



Hamoodi, an Iraqi baby who reunited with his family after 10 months of separation. [Read](#) his story.

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)

Key Trends

From Belgium

From July to December 2019, IOM facilitated 1036 voluntary returns from Belgium to 83 different countries of origin, with Brazil, Ukraine, Romania, Georgia and Iraq as main destination countries. From the returnees, 59% were male and 41% female. Specific attention is given to the voluntary return of vulnerable persons like Victims of Trafficking (5 persons), Unaccompanied Migrant Children (2), Aged-Out UMC (2) and persons with medical needs (77). From the 1036 voluntary returns, 313 persons also requested additional reintegration support via IOM in 58 different countries of origin with Iraq, Armenia, Afghanistan, Albania and Mongolia as main destination countries. Interested beneficiaries were mainly referred to IOM by Fedasil return desks and reception centers, followed by the NGO partners, and Red Cross reception centers. Some migrants also introduced their file directly at IOM Brussels office.

From Luxembourg

IOM has started to facilitate the returns to the Western Balkans that used to be organized by bus by the Immigration Directorate. IOM facilitated 61 voluntary returns from Luxembourg between August and of December 2019, out of which 38 males and 23 females. The top countries of return were Albania (17), Kosovo¹ (9) and Afghanistan (6). In addition, one person was escorted by an operational staff.

¹ References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Country Specific Approaches (CSA) to Reintegration Assistance, Counselling and Visibility in Belgium



© IOM 2019

Under the CSA project financed by the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and Fedasil, aimed at increasing returnees skills set and employability for reintegration with more sustainable impact, returnees to Afghanistan, Albania and Iraq are provided with skills building opportunities (Technical and Vocational Education and Training - TVET), subsidies to learn skills on-the-job, and entrepreneurship/micro-business trainings); with livelihood opportunities (potential to finance partnerships in social enterprises or cooperation initiatives managed by returnees were discussed); and with psycho-social support (IOM lead Socio- Economic Orientation courses with groups of returnees, and provide opportunities for returnees to network and identify mentors).

Throughout the project which ended in December 2019, over 20 Afghan returnees certified in entrepreneurship by following either a two- or five-day curriculum courses on “Micro Business Management Training” delivered by the “United Youth Consultancy & Services” in Kabul and in Nangarhar Province. Following returnees’ needs and feedback and IOM’s evaluation of the initial two-day sessions, the course was extended to 5 days with an extra focus on psychosocial support.

In Iraq, 67 returnees from Belgium participated in socio-economic courses and psycho-social orientation delivered by IOM in Baghdad, Duhok, and Sulaymaniyah, provided by both IOM Staff and guest lecturers. The beneficiaries received a manual to refer to during the course of their reintegration. Furthermore, approximately 50 returnees opted for TVET courses of 1 to 3 months in diverse subjects/skill sets such as in business management, English language, barbering and hairdressing, mobile phone maintenance, and car mechanics classes. In addition to this, 13 people were supported in their on-the-job training, in the form of an apprenticeship.

The geographical coverage of the project was extended to a number of additional countries where different interesting projects were started as well such as networking events, social cooperatives, a number of different trainings and so on.

For more information on the project, kindly contact Morgane Windal, mwindal@iom.int.

Administrative Assistance in the Balkans



© IOM 2019

The ‘Administrative Assistance’ project is developed as an alternative assistance to vulnerable cases that return voluntarily to Western Balkan countries, i.e. Serbia, Albania, Kosovo¹, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and the Republic of North Macedonia. As these returnees cannot benefit from the regular reintegration assistance programme (due to the visa-free regime of most of these countries), a specific supporting mechanism has been developed to provide administrative assistance with obtaining personal documents, school enrolment, guidance and referral for job seeking, referral to different local services, housing, etc.

From 4 to 8 November 2019, IOM Belgium together with Caritas International.be and Fedasil, organized a Balkan exchange week. IOM offices from Albania, Northern Macedonia, Kosovo¹ and Serbia, Caritas Serbia and Caritas partner C.S.I Nadez were present in Belgium to share their experience with Belgian counterparts and to learn more on the Belgian asylum and reception system. A thorough analysis of the ‘Administrative assistance’ project brought together participants on exchanges between countries on practices of the implementation of the project, follow-up, challenges and suggestions for the ways forward.

Participants engaged in several meetings and visits and had exchanges with different actors of the Belgian AVRR program on the implementation of reintegration assistance in CoO for Belgian caseload with focus on the country specific project to the region – the ‘Administrative Assistance’.

On 7 November, a joint event- Balkan Exchange Day served as a forum for IOM, Caritas, Fedasil and implementing partners from both inside Belgium and the Balkan region, to talk over the successes and challenges of this project. The conclusions and recommendations will be part of the evaluation and update of the project for 2020.

From July to December 2019, 45 families and vulnerable persons have been assisted with the administrative support by local IOM missions in Albania (16), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2), Kosovo¹ (3), the Republic of North Macedonia (7) and Serbia (11).

