

# MIGRATION HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2020

## January - December 2020

The report provides an overview of the migration health activities in the Regional Office (RO) Vienna and throughout South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (SEEECA) in 2020. Within its Migration Health Division (MHD), IOM delivers and promotes comprehensive, preventive and curative health programmes which are beneficial, accessible, and equitable for migrants and mobile populations. Bridging the needs of both migrants and IOM member states, MHD, in close collaboration with partners, contributes towards the physical, mental and social well-being of migrants, enabling them and host communities to achieve social and economic development.



DISTRIBUTION OF REUSABLE MASKS AMONG MIGRANTS SLEEPING ROUGH OUTSIDE OF OFFICIAL CAMPS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA © IOM 2020

**IN THIS REPORT:** IOM's strategic response to the COVID-19 pandemic; chronology of the early pandemic response in RO Vienna; COVID-19 projects in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia; 25th anniversary of the Swedish Medical Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina & 20th anniversary in Kosovo\*; social media campaign on HIV/AIDS in Armenia; health response to Syrian refugees in Turkey; tuberculosis prevention among migrants in the Republic of Moldova, and much more...

*\*All references to Kosovo in this report shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244/1999*

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# FOREWORD

*Welcome to the 2020 Annual Report of the Migration Health Division at the Regional Office Vienna.*

2020 was an unusual year with the COVID-19 pandemic being an unprecedented event affecting everyone. At the same time, 2020 was also a year that particularly highlighted the vulnerabilities of migrants. Due to their internal and transnational movements, migrant populations are not only heavily affected by the pandemic and can suffer from the disease, but at the same time, mobility can be a driver of the spread of the virus. The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically shown that migrant populations are among the most vulnerable groups and are in special need of protection.

Our motivation, in RO Vienna MHD and in the IOM missions throughout the region, has been to ensure that mobile populations are at the center of the pandemic response. Therefore, our work has been focused on the health needs of migrants in the face of COVID-19 and beyond. This year's MHD Annual Report provides an overview on how IOM contributed to the response to the pandemic in the SEECA region by addressing the health concerns that are related to migration. It includes a brief overview of the COVID-19 outbreak in the SEECA region, a chronology of the early pandemic response in RO Vienna, COVID-19 regional data collection efforts, COVID-19 online trainings as well as several COVID-19 projects that were implemented as early as April 2020.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has been dominating our work in 2020, other diseases and health problems have not disappeared and remain equally important. Therefore, migration health programming covered a broad range of issues and activities contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and leaving no one behind. One focus was on enhancing access to HIV services among migrants with a successful social media campaign conducted in Armenia and an outreach project in Tajikistan. In addition, the Swedish Medical Programme which is our longest running MHD project in the region celebrated a double anniversary in 2020: The programme's activities have been continuing for 25 years now in Bosnia and Herzegovina and for 20 years in Kosovo. The activities in the region also covered support for Syrian refugees in Turkey as well as the development of evidence-based migration policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Finally, two new health projects started in 2020: one focusing on tuberculosis prevention and treatment in the Republic of Moldova as well as a mental health and disability project among returned migrants in Tajikistan.

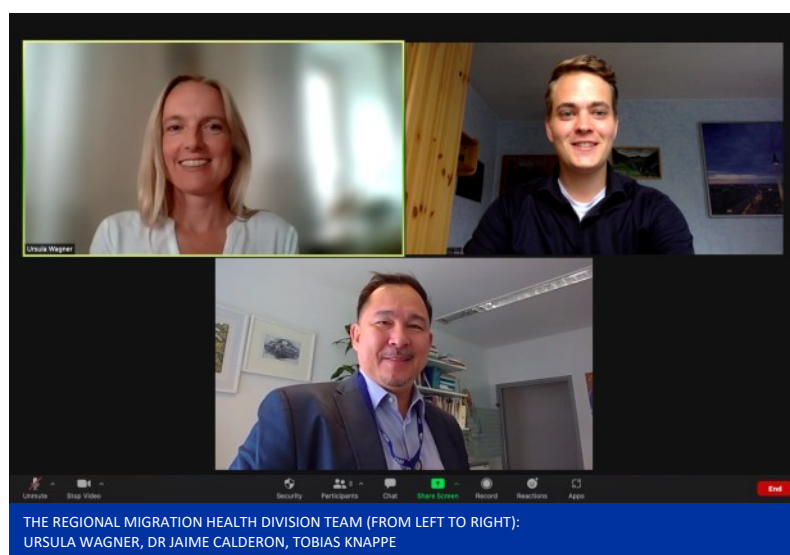
Lastly, we take this opportunity to thank Tobias Knappe who is pursuing a Master's Degree in Global Affairs at the University of Toronto. Tobias joined the IOM Regional Office in Vienna as our Regional Migration Health Intern from June to August 2021 and has been instrumental in producing this Annual Report, in addition to supporting the team.

On behalf of the IOM RO Vienna MHD Team, it is my pleasure to present the 2020 MHD Annual Report to you, we hope you enjoy this issue.

Regards,

Dr Jaime Calderon

Regional Migration Health Advisor



**MHD's work directly relates to the following Sustainable Development Goals:**



# MIGRATION HEALTH 2020—FACTS & FIGURES

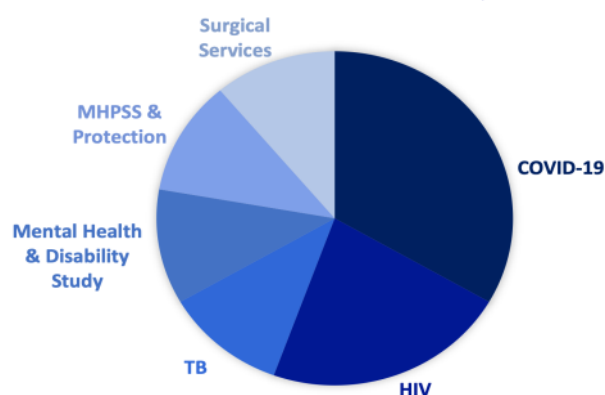
## Migration Health - Project Overview

**9**  
Active MA/MP  
projects

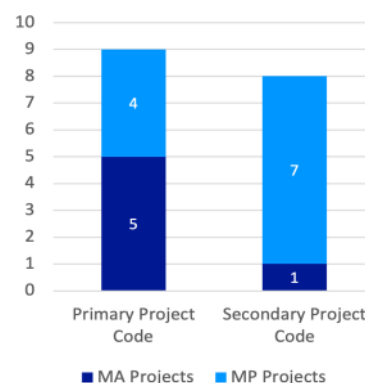
**5**  
New MA/MP projects  
endorsed in 2020

**8**  
Cross-cutting projects (MA/MP as  
secondary project code)

### Thematic Focus - MA/MP Projects



### Number of MA/MP Projects



MA: Health Promotion and Assistance to Migrants; MP: Migration Health Assistance to Crisis Affected Populations

