

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

EVALUATION OF THE MIGRATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA (MIDA) INITIATIVE  
AS AN ILLUSTRATION OF IOM'S APPROACH TO MAKING MIGRATION WORK FOR  
DEVELOPMENT

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IOM International Organization for Migration

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1. INTRODUCTION	
1.1 The Migration and Development nexus in IOM: historical background	3
1.2 Evaluation methodology	4
2. MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT: TWO BROAD CONCEPTS	
2.1 The Development world and Migration	5
2.2 The Migration for Development in Africa MIDA and other IOM projects	8
3. RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT OF IOM'S MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT NEXUS	
3.1 Relevance of Migration and Development nexus to IOM's mandate	11
3.2 IOM's work: an effective contribution to Development?	12
3.3 Impact and sustainability of Migration for Development	21
4. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
4.1 Conclusions	26
4.2 Recommendations	26
Annex 1 TERMS OF REFERENCE	28
Annex 2 INTERVIEWS AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES	31

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For years, organizations, governments and researchers have been studying the migration and development nexus. Since the 1980s and 1990s IOM has been implementing programmes focusing on the issue with research work on the role of remittances in Latin America, with the Return of Qualified Nationals programmes in Latin America and Africa, with community post-crisis stabilization programmes, and since 2001 through the Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) initiative as well as with other specific programmes focusing on labour migration and diasporas in Central America and Asia. In 2005, the UN Secretary General launched an initiative discussing the link between migration and development that culminated in the organization in 2006 of the UN *High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (UNHLD)*. Speakers in the debates highlighted the role that IOM plays in the field of migration and its growing importance as an international organization. As a follow-up to the UNHLD, the Belgian Government organized a states-owned, states driven Global Forum on Migration and Development in July 2007.

In the discussions surrounding the growing interest in the migration and development nexus, a few IOM Member States said that the Organization should not be engaged in programmes focusing on development since it was not a development agency, while others believed that the question was not whether or not IOM would become a development agency but how migration management could contribute to development. A debate also arose around the real impact of migration on development and in particular on the impact of the MIDA. In order to contribute to the analysis of IOM's migration and development work, the Office of the Inspector General conducted a thematic evaluation of the MIDA initiative *"as an illustration of IOM's approach to making migration work for development"*. The main objective of the evaluation is: *"To evaluate the relevance and overall performance, mainly in terms of impact on and contribution to development, of projects, programmes, approaches and concepts referring to Migration and Development with a special focus on the MIDA initiative as an illustration of IOM's work in that field. Analysis will also cover IOM's effectiveness in elaborating innovative strategies and proposing new fields of activity as well as its collaborative efforts with various partners working in the same area"*.

The evaluation clarifies first what both notions of development and migration imply and what may be understood of their nexus. A broad definition of development is used for the analysis, as well as references to other related concepts such as poverty alleviation, wellbeing, growth and progress. The Millennium Development Goals are also used as references. All those definitions and approaches confirm the complexity of development, with its various categories such as economic development, social development, human development, community development or co-development, and the need to approach it systematically when linking it to migration. The report examines the migration and development nexus through various approaches ranging from an individual perspective to a broad geographical description of development and migration (South/South, South/North, North/South, North/North).

The evaluation analyzes the relevance of the Migration and Development nexus to IOM's mandate, the effectiveness of IOM's projects and programmes as a contribution to development, including discussions on the basic conditions for effective implementation, and makes an analysis of what measuring the impact of migration on development and its sustainability implies. The report concludes that IOM activities in the field of Migration and Development are relevant to the IOM mandate, in particular to its Constitution and to the new strategy document adopted by its Member States, and that the Organization can play a more proactive role in the migration and development fields, however with clear requirements for collaboration with various international and regional partners specialized in development, such as the World Bank, UNDP, regional development banks and institutions, and the private sector. Even if migration represents only a small percentage of the overall contribution to development in the world, governments and organizations consider it more and more as an important element with a high level of political and emotional sensitivity.

The effectiveness of IOM's projects and programmes is examined through four major areas of the Organization's work linked to development: (i) brain drain/brain gain and skilled migration, (ii) diasporas, investments and remittances, (iii) labour migration and development, (iv) technical assistance and other types of projects. Concerning the first area, IOM's expertise, including with MIDA, is noted and the evaluation concludes that the projects and programmes can be effective tools for development under precise conditions, in particular the proper identification of needs. An effective contribution to reconstruction in post-crisis situations through returns of qualified nationals (temporary and permanent) is also confirmed.

On the second area, the report notes the increasing interest in diasporas considered as agents of development through remittances and investments in countries of origin. An effective implementation of programmes in that area also requires an appropriate assessment of the diasporas, of their capacity to invest, and of the investment climate and opportunities in the country of origin. The report recommends continuation of the researches that IOM conducts for mapping the diasporas and their potential as investment partners. It encourages stronger collaboration with governments and other development bodies such as the World Bank and IFAD presently launching new initiatives in the field of remittances and investment projects.

