



IOM International Organization for Migration
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IOM'S ONGOING GENDER MAINSTREAMING EFFORTS

Report by the Working Group on Gender Issues (WGGI)

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INTRODUCTION

1. Within the framework of its constitutional purposes and functions, IOM has been making efforts to institutionalize and mainstream gender into its work since 1995 when the Council adopted the IOM Staff and Programme Policy on Gender. A Gender Mainstreaming Strategy was subsequently developed, approved and integrated into the overall activities of the Organization.¹ Gender mainstreaming, as a functional facet of IOM's work, seeks to ensure that women and men are provided with equal opportunities to develop and utilize their skills and to participate in decisions affecting their professional as well as personal lives.

2. IOM introduced and implemented a pilot initiative on gender mainstreaming in 2001 to build on existing experience and to facilitate the implementation of project activities that could serve as catalysts for future project development combining a gender focus with migration. This involved the selection by the Working Group on Gender Issues (WGGI) of a number of projects having a gender dimension and their submission to the Council for funding through the use of a modest amount of Discretionary Income. The selected projects 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. As this initiative was deemed to have proven its value, the exercise was repeated in 2002.

3. As last year, the projects were selected by the WGGI with the aim of:

- advancing the understanding of both gender and migration at institutional and grass-roots levels;
- increasing gender awareness and opening channels of dialogue;
- 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 migrants caseloads; and
- providing innovative tools to address the needs of migrants, especially at grass-roots level.

4. The projects selected in 2002 involved activities in disaster preparedness, labour migration, information campaigns, and counter-trafficking.

¹ In 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defined gender mainstreaming as follows: "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality".

5. This document reports on the assessment by the WGGI of the gender policies incorporated in the projects as well as on the ongoing effectiveness of this mainstreaming initiative measured against the five points above. Missions were requested to provide a final report on the project if completed, or a progress report if the project had not been completed. A summary of the results can be found in Annex I. Each implementing Field Mission was also requested to complete the questionnaire that can be found in Annex II.

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

ASSESSMENT OF THE GENDER DIMENSION

I. Advance the understanding of gender and migration

7. Gender is an issue that cuts across all of IOM's migration programmes and activities, not only because migrant men and women are among IOM's main stakeholders but also because IOM's partners, whether governmental, institutional, or grass-roots, all have an interest in a gender component being appropriately introduced, analysed, and handled in the Organization's programmes.

II. Increase gender awareness throughout the Organization

8. A gender sensitivity survey sent to all IOM staff members in early 2002 showed that despite the existence of a gender mainstreaming policy, a network of over 80 gender focal points throughout the Organization, and commitment to the principle of gender equality at the highest levels by IOM's leadership, gender sensitivity and awareness among IOM staff need constant and ongoing guidance and attention. One of the main results stemming from the expert's analysis was that a good proportion of staff were aware of the gender policy but did not need to apply it in their work, or that they knew it existed but had not read it. The Working Group on Gender Issues (WGGI) devotes a good deal of its time to information sharing and advocacy, but obviously more guidance is needed. Successful gender mainstreaming does not mean adding a "woman's component" to a project and indeed goes beyond increasing women's participation. It means bringing the experience, knowledge and interests of both women and men to bear on any agenda and activity. Thus, it is particularly important that staff other than those directly involved in implementing the project benefit from a cascade effect whether in developing their own projects or simply in passing on the "message" until it is not only understood but accepted as routine.

III. Enhance the capacity to design and implement gender mainstreamed projects

9. When the WGGI first introduced its pilot initiative in 2001 of gender mainstreaming through specific projects, it stressed that mainstreaming was not only beneficial to migrants and staff but that it was also good for the Organization in terms of changing the organizational culture to value different approaches and perspectives. The goal of mainstreaming is the transformation of imbalanced social and institutional structures into equal and just structures for

both men and women. Thus, when a project developer is confronted with incorporating the gender dimension into a new project, it should become obvious that constraints and opportunities for migrant men and women are usually different and that by examining them through a gender sensitive lens, perspectives are broadened from both a personal and professional viewpoint.

IV. Increase gender specific data on migrants

10. While gender and migration indicators and sex-disaggregated statistics are vitally important, what has been of increasing usefulness for project development is the simple examination of how the impact, benefits, and constraints differ for migrant men and women. The whole point of gender mainstreaming in project development is that migrant men and women have different needs, concerns and opportunities. The challenge is to see that they are all addressed equally and humanely without detriment to one gender or the other.

