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IOM'S GENDER MAINSTREAMING INITIATIVE

Report by the Working Group on Gender Issues (WGGI)

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INTRODUCTION

As part of IOM's global strategy for gender issues, the Organization is continuing its efforts to promote gender awareness, to mainstream gender in operational activities, and to increase expertise on gender issues. To build on existing experience and facilitate the implementation of project activities that could serve as catalysts for future project development combining a gender focus with migration, the Deputy Director General last year requested the Working Group on Gender Issues (WGGI) to further the promotion of gender policy through project activities. The WGGI selected a number of projects having a gender dimension for inclusion in the Programme and Budget for 2001 and the Council approved funding for these in November 2000 through the use of a modest amount of Discretionary Income. The projects initiated under this programme were intended to serve as high-profile models: (1) to encourage the development of similar gender-related programme activities throughout IOM's global network; and (2) to promote the complementarity of gender activities with other ongoing IOM activities.

The projects were chosen by the WGGI with the aim of:

- increasing gender awareness and opening channels of dialogue;
- advancing the understanding of both gender and migration at institutional and grass-roots levels;
- promoting the capacity to design and implement gender mainstreamed projects, and enhancing participation of Field Missions in IOM's gender mainstreaming strategy;
- increasing gender-specific data on migrant caseloads; and
- providing innovative tools to address the needs of migrants, particularly at grass-roots level.

The specific activities were in a number of areas, such as migrant health, assisted voluntary returns, migrant trafficking, migrant labour, information campaigns, and migrant children.

This report, therefore, sets out the achievements of this first practical initiative in gender mainstreaming as outlined in the five aims above. It is not intended to evaluate the projects themselves but rather the gender policies incorporated in them, as well as the effectiveness of this pilot initiative.

In order to facilitate this assessment by the WGGI, the Missions were requested to provide a final report on the project if completed, or a progress report if the project had not been completed, with the reasons for not completing it. A summary of the results of the projects can be found in Annex I. Each implementing Mission was also requested to complete the questionnaire that can be found in Annex II.

Other activities carried out by the WGGI this year are listed in Annex III.

ASSESSMENT OF THE GENDER DIMENSION

The conclusions of this assessment are as follows:

(1) Increase gender awareness throughout the Organization

From the responses received, it can be concluded that, overall, efforts at increasing gender awareness encountered open and objective reception among staff in the implementing Missions. It was noted, however, that more awareness raising with regard to the larger concept of gender dynamics would be beneficial for staff. Staff needed to understand that projects were not just projects but venues and opportunities to build on personal capacities and to re-educate themselves. The essence of gender mainstreaming does not and will never work merely on paper. From IOM's perspective, it is particularly important that staff other than those directly involved in implementing the project benefit from a cascade effect that can be instrumental in the development of their own projects. Increasing gender awareness through project implementation is beneficial not only to the women and men that are the migrant beneficiaries of IOM services but also to the IOM staff who are project developers and managers.

(2) Advance the understanding of gender and migration

Again, the importance of the linkage between gender and migration was highlighted throughout the implementation of the projects. Partners, whether governmental, institutional, or grass-roots, but also, and more importantly, the targeted population of the projects, all noted and appreciated this linkage and emphasis on the gender dimension. In many instances, the target groups were undocumented migrant women and it is well-known that migrant women suffer from dual discrimination: firstly, because they are foreigners, and secondly, because they are women. Gender biases and the inequality of treatment between male and female migrants are often blatant but, thanks to gender mainstreamed projects, such as the information campaigns referred to in this document, this inequality - while not disappearing entirely - can at least be reduced. Another important result of this assessment is to note the cross-cutting presence of gender throughout migration, as can be witnessed in the number of IOM's service areas to which these projects pertain, such as migrant health, labour migration, assisted voluntary returns, counter-trafficking and mass information campaigns.

