The opinions expressed in the report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

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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2020 was an extraordinary year which presented the world with unprecedented challenges due to the onset of COVID-19. In line with national measures introduced by the Government of Ghana (GoG) to combat the pandemic, IOM Ghana has quickly adapted its operations in creative and innovative ways to continue to deliver our services, especially those that are lifesaving and make a crucial difference for the most vulnerable of our beneficiaries, and to also support the government in its COVID-19 response.

On a programmatic level, some of the most innovative and creative solutions to highlight are: awareness raising about COVID-19 and safe migration as well as the psychosocial impact of COVID-19; an analysis of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on migrants in Ghana; a rapid assessment of Points of Entry to enhance their capacities in COVID-19 response and recovery; the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure the continuation of essential protection services; the support of safe and dignified return of over 400 Ghanaian migrants amid the COVID-19 crisis; advice to returnees to adapt their business plans as part of their reintegration processes, including community-based reintegration projects to provide livelihoods for returnees and community members alike; and the adaptation of operations at the Migration Health Assessment Centre (MHAC) to resume services after initial closure.

IOM also continued to support the GoG in various interventions related to improving migration governance. In November, Ghana held national consultations on the Global Compact for Migration and launched its National Migration Profile.

Taken together, IOM Ghana supported the GoG’s efforts to manage migration effectively through projects and programmes across an array of areas, including migration travel assistance, voluntary return and reintegration, resettlement, migrant health, counter-trafficking, capacity building for labour and development policy, and the coordination of movement operations and health assessments in support of refugee resettlement in most of West and Central Africa (WCA).

None of this would have been possible without the close and strong collaboration of all partners, governments, donors, UN sister agencies and CSOs – all of which have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to migrants, returnees and survivors of trafficking, as well as to the principles of safe, orderly and regular migration, even during these challenging times.

This annual report allows us to take stock of IOM Ghana’s achievements in 2020 and demonstrates the positive impact migration management can have for migrants and communities alike.

This will help us identify the gaps that need to be filled going forward. We can only do that in synergy, partnership, and coordination with the government, civil society, development partners, academia, private sector, parliamentarians, trade unions, national human rights institutions, migrants and returnees, local communities, diaspora, media, UN sister agencies and other relevant stakeholders in migration governance.

As we reflect on our work in 2020, we strive to build back better for a successful future in which we continue to work together to ensure humane and orderly migration in Ghana and abroad.

I want to recognize the leadership of Sylvia Lopez-Ekra, IOM Ghana Chief of Mission from 2014 to 2020, and thank her and all IOM Ghana staff for their dedication and great achievements in spite of a very trying period, to serve the Government of Ghana and migrants - to ensure no migrant is left behind.

Abibatou Wane-Fall
IOM Ghana Chief of Mission
IOM GHANA

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is part of the United Nations System as the leading inter-governmental organization promoting since 1951 humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all, with 174 member states and a presence in over 100 countries.

IOM has been active in Ghana since 1987, and is contributing to the Government of Ghana’s (GoG) efforts to manage migration effectively. IOM works with its partners in Ghana to promote safe migration, meet the growing migration challenges, advance the understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration, and uphold the human dignity and well-being of all migrants.

IOM is an active member of the United Nations (UN) System in Ghana, which has been working in the country since the early 1960s to support economic and social development, human rights, and peace and security.

The migration agency works within the UN Sustainable Development Partnership (UNSDP) 2018-22, which presents the coherent vision and collective support of UN Agencies towards achieving Ghana’s development priorities. IOM’s activities are also aligned with and contribute to the implementation of the Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies 2017-24.

IOM also serves as the permanent co-chair of the UN Network on Migration, established in 2019 together with the UN in Ghana’s Resident Coordinator’s Office, to facilitate effective, timely and coordinated UN system-wide support to Ghana on migration governance, including on the implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).

The IOM main office, the Canadian Visa Application Centre (CVAC) and the Migration Health Assessment Centre (MHAC) are all located in Accra.
GLOBAL FRAMEWORKS

The 2030 Agenda includes a pledge to ‘leave no one behind’, and to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first. Many SDG targets can only be fully achieved if migration and migrants are considered. Enhancing migration governance through the implementation of the Global Migration Compact will be essential.

Charles Abani
UN Resident Coordinator in Ghana

MIGRATION AND THE SDGS

The main reference to migration in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is made under SDG 10 on “Reduced Inequalities” (Target 10.7), which strives to “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.” But migration is well mainstreamed throughout the SDGs, which are interconnected and indivisible: progress in one area is linked to progress in all areas. IOM contributes significantly to 12 SDGs (as shown throughout the report).

IOM supports the Government in its ambition to harness the benefits of migration for socio-economic development, and to work toward the implementation of the migration-related SDGs and targets in the country. Interventions focus on, amongst others, migrants’ health, education and skills development, gender equality and women empowerment, human trafficking, labour migration, remittances, safe migration, migration-related policies, migration data, as well as partnerships with various stakeholders including Government, civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector.

Mainstreaming migration into national development plans is a brilliant way of tackling our development challenges... It is obvious that no one single sector can handle the issues of migration alone and we must join efforts and resources to be able to attain the desired results.

Victoria Natsu
Acting Executive Secretary, Human Trafficking Secretariat, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection of Ghana
On 10 December 2018, over 160 world leaders and representatives of Governments met in Marrakesh, Morocco to adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), followed closely by formal endorsement by the UN General Assembly on 19 December. The GCM is the first-ever UN global agreement on a common approach on dealing with international migration in all its dimensions.

Ghana was an active participant in the preparatory work towards the GCM. IOM supported the Ministry of the Interior (MINTER) and other stakeholders in national and regional consultations to ensure that priority issues for the country, such as irregular migration, labour migration or counter-trafficking, were thoroughly discussed with all relevant partners.

The GCM – which is not legally binding - contains a list of 23 Objectives which signatory Member States, including Ghana, committed to in order to address migration management holistically, including in the areas of, irregular migration, human trafficking, border management, return and reintegration, amongst others.

The GCM also focuses on solutions and best practices to facilitate regular migration. As reiterated by IOM’s Director General António Vitorino, at the adoption of the GCM, well-managed migration requires cooperation at all levels.

The GCM builds on Target 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in which Member States committed to cooperate internationally to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration.

To support the implementation, monitoring and review of the GCM, the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office and IOM established, in 2019, the UN Network on Migration (UNNM) in Ghana to ensure effective, timely and coordinated system-wide support to the country.

On 30 November 2020, the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) held the first meeting to kick off the National Consultation on the GCM, in preparation for the submission of Ghana’s voluntary national review of GCM implementation. The virtual meeting was organised in collaboration with the MINTER and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MoFARI), with support from IOM. Find out more.

To increase advocacy and ownership on the GCM, 18 countries have volunteered to be champion countries, including Ghana. IOM Ghana continues to stand with the Government of Ghana (GoG) to ensure the full implementation of the GCM in support of national development and to the benefit of Ghanaian migrants abroad and migrants in Ghana.

During these trying times, the Global Compact for Migration provides an effective framework for the governance of international migration in all its dimensions, which can be leveraged by states to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

Abibatou Wane-Fall
IOM Ghana Chief of Mission
Migration Governance Framework

All activities of IOM in Ghana are guided by the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF). The MiGOF was endorsed by IOM Member States in 2015 to assist countries in determining what a national-level ‘well-managed migration policy’ should look like. It presents a consolidated, coherent and comprehensive approach to ensure that migration is humane and orderly and benefits migrants and society.