For more information on the project, kindly contact Arta Hajra: ahajra@iom.int

Job placement support in the Caucasus and Western Africa



Business trainer, Mr. Amirkhadzhiev Magomed and the group of participants © IOM 2019

Within the Belgian AVR program, funded by Fedasil, returnees returning to the Caucasus and Western African region can receive additional support in being linked to trainings or internships available locally. IOM missions in Armenia, Georgia and the Russian Federation (Caucasus region) and Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Guinea and Niger (Western Africa) are in direct contact with governmental and non-governmental training and employment agencies, development actors and the private sector. Building on these networks and activities developed under the EU Trust Fund (in West and Central Africa), returnees can receive additional counseling and be referred to local training and development programmes.

From July to December 2019, 55 persons have been identified for additional support under the Job Placement activity in Armenia (26), Georgia (12), the Russian Federation (9), Cameroon (5), Niger (2) and Guinea (1). From 9-13 December, IOM Moscow visited returnees and AVR stakeholders in the Chechen Republic and organized a Micro-business training in Grozny in cooperation with the Grozny School of Business. The beneficiaries received information concerning business registration, taxation policy, market segmentation, product/service pricing, budget preparation and financial/accounting standards. The returnees also had the chance to discuss their business plans and received a certificate of completion after the training.

IOM Georgia developed also an informative leaflet (in Georgian and English) and video with testimonies on the Job Placement activities, which are available [here](#).

For more information, please click [here](#) or contact Karel Michiels: kmichiels@iom.int.

Job Placement Activities & Monitoring Mission Niger



© IOM 2019

From 12 until 14 December, IOM invited 4 colleagues coming from Burkina Faso, Guinea and Niger to participate in a study visit organized in the frame of the Belgian AVR Job Placement project. The delegation learned about the Belgian migration, reception and asylum policies and trends and had the chance to visit a reception structure for irregular migrants and homeless people.

Additionally, the delegation provided detailed information on the reintegration activities in their respective countries and the linkages with development projects. Through different information sessions in Brussels and Antwerp, the delegation provided information to 30 social assistants and return counselors from the reception structures, as well as to 45 students and diaspora members.

The meetings were organized in close collaboration with Fedasil and the NGO partners Solidarité Etudiants du Monde (SETM-asbl) and CAW Antwerpen and were well received by the participants.

For more information on Job Placement and reintegration activities, please visit <https://belgium.iom.int/job-placement>

Return of Unaccompanied Minor Children (UMC)

From July until December 2019, IOM assisted 4 Unaccompanied Migrant Children (UMC) and ex-UMC to return voluntarily to their home country from Belgium. This number includes 2 aged-out UMC and 2 UMC. The ex-UMC were respectively from Afghanistan (1) and Albania (1), while the UMC originated from Kosovo¹ (2). Albania remains the top country with the most AVRR requests regarding UMC.

Prior to providing AVRR services to unaccompanied and separated children, IOM investigates whether it is in the best interest of the child to return (Best Interest Determination – BID), and assesses the situation with the legal guardian and family in the country of origin (family assessment). UMC are also eligible for tailored reintegration support, which includes schooling, vocational training and income generating activities.

Return of migrants with heavy medical needs

From July to December 2019, 11 migrants with severe medical conditions have been assisted by IOM in Brussels. For these migrants with specific needs, IOM Brussels has provided adequate travel assistance namely by assigning medical escorts and the needed medical support during the travel back to the home country. This had been made possible with the good collaboration of all the actors involved around the migrant but also the various entities active at the operational level.

An increasing number of heavy medical cases are now directly referred by medical institutions all over the Belgian territory. In addition, during the same period IOM Brussels has organized other escort missions for migrants with various types of vulnerabilities (elderly persons, persons with light disabilities, etc). Travel is facilitated with adapted onward transportation until final destination if needed or only requested by the beneficiary.

With regard to the medical assistance provided after return, some of the vulnerable migrants have benefitted from additional reintegration assistance under the Adapted Medical Assistance After Return (AMAAR) project. It has been developed by Fedasil, in partnership with IOM and Caritas, and in response to the growing number of migrant candidates suffering from a significant medical condition and willing to return to their country of origin. This specific project offers a tailored-made medical assistance for migrants suffering from a medical condition that affects their daily life.

For more information on the project, kindly contact Valérie Keller: vkeller@iom.int.

Joint mission IOM-Caritas-Fedasil: Medical Study Visit to Armenia



© IOM 2019

During the week 4 to 8 November 2019, IOM, Caritas and Fedasil have held the second “AMAAR mission” in Armenia. The selection of the destination was done based on the number of Armenian citizens migrating to the EU member states for medical reasons and to Belgium. Secondly, the country has initiated a lot of reforms, namely in the social sector, offering more social and medical services to their citizens. The Belgian delegation held very interesting meetings with Ministries and Health actors, as well as visits to medical institutions. Of course, visits to the beneficiaries assisted after return by either Caritas International and IOM Yerevan were also in the agenda. Their testimonies had been of high importance to assess the reintegration assistance received and to better understand the challenges of the country.

Return of victims of trafficking (VoT)

Between July and December 2019, IOM Belgium assisted 5 victims of trafficking to voluntarily return to their home countries. Following IOM’s procedures and guidelines, this was done in close cooperation with the 3 official NGO shelters for victims of trafficking (Surya, Pag-Asa, Payoke), following tailored needs and risk assessments.

During the last six months, IOM Belgium was also requested to provide general information on AVRR to victims of trafficking who are being assisted by these shelters. This information can help them to decide whether they prefer to stay in Belgium or request assistance for a voluntary return.

