



HEALTH

Worldwide, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) works to operationalize the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDPN) by strengthening collaboration and coherence between humanitarian, development and peace actors, Member States, beneficiaries and other partners. Peace is a fundamental prerequisite for good health, and poor access to health and other basic social services is both a driver and consequence of conflict and displacement. As such, health-related programming has the potential to contribute to peacebuilding activities and provides an opportunity to bridge the divide between opposing parties to work towards mutually beneficial objectives such as better health care for all. This requires, however, consideration not only of emergency health responses guided by humanitarian principles, but also long-term public health interventions that address the root causes of conflict and contribute to health system strengthening, universal health coverage, and progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



An IOM doctor performs a malnutrition screening on a migrant girl in Mafraq Hareeb, Yemen. © IOM 2021

Worldwide, IOM missions strengthen collaboration, coherence & complementarity between humanitarian, development & peace actors. Furthermore, we are enhancing the HDPN by reinforcing coherence between different interventions for increased impact and more efficient use of resources. The HDPN recognizes the importance of simultaneous, rather than sequential, engagement of different stakeholders.

With respect to migrants specifically, these principles are reflected in the World Health Organization's [global action plan](#) to promote the health of refugees and migrants, the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#), IOM's [Migration Crisis Operational Framework](#) and [Health, Border and Mobility Management Framework](#), and the unifying agenda from the [Second Global Consultation on Migrant Health](#), held in 2017. The latter considers health both in the context of acute, large-scale crisis-driven displacement and in relation to long-term population flows driven by structural inequity centered around three key themes – health, health systems and global health; vulnerabilities and resilience as well as development.

HEALTH, HEALTH SYSTEMS AND GLOBAL HEALTH

IOM's Migration Health Division (MHD) implements programming that aims to address **the acute health needs** of migrants and displaced populations in humanitarian contexts and **public health emergencies** (including sexual and reproductive health and rights, menstrual health management, and the provision of mental health and psychosocial support), while maintaining a **long-term** view that also considers the importance of developing **migrant-sensitive** and **people-centered** health systems, health system recovery, robust cross-border health protocols, the mainstreaming of migrant and refugee health, and incremental progress towards global health goals including universal health coverage.

The facilitation of **communication** and **collaboration** across borders, the development of multilateral agreements on cross-border health, and importantly, the **reduction of exclusion** and **social disparities** in health can be an entry point to the mitigation of **insecurity** and **violence** in fragile contexts.

VULNERABILITIES AND RESILIENCE

In collaboration with partners, IOM implements health programming **at every stage of the migration cycle** as well as **in crisis contexts** while also identifying opportunities to support the development of **resilience** among migrant communities. Health screenings, vaccination, disease management, primary health care, risk communication and community engagement and mental health and psychosocial support all serve to address **acute health needs in crises** and contribute to the **long-term well-being** of migrants. This is further strengthened by advocacy for **migrant-sensitive** and **non-discriminatory** health policy and structural change, capacity-building initiatives (through, for example, initiatives training community health workers and expanding the capacity of government health systems), and **culturally** and **linguistically sensitive** health promotion activities. Inclusion in national health systems, empowerment of migrant and host communities and the establishment of a common purpose **protects** these communities against **future shocks, destabilization** and **conflict**, and can support civil society participation, peacebuilding, and the strengthening of institutions in line with [Sustainable Development Goal 16](#).



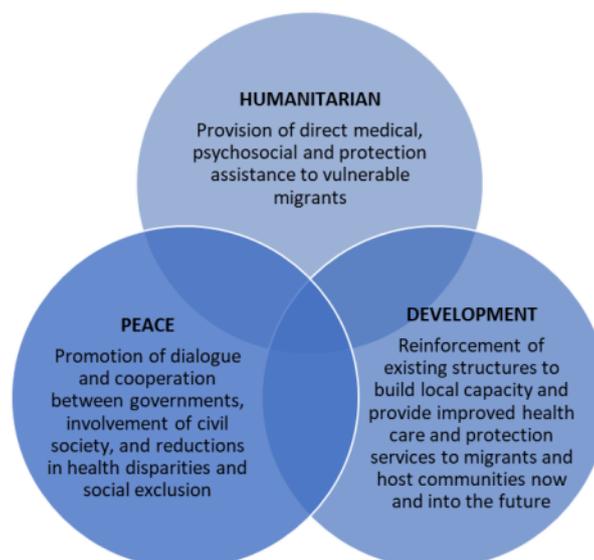
DEVELOPMENT

Migrants make significant positive contributions to development processes in their countries of origin and destination. This is more likely to occur if migrants are able to fulfill their right to the highest possible level of health and fully participate in economic and social life without discrimination. IOM works to break down barriers to health-care access for migrants and displaced populations, reduce inequality, and ensure social protection such that migrants can both benefit from and contribute to the development process through participation in the workforce and the transfer of remittances to their countries of origin, for example. IOM is also cognizant of the need to conduct its humanitarian and development-focused health programming in a manner that is context-specific, promotes trust and social cohesion, reduces marginalization, and is sensitive to and inclusive of the needs of host communities. This ensures that health activities facilitate sustainable development for all, and do not contribute to or exacerbate pre-existing grievances and unrest.