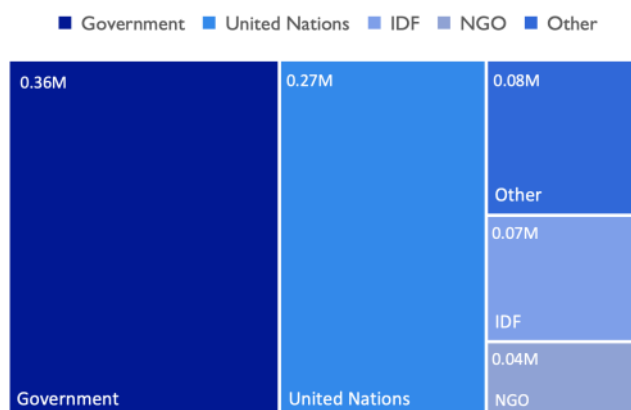
## Migration Health - Budget Overview

**825,171 \$**  
Total Budget for MA/  
MP Projects in 2020

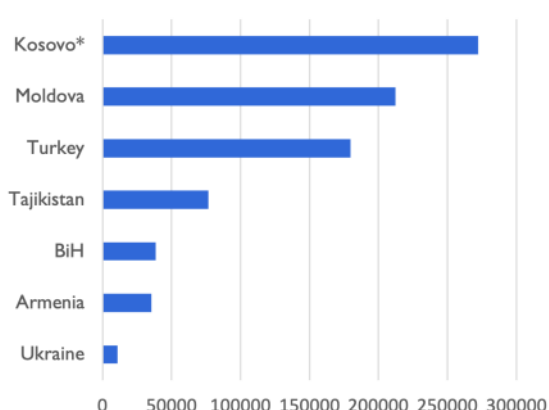
**676,642 \$**  
Budget for MP Projects

**148,529 \$**  
Budget for MA Projects

### \$ Funding by Type of Donor



### \$ Funding by Mission



## Migration Health in the SEECA Region in Numbers

Based on IOM missions' reporting on MHD indicators

**76**  
# of health programming  
personnel in the missions

**32**  
# of Implementing Partner  
Organizations

**348**  
# of health workers trained  
in communicable diseases  
(200 female, 148 male)

**2266**  
Health information  
sessions provided

**26218**  
Community engagement  
activities conducted

**12637**  
Curative consultations  
provided by IOM supported  
PHC facilities

**565**  
Referrals to higher  
levels of care (i.e. secondary  
& tertiary)

**22318**  
People assisted with Mental  
Health and Psychosocial  
support

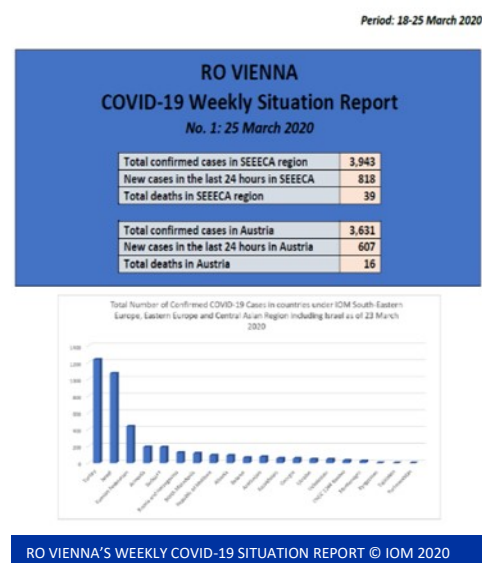
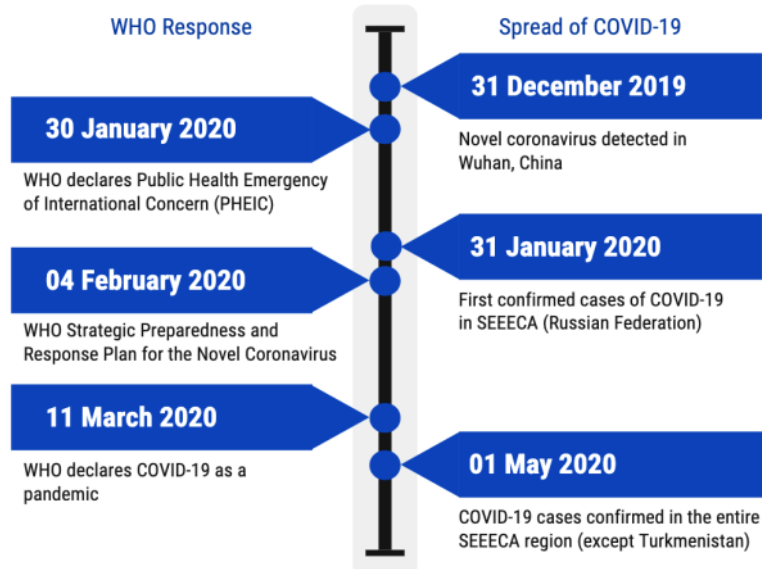
**1001**  
HIV tests performed  
through IOM programming



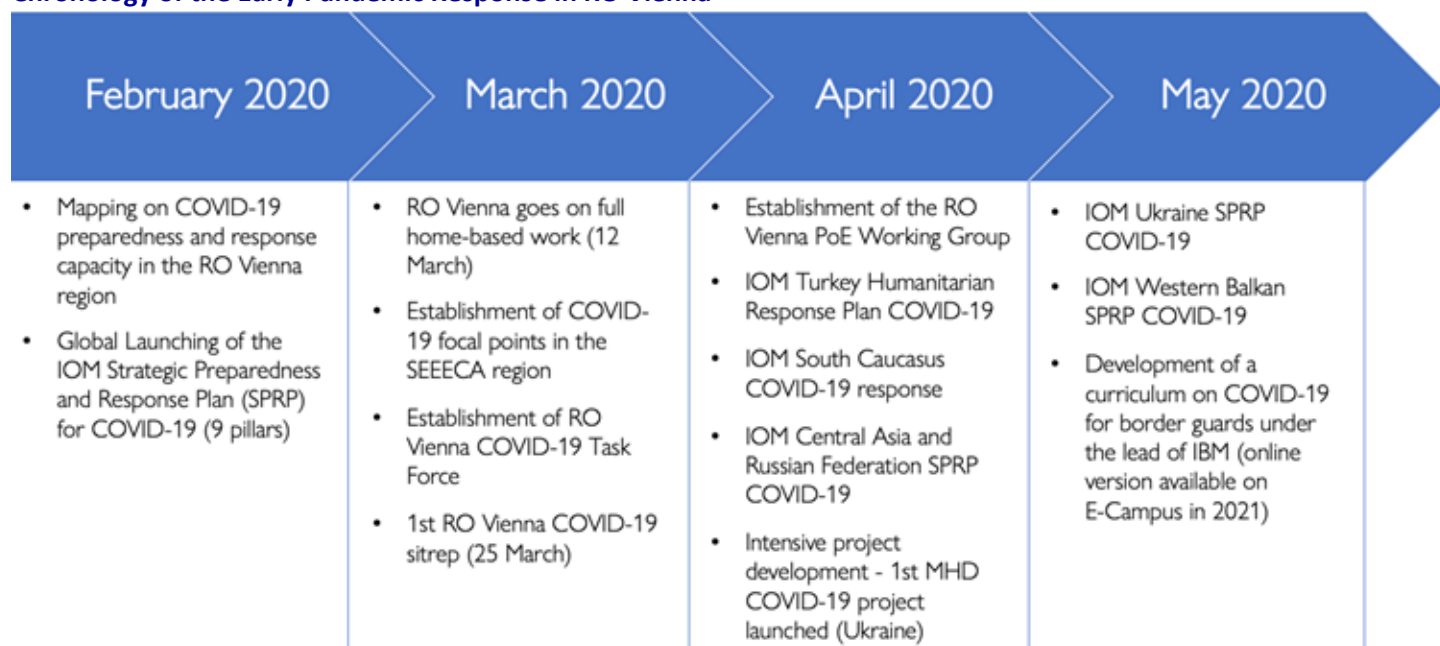
# STRATEGIC RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

With the COVID-19 pandemic being unprecedented, entailing many uncertainties, the strategic response had to be built from scratch. In March 2020, immediate actions were taken, and a COVID-19 Task Force at RO Vienna and COVID-19 focal points throughout the SEECA region were established. During the first half of 2020, the focus was placed on setting up a suitable response framework, whereas in the second half of the year, more and more COVID-19 projects were implemented and monitored.