(3) Enhance the capacity to design and implement gender mainstreamed projects

All implementing Missions felt encouraged to continue in this vein because they have realized the advantages of gender mainstreaming that can benefit, as already mentioned above, not only the migrants themselves, but also the staff, as well as the Organization. Mainstreaming gender is an opportunity to broaden one's perspectives, whether personal or professional, as well as needs that should be improved as, for example, through training. The staff working on the projects acknowledged that their understanding of gender mainstreaming in projects was greatly enhanced and they felt encouraged to develop other projects that would benefit both migrant women and men.

(4) Increase gender specific data on migrants

Disaggregation of data is, of course, extremely important. IOM already began disaggregating data some years ago, but these projects were most useful in that additional indicators such as

educational level, legal status, skills, and organizational experience were developed, which would be important for future project development beyond the basic ones such as sex, age, nationality, or family status. Nevertheless, while some progress has been made in this field, it was also obvious that more measurable indicators were needed to better gauge the overall success of the projects. Also, while a questionnaire was developed for implementing Missions (Annex II), it became obvious that more questions should be added, for example: Did the projects have significant different impacts on migrant women and men? Did both migrant women and men have equal access to the benefits of the project? Did the project account for the different needs of migrant men and women?

(5) Provide innovative tools to better meet the needs of migrants

At a minimum, the networks of contacts on gender issues at government, institutional and grass-roots levels were greatly expanded in the implementing of these projects. The WGGI foresees improved use of existing tools such as the Project Assistance Toolkit (PAT). The PAT is an electronic aid/computer application for project development that contains a section dedicated to gender mainstreaming of IOM projects. It also comprises a list of gender-sensitive and appropriate terminology to be used when writing proposals. The projects funded by the WGGI this year, as well as this assessment, will be highlighted as models for future gender mainstreamed projects.

CONCLUSIONS

This was a pilot initiative but its importance lay in that it constituted the first concrete step by IOM to mainstream gender throughout its programmes and to enhance future project development with a gender dimension. This initiative builds on the Organization's gender policy that can be found in Resolution No 932 (LXXI) of 29 November 1995 and its mainstreaming strategy that is based on the following basic points:

- for IOM to be accountable for applying the policy, gender must be mainstreamed and incorporated as a strategy into the Organization's processes;
- there is a need to institutionalize and integrate gender into the entire spectrum of IOM activities – projects, programmes and staff policies. For that to be achieved, all staff need to understand and implement the strategy in their work;
- the mainstreaming strategy is not exclusively related to women and their specific needs and concerns. It also includes initiatives for men, where necessary, provided they promote overall gender equality.

As the foregoing assessment concludes, the Working Group on Gender Issues feels confident that this initiative represents a most useful beginning to future gender mainstreaming in IOM. Despite the overall successful implementation of the projects, lacunae were identified, questions raised, and lessons were learned that are all promising for improved project development to better meet the needs of migrant women and men. While some projects seemed specifically to target only men or women, it can be said that the results of the projects can also be applied to women, men and children.

Although the majority of the projects did not encounter major constraints and were considered successful, there were two projects that could not be implemented this year, for reasons beyond the WGGI's control. As noted in the summaries of the projects that follow, there is good reason to believe these projects will be implemented in the near future.

Therefore, in view of the overall favourable conclusions of this assessment, the Working Group on Gender Issues feels encouraged to pursue its direct involvement in gender mainstreaming. It has, therefore, requested funding from the Council for four future projects having a gender dimension for implementation in 2002. These projects can be found in Chapter IX.6, General Programme Support, Gender Issues Activities of the Programme and Budget for 2002 (MC/2049).

The WGGI is fortunate to have support from the Director General and Deputy Director General and hopes it can continue to rely on the support of its Member States.

Annex I

STATUS REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECTS

Full reports on the below can be made available upon request.

