


Running an Effective Migrant Resource Centre: A Handbook for Practitioners

DR JANE PILLINGER



March 2015





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¹ Hereinafter referred to as Kosovo/UNSC 1244. This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence. All reference to Kosovo in this report, whether the territory, institutions or population in the text shall be understood in full compliance with UN Security Council resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 3**
- ACRONYMS 8**
- Introduction to the Migrant Resource Centre Handbook 9**
 - How the MRC Handbook was drawn up. 10
 - Structure of the MRC Handbook 11
- Planning and designing a Migrant Resource Centre.. . . . 13**
 - 1.1 Introduction.. . . . 14
 - 1.2 Planning and designing a Migrant Resource Centre.. . . . 17
 - Step 1: Identify the legal base and responsibility for the Migrant Resource Centre 19
 - Step 2: Define Migrant Resource Centre clients 20
 - National and international data on international migration.. . . . 24
 - Step 3: Define Migrant Resource Centre services 26
 - Step 4: Define how services will be provided 29
 - Step 5: Put in place a financial plan 32
 - Step 6: Draw up policies and operating procedures. 33
 - Step 7: Identify partners 34
 - Step 8: Find an appropriate location 37
 - Step 9: Ensure inclusion and equality 40
 - Step 10: Establish systems for assuring quality (client and stakeholder feedback, monitoring and evaluation). . . 40
- Services provided by Migrant Resource Centres.. . . . 41**
 - 2.1 Introduction. 42
 - 2.2 Pre-departure information, orientation and advice 43
 - 2.2.1 Information about legal migration rights, processes and procedures 45
 - 2.2.2 Pre-departure employment-related information and assistance 46
 - 2.2.3 Pre-departure information and assistance on integration and living in the destination country 52
 - 2.2.4 Pre-departure information and assistance for students embarking on international study abroad programmes.. . . . 55
 - 2.3 Training and skills development services.. . . . 57

2.4 Information and reintegration services for returning migrants	58
2.5 Protection of migrant rights: services for migrants at risk or who have experienced exploitation.	60
2.6 Information services and advice about remittances and investment-related services	65
2.7 The contribution of Migrant Resource Centres to migration policy development	66
Methods of service delivery	69
3.1 Introduction.	70
3.2 Ensuring the provision of high-quality, client-oriented services.	73
3.3 Providing a range of services to meet the needs of all clients at all stages of the migration cycle	77
3.3.1 Individualized counselling and case management.	77
3.3.2 Pre-departure orientation training and seminars.	82
3.3.4 Services provided by telephone, e-mail and via the MRC website..	88
3.3.5 Awareness raising campaigns..	90
3.3.6 Outreach and mobile services..	91
3.3.7 Involving clients and former clients in improving the quality of services	93
Building blocks of Migrant Resource Centres.	95
4.1 Introduction	96
4.2 Legal basis and institutional structure	96
4.3 Management and policies of the Migrant Resource Centre..	102
4.4 Staffing, staff competences and staff training..	103
4.5 Resources, equipment, information technology and information resources within the Migrant Resource Centre	108
4.6 Planning and reviewing the Migrant Resource Centre and its services..	113
Cooperation, partnerships and referrals	115
5.1 Introduction	116
5.2 Cooperation with other stakeholders in countries of origin..	116
5.3 Making referrals to other agencies	119
5.4 Cooperation with relevant organizations in countries of destination ..	120

Communication, visibility and outreach..	123
6.1 Introduction	124
6.2 Dissemination and information to publicize the MRC	124
6.3 Outreach activities	127
6.4 Using the media	129
6.5 Website and social media	130
Information management	133
7.1 Introduction	134
7.2 What to include in a Migrant Resource Centre database?	135
7.3 Generation of monitoring and social policy reports	139
7.4 Data security and protection	140
Monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance	141
8.1 Introduction	142
8.2 Establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework	143
8.3 Encourage the feedback and involvement of clients in improving the quality of services provided	147
8.4 Collecting other data on Migrant Resource Centre services	149
Making services equal, accessible and inclusive to all groups	155
9.1 Introduction	156
9.2 Providing gender-sensitive Migrant Resource Centre services	157
9.3 Services that are inclusive of the needs of children and family members	164
9.4 Services that are inclusive of and accessible to all client groups	166
Sustainability of Migrant Resource Centres	169
Appendices	177
Standards for high-quality MRC services	178
Client feedback questionnaire (IOM Budapest)	181
Template for client interviews	182
Beneficiary tracing	184
Migrant Resource Centres referred to in the Handbook	186
References and further reading	189

ACRONYMS

ACM	Alto Comissariado para as Migrações (High Commission for Migrations, Portugal)
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
BAMF	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees Germany
CAMPO	Centro de Apoio ao Migrante no País de Origem (Counselling and Information Centre for Migrants, Cabo Verde)
CGT	General Confederation of Labour (Colombia)
CIAMI	Centre for Information and Care for Migrants
CISO	Youth Employment & Information Centres
CNAI	Centro Nacional de Apoio ao Imigrante (One stop Shop, Portugal)
EIB	Emigration Information Bureau
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres
EU	European Union
EURES	European Employment Services
FGD	Focus group discussion
FWRC	Filipino Workers Resource Centres
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
GAMM	EU Global Approach to Migration and Mobility
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LEO	Labour Exchange Office
MAP	Migrant Action Programme
MCDEM	Maison des Congolais de l'étranger et des migrants
MIDWEB	Migration for Development in the Western Balkans
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPI	Migration Policy Institute
MRC	Migration Resource Centre
MSC	Migration Service Centre
MWRC	Migrant Worker Resource Centres
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIF	Österreichischer Integrationsfonds (Austrian Integration Fund)
OIN	Office of Immigration and Nationality (Hungary)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSRC	One-Stop Youth and Migrant Centre
OWWA	Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration
PDOS	Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar
POEA	Philippine Overseas Employment Agency
SEF	Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (Portugal Immigration and Border Service)
SMS	Short message service
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
US	United States
WAPES	World Association of Public Employment Services



Introduction to the Migrant Resource Centre Handbook

In recent years, Governments, NGOs, social partners and international organizations, such as IOM and ILO, have established Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs)² and other similar facilities in both origin and destination countries. Many of the MRCs established in the last decade by the IOM and more recently by the ILO have been modelled on MRCs created in countries of destination, which date back to the 1980s.³ The importance of providing information, protection and assistance for migrants is firmly embedded in international human rights norms. Globally, MRCs are recognized as having a key role to play in the empowerment and protection of migrants, the importance of which was highlighted at the Global Forum on Migration and Development in 2007 and 2008.

This Handbook focuses specifically on the role of MRCs in **countries of origin**. These MRCs provide a range of services, often using a one-stop-shop model, in one physical location, in a language that the migrant understands. Today, Migrant Resource Centres exist in many countries of origin, with services adapted to local conditions and information requirements. Throughout the Handbook examples are given of MRCs in countries of origin. Additional examples are also given from countries of destination where this is relevant to meeting clients' needs across the whole migration cycle and where countries of origin can learn from the example.

The focus of this Handbook is on the provision of MRC information and pre-departure integration and protection services for migrants and their families in countries of origin. Services are provided: 1) in preparation for travel, entry and stay, employment

² Also called Migrant Information Centres, Migrant Service Centres, Migrant Assistance Centres, Centres for Migrant Advice, Migrant Worker Centres. Throughout this Handbook, Migrant Resource Centres are referred to as the generic title for these centres.

³ The first MRC to be opened was in Melbourne, Australia in 1980. The Spectrum MRC provides a one-stop-shop for newly arrived and established migrants and refugees in three locations. For further information see: <http://spectrumvic.org.au>.

and broader integration abroad; 2) during the stay abroad; and 3) upon return, to assist returnees with reintegration.

MRCs in countries of origin support diverse objectives, such as providing information on safe migration and protection for vulnerable migrants, facilitating labour migration, reintegrating returnees and enhancing the developmental effects of migration. These objectives are implemented through information and counselling, as well as outreach services to a range of clients (migrant workers, family migrants, resettled refugees and students). Some MRCs in countries of origin cater both to the needs of their own nationals emigrating to or returning from abroad and to those of foreign nationals residing in or transiting through the country.