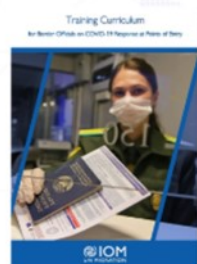
## Chronology of the COVID-19 Outbreak



## Chronology of the Early Pandemic Response in RO Vienna



## PoE Product: Training Curriculum



Developed by IBM and MHD in collaboration of RO Vienna and RO Brussels



## Regional Monitoring of IOM's COVID-19 Response

### July/August 2020

Pilot data collection by RO Vienna on activities in response to COVID-19 in the country offices

### November 2020

Launching of the IOM Global COVID-19 response indicator framework

### December 2020

Second round of COVID-19 data collection in RO Vienna monitoring 18 indicators



# PROJECTS IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In 2020, three COVID-19-related MHD projects were carried out in the RO Vienna region, plus numerous projects had to be reviewed and were implemented from a cross-cutting perspective. The projects presented here addressed topics such as providing urgent supplies or supporting already vulnerable groups and providing health support to UN staff in the pandemic.

## Republic of Moldova

The mission's MHD activities manifested in the two projects IB.0176 and MP.0506. IOM Moldova was among the three UN agencies from Moldova (UNICEF, UN Women, IOM) that received one million USD from the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) to support Moldova in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of this funding, IOM was allocated USD 120,000 and was thereby able to considerably contribute to strengthening the country's capacities with regard to the public health crisis. The response focused on providing support, such as supplies, equipment and capacity building, to key frontline medical workers, police, border police, social workers, and vulnerable communities. IOM ensured infection prevention and control at the 12 Points of Entry (PoEs) with the highest traffic, by updating and disseminating PoEs-specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for detection, notification, isolation, management and referral of travellers infected with COVID-19. Moreover, IOM supported the development, implementation, and delivery of training activities to Border Police frontline staff and assessed the needs and gaps in PoE infrastructure, upgraded hygiene, water and sanitation facilities, and provided necessary supplies for screening to help prevent the spread of the disease. IOM also supported the emergency response of the national institutions through production of up-to-date data and analysis, for instance, on the numbers and profiles of the returning migrants using rapid surveying solutions.



### IOM Moldova - 1st COVID-19 Project

**Title:** Strengthening the Republic of Moldova's National Response to the COVID-19 Crisis (IB.0176)

**Donor:** UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (supported by the Governments of Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Switzerland)

**Budget:** USD 120,000

**Duration:** May 2020 - November 2020

### Key activities & achievements of IB.0176:

- **500 SOP brochures** distributed in three languages (EN, RU, RO)
- **4 online training events** conducted with an overall **participation of 200 frontline border staff**
- **Procurement and distribution of:**
  - 300 rapid COVID-19 tests for frontline border staff and migrants (200 suspected cases referred to clinic for COVID-19 testing)
  - 2000 litres of disinfectant solution & 23 automatic dispensers
  - 8 thermographic cameras & 12 UVC germicidal lamps



DETECTION EQUIPMENT, WASH SUPPLIES AND THERMOGRAPHIC CAMERAS DONATED TO THE MOLDOVAN BORDER POLICE © IOM MOLDOVA 2020

Due to the successful implementation of this first COVID-19 project in Moldova in the early stages of the pandemic, a follow-up project was established in October 2020. The project's overall objective was to strengthen the capacities of the Moldovan border police and penitentiary institutions to ensure infection prevention and control management to reduce the impact of COVID-19 at the Points of Entry and in the penitentiaries. This was achieved through procurement of necessary supplies and equipment for border frontline staff, police and penitentiary institutions staff and prisoners. Among these were personal protective equipment (PPE), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) supplies, fever detection equipment and lifesaving medical devices against COVID-19 infection. In addition, travellers were supported with risk communication, information, and education through travel hygiene kits provided at PoEs. Both COVID-19 projects in Moldova ultimately contributed to the implementation of the country's COVID-19 preparedness and response plan to halt further transmission of the disease, prevent cross-border transmission, and to mitigate the impact of the outbreak.



PPE AND WASH SUPPLIES FOR THE NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION OF PENITENTIARIES AND BORDER POLICE © IOM MOLDOVA 2020

### IOM Moldova - 2nd COVID-19 Project

**Title:** Enhancing the Republic of Moldova's COVID-19 preparedness and urgent response capacity in the international borders and penitentiaries (MP.0506)

**Donor:** Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Budget:** USD 234,124

**Duration:** October 2020 - January 2021

#### Key achievements of MP.0506:

Delivery of the most urgent supplies to **80 PoE and 17 penitentiaries:**

- Personal Protective Equipment:
  - 271,000 surgical masks
  - 3,000 FFP2/FFP3 respirators
  - 135,000 gloves
- 19 thermography cameras
- 1 refrigerator for vaccines
- 240 COVID-19 antigen tests
- Automatic dispensers
- Sanitizer gel

### Kosovo\*

The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected the most vulnerable groups such as women, non-majority communities and internally displaced persons in Kosovo. Women and children already vulnerable to domestic violence were at heightened risk, as reported domestic violence cases increased significantly. In addition, certain non-majority groups already at the socio-economic margin of society, such as the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, faced additional challenges. Against this background, the joint programme of IOM, UN Women and UNHCR aimed at addressing the heightened needs of these vulnerable groups by facilitating their access to social and health care services, life-saving support, access to information and communication, advocacy as well as socio-economic support. Within the joint programme, IOM was responsible for providing psychosocial support and counselling, medical examinations, assisting in establishing a referral system to address various community needs and improving information and awareness regarding COVID-19 prevention. In addition, IOM supported job seekers with highly relevant vocational and on-the-job training, provided other income generating opportunities for those in need and connected beneficiaries with potential employers. IOM's intervention focused on the most vulnerable members of non-majority communities in 12 municipalities throughout Kosovo that lack an easy access to healthcare and other socio-economic activities.

