHERP is a reference document with protocols and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for mitigating against the spread of infectious diseases through air transport. The plan provides the basis for a multi-sector and multi-state response to public health emergencies at the Kotoka International Airport (KIA). The plan will complement KIA's existing emergency response plan ensuring a holistic approach to handling public health emergencies as well as increasing the airport's International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) core capacities.

Since 2016, IOM Ghana has been working with the United States Center for disease Control (CDC), the Ghanaian Health Service (GHS), Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), Ghana Airports Company Limited (GACL), Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) and various other partners at KIA, to develop a PHERP that integrates with the airport's emergency preparedness plans and operations with a health dimension. Read more [here](#).



Ms. Aku Adzraku, Executive Director of Purim African Youth Development Platform (PAYDP) speaking at the Kayayei event. Photo: IOM Ghana/Benedetta Mangialardo/2017

"We may not be able to stop diseases but we can mitigate their risks through capacity building. The time has come to take the steps to prevent the spread of communicable diseases."

Ing. Simon Christopher Allotey
Director General
Ghana Civil Aviation Authority



IOM Ghana Chief of Mission, Sylvia Lopez-Ekra, handing solar lanterns to the Head of the Agboghloshie Head Porters Association. Ms. Comfort Asare, Director of Gender from the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, (left). Photo: IOM Ghana/Benedetta Mangialardo/2017

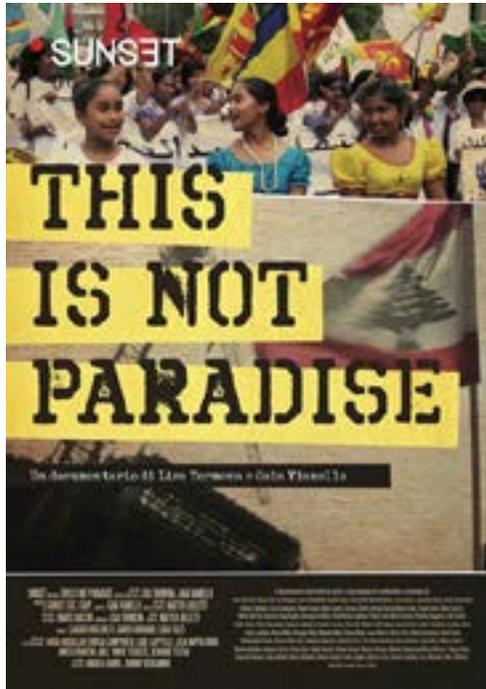
IOM & GOVERNMENT OF GHANA DISTRIBUTE SOLAR LANTERNS TO KAYAYEI

As part of its commemoration of International Migrants Day, the UN migration agency (IOM) together with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in Ghana (201/12) distributed 280 solar lamps to Kayayei – female head porters – and called for increased coordination to address protection concerns.

The Kayayei are girls, as young as six years old, who migrate mainly from the three northern rural regions of Ghana in hopes of generating income for themselves and their families in urban centres such as Accra and Kumasi, carrying loads for traders and other customers in exchange for money. The informal nature of this work exposes the Kayayei to numerous human rights violations, including gender-based violence, verbal and physical abuse, theft and exploitation by patrons who either refuse to pay or who pay very little.

Advocating for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to address the Kayayei phenomenon, IOM Ghana hosted a stakeholders' meeting to pool knowledge and expertise from Governmental and non-government representatives working with the Kayayei. During the stakeholders' meeting, 230 individual solar lamps were distributed to Kayayei, while 50 larger lanterns were given to trained Kayayei leaders. Abuses, including of a sexual nature, that the girls endure often take place at night, and access to light has been shown to be a crucial element for protection, helping to prevent gender-based violence and other abuses. Read more [here](#).

GLOBAL MIGRATION FILM FESTIVAL



From 12 - 14 December, IOM Ghana participated in the IOM Global Migration Film Festival. The 3-day film festival provided the opportunity to inform the public on the challenges migrants face as well as provide a space to dissuade Ghanaians from migrating irregularly.

IOM Ghana hosted their film screenings at the Alliance Francaise d'Accra. The first night involved a public screening with free refreshments for the public. For the second night, IOM invited two high schools to participate in a film screening, a participatory lecture and a quiz on migration. The secondary students watched the film *Wallah je te jure* which tells the stories of men and women traveling along West African migration routes to Italy.

