



Annual Report 2020
IOM the Netherlands

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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As the leading international organization for migration, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to:

- Help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration.
- Promote international cooperation on migration issues.
- Assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems.
- Provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need including refugees and internally displaced persons.

Established in 1951, IOM is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. With 174 member states and more than 13,800 staff worldwide, 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 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.

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CONTENT

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION	4
MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT	5
MIGRANT INCLUSION	6
RESETTLEMENT AND FAMILY REUNIFICATION	7
OUR ASSISTANCE AT SCHIPHOL AIRPORT	8



“Human mobility is the key component of all our projects. The COVID-19 pandemic had an unprecedented impact on people on the move due to border closures and nationwide lockdowns to prevent the virus from spreading. IOM the Netherlands nevertheless remained operational and assisted hundreds of migrants wherever possible, which often required creative ways to face multiple challenges and adapt to the new restrictive circumstances. I am proud migrants worldwide, despite the challenges, could benefit from our services, which are reflected in IOM the Netherlands Annual Report 2020.”

Foreword

In 2020, IOM the Netherlands facilitated the voluntary return to countries of origin of more than 1,800 migrants. We also assisted 41 family members entitled to reunite with their family in the Netherlands and supported over 400 refugees with their Resettlement to the Netherlands.

We continued to raise awareness the importance of helping migrants to find their place in Dutch society. We also assist our partners (government, employers etc.) to recognize and welcome the positive contributions that migrants make to our society. We equally contributed to promote successful labour migration engagement by matching sought talent skills from outside of Europe with Dutch employers. When well-managed, labour mobility is highly beneficial to migrants, their countries of origin and the European economies.

Also, like in previous years, we were able to support many diaspora experts to contribute to the development of their countries of origin. The pandemic challenged us to try-out online transfer of knowledge and entrepreneurial skills.

These activities could not have been possible without the close cooperation with the Dutch government, our partner organizations, diplomatic representations, and IOM missions worldwide for which I would like to express my most sincere gratitude.

To conclude, worth to also ponder and acknowledge on the following point: the pandemic has brought ever more into focus the vital role that migrants play in our societies, and the need for more effective migration governance that both protects and empowers migrants as important members of our communities and in doing so rendering them more effective in their contribution to the whole society.

Antonio Polosa
Chief of Mission IOM the Netherlands

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

One of our core activities is the voluntary return and sustainable reintegration of rejected asylum seekers and migrants in an irregular situation. Since 1992, we are the implementer of the REAN regulation offering information and counselling services, procuring travel documents, arranging safe travel with tailor-made support for vulnerable migrants, and providing sustainable reintegration support after arrival back home.

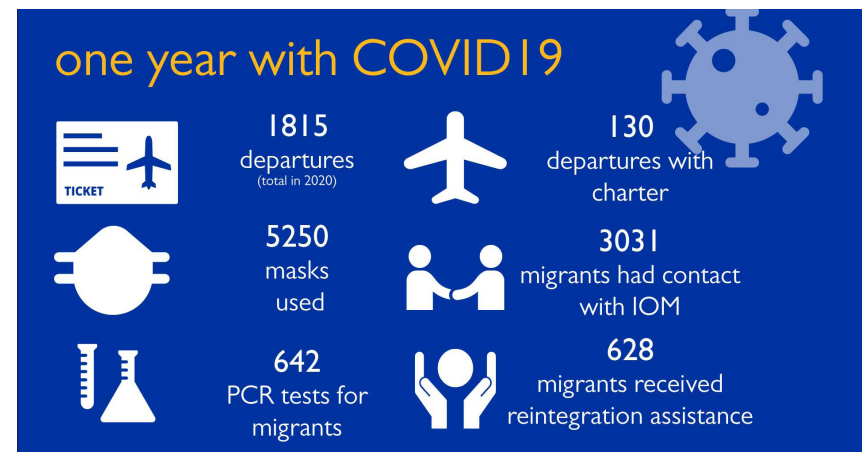
We are in favour of reintegration assistance, based on human dignity and as a major sustainability factor in countries of origin. Through our worldwide network of offices we offer individual in-kind reintegration support, such as setting up income generating activities, or financing educational or training programmes. Tailored assistance is provided to specific vulnerable persons, including migrants with health concerns, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors, families or single parents with underage children, and undocumented migrants.

When the coronavirus pandemic erupted early 2020, we suddenly had to adapt most of our regular procedures. Interested migrants usually meet our staff at various locations in the Netherlands to discuss the options open to them in person. Due to the coronavirus pandemic these one-on-one consultations about life changing decisions suddenly changed into virtual meetings via video calling and whatsapp.

The pandemic required us to reset our role and to develop quick and clever ways to respond to requests from migrants in need for additional assistance. Due to economic effects and travel restrictions, we were confronted with numerous requests from stranded travelers and labour migrants who suddenly became unemployed and



IOM staff working on AVRR forms outdoors due to corona measures.



sometimes even homeless. The flexibility of the Dutch Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V) enabled us to temporarily assist an increasing number of requests from stranded migrants and arrange emergency accommodation prior to departure.

Despite all the practical difficulties due to the COVID-19 measures in the Netherlands, the ending of most international flight and the closure of so many borders, we managed to meet with 3,032 migrants and facilitated the departure of 1,815 persons to their home countries.