FOSTERING HEALTH AND PROTECTION FOR VULNERABLE MIGRANTS TRANSITING THROUGH MOROCCO, TUNISIA, EGYPT, LIBYA, YEMEN AND SUDAN

Every year a significant number of individuals, driven by complex factors including conflict, leave their countries of origin in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa to seek security and improved living conditions elsewhere. The precarious and harsh nature of these journeys, accompanied by limited opportunities for employment, poor living conditions and reduced access to health care place these migrants at risk of serious ill health. Since 2015, IOM has been assisting national governments to improve the health and wellbeing of migrants who transit through, or remain in, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen and Sudan with support from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland with a focus on the development of migrant-inclusive health systems. This includes the development of health policy that takes into account the health needs of migrants and the training of governmental officials in this regard, capacity-building of health professionals to enhance their skills in responding to the health needs of migrants, the strengthening of partnerships at national and regional levels (including best practice exchanges, workshops, webinars on migration health and conferences), and direct assistance to migrants (including medical consultations, psychosocial support and humanitarian assistance). Through this project, IOM has contributed to advancements towards universal health coverage and protection for all, including in post-conflict and conflict-affected settings. Key achievements of this project include:

- Improving national policies responding to the health needs of migrants and host communities through, for example, facilitating a cross-regional knowledge exchange workshop involving government officials from North Africa and Asia that resulted in an agreement to develop and operationalize national migration health policies to support migrants.
- Improving access to health and protection services for vulnerable migrants, reaching almost 90,000 beneficiaries with health promotion and medical, humanitarian and psychosocial support. Over 9,000 individuals also benefitted from referral to specialist care.
- Building the capacity of national and local actors to respond to the health and protection needs of vulnerable migrants, by training over 1,500 health service providers and more than 1,300 civil society actors, peer educators and community health workers on migration and health issues.
- Strengthening cooperation to improve migration health and protection responses in the region, through the facilitation of dialogues on sexual and reproductive health and rights and mental health and psychosocial support involving a range of stakeholders.



The HDPN approach for migrants transiting through Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Sudan





HEALTH SYSTEM STRENGTHENING THROUGH A WHOLE-OF-COMMUNITY APPROACH IN RAKHINE STATE, MYANMAR

Access to basic services has historically been a challenge for both the Rohingya and Rakhine populations living in Rakhine State, Myanmar. This issue has been exacerbated in recent years with Muslim populations facing several barriers to accessing health care, compounded by the August 2017 security incident that resulted in the fleeing of 800,000 persons across the border with Bangladesh and a series of attacks between the Arakan Army and Myanmar Military forces beginning in November 2018.

The provision of health care throughout the state is complex and fractured. Although referral pathways have improved, there are inconsistencies in the way in which medical authorities apply established protocols, contributing to inequitable access to services. Perceptions of unequal aid distribution favoring conflict-affected internally displaced persons and humanitarian programming, over local populations and long-term development needs, have further fueled community tensions. This creates additional health care access barriers and can also contribute to ongoing conflict.

IOM's approach to health system strengthening in this context takes a whole-of-community approach, whereby health services across an entire geographical region are strengthened and support is provided to overcome barriers to health care access for both Rohingya and Rakhine communities alike. State and township health facilities, including those in conflict-affected and hard-to-reach locations, are provided with material and human resources support, increasing their capacity to provide services for all. Activities have been developed to ensure flexibility to respond to humanitarian needs as the situation in Rakhine State evolves, while also contributing towards the fulfilment of the recommendations from the final report of the Rakhine Advisory Commission, the Ministry of Health and Sports' National Health Plan and other long-term development goals.



An IOM mobile medical team provides health care to migrants in Shabwah Governorate, Yemen © IOM 2021



A patient receives pain management services through IOM's health teams in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. © IOM 2020

KEY RESOURCES

[IOM'S HEALTH, BORDER AND MOBILITY MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK](#)

[WHO HEALTH AND PEACE INITIATIVE](#)

[SECOND GLOBAL CONSULTATION ON MIGRANT HEALTH](#)

[OCHA: NEW WAY OF WORKING](#)

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