### IOM Kosovo - COVID-19 Project

**Title:** Countering the deepening of pre-existing inequalities in Kosovo through COVID-19 by assisting Kosovo's non-majority communities and domestic violence survivors

**Project Code:** MP.0476

**Donor:** UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund

**Budget:** USD 224,862.64

**Duration:** May 2020 - January 2021

*\*All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244/1999*

#### Key achievements of MP.0476:

- **1699 direct beneficiaries** assisted by IOM counselling
- **378 psychosocial sessions provided** for 128 beneficiaries (70 women and 58 men)
- **1,022 free medical examinations** provided
- **453 people** receiving support with medical bills
- **Over 250,000 people reached** by information and awareness campaigns
- **56 beneficiaries** provided with career guidance mentoring
- **36 beneficiaries** provided with on the job training which resulted in over **10 long term employments** and **5 short term ones**



# CROSS-CUTTING COVID-19 PROJECTS

## WESTERN BALKANS

**Title:** Addressing COVID-19 challenges within the Migrant and Refugee Response in the Western Balkans (DP.2213)

**Geographical coverage:** Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo\*

**Donor:** European Union (EU) Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)

**Overall Budget:** USD 9,449,907

**Budget in 2020:** USD 4,608,232

**Duration:** April 2020 – July 2021 (no-cost extension until December 2021)

### Background

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Western Balkan region requires additional support as it hosts considerable numbers of migrants. The overall objective of this regional project is to protect migrants, asylum seekers and refugees and other vulnerable persons by ensuring that border and migration management systems and services remain operational and can be quickly adapted to the measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The EU-funded project is implemented by IOM in cooperation with UNHCR and targets six partner locations in the Western Balkans. The action has been primarily coordinated by the Department of Operations and Emergencies (DOE) with the support of MHD.



DISTRIBUTION OF MASKS TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN BORICI TEMPORARY RECEPTION CENTRE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA © IOM 2020

### Albania

The intervention in Albania has been focusing on building capacities to respond to the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. For this purpose, three fully equipped medical ambulatories and isolation wards were installed at Points of Entry and the Migrant Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centres in Kapshtica, Gerhot and Kakavija, and training on the use of medical equipment was provided. Three accommodation containers and sanitary facilities for 18 people were installed at the Border Crossing Point Kakavija. As further risk mitigating measures in the centres, hand-washing stations and *digital info boards to share information on COVID-19 infection prevention measures* were installed. In addition, over 62,000 pieces of personal protective equipment (PPE) were delivered to the Albanian authorities to ensure continuity of border and migration management activities.

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

In Bosnia, several Temporary Reception Centre (TRC) received supplies and site improvements. This includes the creation of quarantine and isolation areas, provision of additional WASH facilities, and an improvement in food distribution points to facilitate physical distancing. In Blazuj TRC, the centre hosting the highest number of migrants, 25 containers with up to 80 additional places for accommodation were installed. Furthermore, over 128,000 different pieces of PPE and disinfection supplies were distributed to Border Police, frontline workers, healthcare institutions, and migrants inside and outside of reception centres. Over 80 TRC staff were trained on gender-based violence, child protection and prevention of sexual exploitation, in response to an increased number of incidents due to COVID-19. Other activities included support to persons in quarantine and an increase of recreational activities for those in collective accommodation subject to movement restrictions due to COVID-19. Interventions also included outreach and risk communication measures such as the installation of COVID-19 information boards in six different languages in all TRCs.

### Montenegro

IOM assisted the Ministry of Interior (Moi) to finalize the construction and equipping of Bozaj transit centre, which is now being used as the quarantine area for all new arrivals and isolation of COVID-19 suspect cases. At the centre, the project supports the distribution of meals, sanitary items, PPE and disinfection supplies, plus additional emergency packages in case of arrival of larger groups. Besides, IOM mobile teams, including doctors, medical and social workers, and psychologists assist the Centre's staff with registration, medical screening, psychosocial support and transport of beneficiaries. IOM also organized a workshop for border police and Moi representatives to draft SOPs for camp coordination and management.



NEW TEMPORARY RECEPTION CENTRE IN BOZAJ, MONTENEGRO © IOM 2020



## Serbia

Various mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) activities for migrants have been regularly organized in collective accommodation centres. PSS workshops such as creative workshops for migrant children and several occupational workshops were continued and scaled up. Within the occupational workshops, migrants help to produce protective items needed for the prevention of COVID-19. More than 900 beneficiaries have participated in these PSS activities until January 2021. In cooperation with the Ministry of Health, IOM conducted field monitoring visits to reception and asylum centres to screen the local health response and identify operational issues. The Direct Assistance Fund (DAF) has been introduced to provide health-related assistance to migrants in vulnerable situations. The project activities in Serbia also include the procurement of PPE, medical equipment and other supplies for border authorities, as well as risk communication measures.



CREATIVE WORKSHOP WITH CHILDREN AS PART OF PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT ACTIVITIES IN ŠID, SERBIA © IOM 2020

## North Macedonia

A needs assessment at all transit and asylum centres aimed at enhancing COVID-19 prevention capacities was conducted in June 2020. Based on the results, equipment was procured and construction work started to enable the centres to meet WHO recommendations. Existing accommodation areas were reorganised, WASH services improved, and proper isolation zones established. To mitigate COVID-19 transmission, disinfection tunnels and temperature scanners were installed in the temporary transit centres Vinojug and Tabanovce. As in Serbia, the Direct Assistance Fund for individuals and families in vulnerable situations has been reactivated and four people have already received tailored assistance in 2020.

## Kosovo

Besides PPE procurement, IOM Kosovo has conducted different activities to reach out to regular and irregular migrants outside of reception centres and to inform them about COVID-19 risks and available resources and services. IOM drafted the respective outreach strategy, developed education and communication materials and made several visits to locate and meet unregistered migrants. During these outreach sessions, IOM counselors provided information about the procedures on how to register at the police registration centre and distributed food packages. In addition, *an Infoline system was established and more than 300 refugees and migrants have benefited from counselling sessions on COVID-19 and existing government support services until January 2021.*



## Joint Online Training on COVID-19

## TURKEY/GREECE

From 9 to 11 December 2020, IOM Turkey with the support of the Regional Office Vienna conducted a joint online training on communicable diseases with a focus on COVID-19 for border authorities. Funded by the EU & Turkey, the training focused on preparedness and response to public health events, including through mental health and psychosocial support for border staff and migrants. It was attended by 15 Greek and 10 Turkish border officials, including 6 women.

## UKRAINE

**Title:** Provision of Health Support to the United Nations Country Team in Ukraine in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic (MP.0470)

**Donor:** United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Ukraine

**Overall Budget:** USD 10,800

**Duration:** April 2020 – August 2020



In response to an increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Ukraine, this project contributed to ensure safety and security for the staff of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and their family members along with guaranteeing business continuity. Given that IOM successfully operates a Health Assessment Facility with multinational health professionals in Ukraine, the UNCT had requested IOM's support on counselling and medical issues related to COVID-19. For that purpose, an IOM health professional was designated as United Nations Medical Counsellor (UNMC) as a short-term counsellor. The UNMC provided remote advice to UN personnel and their dependents through phone or online consultations on all aspects related to COVID-19. This included prevention, personal protection, care, treatment options or further referral. In addition, UNMC was responsible for monitoring the health status of isolated personnel as well as contact tracing among close and casual contacts. Furthermore, UNMC supported UNCT efforts on preparedness work to COVID-19 as well as regarding the establishment of the medical evacuation hub.