The three principles propose the necessary conditions for migration to be well-managed by creating a more effective environment for maximised results for migration to be beneficial to all. The three objectives are specific and do not require any further conventions, laws or practices than the ones that are already existing. Taken together, these objectives ensure that migration is governed in an integrated and holistic way.

The Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) were developed to assist countries operationalise the MiGOF by using a standard set of approximately 90 indicators which could be applied across six key policy domains of the MiGOF.

In May 2018, IOM published the Migration Governance Profile for Ghana. It describes the well-governed areas of the country’s migration governance structures and areas with potential for further development, as evaluated by the six domains of the MGI. These address migrants’ rights, a “whole-of-government” approach, partnerships, socioeconomic well-being of migrants, the mobility dimensions of crises, and safe and orderly migration.

Local Migration Governance Indicators: Accra one of three pilot cities

In October 2019, IOM and the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) launched the report “Local Migration Governance Indicators: 2019 Accra City Profile”. The report, piloted in Accra, highlights areas of migration programming in the capital city which are well-developed, such as the roll-out of mass health insurance registrations in deprived communities including migrant settlements, and emergency assistance offered to the population including migrants. The report also identifies areas for improvement, such as the collection and publication of migration data and the implementation of awareness raising strategies to fight xenophobia and exclusion. Find out more.

Accra was one of three cities in the world that participated in the pilot phase, together with Montreal, Canada and Sao Paolo, Brazil. Local Migration Governance Indicators are now being rolled out globally.

The Local MGI contributes towards the Government of Ghana’s efforts to achieve the Objectives set out in the Global Compact for Migration; Government’s commitment to the SDGs, specifically Goal 10 on Reducing Inequalities and Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities; the New Urban Agenda, in which migration is fully integrated in the strategic planning and management of cities; and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol on Free Movement of Persons.

STRATEGIC VISION: SETTING A COURSE FOR IOM

Drafted at the request of the Director General at the beginning of his term, the IOM Strategic Vision represents the Organization’s reflection on its needs and priorities, drawing on a landscape assessment of what the next decade will bring. It sets out how IOM, as an organization, needs to develop over the next five years – from 2019 to 2023 – in order to meet new and emerging responsibilities.

The three pillars of the Strategic Vision set out a series of strategic priorities based on an assessment of what the next decade will bring in terms of migration dynamics and migrant needs. They reflect the reality that it is no longer possible for IOM to work through strictly defined programmatic areas.

- **Resilience**: IOM will need to prepare for higher numbers of people moving in and out of situations of vulnerability, stemming from a range of complex drivers, including climate change, instability, poverty and exploitation. IOM will endeavour to take a long-term and holistic approach to emergency response, integrating development objectives and acknowledging changing drivers and vulnerabilities.

- **Mobility**: The ways in which people move are constantly changing. As migration dynamics evolve, so must the tools that manage movement, whether relating to selection, identification, entry, stay or return. In this regard, IOM will pursue innovative approaches to the design and implementation of systems to manage migration, based on its existing knowledge of what works, where, and for whom, and specific regional and political contexts.

- **Governance**: IOM is already an important partner for Member States in terms of delivering services to migrants that governments cannot deliver themselves. However, with the adoption of the Global Compact, there is a new opportunity for IOM to support participating governments to build capacity for the governance of migration and the provision of assistance to migrants, and to build stronger cooperation with other United Nations agencies. This requires more strategic partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders and partners, and the development of robust research, analysis and data collection capabilities, to support decision-making in an often difficult space.

MiGOF Principles and Objectives

1. **Principles**
   - Adherence to international standards and fulfillment of migrants’ rights.
   - Formulates policy using evidence and “whole-of-government” approach.
   - Engages with partners to address migration and related issues.

1. **Objectives**
   - Advance the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society.
   - Effectively address the mobility dimensions of crises.
   - Ensure that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner.

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2019 IN FIGURES

- 8,500 (4,334 men, 4,166 women) Beneficiaries received health assessment services
- 2,958 (1,512 men, 1,446 women) Refugees resettled to Canada, USA, Australia & Europe from 14 countries in West & Central Africa
- 7,700+ People reached through awareness raising activities to promote safe migration in communities and schools
- 479 (414 men, 65 women) Migrants assisted to return to Ghana from 33 countries
- 429 (362 men, 67 women) Migrants received reintegration assistance on individual and collective levels
- 75 (1 man, 74 women) Victims of trafficking (VoTs) assisted with safe return and reintegration
- 106 (66 men, 40 women) Migration stakeholders built their capacity on psychosocial support (PSS) through nine workshops
- 25 (16 community members, nine returnees) Beneficiaries successfully concluded training at the National Vocational and Technical Institute (NVTI) in forklift/heavy duty machinery operation in Takoradi
- 0 Single use plastics campaign launched at IOM Ghana

2019 - HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

MIGRANT PROTECTION & ASSISTANCE

- Launch of Government-run shelter for female VoTs. The shelter is a critical element of the National Referral Mechanism which provides safe accommodation, psychosocial support and reintegration counselling to VoTs identified and referred by counter-trafficking stakeholders.
- Capacity building of stakeholders to identify, refer and address the needs of VoTs. 15 shelter staff members received training on shelter management as well as on direct assistance to VoTs, trauma-informed approaches and conducting needs assessments. It provided the social workers with the needed theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to protect others and themselves when fulfilling their professional duty.
- Mapping of vulnerability to trafficking in persons (TIP). The report identified the vulnerability to trafficking in various sectors (e.g. education, transport, labour, etc.) and revealed gaps and challenges in coordination, capacity building and preventive measures. Recommendations were given to each sector and awareness raising materials were developed with consideration of the recommended mitigating measures.

MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

- Government stakeholders validated recommendations of an IOM study on remittances mechanisms in Ghana. Once addressed, the recommendations would contribute to reducing the cost of remittances transfers to Ghana and leveraging remittances for development.
- IOM worked with the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) to develop guidelines and SOPs to mainstream migration into national and sectoral development plans.
- High-level study visits for government officials from Mauritius and Seychelles promoted South-South cooperation between the GoG and the Governments of Mauritius (GoM) and Seychelles (GoS) in the areas of diaspora engagement and ethical recruitment for labour mobility. They led to closer collaboration on labour mobility between Ghana and the two Southern Africa countries.

MIGRATION, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

- IOM Ghana, along with the other UN agencies, banned single-use plastics in all its premises as of 1 September 2019. Through an email campaign and distributing posters through its office, IOM Ghana raised awareness of staff about the ban of single-use plastics, as well about broader information in relation to relevant SDGs. In addition, colleagues going the extra mile to reduce their environmental footprint were celebrated as “Plastic Warriors”.

