

NEWSLETTER

IOM Belgium and Luxembourg Newsletter



The **International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Belgium and Luxembourg** is proud to deliver its second biannual newsletter of 2021. As we celebrated International Migrants Day and our 70th anniversary, this edition is an opportunity for us to reflect on our values and commitment.

To mark **International Migrants Day**, the office organised a webinar exploring the obstacles and opportunities of remittances (page 1). The **U-CARE** project set up a recruitment campaign targeting foster parents with a migration background (page 2). A toolbox is being developed by the **Other Talk** team to encourage future teachers to discuss polarised topics such as diversity and migration in more nuanced ways in their classes (page 3). The **CoP** project launched its 'Practical Guidelines', action points for every police zone willing to work on diversity and inclusion (page 4).

The **Equality** project finalised its 4 toolboxes for frontline workers on sexual and gender-based violence (page 5-6), while the **Actiris Coordination Platform** was officially launched, marking the transition from the conceptual to the operational phase (page 7). The Belgian Secretary of State for Asylum and Migration, Sammy Mahdi talks about the benefits of labour migration in the second episode of the **MATCH** podcast series (page 8). The **Diaspora Engagement** team celebrates the first anniversary of its Diaspora Insights podcast series (page 9), and the **AVRR and Resettlement** team kept up a strong operational capacity in difficult circumstances with worldwide mobility restrictions (page 10-13).

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INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY

Webinar in celebration of International Migrants Day



Making Remittances Count: Opportunities and Obstacles



Speaker
**FLOR
DIDDEN**

Advocacy Officer
Migration at 11.11.11



Speaker
**STELLA OPOKU
OWUSU**

Deputy Executive
Director, AFFORD
(African Foundation for
Development)



Speaker
**DONNA
HARRIS**

Director of Studies in
Political Economy at the
University of Oxford



Speaker
**LIEVEN DE
LA MARCHE**

Special Envoy Migration
and Asylum at the Belgian
Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Moderator
**MICHAEL
NEWSON**

Senior Labour Mobility &
Human Development
Specialist at IOM



Speaker
**OSCAR
ASAMOAH**

Engineer, founder of
YABs Network and part
of the Ghanaian diaspora

IOM marks **International Migrants Day** to draw attention to the contributions made by migrants in both their countries of residence and in their countries of origin. This year, IOM Belgium & Luxembourg has chosen to highlight the topic of **migrant remittances and the vital role they play in poverty reduction and development in communities of origin.**

Two of the key challenges are **the cost of sending remittances**, which can be exceedingly high in certain corridors, as well as **the financial inclusion of migrants and remittance recipients**, which could allow them to better leverage their remittances towards longer-term sustainable development and livelihood opportunities.



Watch the webinar's key highlights [here](#).



There are a variety of factors about remittances that need to be taken into account, particularly issues of trust and comfort level.

- Donna Harris, Director of Studies in Political Economy at the University of Oxford and Consultant at Oxford Policy Management



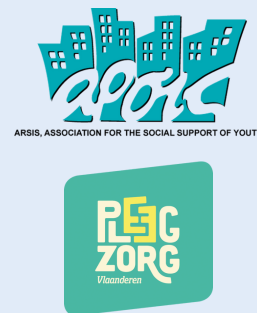
The panel took a deep dive into the enablers and inhibitors for the use of remittances, looking at **financial inclusion, policy frameworks, and the rise of digital services.**

We can conclude that the key in going forward is to assess what policies and programmes we can put in place to encourage the use of remittances towards more **sustainable development.**

The webinar was a success thanks to our excellent panellists from [Afford](#), [YABS Network](#), [11 11 11](#), [FPS Foreign Affairs Belgium](#), [University of Oxford](#), and [IOM](#).

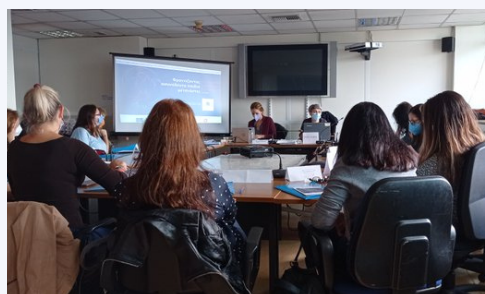


Unaccompanied Children in Alternative Residence 'U-CARE' project aims at developing and improving alternative care for unaccompanied migrant children (UMC) in Europe. In coordination with IOM in Belgium, Greece and Germany and partner organizations Pleegzorg Vlaanderen (Belgium) and ARSIS (Greece), project activities focus on **improving foster care** and developing alternative care systems that will better **support UMC's transition to adulthood**.