# ENHANCING ACCESS TO HIV SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS

## ARMENIA

**Title:** Improving HIV/AIDS Awareness Among Urban Labour Migrants in Armenia Through Social Media (MA.0458)

**Donor:** Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

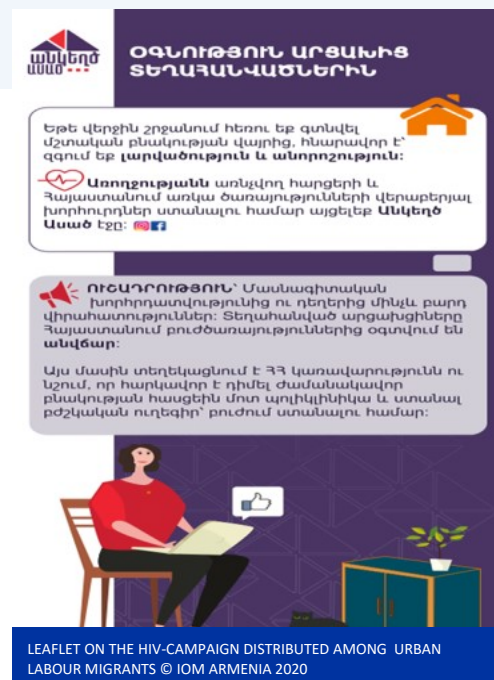
**Overall Budget:** USD 85,000

**Budget in 2020:** USD 35,417

**Duration:** June 2019 – November 2020

The project aimed at improving the prevention and detection of HIV/AIDS among male and female Armenian urban labour migrants in all phases of the migration cycle. Through a social media information campaign, urban labour migrants were targeted to enhance their knowledge and awareness about HIV, as well as to provide them with accurate information on HIV transmission, possible prevention, the need for voluntary testing and treatment options. The social media campaign “Sincere Talk” was developed by a behavioural scientist, who had gathered views and perceptions of the target group through focus group discussions. The campaign’s information posts consisted of short stories using fictional visual characters, confession stories, quizzes, polls, contests, vlogs, and videos with actors and experts. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, also risk communication messages on this topic were included.

The social media campaign was implemented from April to November 2020, using the social media networks Facebook, Instagram, and Odnoklassniki as the main channels. The project was a success in terms of coverage and sustainability as the campaign reached around 600,000 page views on the different social media channels during the six-month period. As it cannot be assessed exactly how many of these were migrants, further activities were conducted to make sure to specially reach the target group. Thus, 40,000 migrants and families with migrants were reached through a VIBER campaign with targeted text messages. In addition, a leaflet was published which contained information about the campaign and the links to the channels. One thousand leaflet copies were printed and distributed with the support of the National Center of Infectious Diseases among migrants and their families in the communities of Armenia with a high labour migration rates.



LEAFLET ON THE HIV-CAMPAIGN DISTRIBUTED AMONG URBAN LABOUR MIGRANTS © IOM ARMENIA 2020

### Reach of the Social Media Campaign “Sincere Talk”:

- Facebook: 394,000 page reaches, over 6,000 likes, 900 Messenger subscribers
- Instagram: 103,000 page reaches and more than 600 followers
- Odnoklassniki: 98,000 page reaches and over 600 followers



### MHD Response to the Displaced Population from Nagorno-Karabakh

- From September to November 2020 an armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan erupted in the Nagorno-Karabakh region
- The existing framework of the HIV campaign was used to provide quick support to the significant numbers of the displaced population
- COVID-19, mental health and psychosocial support messages to displaced populations were delivered through the Facebook page “Sincere Talk”
- 5000 additional leaflets were produced and distributed among displaced people from Nagorno-Karabakh to raise awareness of the campaign

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN “SINCERE TALK” WITH INFORMATION POSTS ON HIV AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ON THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM ODNOKLASSNIKI © IOM ARMENIA 2020





## TAJIKISTAN

**Title:** Improving Migrants' Access to HIV Services in Tajikistan (MA.0467)

**Donor:** Stichting AFEW International

**Overall Budget:** USD 44,247

**Duration:** December 2019 – November 2020

The project aimed to improve Tajik migrants' health-seeking behaviour on HIV diagnostic and treatment in Kulob of Khatlon Oblast and understand their vulnerability to HIV by targeting returned Tajik migrant workers, particularly key populations among migrants. IOM partnered with the local NGO "Nakukor" that is well established and already has a long experience of working with different groups of migrants. IOM improved the NGO's capacity by providing training on conducting operational research, mentoring during training sessions for migrants on legal issues, as well as information on prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV. "Nakukor" organized focus group discussions to collect feedback and improve the content and design of the brochures targeting returned Tajik migrants. The COVID-19 pandemic led to an interruption of the outreach work and required the redirection of funds. With the permission of the donor, IOM adjusted the project and allocated funds for food support and hygiene kits for 50 vulnerable migrant households, information sessions on prevention of COVID-19, as well as personal protective equipment for the NGO staff. Finally, on 12 November 2020, a high-level regional dialogue with 70 participants took place to promote cross-border cooperation on improving migrants' access to essential HIV services.



FOOD DISTRIBUTION ACTIVITY © IOM TAJIKISTAN 2020



TRAINING ON SAFE MIGRATION IN KULOB, TAJIKISTAN © IOM TAJIKISTAN 2020



### Key Activities

- 2 brochures on safe migration and the prevention of STIs and HIV among migrants were developed and distributed
- 5 training events on safe migration
- 256 beneficiaries (234 male/22 female) reached with information sessions and provided with referral vouchers for HIV tests
- 1000 tests purchased for Kulob AIDS Control Center
- 4x increase of migrants covered by HIV tests in Kulob compared to same period in the year before
- Operational research conducted

### UNAIDS Focus Group Discussion on HIV and Migration

On 14 October 2020, the IOM Regional Offices Vienna and Brussels, together with UNAIDS and the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) organised an online focus group discussion on HIV and migration to inform the new UNAIDS strategy. The meeting brought together 30 stakeholders and experts to collect their views, experience and recommendations on how to address the needs of migrants, particularly those living in situations of precarity. Most participants were representing organizations operating in Western and Central Europe, in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, a good number had experience in other parts of the world and therefore offered a global perspective as well.

The introductory plenary was followed by breakout groups who reported their feedback and recommendations in the final plenary session. Participants to the FGD agreed that now is the time to ensure that migrants and mobile populations are considered a key population, and that mobility itself is understood a structural driver of HIV. They called for active mobilization of resources and advocacy to not only address structural barriers, but also documentation and regularization of undocumented migrants. Action is required across the full cycle of migration (pre-departure, in transit, travel, arrival) since migrants face different vulnerabilities and require a range of services along the way. Finally, participants were adamant that there is a need for global and local accountability around inclusion of migrant populations in the HIV response and emphasized that the SDGs and other global HIV goals will not be reached unless the narrative on migration and HIV is shifted.

