



IOM FINLAND
25 YEARS



2010

IOM FINLAND HAS GIVEN PRE-DEPARTURE
ORIENTATION TO OVER 4,000 QUOTA REFUGEES BOUND
TO FINLAND AND ICELAND SINCE 2001. THE AIM IS TO
PREPARE THE REFUGEES – LIKE THESE GIRLS IN RWANDA
IN 2010 – FOR THE PRACTICALITIES OF
THEIR DESTINATION COUNTRY.

A QUARTER OF A CENTURY OF
DIGNIFIED, ORDERLY AND SAFE
MIGRATION FOR THE
BENEFIT OF ALL



FOREWORD

IOM DIRECTOR GENERAL
WILLIAM LACY SWING

IOM was founded by a small group of about a dozen countries in Brussels in 1951. We were founded for a single purpose: to take Europeans ravaged by the Second World War to safe shores and new lives. We were about to complete our mandate when regional conflicts broke out — Indochina, the Congo, Central America — and suddenly we had to develop regional response capabilities, and then, of course, with the beginning of globalization in the 1990s, we became a truly global organization.

Currently, we have 11,000 staff in 450 locations around the world, with 97 per cent in the field. We have an extensive portfolio of activities covering every aspect of migration governance — from the protection of the human rights of migrants, resettlement, labour migration, humanitarian assistance to displaced populations, border management, migration and development, migrant smuggling and trafficking and everything in between. This story of growth would never have been possible without our close relationship with Member States and their constant encouragement and guidance. Finland has a place of choice in that community.

Finland has been an IOM Member State since 1991, while the IOM Country Office was set up in 1993, which nowadays has coordinating functions for the sub-region. It is responsible for implementing a wide range of migration-related activities in Finland, Sweden and Iceland, and provides administrative and management support to IOM offices in Denmark and Estonia. The office in Helsinki currently has about 40 staff members.

I am immensely grateful for the trust that Finland placed in IOM and for its active participation in the governance of the Organization. I thank it for hosting our office in Helsinki and for the faithful financial support it has provided over the years.

IOM looks forward to a continued and strengthened relationship in future.

FOREWORD

CHIEF OF MISSION AND SUB-REGIONAL COORDINATOR
SIMO KOHONEN

This anniversary booklet describes the 25-year history of the IOM office in Finland and its functions. Both geopolitical changes around us and structural changes within the Organization have shaped the regional coverage, the scope of operational activities and the funding of the office. For this publication, we have interviewed some of our partners and former as well as current colleagues about their memories and views of the past.

One of the characteristics of IOM is the dependency on project funding. This means continuous fundraising and project development and poses a challenge to ensure continuity and talent retention. Throughout the first decades, our main donors have been the Nordic governments and various European Union funds. I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Finnish Government and our other donors and partners for their continued support over the past 25 years.

Over the years we have employed many professionals who have worked tirelessly to achieve the Organization's objectives and targets, while overcoming any challenges that may have stood in their way. Our office has offered internship opportunities to many young graduates, which for some, myself included, have led to a career within IOM or other international organizations. Over the years, I have witnessed incredible commitment, even when the

budgets have been limited and when the future has been uncertain. To all former IOM Finland colleagues: Thank you – we would not have succeeded without you. Tomorrow's successes depend on how well we perform today. Thank you team, I am very impressed by the talent, dedication and commitment you demonstrate every day.

Looking ahead, the main challenge will be how we can move to a more balanced, evidence-based, and historically accurate approach to counter widespread misinformation, misperceptions and scapegoating of migrants in the political debate. After all, Europe is an ageing continent that depends on migration to avoid population decline — it is the only continent where the size of the population would be falling in the absence of positive net migration. At the same time, there are persisting humanitarian crises at the doorstep of Europe with people fleeing their countries to seek protection. Neither of these two realities is likely to disappear in the near future. Consequently, we need to offer viable alternatives to prospective migrants – whether they are seeking protection or a better future – in order to durably reduce incentives for irregular migration and undercut human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

Now is the moment for a shift from reforming individual legal instruments and policies, each reflecting responses to past migration realities, to devising a long-term shared vision. Such shared vision, developed together with all stakeholders, would allow updating and interlinking existing laws, policies and practices and would advance inclusion and social cohesion for the benefit of the whole society.



CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

FINNISH MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR
KAI MYKKÄNEN

Migration is one of the main issues on my political agenda as Minister of the Interior. Firstly, I see a need to increase labour migration to Finland by making this a compelling home country for international experts and by making sure that the residence permit system is functioning as efficiently as possible.

Secondly, I stress the importance of human rights. We need to ensure the rights of people seeking international protection and, at the same time, to continually support effective asylum procedures.

Thirdly, I find it important that we enable the effective return

of people who have not been granted asylum or a residence permit in Finland based on work or studies.

In order for us to continue to have an open-minded, internationally oriented and safe Finland, we need to make sure that our asylum and residence permit systems are working as planned and that no shadow society of paperless migrants becomes established. A key factor in ensuring this is to assist in and support voluntary return.

Assisted voluntary return (AVR) programmes have been funded by the EU Return Fund and the Finnish Immigration Service and implemented by IOM Finland since 2010. The first project was carried out between 2010 and 2012 and it successfully supported the return of 858 people. In 2017, 1,422 migrants returned through the programme.

I would like to thank IOM for its important work and I applaud its efforts on behalf of displaced persons asylum seekers and refugees.

In the long term, I wish to see a more ambitious common European solution to the refugee question. We need a more controlled way of providing international protection which does not lead to human trafficking and unnecessary loss of life.

To guarantee such a comprehensive approach to managing migration on our continent, we need European-wide cooperation and practices. I hope and believe that IOM will take an even-more determined and decisive role in shaping this European system over the next 25 years.



Ulkoministeriö
Utrikesministeriet
Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs would like to congratulate IOM Finland for its 25th anniversary and thank the office for all the cooperation the office has extended to Finnish authorities and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs during its existence.

IOM has an important role both in Finland and globally. It has an impressive history of more than 65 years of operations in almost all countries of the world. IOM is also in a unique position now that we have embarked upon the negotiations on the Global Compact on safe, orderly and regular migration. IOM has facilitated and prepared the thematic consultations leading to the negotiations providing exceptional insights to migration and its management and helping in understanding the complexities of migration.

The outcome from the negotiations will include a major role for IOM also in the implementation and follow-up of the Global Compact. The extensive field presence puts IOM in a unique position in assisting countries to implement the Global Compact. The new status of IOM as a related organization to the United Nations gives it an important position to coordinate the UN family in its approach to global migration providing the whole-of-UN approach.

IOM has implemented successfully a wide range of migration related activities not only in Finland but also in Sweden and Iceland including operations on assisted voluntary return and reintegration, counter-trafficking, resettlement, cultural orientation and integration.

IOM Finland also administers the MIDA FINNSOM-programme financed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The programme helps professionals of Somali origin to return temporarily to Somalia to build healthcare and education capacities in the country. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is pleased about this partnership that gives the diaspora an opportunity to help their country of origin.

Migration is an age-old phenomenon and it will also continue in the future hopefully in a safer, more orderly and regular manner. IOM is one of the organizations whose role will be important in improving the management of global migration.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs wishes IOM and IOM Finland continued success in the complex world of migration!



1993

THE AGREEMENT TO OPEN A MISSION IN FINLAND

WAS SIGNED AT IOM GENEVA HEADQUARTERS ON

THE 22ND OF APRIL 1993. PRESENT WERE FINNISH AMBASSADOR

ANTTI HYNNINEN, DIRECTOR GENERAL JAMES PURCELL

AND FIRST SECRETARY MARIA SERENIUS.

INTRODUCTION TO IOM

The International Organization for Migration is the UN Migration Agency, and the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration. IOM works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners.

IOM is dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. It does so by providing services and advice to governments and migrants.