V. Provide innovative tools to better meet the needs of migrants

11. Existing tools such as the Project Assistance Toolkit (PAT) that provide examples and terminology for project development as well as the posting of illustrations of gender mainstreamed projects need to continue to be improved and encouraged.

CONCLUSIONS

12. While lessons have been learned since specific gender mainstreaming projects were introduced in 2001, much improvement is still needed before gender mainstreaming becomes an automatic process. For this, training is required and will be a priority for the WGGI in 2003, while continuing its support to project development. The Working Group on Gender Issues feels confident that gender mainstreaming in IOM is on the right path but requires ongoing attention and resources.

13. For this reason, in view of the overall favourable conclusions of this assessment, the Working Group on Gender Issues believes its direct involvement in gender mainstreaming remains valuable. Accordingly, it has requested funding from the Council for two future projects having a gender dimension for implementation in 2003, as well as for a training programme. These projects can be found in Chapter IX.6, General Programme Support, Gender Issues Activities of the Programme and Budget for 2003 (document MC/2083).

14. The WGGI is fortunate to have the support of its 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 projects below can be made available upon request.

I. Production of a radio soap opera for disaster prevention (IOM San José)

1. **Project Summary:** In the wake of disasters such as hurricane Mitch in 1998, the need for increased knowledge, preparedness and response measures by migrant populations has become very evident. Empowering migrant women and men to assume a more proactive role in disaster prevention can reduce potentially catastrophic consequences for migrants and their host communities in Central America.

2. **Constraints:** none encountered.

3. **Results:** This soap opera is the result of an inter-agency initiative where IOM joined efforts with the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), the Center for Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPRENAC) and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). The main outcome of the project is the production of an educational and entertaining community-oriented radio soap opera consisting of four stories with 20 chapters each. It is entitled “Times of Hurricanes” and presents segments on what could happen before, during and after natural disasters (especially hurricanes and floods) by contrasting the negative results of the lack of preparedness on the part of local communities with positive experiences that result from a better level of preparedness. The dramas also serve as an educational tool for preventing irregular migration and generate discussion about gender roles in the disaster context and beyond. IOM participated actively by providing technical advice on migration and gender issues with special attention to the use of non-sexist language, the non-perpetuation of gender roles, the recognition of women’s capacities and potentialities, and the portrayal of women’s active participation in real-life emergencies, both at the family level as well as the community level.

4. This project revealed its importance for its analysis of the gender dimension. In the development phase of the script, sexism would sometimes come out in subtle almost imperceptible ways. For example, women were portrayed as martyrs and men portrayed as heroes. This clearly raised a problem because of the perpetuation of gender roles. This example provided an opportunity to correct the portrayal of gender roles since both women and men had to take leadership positions in their communities in times of need. Once this problem was recognized, it became possible to recognize the triple role that women play in society: productive, reproductive, and as active community participants. From a different perspective, but equally important, was the emphasis on the burden that men carry as family providers which

is one of the main reasons for migration and the taking of risks during the migration process. Thus, traditional gender roles were recognized more realistically, were questioned, and changed to portray a more gender-balanced outcome.

5. Furthermore, this soap opera highlighted the changes in gender roles after migration. When a woman migrated alone, for example, her traditional gender roles were challenged since she now had to make financial and family decisions. This change in gender roles also applied to women who stayed at home as heads of households since they had to make financial decisions and assume the responsibilities traditionally left to men.

WGGI funding: USD 23,000

II. Publication of information brochures to counter trafficking through information (IOM Addis Ababa)

6. **Project Summary:** Within the framework of a comprehensive counter-trafficking project including a public information campaign, an information brochure was devised and distributed to migrant workers, mostly to women, taking into consideration that the overwhelming majority of migrant workers and trafficked victims are women. This brochure was devised as a tool of the campaign to increase awareness among potential and actual victims of their rights as women and as workers, to make better informed decisions related to migration, and to inform them where to seek assistance if needed.

7. **Constraints:** none encountered.

8. **Results:** 51,000 information brochures (50,000 in Amharic and 1,000 in English) were produced and will be distributed during the information dissemination phase of this project over seven months. The WGGI's contribution to this phase covered the design of the content and structure of the message ("Be Informed"), production and dissemination of the brochures for the target groups. This brochure provides pertinent information to potential migrants and their families, sensitizes them on their human rights and on issues related to living and working abroad as migrants, gives insights on how migrant workers can protect themselves from traffickers, and lists contact numbers of organizations within destination countries that provide legal and medical services (including medical counselling) and/or other protection services (shelters, provision of clothes and food) to migrants in need.

9. This campaign contributed to raising awareness of the feminization of migration, trafficking of women and equal access to education and employment for women among target audiences. The brochure was distributed to NGOs, training centres, schools, recreational centres, employment agencies, youth clubs, media and other bodies.