Dr Jaime Calderon and Ursula Wagner from the IOM Regional Office Vienna hosted the breakout group focused on Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In addition to the above, critical issues that need to be addressed in this region were the residence ban for HIV positive migrants in the Russian Federation, and forced disclosure of the HIV status as part of the recruitment and hiring process for foreign workers.





# 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Swedish Medical Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina & 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Kosovo under UNSCR No. 1244

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA/KOSOVO

**Title:** Swedish Medical teams & Medical Emergency Assistance for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo under UNSCR No. 1244 (PHASE V) (MP.0280)

**Donor:** International Medical Programme (IMP) at University Hospital Linköping, Sweden

**Overall Budget:** USD 509,512 (Bosnia and Herzegovina: USD 227,730; Kosovo: USD 281,782)

**Budget in 2020:** USD 86,205 (Bosnia and Herzegovina: USD 38,540; Kosovo: USD 47,665)

**Duration:** March 2016 – December 2019 (no-cost extension until December 2021)

### Background

The conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) led to thousands of civilian injuries and severely damaged the country's health care infrastructure. In response, IOM, in partnership with the Swedish Migration Board, initiated the Swedish Medical Programme (SMP). SMP is organized by the International Medical Program (IMP) in the Region of Östergötland, Sweden. The first activities in BiH started in 1995, which makes the programme IOM's longest health intervention in the region. Due to the armed conflict in Kosovo\*, the operations were expanded to Kosovo in 2000. Swedish Medical Teams (SMT) have been sent to the two countries to target those in need of urgent assistance and to perform complex operations together with local colleagues. Throughout the years, IOM has been involved as the coordinating and implementing agency. For instance, facilitating effective SMT visits by doing preparatory work and identifying health care facilities and potential patients.

### Shifting Focus: From Emergency Response to Capacity Building

Over the past 25 years, the SMP has evolved and shifted its focus due to changing circumstances in BiH and Kosovo. The programme's key objective, in the beginning was the response to urgent and humanitarian needs of the war-affected populations. Medical treatments that were otherwise not available were offered to these populations, and individual patients who could not be treated locally were evacuated. Over time, the SMP's focus shifted more and more towards capacity building, training and longer-term development, ultimately improving the independent performance of local professionals. In the past decade, cooperation has mostly focused on the exchange of teams. Since the start of the programme, SMP's overarching goal has been to reduce morbidity and mortality of individuals in need of medical treatment with an additional focus on the needs of vulnerable populations. Besides, there have been three prevailing objectives:

1. To find medical treatment options for individuals for whom appropriate services were not available locally;
2. To build local capacity and establish functional local services in priority fields, and thereby reduce the need to seek medical treatment abroad;
3. To strengthen regional cooperation between medical institutions and professionals in ex-Yugoslav countries.

In 2020, most of the planned workshops, activities and visits of Swedish medical personnel to the region had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These activities are expected to continue again in 2021.

#### ACTIVITIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA SINCE 1995

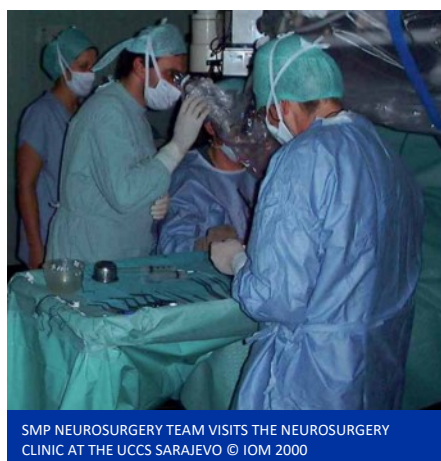
- Successful implementation of 12 projects (+ 1 active project) among other towns in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla, Prijedor
- Establishing several specialized collaborations
- More than 4000 patients evaluated
- Over 1000 patients received medical treatment
- 126 patients evacuated and treated in Sweden

#### ACTIVITIES IN KOSOVO SINCE 2000

- Successful implementation of 13 projects (+ 2 active projects) among other towns in Pristina and Prizren
- Establishing several specialized collaborations in Sweden, and Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Projects of greater impact: hand and reconstructive surgery, urodynamic and pediatric surgery, emergency and pre-hospital services

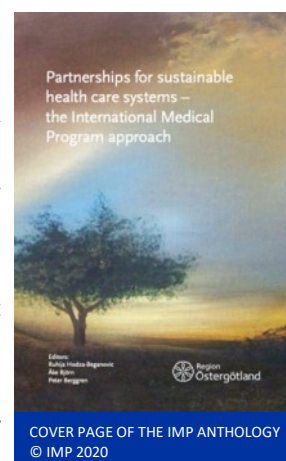


MEDICAL DOCTOR FROM BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ATTENDING A ONE-YEAR TRAINING IN PAEDIATRIC-CARDIAC SURGERY AT LUND UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL © IOM 2011



## IMP Publication

The International Medical Program recently published an anthology on its activities from 1996 to 2018. The book presents examples of existing or finished projects and activities carried out within the framework of the IMP. The anthology outlines IMP's evolution and expansion over the years and describes 20 selected projects carried out since the start of the programme. The chapters were written by former or current SMP participants and are covering one project each. The individual chapters describe the project objectives, length, activities as well as the project's ultimate results. The anthology was finalized and published in 2020.



## Interview with Ruhija Hodza-Beganovic (International Medical Program, Sweden)

The International Medical Program is a department at the University Hospital Linköping and is subordinated to the County Council of Östergötland in Sweden. The department's role is to develop, organize and coordinate international exchange projects where specialized teams from low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) and countries affected by crises work together with medical teams from Region Östergötland. Ruhija Hodza-Beganovic is the Head of the International Medical Program. Before joining the IMP in Sweden, she was Medical Officer, Head of Medical Department in IOM Kosovo and managed the Swedish Medical Programme in Kosovo from 2000 to 2015.

**Looking back at the early years of the SMP, what was the motivation to start the programme and which needs were addressed?**

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and particularly the grenade attack towards the market place in Sarajevo in August 1995 was the start of the programme. Swedish parliament together with 31 countries responded to this emerging call. IMP and Region Östergötland managed the medical evacuation of the injured patients to Sweden. After the crisis the health care system was disrupted and medical evacuation was a temporary solution.

**Which changes did the programme go through over the course of the years?**

The success of our projects is flexibility and adjustment according to the local needs and challenges. Participation of local management and teams in the planning and design of the projects ensures that health care professionals are interested and ready to contribute to and exchange knowledge and experience with other colleagues.

**What was your personal highlight in this programme?**

Being a part of the programme in Kosovo and Sweden, made me gain understanding from both perspectives. Clarity and transparency in setting the goals of the projects is important for the partnering health institutions. We look for a win-win approach in planning projects trying to be transparent in finding goals that satisfy all collaborating parties.

**Which challenges were encountered in the implementation of the programme?**

Apart from financing, frequent changes of the leadership within the collaborative institution consume time and resources. A big risk has been rotation of the personnel leaving and entering the projects, challenging continuity.

**How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the programme in the past 1 ½ years?**

During the pandemic our operational activities were put on standby. Health care staff were occupied with managing COVID-19 patients. The postponed implementation influences continuity of planned training and treatment. When possible, we replaced some parts of the projects by organizing online workshops and counselling.

