



Migration for the Benefit of All

Upper Right: An IOM team conducting population mobility mapping (PMM) activity in Province 7 with an aim to identify health risks including the COVID-19 as result of human mobility. **Bottom Right:** IOM delivers safety equipment to a provincial government authority for the use of the essential and frontline workers such as those working in holding/quarantine centers, hospitals, migrant shelters and security personnel among others in response of COVID-19 **Upper Left:** A returnee migrant in Province 1 makes *muda* (a kind of hand-made chair) upon receiving recovery support from IOM. **Bottom Left:** An IOM staff briefs a group of returning Nepali migrants upon their arrival at Kathmandu airport with IOM support. @IOM

PRESENCE IN NEPAL

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) - a related organization of the United Nations - is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration. It works to meet the growing operational challenges of migration, advances the understanding of migration issues, encourages social and economic development through migration and works to uphold the well-being and human rights of migrants.

Upon signing the Cooperation Agreement with the Government of Nepal in 2007, IOM started its operations in Nepal by facilitating the resettlement of Bhutanese refugees to receiving countries. Since then, IOM has expanded significantly both in terms of programme areas and target populations and has contributed to the government of Nepal's efforts to manage migration more effectively through a wide range of programmes aligned to IOM's Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the [Global Compact for Migration \(GCM\)](#).

IOM's focus areas include migrant protection, migration and development, labour migration, disaster preparedness and response, migration health, environment and climate change-induced migration.

COVID-19 AND MIGRATION IN NEPAL

The pandemic halted Nepal's foreign employment dominated migration, many losing jobs in destination countries including India, exacerbating the challenges faced by already vulnerable migrants and their families. Owing to the pandemic, total of 228,829 Nepalese have returned home via air as of 18 January 2021 ([CCMC, Nepal](#)) and estimated 700,000 have returned from India ([IOM, August 2020](#)).

There is an urgent need to set up a comprehensive gender-responsive sustainable socio-economic plan to reintegrate returnee migrants in the national labour market – creating job opportunities, matching skills and interest of returnees to match the needs of the national economy.

IOM works on all the identified priority areas, including coordination and planning, risk communication and community engagement, disease surveillance, interventions at Points of Entry (PoEs), case management, infection prevention and control, mobility tracking and socio-economic assistance, migration health, emergency preparedness and response.

As part of IOM's global contribution to the UN's First Line of Defense against COVID-19, IOM's Migration Health Assessment Center (MHAC) in Kathmandu is designated as UN Clinic and has started providing health services, including testing for COVID-19 for UN personnel and dependents.

AREAS OF WORK IN NEPAL

Migration and Health

IOM's Migration Health Division contributes to global migration health priorities as outlined in the World Health Assembly Resolutions 61.17 and 70.15 on the health of migrants and refugees through the provision of comprehensive health services and promotion of safe, dignified and healthy migration.

In Nepal, IOM, through its comprehensive, preventive and curative health programmes, supports the Government of Nepal in its efforts towards addressing migration health issues.

At the request of migrants receiving countries, IOM provides an evaluation of the physical and mental health status of migrants prior to their departure for the purpose of resettlement, international employment, enrolment in specific migrant assistance programs, or for obtaining a temporary or permanent visa. In 2020, the Migration Health Assessment Centers (MHACs) located in Kathmandu and Damak conducted pre-departure health assessment of total of 8,653 migrants per requirement of the receiving countries.

Key IOM preparedness and response activities to COVID-19:

- Conducted [population mobility mapping \(PMM\) exercise](#) in 3 provinces — 1, Lumbini and Sudurpashchim, which has identified priority locations vulnerable to the spread of communicable diseases and other health threats as a result of human mobility.
- In May, IOM conducted [a rapid phone survey](#) of all 753 municipalities to understand health issues in relation to migration at local levels. A total of 1,562 officials of all 77 districts were interviewed remotely.
- Developed a dedicated [webpage](#) with all COVID-19 related information for Nepali migrants;
- Undertook feasibility assessment of 14 designated Points of Entry (POEs) for the coordination to establish the health desk and human resource management. Also, completed assessment of 20 POEs from the perspective of the International Health Regulations.
- Conducted psychosocial support, easing stigma, as well as COVID-prevention training for government health officials and civil society organizations directly working with migrants noting that initially the majority of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Nepal were returning migrants and stigma and discrimination against them were significantly prevailing.
- Established Health Desks at two PoEs of Sudurpashchim Province.