Concerning labour migration, the report suggests a continuing focus on the management of organized labour migration and to include a development component in activities when relevant, as is the case with the labour migration projects being implemented between Guatemala and Canada. But labour migration does not systematically require a strong link with development prospects; as the recently adopted strategy document says: The primary goal of IOM is to facilitate the orderly and humane management of international migration.

The fourth area includes capacity building projects and researches where IOM has gained a recognized expertise. A new area that deserves special attention within MIDA is the active promotion of the inclusion of migration into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers of developing countries. The evaluation strongly recommends increasing efforts at such levels of capacity building activities. Concerning other IOM projects including a development component, the work in post-crisis situations for the development of communities affected by significant returns and subject to economic pressures, with migration remaining often the only solution for their population, deserves continued attention and should be promoted as a longer term community development alternative.

In the analysis of the impact of migration on development, the evaluation draws attention to the different levels of impact related to the numerous approaches of development: the impact on the wellbeing of the migrant, on the wellbeing of the migrant's family in the country of origin, on poverty alleviation of the community of origin through remittances or small investments, on economic growth in developed countries through the work of the migrants, on the economy of the developing country at macro-level, for instance through the investments by diasporas, or the impact on social and cultural development.

The report notes that measuring some of those impacts are not cost-effective, requiring time and high investments, and that working on the effectiveness with verified hypotheses, such as that brain drain affects development, can be as informative and relevant. Previous evaluations of MIDA projects also showed interesting unexpected impacts that should be highlighted, such the spontaneous implementation of co-development projects in recognition of the migrants' contribution to the host country's economy. The report recommends however that IOM examine the possibility of identifying impact indicators for its projects and programmes with a development component. Regarding sustainability, the report concludes that investing in guaranteeing sustainability deserves proper assessment before implementation of projects.

## SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### CONCLUSIONS

- The Migration and Development nexus is relevant to IOM's mandate and IOM's broad and evolving experience can address existing development needs through migration projects, as recognized by the international community and IOM Member States. However, there is still room for institutionalizing that role and for clarifying what IOM could become in future years as an agency working for development. MIDA offers a good example of a comprehensive approach to Migration and Development, formally endorsed by governments.
- In terms of brain drain, brain gain and skilled labour, IOM programmes and projects can be effective if needs are properly assessed and if the governments, particularly in the developing countries, are committed to the success of such programmes, are ready to work with nationals who decided to migrate and are monitoring properly the added value of the programmes and projects for a good management of its cost-effectiveness. Flexible options and various incentives for return deserve being taken into account as developed by MIDA through temporary and 'virtual' returns. Effectiveness appears to be easier to address in post-crisis scenarios where needs can be identified more rapidly and return can take place more readily.
- Implementation of IOM projects and programmes for investments through migration for development is effective if proper preparatory work is done to identify diasporas, investment opportunities and channels of remittances. As already underlined, formal commitment from the governments of the countries of origin to support IOM work is necessary for successful results.
- Any impact is possible to measure, if the amount necessary for conducting such an analysis is available; however, these sums could end up being important, taking into account the complexity of migration, the complexity of development and the volatility of migrant forces. Such an investment could be far from being cost-effective. A reasonable impact analysis can be made working with basic hypotheses as well as through a proper monitoring of the effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and projects, including data gathering.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- IOM should continue discussions with its Member States and donors to support its work in the field of development. The discussions could also highlight IOM's broad experience and project/programme strategies, and the MIDA programme could serve as a basis for presenting a comprehensive migration management approach for development.
- Joint ventures and active collaboration between IOM, the host country, the country of origin, diaspora associations, local authorities and the private sector can be promising and new initiatives should be further tested, building on the work already conducted, in particular within MIDA. Close collaboration with partners such as UNDP and the World Bank should be actively pursued as it is the case now with the new initiatives promoted by those agencies in the implementation of investment projects.

- IOM should continue exploring potential projects and programmes that could specifically link labour migration management and development as tested in the Guatemala/Canada temporary migration project. However, the management of Labour Migration deserves specific attention as it includes aspects not directly linked to development but to the respect, protection and well-being of migrants and more globally to the orderly migration concept.
- IOM should continue to offer its technical assistance to governments of developing countries for including migration in poverty reduction and development strategies, analysing the nature of the difficulties encountered for institutionalizing it in particular the additional workload on government officials in charge of such development policies. IOM can adjust its technical assistance accordingly, include it more systematically in its traditional programmes dealing with migration and development, and promote it more effectively with donors. IOM should also actively propose its community development programmes as an effective way of stabilizing populations, working towards development and addressing the root causes of migration.
- IOM should continue discussions on the measurement of the impact of migration on development with its international partners and governments, as is now the case with the World Bank, some African countries and the Millennium Institute. However and when appropriate, IOM should also stress that measuring the impact is not necessarily a precondition for effective implementation of IOM's migration and development approaches. Learning by doing through concrete and pilot work for a better understanding of the impact can also be an effective contribution to the elaboration of theoretical models. As an alternative to major investments, IOM should try to develop outcome and impact indicators that could help to assess the impact of its development projects and programmes.