IOM was established in 1951 and currently has 169 member states, a further eight states holding observer status and offices in over 100 countries.

IOM works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people.

The IOM Constitution recognizes the link between migration and economic, social and cultural development, as well as to the right of freedom of movement.

IOM WORKS IN FOUR BROAD AREAS OF MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

- Migration and development
- Facilitating migration
- Regulating migration
- Forced migration

IOM activities that cut across these areas include the promotion of international migration law, policy debate and guidance, protection of migrants' rights, migration health and the gender dimension of migration.



IOM TIMELINE

1991
FINLAND BECOMES A MEMBER STATE OF IOM



1993
IOM PRESENCE IN FINLAND STARTS WITH A SEMINAR IN HELSINKI

The high-level seminar by IOM and the Foreign Ministry in May 1993 in Helsinki was the start of IOM presence in Finland. The office was opened in August of the same year.

1993
IOM OFFICE IN FINLAND OPENS



1988

FINLAND GETS FIRST REFUGEE QUOTA

1990
NUMBER OF FOREIGN NATIONALS IN FINLAND: 26,255



Migration Timeline

1995
FINLAND JOINS THE EU
THE FINNISH IMMIGRATION AGENCY IS FOUNDED

The first large wave of refugees to Finland came in 1990 with the Somali refugees who fled the country's civil war. In the following years there were also refugees fleeing the war in former Yugoslavia.

1996

THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN
NATIONALS IN FINLAND
EXCEEDS 70,000 (73,754)

1993-1997

CHIEF OF MISSION
ØYSTEIN OPDAHL

1997-2002

REGIONAL
REPRESENTATIVE
JOSÉ-ANGEL
OROPEZA

1998

DUBLIN CONVENTION
INTO FORCE IN FINLAND



1998

IOM COUNTRY OFFICES
OPEN IN LATVIA &
LITHUANIA



1999

RETURN
OPERATION
TO KOSOVO

1999

MANY IOM
OFFICES
IN THE EU
JOIN IN A
COMMON
RETURN
OPERATION



1999

LARGE FLOWS OF
MIGRANTS ACROSS
EUROPE

In 1999 there were large movements of migrants across Europe. As the war in former Yugoslavia ended many of the refugees from the war began returning. During those years there were also waves of Roma people seeking asylum in various EU countries, including Finland.

2001-2010

IOM FINLAND IN CHARGE OF
PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION
FOR FINLAND BOUND QUOTA
REFUGEES

REGIONAL
REPRESENTATIVE
DR. THOMAS WEISS

2002

IOM COUNTRY OFFICE IN
NORWAY OPENS

2003-2009



2004

IOM FINLAND SUPPORTS THE ORGANIZATION
OF IRAQ OUT-OF-COUNTRY-VOTING IN
SWEDEN AND DENMARK

In January 2005, the first democratic elections in Iraq were held, and IOM helped arrange the out-of-country-voting. In the Nordics voting took place in Sweden and Denmark.

2004

IOM COUNTRY OFFICE IN
ESTONIA OPENS

2005

RESTRUCTURING OF
IOM: IOM FINLAND
IS PUT IN CHARGE
ALSO OF EASTERN
NEIGHBOURHOOD
COUNTRIES AND
SOUTHERN CAUCASUS

2001

THE SCHENGEN
AGREEMENT ENTERS
INTO FORCE

2002

NUMBER OF FOREIGN
NATIONALS IN FINLAND
REACHES 100,000 (103,682)

2004

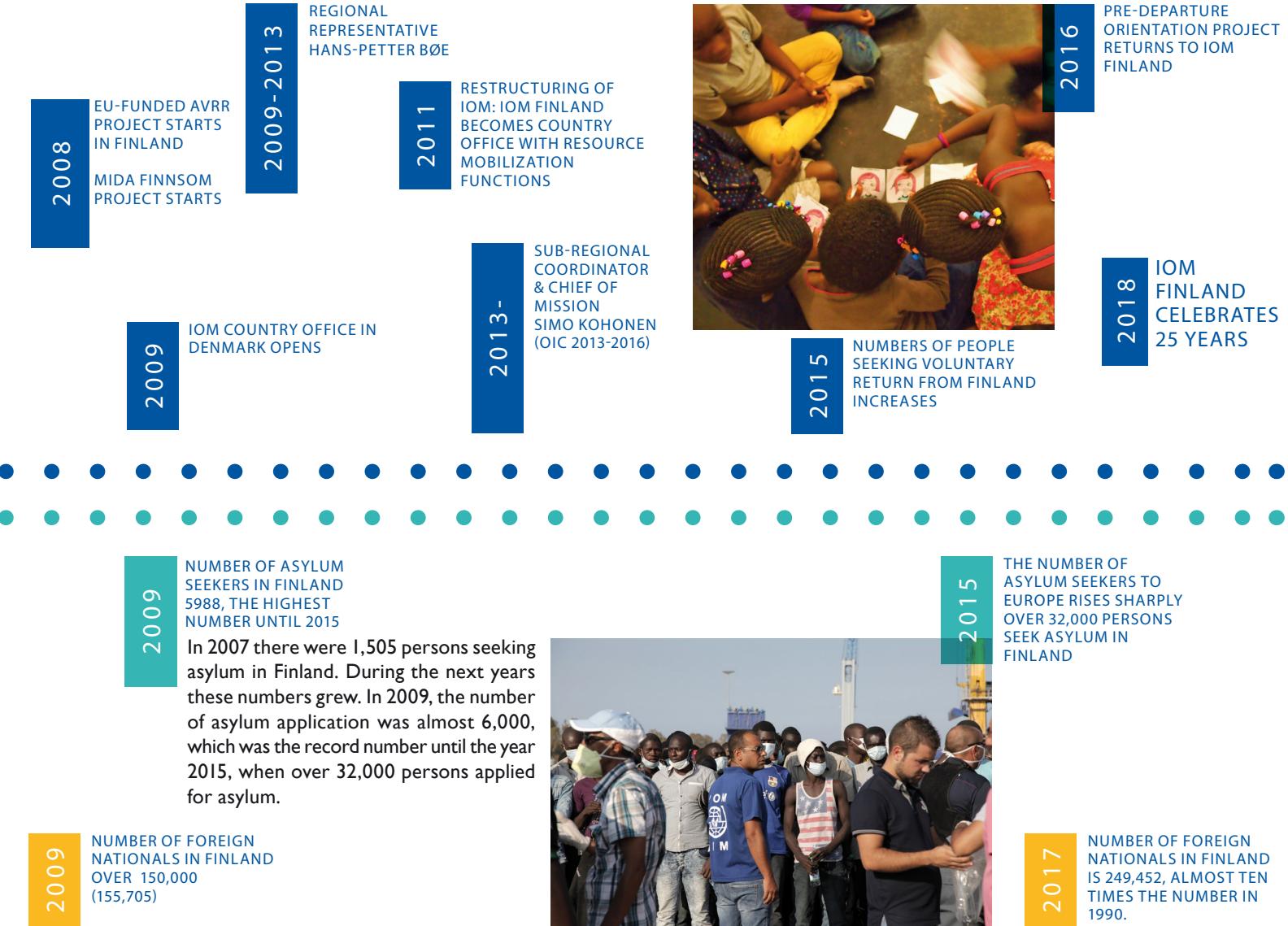
BALTICS STATES JOIN
THE EU



2007

MIGRATION ISSUES
IN FINLAND ARE
TRANSFERRED TO
THE INTERIOR MINISTRY

When the Baltic states became members of the EU in 2004 it meant a big shift for the work of IOM Finland. Much of the work before that had focused on preparing the Baltics for the membership.



FOUNDING OF THE IOM MISSION IN FINLAND

The process of opening a regional IOM Mission in Helsinki started quite soon after Finland had joined IOM in 1991. In October 1992, James N. Purcell, then the Director General of IOM, and Anders Wenström, then the Director of the Bureau for Europe and North America, visited Helsinki for a dialogue on migration affairs.