Reintegration Stories



© IOM 2019

Desta, Ethiopia

Mr. Gebregziabher Mengesha Desta arrived in Belgium in 2016 and stayed in a Fedasil center in Kapellen during the time of his procedure. After having received a negative decision he decided to return to Mekeleh, Ethiopia. After return, Mr. Desta used the reintegration grant to open a small restaurant and buy all the necessary furniture. During a monitoring mission visit, he mentioned that he is planning to extend his business and hire some staff to help him run the place. Shortly after, Mr. Desta also enrolled in a touristic guide training through IOM Country Specific Approach project.



© IOM 2019

Walter, Nicaragua

In 2019, Walter decided to return to Nicaragua after he had migrated to Luxembourg due to the economic insecurity and instability in his home country. With support of IOM, Walter was able to move back safely and reunite with his family.

A few days after his arrival, he contacted IOM Nicaragua and went to the capital of Managua to talk about his future. Walter set out his idea to start up a business to create financial stability for his family and to contribute economically to his community. [Read more](#)

Joint Fedasil – IOM Monitoring Mission to Ethiopia



© IOM & Fedasil in Ethiopia

IOM Brussels, together with Fedasil, undertook a monitoring mission to Ethiopia from 28 October to 1 November. The purpose of the visit was to meet returnees from Belgium who had been assisted through the AVRR programme and to monitor the reintegration assistance in Ethiopia. With the support of IOM Addis Ababa, the participants travelled to various places in the country, visited an IOM transit center for UAM's and met four returnees who had received support through the Belgian AVRR programme. Different profiles of beneficiaries were visited, such as returnee with a medical condition, an elderly, an ex-UAM. Moreover, a meeting with national officials from the Ministry of Foreign affairs took place.

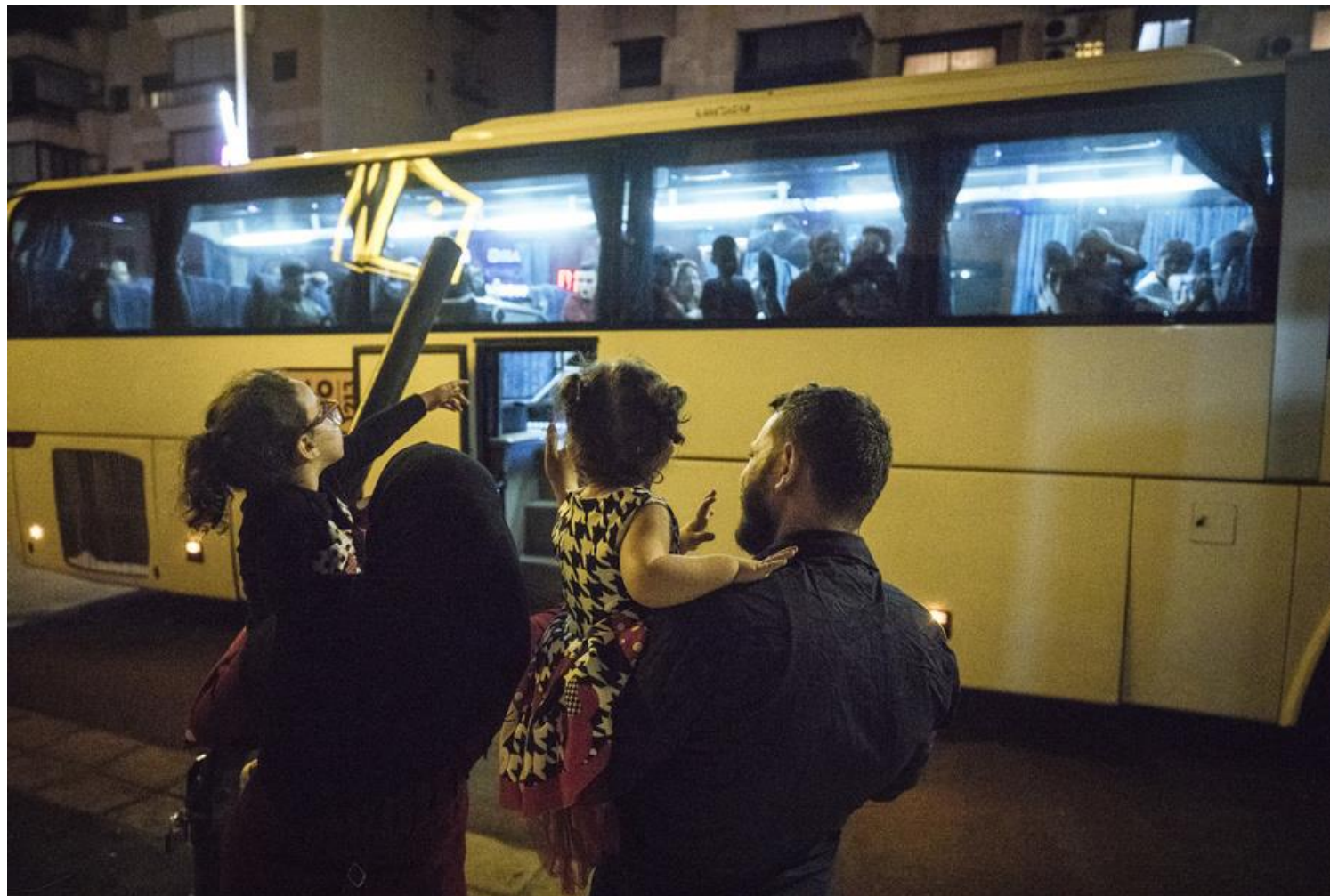
IOM's annual partner meeting on Voluntary Return