During the past 6 months the U-CARE project:

- developed a **recruitment campaign targeting foster parents** with a migration background using the **"key figures"** approach;
- paid a visit to some dedicated **foster families** who foster UMC; watch the **video [here!](#)**
- **trained** more than 50 professionals and 20 candidate foster families in Greece on foster care for UMC;
- set up **consultations with (aged-out) UMC** on their needs and wishes for their transition to adulthood, in Germany;
- developed **3 prototypes to support UMC's transition to adulthood** based on consultations with UMC.



For more info on the realizations of U-CARE in 2021, read our [project update!](#)

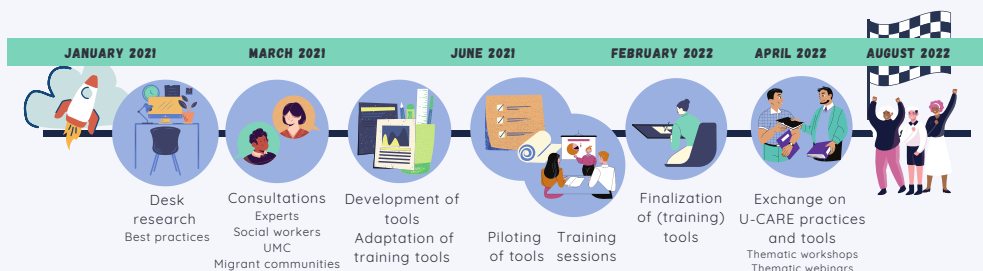
Belgian Week of the Foster care 2021 - Podcasts

In honour of all the actors who make foster care a success, our team created 4 podcast episodes. Each guest shares their own foster care story and together we elaborate on the advantages of family-based care for UMC. **Listen to our podcasts in French and Dutch on [Spotify](#). Click on the pictures below for the interview with English subtitles.**



Stay tuned!

- EU-wide thematic workshops (28 - 29 March)
- National stakeholders events in Belgium (24/2) and Greece (17/3)
- Launch of our U-CARE tools (May)
- Final conference (June)



The Belgian U-CARE activities were made possible with the financial support of Fedasil:



Are you interested to know more about our project activities? Visit our website [here](#) for the latest updates or contact Anke Van de Velde avandvelde@iom.int



This project is funded by the European Union

The Other Talk – Teaching Migration project kicked off at the beginning of 2021. The project aims to **provide tools to prospective teachers** in Dutch-speaking secondary schools in Belgium that will **build their capacity to teach about migration, refugees and related media literacy** and to foster their pupils' critical thinking on these topics in their future classrooms.



During the **research phase** of the project (January to November 2021), a joint needs assessment in cooperation with Caritas International has been launched. These survey results provided input for the focus group discussion that has been held. The research insights were an important building block to design the envisaged toolbox in correspondence to real needs. Additionally, good practices have been analyzed to gain inspiration from.

Since November 2021, the Other Talk team has entered the **design phase** (November 2021 to November 2022). In close cooperation with individual teacher trainers, interesting approaches to tools have been defined. Over the next few months, the IOM project team is committed to further design, pilot and refine the tools based on received feedback. Relevant external organizations will be consulted for input through the Community of Practice or the Other Talk stakeholder network.

An overview of the tools that are being developed:



GUEST SPEAKER MAPPING

Take a step into the lived realities of migrations through testimonials by teachers or students with a migration background or experts in a migration related field.



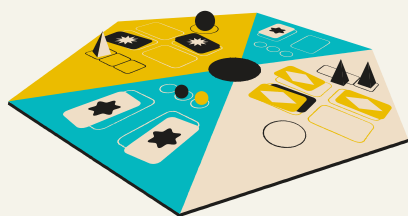
MAINSTREAMING MIGRATION AND DIVERSITY

Make students more aware of migration and diversity by adding a cultural sensitive look on existing course materials.



DECOLONIZE YOUR MIND

Reflect on how one's personal frame of reference influences used teaching practices. Awareness of this is central.



INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES

Expand your intercultural knowledge with interactive instruments stimulating constructive dialogue and discussion.



SERVICE LEARNING

Interaction, practical experience and reflection play a key role in this tool. Service learning is a progressive learning experience that tries to meet societal needs.



BACHELOR THESIS

Students learn more about the Other Talk project and design and develop their own tool in close cooperation with teacher trainers and IOM.

This project was developed within the Other Talk programme. Other Talk is a three-year program by 11.11.11 and Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen that aims at bringing nuance to the polarized migration debate in Flanders, to encourage those who stand between the opposites of the debate to re-enter the conversation, and to prevent further polarization. For more information on the [Other Talk - Teaching Migration project](#), feel free to contact nrabijns@iom.int.