1. Publication of Guidelines for Conducting Research on Trafficking (Headquarters)

Project summary: Trafficking is a very difficult subject to research and requires innovative and gender-sensitive approaches. This project resulted in the preparation of a set of practical guidelines on different approaches to the study of trafficking which should facilitate not only the work of IOM staff but also benefit those working for other agencies.

Constraints: Although the guidelines focus mainly on trafficking in women, many of the conclusions can be applied to men and children as well. There were no real constraints because of the project focusing mainly on women.

Results: Two reports have resulted from the project: one for internal use within IOM for staff in the Field wishing to carry out authoritative trafficking research, and a second one for publication that will be more theoretical. This document will definitely clarify some of the issues that have been negatively affecting trafficking research such as a confusion of consensual prostitution with trafficking, and a confusion of smuggling and trafficking. Prevention of trafficking and protection of trafficked victims will be enhanced, as will efforts to develop projects to achieve these goals. Other concerns such as the marginalization of women in their countries of origin will also be highlighted.

WGGI funding: USD 8,500

2. Training programme for Sudanese young adults (IOM Nairobi)

Project summary: This project was to provide educational, HIV/AIDS awareness and gender training for Sudanese unaccompanied youths accepted for resettlement in the United States. Gender issues would be an important component of the cultural orientation classes. The target population of young men (average age 18-25) had lived in refugee camps for over thirteen years and did not have experience in interacting with women outside their refugee camp environment.

Constraints: None were met as gender was considered an issue of primary importance by the cultural orientation (CO) trainers.

Results: The CO trainers and HIV/AIDS counsellors were able to explore gender issues to a higher degree than would have been possible without the support of WGGI funds. Implementing IOM staff learned about the Sudanese cultural perspective regarding women and used this perspective to facilitate cross-cultural understanding and prepare the target population for the impending resettlement. Important aspects of the gender training included:

- understanding Sudanese male/female interaction and socializing;
- the concept of gender equality - comparing and contrasting this meaning in Sudanese and American culture;
- exploring and discussing the importance of gender-related laws, including sexual harassment, marriage, divorce, physical abuse, child support and laws surrounding discrimination;
- exploring dating and marriage rituals in Sudanese and American culture;
- preparing participants for the differences in behaviour between Sudanese and American women;
- counselling on STD and HIV/AIDS issues.

Ultimately, these young men were given the opportunity, possibly for the first time in their lives, to be exposed to issues related to gender-awareness - issues which allowed them to explore, question and understand both their own cultural values and those of the receiving country in a non-threatening, risk-free environment.

WGGI funding: USD 3,500

3. Financial participation in a 12-month public information campaign on human trafficking in the Philippines (TIMP) - (IOM Manila)

Project summary: This project aimed at raising the overall level of awareness among the population of the Philippines on the debilitating effects of trafficking on society and the welfare of its victims. It involved the airing of two 30-second public service announcements (PSAs) in cinemas around the country and was to target not only men, the more frequent movie-goers, but also women who were increasingly pushed to join the labour migrant workforce. The PSAs were popularly and creatively designed and packaged to provide factual information on trafficking in an interesting and informative manner that, at the same time, raised awareness of the realities, pitfalls and dangers of irregular migration and trafficking.

Constraints: None were encountered on the WGGI component.

Results: WGGI funds were used to air two PSAs in 19 different cinemas totalling 416 times with an audience reach of 1,990,196 persons. The whole project aired *Child's Play* and *Shortcut* 8,447 times in 19 cinemas for 81 days in 20 weeks, from August 2000 to March 2001, with a total audience of 4,930,623 reached for the same period. As for the WGGI component, this project definitely maintained and sustained IOM's delivery of gender-balanced migration information through PSAs in cinemas within a period of two months.

Pre-screening and post-screening surveys were conducted covering over 600 persons, showing in the post-screening survey an increased percentage of viewers aware of trafficking. Relevant tests were made at the 95 per cent significance level, proving that there was an increase in awareness of the viewers on the issue of trafficking since the screening of the PSAs.