© IOM 2019

On 5 December, IOM Belgium organized its annual partner meeting on voluntary return. As per IOM's tradition, this meeting was organized for the Belgian AVRR partners with the aim to inform and strengthen the capacity of IOM's partner network. The day started with a presentation of the Belgian Migration Centre (Myria) explaining the main asylum and migration trends in Belgium. This was followed by an overview of the updates and developments within the Belgian AVRR program and insight on EU return trends, jointly presented by IOM and Fedasil. The morning session ended with the first working group that was organized in a more informal setting to allow both partners and IOM to exchange on how the pre-departure counselling and return process can still be strengthened.

After a seated lunch, IOM and its partners started the second working group that was organized in coordination with Caritas International. During this session all participants discussed the different approaches to sustainable reintegration through an individualized and country specific approach to reintegration. The event allowed all participants to have a common understanding and sharing of good practises of the AVRR programme from Belgium. Similar small-scale meetings will be organized in the course of 2020.



Pre-departure movement of Syrian refugees from Beirut to the airport where they will be resettled to their new countries. © IOM 2019

Assisted Movement Operations

Resettlement Assistance

Belgium

During the 2nd half of 2019, a family of 6 Syrian refugees travelled from Lebanon to Belgium. This makes up a total of 239 persons for 2019. IOM provides logistical support to the Government of Belgium in the organization of selection missions, visa processing, pre-departure orientation missions, health assessments and is in charge of the transfer to Belgium.

In October, IOM Belgium took part in a 3-day workshop on resettlement to the European Economic Area. This workshop, during which many counterparts from the field were present, was meant to strengthen the cooperation and grasp a better understanding of the challenges and realities in the field.

For more information, please consult the [IOM Resettlement Booklet 2019](#).

Watch the video on [IOM Resettlement activities](#).

Luxembourg

Luxembourg has responded to UNHCR's projected global resettlement needs and to the priorities put forward by the EC by deciding to resettle 50 persons from Niamey, Niger to Luxembourg. In this view, IOM and the Government of Luxembourg signed an agreement intended to provide comprehensive resettlement support to those refugees identified by the Government of Luxembourg for resettlement to Luxembourg in 2019-2020. Within this project, IOM supported the selection mission in Niamey that took place in October, provided health assessments and pre-embarkation checks (PEC) to establish fitness to travel, facilitated the pre-departure orientation (PDO) session, and organized the travel to Luxembourg for 38 selected refugees (most of them of Eritrean nationality). The travel of 10 refugees will occur in 2020 due to their medical condition impeding them to travel in December.

Family Reunification

From July to December 2019, IOM has assisted a total of 147 persons with their travel to Belgium and/or Luxembourg, in the frame of their family reunification. Among them, there were 7 unaccompanied migrant children. The majority of them travelled from Afghanistan while one young girl has been assisted in her journey from the Syrian Arab Republic to Belgium, via Lebanon after months of preparation. In total, 385 persons have been assisted over the full year.

For more information, please click [here](#).

Family Reunification Story

Iraq



© IOM 2019

Hamoodi, an 11-month-old baby from Iraq, arrived in Belgium to reunite with his parents in Luxembourg. When they left the country, Hamoodi was 1-month-old. On 3 October, Caritas International Luxembourg contacts the IOM Country Office in Brussels on behalf of the family desperately looking forward to reuniting with their 11-month-old child left in Iraq. Although the child has a valid passport and visa there remains one complication: organizing his trip to Luxembourg. Indeed, on the one hand being less than 2-years-old, the child is considered too young and thus not eligible for the unaccompanied minors assistance provided by the airline. On the other hand, his parents are still waiting for a decision on their application for international protection and are not allowed to leave the country. The family reunification visa of the child expires on October 20, which means that IOM had exactly 12 days to organize his trip. The countdown has started! [Read more](#)



Closing Ceremony of the project 'Enhancing Tunisian youth employability', Brussels. © IOM 2019

Labour Migration

Tunisia

The project “Enhancing Tunisian youth employability through professional internships in Belgian companies”, funded and supported by the Belgian Government, was closed on 31 December 2019. All the interns had travelled back to Tunisia by mid-august 2019 and received additional tailored training upon their return. By the end of the project, 27 out of 31 interns had found a job in a Tunisia based company.