To be able to offer return assistance, we maintain close relationships with diplomatic representations in the Netherlands and Belgium. Good cooperation with embassies and consulates is key for the referral of migrants in need of return assistance and to assist them with obtaining (emergency) travel documents. This way we could support 408 migrants with a travel document in 2020.

With many commercial flights coming to a standstill, more countries opted for organizing repatriation flights with chartered aircraft. Fortunately, with the support of the diplomatic representations, we were able to book 130 migrants to 12 different countries by means of these flights.

The pandemic also had a big impact on returning migrants after arrival in their home countries. Corona regulations in the countries of origin required them to show negative PCR tests. Returnees often had to self-isolate in hotels or at home. To follow how the migrants fared in the period after arrival our colleagues in the countries of origin closely monitored every individual return process.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Netherlands is home to many diaspora; migrants or descendants of migrants who feel connected to their countries of origin. Since 2004, we are offering temporary assignments to professionals from the diaspora who want to use their knowledge and expertise for the benefit of their country of origin. In 2020, we continued our two successful Migration and Development projects: Connecting Diaspora for Development (CD4D) and Entrepreneurship by Diaspora for Development (ED4D).

We had to rethink the concept of being engaged with restricted travelling. We succeeded in turning the coronavirus crisis into an opportunity to explore different ways of staying connected with the host institutions in the countries of origin. For our CD4D project, most diaspora experts are now virtually engaged with training staff and building up capacity at the host institutions.

Interestingly, this has opened up opportunities for experts who cannot easily find the time to take up an in-country assignment because they are professionally engaged in the Netherlands.

CD4D supported 39 experts who took up a total of 46 assignments in 2020, of which 36 physically and 10 virtually, with the majority taking place in Somalia.



Our ED4D project aims at encouraging the Ghanaian and Ethiopian diaspora entrepreneurs living in the Netherlands, to get involved in the development of the private sector in Ghana and Ethiopia. We assisted with their journey to start up or expand businesses back home. After an intense selection process the entrepreneurs were trained on funding mechanisms, and they joined a virtual bootcamp with country specific advice and guidance on how to conduct business in Ghana and Ethiopia. We implemented this project together with PUM (Netherlands Senior Experts).

MIGRANT INCLUSION

Promoting migrant inclusion and social cohesion in the Netherlands is one of our core activities. We develop and implement projects that help migrants with their integration into new communities. To foster successful integration we also assist receiving communities and employers to recognize and welcome the positive contributions that migrants make to Dutch society.

In 2020, we launched two projects: [MATCH](#) and [Includ-EU](#). MATCH addresses labour market shortages which are caused by an aging population. It is vital to invest in our societies to make them more close-knit and prosperous. We do this by matching highly skilled candidates from Nigeria and Senegal with Dutch companies across all

sectors. When well-managed, labour mobility is highly beneficial to migrants, their countries of origin and European economies. For this innovative project we set up a partnership with the Netherlands African Business Council (NABC).

IOM promotes the participation and inclusion of people with a migrant background. The EU-funded project Includ-EU aims to enhance the integration of third-country nationals in Europe. We assist cities in the Netherlands with their migrant inclusion activities and their efforts to create more cohesive societies. We do this by offering needs-based training and by exchanging good practices on EU-level. Includ-EU is implemented with the Municipality of Tilburg and focuses on inclusion practices in the Hart van Brabant region.



MATCH – Finding the Best Talents for your Company's Needs

RESETTLEMENT AND FAMILY REUNIFICATION

People forced to flee their homes are received in refugee camps. The most vulnerable refugees are eligible for resettlement to a safe country. We arrange the safe travel of the refugees accepted to resettle in the Netherlands. Special consideration is given to refugees with medical problems and women at risk.

Resettlement is life-saving and it gives people a chance to begin life anew, which is why the Dutch government has accepted refugees for resettlement since 1986. Despite significant challenges caused by COVID-19, in 2020 we were able to organize the safe arrival of 512 migrants in the Netherlands.

Through invaluable teamwork with the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers COA, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service IND, the Ministry of Justice and Security and our offices in countries of departure, we successfully navigated the restrictions and welcomed 422 migrants for Resettlement and 49 migrants under our Relocation project.

For family members who have stayed behind, it is vital to be reunited with their resettled families in the Netherlands. We prepare and arrange their travel and act as contact point for their relatives and sponsors in the Netherlands. In our Family Reunification project we assisted the safe travel of 23 families (41 migrants) with the valued assistance of the Dutch Council for Refugees (VluchtelingenWerk).



OUR ASSISTANCE AT SCHIPHOL AIRPORT

At Schiphol airport, we offer logistic services to different categories of migrants. We support migrants leaving the Netherlands to return home, help resettlement migrants in transit with connecting flights, assist migrants allowed to resettle in the Netherlands or who are being reunited with their families and book flights for experts from the diaspora travelling to countries of origin for short assignments.

As the coronavirus pandemic came with major global restrictions, our staff at the airport immediately adjusted their services. Most flights were suspended which made it challenging to provide assistance to migrants in the spring and summer of 2020. We had to find innovative ways to improve our services and make swift decisions. This required a new framework for departures, arrivals and transits based on finding the best options to help as many migrants as possible.

Even though 75% of the airport was closed and flights were grounded we facilitated 1,815 departures, 1,033 transits and 512 arrivals