Migrants or potential migrants are often not aware of their rights in relation to the processes and procedures for legal migration, seeking employment, integrating into a new country or accessing public services in countries of destination. Without accurate and up-to-date information, potential migrants may seek information from the mass media, friends or social networks, which may be inaccurate. This can leave them vulnerable to fraudulent migration brokers and recruitment agents, to using irregular means of migration, and to being at risk of exploitation and abuse. A key issue is the need for migrants and potential migrants to be empowered and informed so that they can identify misinformation from fraudulent recruitment agents and benefit from ethical recruitment practices.

MRCs can enable potential migrants to make informed choices about migration and thus avoid brain waste, bad job-matching, false expectations and difficulties encountered in integrating into a new country. Enabling migrants to gain knowledge of integration issues at the pre-departure stage of migration will help to enhance their stay in a country of destination. This focus on integration will also be important in encouraging governments and other funding partners to support MRCs in the longer term.

How the MRC Handbook was drawn up

The MRC Handbook draws on a wide range of resources produced by IOM, ILO and other organizations involved in planning, running and monitoring MRCs. The author of the Handbook conducted interviews with key personnel involved in managing and running MRCs in countries of origin in Africa, Asia, South America and Europe, and carried out desk research on MRC resources,

evaluation reports and the wider literature as a basis for informing the content and examples used in the Handbook.

The Handbook is produced as part of the IOM-managed and EU-funded project HEADSTART: Fostering Integration Before Departure. The project aims to enhance the capacity of service providers in countries of origin to deliver relevant and cost-effective pre-departure integration services to third-country nationals migrating to the EU. The project outcomes anticipate improved networking among service providers and their counterparts in countries of destination in the EU, and better coordination of the pre-departure and post-arrival provision of relevant services, based on the good practices in this field identified by the project.⁴

Structure of the MRC Handbook

Chapter 1: Planning and designing a Migrant Resource Centre

- This chapter sets out ten steps for consideration when planning and designing an MRC.

Chapter 2: Services provided by Migrant Resource Centres

- This chapter sets out the full range of services available at MRCs for migrants, potential migrants, returnees, and their children/families.

Chapter 3: Methods of service delivery

- This chapter looks at the different methods for delivering MRC services. These include one-to-one counselling and information services at the MRC, provision of written and web-based information, outreach and mobile services, and awareness raising campaigns.

Chapter 4: Building blocks of Migrant Resource Centres

- This chapter looks at some of the most important building blocks for MRC services. These include the legal basis and institutional structure; governance, management and policies of the MRC; recruitment and staffing structures; staff training and support; Information Technology and equipment; information resources; and planning, reviewing and assuring the quality of the MRC and its services.

⁴ For further information see: <http://www.headstartproject.eu>

Chapter 5: Cooperation, partnerships and referrals

- This chapter looks at the different ways in which MRCs can establish effective forms of cooperation and partnership, networking and referral with other services and organizations in migrants' countries of origin and destination.

Chapter 6: Communication, visibility and outreach

- This chapter provides information and guidance on creating an effective communication and outreach strategy for MRC services, including working with the media.

Chapter 7: Information management

- This chapter provides guidance on implementing good quality information management systems for client data, creating databases, data protection and data required for monitoring and evaluation.

Chapter 8: Monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance

- This chapter provides information on how to monitor and evaluate the services of MRCs, including client feedback and ways of measuring the outcomes of MRC services.

Chapter 9: Making services equal, accessible and inclusive to all groups

- This chapter examines how services can be provided in accessible, inclusive and equal ways. It gives guidance on providing services that are gender sensitive and that meet the needs of children and families, people with disabilities, and other groups that experience barriers in accessing services.

Chapter 10: Sustainability of Migrant Resource Centres

- This chapter provides guidance on how MRCs can ensure long-term institutional and financial sustainability.

Appendix 1 lists the main objectives that should guide the implementation of high quality MRC services. These objectives are contained in the relevant sections of the Handbook.

Chapter 1

Planning and designing a Migrant Resource Centre



Chapter 1

Planning and designing a Migrant Resource Centre

Objective: Have in place an effective plan for the design and institutional set-up of the MRC in order to meet the identified needs of clients at all stages of the migration process and to provide for long-term sustainability

1.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the design and institutional set-up of a Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) in a country of origin. The planning stage will ensure that the MRC can fully meet the goal of providing high quality, personalized information services and advice services to migrants, potential migrants, returnees, and their families, and that it can be sustainable in the long term.

Although MRCs in countries of origin carry out varying roles and functions, the overall goals of MRCs are typically:

- To provide independent, accurate and up-to-date information services and advice to potential migrants to empower them to make informed choices to participate in safe, planned and legal forms of migration, and enable them to make informed decisions that affect their mobility, integration and economic and social advancement;
- To facilitate the provision of coordinated information and services that are complementary to existing services – provided, for example, by government agencies, NGOs, trade unions, employers and recruitment agencies – so that MRC services add value rather than duplicate existing services;
- To provide information, assistance and services to support the reintegration of migrants who have returned to their countries of origin;
- To build capacity and provide information for returning migrants to contribute to the development of their country of origin and enable



existing migrants to have links with diaspora services and remain in contact with their country of origin;

- To protect migrants' rights and provide specialist support services for victims of exploitation and abuse;
- To contribute to awareness and development of national and regional policies in countries of origin, transit and destination designed to govern migration and promote growth and development.

In relation to these goals, IOM (2009) suggests that MRCs can support a number of key policy objectives, directly or indirectly, in the following areas:

- Prevention of irregular migration;
- Facilitation of legal migration;
- Protection of regular and irregular migrants;
- Promotion of sustainable, voluntary return (where relevant);
- Integration of migrants into the country of destination (where relevant);
- Promotion of the links between migration and development.

Human rights approach

Migration advice and support are underpinned by international normative instruments, including the principle that migrants and potential migrants should have access to information services and advice free of charge. In addition, human rights standards are the fundamental basis for the provision of migrant protection and development.

The relevant instruments are:

- ◆ United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990. See: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cmw/cmw.htm>
- ◆ ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration: Non-binding principles and guidelines for a rights-based approach to labour migration, 2006. See: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/migpractice/docs/28/multilat_fwk_en.pdf

- ♦ ILO Migration for Employment Convention, 1949 (ILO Convention 97). See: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::PI2100_ILO_CODE:C097
- ♦ ILO Migrant Workers Convention, 1975 (ILO Convention 143). See: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:PI2100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312288:NO

The services of Migrant Resource Centres should also take into account fundamental principles and rights at work, as embodied in the ILO Core Conventions, which apply to all workers, including migrant workers. For further information see:

- ♦ ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, available at: <http://www.ilo.org/declaration/lang--en/index.htm>
- ♦ ILO Decent Work Agenda, available at: <http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/lang--de/index.htm>

MRCs have an important role to play in contributing to **managed migration** that is carried out in a safe, orderly and humane way. This is beneficial for migrants and their families, as well as for communities and countries of origin and destination (OSCE-IOM-ILO, 2006). Through information services and advice, MRCs can ensure that migration choices become informed so that potential migrants are better aware of safe migration, ethical recruitment procedures and effective job searching, and can better understand the living costs, culture and practices, and other requirements in a country of destination.

It is important that MRCs are well planned and provide added value to the services already provided in a country of origin and destination. In this manner, MRCs can result in long-term cost savings (after initial investment in building, equipment and staffing), as providing better coordination of information saves resources for everyone. Key to this is ensuring that information and services are coordinated between relevant governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations. Therefore, providing these services through a one-stop-shop model, where all relevant services are provided in one location, should be considered.



MRCs also may support the positive links between migration and development. IOM's assessment of MRCs in seventeen countries documents good practices in empowering migrants. These practices include ensuring self-protection, facilitating development by harnessing the skills and capital that migrants may have gained through migration, and supporting the involvement of migrant families and communities in countries of origin:



MRCs should consider their work from the perspective of supporting migration for development, and that expertise would be helpful to governments and other actors in the formulation and implementation of migration and development strategies and programmes (IOM, 2009:7).