AWARENESS RAISING

- Community events at the occasion of International Migrants Day, organised in collaboration with Ghana Immigration Service (GIS), reached over 5,000 people in New Takoradi, and included fun games, a participatory graffiti event, cultural displays, sharing of stories of returnees, conversations about safe and irregular migration, official speeches, and a performance by IOM’s Goodwill Ambassador Kofi Kinaata.
2020 IN FIGURES

8,641
(4,322 men, 4,319 women)
Beneficiaries were screened for TB across West & Central Africa

6,999
(3,594 men, 3,405 women)
Beneficiaries received health assessment services

252
(155 men, 97 women)
Refugees participated in pre-departure orientation sessions, out of which 152 received their orientation via telephone amid COVID-19

58
(56 women, 2 men)
VOTs assisted with safe return and reintegration

668
(594 men, 74 women)
Migrants from 27 countries assisted to return to Ghana

1,024
(547 men, 477 women)
Migrants received reintegration assistance on individual, collective and community-based levels

1,000,000+
Ghanaians reached through various channels as part of the #LetsTalkMigration safe migration campaign, and another 600,000 Facebook users reached with Kofi Kinaata’s Made in Taadi (MIT) Youth Seminar for IMD

360
(196 men, 165 women)
Social workers (136), stakeholders (206) and senior police trainers (18) are better equipped to identify and meet the needs of VOTs, have improved knowledge on issues related to combat trafficking

492
(262 men, 225 women)
Refugees resettled out of which 240 (132 men, 108 women) were resettled amid COVID-19, following border reopening

2020 - HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

COVID-19 RESPONSE

• IOM donated PPE in support of Government’s COVID-19 response, including to government and NGO-run shelters for survivors of trafficking, to the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), Ghana Immigration Service (GIS), Ghana Police Service (GPS), and other partners and stakeholders in six regions working to end trafficking in persons (TIP) in Ghana, and to a reception and quarantine centre in Prampam.

• To support the livelihood resilience of returned migrants, IOM supported eight returnees who already had sewing businesses to reorient their activities and add the production of nose masks. A total of 4,000 nose masks were produced to help curb the spread of the virus, while at the same time enable their business to cope during this crisis. The nose masks were approved by the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) and were distributed to the public during awareness raising activities.

• To support the safe reopening of borders, IOM conducted a rapid assessment of the preparedness of all 48 national points of entry.

• Two murals were painted in Accra to raise awareness of COVID-19 and safe migration.

• As part of a series published by the United Nations in Ghana, IOM drafted a briefing note on the impact of COVID-19 on migrants.

MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

• The 2019 Ghana Migration Profile was launched to address the need for accurate, reliable migration data.

• IOM supported government stakeholders to develop and validate annual institutional workplans to ensure effective implementation of the National Labour Migration Policy.

• IOM continued to support Government in the establishment of the Ghana National Commission on Migration (GNCM). IOM facilitated study visits to Nigeria and Kenya, to understand the National Migration Coordinating Mechanisms in both countries. Further, a study to map out the models of commissions in Ghana was finalized to inform the drafting of a cabinet memo for the establishment of the GNCM.

MIGRANT PROTECTION & ASSISTANCE

• Psychosocial support (PSS) remained a priority, especially in view of the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country. 41 persons (31 men, 10 women) received PSS, 16 of whom were supported with individual psychotherapy sessions and follow-up. 82 persons (59 men, 23 women) were supported through PSS group counselling sessions. Nine PSS capacity building sessions were organized for 183 migration stakeholders (132 men and 51 women) in various communities across the country to raise awareness of stigma-related issues, and to empower them to provide psychological first aid to returnees, if indicated.

• With IOM’s support, the government-run shelter for child VOTs became fully operational. A crucial component of the National Referral Mechanism, it accommodates children referred by counter-trafficking stakeholders and provides comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration assistance.

• IOM increased the knowledge of 158 (83 men, 75 women) returnees, potential migrants and community members involved in farming in the Bono and Bono East regions on environmentally sustainable methods through ten trainings on how to achieve chemical-free protection for their plants.

AWARENESS RAISING

• The 2020 IMD activities included a range of interventions adapted to the required COVID-19 safety needs: a series of radio shows, a mural in Nima inviting to reimagine the future of human mobility, as well as a collaboration with IOM Goodwill Ambassador Kofi Kinaata on his Made in Taadi Youth Seminar and participation in the Global Migration Film Festival which were organized as hybrid (online/offline) events.

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• IOM continued to promote the National Migration Policy and the establishment of the National Commission on Migration (GNCM) through ten trainings on how to achieve chemical-free protection for their plants.
MIGRATION & HEALTH

The Migration Health Division (MHD) at IOM Ghana conducts health assessments and provides health-related travel assistance for refugees and migrant visa applicants at the Migration Health Assessment Centre (MHAC) in Accra. During public health emergencies, such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the 2013-2016 Ebola outbreak in WCA, IOM Ghana’s MHD also supports response efforts.

COVID-19 response

In 2020, health assessment activities were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, not only in Ghana and within the region, but globally. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related border closures, health assessment activities slowed down significantly within the region which resulted in the temporary closure of MHACs in several locations, including Accra. After one month of closure, MHAC Accra reopened at the end of May and resumed health assessment activities, following a relaxation of government restrictions and implementation of a number of infection prevention and control (IPC) measures and trainings.

To ensure the delivery of safe services to beneficiaries at the MHAC in Accra, staff undertook regular trainings in IPC. Beneficiaries at the clinic were provided with briefings on COVID-19 safety protocols and had access to health promotion materials, such as posters.

IOM Ghana supported government efforts in combating the pandemic through participation in UN in Ghana Crisis Management Team meetings, discussing and coordinating response efforts, including the roll-out of the vaccination programme. IOM Ghana provided technical support on risk communication to the Ghana Health Service’s (GHS) Health Promotion Unit, thus supporting the government in drafting its COVID-19 response plan.

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the need for UN staff to continue their work in various locations, IOM and the UN signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide COVID-19 related health services to its staff and dependents to ensure their wellbeing. Under the IOM First Line of Defense (FLoD) project (March 2020 to April 2021), IOM Ghana, in collaboration with the UN clinic and IOM’s partner laboratory, provided SARS CoV-2 testing service for UN staff, dependents and contacts who were symptomatic for COVID-19. By end of December 2020, 42 tests had been administered. Going forward, IOM Ghana intends to continue providing these services on a self-payer or cost-shared basis and to offer administrative testing services for travel purposes.

We are hoping to join our uncle in the UK as soon as travel restrictions are lifted. We want to further our education. When we arrived at MHAC, we were expecting that a lot of safety and social distancing measures were in place, so we are adhering to what is required from us.

Evans, one of the first visitors on the day of re-opening of MHAC
Health assessments for migrants and refugees

The MHD provides medical services and coordinates migration health activities including health assessments for refugees and migrants, screenings for the UK Tuberculosis Detection Programme (UKTB), DNA sample collections, support to medical cases of IOM’s Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) and counter trafficking programmes, as well as medical escort assistance as required.

The MHD coordinates the provision of these services for the 23 countries in the WCA region (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC], Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo).

In 2020, 6,998 migrants (3,594 men, 3,405 women) underwent medical examinations as part of their resettlement process at the MHAC in Accra. 569 (200 men, 369 women) health assessments were conducted for refugees across the WCA region. Also, 72 returnees with significant medical conditions received medical assistance and referral for inpatient care upon arrival in Accra (under IOM Ghana’s various migrant protection and AVRR programmes).

Tuberculosis assessment for migrants

IOM MHD Accra conducts UK Tuberculosis (UKTB) assessments for migrants planning to travel to the UK for more than six months from Ghana and other locations within the WCA region. In 2020, 6,411 (3,290 men, 3,121 women) were screened at the MHAC in Accra under the UKTB. An additional 2,230 migrants were screened under the programme in the other regional IOM UKTB sites (Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, DRC, Gambia and Senegal), making a total of 8,641 (4,322 men, 4,319 women) beneficiaries under the UKTB detection programme across the region.