Two events celebrated the end of the project in Belgium and Tunisia. On 12 September, a closing conference took place at the Belgian Immigration Office in Brussels. The project results were presented:



© IOM BE 2019

More than 100 companies were contacted in the first phase of the project;

- ❖ 12 companies actively participated in the project and recruited one or more interns, even though the majority of them did not have previous experience with international interns;
- ❖ Most of the interns selected for the project were between 20 and 25 years old and possessed a degree in IT/engineering;
- ❖ The participating companies scored the overall interns' performance with a 7 out of 10;



© IOM BE 2019

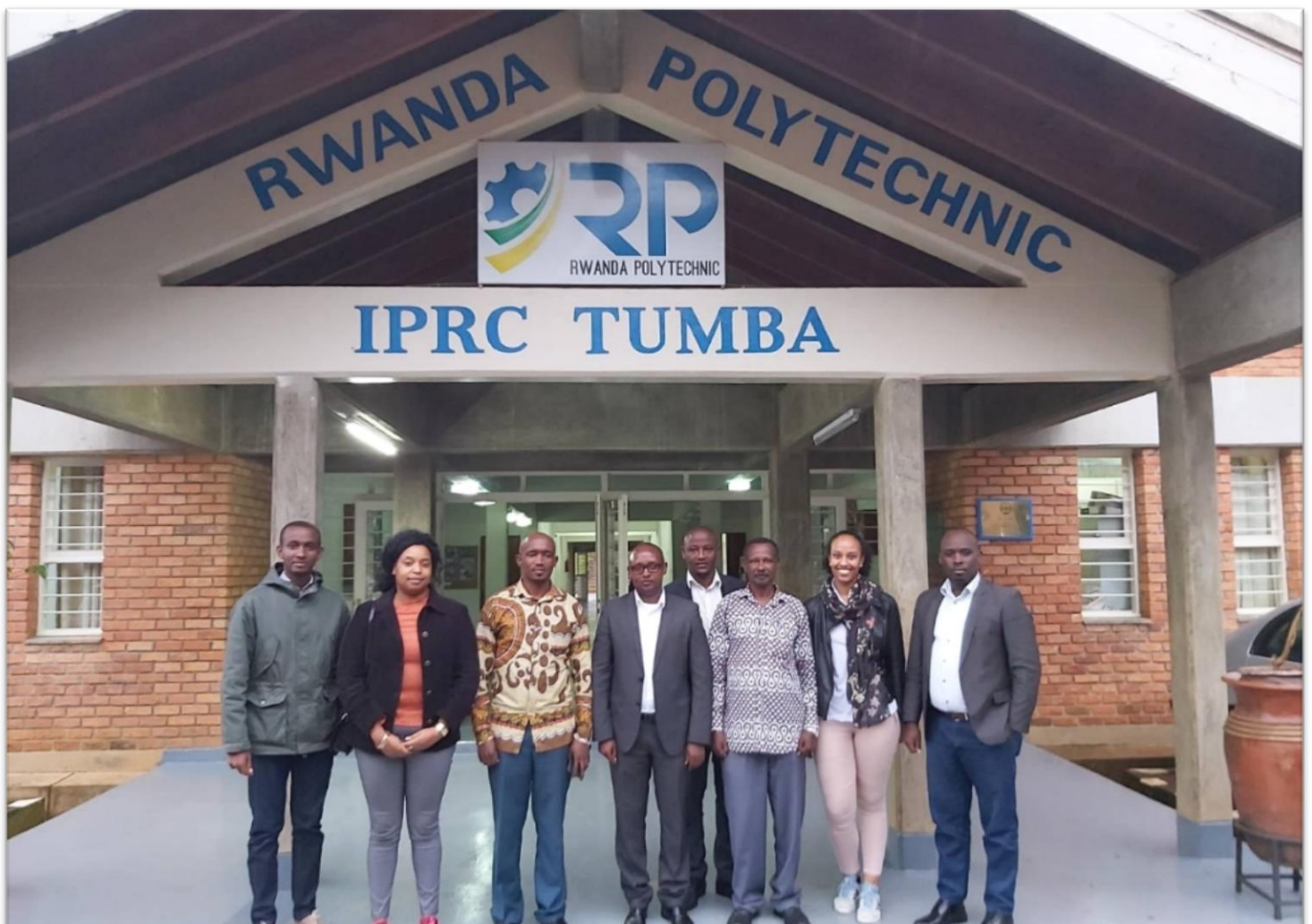
- ❖ A growth in the interns' understanding and command of soft skills was highlighted throughout the project implementation;
- ❖ Most of the interns evaluated the project as good with a 7 out of 10;
- ❖ Similarly, most of the companies rated the project with a 7-8 out of 10;
- ❖ Four companies hired their interns in Tunisia through their local branch or newly opened offices in the country;
- ❖ 11 companies out of 12 would participate again in this kind of project.



© IOM BE 2019

In Tunisia, an official reception was organized on 25 September by H.E. Christophe de Bassompierre, Ambassador of Belgium to Tunisia. The interns and a delegation of representatives from IOM Tunisia and Belgium attended the reception. H.E. the Ambassador and the IOM Chief of Mission for Tunisia, Mr. Azzouz Samri, addressed the participants highlighting the mutual benefit of this type of projects for both the country of origin and destination. The speeches were followed by the delivery of the certificates of participation to the last interns who returned to Tunisia in the month of August 2019.

IOM developed a video which includes the testimonies of interns and employers who participated in the project. The video can be found on YouTube in French with [English](#) and [Dutch](#) subtitles.



Field trip to Integrated Polytechnic Regional Centres (IPRCs) with government officials, Rwanda © IOM 2019

Migration and Development

Diaspora Engagement in Belgium and Germany to support TVET in Rwanda



© IOM 2019 / Workshop Migration Management

Since July 2019, IOM colleagues in Belgium, Germany and Rwanda have been working on the implementation of the *Diaspora Engagement to Support the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Rwanda* project.