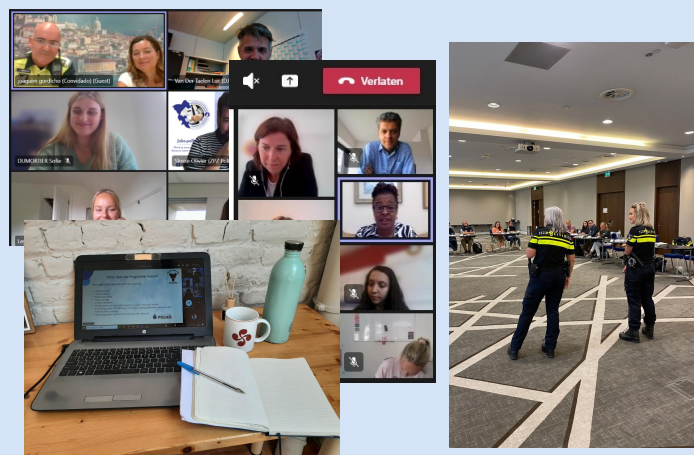


For the 'Community Policing without Borders' project (or 'CoP'), **2021 was focused on network building, research and inspiration gathering.** The CoP journey began with the publication of three **good practices reports** containing summaries of interesting and inspiring good initiatives from all over the world, focusing on three main questions:

- 1. How can we make the police more diverse and inclusive?**
- 2. How can we improve the current police complaint mechanisms?**
- 3. Which community policing initiatives are worth pursuing to reinforce mutual trust?**



STUDY VISITS: ONLINE & IN ROTTERDAM



Additionally, IOM successfully hosted **four study visits** with interesting speakers from the Merseyside Police (UK) on positive action, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (UK) on complaint mechanisms, and the Lisbon Municipal Police on community policing. One in-person visit to the Rotterdam Police covered the topics of diverse recruitment and mediation as well as an introduction to the Second Wave methodology.

In October 2021 the CoP project organised a **Reflection Day** with several stakeholders and partners to discuss possible lines of action for the participating police zones. The day started with a general introduction of the good practices reports, with discussions in smaller groups at the end of the day.



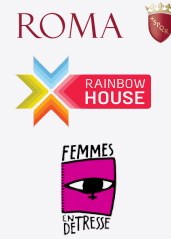
Building on the good practices, study visits, and the Reflection Day, the project team developed **Practical Guidelines** regarding the three questions mentioned above to inspire the participating police zones on actions and initiatives they could implement in 2022.

The project team also launched several **surveys** for both police officers and civilians, with the idea to gather experiences related to diversity and discrimination. The surveys are still open, and focus groups are still being held.

2022 will be the year to put all of these ideas into practice! Stay tuned for more information!



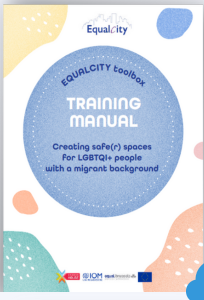
Equality



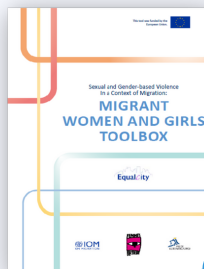
The 4 toolboxes aimed at **building the capacity of frontline services to better detect and address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against migrants** are available to the public! You can download them in multiple languages. Take a look at [our website](#) to know more.

The toolboxes are the result of 2 years of research, exchange of practices with experts, trainee cities and organizations, and implementation and evaluation in the field.

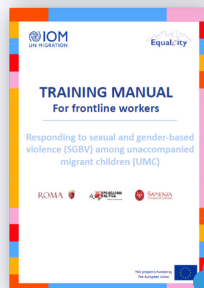
DOWNLOAD OUR TOOLBOXES HERE !



- **Safe(r) spaces for LGBTQI+ people with a migrant background** - How to set up safe(r) frontline services?



- **SGBV against migrant women and girls** - How to provide tailored services as a frontline worker?



- **Working with Unaccompanied Migrant children** - How to provide tailored services as a frontline worker?



- **Parenting in a new country** - How to engage in trust-building dialogue with migrant parents?

FINAL CONFERENCE

In October, Equality held its **final conference** in Brussels. The event gathered stakeholders from across the EU, in- person and online.

The project partners (Rainbowhouse Brussels, Femmes en Détresse asbl, ETNA - Progetto di Etnopsicologia Analitica, Department of Psychology, Sapienza University of Rome, City of Rome, City of Gothenburg) presented their toolboxes and the results of their piloting.

The participants had the opportunity to participate in practical workshops where they could ask their questions about the implementation of the tools in their own local (city) context.