DNA sample collection

591 applicants (289 men, 302 women) were sampled for DNA to support migrant family reunification in six countries: Australia, Canada, USA, Italy, Spain, and the UK.
 Movements amid COVID-19

The number of refugees affected during the COVID-19 pandemic was significant. Due to the suspension of departures between 1 March 2020 and 31 August 2020, 452 refugee resettlements were canceled. These refugees were mainly from camps in Chad, Cameroon, and Niger and scheduled to be resettled in Canada, USA, Australia, and Europe.

Refugees, migrants, including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), are among those most vulnerable to the pandemic. Upon notification of their travel dates, many sell their belongings and properties. This situation resulted in poorer and temporary living conditions for many which put them at higher risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19.

On 22 March, the GoG closed all international borders as part of its COVID-19 protection measures. During that period, the government stepped up its efforts to evacuate hundreds of Ghanaians stranded in various countries across the globe including the WCA region. To allow for safe returns amid the pandemic, the government decreed a 14-day mandatory quarantine in facilities where returned migrants were tested, monitored, and offered adequate medical assistance. IOM Ghana supported returnees, amongst others with PPEs.

Movement Operations in Ghana resumed refugee resettlements on 1 September 2020, with the reopening of the Kotoka International Airport in Accra. Following the recommencement of resettlement travels (1 September to 31 December 2020), 240 refugees (132 men, 108 women) were successfully resettled from WCA, including Ghana, to Canada, USA, and Europe.

In full compliance with GoG COVID-19 regulations, Movement Operations provided assistance upon arrival at the airport, medical assessments and support to COVID-19 testing to refugees prior to departure/arrival. IOM Ghana has also informed other IOM missions worldwide about the GoG’s COVID-19 guidelines and health requirements for all international arrivals, including the ECOWAS region, to support them to plan movements to Ghana.

Canadian Visa Application Centre

As part of IOM’s global partnership with Visa Facilitation Services (VFS) Global (an exclusive service provider for visa services to the Government of Canada), IOM operates the Canadian Visa Application Centre (CANVAC) in Ghana. It accepts applications for various visas (visitor, student, and work permits) to Canada for nationals from Ghana as well as from Ascension, Benin, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe, St. Helena, The Gambia, Togo, and Tristan da Cunha. IOM also supports the Canadian High Commission by reviewing visa applications for accuracy, processing and dispatching applications, conducting biometric registrations and transmitting passports.

Due to COVID-19, CANVAC was closed in March 2020 and re-opened in June 2020 under strict COVID-19 protocols. When the Centre re-opened, new measures introduced by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) included that all applications had to be submitted online through the IRCC portal. CANVAC was authorised to accept applicants for biometric registrations only and transmit passports for specified cases via courier.

# MOVEMENT OPERATIONS

IOM Movement Operations Ghana coordinates activities like pre-departure orientation and logistical support to health assessment and selection missions on a regional level. IOM Ghana also provides verification services by leveraging its local knowledge and strong network to alleviate immigration and visa fraud.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOVEMENT OPERATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IOM Movement Operations Ghana coordinates activities like pre-departure orientation and logistical support to health assessment and selection missions on a regional level. IOM Ghana also provides verification services by leveraging its local knowledge and strong network to alleviate immigration and visa fraud.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ARRIVAL OF RETURNEES AT KOTOKA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN ACCRA ©IOM/Ghana

### APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>14,902</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2,322</td>
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### PASSPORTS TRANSMITTED

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>4,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2,029</td>
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### BIOMETRIC REGISTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>6,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>6,493</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impact of COVID-19 and related measures on the total number of applications, passport transmissions and biometric registrations 2019 vs 2020 figures:
Pre-departure orientation

252 refugees (155 men, 97 women) participated in Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) pre-departure orientation sessions who were based in Ghana, Niger, Chad, Senegal, DRC and Côte d’Ivoire. 93 people attended in-person sessions. Following the outbreak of COVID-19, COA informational packages were sent to seven beneficiaries who had to travel immediately and/or where no in-person session could be arranged. IOM also conducted briefings for 152 beneficiaries via telephone amid COVID-19.

Refugees who were provided with telephone briefings during COVID-19 could not hide their appreciation about the fact that IOM assisted them in spite of the challenges posed by COVID-19. IOM staff often spent hours over the phone with beneficiaries to provide them with the needed information. The participants were appreciative of the sessions which equipped them with the relevant information about their travel and resettlement country before they departed.

Patience Lartey
Project Coordinator and Facilitator – Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA), IOM Ghana
IOM supports migrants who require protection and/or return and reintegration assistance. Beneficiaries assisted consist of irregular and regular migrants, stranded migrants, and migrants in vulnerable situations, such as victims of trafficking, unaccompanied migrant children and migrants with medical needs.

Migrant Protection & Assistance

In coordination with donors, operational funds were reprogrammed to respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic. For example, seven returnees and one VoT, who had already benefitted from reintegration support for the establishment of sewing businesses which were negatively impacted by the pandemic, were supported to go into the production of nose masks. This was to complement government efforts to counter the negative impact of the virus on livelihoods.

In addition, six CSOs were engaged to support the IOM awareness raising campaigns on safe migration and COVID-19 prevention messages were incorporated into these campaigns. Several of these campaigns were undertaken, reaching over 900,000.

In 2020, IOM Ghana coordinated the arrival of 537 returnees (502 men, 35 women) under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration. Most of them arrived amid the pandemic on three air charters from Libya while one land movement from Niger took place prior to the outbreak of COVID-19. IOM partnered with the Governments of Ghana and Libya to ensure the successful organization of the three charter flights during the COVID-19 travel restrictions period.

The GoG and IOM launched the “Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Reintegration of Returnees in Ghana” on 2 September 2020. The SOPs are the first of its kind in Ghana and will provide a common understanding amongst migration stakeholders and ensure a consistent approach across all returns to Ghana and the returnees’ subsequent reintegration into their communities of return. The SOPs clarify the processes and procedures related to reintegration in Ghana, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the different actors involved.

In 2020, IOM Ghana implemented, with the support of its local partners BOK Africa Concern and Refugee Integration Organisation (RIO), seven community-based and four collective livelihood projects in the Bono, Bono East and Western regions of Ghana. These initiatives aim to provide livelihoods for returnees and community members, support skills development, strengthen social cohesion, facilitate migrants’ reintegration without discrimination and stigma, and ensure that youth have access to opportunities at home, offering an alternative to risking their lives on irregular migration routes. The projects benefitted more than 630 persons and created employment for 256 (85 men, 171 women). Among the beneficiaries were also 75 physically handicapped persons (40 men, 35 women). Examples of projects supported include a new gari processing factory and a cashew seedlings nursery in Praprabaabida in the Bono region established in close collaboration with the Dormaa East District Assembly.

Lastly, 158 (83 men, 75 women) farmers - returnees, potential migrants and community members - were trained in the production of organic herbicides and pesticides. Participants learnt how to produce self-made and chemical-free protection for plants (i.e. pesticides and herbicides). This knowledge has the added advantage of fostering environmentally sustainable farm practices and making the collective farmers independent from industrially produced chemicals.
Interventions to combat human trafficking

2020 was a very fruitful year in terms of partnerships and activities related to combating human trafficking, even though, as with most other interventions, COVID-19 related restrictions presented challenges.