On this basis, MRCs have a broader role in empowering migrants to make informed decisions about strategies and plans for migration, use of their skills and finances, and their potential return strategies. If migrants' plans are well grounded, and if conditions allow in their origin countries, it is likely such empowerment will have a positive impact on the development of their countries. In addition, by providing services to empower migrants to protect themselves, MRCs can assist migrants to exercise their rights and prevent exploitation.

Through their ongoing direct engagement with migrants, MRCs may contribute important data, knowledge, information and expertise to local and national migration policy development.

In some cases, MRCs provide redress for returning migrants who have experienced exploitation working overseas. MRCs can facilitate awareness-raising to prevent further exploitation by ensuring that migrants know their rights and ways in which they can be protected against rights violations. Information and services are also provided for undocumented/irregular migrants concerning remedies, return programmes and assistance in managing their status.

1.2 Planning and designing a Migrant Resource Centre

Good planning and design can ensure a Migrant Resource Centre meets its goals, is responsive to the full range of potential clients, and provides the best quality services that are sustainable in the long term.

A framework for planning the set-up and design of an MRC is set out in Chart 1. Each step in the framework is then explained in more detail below. Where relevant, reference is made to further information contained in different chapters of the Handbook.

Chart 1: Ten steps to take in planning and designing an MRC





Step 1: Identify the legal base and responsibility for the Migrant Resource Centre

From the outset it will be important to clarify who will be legally responsible for the MRC, including who will take responsibility for its funding and management. Establishing who will be the lead agency in the design and running of the MRC is also important so as to establish the management structure and sustainability of the MRC.

In some cases an external partner, international organization or donor organization can support the development and set up of an MRC. In these circumstances it will be necessary to have a clear plan to share with governmental or non-governmental providers, or a consortium of providers, on the running of the MRC. This will be very relevant for the long-term sustainability of the MRC after initial funding for the Centre comes to an end (typically following a one- or two-year launch project).

Consideration should be given to the following factors:

- Identifying the level and type of support required for setting up the MRC;
- Identifying the lead agency for the planning and design of the service (in many cases public employment agencies take over the running of MRCs once they are set up);
- Maintaining an objective to include and involve all relevant stakeholders in consultations and feedback on the proposed model for the planned MRC, including, where relevant, political support;
- Ensuring that the MRC complements rather than duplicates existing services by establishing referral agreements and areas for joint service delivery;
- Planning for the sustainability of the MRC, including exploring the feasibility or relevance of integrating the MRC into non-governmental, governmental or local government structures. If integration is possible, it can help to ensure inclusion in nationally and locally planned long-term funding plans and development opportunities, thereby promoting MRC sustainability.

Another factor to identify at an early stage is **the legal basis for the MRC**. Consideration should be given to the following:

- Identifying the legal basis for the MRC (for example, whether it will be an independent limited company, an IOM or other donor-run Centre, an NGO or a government agency).



See: Chapter 4: Building blocks of Migrant Resource Centres for more detailed information about the advantages and disadvantages of different institutional set-ups).

- Planning for any legal steps that need to be taken to establish an MRC, such as drawing up a legal document on the establishment of the MRC or a Memorandum of Understanding (depending on the legal basis of the MRC).
- Identifying any potential legal constraints, and putting a plan in place to overcome them.



Chapter 4 discusses in more detail the institutional and management structure of MRCs, as one of the building blocks of MRC services.

Step 2: Define Migrant Resource Centre clients

Having a clear picture of the potential clients of an MRC will ensure that the MRC is inclusive, relevant and meets the needs of its clients. As a starting point, it is important to ensure that an MRC provides services to the full range of potential clients, including migrants, potential migrants, returnees, and their families. However, there may be specific groups of clients that the MRC will need to target.

Gender considerations should be integrated into the planning and establishment of MRCs from the outset. This should take account of the different information requirements and other specific needs of women.

- Migrant women often experience legal and financial dependency related to their residency status, which in turn puts them at risk of violence, exploitation and abuse. Undocumented women experience greater risks as fears over insecure residency status may prevent them from accessing shelters or support services.



- The gendered nature of employment and the different sectors in which women and men work are important to understand. For example, women are overwhelmingly employed in domestic and care work: sectors that are poorly protected by employment rights or trade union representation. Men often work in construction and agriculture, which in turn are unregulated sectors with poor union protection.
- Even where women and men work in the same sectors, women predominate in the lower skilled jobs and experience discrimination in pay and conditions of employment and the undervaluing of their skills.
- The overwhelming majority of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are women. Men also may experience gender vulnerabilities, and not seek help if they have been exploited or trafficked, because of the stigma of failure. Both men and women may experience labour exploitation where there is little or no protection of their labour rights.

The best way to identify MRC clients is to carry out a target group analysis to identify the main potential client base for the MRC. This should be linked to a needs assessment (see below) that ensures needs are clearly identified and monitored on an ongoing basis. Needs assessments should be included in standard operating procedures to ensure services remain relevant.

What is a target group analysis?

A target group analysis aims to define and reach a specific target group or groups. In the case of an MRC, it will target the potential clients of the Centre including the most disadvantaged and hard-to-reach groups.

Target group analysis can be carried out by consulting with potential clients, groups and organizations, as well as drawing on existing data, research and information about who is migrating and to where. This enables an MRC to plan and deliver its services in the most effective way and will also allow easier evaluation.

The following measures should be considered in carrying out a target group analysis:

- Collect available data and evidence on patterns of outward and inward migration for the country of origin, including the migration profiles that are often drawn up by national and international organizations (see section below on sources of national and international data);
- Draw up a plan to make contact with potential client groups and the community organizations and advocacy bodies that may represent them; this might initially involve making visits, holding meetings and carrying out information exchanges with organizations representing specific groups of clients;
- Carry out consultations with local stakeholders and agencies, such as representatives from migrant organizations and NGOs, trade unions, government agencies and employment services. This could involve:
 - Holding one-to-one interviews and/or focus groups. Focus groups can be a particularly useful tool in promoting discussion amongst a group (see box below on carrying out a focus group discussion);
 - Conducting a confidential survey to consult with stakeholders and the wider community; this could be disseminated as an online survey, a paper based survey, or through one-to-one interviews;
- From consultations, identify the main group or groups that will be targeted as potential clients of the MRC. For example, this might include specific target groups such as women, young people, low-skilled or vulnerable groups of migrant workers and/or higher skilled workers;
- Determine where the main potential client group or groups live, as this will have a direct impact on the location of the MRC and how the MRC provides its services;
- Identify the main languages spoken by potential target groups and how services can be tailored to different linguistic communities;
- Develop an inclusive approach by involving potential clients who are located in remote or difficult to reach areas, groups that are most at risk of participating in unplanned or irregular migration, and vulnerable groups of migrants who may be at risk of exploitation and human trafficking.



Carrying out a Focus Group Discussion

A focus group discussion (FGD) is a group discussion of approximately 6 to 12 persons guided by a facilitator, during which group members talk freely and spontaneously about a particular topic. The focus group should last for about one hour. The purpose of an FGD is to obtain in-depth information on perceptions and ideas about a specific topic. It aims to be more than a question–answer interaction. The idea is that group members discuss the topic among themselves, with guidance from the facilitator.

To start with it will be important to:

- ◆ Establish a clear idea of what you want to find out from participants;
- ◆ Identify the main questions you want to ask (around four or five questions is usually sufficient);
- ◆ Recruit participants;
- ◆ Ensure a comfortable physical arrangement, for example, by organizing chairs in a circle.

The facilitator should not act as an expert on the topic. His or her role is to stimulate and support discussion. The following are some tips about how to carry out an FGD:

- ◆ Introduce the focus group and its purpose;
- ◆ Introduce the facilitator, note taker and participants;
- ◆ Encourage discussion and involvement;
- ◆ Build rapport and empathize;
- ◆ Take time at the end of the meeting to summarize, check for agreement and thank the participants.

After each focus group session the facilitator and note taker should meet to review and complete the notes taken during the meeting. This is the right moment to evaluate how the focus group went and to document the main findings.