**How would you describe the role of IOM with regards to the SMP and were there any changes to it over the years?**

We implemented a number of projects in ex-Yugoslavian countries, and this could not have been possible without IOM support. IOM's network with local structures, knowledge on local bureaucracy and operationalisation of projects was of importance. Over the years the IMP-IOM collaboration functions as a partnership where changes and adjustment for the projects are made jointly.

**What is your vision for the SMP in the upcoming years?**

We are interested in, through the partnerships, to learn from each other and to support a best practice that is feasible for both parties. Our intention is to continue with clinical skills training and to improve teamwork practice and interprofessional collaboration. Today IMP has projects in the Balkans, Kenya and Ethiopia and our intention is to expand this to other countries.

# EVIDENCE-BASED LABOUR MIGRATION POLICIES

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

**Title:** Contributing to Evidence-Based Labour Migration Policies for Healthcare and ICT Sectors in Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Project Code:** LM.0157

**Donor:** IOM Development Fund (IDF)

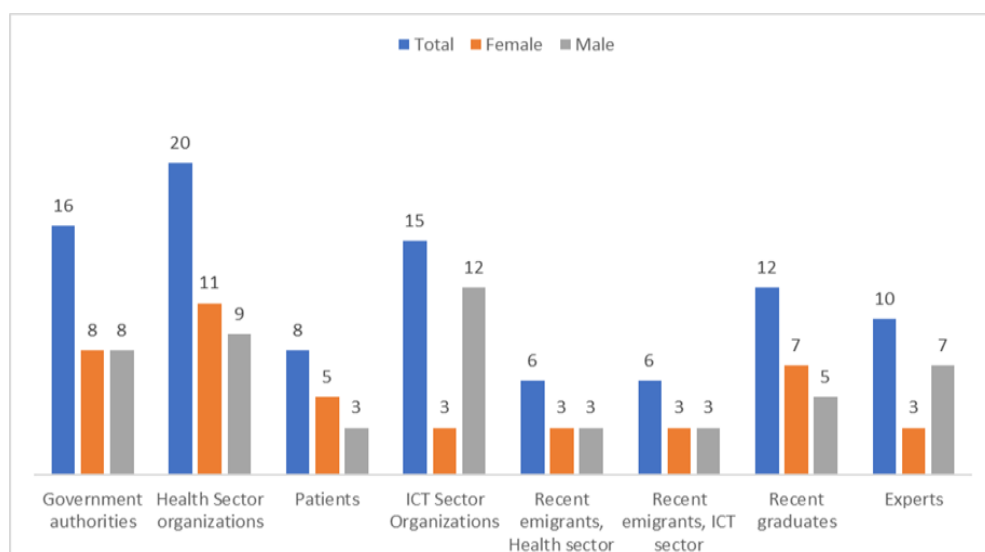
**Overall Budget:** USD 200,000

**Budget in 2020:** USD 80,144

**Duration:** December 2019 – November 2021

### Project Summary

Bosnia and Herzegovina has experienced large migration outflows for many decades. This trend has accelerated even more in recent years and the number of Bosnian citizens emigrating is particularly alarming in the healthcare and information communication and technology (ICT) sectors. To address the lack of comprehensive data on this phenomenon, IOM partnered with relevant government authorities and the private sector to gather evidence on the scope of the emigration of healthcare and ICT professionals and to assess its impact on the economy. Moreover, the project aims to provide policy recommendations to improve migration governance and support the development of evidence-based policies. This will contribute to mitigating the negative effects of emigration in these sectors. For this purpose, evidence on the scope, trends, and impact of the emigration of professionals working in the healthcare and ICT sectors is gathered. In addition, through a participatory approach, the project also identifies and provides seed funding to innovative solutions with the potential to mitigate the effects of brain drain and maintain quality healthcare and ICT services in the country. The research is following a mixed-methods approach, including the review of existing literature and policies, the gathering of secondary quantitative data from surveys and official statistics, and the collection of qualitative data through in-depth interviews. Despite setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the major activities were initiated and interviews were conducted online. A total of 93 individual, 43 women and 50 men, participated in the research. A diversified group of key informants was identified, including government representatives, health and ICT sector representatives, recent sector graduates, experts as well as recent emigrants. Gender-sensitive stakeholder mapping and respondent selections have been an integral part of this process. The study will be reviewed and published in 2021 and respective policy recommendations will follow as a next step.



OVERVIEW OF INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED INCLUDING GENDER DISAGGREGATED DATA, SOURCE: RESEARCH AUTHORS

### CONTRIBUTING TO EVIDENCE-BASED LABOUR MIGRATION POLICIES FOR HEALTHCARE AND ICT SECTORS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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### CONTRIBUTING TO EVIDENCE-BASED LABOUR MIGRATION POLICIES FOR HEALTHCARE AND ICT SECTORS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

PROJECT FACTSHEET

Bosnia and Herzegovina has experienced large migration outflows for many decades. Although comprehensive data on this phenomenon is missing, in the recent years, the number of Bosnian citizens emigrating has reached alarming proportions. This trend is particularly evident in the healthcare and information communication and technology (ICT) sectors. In spite of the high unemployment rate, public institutions and the private sector face challenges in finding and retaining adequate personnel, with a consequent loss for the economy and a negative impact on the welfare system.

To fill the data gap, IOM will partner with Bosnia and Herzegovina relevant government authorities and the private sector to gather evidence on the scope of the emigration of healthcare and ICT professionals, assess its impact on the economy and provide recommendations to policy makers on systemic changes needed to address the negative effects of emigration. Through a participatory approach, the project will also identify and provide seed funding to innovative solutions with the potential to mitigate the effects of brain drain and maintain quality healthcare and ICT services in the country.

**OBJECTIVE:** Contribute to the BiH Government's efforts to analyse migration governance and development of evidence-based policies related to the migration of healthcare and ICT professionals.

**DURATION:** December 2019 – November 2021

**BUDGET:** USD 200,000

**DONOR:** IOM Development Fund

**TARGET LOCATION:** Bosnia and Herzegovina

**BENEFICIARIES:** Policy makers, labour migrants, citizens prone to labour migration and the communities from which they originate.

**PARTNERS:** State, Entity and District authorities, in the field of healthcare, labour and education, public institutions, employment agencies and the private sector.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:**

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PROJECT FACTSHEET AND ARTWORK © IOM BIH 2020





# HEALTH RESPONSE TO SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY

## TURKEY

**Title:** Integrated Protection Assistance through Mobile Outreach and Case Management Teams to Improve the Well-Being of Syrian Refugees in Turkey

**Donor:** Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)

**Budget in 2020:** USD 179,546

**Project Code:** MP.0378

**Overall Budget:** USD 1,316,670

**Duration:** June 2018 – March 2020

### 57,343 Beneficiaries of Mobile PSS Assistance:

- 45,733 individuals benefited from social cohesion activities
- 9,753 from information sessions
- 1,857 from structured MHPSS sessions
- 191 from individual counselling and referrals