From 8 to 10 January 2020, IOM, in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) and its Human Trafficking Secretariat (HTS), facilitated a visit of the Human Trafficking Management Board (HTMB) to the Krachi West District in the Oti Region, an area vulnerable to Trafficking in Person (TIP). The activity brought together government representatives, CSOs, as well as sending and receiving communities. Visiting the fishing sites on Lake Volta and some adjoining islands allowed the HTMB members to witness the prevalence of child trafficking as well as the living conditions on the islands. During an advocacy and sensitization forum residents and community leaders from Kete Krachi and surrounding communities were informed about the threats and consequences of child trafficking, as well as preventative measures.

To support the government with reliable data on TIP prevalence, push and pull factors and recruitment modus operandi, IOM conducted and launched the TIP study on internal and cross-border trafficking for sexual exploitation. The results of the study were presented to national stakeholders and will enable decision-makers to develop national prevention and protection mechanisms.

Despite the COVID-19 related travel restrictions, IOM continued to facilitate with identification, reintegration and safe return of VoTs to Ghana or to their country of origin. In total, 58 survivors of trafficking (56 women, 2 men) of Ghanaian and Nigerian nationalities were assisted to return to their homes.

To strengthen the capacity of counter-trafficking stakeholders to respond to TIP challenges, to better meet the needs of VoTs and those who are vulnerable to it, and to coordinate preventive and protection measures, IOM revised and validated the training curricula for law enforcement and for social workers.

In October 2020, a series of trainings took place aimed at improving rescue, investigation and prosecution processes to contribute to ending TIP in the country. In total, 18 senior trainers from Police Academies in the Greater Accra, Central, Eastern, Ashanti, Northern and Volta regions participated to strengthen their knowledge on effective identification and investigation of trafficking cases within the national legal framework and to be able to hand over the skills to colleagues across the country as trainers in their respective educational institutions.

Throughout September and October 2020, IOM Ghana ran a series of trainings for officers from the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) to empower them with theoretical knowledge and practical skills to comprehensively combat child trafficking and address the needs of victims. The trainings included 136 social workers from six regions (Eastern, Bono East, Greater Accra, Oti, Central and Volta regions), including from the DSW in Accra. The trainings helped the social workers to better understand TIP, identify trends and appropriate referral mechanisms to tackle the problem, identify and meet the needs of child VoTs, understand the concept of the child’s best interest and rights of child VoTs, and acquire the knowledge and skills to screen and provide trauma-informed direct services to child VoTs.
PPE donations to ensure continuation of life-saving services amid COVID-19

As the number of COVID-19 cases increased in Ghana, the impact of the pandemic on direct service providers and beneficiaries was immense. Therefore, in May 2020, IOM donated Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), including veronica buckets, sanitizers, nose masks, disposable gloves, gallons of disinfectants, and sets of PPEs, to governmental and NGO partners who run shelters for the survivors of trafficking. IOM Ghana distributed PPEs and other items, such as life jackets, to support its partners and stakeholders working to end trafficking in persons (TIP) in Ghana, including the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), Ghana Immigration Service (GIS), Ghana Police Service (GPS), and partners in six regions, to continue their important work amid COVID-19. This positively impacted safe direct assistance and timely response to survivors of trafficking. Additional support to the government’s response to the pandemic included the donation of PPE to reception and quarantine centres as well capacity building of staff in psychosocial first aid, such as the Prampram Quarantine Centre.

Migrants’ Mental Health, a Priority for IOM Ghana Amidst COVID-19

As part of IOM’s holistic reintegration scheme, returnees can receive psychosocial assistance to help them cope with the difficulties of return and sequels of the journey.

With the outbreak of COVID-19, IOM’s psychosocial support to returnees has been challenged by preventive measures adopted to fight the pandemic, as physical meetings had been suspended, especially during lockdown.

To continue providing returnees with the necessary support, IOM Ghana is offering virtual mental health and psychosocial counseling. IOM is also running trainings on psychological first aid, introducing participants – from doctors and nurses to security personnel and community leaders – to tools to provide basic psychological first aid. Finally, training material is accessible online, including three educational and three social media videos on migrants’ mental health, psychological first aid and stigmatization.

Throughout the year, IOM provided individual counselling to 34 persons (24 men, 10 women), 16 of which had returned from Germany. Furthermore, 82 persons (59 men, 23 women) were supported through group counselling sessions.

IOM held 18 capacity building sessions on psychosocial support, including psychological first aid and sensitization on stigmatization for partner CSOs and community leaders (assembly men/women, religious leaders, etc.) in 16 communities across nine regions. These have strengthened their capacity to assist returning and potential migrants, identify basic mental illness, address the issue of stigmatization of returnees, and refer cases that need professional support. In total, 289 participants (198 men, 91 women) participated in the sessions. Dedicated sessions for staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MoFARI) and the Prampram Quarantine Center were organized to ensure safe returns amid the pandemic.
SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING ASSISTED - BY AGE

- Total: 58
- Men: 2
- Women: 56

RETURNEE ASSISTED - BY AGE

- Total: 668
- Men: 594
- Women: 74

RETURNEE ASSISTED BY REGIONS OF RETURN

- Upper East: 11
- Upper West: 7
- North East: 1
- Northern: 20
- Savannah: 6
- Bono: 120
- Bono East: 118
- Ahafo: 2
- Ashanti: 145
- Western: 38
- Central: 32
- Eastern: 25
- Volta: 13
- Greater Accra: 91
- Other: 49

TOTAL: 668
IOM's migration and development initiatives support Ghana's efforts to leverage migration for sustainable development, support poverty reduction efforts and empower communities.

Labour Mobility and Human Development

IOM's migration and development initiatives support Ghana's efforts to leverage migration for sustainable development, support poverty reduction efforts and empower communities.

Towards the establishment of the Ghana National Commission on Migration

In line with the implementation of the National Migration Policy, the MINTER inaugurated an Inter-Agency Technical Working Group (IATWG) in December 2019, tasked with recommending modalities for the establishment of the Ghana National Commission on Migration (GNCM), the national migration governance platform to coordinate the implementation of the National Migration Policy.

In 2020, IOM supported over ten coordination meetings of the group, including facilitating and supporting a request from the government for two study visits to the Kenyan National Coordination Mechanism on Migration, as well as the Nigerian Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons. The visits afforded the IATWG insights into the governance structure, mandate, challenges, and success of the two-migration coordinating mechanisms.

Subsequently, IOM supported the government to engage a consultant to carry out a mapping of different commission models in Ghana, including their operationalization in terms of needed human and financial resources, as well as modalities for its establishment, to inform the model and function of the GNCM, including the drafting of a cabinet memo for executive approval as envisaged by the National Migration Policy (2016).

Ghana Migration Profile

The MINTER, with support from IOM, launched the 2019 Ghana Migration Profile. The Profile is a comprehensive and user-friendly repository of relevant migration data covering topics including internal migration dynamics, human trafficking, diaspora, remittances, and labour migration, amongst others. This iteration of the Ghana Migration Profile is the first since its inaugural edition, published in 2009, and responds to the need for accurate and reliable data for evidence-based policy making, in line with the recommendations and objectives of the SDGs, GCM and the National Migration Policy.

Supporting diaspora entrepreneurship in Ghana

The project Promoting and facilitating diaspora entrepreneurship in Ghana, was closed in 2020 and contributed to addressing the challenges diasporans face, including the lack of professional guidance on investments when they want to set up businesses in Ghana. 20 diaspora entrepreneurs were integrated into an incubator programme through which they learnt how to navigate the legal and regulatory landscape in Ghana, build local partnerships, manage customer acquisition and market entry, conduct research and testing, as well as build successful cross-border businesses. Through the project, all participating entrepreneurs were granted membership at Impact Hub Accra until June 2021, which includes being part of a virtual ecosystem as well as receiving one-on-one support and continuous mentoring expected to lead to the setting up of a viable business to support the socio-economic development of the country.