THANK YOU

We take this opportunity to THANK all the stakeholders who played an important role in making this project a success. In particular the project partners and the frontline workers themselves, the participating cities and municipalities, and our experts. But also all the other people and organizations who provided us with feedback and ideas along the way!

Below, you will find a bit more information on the stakeholders we would like to thank in particular.



Frontline Workers in the Spotlight

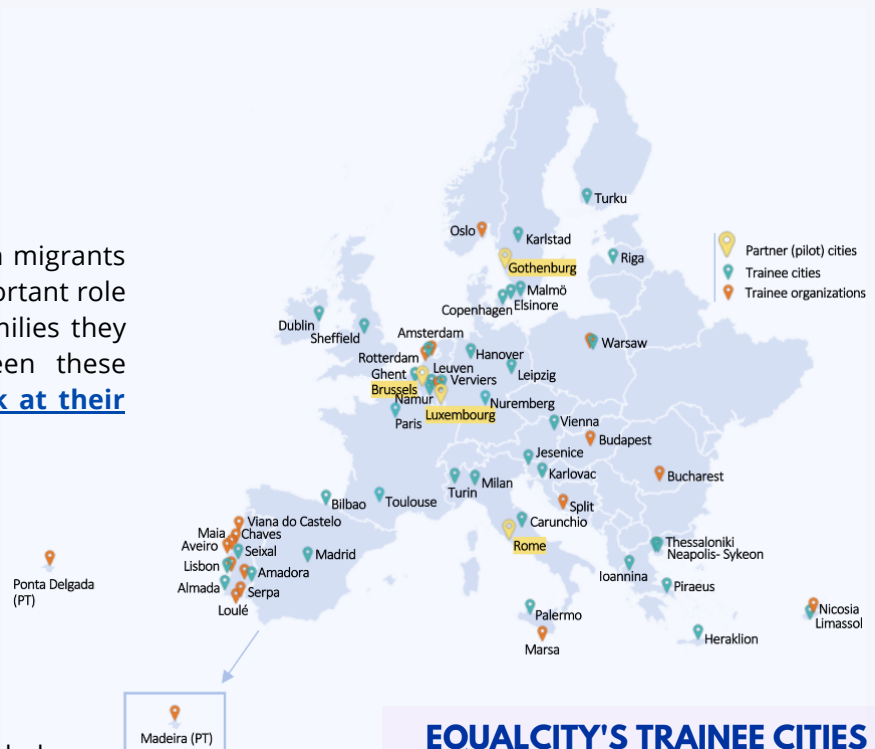
We interviewed 9 frontline workers who work with migrants and SGBV survivors on a daily basis about the important role they play in the lives of many individuals and families they support. They often serve as a bridge between these communities and their host country. [Have a look at their story here!](#)

Cities in the spotlight

Cities played a central role in Equalcity. They provided us with feedback on our tools and gave us guidance in how to adapt the tools to fit different local contexts. The cities of Leuven en Gent testified on their experience and the reasons why they joined Equalcity. [Have a look here!](#)

Expert insights

Our 34 thematic experts sat at the table with us and shared their diverse and constructive feedback on our toolboxes! We compiled some of their testimonies in a short video. Thank you for your valuable insights!



EQUALCITY'S TRAINEE CITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS



For more information on Equalcity, contact Elisabeth Palmero: epalmero@iom.int



Actiris Coordination Platform

for the actors for labour market integration of newcomers in the Brussels Capital Region

The second half of 2021 was a crucial period for the Actiris Coordination Platform project - and 2022 will be just as exciting! Between June and August 2021, the project team finalized the concept of the Actiris Coordination Platform (ACP), integrating the stakeholders' feedback received during the consultations held in the first half of the year. The conceptual specifications of the Platform, which consists of an in-person and digital component, were documented in a user-friendly, detailed "Guide Booklet", available in French, Dutch and English. Watch this [video](#) for more information on the ACP!

In the months of October and November, an extensive **communication campaign** was rolled out to raise awareness about the needs that the ACP wants to address in the field of labour market integration in the Brussels-Capital Region as well as to increase visibility to its upcoming launch. The project team produced three **video podcasts**: one with the Athens Coordination Center for Migrant & Refugee Issues (ACCMR), which had served as a valuable source of inspiration during the conceptualization phase, and two other ones with HackYourFuture and Rising You respectively, two important stakeholders in the framework of the project. You can watch the podcasts [here](#).



Launching event, 24 November 2021



The communication campaign paved the way to the **Platform's official launching event in November** in Brussels. The attendees, professionals active in the field of labour market integration in the Brussels Capital Region, learned more about the ACP's structure and functions and participated in a workshop in which they could start reflecting with their peers on their expectations, needs and potential contributions.