Knowing who the MRC's target groups are (their age, gender, education, qualifications, languages spoken, skills, and so on) will have considerable impact on the types of services provided, the methods used to reach the specific groups and the specific information that needs to be collected.

Example**Examples of MRC target groups**

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the clients using Migrant Service Centres are typically labour migrants who are young, unemployed university graduates seeking employment. This led the MRCs to target specific outreach activities and information towards students and young people in schools and universities.

In **Colombia**, the Center for Information and Care for Migrants (CIAMI) is a project led by the trade union General Confederation of Labour (CGT Colombia) to provide information to migrants about their labour rights and social protection outside the country and in Colombia. The objective is to provide regulated and dignified migration in countries of origin, transit and destination. CIAMI was created in response to the concerns of Colombian migrants working abroad and the need to protect workers' labour rights. Clients of CIAMI can avail themselves of information on migration from Colombia to countries like Argentina, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, Spain, Panama, the United States and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Visitors can access publications and guides related to the rights of migrants and receive services from the legal department of the CGT. CIAMI's office is based in Bogota and services are provided through 24 CGT offices across the country.

National and international data on international migration

The national statistical organizations of most countries have publicly accessible data available at their respective websites on international migration. This national data can help to provide an overview of the main countries of destination and the types of employment migrants have taken up.



International and academic data sources

International and academic data sources can be useful in sourcing data for countries of origin and destination, they include:

National data

- ◆ Government data on migration trends and patterns, carried out by national statistical agencies.

International data

- ◆ UN DESA data on international migration (latest update from October 2013), available at: <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/index.shtml>
- ◆ IOM migration profiles, available at: <http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/what-we-do/migration-policy-and-research/migration-research-1/migration-profiles.html>
- ◆ OECD information and databases, including the international migration database, available at: <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=MIG>
- ◆ World Bank Data on remittances, available at: <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTDECPROSPECTS/0,,contentMDK:22759429~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:476883,00.html>
- ◆ EU Eurostat data on international migration and asylum data for European Union countries, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics
- ◆ ILO International Labour Migration Database (LABORSTA), available at: <http://laborsta.ilo.org>

Step 3: Define Migrant Resource Centre services

Prior to establishing an MRC it will be important to have a clear picture of the services that the MRC will provide, based on the needs of potential clients and the types of services already available. Remember that it will be important to monitor the use of services and to include this in the standard operating procedures of the MRC to ensure that services remain relevant and are flexible, responsive and able to adapt to the changing needs of clients.

One way to do this is to carry out a needs assessment. A needs assessment is a tool for identifying priority issues and needs, and any specific gaps that require to be met.

There are various ways in which a needs assessment can be carried out. The following are some factors to take into account:

- The current migration context in the country or region of origin and/or transit;
- The current migration context in countries of destination;
- Information or gaps in services that have been highlighted in research studies by relevant governmental or non-governmental organizations and academia;
- Consultations held with potential clients and returned migrants to identify areas of information and services that are relevant;
- Workshops and consultations with stakeholders from government agencies, local government units, NGOs and community organizations.

The aim is to identify the main and any specific information and service needs, and any barriers that currently exist in accessing information and services. Where consultations are held, these can be carried out through focus groups (see Guide to Focus Groups in Step 2) and/or interviews (see box below) with potential migrants, existing migrants and returned migrants to identify their main information and service requirements.



Suggested questions to inform the consultations carried out as part of a needs assessment

- ◆ What pre-departure information would help potential migrants in making decisions about migrating (for example, legal or employment information, vocational, skills, language or financial literacy training, or facts about work and living conditions in another country)?
- ◆ Are there other services that the MRC should provide (for example, help in finding employment and training in a destination country or in the home country)?
- ◆ What would be the best physical location for an MRC?
- ◆ What would be the most effective ways to reach potential clients?

Once this information has been collected, prepare a list of available services provided by existing organizations and agencies (such as legal services, governmental and non-governmental information services providing information about migration and employment, services to promote physical and mental health, community services, and so on). When this has been completed, identify the main services that the MRC should provide, including any gaps that need to be addressed.

Example

Examples of the different ways in which MRCs have assessed clients' needs

IOM has carried out a number of feasibility studies for setting up MRCs, with the aim of identifying the potential needs of clients and the existence of institutional gaps.

Migrant Information Centre, Slovakia (a destination country MRC): The Migrant Information Centre (MIC) in Slovakia commissioned a needs assessment, which provided a baseline for its work. The MIC used qualitative methods to research migrants' experiences of migration with a view to identifying common and specific services that would respond to migrants' needs.

ILO GMS TRIANGLE project: A baseline survey was carried out in 2011 to identify the needs of potential migrants. In the survey it was found that, in three provinces of Lao People's Democratic Republic, 90 per cent of the potential migrant respondents planned to rely on friends and family for advice and assistance in migrating abroad.

Needs assessments, MRC Georgia: During the inception phase of the Georgia MRC in 2006, IOM consulted with 114 potential migrants in order to establish their profiles and information needs. Based on that feedback, IOM developed a services package, which was regularly adapted following requests for particular types of information. At the end of the initial project, a client analysis was conducted based on face-to-face interviews with 2,161 potential labour migrants who had visited the Centres between July 2006 and June 2008. This analysis provided valuable data on potential migrants' demographic profiles, educational and professional experiences, preferences about working abroad and previous overseas work experiences. In addition to profiling the clients, the survey highlighted the evolving needs and interests of migrants, ensuring the ongoing relevance and quality of the MRC services. The analysis was also useful in providing relevant data for the government about the long-term sustainability of services. Based on new trends, services were modified or expanded to incorporate new countries of destination or new needs. The survey covered the following main issues:

- ◆ General profile of potential migrants: data on age, gender, ethnicity, number of children, educational and professional qualifications, current employment and professional experience, language skills, type of job sought, choice of country of destination, reasons for choosing country of destination and previous work experience abroad.
- ◆ Obstacles and opportunities in finding a job in a country of destination: for example, language skills, unemployment, up-to-date training, qualifications, difficulties in gaining work permit or unrealistic expectations.
- ◆ Services that potential migrants need: such as help seeking job vacancies in home country, training opportunities, techniques for writing application letters and CVs, opportunities to participate in microcredit schemes, database of job vacancies in countries of destination, study opportunities abroad and visa procedures.



As well as seeking information from successful migrants, the MRC cooperated with Georgian Border Police to interview those being deported from Turkey to determine what information the deportees lacked pre-departure that could have influenced their decision to migrate irregularly.

Stakeholder consultations, MRC Micronesia

In 2013, a Migrant Resource Centre was opened in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, with the purpose of providing counselling and pre-departure orientation training prior to individuals' migration to the US (particularly Guam and Hawaii). To ensure that services responded to the needs of potential clients the planning and development of the MRC included an MRC Stakeholder Consultation Workshop, which piloted pre-departure orientation training with government and other stakeholders (including national, state and local government, NGOs, women's organizations, United Airlines, media and communications agents, students and civil society members). The MRC also carried out a survey of 250 people to assess the best means of communication, advertising and dissemination of information. The opening of the MRC was an opportunity to provide publicity for the Center with the attendance of media, government department representatives, NGOs and other relevant organizations. These activities were important in building the capacity of MRC staff and ensuring that services provided were appropriate and relevant to the Micronesian context.

Step 4: Define how services will be provided

Once there is a clear picture of the target groups and the types of information and counselling services to be offered by the MRC, it will be important to draw up a plan for how these services will be provided.

There are a number of different ways in which services can be delivered. Consideration should be given to the best ways in which services can be provided to meet the needs of different groups of potential clients. These can include the following:

- Face-to-face individual consultations provided in the MRC;
- Individual telephone information services and hotlines;
- Web-based information and online services;
- Outreach services provided in targeted locations such as colleges, schools or community centres;
- Mobile services provided in different locations, for example, in rural and remote areas;
- Referrals to other services and specialist agencies.



Further information and guidance about different methodologies of service provision are covered in more detail in Chapter 3.

