



## IOM and Migrant Integration

Integration is key to effective and comprehensive migration management approaches. It intersects with a number of other major policy areas, including human rights protection and non-discrimination, employment policy, public security, social stability, public health, education, foreign affairs, citizenship and development. Policies and strategies to support the social, economic and cultural inclusion of migrants in their new environment in countries of destination and to educate receiving communities on the diverse contributions of newcomers can reinforce the positive effects of migration. Improved cooperation between countries of origin and destination can also play an important role in making integration work for all concerned.

### General Principles

The close link between migration and socio-economic and cultural development is explicitly recognized by the founding members of IOM. One of the purposes and functions of the Organization as described in its Constitution is "to provide, at the request of and in agreement with the States concerned,

migration services such as recruitment, selection, processing, language training, orientation activities, medical examination, placement, activities facilitating reception and integration, advisory services on migration questions, and other assistance as is in accord with the aims of the Organization."



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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental body, 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 work towards effective respect of the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

Effective integration policies need to be set among the first priorities of a government's migration agenda, regardless of whether the anticipated stay is temporary or permanent. Integration is essential for all parties concerned to benefit from migration and migration's contribution to the security, stability and prosperity of societies. Effective integration policies will enable governments to ensure that migrants are able to function productively during their temporary or permanent stay and that the host community adapts to and supports their presence. Integration policies will be most effective where they are tailored to the relevant circumstances – for example, they should address the different integration needs of temporary migrants, on the one hand, and permanent migrants, on the other hand.

Successful integration is a two-way process that involves mutual adaptation of migrants and the host society, as well as equality of rights and obligations. It involves acceptance by the host society and adjustment by the migrant. It is not something that happens once in a static manner. Integration is a dynamic relationship between two communities.

It is common knowledge that there are several integration models already available and being used by governments. Some of them are less or more effective than others. Some of them are effective in one country but not in another. All depends on specific circumstance, specific needs of migrants and requirements of host countries. IOM draws from successful practices developed by governments and builds on them for the benefit of other governments who may be interested in ensuring social cohesion in communities with a diversity of peoples, cultures and beliefs.

### **IOM's Activities and Programmes**

The Organization has provided reception and integration assistance and advice to both governments and migrants through a number of initiatives over the years. It uses appropriate means and occasions to stimulate awareness of the contributions migrants can and do make, the difficulties they often face, and the rights to which they are entitled both as human beings and migrants. IOM also sees the need to help migrants understand their lawful obligations to the States granting them admission.

Present in almost 120 countries with more than 280 offices, IOM can operate at various stages and levels in the migration process. Its neutrality and independence makes it an eligible neutral broker between newcomers and host communities. With a broad range of migration management services, IOM has the capacity to be flexible in the design and implementation of its integration programmes:

- IOM conducts research that provides overviews and analysis of international experiences in the field of migration legislation and practice, including integration. The collected information permits comparison of migratory flows, migration characteristics, and the treatment of migrants in selected regional and sub-regional migration environments.
- IOM's integration activities take place not only in countries of destination but also in countries of origin. Effectiveness of integration can be enhanced when the integration process begins in the country of origin, prior to emigration, and continues in the host country. With a view toward empowering migrants

and enhancing their prospects for effective integration, IOM:

- o disseminates information in home and host countries on the rights and obligations of migrants,
- o offers pre-departure/cultural orientation courses to facilitate their adjustment to life in a new country,
- o provides advice and counseling related to services available to migrants in the host country,
- o carries out vocational training to enhance their skills,
- o organizes conferences to exchange information on integration policies,
- o improves the migrant's image through the media,
- o organizes awareness raising and legal training for lawyers on discrimination practices,
- o provides integration projects for returning ethnic groups, and
- o improves health conditions of migrants.

In addition, the Organization also engages in awareness-raising activities targeting host communities, local authorities and on-shore service providers, which are used to highlight the contributions newcomers bring and, in turn, to improve their perception and acceptance.

- IOM extends technical support to government officials and other practitioners working directly with migrants through training, advisory services and other capacity building initiatives. It also increasingly extends advisory services to governments, by sharing knowledge and experience on a range of applied integration models and works with them, the private sector, NGOs and migrant communities to establish workable institutional structures and practices.

### **Conclusion**

IOM will continue to work with its Member States, its Observers, civil society, the private sector and other partners in the international community to help promote cohesive, inclusive and tolerant societies where the immigrant population can live in harmony with the local population.