Labour migration

The National Labour Migration Policy (2020-2024) (NLMP) provides a coordinated framework that seeks to promote good governance in the management of labour migration issues, to protect the rights of migrant workers in Ghana and abroad, and to maximize the positive impacts of migration on sustainable development. In 2020, IOM has been working closely with the IATWG for the NLMP, as well as supported the development and validation of annual institutional workplans for an effective implementation of the policy. The IATWG agreed to meet quarterly to track progress of implementation of the policy.
Immigration and border management (IBM) activities are designed to support the GoG in improving policy, legislation, operational systems, human resources and administrative and technical structures required to respond more effectively to diverse migration and border management challenges. IBM activities are in line with IOM’s commitment to facilitate orderly, safe and regular migration and mobility.

COVID-19 Response: Rapid Assessment of Points of Entry (PoEs)

IOM, together with WHO, co-leads the PoE Pillar Working Group in the UN’s support to government’s COVID-19 response and recovery plans.

In June 2020, IOM Ghana conducted a rapid assessment of 48 Points of Entry (PoEs) in Ghana to capture their operational status relative to migration flows, appraise health screening process, referral systems and IPC measures. The assessment was carried out in the context of assessing the COVID-19 preparedness and response of the PoEs. It revealed the state of the PoEs relative to public health emergency preparedness and the gaps requiring remedial action.

Key among the assessment’s findings are:

- 25 percent of PoEs do not have the presence of health workers with temporary presence in 48 percent.
- Over 70 percent of PoEs do not have SOPs in place for IPC and referral of ill travellers.
- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities for travellers were absent in over 90 percent of the PoEs.
- Over 80 percent of the PoE collect data including migration data manually.

The assessment was a tool to help national authorities develop adequate pandemic preparedness and response interventions at the PoEs. The full assessment can be accessed online here.

Partnerships Rejuvenated and IBM Strategy

A refreshed commitment aimed at rejuvenating the relationship with key stakeholders in the IBM continuum in Ghana was pursued in 2020. Urged on by the migration coordinating role within the UN framework, IOM Ghana’s IBM Unit held several consultative engagements with state and non-state actors to build new relations as well as reinforce existing ones. Against the backdrop of a newly crafted border management strategy for IOM Ghana, anchored in national strategies, regional policies and international best practices, consultative deliberations were held with institutions such as the GIS, MINTER, Security Governance Initiative (SGI), amongst others.

The Strategy utilizes a five-pronged strategy, aimed at supporting the GoG to respond to emerging challenges in border management and covers areas including humanitarian border management, community engagement, border infrastructure and equipment, border management information systems and capacity building. The positive feedback at national level and receptive international donor response provides a foundation from which implementation can take place moving forward.
AWARENESS RAISING

IOM used diverse strategies to sensitise the general public, including the youth, on the dangers associated with irregular migration and the need to use safer migration options. With the outbreak of the pandemic, IOM Ghana included COVID-19 prevention messages into its awareness raising interventions.

A shared responsibility for IOM and CSOs

To strengthen efforts to raise awareness of the dangers of irregular migration among Ghanaian youths and to discuss how to best engage with communities in migration-prone areas across the country, IOM trained 16 CSOs in January 2020. Participating organisations are closely connected with the local communities and are knowledgeable of the local context and culture. They are therefore important actors to tailor and disseminate reliable information on the risks of irregular migration, to counter the stigmatisation of returnees and address their potential psychosocial needs. Six of the participating CSOs were selected later in the year to carry out awareness raising interventions (see below).

COVID-19 Awareness Raising

One of the first interventions implemented by IOM Ghana to raise awareness of COVID-19 in the country, was the printing and distribution of a series of posters and postcards. A total of 12,800 WHO and GHS certified posters and postcards on COVID-19 prevention (in Twi and English) were printed and distributed. Partnering government bodies, UN agencies, CSOs, community influencers, youth-led NGOs, including a migration youth group run by a returnee that took it upon themselves to educate youth in their respective communities on COVID-19, distributed these posters in their various interventions in local communities across eight regions of Ghana (Bono, Bono East, Ashanti, Western, Northern, Volta, Ahafo and Greater Accra region). They were also used on social media.

Video series on the impact of COVID-19 on returnees’ and migrants’ mental health

A series of videos was produced in which returnees share their migration experiences as well as the impact of COVID-19 on their livelihoods. The videos are being used on social media and during awareness raising interventions in communities to give visibility to the authentic voices of returnees, to the live-saving support of reintegration programmes, and to raise awareness of the dangers of irregular migration. Three educational and three social media videos on migrants’ mental health, stigmatization and psychological first aid were produced to support trainings on mental health.

Street Art: awareness on COVID-19 and safe migration

Amidst the fight against the spread of COVID-19 in Ghana, IOM Ghana joined forces with the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), European Union, and artists from the Ghana Graffiti collective, in an effort to use street art to sensitize people about COVID-19 prevention, safe migration and solidarity. The location of the mural is a busy road in Accra in the Okaiwei North Municipal community with a great deal of daily traffic and commuters from all walks of life. The initiative is part of a larger street art project IOM is working on across West and Central Africa and involved five countries in 2020, namely Côte d’Ivoire, Senegal, Mauritania, Niger and Ghana.

Together with the GoG, IOM virtually launched on 17 July 2020 a nationwide multi-media awareness raising campaign to promote safe migration among the Ghanaian youth amid COVID-19. The campaign aimed to inspire a conversation about migration, both online and offline in communities. Mediums used to spread the messages and testimonies of returnees included radio, television, posters, brochures, billboards, murals, short message service (SMS), and pen drives. A social media campaign including returnees’ testimonies via Facebook and Twitter received popular engagements (e.g. in August 2020 alone, a total of 111,217 engagements [clicks, reactions, comments, shares]). Returnees, their community members, and people who might consider irregular migration as an option were invited to share their own stories online using #LetsTalkMigration.
Training of volunteers
20 returnees have been trained by partner CSOs in the Western region of Ghana to act as volunteers to support awareness raising activities on safe migration. The volunteers were provided with training on identifying available opportunities within the local economy, basic business knowledge to run micro and small enterprises, and communication skills to support awareness raising activities.

Community interventions: joining forces with CSOs
As part of the #LetsTalkMigration awareness raising campaign, six CSOs were engaged to bring the COVID-19 and safe migration messages to communities of high returns in Ghana. Together, they reached over 150 communities in six regions, via interventions in public spaces, schools, and churches, with local chiefs and authorities, as well as via local radio and television stations. The interventions were also an opportunity to speak about COVID-19 prevention. CSOs were provided with posters and t-shirts (including COVID-19 messages) as well as with a toolkit to guide their outreach activities.

The collaboration with the CSOs to carry out awareness raising interventions will go a long way to ensure sustainability. Many of these CSOs have a core focus on migration and migration-related issues. The guidance and toolkits they received will help them design and implement future interventions. This kind of collaboration has proven effective in the past with the training of community influencers who act as ambassadors and advocates for safe migration and have continued to raise awareness amid COVID-19 via radio and television.