In the planning stage it will be important to identify the cost implications of different types of service provision. This may include, for example, a budget for web design or travel costs. If, for instance, potential clients in rural locations are unable to travel to a city-centre location, consideration may need to be given to planning and budgeting for staff time and travel for outreach locations, mobile services or satellite centres. Such planning may require introduction and provision of some of these services on a phased basis after the initial set-up of the MRC has been completed.

It will also be important for services to be provided in a coordinated way so they complement existing services provided by government departments, consulates and/or migrant associations and NGOs.

One effective and best practice approach is the one-stop-shop model of service provision. A one-stop-shop is a service that provides relevant governmental and non-governmental services on migration, integration and other related services in one location. Two examples of one-stop-shop services, from a country of destination (Portugal) and a country of origin (the Philippines), can be found below. They illustrate a coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach to information and service provision that can be replicated in other countries of origin and destination.



Centro Nacional de Apoio ao Imigrante: One-Stop-Shop MRC, Portugal (destination country MRC)

The one-stop-shop is a destination country MRC developed in Portugal. It provides an integrated approach to information provision from multiple governmental and non-governmental agencies. Three one-stop-shops, Centro Nacional de Apoio ao Imigrante (National Immigrant Support Centres), have been established in national Centres in Portugal in the cities of Lisbon, Porto and Faro. There are also 85 local Centres, which provide information and referral to the national Centres, plus an additional Centre linked to the CNAI in Cabo Verde.

The Centres provide information and services to migrants who have recently arrived in the country as well as information for long-term immigrants in dealing with citizenship and residency issues. To help with this work they maintain a dialogue with country of origin authorities. The principal focus is on providing information and services about employment and training, entrepreneurship, education, integration in areas such as health, legal advice for both documented and undocumented migrants and services for migrants in distress. The one-stop-shops have been registered as public institutions and a Handbook on implementing a one-stop-shop has been produced.

For further information see: **Handbook on How to Implement a One-Stop-Shop for Immigrant Integration** (2009). Available from the project website: www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt (in English, Portuguese, German, Greek, Italian and Spanish).

One-Stop Resource Centre for Youth and Migrants, Philippines

Four One-Stop Youth and Migrant Centres (OSRCs) have been established by IOM in partnership with Philippine national government agencies; the provincial governments of Masbate, Antique, Agusan del Sur, and Maguindanao; youth and migrant organizations; and local private sector organizations. Support has also been provided by UN Country Teams, including the ILO, UNICEF and UNFPA. Under one roof, the OSRC is a local facility that provides information, training, counselling and referral services, with the objective of ensuring safe and legal migration,

productive reintegration of migrants, facilitation of employment for young people, the processing of complaints and welfare problems, and promotion of the socioeconomic development potentials of migration.

The OSRC model is a good example of the provision of MRC services in a local area that is planned and implemented through multi-stakeholder engagement and partnership; all key organizations are involved in providing services and information for youth and migrants. In relation to migration, the mission of each OSRC is to maximize the use of resources and minimize the negative impacts of migration to enable the successful reintegration of migrants. OSRCs are supported by the Department of Labor and Employment's efforts to set up migrant reintegration centres, Overseas Filipino Workers Desks, and Public Employment Service Offices at the local community level to target the needs of migrant families and youth. The OSRC uses a "space, time and resource-sharing facility model" whereby different service providers and NGOs provide services at specific times. A multi-stakeholder OSRC Coordinating Committee and four sub-committees have been established to oversee the OSRCs.

For further information see: **One-Stop Resource Centre for Youth and Migrants: Establishment and Operations Manual** (IOM, 2013), available from: http://www.mdgfund.org/sites/default/files/YEM_MANUAL_Philip_One%20Stop%20Resource%20center%20youth%20and%20migrants.pdf

Step 5: Put in place a financial plan

In some cases it will be necessary to draw up a budget for an MRC, particularly if donor or government funding is sought. If this is required, it will be important to make the case for an MRC by setting out the potential economic and social benefits, cost savings and added value offered by the MRC.

The budget will be also needed if it is planned that MRC services will be handed over to governmental or non-governmental agencies. If the plan is to hand over to a government body, it will be important at an early stage to gain political support for the MRC and for its financing to be included in the State budget.



The budget should include the following costs:

- Office rental and set-up;
- Computer hardware and software;
- Office equipment;
- Staffing costs, including recruitment and salaries;
- Travel and outreach costs;
- Library and information resources, including capturing and keeping information up-to-date;
- Printing of information leaflets and posters;
- Telephone and Internet costs;
- Communications activities and media events;
- Running costs, such as utilities;
- Interpretation and translation costs, if necessary;
- External evaluation services if possible, to ensure that the MRC responds to the needs of migrants.

When drawing up a budget, consider whether negotiations need to take place regarding staff secondments to the MRC, and identify other issues that may arise in a future handover. If an MRC has been established by IOM, ensure that the plan includes a handover strategy, which sets out how local structures/agencies will run, manage and fund the MRC in the longer term.

Consideration may need to be given to exploring a range of potential funding sources and donors. In this case it will be important to identify available funding options for project funding from donor agencies, international organizations or government agencies. To date, some MRCs have been established with IOM seed funding through the IOM Development Fund (IDF), through ILO project funding, and funding from donors such as the European Commission and governments in countries of destination and origin.

Step 6: Draw up policies and operating procedures

A plan will need to be put in place for MRC policies and operating procedures. Chapter 4 deals with these issues in more detail. However, at the planning

stage it will be important to make a list of the different policies and operating procedures that the MRC will need to draw up prior to the MRC opening. Consideration should be given to the following:

- Management and staffing structure;
- Staffing plan, staff recruitment and staff training;
- Human Resource Management policies and procedures;
- Commissioning of equipment, IT, telephone, office furniture and office supplies;
- Sourcing and updating data and information, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
- Opening times, including if possible times outside of normal office hours;
- Policies, procedures and standards for service delivery.



Further information can be found in Chapter 4: Building blocks of Migrant Resource Centres

Step 7: Identify partners

MRCs should aim to establish contacts and partnerships with all relevant stakeholders in the planning and design of the MRC, and make linkages between countries of origin and destination



The IOM HEADSTART project had an objective to link MRCs in countries of origin and destination (see Chapter 5: Cooperation, partnerships and referrals, for more information on cooperation between countries of origin and destination).

Partners in countries of origin

MRCs in countries of origin benefit from the involvement and participation of relevant government departments and agencies, migrant groups, employers, trade unions, recruitment intermediaries, community organizations and NGOs in planning and implementation for both ends of the migration spectrum. Effective forms of involvement and participation with all relevant stakeholders from the outset can ensure that the planning and design of the MRC is



responsive both to the views of government and local community needs and interests.

This participation can foster a culture of coordination and cooperation, avoid duplication of effort in service provision and ensure that effective communication, exchange of information, and referral routes are established from the start. It can also be very important in gaining visibility, support and publicity for the MRC once it has opened and in ensuring there is good cooperation and coordination across different governmental and non-governmental services.

MRC networks and partnerships are vital in ensuring there is no duplication of services. They can also be especially important for MRCs that have insufficient resources to provide all relevant services within the MRC. Networks and partnerships can help facilitate referrals for services to other specialist bodies, for example, for legal aid and assistance.

Regarding partners to cooperate with in providing services in countries of origin:

- List all relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations that are involved in providing information and legal, employment, health and other relevant services to potential migrants in the country of origin;
- Based on the mapping of services (see Step 3 above), identify which services can be provided in partnership and cooperation with the MRC, including whether there is potential for staff secondments;
- Examine and discuss with partners how best to share and keep information up-to-date and relevant concerning policy developments and the needs of clients;
- Identify areas of information or service provision that can be provided by other services and agencies, and consider agreements and protocols for referrals to specialist services.

Partners in countries of destination

When establishing an MRC in a country of origin it will be important to consider the individuals and organizations that the MRC will need to partner with in **countries of destination**.

Regarding partners to cooperate with for information exchange with countries of destination:

- Identify and work with partners in countries of destination to keep up-to-date with legal, employment, integration and service developments;
- Establish information exchanges between MRCs and relevant organizations, such as immigration authorities, employment services, information services, integration services, migrant organizations and other MRCs;
- Exchange and keep up-to-date information about requirements for employment from employers' organizations, recruitment agencies and professional recognition bodies in relevant countries of destination;
- Make contact with embassies, consular offices and labour or welfare attachés in the most common countries of destination, and establish agreements on providing regular and updated information about countries of destination;
- Plan with agencies and organizations to put in place protocols and agreements, such as Memoranda of Understanding, on areas for collaboration on information exchange, as well as on ways of sharing and updating relevant information.