The launching event marked the **transition from the conceptual to the operational phase**. In the next months, Actiris will pilot the Platform, while IOM will provide support in the initial follow-up and monitoring and act as a third-party facilitator. In particular, building on the interest shown at the launching event, a number of **Thematic Committees will be kicked off**, which constitute the heart of the Platform where exchanges and collaborations between like-minded organizations will take place. Check out the infographic on the right for some of the potential Committees!

- Coaching & mentorat
Coaching & mentorschap
- Formation (hard & soft skills)
Training (hard & soft skills)
- Personnes primo-arrivantes vulnérables
Kwetsbare nieuwkomers
- Formation linguistique
Taaltraining
- Femmes primo-arrivantes
Vrouwelijke nieuwkomers
- Support légal
Juridische ondersteuning
- Reconnaissance des diplômes & validation des compétences
Diploma-erkenning en validatie van vaardigheden





Job training for Nigerian MATCH recruit

Last December, Mr. Chinedu Onuegbu, one of the **Nigerian MATCH talents**, was welcomed to the Netherlands for job training. As part of the MATCH Project, Mr. Chinedu Onuegbu had the opportunity to upscale his skills in Europe. He will be **reinvesting his talent** into his new role within a Dutch company. We would like to thank Mr. Paul Janssen, the Sales Director for Chore-Time Europe B.V. for the warm welcome at their warehouse in Ede. We could not have done this if not for the help of Mr. Jan Hulzebosch, Poultry Expert and Trainer at the Dutch Poultry Management Support, who conducted, and is continuing with, the **knowledge-transfer training**.

Institutional capacity building in Nigeria & Senegal

In November 2021, MATCH Nigeria conducted Part 2 of its Capacity Building Training for Tech Hubs on **Project Management & Entrepreneurship Skills**. The participants were taken through sessions on Partnership Development, Stakeholder Management, and Strategies and Pathways for Expanding to Africa and Europe.

In November 2021, MATCH Senegal also hosted institutional capacity building activities for **Public Employment Services in Senegal**. The VDAB (Public Employment Services in Flanders) and their counterparts in Senegal – ANPEJ SENEGAL and the Direction de l'Emploi du Sénégal - provided great insights on files and **data processing management**.



The global race for talent: the labour migration (r)evolution

Episode 2 - MATCH Podcast: "The global race for talent: the labour migration (r)evolution"

In the MATCH podcast, **Belgian Secretary of State for Asylum and Migration**, Sammy Mahdi, explains that the European Commission considers Belgium a **pioneer country to implement talent partnerships**. The MATCH project is one of the projects the EU invested in to **stimulate legal pathways** for migration in light of pressing labour shortages. The Belgian MATCH project team had the privilege to discuss with Mr Mahdi, and CEO of Voka, Hans Maertens, how well managed labour migration can provide a solution to **labour shortages**.

You can listen to the podcast in [English](#) and in [Dutch](#) on Spotify.



MATCH intercultural competence training for employers

The MATCH project team developed an intercultural competence training to guide companies on their mission to **implement inclusive diversity policies**. The modules are meant to serve as an introduction to the complex topic. IOM Belgium and Luxembourg offers **tailor-made training sessions** to companies interested in improving the inclusion of international talents in their workplace. MATCH Belgium gave three training sessions to the company Amaris Belgium with excellent feedback.



Contact us via match@iom.int if you are interested to create a more inclusive workplace and want to know more about our intercultural competence training for employers.



This January, our **Diaspora Insights podcasts** series celebrates its first anniversary! We are happy to have published three podcasts in 2021, and that we have more episodes ready to be launched over the course of the next few months! To celebrate our one-year existence, we **launched a new podcast with Tino Chibebe**, a Zimbabwean entrepreneur. [Check it out here!](#)

Next to Tino's podcast, the Diaspora Team also launched a podcast with **Olivia Lopez Calderon**, founder of Skin Mutts, in September. During our conversation, Olivia discussed the importance of reflecting on cultural identity and multiculturalism, and her search for an answer to the question "Where do I belong?". You can watch her podcast [here](#).



In October, **our fourth Diaspora newsletter** was published online and can be accessed [here](#). This edition included, among others, a brief introduction of the U-CARE and CoP without borders projects, and several calls and events for and by diaspora members. Our next newsletter is due to be published in April!



'I am half Belgian and half Rwandan, but I don't know much about my Rwandan part. I hope to learn more about it during my time here.'

- Steffi Mushayija, Physiotherapist and Rwandan Diaspora Professional

Rwandan Diaspora Engagement Projects

is coordinated by IOM Rwanda in close cooperation with IOM Belgium. The project aims to improve the **Rwandan Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Health sector** through assignments of Rwandan diaspora members living in Europe who are willing to go to Rwanda to exchange expertise and knowledge.

