



## IOM's Migrant Resource Centres

IOM supports the establishment and running of various Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) globally, as a “one-stop shop” for information and services for migrants in both source and host countries. Depending on the specific national context, MRCs may take on different functions, involving a variety of actors and serving a multitude of objectives.

MRCs offer an neutral space for potential and migrants to obtain accurate information on legal migration procedures and documentation required, the risks of irregular migration, how to stay healthy and safe during the migration process, and the rights and responsibilities that migrants have throughout the migration process. MRCs can also play a role in helping migrants to understand how they can become active contributors to the development of their countries of origin. Depending on migrants’ specific needs, MRCs may offer language or vocational/skills training and provide legal counselling.

As the leading international organization in the field of migration, IOM recognizes the fundamental value of MRCs and assists governments to establish and manage these centres to ensure their long-term sustainability. Their scope reflects a holistic response towards the empowerment of migrants, in particular regarding the prevention of irregular migration, facilitation of legal migration, and protection of migrants. MRCs also contribute towards the overall integration prospects of migrants by improving their knowledge about the destination country and ensuring that their expectations about the migration process are realistic. Therefore, the migrants assisted by MRCs can vary considerably and include labour migrants, family reunification cases or recently resettled migrants, immigrants seeking integration assistance, or returnees concerned with their successful reintegration.

### [Making informed choices throughout the migration process](#)

MRCs use a variety of approaches, including individualized legal counselling, disseminating information and dedicated hotlines and websites, that enable migrants to make informed choices related to their individual needs, including information specifically related to their rights and obligations, such as their right to health care services once abroad. Such information is important throughout the migration process as it can play a significant role in ensuring a successful and safe migration.

Before leaving the country of origin, support from MRCs can ensure that migrants are able to apply for and obtain the correct documentation as well as fully understand the implications of their status in their country of destination.

In host countries, migrants can be provided with information and advice on a safe stay, referred to relevant services, and provided with appropriate assistance in the event that their rights are violated or they have difficulties in accessing services. For irregular migrants, MRCs provide information and advice about available services related to voluntary return and reintegration.

Where appropriate, migrants can also be supported to better understand and deal with the legal, social and economic changes that may have taken place in countries of origin, which may have impacted changes on their communities and families during their time abroad, to ease the return and reintegration process.



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### Training

MRCs can provide support for migrants' training needs, either through referral to training facilities and financial support for training, or through training delivered by MRC staff. Pre-departure training tailored to country of destination also prepares migrants for the cross-cultural differences they will encounter in the host country. Language training can supplement cultural orientation and help migrants to acquire the language skills necessary to increase their integration prospects. In addition, trainings may be delivered upon arrival in the country of destination to provide more country-specific information.

### Employment-related services

MRCs have proven to be a useful way to assist migrants in all stages of the migration process to acquire an understanding of the realities of labour migration, thereby empowering them to make informed decisions. Employment-related assistance can take the form of job matching, by supporting migrants to find employment and acquire more skills. In addition to direct support for migrants, MRCs also play an important, if indirect, role in ensuring that migrants' qualifications are recognized. Lack of recognition of qualifications can be a significant factor preventing migrants and returnees from accessing suitable employment that matches their skill sets.

### MRCs linking migration and development

Migrants are often concerned with improving the situation of their families and communities of origin, as indicated by the high level of remittances sent each year. Moreover, migrants are often enthusiastic about undertaking philanthropic activities or engaging in business ventures to assist their communities in countries of origin. However, one obstacle to effectively linking migration to development is the lack of information among migrants on potential means of leveraging the benefits of their migration, return or remittances for the development of their countries of origin.

MRCs can be located in migrant communities in villages and cities or even be mobile in order to deliver services to areas that are difficult to reach and to provide both potential and actual migrants with access to services and information on how they can link their migration experience to the development of their countries of origin. Services related to remittances and investment opportunities include disseminating information about remittance transfer costs to ensure that clients are aware of the most cost-efficient options to transfer money home. In addition, partnerships to facilitate remittances can be undertaken by MRCs in order to lower remittance transfer costs or increase the speed of the process itself.

Furthermore, as health is a precursor to development, information on possible health risks linked to migration and information on how to access migrant-friendly health services are included in the services provided by MRCs. Health is a migrant's main asset and the leading factor for determining whether the migration experience for the migrant, their family, and the countries of origin and destination will be positive or negative.

While initially run by IOM, MRCs should ideally be managed by government or non-government organizations whose work includes informing and empowering potential migrants with the information needed to undertake informed decisions regarding a sustainable migration.

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