Chapter 5 provides more detailed information about creating partnerships and putting in place agreements to share and update information.

The launch or **opening of an MRC** is a good opportunity to network with potential partners with which the MRC can cooperate. Arrange meetings with local groups and officials to let them know the MRC will be opening, as they will be able to contribute information about the experiences of migrants. It will be important to emphasize the strengths of the MRC and its role in providing services that are currently not provided. These organizations and groups can be a useful source of information and materials that can be displayed and distributed by the MRC.

Consideration should be given to establishing a **Consultative Committee or Advisory Group** made up of all relevant governmental, non-governmental and International Organization partners. This can be very helpful in promoting on-going dialogue and feedback, monitoring of the MRC and planning for long-



term sustainability. Aim to involve senior representatives from government as this can help strengthen the role of local stakeholders, ensure that the MRC is closely linked to government policy and will be important for the sustainability of the MRC.

Example

Example: Information exchanges and networking between MRCs

The sharing of information and good practices between IOM's MRCs has proven very useful for: sharing country of origin and destination information, improving information practices and services with external stakeholders, job-matching and staff exchanges, and so forth. This practice could form the basis for new MRCs at the inception stage and existing MRCs to share information on setting up and running MRCs.

Information exchange between MRCs has proved very beneficial for IOM-run MRCs such as those in the Western Balkans and in Tajikistan, which have each drawn on and exchanged information with other MRCs in countries of destination.

The **Sri Lankan MRC** has introduced an alternative approach to networking, by liaising with trade union partner organizations to draw up agreements with countries of destination. An example of this is an agreement with the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions to support the protection of Sri Lankan migrant workers.

Step 8: Find an appropriate location

MRCs should aim to be accessible to all members of the community and in locations that are close to transport links

The location of the MRC is critical, especially if it is to be accessible to all potential clients. Consideration should be given to women who may have difficulties in accessing the service because of family responsibilities, and to people with disabilities.

Plans will need to put in place for the purchase or lease of a suitable building, inclusive of the running costs such as electricity, cleaning and maintenance. An MRC may also be set up in a physical location shared with another service

provider, government agency or community organization, by adapting an existing government or local authority building, or by creating a new shared location.

Choosing a location should consider the following:

- The location of the MRC should be easy to access, close to public transport links and in a known area of town preferably in close proximity to where migrants and potential migrants live.
- City centres close to transport hubs are often the best locations for MRCs; however, the location will need to be discussed and agreed upon with relevant partners and may require a local needs analysis of the potential site.
- The MRC should be easy to find, preferably on a main road, with street frontage.
- Other factors to consider include proximity to other community centres or service providers, schools and universities, bus stops or transit points and markets.
- The MRC should ensure that the location is sensitive to the needs of women, for example, by choosing a safe location that also enables women with family responsibilities to access the service.

The external and internal design of the MRC should promote a welcoming environment:

- The environment should not appear too official because migrant workers and potential migrants may not feel comfortable entering an MRC that looks overly formal and intimidating.
- Ensure that the premises are physically accessible for clients, especially people with disabilities (further information on accessibility of MRC services can be found in Chapter 9).
- The MRC should be clean, tidy, comfortable, and welcoming to all visitors, especially the initial reception area.
- Try to ensure people can easily walk into a reception area from the street without needing staff to unlock a gate or door; and try to make sure there is someone near the entrance to encourage people to enter.



- The MRC should have at least two rooms; a space to receive visitors, which may be within an office for staff, plus a room for private counselling. It is very important to ensure privacy to clients by enabling a space for private meetings.
- Ensure that the MRC has a clear sign at the entrance that is welcoming and easy to see. Signs posted in the vicinity of the MRC will also help visitors find the Centre.
- If it is decided to locate an MRC inside the existing offices of an organization or government building, it will be important to make sure the building is accessible and welcoming. In this context, ensure the MRC is located in the premises of an institution that migrants and potential migrants trust.

Opening hours of the MRC:

- MRCs should plan to have opening hours that suit working people and people that need to travel to access the service. The hours should also fit with the schedules of staff seconded from government departments and agencies.
- Aim to enable service provision outside standard office working hours, through early or late opening on one or two days a week, and/or weekend opening.
- Consider arrangements to enable flexible working hours for staff that allow for different starting and finishing times. It is often the case that some staff may prefer flexible start and finishing times as this can contribute to work-life balance by fitting in with family or other responsibilities.

Filipino Workers Resource Centres (FWRC), Philippines

The provision of services outside standard office hours enables the FWRCs to provide migrants with immediate support in emergency situations and access to routine services, without the migrants having to miss work. The FWRCs show particularly good practices in this respect, as they are required to be available to migrants at all times, on public holidays and weekends as well as normal working days.

Step 9: Ensure inclusion and equality

One of the most important elements of service provision is to ensure the information provided is accessible to a diverse population base, and that services are provided in inclusive and equal ways. This should be informed by a human rights approach (discussed in Chapter 1).

Ensure that planning takes into account the needs and experiences of different groups of migrants and potential migrants, including women, people that are vulnerable or at risk, and the children and family members of migrants and potential migrants.

Identifying barriers, and planning to overcome them, is a crucial step. Other groups may be excluded from accessing services because of their geographic location or lack of knowledge about the MRC. It is important that services are provided in gender-sensitive ways and also take account of the accessibility needs of all groups of people.



See Chapter 9 for more detailed guidance on inclusion and equality, including putting in place ethical approaches to the provision of services with a diverse group of clients.

Step 10: Establish systems for assuring quality (client and stakeholder feedback, monitoring and evaluation)

At the planning stage it will be important to identify the quality standards that will be embedded in the MRC's operations. This should include systems for both client and staff feedback, information management systems and decisions on how the MRC's main activities will be monitored and evaluated.



These issues are dealt with in more detail in Chapter 4: Building blocks of Migrant Resource Centres; Chapter 7: Information management; and Chapter 8: Monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance.



Chapter 2

Services provided by Migrant Resource Centres



Chapter 2

Services provided by Migrant Resource Centres

2.1 Introduction

MRCs provide a wide range of services that will differ from country to country and from region to region depending on the country context and the needs of different client groups. **Overall, the main activities provided by MRCs in countries of origin include the provision of independent and impartial information, advice and outreach services.**

This chapter specifically covers the different types of services provided by MRCs in countries of origin. It includes information and guidance about the pre-departure information and other related services provided by MRCs for migrants, potential migrants, returnees, and their families, as follows:

- 2.2 Pre-departure information, orientation and advice (legal migration rights, employment, integration, and study abroad)
- 2.3 Training and skills development for migrants
- 2.4 Services for migrants at risk or who have experienced exploitation
- 2.5 Reintegration services for returning migrants
- 2.6 Information services and advice about remittances and investment-related services
- 2.7 The contribution of the MRC to migration policy development



2.2 Pre-departure information, orientation and advice

Objective: Provide coordinated, relevant, impartial, independent, high-quality information services and advice to enable potential migrants to make informed decisions and choices about migration

Pre-departure information, orientation and advice services should aim to improve coordination with post-arrival provision of relevant services. Pre-departure information and/or orientation needs to include a range of relevant information concerning:

- Legal migration processes and procedures, including visa information about admission;
- Migrants' rights and protection mechanisms, including legal redress;
- Employment related information, job-matching measures, ethical recruitment procedures and entrepreneurship;
- Migrant skill development, including professional and employment related skills, and language training;
- Recognition of skills and competences;
- Studying abroad;
- Integration and culture in a country of destination;
- Access to services such as social protection, education and health care.

This section covers the different types of information services provided by MRCs, including the information MRCs will need to compile and have access to in order to provide up-to-date pre-departure information about relevant laws, services and practices in countries of destination.