Continued support to Ghana Immigration Service
To support the sustainability of awareness raising activities on safe migration in Ghana, IOM donated technical and audiovisual equipment to the GIS. Donated equipment included projectors, projector screens, microphones, speakers, cameras, generators, pull-up banners, amongst others. It will allow GIS officers to carry out and document awareness raising activities on the risks of irregular migration and regular pathways in migration-prone areas across the country. GIS has been running awareness raising activities through its Migration Information Centre (MIC) in Sunyani, Bono region, since 2016, and Takoradi, Western region, and Tamale, Northern region, since 2019, as well as its Migration Information Bureau in Accra.

Creation of Information Centre Desks
Through a partner CSO working in the Bono East region, BOK Africa Concern, four community-based Information Centre Desks have been created to support awareness raising activities. These Information Centre Desks are equipped with the toolkit on awareness raising developed by IOM and materials used to regularly inform communities about irregular migration and COVID-19 prevention. The Information Centre Desks serve as point of reference for reliable information on migration. A WhatsApp platform has also been created to coordinate information and to help manage queries from the communities. This platform involves a representative from GIS/MIC, IOM and other relevant stakeholders who could help address issues that members of the communities may raise.

Posters and jingles to counter trafficking issue
New awareness raising materials aimed at the prevention of trafficking of women and children – posters, leaflets and radio jingles in English and Twi – were developed under the slogan “Trafficking in Persons is real in Ghana. Be aware. Stay safe. Help prevent it!”. They were distributed amongst governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and partners who use them to raise awareness of the issue of TIP locally amongst the vulnerable population of trafficking-prone communities.
Due to the global pandemic, IOM Ghana adapted its International Migrants Day (IMD) activities that usually bring together hundreds of people in various communities across the country. In 2020, IOM Ghana made a stronger use of radio stations, murals, as well as hybrid (online/offline) events. The 2020 Migrants Day reminded us that these challenging times we find ourselves in offer an opportunity to reimagine the future of human mobility and ensure that it is inclusive, safe, contributes to sustainable development, and respects human rights. As we move forward with a transformational recovery from COVID-19, it is important that the voices and the needs of migrants are taken into account.

**Migrants Day on Air**

A series of radio interventions, as part of the multimedia awareness raising campaign #LetsTalkMigration, took place throughout the week on Twin City Radio and Goodnews FM (Western region), Dormaa FM and Shalom Radio (Berekum, Bono region). IOM Ghana Chief of Mission, Abibatou Wane-Fall, spoke to West Africa Democracy Radio about the 2020 IMD theme “reimagining human mobility”, irregular migration and the impact of COVID-19 on migration and migrants. A special radio show was organised on 3FM (Accra) in the morning of IMD which featured IOM Ghana Goodwill Ambassador Kofi Kinaata and the Chief of Mission of IOM Ghana. The programme also ensured that the voices of our youth, who are indeed our future, are heard, through the participation of Emmanuel Ametepey, Executive Director of Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG), a prominent youth NGO in the country.

**A new mural in Nima**

Convinced of the power of art to reach people, for this Migrants Day, IOM Ghana joined forces again with artists from the Ghana Graffiti Collective and the AMA to create a new mural in Accra, in Nima on the Kanda highway. Under the creative leadership of Mohammed Awudu, the artists helped, with their artistic interpretation of the theme, to reimagine the future of migration amid COVID-19.

**Kofi Kinaata: Engaging with the youth**

The focus on the youth continued with Kofi Kinaata’s Made in Taadi (MIT) Youth Seminar on 22 December 2020 in Takoradi. Exploring the topic “Surviving the vicissitudes of COVID-19: The opportunities the pandemic presents and the dangers of irregular migration”, the broad range of speakers discussed the skills needed to be resilient amid the pandemic and shared their experiences of becoming successful entrepreneurs in Takoradi, contextualised within the reality that the Western region is one of the main regions of returns of irregular migrants. In line with COVID-19 protocols, the event brought together about 100 youth at the venue and was streamed to 600,000 on Facebook. “I continue to use my music and my platform to promote safe migration. I know I can reach a lot of young people who might not have access to accurate information about regular and irregular migration,” said Kofi Kinaata, reaffirming his commitment as IOM Ghana Goodwill Ambassador.

**Global Migration Film Festival: Screening of “Agadez”**

The MIT Youth Seminar presented an opportunity to speak with the youth about safe migration pathways and addressing the issue of irregular migration. The short film “Agadez” by Director Ian Barling was screened as part of the 2020 Global Migration Film Festival (GMFF) West and Central Africa selection, to shed light on the realities of irregular migration and human trafficking. The youthful audience engaged actively in a Q&A session with an IOM Ghana Reintegration Officer, and made suggestions on how to bring the safe migration messages into the communities. The film inspired a spontaneous spoken word performance by a young student from Takoradi.

As the United Nations in Ghana continues to work with stakeholders and partners, to support the Government of Ghana and all people to recover better from the crisis, we are mindful of ensuring an inclusive response plan, where all people, including migrants, are considered.

Charles Abani
UN Resident Coordinator in Ghana, during the IMD event in Accra

As the United Nations in Ghana continues to work with stakeholders and partners, to support the Government of Ghana and all people to recover better from the crisis, we are mindful of ensuring an inclusive response plan, where all people, including migrants, are considered.
MIGRATION, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (MECC)

IOM Ghana works to contribute towards enhancing the Government’s management of the MECC nexus, as well as the resilience of Ghanaians and their communities, including migrants, to cope with a rapidly changing climate and environment.

It is widely recognized that human mobility is increasingly impacted by environmental and climatic factors, both pushing and pulling individuals to move. Increasing land degradation in the north and middle of Ghana, for instance, worsens the living conditions for those living in poverty, and in some circumstances triggers the movement of people, oftentimes to urban centres. Meanwhile, unregulated artisanal and small-scale gold mining, referred to locally as galamsey, has attracted thousands of workers in recent years, many of whom are migrants. This practice has environmental consequences such as deforestation, the loss of biodiversity, as well as water and air pollution.

Support to returnees’ sustainable farming activities

In 2020, IOM Ghana continued to mainstream environmental sustainability into its interventions. For instance, IOM increased the knowledge of 158 (83 men, 75 women) returnees, potential migrants and community members involved in farming in the Bono and Bono East regions on environmentally sustainable methods through ten trainings on how to achieve chemical-free protection for their plants by producing their own bio-pesticides using neem, pepper, self-made soap and other ingredients.

IOM Ghana shared its experiences and lessons learned from these interventions in a webinar on “IOM Green Livelihoods Programming” organised by the Regional Office for Central and North America and the Caribbean in San José, Costa Rica, for IOM country offices working on the response to the current Venezuelan refugee and migrant crisis.

Contribution to UN in Ghana’s environmental agenda

Throughout 2019 and 2020, IOM Ghana actively participated in the UN in Ghana’s Greening Committee, which unites all UN Agencies in the country to lead the development and implementation of strategies to make the UN greener. IOM Ghana also actively participated in UN in Ghana coordination meetings on Protected and Safe Environment (Results Area 3 of UNSDP), thereby ensuring that MECC was mainstreamed in the planning and reporting of UN interventions.

IOM Ghana’s greening efforts

In 2019, IOM Ghana took important steps towards improving its environmental footprint. This was done through banning single-use plastics at its office, as well as raising the awareness of staff on relevant matters related to environmental sustainability, including relevant SDGs; efforts of the GoG on plastic waste management; the MECC nexus; and the global UN Greening the Blue initiative.