In a first phase, a research was conducted to identify the needs of the different technical institutes of Rwanda Polytechnic (IPRC) as well as the gaps in skills and knowledge of the professors. This baseline will be used to find a match between the technical schools and the relevant diaspora professionals residing in Belgium and Germany. A complementary field monitoring trip took place with officials of the Rwandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ensure the presence of quality transport and accommodation facilities in each institute for selected diaspora members.

In August 2019, IOM Rwanda facilitated a five-day workshop to thirteen government officials to enhance their capacity in migration management and diaspora engagement.

IOM colleagues in Rwanda had the chance to meet OVO (Entrepreneurs for Entrepreneurs), a Belgian organization that supports and promotes sustainable entrepreneurship in Africa. As part of their first Sustainable Technology for Africa event in Rwanda they had organized a bootcamp for the ten best applicants to a call for business proposals. In the context of the IOM project, diaspora members, professors and students will be encouraged to develop a total of 10 ad-hoc pilot projects to be implemented in Rwanda and related to their areas of expertise. The information shared by the OVO experts is, therefore, of undeniable value for writing solid business plans for the pilot projects.

Over the past months, IOM has also been reaching out to diaspora associations and members residing in Belgium and Germany, in order to raise awareness about the start of the project. This is linked to a short survey which allows IOM to gather some interesting information on availability, current engagement, and professional background. The preparations are ongoing to organize an information session for interested diaspora members, both in Brussels and Bonn.

Lastly, in September 2019, IOM Rwanda received funds from the IOM Development Fund (IDF), to broaden the scope of the diaspora engagement project by including the health sector. IOM Belgium and the diaspora members residing in Belgium will therefore be included in activities for both the TVET and health sector.

Diaspora Newsletter

Over the years, IOM Belgium has been engaging with diaspora on various occasions. On 5 October, IOM was present at an international meeting of the Nigerian diaspora in Lille where IOM described the diversity of its work and the current initiatives of the country office on diaspora engagement. Although IOM is fully aware of the impact that diaspora members have on the development of their country of origin and destination, the absence of a good platform where diaspora members can interact with each other and with other Belgian stakeholders is perceived as an important shortcoming. In this light, IOM has developed a diaspora engagement [newsletter and webpage](#), in order to highlight the valuable work of diaspora in Belgium and their country of origin.

The newsletter contains interesting information on IOM projects engaging diaspora, as well as calls for diaspora participation, project proposals, interesting diaspora events, etc. Diaspora members are invited to complete [a short survey](#) and subscribe [here](#)).

Other projects

LINK IT



*A Syrian couple and their children prepare to resettle in UK.
Photo: IOM/Abby Dwommoh*

The [LINK IT](#) project is an EU-funded project that has been running in Germany, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom for the past 18 months. The project aimed to link pre-departure and post-arrival support to facilitate the socio-economic integration for resettled Syrian refugees in the EU.

On 12 July, IOM Belgium and IOM United Kingdom organized the [closing conference](#) of the project at the Ateliers des Tanneurs in Brussels. It gathered about 80 representatives from EU institutions, International Organizations, national governments, and civil society.

The event provided an overview of the successes of the project and presented the findings of IOM's Syrian refugee skills profiling. It also gave the opportunity to share refugee experiences from across the project and to facilitate workshops and conversations around refugee integration from across the EU countries involved.

Fostering Across Borders (FAB)

The Fostering Across Borders (FAB) project, funded by the European Commission's DG Justice (European Union's Right, Equality and Citizenship Programme, 2014-2020), held its closing conference on 10 September 2019 in Brussels. The project, aiming to improve the quality of Family-Based Care (FBC) of UMC and expand its availability, was implemented in the course of 20 months in Austria, Belgium, Greece, Luxembourg, Poland and the United Kingdom. A foster care training program was developed and professionals (including foster carers) were trained on and supported to better protect and meet the needs of these children.



© IOM 2019

[In Belgium](#), FAB was implemented in partnership with Fedasil, Minor-Ndako and Mentor-Escale. [In Luxembourg](#), IOM worked together with the Luxembourgish Red Cross. FAB produced materials include mapping reports on the training gaps and needs of each EU country involved, a comprehensive training package fully adapted to each country's local context and framework in FBC for UMC, information and country of origin leaflets for the current and prospective family-based carers and a promotional video to be used as a raising awareness tool. All material is available [online](#).

The closing conference gathered IOM, the implementing partners and EU stakeholders around the table for a presentation of the materials produced, a project report on key findings and recommendations and a world café forum to share experiences and best practices.

For more information on the project *Fostering Across Borders*, please visit [IOM EEA's website](#).

PROTECT

In the framework of the regional [PROTECT](#) project - Preventing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against migrants and strengthening support to victims – IOM BE has organized trainings for 1st line workers and future social assistants, in cooperation with their project partner Le Monde selon les femmes. PROTECT aims to support the coordination and/or adaptation of support services for sexual and gender-based violence victims and potential victims among refugees, migrants and asylum seekers (children and adults, including LGBTQI people). The project is funded by the EU's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020.