Pre-departure information, orientation and advice needs to be tailored to the individual needs of clients according to their specific backgrounds, the country they plan to migrate to, the sectors they plan to work in and other factors related to family circumstances, health and well-being, and dealing with stress and culture shock on arrival in a new country.



One of the key challenges faced by MRCs in countries of origin is keeping information relevant, accurate and up-to-date. Guidance on keeping information up-to-date is provided in Chapter 4: The Building Blocks of Migrant Resource Centres.

Where possible, pre-departure orientation programmes should be devised for specific groups of workers who are vulnerable to exploitation such as domestic workers and low-skilled workers. This is important in ensuring that potential migrants can take advantage of ethical recruitment procedures, will have knowledge of employment rights and contracts of employment, and can benefit from information about integration and accessing services and support in a country of destination.

Pre-departure orientation programmes for domestic workers

The governments of the Philippines and Sri Lanka have implemented two-day pre-orientation programmes for domestic workers leaving for Hong Kong, China and the Middle East, covering the following issues:

- ◆ Employment and contractual rights of domestic workers;
- ◆ Obligations of domestic workers in managing and living in a destination country;
- ◆ Services offered by government bodies and NGOs;
- ◆ Travel documents and travel tips;
- ◆ Arrival in the destination country;
- ◆ Return and reintegration;
- ◆ Options and procedures for remittances and savings.

Often there are complex issues to address, for example, family reunification or the status of dependent spouses, in which case it is important to ensure that family members are invited along with the potential migrant to pre-departure orientation sessions. The key to effective pre-departure information services and advice is that potential migrants, and their families, are empowered,



informed and able to access relevant information themselves prior to departure and upon arrival in a new country.

Pre-departure information, orientation and advice services provided by MRCs are discussed in this section under the following headings:

- Information about legal migration rights, processes and procedures;
- Employment-related information and assistance;
- Integration and living in the destination country;
- Studying abroad.

2.2.1 Information about legal migration rights, processes and procedures

MRCs in countries of origin should aim to provide high-quality, up-to-date information and assistance to enable potential migrants to make informed decisions about legal and safe forms of migration

Information about migration law, process and procedures governing entry, length of stay, visa requirements and so forth, in countries of destination empowers clients to be able to make informed decisions and choices related to their migration plans. It is important that this information is provided in a clear and accessible way, and in a language that the potential migrant can understand. This will enable people to participate in a migration that results in a positive and enriching experience.

MRCs, therefore, have a crucial role to play in ensuring that migrants are empowered to exercise their rights and can protect themselves from potential vulnerabilities and exploitation. This is very important as unscrupulous recruitment agencies, migration interlocutors, traffickers and other third parties often present information that is misleading or inaccurate. In other instances, a lack of information can result in unsafe migration. Some migrants, for example, have migrated on a tourist visa as a basis for finding work, which in some cases leads to them becoming undocumented and open to exploitation. In other cases, migrants on temporary work permits, particularly in low-skilled sectors, may also become undocumented because an employer fails to renew a work permit.

Ensuring that potential migrants are aware of their rights and responsibilities at all stages of the migration process is essential for potential migrants to plan for safe, protected and legal forms of migration. This includes provision of up-to-date, accurate and accessible information services and advice in relation to:

- Empowering potential migrants to make informed decisions and choices about whether or not to migrate, where to migrate and under what circumstances;
- The necessary requirements, conditions and steps that need to be taken to migrate safely and legally and to avoid the risks associated with irregular migration;
- Migration-related legislation, procedures and requirements concerning entry, residence and family reunification in countries of destination;
- Documents required for travel, such as passport, work visa or work permit, and other documents that need to be processed through the home country government prior to departure;
- Procedures for renewing work permits, visas and passports when they expire;
- Recourse to assistance if a migrant becomes undocumented through no fault of their own, or if they have experienced exploitation working in another country.

2.2.2 Pre-departure employment-related information and assistance

MRCs in countries of origin should aim to provide high-quality, up-to-date information and assistance to enable potential migrants to have knowledge of labour markets, job seeking and skills requirements in countries of destination

MRCs perform a critical function in enhancing opportunities for migrants to find and maintain a job in positions that provide them with decent work and career and skills development, based on ethical recruitment procedures.

This subsection covers the following areas:

- a) Information on working in another country;
- b) Information on searching for jobs in another country and job matching;



- c) Sector/job specific information;
- d) Processing of work permits and work visas;
- e) Mutual recognition of qualifications and diplomas.

a) Information about working in another country

MRCs have an important function in providing information about working in another country. The following are some of the factors to consider:

- Knowledge of rights and obligations in relation to employment and labour law in a country of destination; this can include national and international laws and standards (refer to ILO) on decent work, social protection, protection against exploitation, and so on;
- Information services and advice to empower vulnerable workers to protect themselves; this is particularly relevant for domestic workers who face the greatest risks of exploitation, harassment, and physical and sexual violence;
- Information regarding employment contracts including all relevant factors (such as place of employment, position and job title, pay, working hours, overtime pay, probationary period, medical and social security benefits, and taxation);
- Requirements from employers, for example, for language testing or medical examination;
- Information on how to avoid illegal or unethical recruitment practices by recruitment companies.

Skilled migrants sometimes find they have been recruited into jobs that do not fully recognize their qualifications, skills and experience. MRCs can provide information about mutual recognition of qualifications, professional registration requirements and knowledge of local labour markets to ensure that jobs applied for do not result in 'de-skilling'.

In the case of extreme forms of exploitation, including trafficking for forced labour and sexual exploitation of women and girls, MRCs have a key responsibility in providing information and awareness about the dangers of human trafficking, in spotting bogus offers of employment and in providing alternative and safe forms of legal migration.

The EU Immigration Portal is a valuable information site for migrant workers and other categories of migrants, and contains specific information for non-EU nationals. For further information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/immigration/>

b) Information and assistance in searching for employment and job matching in countries of destination

Some MRCs in countries of origin provide direct information and assistance in finding employment in countries of destination. This should take account of the following:

- Availability of information and assistance that empowers migrants to seek employment that guarantees decent work, pay and conditions of employment, and opportunities for skills and professional development;
- In the countries where bilateral or multilateral agreements are in place, MRCs can facilitate job searching in areas covered by the agreements, as well as provide information about travel and integration into the country of destination. This will require knowledge of the terms of the agreements and their application to specific job categories;
- Where bilateral agreements promote circular migration, MRCs can perform a key function in supporting and providing information about return and reintegration for returnees;

MRCs in countries of origin can establish Internet links to job search portals in countries of destination. For example, the European EURES portal provides tools for potential migrants to search for employment, training and scholarships, as well as facilities for employers to search for employees. The portal also contains links to institutions and stakeholders' websites in all Member States of the European Union.

For further information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/eures/page/homepage>



- Disseminating information about job search portals should be conducted widely, and include assistance in using job search portals and in applying for positions advertised. Be aware of the limitations in using existing information services such as destination country employment services and the EU Jobs Portal, which are maintained and updated by host country services. Many countries place restrictions on the mobility of third-country migrants. In the case of the EURES EU Jobs Portal, for example, employment openings are posted for EU and EEA citizens under the principle of free movement of labour between EU member countries;
- Providing information about recruitment companies may also require verification of the credentials of those companies to ensure that they operate ethical recruitment practices.

If resources and staffing permit, provide assistance in actual job placement abroad, agreeing concrete job offers and verifying contracts of employment. Job matching tends to take place through the searching of online databases of vacancies. Some government agencies in countries of origin and destination have produced advisory services to promote job matching, as is the case for returnees to the Philippines.

- Make links with specialized international placement agencies, although these tend to cover higher skilled and more specialized occupations;
- When using the services of private recruitment agencies, it is important to check their reliability;
- Public recruitment agencies can be useful sources of information, particularly if specific job quotas and job openings have been included in bilateral labour agreements.

Example**Examples of job searching**

The **MRC in Viet Nam** provides information and counselling to clients and includes job opportunities in countries such as Japan, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan Province of China, Malaysia, Libya, United Arab Emirates and Cyprus. Many enquiries request information **about recruitment companies** such as whether they are licensed, the fees they charge and the costs of migration, as well as the rights and benefits available for those needing to return before their contract ends. Training-the-trainers workshops on pre-departure information and orientation are provided to recruitment companies that are required by law to carry out this function.