Though pandemic-related travel restrictions have not made it easy for participants to travel to Rwanda, several experts have already been able to successfully complete their training.

Not only is the Diaspora Engagement an important programme to share valuable knowledge and skills with participants in Rwanda, it is also an excellent opportunity for the diaspora experts to (re-)discover their country of origin by spending time there and exploring the country in their free time.

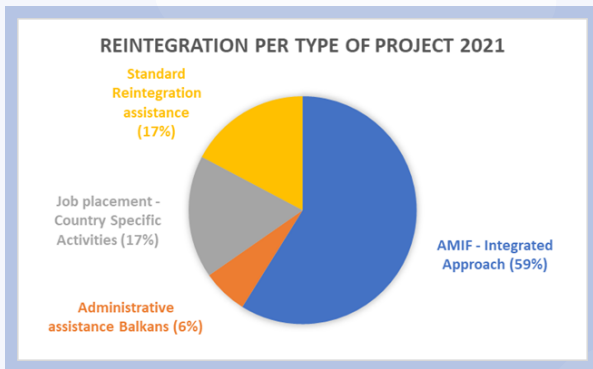
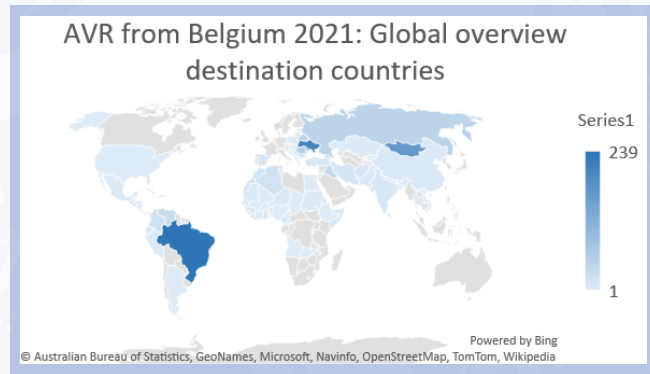
As of now, several Belgium-based diaspora members have participated in the project. In collaboration with IOM Belgium, three of them have recorded their journey in Rwanda. You can watch the vlogs of Steffi, Clément and Désiré on all our social media channels and our [YouTube channel!](#)



Are you interested to know more about our diaspora activities? Visit our general webpage [here](#) for the latest updates or contact Anke Van de Velde: avandvelde@iom.int.

Statistics from Belgium

In 2021, IOM provided **voluntary return assistance** to 1695 persons to 82 different destination countries. Brazil, El Salvador and Ukraine are ranking 1 to 3 in the list.



Of the total of assisted persons, 705 persons (or 42%) have received **reintegration assistance in their country of origin**. Mongolia, El Salvador and the Republic of Moldova are the main return countries for reintegration assistance. Reintegration assistance is designed to support a sustainable return and reintegration of migrants in their countries of origin and within their local communities.



AVRR Partner Meeting



Monitoring Mission Moldova

IOM's yearly partner meeting took place on the 13th of December. The meeting brought together all relevant stakeholders in the field of **voluntary return and reintegration in Belgium**. **State Secretary for Asylum and Migration, Mr Sammy Mahdi**, presented his policy note on return and stressed the relevance of all stakeholders (cities and municipalities, civil society organizations, regional and international organizations). **Director-General of Fedasil, Mr Michael Kegels**, elaborated on the importance of partnerships in the framework of the voluntary return and reintegration activities of Fedasil. Thanks to the commitment of our partners, the Belgian Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme remains for many migrants a possibility to return home in dignity.

At the end of November IOM, together with Fedasil, organised a **monitoring field visit to Moldova**. This 4-day visit was meant to better understand the migration context and the **reintegration challenges for beneficiaries that return via the Belgian AVRR programme**. Interesting discussions were held with relevant stakeholders from the Moldovan Government and relevant NGO's. The delegation also visited several beneficiaries whereby they had the chance to listen to their stories on their migration experience, the services they could benefit from and the challenges they encountered when returning.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ON MIGRANT PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

As a member of the Conex project, a network funded by Fedasil, IOM engages with local authorities, their migrant communities and frontline services. Local authorities play a key role in understanding and responding to the needs of their local communities. One of IOM's new collaborations is HackYourFuture, a programming school for newcomers. This non-profit organization not only addresses Belgium's shortage of talent in the IT sector, but also empowers migrants by teaching them the necessary skills for a career in software development.