10. Steps have been taken to review migration legislation in Ethiopia with the objective of adding a gender component of equal protection, promotion and respect of women migrants and trafficked victims' rights.

11. Women were mainly targeted in the campaign since their migration is shaped by their roles in the country of origin where they have limited access to education, information and employment opportunities, are relegated to the domestic sector, and are often socially discriminated against. Nonetheless, efforts were made throughout the campaign to have a balanced impact on both men and women.

WGGI funding: USD 18,000

III. Research project on the labour migration needs of migrants following deactivation of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant (IOM Vilnius)

12. **Project summary:** As a complementary activity of a broader project that established a Labour Information and Consultation Centre in Visaginas, this research project aimed at facilitating the process of integrating non-Lithuanians, particularly women, into Lithuanian society and its labour market. Moreover, it sought to prevent the future emigration of highly-skilled professionals at present employed at the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant which is scheduled to close in 2004. While the project explores alternative labour possibilities and devises a future job creation strategy for all the employees of the plant, special attention was paid to employment possibilities for women.

13. **Constraints:** none were encountered.

14. **Results:** Special research was carried out that aimed to analyse the current labour market and employment situation in the rather closed immigrant community of Visaginas which comprised the specific features of the town, its problems and potential, as well to define priority spheres for small business development and the labour market. This project mainly targeted migrant women as the majority of the migrant men were in a much more privileged position with regard to employment. The research indicated the particular social vulnerability of unintegrated migrant women and the necessity to address these issues through specific training in the following fields: sales and marketing skills; general entrepreneurial skills; technical assistance in languages, office management, and project management skills; export development skills; and supply development skills.

WGGI funding: USD 7,562

IV. Research proposal on the establishment of a Directory of Professional African Women in the African Union (AU) (Headquarters)

15. **Project summary:** In a joint initiative with the Regional International Labour Office (ILO) in Côte d'Ivoire, this project consisted of the drawing up of a directory of highly-qualified professional African women. As the treatment of gender is an integral part of IOM's action for migrants, its co-sponsorship of this Directory was but one manifestation of its efforts to promote the work of qualified women in the work of Governing Bodies throughout important fora such as the African Union. The women included in this Directory are not only nationals of countries but are often migrants themselves with the same problems, preoccupations and ambitions that face all migrants. They have assumed positions and responsibilities out of their countries of origin but always with a cross-cutting theme in mind: advancement and empowerment of women in the interest of a just humane and equitable society.

16. **Constraints:** the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire resulted in the evacuation of staff involved in the project that created a delay in the finalization of the Directory.

17. **Results:** A Directory comprising names and pertinent biodata of professional, highly-qualified women from all parts of Africa was drawn up. All entries into the Directory were voluntary. It will be made available to the Secretary General of the African Union in his efforts to advance gender mainstreaming within the African Union. Moreover, the identification of African women in decision-making positions will hopefully allow for a more relevant advocacy role within the larger New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) context.

WGFI funding: USD 5,000

Annex II

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Did the implementation of your project contribute to raising further gender awareness among your partners – including the government – or Field Mission staff, other than for staff directly involved in the project? If so, how?
2. Have other gender-related activities or projects results 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 2002

1. Ongoing publication of the IOM Gender and Migration News Bulletin that is posted on the WGGI page of IOM's web site.
2. Monitoring and assessment of the gender dimension in four projects funded by the Working Group on Gender Issues.
3. Drafting and publication of a generic Fact Sheet on Gender and Migration.
4. Execution of interactive exercise with Gender Focal Points on respective Plans of Action for 2002.
5. Ongoing participation in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group (RG) on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance. The WGGI's contribution to the work of the RG consisted in providing input to the Secretary General's Report on Women, Peace and Security and will contribute in 2003 updated information to the electronic gender resource package developed by the RG. Moreover, through its work with the RG, the WGGI participated in an inter-agency exercise to address allegations of misconduct by staff in emergency humanitarian situations. While not involved, but in the interest of solidarity and a unified inter-agency position, the WGGI thus participated in updating pertinent paragraphs of IOM's Standards of Conduct for all staff following the alleged sexual abuse of refugee women and children in camps in West Africa.
6. Drafting and implementation of a gender sensitivity survey for all IOM staff. Analysis of and follow-up to the expert's final report on results of the survey to constitute a programme priority for 2003.
7. Implementation of the first phase in the organization of four workshops targeting migrant women and devoted to micro-credit management, micro-enterprise development, and empowerment.