"It was important for IOM as an institution to create a closer relationship with the Nordic and Baltic states through a Nordic office. Finland was working very proactively for this initiative. At the time, no other Nordic country showed keen interest in hosting a Regional IOM Mission", Anders Wenström recalls.

Ambassador Antti Hynninen at Finland's permanent mission to the international organizations in Geneva was instrumental in forging an IOM presence in Finland, according to Wenström.

On April 22, 1993, the agreement on establishing IOM Helsinki was signed at the IOM Headquarters in Geneva by Director General Purcell and Ambassador Hynninen. The agreement stipulated that IOM Helsinki was a Regional Office for the Baltic and Nordic states.

Already before the agreement was signed, the preparations had started for the inauguration event: a two-day conference on Migration Trends, Social Change and Cooperation in the Baltic Region. It was organized jointly by the

to stand in, quite unprepared, as the IOM representative. Consequently, me and my deputy Hans-Petter Bøe (who sixteen years later was to become Regional Representative and Chief of Mission in Helsinki) found ourselves running the conference on our own."

IT WAS IMPORTANT
FOR IOM TO CREATE
A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP
WITH THE NORDIC AND
BALTIC COUNTRIES

Finnish government and IOM on 11-12 May 1993 at the Marina Congress Center in Helsinki.

"As we touched down in Helsinki, we were informed that for health reasons DG Purcell was unable to attend, so I had

The chairman of the conference was the noted veteran Finnish diplomat Max Jakobsson, who according to Wenström, skilfully navigated the differing opinions to a reasonable result. Heikki Mattila, who then worked at the international department of the Ministry of Labour and coordinated the conference preparations between Finnish Ministries, recalls that the atmosphere was very optimistic, and people were excited about the new situation in Europe.

The office itself was opened in August, in premises provided by the Finnish government, which also funded a locally hired employee, Petteri Vuorimäki.

"On the 15 August 1993, I walked to the Ympyrätalo (Round House) in Hakaniemi into an empty office room and started from scratch. We needed furniture and computers, and I had to make sure that we got our mail delivered. For a couple of

months, I was there alone until we got our first Chief of Mission, Norwegian Øystein Opdahl, and one assistant seconded from the Ministry of Interior, Monica Harju.”

Vuorimäki says that the beginning was filled with coordination meetings with Finnish and Nordic interlocutors. The Mission also started to draft the Comprehensive Migration Management Programme (or COMPRE) for the Baltic states and Belarus. Starting the programme required a lot of travel to the region’s capitals to map out what needs there were for trainings, skills transfer and for equipment.

“We assisted with the capacity building for the border guards and the migration and refugee administrations. We helped with language trainings, as English was needed both at the borders and in the administration. We also organized seminars, for instance on national legislation.”

Vuorimäki remembers that there were also other quite different tasks.

“I was once requested by Headquarters to charter a plane to transport wounded persons from the former Yugoslavian republics to Finland. It took some time

before the person I called at Finnair really believed me when I said I wanted to charter a MD-81 with pilots and cabin crew. That was the only time I have flown to Ancona in Italy being the only passenger and having the air hostess ask me whether I would rather sit in the cockpit.”

Vuorimäki recalls that IOM Helsinki was very enthusiastically received.

“In Finland, everyone concerned seemed very pleased to have the representation of an international organization. Also, the other Nordics were positive, and the Baltics and Belarus were so excited that we sometimes had to try to lower their expectations a bit – they hoped that we would come bringing hundreds of computers overnight.”

According to Anders Wenström, the founding of IOM Helsinki laid the groundwork for a strong Nordic presence.



FOCUS ON THE BALTICS

The focus of IOM Finland's operational work in the first years was on the Baltic states. At the same time, it was important to build up a strong Nordic presence. The first Regional Representative in Helsinki was Øystein Opdahl. He was followed by José-Angel Oropeza in 1997, who remained in charge until 2002.

"At the same time with the operations in the Baltics, we enlarged our activities in the Nordic countries in the field of voluntary return, integration and resettlement. Consequently, IOM Finland operations and staff were expanded considerably." Oropeza recounts.

Erikas Slavenas, Programme Officer at IOM Finland in 2000-2002, says that being a regional office, IOM Finland's task was to think strategically about the whole region and support all the countries in project development and funding. "The Baltic states and Poland joining the EU shaped our work. We were getting considerable EU-funding to work with them on pre-accession capacity building technical assistance."

One of the biggest programmes in the first years was the Comprehensive

Migration Management Programme (COMPRE) for the Baltic states and Belarus. The aim was to build up migration management systems for the East and Central European states. Assisting the Baltic states for their entry to the EU became a major objective.

Heikki Mattila, who was deputy Chief of Mission in 1995-1997, praises COMPRE.

"For instance, we organized exchanges for half a year from the statistical bureaus in the Baltics to the EU's statistical office Eurostat. Statistics is a fundamental part of migration management, and in the Baltics, there were still some old school thoughts on openness of statistics and data."

Mattila says that there were seminars or workshops in the participating countries at least once a month, which necessitated a lot of travel. He recalls the first time he went to Minsk.



1995

TRAINING OF BALTIC

BORDER GUARDS

"At that time Minsk was a world of its own. The chief of the border control was a bear of a man, who put on quite a show when I came to the office. He bellowed that if the computers they need are not coming, he will cause a stir. I saw the employees smiles and guessed that he was putting on a show. Then we were able to discuss calmly and orderly."

Oropeza points to the preparation of the Baltic states' accession to the EU as one of the most important events of his time. Global migration was becoming a reality that also touched the former Soviet states.

"I would say that our cooperation greatly contributed to the alignment of Baltic states' policies, procedures and administration of migration with those of the European Union. This was necessary for accession of the Baltic states to the European Union."

In 1998, the IOM offices in Vilnius (Lithuania) and Riga (Latvia) were opened.

"The main problem at that time in Lithuania was the illegal transit of migrants due to the porous borders. As Latvia and Estonia had only sea borders with the "West", ours was the only land passage that remained and the flows of irregular migrants, mainly from East Asia, was drastically increasing", says Dr. Audra Sipavičienė, the first Head of Office in Vilnius.

Many of those were residing in Russia and trying to get to Germany. The Lithuanian authorities apprehended the irregular migrants but were at a loss with what to do with them after that. IOM Lithuania and IOM Finland together established a programme for Assisted Voluntary Return.

BALTIC STATES' ACCESSION TO THE EU WAS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS

In Latvia the first focus was also on returns. "The largest project was the voluntary return of Russian elderly and handicapped persons", says Ilmārs Mežs, who started up the office in Riga. The total number of returns through this initiative was around 1,500.

"Most of them did not want to fly, so we organized the transport by land. It was possible as most returns were to places like Saint Petersburg or Moscow. The amounts of luggage were staggering: many brought furniture with them."

Those years also saw the first counter-trafficking campaigns in the Baltic states. "I remember the first pan-Baltic campaign where the slogan was 'Do not believe in easy money abroad: you will be sold as a doll'", recalls Dr. Sipavičienė.

Awareness raising campaigns were done in schools and in the media, but the priority in Latvia was on the police, prosecutors and the rest of the judiciary, and in Lithuania on social workers and NGO's. "We needed them to realize that human trafficking is a serious crime and that victims need assistance."

Jaana Vuorio, now Director General at the Finnish Immigration Service, remembers participating in a conference on voluntary returns in 1997. At the time Finland still thought this concept did not concern the country. "People left by themselves or were deported by the police. But in the beginning of the year 2000 there was a pilot AVR (Assisted Voluntary Return) programme for Roma people from Eastern Europe. I was impressed by the huge amount of knowledge that IOM had on these issues in Germany and the Netherlands."