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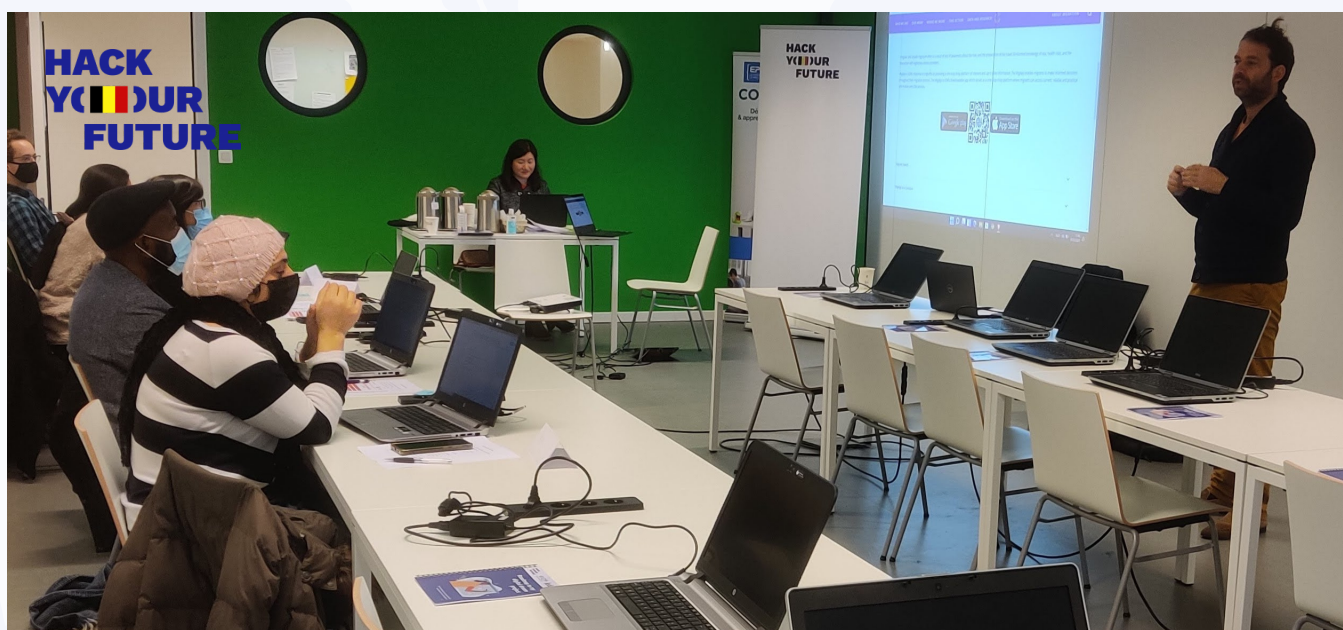
The training was very useful and I would like people in my network to also participate.

- Participant training

”

HackYourFuture and IOM Belgium joined forces to create a course designed for migrants looking for a job in the IT field. Migrants from Thailand, Iran, Sudan, Morocco and Nigeria took part in a three-day intensive course **to improve their digital skills**. The participants discussed safe migration, financial inclusion through digital remittances, and opportunities in countries of origin via reintegration projects.

Visit HYF's website [here](#)



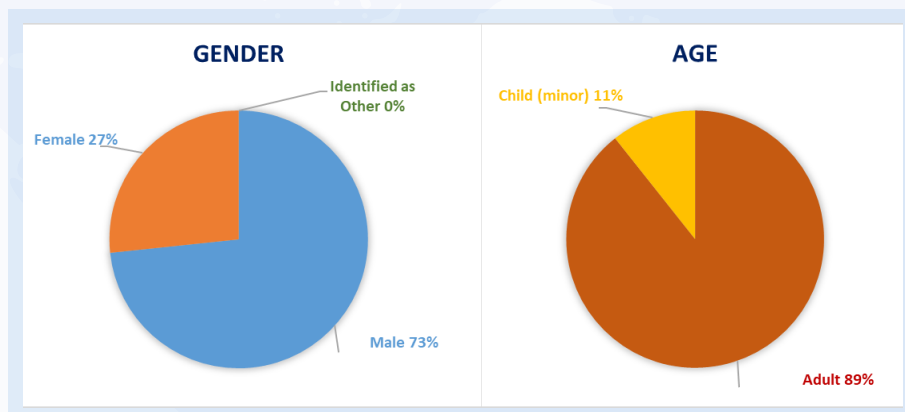
HackYourFuture was initially founded in 2015 in Amsterdam. Because their curriculum is 100% open, the school was replicated in many countries, including Belgium, in 2018.

AVRR FROM LUXEMBOURG



Statistics

In 2021, IOM provided **voluntary return assistance** to 75 persons to 25 different destination countries. Iraq, Montenegro and Venezuela ranked top three of the country list.