WGGI funding: USD 5,000

4. Updating and printing of the IOM publication on “Trafficking of Women from the Dominican Republic for Purposes of Sexual Exploitation” (IOM Santo Domingo)

Project summary: The original study was undertaken in 1996 as a summary assessment of interviews with returned trafficked women in the Dominican Republic, governmental and NGO officials. This updated version provided recent available information on the dimensions of the problem in order to gain the attention of civil society and public institutions in the country about a subject that, to date, has received little attention from policy-makers.

Constraints: None encountered, although it was noted that there exists a need to further enhance the trafficking knowledge base.

Results: The study was presented in a press conference by the Dominican State Secretary for Women and received wide coverage. It was further distributed at the national level to public institutions, the Congress, academic centres, the media, to 600 secondary school directors and teachers, to Dominican embassies and consulates worldwide, local women, youth and neighbours’ associations, foreign embassies, consulates and international organizations and to selected NGOs in countries of destination.

WGFI funding: USD 5,000

5. Information campaign aimed at employers of, as well as domestic workers in the district of Montes de Oca in the San José area (IOM San José)

Project summary: This campaign was to target employers of housekeepers to increase their awareness of the rights of migrant women who make up a large proportion of domestic workers in Costa Rica and the legal obligations of the employers towards them. These women often suffer discrimination and do not enjoy the same rights as their male counterparts. They were also to benefit from increased counselling. The overall objective of the project was to inform employers and domestic workers of their labour and social security rights and obligations in a simple and easy manner.

Constraints: None were encountered.

Results: Approximately 10,000 male and female employers and 15,000 domestic workers received overall information in the form of brochures on their labour and social security rights and obligations in Costa Rica. They were also informed of procedures required by the Ministry of Labour to regularize domestic work. Information on labour rights was consolidated and disseminated through accessible language for the target population. At the same time, 15,000 domestic workers were sensitized to their labour rights as laid down in national laws. Moreover:

- an assessment was made of the labour rights and obligations, and the knowledge thereof, among domestic workers and employers;
- governmental and non-governmental actors were actively involved in and sustained this pilot project. In particular, the Costa Rican Social Security Institute offered to study the possibility of creating a link in their web page to make this information more accessible to employers, as well as making available an exclusive telephone line to give labour information to domestic workers and employers;

- the results will be presented in a national experts workshop to promote the labour rights of female migrants in Nicaragua, organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO). ASTRADOMES (Domestic Workers Association), IOM San José and ILO Costa Rica will also participate.

WGGI funding: USD 3,000

6. Improving access to health care for migrants in the European Union (EU) (IOM Brussels)

Project summary: The WGGI provided seed money for the development of this project that was to examine the access to health care of all third country nationals in the EU with a special emphasis on migrant women. The overall objective of the project was to improve access to health care for migrants residing in the European Union. The project was to achieve this through the establishment of a network and the development of a larger research project to carry out a selected survey of migrant groups and health care professionals in the EU, thereby achieving a better understanding of the barriers to the delivery of equal health care treatment to third country nationals. Finally a report outlining policy-oriented recommendations to improve access to and delivery of primary health care will serve to disseminate the project's findings widely amongst practitioners and policy-makers in the EU.

Constraints: None were encountered.

Results: The project's aim has been largely fulfilled and it has been possible to develop, submit and receive funding from the European Commission for a wider project. A network of partners throughout the participating EU member States has been established and dialogue on the question of improving access to health care for migrants in the EU has been maintained. The seed funding has assisted IOM in demonstrating its commitment to questions of health and migration, with particular emphasis on migrant women.