A TIME OF EXPANSION

The beginning of the new millennium was a time when the Baltic states were finalizing their accession to the European Union. In Finland, the number of asylum seekers started growing.

Also, it was a time when new offices were opened: in 2002 in Norway, in 2004 in Estonia and in 2009 in Denmark.

In 2004 Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania became members of the EU. This meant changes in funding and programming as the focus shifted to EU funds and their priorities. For some activities, like counter-trafficking (CT), the work continued as before, with focus on the Baltic states.

“Our projects produced studies, handbooks, trainings, and raised awareness of trafficking in human beings, focusing on youth - a target group that has remained important for IOM Finland ever since.”, recalls Jaana Sipilä, CT Specialist at IOM Finland.

During those years, many of the projects were multi-national projects funded by the European Commission.

“Anti-discrimination was one of the themes we focused on at the time. We participated in an EU- funded project on equality for migrants in the health care system. In another project, we

trained lawyers and judges in anti-discrimination legislation, through e-learning”, says Sipilä.

THE MISSION WAS
EXPANDED TO COVER
ALSO SIX COUNTRIES IN
THE EASTERN EUROPEAN
NEIGHBOURHOOD
AND THE SOUTHERN
CAUCASUS

Some projects were more of a one-of-a-kind-nature. Simo Kohonen, present Chief of Mission, talks about the hectic work involved in setting up the out-of-country voting system for the first democratic elections in Iraq. Due to the large number of Iraqi diaspora residing in Sweden and Denmark these countries took part in the voting.

“We got the information in early November 2004 and the elections took place at the end of January 2005. At the time, we had no presence in either country, so we had to hire people through recruitment agencies, send people to be trained in Amman during Christmas and make the ad campaigns first for the registration and then the voting itself.”

Another project of a one-off-nature was the handling of the claims for the German Forced Labour Compensation Programme. The programme was devised to pay out compensation to those who had been forced into slave labour during the Second World War and IOM Finland handled the outreach and the filing of the claims for Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

In 2005, there was a big change as the Mission in Finland was expanded to cover also six countries in the Eastern European neighbourhood and the Southern Caucasus.

“Suddenly we were presiding over a region spanning five time zones from Azerbaijan in the east to Iceland in the west”, the then Regional Representative, Dr. Thomas Weiss, says.

He says that this was an opportunity

to build interesting bridges among the different parts of the region covered from Helsinki.

"We had the opportunity to raise interest and funds in the Nordics for projects we implemented in the Eastern neighbourhood and building solid bridges among the countries covered by the Mission."

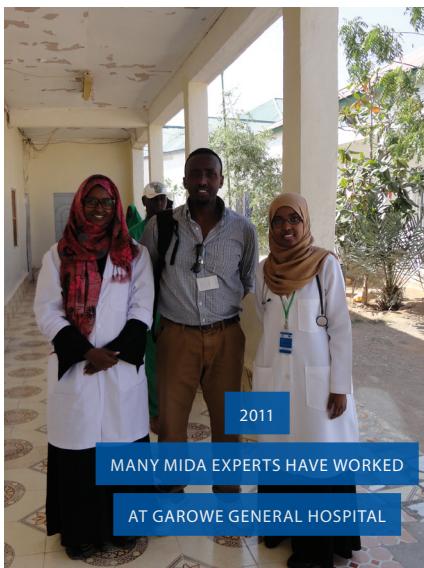
Kohonen says that the expansion meant that Helsinki oversaw four very different sub-regions:

"We had the Nordics, who were developed countries. Then we had the Baltics, who were ramping up capacity and trying to catch up as new EU members. Then there were the countries in the Eastern Neighbourhood who were knocking on the EU's door and then the Caucasus. All had very different funding opportunities and activities. Ukraine and Moldova each had more staff than the whole old region together. They had large counter-trafficking and migrant health programmes."

In 2008, IOM Finland developed an EU-funded comprehensive programme for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration.

"In the beginning there was no framework for AVRR, IOM invented it. Before 2009 the return programme in Finland applied only to certain nationalities or to rejected asylum seekers", tells Tobias van Treeck, Programme Coordinator for AVRR.

IOM Finland was able to offer a broad range of services to all third country nationals with different legal statuses. Among the services were counselling, info materials, training of different authorities and stakeholders.



Another significant thing was the start of the MIDA FINNSOM project in 2008, that helps to build up the Somali health system of with the help of the Somali diaspora.

"The diaspora approached us as they knew of our Return of Qualified Nationals-programme in a number of African countries. We did some hard and targeted resource mobilization and were able to get funds from the Finnish and the Swedish Foreign Ministries to do some exploratory missions. We set up the framework and mechanism for IOM's very first MIDA Health programme, that continues to be implemented today", Dr. Weiss says.

Ten years later the programme is still active and has helped close to two hundred diaspora experts to spread their expertise in different parts of Somalia.

"It is still highly relevant and responding to the desire of the Somali diaspora to help their country of origin, as much as to the needs of the local people and communities in Somalia. It is a beautiful example of health professionals building solid bridges between their old home and new homes", Dr. Weiss says.

THE FOCUS TURNS TO FINLAND

Hans Petter Bøe, who became Regional Representative in 2009, says that quite a lot changed when an organization-wide restructuring of IOM took place in 2011. This meant that IOM Finland became a Country Mission with Resource Mobilization Functions, and was now part of a larger region, that covers the European Economic Area.

"After that we continued to oversee project implementation and donor relations in Finland and Sweden and to provide administrative support our offices in Estonia and Denmark," says Simo Kohonen, the present Chief of Mission.

He says that the change led to a greater emphasis on operations in Finland. One of the projects that grew in importance was the Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR). This was done with a comprehensive approach and with funding from the EU.

AVRR Programme Officer Tobias van Treeck says that the reintegration support was gradually built into the system. Nowadays reintegration support is an integral part of AVRR programmes, giving the beneficiaries help to restart their lives.

In 2015, the EU-funded AVRR project ended, and following legislative changes, the Finnish Immigration Services (Migri) took over the management of the programme. The focus now is on those, whose asylum applications have been rejected or who have withdrawn their applications. A few cases a year are outside of these groups and are for instance paid for by municipalities.

IOM FINLAND WAS
FOCUSING ON
NON-DISCRIMINATION,
MIGRANT YOUTH,
AND A MULTIFAITH
APPROACH

There were also several other EU-funded projects in the beginning of the 2010s, particularly in the field of integration.

IOM Finland was focusing on non-discrimination, migrant youth, and a multifaith approach.

"In the IAMA multifaith project we trained migrant religious leaders together with the offices in Denmark, Germany and Latvia. We travelled around Finland and visited cellar mosques and churches. Sometimes we were very positively received, sometimes we were seen as representatives of the authorities and people refused to talk to us unless we promised that they could build a real mosque", recalls van Treeck.

The focus of the counter-trafficking work changed from supporting the Baltic states to Finland-based activities. Since 2011, IOM Finland has done several information campaigns on counter-trafficking that have been well-received, "What is the Price of a Human Being" being the latest one in 2016. Otherwise, the work has focused on awareness-raising among groups as diverse as embassy personnel, ferry workers and social and health care workers.

These were also the years when the MIDA FINNSOM -project in Somalia went from the pilot stage to a real

IHMISKAUPPA



2016

THE STORY OF THE "WHAT IS THE PRICE OF A HUMAN
BEING?" -CAMPAIGN IN 2016 WAS WRITTEN BY STUDENTS
FROM THE UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL OF RESSU,
HELSINKI. DO WE SEE AND CARE ABOUT PEOPLE BEHIND
PRODUCTS AND SERVICES?

project. The recruitment of Somali diaspora health professionals trained in Finland or other Western countries gained speed. There were excellent results, like the expansion of the work of the neo-natal unit in Hargeisa that lead to a drop in neo-natal deaths in the region.

And then came 2015.

The year when the migration flows into Europe multiplied and even in the far north in Finland the number of asylum seekers went drastically up to 32,000, almost ten times more than the year before.