The final festival night targeted university students who participated in a film screening and a roundtable discussion on migration. The university students watched *This is not paradise*, a film focused on the thousands of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon without proper legal protection.



NOVEMBER



INTRODUCING IOM GHANA GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

KOFI KINAATA

Ghanaian rapper and songwriter, Kofi Kinaata, has become IOM, the UN Migration Agency's first Goodwill Ambassador to promote safe migration in Ghana. He will be supporting IOM's advocacy and fundraising efforts, including educating young Ghanaians about the dangers associated with the journey across the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea to reach North Africa and Europe.

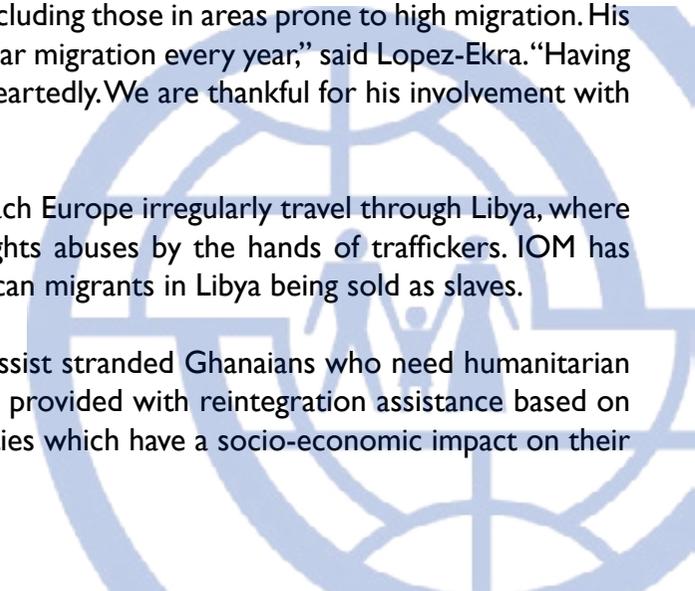
Kinaata will support IOM Ghana's Aware Migrants Information Campaign through the release of a new song aimed at encouraging Ghanaian youth to value their lives and not take unnecessary risks in chasing illusionary greener pastures. The Aware Migrants Information Campaign is part of the Engaging West African Communities (EWAC) project funded by the German Federal Foreign Office.

From 20 to 21 November, Kinaata travelled to the Brong Ahafo Region with Sylvia Lopez-Ekra, IOM Ghana Chief of Mission, as his first official trip. He met with the Brong Ahafo Regional Minister; visited the Migration Information Centre (MIC) set up by IOM and currently managed by Ghana Immigration Service in the city of Sunyani; and visited a pilot farm established by IOM through the Ghana Integrated Migration Management Approach (GIMMA) project in Nkoranza. The farm employs young returnees and provides alternative livelihood generation for potential migrants among other activities. The GIMMA project is funded by the European Union and jointly implemented by IOM Ghana and the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS).

"Kofi Kinaata, as one of the most talented contemporary Ghanaian singers, has a huge fan base among young people including those in areas prone to high migration. His engagement with IOM can truly contribute to saving many Ghanaian lives that are lost or negatively affected by irregular migration every year," said Lopez-Ekra. "Having friends and acquaintances who have chosen to migrate irregularly, he has embraced the safe migration cause wholeheartedly. We are thankful for his involvement with our work," she added.

In 2016, 5,636 Ghanaian migrants arrived in Italy by sea, an increase from 4,431 in 2015. Most Ghanaians trying to reach Europe irregularly travel through Libya, where currently, tens of thousands of the estimated 700,000 migrants living in the country suffer horrendous human rights abuses by the hands of traffickers. IOM has reported and condemned the exploitation of migrants in Libya since April 2017 when a video emerged showing African migrants in Libya being sold as slaves.

In 2017, IOM Ghana has so far facilitated the return of 241 Ghanaians from Libya and Niger. IOM will continue to assist stranded Ghanaians who need humanitarian assistance through the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in Africa. The returnees are provided with reintegration assistance based on their needs. IOM and partners also support returnees with orientation towards innovative income-generating activities which have a socio-economic impact on their community of origin.