From the total of voluntary return cases, **66%** of beneficiaries have received reintegration assistance in their country of origin. This might consist of legal and material support, training and schooling, assistance with the setup of a revenue-generating activity, professional equipment, temporary accommodation, etc. Some are considered **vulnerable** and may benefit, in consequence, from specialized support such as an operational and/or medical escort during the flight and additional reintegration support for their respective medical needs.

AVR TO EU COUNTRIES

In 2021, IOM kicked off a **new pilot project** in Luxembourg aiming to support EU citizens and third-country nationals having a valid residence permit in another EU Member State wishing to return voluntarily but lacking the means to do so, to their country of origin or residence in the EU.



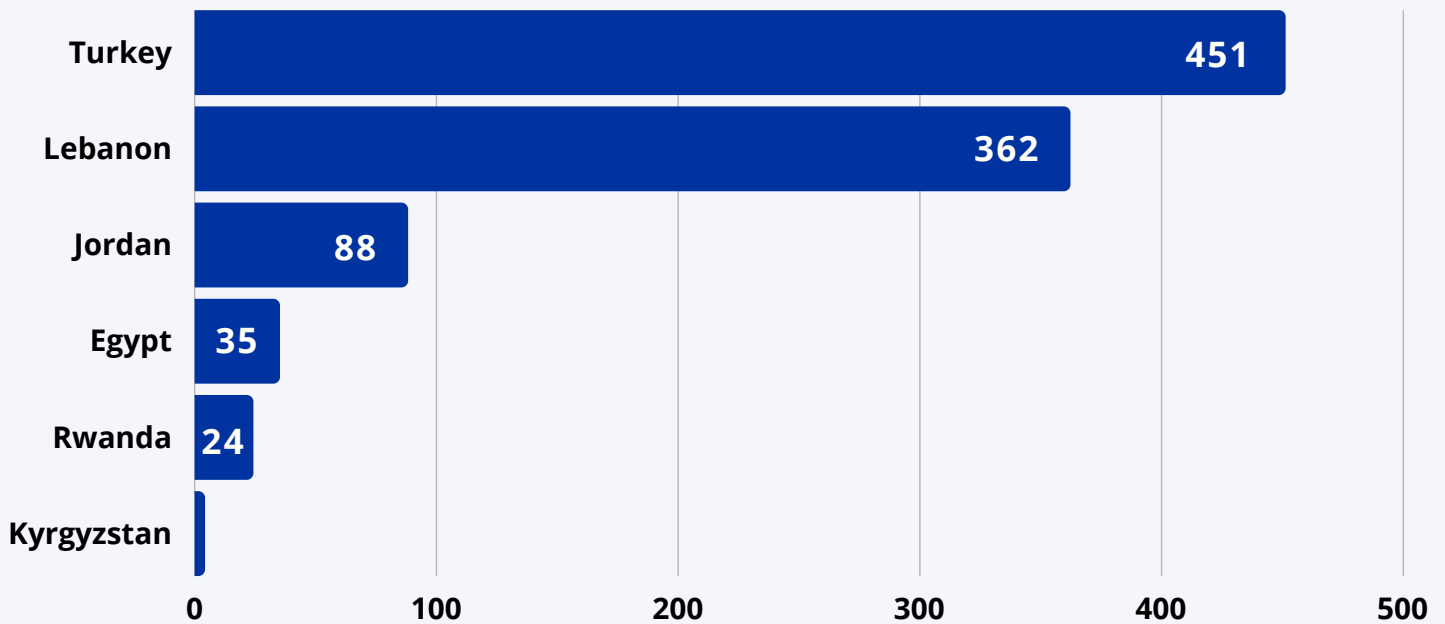
For more information on project activities in Luxembourg, please contact Viviane Van Hoeck: vvanhoeck@iom.int

These projects are supported by:



LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère des Affaires étrangères
et européennes

In 2021, 964 refugees have travelled to Belgium within the framework of the **resettlement programme**. The majority arrived from Turkey, followed by Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Rwanda.



IOM assists the Government of Belgium in organising the **pre-departure activities**, such as pre-departure orientation training, health assessments and visa collection. For the transfer, IOM regularly charters planes in order to bring large groups at once to Belgium. This year, five chartered flights were organised.

As **the crisis in Syria** entered its 10th year, millions of people are still in need of life-saving assistance. IOM remains committed to supporting vulnerable populations inside Syria and across the region with life-saving and sustainable assistance ranging from emergency distributions and site support to livelihoods development. Since the onset of the Syria crisis, IOM has been involved in the coordination mechanisms for humanitarian response and has continued to operate ongoing resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes from within the region. IOM's resettlement operations in countries neighbouring Syria, as well as in Syria itself have continued to support refugees and states.