“The immediate thing that we noticed in the office was the media attention. Before that we struggled to get any migration related story out in the media, and then suddenly we went to the other extreme: migration was the main news item and headline”, Simo Kohonen tells.

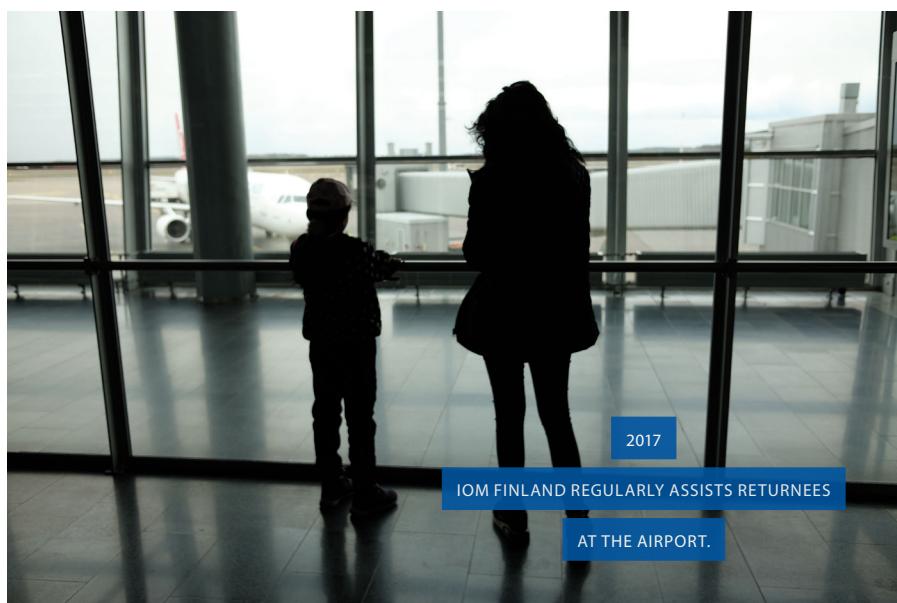
Jaana Sipilä concurs: “The phones were ringing off the hook. Actors from very different backgrounds, who had never even known that IOM existed in Finland, contacted us.”

For the AVRR project, it meant a big increase in returnees, from 318 in 2014 to 635 in 2015 and 2,116 in 2016.

“In the first wave there were many who withdrew their applications themselves. Now a majority are those who have received negative asylum decisions”, Kohonen says.

In the counter-trafficking work the number of victims of trafficking with an asylum seeker background has grown.

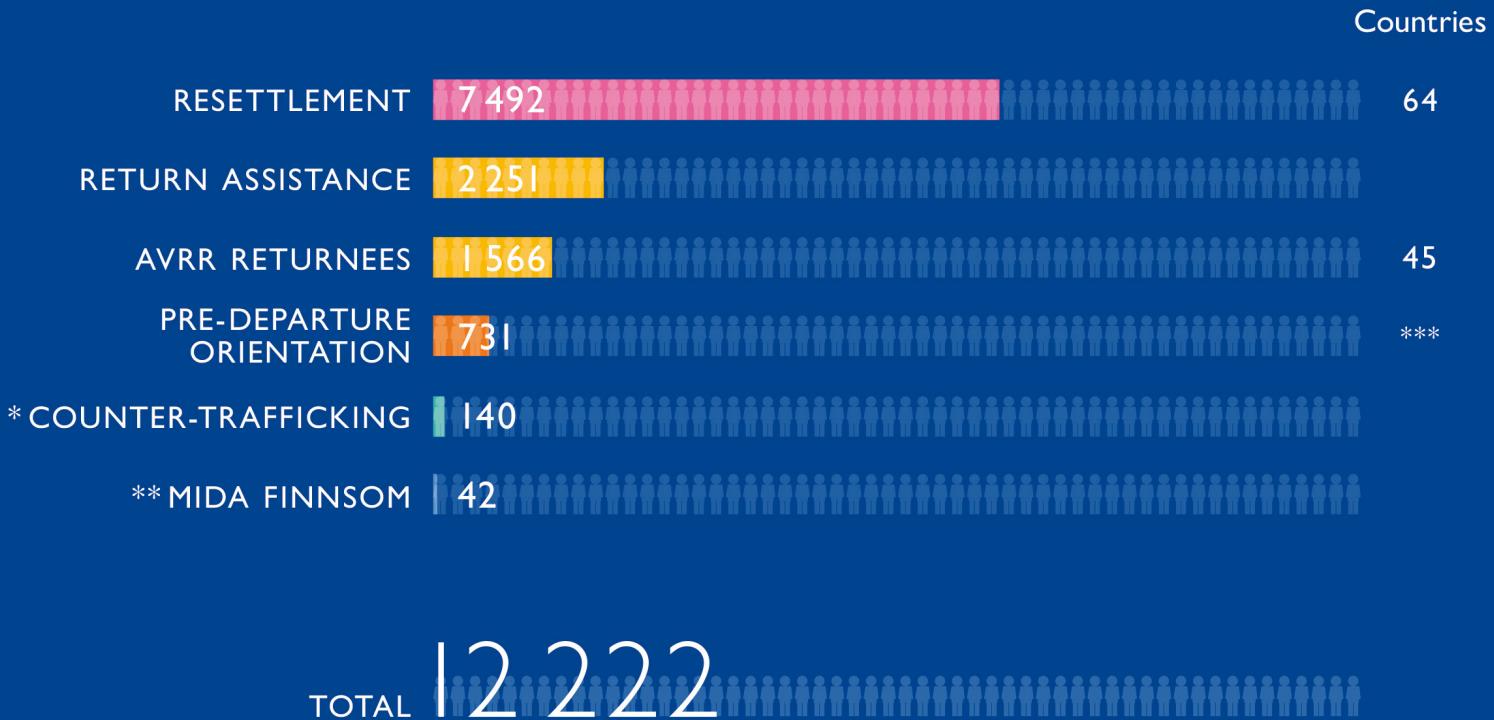
“We warned about exploitation faced by migrants on the way to Europe to urge countries to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. Today's number of victims of trafficking assisted in Finland show that the exploitation has come true to so many”, Sipilä says.



IOM FINLAND REGULARLY ASSISTS RETURNEES

AT THE AIRPORT.

PERSONS ASSISTED/TRAINED IN 2017



* Persons trained in Counter-trafficking

** People working in Somalia and Somaliland

Syrian refugees/Training site Turkey (FINCO/Finland)
Syrian, Iraqi Refugees/Training site Jordan (ICECO/Iceland)

MOVEMENTS – THE CORE OF OUR OPERATIONS

Ever since IOM was founded, transporting persons in need of assistance has been at the core of what we do. In the words of IOM's Resettlement Movement Management unit mission statement: "Safe, orderly, and dignified movement of migrants and refugees is the essence of migration, and represents the central purpose of IOM since its founding in 1951."

IOM, or as it was first known, the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME), was born out of the chaos and displacement of Western Europe following the Second World War. Mandated to help European governments to identify resettlement countries for the estimated 11 million people uprooted by the war, PICMME arranged transport for nearly a million migrants during the 1950s.

Movements are still a central part of our mission, but the organization has transformed from a logistics agency to a more comprehensive management of operations. IOM organizes the safe movement of people for temporary and permanent resettlement or the return to their countries of origin.

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- Resettlement of refugees to new countries
- Assistance with family reunification cases
- Coordination of health assessments and travel of medical cases

IOM Finland manages all operations related to Refugee Resettlement and Family Reunification for Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland and resettles around 10,000 persons most years. The scope of these resettlement projects is global.

IOM Finland's resettlement and movement unit also handles travel arrangements for all other projects and activities, including the Assisted Voluntary Returns, the travel of the MIDA FINNSOM experts, travel for victims of trafficking who are returning to their home countries and for IOM personnel.