COUNTER-TRAFFICKING

Free to be Me

Child Protection through human rights education



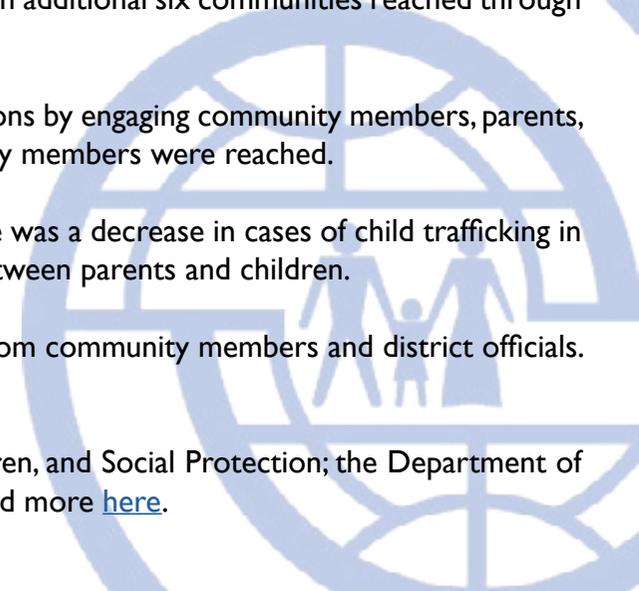
IOM Ghana held a closing workshop (2/11) for its project: Increasing Child Protection and Combatting Child Trafficking in 8 Districts of the Volta Region through Community Child Rights Education. Under this two-year project, supported by UNICEF, a toolkit on child protection and counter trafficking titled Free to Be Me was developed in 2013. The toolkit was distributed in 43 selected communities within eight districts of the Volta Region, with an additional six communities reached through the project's pilot phase which began in November 2012.

The toolkit aims to build the capacity of local communities to address and prevent child trafficking and protection violations by engaging community members, parents, and children. Over 127 volunteers and district officials were trained to implement the toolkit, and over 5,000 community members were reached.

The dissemination of the toolkit resulted in the parent-led return of 43 children to eight communities. Additionally, there was a decrease in cases of child trafficking in the targeted communities and an improvement in children's achievement at school, as well as improved relationships between parents and children.

The IOM Ghana workshops provided an opportunity to share project methodology, lessons learned, and testimonials from community members and district officials. Additionally, participants engaged in a question-and-answer session and watched a summary video about the project.

The closing workshop was attended by delegations from over 29 organizations including the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection; the Department of Social Welfare; the Volta Regional Coordinating Council; and Parliamentarians without Borders for Children's Rights. Read more [here](#).



OCTOBER

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

IOM, the UN Migration Agency, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and the Embassy of Mexico partnered to hold a photo exhibit entitled *A Day in the Life of Migrants and Refugees*.

Photos exhibited by IOM included images of migrants along the migratory routes from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe, highlighting the challenges of traveling through the desert and the Mediterranean.

The exhibit and its associated events were co-sponsored by IOM Ghana, UNHCR Ghana, the Embassy of Mexico in Ghana, the Nubuke Foundation, AMEXCID, and the Federal Foreign Office of Germany. IOM Ghana's involvement was generously sponsored by the Aware Migrants Information Campaign – Engaging West African Communities (EWAC) which includes Ghana, Senegal and Niger, and is funded by the Federal Foreign Office of Germany.



Representatives from the sponsoring agencies including IOM Ghana Chief of Mission, Sylvia Ekra-Lopez, UNHCR Country Representative, Ioli Kimyaci and Deputy Head of Mission of the Mexican Embassy in Ghana, Marcos Moreno Baez.

Photo: UNHCR/2017



A photo shown at the exhibit of an IOM staff member and beneficiary in Transit Camp in Niger.
Photo: IOM/Amanda Martinez Nero/2016

The project aims to address irregular migration along the main routes from Western Africa across the desert and the Mediterranean, by empowering migrants to make informed decisions and informing public opinion in target countries on the extreme risks of irregular migration.

A Day in the Life of Migrants and Refugees provided a considerable opportunity to educate both the public and key stakeholders on the impacts of irregular migration and the human stories behind mass migration statistics. The exhibit ran from October 28th – November 3rd and included 49 pictures providing a snapshot into the lives of irregular migrants and refugees.

Read more [here](#).