An animated video message was developed focusing on returning migrants on importance of staying in quarantine center upon arrival from abroad and protocols to follow while staying there to contain the virus.

- Reached out to approximately four million migrants and their communities both residing abroad or at home with its culturally and linguistically tailored radio, TV, and social media messages on COVID-preventive measures, easing stigma, and emphasizing everyone's human rights irrespective of their migratory situation.
- Distributed safety equipment such as medical masks, hand-sanitizers, handwashing stations, non-touch infra-red thermometers, coveralls, goggles, and gloves to various local governments and CSOs targeting frontline workers and those directly working with migrants at shelter houses, quarantine/ holding centers.

Emergency Response

As the global lead for Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster for natural disasters, IOM has been responding to emergencies and post-crisis situations. IOM has been working together with the Government agencies, Security Forces and non-governmental agencies in enhancing the capacity to better address the needs of people displaced as a result of disasters, in line with international standards and best practices.

Refugee Resettlement

For over 65 years, IOM has played a key role in refugee resettlement around the world. In Nepal, since 2007, IOM has supported the resettlement of over 112,000 refugees to more than 8 countries (Australia, Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, Netherlands, Norway, UK, and USA). The refugees - mostly Bhutanese - are supported with a range of comprehensive resettlement services including case processing, health assessments, medical screening, pre-departure orientation and transportation.

Amidst COVID-related travel restrictions, IOM assisted departure of 53 refugees in 2020.

Migration, Environment and Climate Change

The adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on livelihoods, food security and water availability are likely to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and increase overall levels of migration in the coming decades in Nepal. To support the Government's efforts to mitigate such vulnerabilities, IOM works to address the need to integrate migration within the broader climate change and environmental framework.



Part of anti-stigma campaign, IOM Nepal collaborated with Ms. Prashiddhi Shrestha, Nepal's 2nd confirmed COVID-19 case, a returnee migrant, to develop an animated video message.

AREAS OF WORK IN NEPAL

Year 2020 in numbers:

434	returning migrants assisted with recovery/ reintegration support
250	returning migrants in vulnerable situation were provided with direct assistance
4 million	(aprx.) migrants and communities residing both abroad and at home were reached out with awareness raising messages about COVID-19 preventive measures, anti-stigma, migrant's rights irrespective as well as disaster preparedness
8,653	migrants and refugees received health assessment and TB screenings
189	Nepalese in difficult conditions assisted to return home from 14 countries
53	refugees assisted to resettle in 3 countries
114	officials and partners trained on range of migration management areas through both virtual and in-person mediums
348	members of parliament and government officials attended consultation programmes on range of migration management areas

Distributed:

33,500	masks (medical, cloth and N95) /	6,500	mosquito nets /	280	liters hand sanitizers
60	non-touch infra-red thermometers /	3,000	coveralls /	1,000	goggles

Also, handwashing stations, gloves, and sanitizing and cleaning items.

Migrant Protection and Assistance

IOM provides assistance to stranded migrants and migrants in vulnerable conditions. Among those returning, many arrive empty-handed, having spent their savings while waiting to safely return home, some forced to take loans with high interest rates, and some have not been paid their wages.

To address the situation, IOM provided:

- Immediate cash assistance to 250 most vulnerable returnee migrant workers, of which 182 are women. The project also provided recovery support to 410 returnee migrants and their families in Province 1. (with funding from the [Multi-Partner Trust Fund \(MPTF\)](#)),
- 6,500 sets of safety equipment consisting masks, sanitizers and mosquito nets to quarantine centers, holding centers, isolation centers and shelter homes of Province 1 and province 3 through provincial and local governments. (with funding support from MPTF, [DFID](#))
- Support to stranded and vulnerable migrants in destination countries with return tickets, together with the Government of Nepal and Non- Resident Nepali Association
- Support to the Foreign Employment Board for data collection of returnee migrants repatriated by the Government.
- Conducted a survey (April 2020) with individual Private Recruitment Agencies (PRAs) in Nepal and with Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agencies (NAFEA) members to better understand the [Covid-19 impacts on migrant workers in labour destination countries](#).
- Trained over 50 Private Recruitment Agencies (PRAs) on International Recruitment Integrity System ([IRIS](#)) standard and have engaged selected PRAs, committed to practice fair and ethical recruitment practice for pursuing the IRIS certification planning, to support with the IRIS Labour Recruiter's Capacity Building Program (ILRCBP). (funding through [IOM Development Fund \(IDF\)](#))

- Assessment of immediate vulnerabilities and risks faced by migrant workers and their communities has been conducted with the aim to integrate migrants and communities' protection needs, vulnerabilities and risks into COVID-19 socio-economic response and recovery efforts. (Funding from [EU DG DEVCO](#))
- Supported the return of 189 migrants in need in 2020. IOM's migrants protection and assistance programmes include return and repatriation assistance to stranded migrants, referral support services for temporary accommodation/shelter support, psychosocial counselling, legal counselling.