Working in movements and operations means being ready for the unexpected, as one of our Operations Assistants, Tania Talikka, describes in a post on the IOM Finland blog: "Many of our beneficiaries are at an airport or in an airplane for the first time in their lives. So, this means the unexpected often happens. But our colleagues around the world are ready to face any situation and to help the passengers, whatever comes before them."

Many of the cases require special arrangements. Children traveling alone or difficult medical cases need special arrangements with the authorities and the airline, and often require an escort for the whole trip.

As there are IOM offices almost in every corner of the world (11,000 members of staff in 450 locations), we are in quite a unique position to be able to help hands-on, wherever and whatever happens. The main thing is to help the person needing assistance in traveling to get to their intended destination, in the catchphrase of IOM: safely, humanely and in a dignified way.

THE COUNTRIES THAT IOM FINLAND COOPERATED WITH IN 2017



ASSISTED VOLUNTARY
RETURN AND
REINTEGRATION (AVRR)



PRE-DEPARTURE
ORIENTATION (PDO)



MIDA FINNSOM



RESETTLEMENT

MIGRANT TRAINING AND INTEGRATION

IOM provides pre-departure orientation for refugees accepted for resettlement to a third country. Over the past 25 years, IOM has trained over 500,000 refugees in over 70 locations around the world. IOM works closely with governments and develops curricula tailored for individual migrant populations.

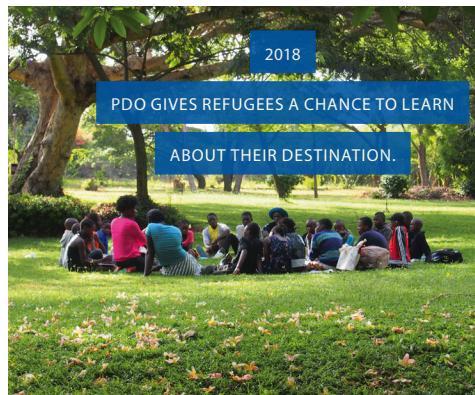
Empowering migrants prior to their departure has positive benefits for the resettlement continuum, ensuring that migrants' rights are upheld and their responsibilities are understood by both the receiving communities and migrants themselves. To support this, Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO) prepares the refugees by providing practical information on their country of destination and assists refugees in setting realistic goals.

IOM Finland provides Pre-Departure Orientation for Finland-bound quota refugees and upon request for Iceland-bound quota refugees. Since 2001, IOM Finland has provided Pre-Departure Orientation to more than 4,000 refugees.

The Finnish Pre-Departure Orientation project (FINCO) is currently implemented in cooperation with the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri), Diaconia University of Applied Sciences and IOM offices in the countries of departure. The project is coordinated by Migri and receives funding from the EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

In the last years, trainings have been organized for Syrian refugees in Turkey and Lebanon, and for Congolese refugees in Zimbabwe.

The training sessions carried out by IOM's multilingual, multi-ethnic trainers, discuss practical issues like everyday life in Finland, welfare services, employment, education, cultural adaptation and refugees' rights and responsibilities. The refugees also have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the Finnish language.



PDO is acknowledged as a significant factor in helping refugees resettle and integrate into Finnish society. IOM Finland will in its new project focus on strengthening the continuum between pre-departure and post-arrival activities, through capacity building and increasing the awareness of municipality representatives working with quota refugees and other migrants, on issues related to the integration needs of new arrivals.

"Earlier studies have shown that by strengthening the pre-departure and post-arrival continuum, our efforts in integration of migrants will be more successful", says Hanna Viljamaa, Project Coordinator for Migrant Training and Integration at IOM Finland.

In the field of migrant integration, over the past fifteen years IOM Finland has managed in several EU-funded multinational projects on migrants health, youth empowerment, and dialogue with religious communities.

ASSISTING MIGRANTS IN RETURNING HOME

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) aims to better enable the safe, orderly and humane return and reintegration of migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in host countries and who wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin.

IOM globally provides pre-departure, transportation and post-arrival assistance to asylum seekers, migrants in an irregular situation, migrants stranded in transit, stranded students and other persons under similar circumstances. Despite the often considerable numbers of migrants assisted, IOM always aims to provide individual and comprehensive assistance that considers the situation and needs of each returnee.

IOM Finland provides AVRR in Finland, Sweden and Iceland. IOM Finland has been an active player in AVRR since the late 1990s, and activities have grown in scope and size since then.

The current AVRR project in Finland is funded by the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) and the target group includes mainly asylum seekers who have withdrawn their application or who have received a negative decision as well as certain other migrants. IOM Finland can also provide AVRR assistance to the migrants on a per-case basis.

The assistance provided by IOM Finland includes multi-lingual counselling, travel arrangements from the beneficiaries' current location to his or her final destination, and cash or in-kind reintegration assistance. In 2017, IOM Finland assisted 1,425 voluntary returnees from Finland.

In Iceland, IOM Finland provides Assisted Voluntary Return

and Reintegration services to migrants in cooperation with the Icelandic Directorate of Immigration. Eligible migrants include asylum seekers, persons considered to be vulnerable, victims of trafficking and unaccompanied minors in Iceland.

The aim of the project, launched as a pilot in 2016, is to contribute to establishing a consistent and nation-wide offer of AVRR in Iceland. While the project provides capacity-building for Icelandic counterparts, its main focus is on assisting returnees.

In 2017, a total of 102 returnees from Iceland were assisted by IOM Finland.

The focus in Sweden is a slightly different and twofold: IOM Finland assists migrants who have been exposed to trafficking in human beings and/or to prostitution in Sweden, on one hand, and coordinates payments of reintegration cash grants to voluntary returnees from Sweden, on the other.

Since 2012 the Swedish AVRR programme has aided migrants who are exposed to trafficking in human beings and/or to prostitution in Sweden. The programme assists both EU nationals and third country nationals.

The newly established Swedish Gender Equality Agency funds this programme since 2018. Potential beneficiaries are referred to IOM by Swedish regional anti-trafficking coordinators and assisted with comprehensive measures aimed at safe return, sustainable reintegration and rehabilitation of victims. This also includes enabling beneficiaries' access to justice, for example, when beneficiaries are called as witnesses in court cases against traffickers.

In 2017, IOM Finland assisted 41 persons returning from Sweden through this programme.

In cooperation with the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA), IOM Finland facilitates payments of reintegration cash grants to voluntary returnees from Sweden. The pre-departure and travel assistance for these returnees is provided directly by the SMA. The aim of the project is to support returnees in reintegrating to their countries of origin.

Reintegration cash grants can be provided to voluntarily returning asylum seekers whose application has either been rejected or who have withdrawn their application. Over the course of the project, which was launched in 2007, thousands of beneficiaries have gotten financial support for their reintegration in their countries of origin. In 2017, IOM Finland facilitated over 1,000 grant payments for returnees from Sweden.

Programme Coordinator Tobias van Treeck, who has been at IOM Finland for over 10 years, points out that IOM has played a key role in developing AVRR globally as well as in the Nordic and Finnish contexts.

In Finland, the first returns were organized for specific groups, for instance for returnees to the Balkans or to Eastern / Central Europe in the late 1990s and early 2000s. A more systematic approach has been in place since 2008, when IOM Finland received EU funds to develop a comprehensive AVRR programme. The aim of the programme, jointly implemented with Migri, was to contribute to the establishment of a permanent AVRR system in Finland.



“We offered a broad number of services: counselling, info materials and also trained different authorities and stakeholders. In terms of beneficiaries, all third country nationals with different legal statuses could apply”.

The reintegration support was gradually built into the system.

Following legislative changes in 2015, AVRR for certain target groups was institutionalised in Finland. Due to the new legislation, Migri has been assigned the main responsibility for AVRR, while IOM continues to provide a broad range of AVRR assistance.