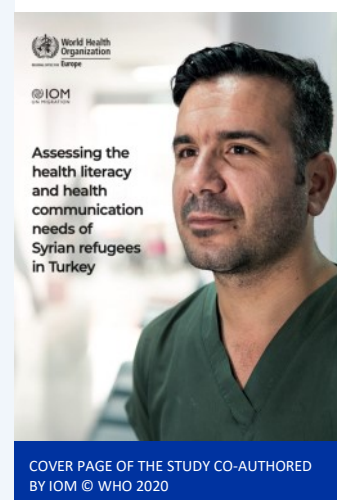
A GROUP OF YOUNG TURKISH AND SYRIAN GIRLS PLAYING WITH BUILDING BLOCKS AT İSKENDERUN YOUTH CENTRE © IOM TURKEY 2020

This project supported Syrian refugees in Turkey as well as other migrants and host community members by providing them with accurate information on their rights and access to available services. Services included the provision of tailored and individualized case management assistance, dissemination of information on available services, awareness-raising on legal rights for Syrians under temporary protection (SuTPs) as well as Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services. Psychosocial Mobile Teams (PMTs) provided a wide range of activities targeting communities in hard-to-reach locations, including rural and remote areas and tent settlements. The PMTs activities consisted of focused and non-focused MHPSS sessions implemented at communal level, information sessions aiming to increase knowledge on access and availability of services as well as socio-cultural and recreational activities between communities. The latter activities encouraged and fostered interaction, participation, and longer-term integration between Syrian and non-Syrian refugees and Turkish host communities. This aspect was especially positively echoed during feedback sessions with beneficiaries, both from Turkish and Syrian communities, as they commented on the need for future opportunities to interact with each other through local initiatives. The four target provinces of the project were Gaziantep, Hatay, İzmir, and Şanlıurfa.

### Health Literacy and Health Communication Needs of Syrian Refugees in Turkey

In 2020, WHO and IOM co-authored a study that presents an assessment of health literacy and health communication, including information needs and sources of information, among Syrian refugees in Turkey. Based on interviews conducted face-to-face with 7,105 adults, and focus group discussions involving 219 people, it describes health literacy and the factors that determine health literacy, health information needs, common sources and channels of health information, and barriers to health communication among Syrian refugees. The publication concludes with recommendations for improving health literacy and health communication, including targeted, culturally sensitive health communication through preferred and commonly used channels that are endorsed by trusted sources.

On behalf of its publication, on 10 December 2020 the WHO Turkey together with IOM organised a symposium on health literacy and health communication, with presentations and a panel discussion with experts. IOM was represented by Ursula Wagner from the Regional Office Vienna who emphasised the importance of including communities in health communication strategies and risk communication to ensure the community's ownership and effectiveness of information campaigns.



ONLINE SYMPOSIUM ON HEALTH LITERACY AND HEALTH COMMUNICATION AMONG REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS ON 10 DECEMBER 2020 © IOM 2020

## REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

**Title:** Enhancing Gender-Sensitive TB Detection, Surveillance, Treatment and Prevention Among Mobile Populations from the Republic of Moldova (MA.0494)

**Donor:** IOM Development Fund (IDF)

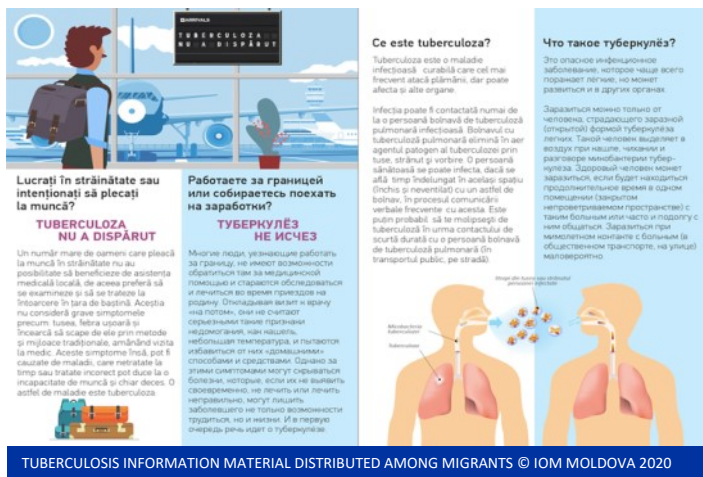
**Overall Budget:** USD 300,000

**Budget in 2020:** USD 35,506

**Duration:** November 2020 – October 2022



Tuberculosis (TB) remains a public health burden in the Republic of Moldova and disproportionately affects marginalized populations such as migrants. Moreover, migrants are facing barriers in accessing healthcare and TB treatment. The project aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of migrants' access to TB medical care and gender-specific barriers, thereby promoting effective, evidence-based and gender-sensitive migrant TB interventions. The project activities include data collection and a comparative qualitative study and support for a national information campaign on the access to TB diagnostics and treatment for migrants. In addition, TB affected migrants will be empowered as development actors that promote exchange of experiences on dealing with the disease and its treatment. The project will be conducted in close collaboration with the National TB Program and will build capacities of government officials and health workers for instance by supporting interregional workshops on TB control.



## TAJIKISTAN

**Title:** Returned Tajik Migrants - Promoting a Multi-Stakeholder Response to Mental Health and Disability Issues (MA.0498)

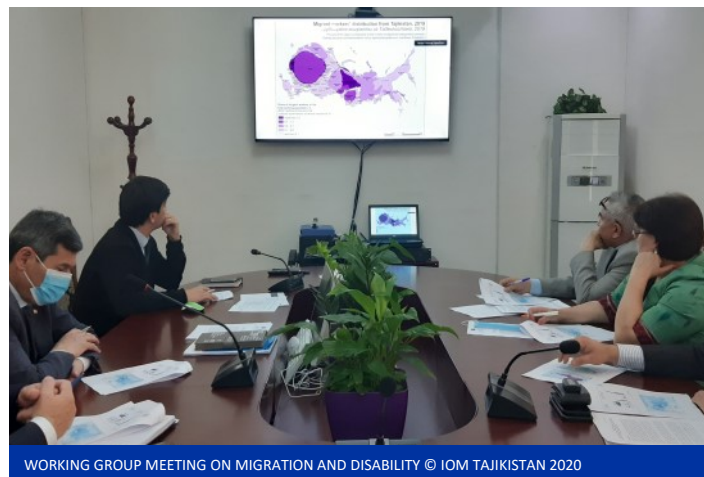
**Donor:** IOM Development Fund (IDF)

**Overall Budget:** USD 300,000

**Budget in 2020:** USD 33,734

**Duration:** November 2020 – October 2022

Through direct assistance to returned Tajik labor migrants, IOM found that non-communicable health challenges for migrants, particularly poor mental health and disabilities, are not sufficiently understood. Therefore, the project aims to gather evidence through an in-depth analysis of the situation on mental health problems and disability among returned Tajik labor migrants. Ultimately, the project contributes to improved access to health and social services for returning Tajik migrants. IOM will engage stakeholders, civil society, academia and the private sector in the process to build a shared understanding of the protection needs and to enhance coordination on better service provision. Cross-border collaboration particularly with Russian authorities is promoted and technical working groups on mental health and disability were established. Research concepts and methodologies were developed for two studies on disability and mental health problems that focus on gender-specific needs and challenges faced by migrants, as well as the impacts of poor health on the families of returning migrants.



## Acknowledgements

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