WGGI funding: USD 10,000

7. Production of a video to promote the return of Afghan female doctors (IOM Islamabad)

Project summary: In order to encourage other Afghan women to return and to enable them to make an informed decision, a video was to be produced to document and publicize the experience of qualified Afghan female doctors who had already returned to Afghanistan under the ongoing Return and Reintegration of Qualified Afghan Nationals in the health and education sectors (RQAfgN). The video was to focus on the crucial role of female doctors in improving the humanitarian situation of the Afghan female population in terms of increased access to vital medical services. An Afghan film crew was hired for the video production. The documentation was filmed and all the interviews with female returnees and sometimes with their spouses, implementing partners, and IOM officials were conducted in Peshawar and Islamabad.

Constraints: The video could not be filmed inside Afghanistan due to the lack of filming permission from the Taliban authorities and the restriction on filming living creatures in Afghanistan. Furthermore, following the 11 September 2001 attacks, the scriptwriter was evacuated to New Delhi and the script still remains to be finalized.

Results: As the video has not yet been finalized, it is not known at this stage if it will meet the desired output. Once completed, however, it will definitely contribute to enhanced awareness among potential female returnees and other stakeholders on the crucial role of female doctors in improving the welfare of the Afghan female population. The interviewees gave very strong motivational messages and it is assumed that, through this video, these statements will reach out and encourage many other female doctors whose services will be needed in Afghanistan in a post-conflict situation.

WGFI funding: USD 5,000

8. Financial support to the pre-production of a film on migrant children (IOM San José)

Project summary: This film was to depict the story of a brother and sister leaving Nicaragua to search for their parents who migrated to Costa Rica. A range of migration-related issues, including the abuse, trafficking and vulnerability of migrants and their children was to be highlighted.

Constraints: IOM's contribution accounted for 6 per cent of the total costs. While location sites, actors, technical resources and a production plan were identified, as well as the undertaking of several trips to northern Costa Rica to identify shooting sites, the actual filming has not yet begun because the director was unable to locate the entire amount of required funding. Efforts were made to reduce the costs, including volunteer work by some of the professionals involved in the project.

Results: Thanks to possible additional funding by IOM San José and the ILO, the remaining funds should be located and the film is due to be finished in early 2002.

WGFI funding: USD10,000

Annex II

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Did the implementation of your project contribute to raising further gender awareness among your partners – including the government – or Mission staff, other than for staff directly involved in the project? If so, how?
2. Have other gender-related activities or projects resulted from the implementation, since the allotment of Discretionary Income was meant to support other gender-related initiatives?
3. Did you feel encouraged to further develop gender-mainstreamed activities while implementing this project? Were there constraints that were clearly directed towards the fact that it was a typical gender-related project?
4. As the main objectives of the project were to strengthen the Organization's commitment to examine a range of gender-related concerns, integrate gender mainstreaming into IOM's planning and operational activities, as well as serve as models for further gender-mainstreamed project development, what were the lessons learned in this context?
5. Do you think there was a balanced impact on men **and** women in your project? If so, what was the relationship between the two?
6. By implementing this initiative, do you feel an enhanced capacity to design and implement gender-mainstreamed projects? In the same perspective, has your network of contacts on gender issues increased as a result of the project?
7. Would you consider the project successful from a gender mainstreaming perspective?
8. Through the implementation of the project, have you accumulated more relevant gender-specific data that could help you define innovative tools to address the needs of migrants?

Annex III

OTHER WGGI ACTIVITIES IN 2001

1. Ongoing publication of the IOM Gender and Migration News Bulletin.
2. Participation in the organization of a Workshop on “Trust building and peace enhancement through better communication among Somali women”, Hargeisa, Somaliland, 6-11 March 2001.
3. Streamlining of programme and staffing objectives in plans of action for gender focal points.
4. Development of a WGGI page on IOM’s new website.
5. Monitoring and assessment of gender dimension in eight projects funded by the Working Group on Gender Issues.
6. Implementation of the first phase of a gender sensitivity survey for IOM staff.
7. Financial support for humanitarian assistance to Afghan women, men and children through the provision of quilts to prepare for the coming winter.
8. Publication of a presentation on “The role of women in conflicts in Africa and IOM’s response” – for the moment only in French.