The trainings covered the topic of SGBV in a migration context specifically, and focused on the impact of (sexual) violence. Trainings of 1st line workers were held in cooperation with, amongst others, Le Collectif des femmes (Louvain-la-Neuve), La Maison de l'Amérique latine (Brussels), Conseil consultatif de l'Égalité Femmes-Hommes (Mons), CAW Oost-Vlaanderen (Gent), Oasis Belgium (Brussels). IOM BE and Le monde selon les femmes also trained future social assistants at the Ecole supérieure de formation sociale Cardijn (Louvain-la-Neuve), Ecole supérieur de formation sociale HELMo (Liège) and Hogeschool PXL (Hasselt).

A stakeholder meeting was also organized under this project, gathering field organizations such as Plateforme Citoyenne, Isala and OASIS. The various actors shared the challenges they face to identify, refer and assist victims of SGBV in the field.

IOM Belgium also regularly met with Médecins du Monde Belgique, GAMS and Défense des Enfants International to coordinate activities and discuss synergies. All organizations are implementing SGBV projects under the same EU fund.

[Watch](#) the video on PROTECT project.

New projects

MATCH



The project “Migration of African Talents through Capacity building and Hiring – MATCH”, managed by IOM Belgium, started on 13 January for a duration of 36 months. The kick-off meeting took place on 16 January with all participating partners. Funded by the European Commission (DG HOME – AMIF Fund), the project seeks to address labour market shortages in 4 EU Member States by enabling an estimated 210 migrants from Nigeria and Senegal to work for a period of 1-2 years in companies in Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg or the Netherlands where specific sectorial labour shortages have been identified - primarily the ICT, technology and digitalisation sectors. In addition to the mobility scheme, MATCH implements complementary activities such as skills development, capacity building and knowledge sharing. [Read more](#)

EQUALCITY



Since 25 November, IOM Belgium manages and implements the Equal(c)ity project, funded by the European Union’s Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020). On 13 January, the kick-off meeting was organized.

EQUALCITY aims to improve existing urban services for victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in order to better reach migrant communities and to improve identification, referral, protection and recovery of SGBV victims within these communities. This project targets EU cities and their migrant communities, including refugees and asylum seekers, whether they are newly arrived or from a second or third generation. The project also aims at empowering migrants by raising awareness on SGBV and migrants’ rights.

4 partner organizations, together with 4 EU cities and with the support of an expert panel, will develop and pilot 4 different toolboxes that will tackle SGBV in migrant communities from a specific angle.

In the framework of PROTECT and EQUALCITY, IOM Belgium was also invited to external events to talk about SGBV and migration. On 29 November, upon the request of IOM Spain and the Municipality of Madrid, IOM Belgium presented the situation in Belgium regarding assistance to victims of sexual in violence in particular in a multi-stakeholder context. IOM Belgium was also invited by GAMS to a national colloquium on 11 December: Gender-based violence and asylum: look – listen -link. IOM was part of a panel with UNHCR and the International Centre for Reproductive Health and gave a presentation on SGBV on the migration route.

[Read more](#)

Other initiatives and events

International Migrants Day and Global Migration Film Festival



GMFF - Screening 'All People's Orchestra' © IOM 2019



Workshop 'Stereotypes on Migration' Migration Museum – Brussels © IOM 2019

On the eve of International Migrants Day, IOM Belgium organized several activities starting by a guided tour in the newly opened Migration Museum of Brussels followed by a workshop during which stereotypes on migration were discussed.

In the evening, IOM Country and Regional Offices in Brussels organized a short movie screening of the captivating 'All People's Orchestra', followed by a very interesting panel discussion, and as part of the [Global Migration Film Festival](#). The City of Brussels gave a very inspiring speech on the power of music and art in bringing people together. Mrs Caroline Petit, Deputy Director of the United Nations Regional Information Center (UNRIC) of Brussels, moderated the panel discussion.



© IOM 2019

Among the panelists, IOM was very delighted to welcome Ms. Laura Corrado, Head of the Legal Migration & Integration Unit DG Home – European Commission, and Ms. Amal Amjahid, Belgian World Champion of Jiu-Jitsu and collaborator at [CENS Academy](#). Amal gave a very moving speech about her personal life and how she has been struggling to achieve her dreams.

She also talked about the association she created with her parents in order to help other young people achieve their dreams and taught us a beautiful lesson on how important it is to share and help other people. She is a very good example of social cohesion in our society.



Watan Dabke Dance Workshop © IOM 2019

After the debate, all participants enjoyed the dance performance and workshop by [Watan Dabke Dance Group](#), made of young people coming from the Middle East and sharing their culture with everyone who is interested. Their main goal is to convey a different image about the Middle East and to bring people together through dance. They focus on opening the dialogue between cultures inviting people from different nationalities and backgrounds to share beautiful moments dancing together. Through their amazing performance, they managed to create a very peaceful and positive atmosphere full of joy and positive vibes, while celebrating social cohesion with meaningful smiles.

IOM also decided to work with a catering service that shares the same values and that aims at changing mindsets and negative perceptions about migration. Therefore, IOM collaborated with the NGO [We Exist](#) created by Syrian newcomers who want to connect people through food and to facilitate access into the labour market for people who fled conflict and persecution. They promote participation in socio-economic and cultural life and raise awareness of Syrian culture and traditions.