We learnt modern farming methods including the production of pesticides and herbicides on a natural basis. Our farm looks beautiful. The group farming has helped us collectively achieve much more than we could have achieved individually.

Justice

Returnee and beneficiary of the bio-pesticide training
of UNGT’s joint activities, including the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (25 November to 10 December) and International Day of the Girl Child (11 October).

Gender is central to effective and sustainable migration governance. It is recognised that a person’s sex, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation shape every stage of the migration experience. Gender influences reasons for migrating, who migrates and to where, how people migrate and the networks they use, opportunities and resources available at destinations, and relations with the country of origin. Risks, vulnerabilities and needs are also shaped in large part by one’s gender, and often vary drastically for different groups. It is crucial for any project to consider gender-specific migration trends in general, and in the Ghanaian context, and to respond accordingly.

IOM Ghana is part of the UN Gender Team (UNGT), composed of gender experts and focal points from various UN agencies, including IOM. The UNGT ensures that gender perspectives are addressed within the UN’s assistance to Ghana and that support to the Government’s efforts on gender equality is coordinated, primarily within the context of the UN Sustainable Development Partnership (UNSDP) 2018-2022, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2020, IOM participated in all of UNGT’s joint activities, including the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (25 November to 10 December) and International Day of the Girl Child (11 October).

IOM is committed to gender mainstreaming in all its migration management activities. As part of the UN system, IOM supports the Government of Ghana’s commitment to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment and to work towards achieving SDG 5 on Gender Equality.

In 2020, IOM supported the establishment of a new Soap Resource Centre in Senase in the Bono region, one of eight community-based projects implemented with funding from the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), through the Ghanaian-German Centre for Jobs, Migration and Reintegration (GGC).

Amid the challenges posed by the global pandemic, the establishment of the soap centre became even more important, since it not only provided livelihood opportunities to returnees and community members alike, but also contributed to keeping the community of Senase safe, as Ghana continued to work hard to contain the spread of the virus.

The Soap Resource Centre has been completed and was handed over to the community in May 2020, at a time when the country had just concluded a lockdown period as a restrictive measure to fight the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in Ghana, not only on migrants and returnees but on the population in general, initiatives aimed at creating employment opportunities, like this one, were even more important and timely.

The project gained active support from the people of Senase as it provides the necessary skills training for their youth in making high quality soap. The Centre facilitates access to necessary equipment and provides employment opportunities and alternative income activities for the youth, especially for the almost 80 returnees and the large number of young women involved.

“...it is more than a Centre. It is a blessing. I learnt to produce my own soap. My main interest is in the liquid black soap. I can use these products in my saloon to wash hair. It smells nice, so my customers will like it. I am optimistic that this will have a positive impact on my business,” Ms. Peggy Asantewaa, a returnee and survivor of trafficking.

In total, 78 persons (8 men, 70 women) are directly employed to manage, boil, salt, conduct the saponification, pitch, cool/finish, cut and package the products. Additionally, 284 persons (80 men, 204 women) received start-up kits for soap production, complementing a training they received from a local government initiative.

Among these beneficiaries are also 75 persons (40 men, 35 women) with disabilities, making sure no one in the community is left behind, and demonstrating the inclusive approach of the project.

“Their engagement will allow them to sustain themselves and their families instead of depending on the benevolence of friends and family,” explains Benson Obeng-Savio Boateng, Executive Director of BOK Africa Concern, IOM’s implementing partner making sure that the project was brought to life.

Under the leadership of the local Queen Mother, a stakeholder’s committee including four Municipal Chief Executives, decided in August 2020 that the Senase Resource Centre will become a model and serve as the coordination centre for black soap production and marketing across the region. Around 1,200 beneficiaries were trained in soap making and marketing subsequently, and the Centre thus serves as a catalyst for employment prospects, further promoting gender equality and continuing the advocacy efforts sparked by the project in this regard.

“The project has given women in the community new hope and a new life. Most of the women now gather at the Centre and work together. It has really brought the women together,” said Nana Owusu Fakyewaa, Queen Mother of Senase.
Sherrynorth from Ghana, 27, and Adaku from Nigeria, 18, have gone through a lot already in their lives. Both are smart and creative. Both have big dreams for their own future. Both are survivors of trafficking in persons. Today they are keen on sharing their stories to raise awareness of this scourge among their communities, including their young sisters.

Sherrynorth went to Iraq convinced that she would find greener pastures there; when she arrived, she realized she was being trafficked.

“I left Ghana in April 2019. When I got to the airport in Erbil, my passport was withdrawn. It was very horrific. Together with other ladies, we were moved to Bagdad. We were forced to work long hours, without rest or time off,” she recalls. “When in need of medical support, we were left suffering. I was abused physically, mentally, emotionally, sexually. Eventually, I managed to escape,” she adds.

In October 2019, with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, United States Department of State, she managed to voluntary return to Ghana. Her reintegration process was challenging, even more so since COVID-19 hit Ghana in March 2020. Nonetheless, she has been pushing through.

Today, Sherrynorth is working as a seamstress and is running a small second-hand clothing business. She is among a group of returnees who have started to produce nose masks to support the Government in their COVID-19 response, under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, funded by the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. “At least I could also help save some lives out there,” she says.

But Sherrynorth’s dreams are bigger. “I’m aspiring to be a journalist to reach out to the youth and my fellow young women. So, besides the second-hand clothing business, I am studying in a Media school,” Sherrynorth explains. “I wouldn’t want any young girl to go through what I experienced. I was lucky that I got back home because I know some of my sisters are dead out there without a trace,” she says. “You should focus on the little you can do in your own country, where you have your peace and no one is going to torment you and try set-up something here,” she urges young women.

Just like Sherrynorth, Adaku left Nigeria in 2019 to seek better economic opportunities. In Nigeria, Adaku was an apprentice to become a hairdresser. She was only 17 years old and was trafficked by a fellow Nigerian lady to Ghana.

“The lady told me I was going to Ghana for work and I would have a good life. I found out that she brought me there for prostitution. I had to run as fast as my legs could take me. I went to the police and they took me to IOM,” Adaku recounts. Following her escape, she stayed at a Government-run shelter for victims of trafficking. During her stay at the shelter, Adaku reflected on what has happened to her. She is using poetry, music, and writing to process what she has been through. She wrote over 20 songs, and a short theatre play. Before she left Ghana, she shared with IOM not only her story, but a song and a scene she wrote to warn other young girls of the dangers of trafficking.

Her advice to her fellow Nigerian sisters is: “Think twice before you travel. You should be careful if someone promises you a better feature abroad. They might be liars and take advantage of you.”

Due to COVID-19 Adaku and her friend couldn’t return to Nigeria until just recently when Ghana reopened its air borders in September 2020. “I am looking forward to going back to school when I get to Nigeria to study theatre. I want to become an actress, my biggest dream,” she said.

Girls and women like Sherrynorth and Adaku are important messengers for their peers. Sherrynorth reminds: “I want to be an advocate and lead by a good example. We need to reach out to each other and be there for one another. Girls face multiple challenges jeopardizing their freedoms every day. We need to ensure that every girl and the young woman has the power over her own life. With the freedom to move, the freedom to live as we want, the freedom to socialize, the freedom to speak up, and the freedom to take action for positive change, without fear of discrimination or violence or harassment. This is my vision for a future that is equal for young girls.”

Adaku wants to become an actress ©IOM/Ghana

**Trafficking survivors raise their voices to advocate for an equal future and opportunities for young women and girls**