REBUILDING SOMALIA WITH THE DIASPORA

For ten years now the MIDA FINNSOM projects have worked towards supporting Somalia in developing its health and education sectors. This is done as diaspora experts of Somali origin residing abroad return to Somalia for months or even years, to transfer their knowledge to the local staff and institutions with the support of IOM. To date 176 experts have worked in Somalia for periods of 6-24 months.

MIDA stands for Migration for Development in Africa, and is a concept based on earlier projects of Return of Qualified African Nationals to help with the development of the continent.

The MIDA projects run by IOM Finland are funded by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There are two projects ongoing at the moment, with slightly different aims.

The MIDA FINNSOM Health project started in 2008 in Somaliland and aims at developing well-functioning health care systems in Somaliland and Puntland. Hargeisa Group Hospital has been one of the main beneficiary institutions of the project. Project participants have been vital for example in starting the haemodialysis unit and the neonatal unit at the hospital. As a result, neonatal mortality at the hospital has dropped from 24 % down to 5 %.

The MIDA FINNSOM Health and Education project started in 2015 and targets the Federal Government of Somalia and Federal Member States, including Puntland. Earlier the security situation was such that sending experts to southern Somalia was not possible, but now the situation has changed. The aim is to strengthen the capacities of the health and education

sectors in the areas. Many of the experts have been working at ministries, both federal and regional. In the health part of the project many participants are working in hospitals.

The diaspora experts are paired with young Somali professionals, who will gain both experience and employment.

“For us it is about sustainability. When the experts go home, these young people can take over and even get hired to do the job”, says Project Coordinator Anna Aguilera-Pesä.

Dr. Thomas Weiss, who was Regional Representative at IOM Finland from 2003 to 2009, recalls the start and continuation of MIDA FINNSOM as one of the major highlights of his time at the Mission.





2015

MIDA FINNSOM HAS FOCUSED ON MATERNAL AND CHILD
HEALTH IN THE EFFORT OF REBUILDING SOMALIA.

“It is a beautiful example of diaspora professionals building solid bridges between their old home and new homes.”

Weiss highlights that the process was started by diaspora members. One of those was has been involved in MIDA FINNSOM from the start is Saed Guled, who worked for IOM Finland from 2005 until he transferred to IOM Somalia in 2017. He says that the diaspora held discussions with both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and IOM. Then the ministry asked IOM to draft a concept note for a pilot phase of MIDA FINNSOM.

“It was the first ever MIDA activity in Somalia. At some point Sweden joined as a donor, as so many of the applicants were coming from Sweden.”

Guled is proud of what has been achieved during the years.

“We have managed to encourage the diaspora worldwide to return and we have made local society and governments understand the approach. Capacity building by the diaspora is an important tool to make the government function.”

The first participants of MIDA FINNSOM were from Finland, but later the vacancies were opened to all qualified Somali diaspora members residing in the industrialized countries. There have been participants from Canada, Sweden, Norway, Australian, the United States and the United Kingdom.

“This is the opposite of a brain drain, this is brain gain.”, says Guled.

Some of the experts have returned to Somalia for good, continuing to build up the country, like Abdulkadir Diesow, who at one point served as a minister in the Somali transitional federal government and has been building cooperation between Finland and Somalia in the university sector as a MIDA FINNSOM expert.

“Now I am making the link, trying to be the bonding bridge between the two educational systems of Finland and Somalia. For the Somali diaspora, and for every diaspora, the goal should be to transfer their experience, knowledge and skills to their home country and share with their fellow people.”

In the middle of September 2017 there was a mid term-review meeting in Mogadishu with the counterparts of MIDA FINNSOM Health and Education. The results were very good, says Aguilera-Pesä.

“The participants were able to present a lot of achievements already. For instance, one expert had written a medical training curriculum for the university, now under consideration of the review committee of Somali National University. Another, a gender policy expert, had reviewed and rewritten a gender policy for the Ministry of Education on how to promote gender equality in education.”

The positive outcomes during the projects show how engaging the diaspora to rebuild their country of origin – closely and with a long-term perspective – enables sustainable development and better future.

ENHANCING AWARENESS OF TRAFFICKING

IOM started working in counter-trafficking activities in 1994, around the same time the Helsinki office was founded. The counter-trafficking activities of the IOM office in Helsinki focused on the Baltic states at first. Information campaigns in the media and in schools were one part of the work, as were research and capacity building trainings. Ilmars Mezs, Head of Office at IOM Latvia, says one priority at the time was to get people to realize that human trafficking is a serious crime.

In Finland, IOM aims to bring added value to the counter-trafficking scene, says Jaana Sipilä, Project Coordinator of IOM Finland's counter-trafficking work. The priority areas until 2020 are empowering and assisting victims of trafficking, enhancing counter-trafficking awareness and prevention of trafficking through cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination.

To meet these goals, we work together with partners from public, private, and third sectors in Finland and in the Nordic and Baltic countries. IOM Finland participates in the national



coordination network on counter-trafficking led by the Finnish Ministry of the Interior.

IOM Finland has implemented several well-received information campaigns. The latest and most widely acclaimed - *What is the Price of a Human Being* - was done in co-operation with a high school in Helsinki, the National Assistance System in Finland and private companies working pro bono.

Private sector partners have made it possible to create innovative and attractive campaigns and to reach for larger audiences than would have otherwise been possible with the scarce funding available.

Another innovative initiative was a project to enhance awareness of trafficking issues on passenger ferries in the Baltic Sea. Ferry personnel was trained in recognizing signs of trafficking in what one employee called an “eye-opening training session”.

One of the IOM activities, also a part of the Finnish National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings, is the project entitled Caring for Trafficked Persons in Finland – HOIKU. The project provides guidance and training to health care and social service professionals in early identification and referral of victims of trafficking.

“Already a few years ago, we understood that very few of the social workers and health care professionals had received training in recognising human trafficking”, Sipilä says.

IOM Finland is also working together with trade unions and IOM Ukraine to spread the knowledge on the rights of seasonal agriculture workers.



HIGHLY DEDICATED STAFF

The staff at IOM Finland is highly skilled and dedicated to their work towards making a difference in the lives of migrants. For many the time at IOM Finland has been a stepping stone to an international career.

But it is not all work and no play, the staff also know how to have fun together. The Local Staff Association is often the driving force behind organizing events and activities where the staff can have fun together and take advantage of the possibilities of the multicultural atmosphere at the office, like celebrating the Indian festival of Holi or tasting food from different cultures.

Origins of IOM Finland staff throughout the years

Europe

- Finland
- Norway
- Germany
- Spain
- Russia
- Serbia
- Denmark
- Netherlands
- Sweden
- Armenia
- Kosovo
- Bosnia & Herzegovina
- United Kingdom
- Italy
- Estonia

Asia

- India
- Iraq
- Sri Lanka
- Afghanistan
- Bangladesh
- China
- Japan
- Mongolia
- South Korea

Oceania

- New Zealand

Americas

- Chile
- USA
- Brazil
- Columbia
- Panama
- Canada

Africa

- Kenya
- Ethiopia
- Somalia

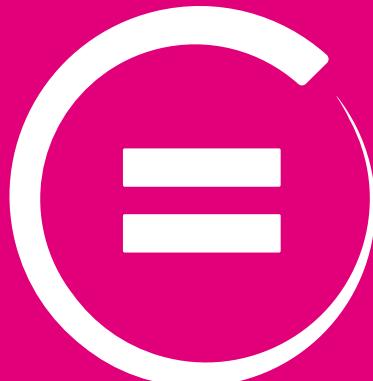
ORIGINS OF IOM FINLAND STAFF THROUGHOUT THE YEARS





Migration and the Sustainable Development Goals

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



“FACILITATE ORDERLY,
SAFE, REGULAR AND
RESPONSIBLE MIGRATION
TO REDUCE INEQUALITIES
WITHIN AND AMONG
COUNTRIES.”