A radio message developed to encourage women migrant workers to speak up any forms of gender-based violence whether they are in destination or home country.



AREAS OF WORK IN NEPAL

Migration and Development

In Nepal, remittances that migrants send home play a vital role in national development, contributing to over 25% of the GDP in the fiscal year 2018/19, according to [Nepal Migration Profile, 2019](#) developed by IOM.

With funding support from the [Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation \(SDC\)](#), IOM, together with UNDP, has been implementing a global programme on Making Migration Work for Sustainable Development (Phase III).

The overall objective of the programme is to harness the development benefits and reduce the negative effects of migration for host and home communities, migrants and members of their families.

With funding support from [IOM Development Fund \(IDF\)](#), a rapid phone survey was conducted, in close coordination with the National Planning Commission, among 3,000 migrant workers to understand [the situation of Nepali migrant workers in relation to COVID-19](#), their economic plans and learn more about their skills.

Labour Migration

Many Nepali migrant workers face challenges such as deceptive, non-transparent recruitment practices and excessive fees which could lead to debt bondage, trafficking and forced labour. IOM is working with the government and stakeholders to address these challenges through engaging with private sector partners and building the capacity of Migrant Resource Centres, which act as a one-stop-shop for information and advice on safe channels of migration, and works to promote ethical recruitment practices.

Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience

Nepal is at high risk of natural disasters. To support the Government's efforts in emergency preparedness and resilience, IOM supported identifying and building open spaces in Kathmandu valley and the Western Region.

Few major achievements in 2020 are:

- Completed construction of 8 earthquake-resistant multi-purpose community centers at 8 districts worst-hit by the Nepal earthquake 2015, with funding from the People of Thailand through their government. The centres will be used as an evacuation centres in an event of a disaster.
- Assisted local authorities in identification and mapping of total of 32 new open spaces that can be used for life-saving activities at the onset of disaster. The open spaces are now integrated into the [BIPAD](#) platform, owned by the Government.
- Reached out to more than 5,000 local people – including youths and women, and those in decision making positions – to raise awareness about protection of open spaces.
- During the monsoon, in August, IOM conducted displacement tracking matrix (DTM) [assessment of those affected by floods and landslides](#) to map the needs and gaps of pop-

ulation displaced by landslides and floods.

Under a project funded by the USAID's [Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance](#), IOM:

- conducted total of 7 consultations programme with Provincial Assembly members of all 7 provinces in the leadership of Provincial Assembly Speakers and Minister for Internal Affairs and Law on integrating disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) into provincial and local development plans. In total, 152 members of parliament (64 female) participated and actively contributed on discussion around importance of incorporating the DRRM into provincial development plans. Likewise, separate interaction programs were conducted with women leaders of local level where a total of 189 attendees engaged in identifying whether the recently endorsed DRRM Act is gender-responsive or children and elderly-friendly or pro-poor.
- Developed comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Localization Manual – an operational training manual for disaster risk management (DRM) capacity building of local levels.
- Conducted national level ToT for 24 DRM professionals.
- Completed 52 episodes of weekly television show through National television for media advocacy on DRRM policy implementation.



Signatures collected from local people including youths and women and local authorities as their commitment to protect the identified open spaces for humanitarian purposes in the event of disaster.

Global Compact for Migration (GCM) implementation

Nepal has been actively contributing to the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration \(GCM\)](#) ever since its development phase. IOM has been supporting the Government in the operationalization of the GCM in the country. Nepal is elected as the 'champion country' on the implementation of the GCM. IOM supported the Government of Nepal in its first voluntary report on GCM implementation in the country, which was submitted end of December 2020. Nepal will also attend the regional review meeting scheduled for mid-March 2021.

The first meeting of the [UN Migration Network](#) in Nepal was held in late 2020.

For full reports, please visit: <https://nepal.iom.int/publications>

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