The event was made possible thanks to the support of the IOM Regional Office in Brussels and the City of Brussels.



Manneken-Pis Dressing Ceremony



Manneken-Pis Dressing Ceremony (Costume 'I am a migrant') © IOM 2019

On 18 December, IOM had the privilege to dress up the most famous Brussels' boy – Manneken-Pis. On the occasion of International Migrants Day and with the collaboration of the City of Brussels, IOM offered a new costume, labelled as 'I am a migrant' to Manneken-Pis.

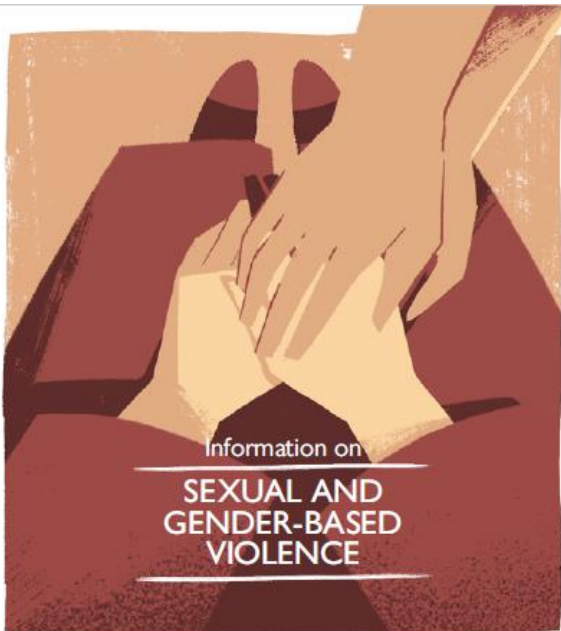
For the first time in his 400-year history, Manneken-Pis dressed up to celebrate diversity and solidarity with migrants.

On this occasion, our designer assembled different recycled materials to symbolize the many migratory routes and multilayered ties between cultures representing the contribution of each individual in building a more united and inclusive society. IOM Belgium's Chief of Mission first started by giving a speech on social cohesion and the importance of sharing and bringing people together in the City Hall of the City of Brussels before opening the official dressing ceremony that took place in the City Center.

[Read more.](#)

[Read more](#) on the events organized by IOM in Brussels to celebrate International Migrants Day.

Gender



As the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration, IOM strongly advocates for gender equality while also taking into account gender-specific migration trends in all its activities.

On the occasion of the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#) on 25 November, UN Women launched the [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence](#) campaign.

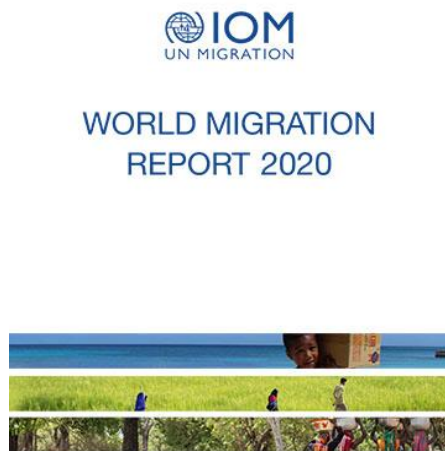
Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in our world today, and it remains largely unreported due to the impunity, silence, stigma and shame surrounding it. IOM's EU-funded PROTECT project aims to raise awareness on this issue among migrant communities and the general public as well.

In light of this project, IOM Belgium actively promoted the campaign through tailored social messages shared on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) and prepared by IOM Budapest

Information in various languages on sexual and gender-based violence and available support services in 12 countries can be found [here](#). #PROTECTproject | #NoOneHasTheRightToHurtYou.

Interesting IOM publications

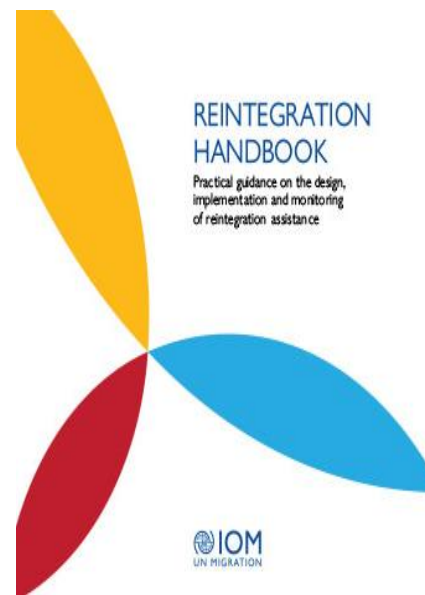
World Migration Report 2020



The *World Migration Report 2020*, the tenth in the world migration report series, has been produced to contribute to increased understanding of migration throughout the world. This new edition presents key data and information on migration as well as thematic chapters on highly topical migration issues.

Read [here](#) the full report.

Reintegration Handbook



The Reintegration Handbook aims to provide practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance for returnees. While reintegration is a process taking place in different return contexts (for example following spontaneous, forced or assisted voluntary returns, or internal displacement), the Handbook focuses on assistance provided to migrants unable or unwilling to remain in the host country.

Consult the Handbook [here](#).

Contact

For more information, please contact the Communications team [here](#).