“MIGRATION:
A KEY
TO SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS”

In 2015, the international community adopted the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs recognize the nexus between migration and development and aim to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants.

Several goals relate to migration and identify migrants as agents of development. IOM helped place migration at the centre of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The Organization will continue its role to ensure that migration is recognized for its contribution to development.

IOM has taken great strides to implement the SDGs. The Organization's Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF) is the only internationally recognized comprehensive overview of “well-managed migration policies”. MiGOF helps define, review and supports implementation of migration-related targets.





1 NO POVERTY

Support adequate living standards; ensure access to livelihoods and employment; assist migrants caught in countries in crisis, displaced persons and returning or resettled populations to become productive members of society; and build migrant resilience during economic, social and environmental shocks.



2 ZERO HUNGER

Recognize that land access and tenure security are inherently linked to food security and sustainable agriculture; provide policy advice, technical and implementation support to governments, partners and communities to secure access to land and property rights. Devise gender-responsive and sustainable land reform.



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Ensure well-being through monitoring of migrant health, enable conducive policy and legal frameworks and strengthen migrant-friendly health systems; facilitate access to safe, effective and affordable health-care services in order to improve migrant well-being and reduce their vulnerability to external shocks.



4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Promote learning and highlight education as a key to successful migration, recognizing that migrant children, including refugees often experience interrupted schooling; expand scholarships for youth in developing countries, so that more children can be given the opportunity for quality education and study abroad.



5 GENDER EQUALITY

Advocate for and promote equal gender rights and gender mainstreaming in national migration policies, livelihoods and reintegration programmes in displacement contexts, employment and mobility. Combat discriminatory migration practices including trafficking in persons and gender-based violence.



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Deliver Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) assistance and coordinate WASH assistance in internally displaced person (IDP) sites and as part of stabilization programming. Improve living conditions for migrants, mobile populations and affected host communities.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Advocate for and support the ethical recruitment of migrants to enhance the impact of labour migration on development. Build self-reliance in displacement contexts and help populations be productive members of society during displacement and following return, reintegration or resettlement.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Promote resilience, assist in rebuilding infrastructure, including “build back better” that is resilient to natural disasters with an aim to reduce the drivers of vulnerability and forced migration; provide cash programming as a means of building household and community resilience.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration to reduce inequalities within and among countries, including harnessing contributions for development from diaspora migrants. Develop an index for Member States to measure their progress towards better migration governance.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Support migrants’ inclusion and contribution to development of sustainable cities; encourage the benefits to urban renewal of migration; develop planning and safety measures, and increase and protect access to land and land tenure security for vulnerable populations in rural and urban settings.

13 CLIMATE ACTION

Prevent forced migration as a result of environmental degradation and climate change, provide assistance to those displaced by environmental factors; facilitate migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change. Fill the existing data, research and knowledge gaps on the migration-environment nexus.

15 LIFE ON LAND

Support sustainable community land management and land rights identification. Recognize the links between human mobility and land degradation, utilize the positive impacts of migration by channeling remittances and diaspora investments towards land management and adaptation to climate change.



16 PEACE AND JUSTICE



Reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere; end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence against children; provide survivors of trafficking safe and sustainable reintegration support; support governments and communities in post-conflict reparations and restorative justice measures.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



Improve access to technology and data on global migration; create tools to contribute to countries' abilities to monitor progress towards effective migration policies. Facilitate capacity-building and cooperation among member states through regional consultative processes on migration and related issues.



"IOM CAN BE
THE GUIDING STAR"

THOUGHTS ON MIGRATION

AND THE IOM'S ROLE

IN THE FUTURE

IOM is evermore relevant as there are more member countries and we are a UN related agency. **The organization has grown in a fantastic way** – there are offices in nearly every country. We are being more and more well known, also as a source for news both for international and national media.

Hans-Petter Bøe, former Regional Representative

Traditionally IOM's role has been very practical: resettlement, medical screening, return or counter-trafficking work in broad variety. **But what role does the organization want to take in migration policy?** There is a need for support on legislation and on training and advising governments, but how much can you do that without being accused of interfering, especially in countries of origin in the global South?

Heikki Mattila, Academic Advisor, former Programme Officer and Deputy Head of IOM Helsinki

International migration - the movement of people across boundaries - continues to be one of the most important challenges of the global policy agenda. **The main challenges for the policy makers and societies is to recognize that migration is here to stay** and that if managed properly - with an open mind and with the right policies - **migration generates enormous economic, social and cultural implications in both sending and receiving countries.**

José-Angel Oropeza, former Regional Representative

In Finland IOM continues to be relevant especially when it comes to the AVRR portfolio and to strengthening linkages between countries of origin and the diaspora in the Nordic countries. **MIDA FINNSOM is a bright example of this.**

At an international level we can only remain relevant if we continue to be as hands-on as we are now. I have spent more than three years in Iraq and IOM is the largest of all the UN agencies there. We have people on the ground in the dangerous hotspots, close to the migrants and IDP's. For us to be able to tailor-make our response and support the most vulnerable people, **we need to focus our feet, heart and brains on the ground.**

Thomas Weiss, former Regional Representative

To ensure humane and orderly migration, our Member States need to have capacity to manage their borders effectively, based on good governance and respect of human rights. **IOM can be the guiding star, provide a sense of direction.**

Moderns border controls and travel documents are often based on the technologies of the most developed countries. The developing world struggles to implement such demanding international standards. IOM plays a meaningful role in helping to link assistance needs, technical expertise and donor funding to provide migration management technical assistance where it is needed the most.

Erikas Slavenas, IOM Identity Management and Biometrics Officer, former staff member at IOM Finland

“ We must work together with all stakeholders to change the narrative on migration and negative perceptions towards migrants. After all, migration will be necessary to respond to the socio-economic and demographic needs. We need to find new ways to advance inclusion and social cohesion in order to counter discrimination and xenophobia.

Simo Kohonen, present Chief of Mission and Sub-Regional Representative



“ Few people understand just how important and central the role of IOM is. In some countries they have tried to put AVR out to tender competitions, with catastrophic results. IOM has a comprehensive network, a deep and longstanding experience, is neutral and has competent staff.

Matti Heinonen, former Head of Section of International cooperation at the Finnish Immigration Service



“ IOM is growing both in Europe and in the world. Migration itself as an issue is also growing. I do not see that in five years we will have finished anything. In some areas, like counter-trafficking here in Riga, we have let local organizations take over. Maybe one day the same can happen with irregular migration.

Ilmārs Mežs, Head of Office, IOM Latvia



“ I hope that IOM stays as flexible as it is and hope that there will be a continued presence in Finland. Our common experiences have built up mutual trust.

Jaana Vuorio, Director General of the Finnish Immigration Service

“ At an overall level IOM has an even bigger raison d'être since we became a part of the UN also formally – it is a manifestation that there is room both for UNHCR and IOM with their different mandates and approaches.

There is a disturbingly large number of people who are refugees legally - and in their wake follow even more people seeking a better life. We need to look at the underlying causes, which is what IOM has been doing for decades, offering programmes for management of orderly migration, to the benefit of all.

Anders Wenström, former IOM Director of Operations, Europe and North America



“ A challenge for IOM is that we are project based. We see the problems that exist, but we always need to convince the donors and the governments. We cannot start working if we do not have the availability of money.

Audra Sipavičienė, Chief of Mission, IOM Lithuania



“ We aim at bringing added value to the counter-trafficking work in Finland. This we can do through our network of country offices [in preventing trafficking in human beings and assisting victims who are returning home]. In the near future, we will be working on promoting well-informed labour migration to seasonal work in Finland, starting with Ukraine. Through our mission there we can help spread correct information about working in Finland and where to get help if problems arise.

Jaana Sipilä, Counter-Trafficking Project Coordinator, IOM Finland

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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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IOM FINLAND
25 YEARS

International Organization for Migration
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