Job-matching schemes and support with job searching for migrants returning from working overseas are provided by FWRCs managed by the Overseas Workers Welfare Agency in **the Philippines**.

The **Migrant Information Centre in Croatia** provided a list of job opportunities abroad as part of quotas agreed prior to accession to the European Union. Potential migrants were referred to training courses provided by the Croatian Employment Service, for example, language ability, in order to gain relevant skills for the jobs sought abroad. The Centre has since been incorporated into the country's EURES service, the EU intra-regional job mobility service.

c) Sector/job specific pre-departure information

In some cases sector specific pre-departure orientation may be relevant. The emphasis and content of this will differ according to whether a migrant plans to work in low paid, less-skilled sectors such as construction or domestic work, or in higher skilled positions such as nursing, medicine or engineering. Factors to consider include:

- Visa and work permit requirements for work in specific sectors or professions;
- Rights or otherwise to family reunification, which vary according to the status of the work visa issued for the work sector;
- Requirements for registration and verification of qualifications, including experience with professional bodies such as Nursing or Medical Councils;
- Protection of migrants working in sectors where they could be at risk of exploitation, for instance, domestic work;
- Information about sector specific professional bodies and trade unions.

IOM has produced a set of **glossaries for three sectors** (welding, manufacturing and construction) translated from all of the languages in the Western Balkans into three languages (English, Italian and German). The glossaries can enhance the day-to-day communication abilities of potential migrants seeking to work in these sectors.



d) Processing of work placements and residence and work permits

Some MRCs that are run under the auspices of public employment services may play a direct role in facilitating temporary work placements and work permits. This was the case with the MSCs in Kosovo/UNSC 1244, which processed 351 temporary work placements for students in Germany.

e) Recognition of qualifications and competences

The recognition of qualifications and competences is vitally important as non-recognition can be a major barrier to accessing the labour market and could lead to a migrant becoming undocumented. MRCs can provide information about the recognition of qualifications and competences in countries of destination and give this information as part of job searching prior to departure. There are various sources of information about the recognition of qualifications and competences, although it is important to remember that qualifications requirements can change quickly. In addition, recognition of non-formal and informal learning or various soft skills may require development of relevant methodologies jointly with partners, especially employers, in the country of destination.

Sources of information on the recognition of diplomas and qualifications

The ENIC Network (European Network of Information Centres) is made up of the national information centres of the States party to the European Cultural Convention or the UNESCO Europe Region. They provide information about the recognition of foreign diplomas, degrees and qualifications; education systems in countries of destination; and opportunities for studying abroad. For further information and sources see: <http://www.enic-naric.net/>

European Commission website on EU law governing recognition of professional qualifications, including Directive 2005/36/EC regulating certain professions and contact points for national authorities. For further information see: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/index_en.htm

Examples of specialized agencies and websites dedicated to recognition of foreign qualifications:

- ◆ Australia: <http://www.vetassess.com.au/>
- ◆ Austria: <http://www.berufsanerkennung.at/en/>
- ◆ Germany: <http://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/>
- ◆ The United Kingdom: <http://www.ecctis.co.uk/uk%20ncp/>

Further information on links to official sources of information can be found in the appendix to the IOM publication *Safe Surfing: A quick guide to navigating the Sea of Information for those wishing to work abroad* (2015) http://www.migrantservicecentres.org/userfile/MRC_Guide_for_Counsellors_final%2010032015.pdf

2.2.3 Pre-departure information and assistance on integration and living in the destination country

MRCs should aim to provide up-to-date and relevant information on living in the country of destination to support migrants' integration, protection and inclusion in a new country

Destination countries vary considerably in terms of their culture and laws. The following are some of the issues to consider for inclusion in pre-departure information about specific countries:

- Information about the country, its history, population and geography;
- Political structure and voting rights;
- The benefits and challenges of working in the specific country;
- Banking and finance, including requirements for opening a bank account on arrival in a specific country;
- Finding rented accommodation and accessing utilities, requirements for up-front payments, deposits and references, and information on the legal rights of tenants;
- Transport links, costs of transport and how to use public transport;
- Cost of living for items, including rent, food and clothing, and advice on managing budgets;



- Preparing for a different climate and seasons;
- Communications and Internet services;
- Language, common sayings, cultural customs and mores, communicating with and greeting people, dress and attire in public places, respect for religious or ethnic practices, and so forth.

MRCs in countries of origin can provide useful information and advice about how to find services, support and information to assist with integration in countries of destination. This should take account of information on:

- How to contact NGOs, migrant associations, diaspora communities, trade unions and migrant information facilities that provide support services for newcomers in countries of destination. This is particularly important as many migrants, particularly on arrival in a new country, may experience social isolation, stress from being away from family and social networks, and difficulties in coping with integration. Accessing school and university education for children, including fee requirements.
- Accessing childcare and services for pre-school children, including costs.
- Accessing health care, out-of-pocket payments for health care and whether visas or work permits allow access to public health care, health screening, and so on. This includes empowering potential migrants to increase their health literacy and protect their own health and well-being. (See box below: IOM health checklist).
- Rights in relation to social protection such as pensions, social security or unemployment benefits; and issues in relation to portability of pensions, and how to access these rights.
- What to do and who to contact if exploitation or abuse takes place, for example, exploitation by an employer or restrictions on access to key services; and information on how to participate in voluntary return programmes. This includes advice on support that can be provided by national consulates, embassies and trade unions in countries of destination.
- How to access psychosocial support services such as help-lines, safe houses and legal assistance; and remedies for migrants who have experienced discrimination, racism, hate crimes, gender-based violence or other forms of violence or abuse in countries of destination.

Example**Example: IOM Pre-departure health checklist**

The checklist below is a (non-exhaustive) list of health items that should be included in the pre-departure orientation for migrant workers. These issues should be adapted to the characteristics of the migrant workers attending pre-departure training (age, gender, skill level) and to the country of origin and destination. The health items for pre-departure orientation listed below are grouped under two training objectives:

- a) Improve migrant workers' knowledge and understanding of health requirements and entitlements during the migration process and the ways to access health services in the country of destination:
 - ◆ Medical screening, certification and pre-departure (and possibly post-arrival) health checks;
 - ◆ Vaccinations/immunization;
 - ◆ Health insurance;
 - ◆ Navigating the health system in the country of destination.
- b) Empower migrant workers to take care of their own and others' health by improving their knowledge and practices with respect to health:
 - ◆ Air travel and health;
 - ◆ General safety procedures and basic first aid;
 - ◆ Cultural/psychological preparation;
 - ◆ Occupational health and safety: common health risks faced by migrant workers, common risks faced by female migrant workers;
 - ◆ Nutrition, personal hygiene, family well-being;
 - ◆ Safe sexual behaviour;
 - ◆ Awareness of common and not so common diseases.



2.2.4 Pre-departure information and assistance for students embarking on international study abroad programmes

MRCs should aim to provide up-to-date information and assistance for students wishing to study abroad

MRCs sometimes provide services to students and people seeking opportunities to pursue education and training abroad. Providing correct and timely information is important as requirements for studying abroad and fees regularly change.

Issues to consider in providing information and assistance regarding study abroad:

- Legislation on studying abroad and student visa requirements;
- Language requirements for university or college courses, including requirements for language testing or verification of language skills;
- Overseas student fees, and university or college entry requirements;
- Procedures and entry requirements when applying for specific vocational or professional training courses such as nursing or medicine;
- Recognition of qualifications required for entry into specific courses;
- Right to work and the maximum hours in a week that are permitted for students to engage in paid work;
- Information about the country in which a student is planning to study, including customs and practices, and the challenges related to integrating into a new country (see further information on this below);
- Warnings to students who seek employment that they may be at risk of exploitation;
- Information about international student services, student bodies and student migrant groups.

Example**Example: Migrant Information Centres
in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

A large number of clients of the Migrant Service Centres (MSCs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina were students, either newly graduated or unemployed graduates seeking employment in another country, principally within the EU. The MSCs provided promotional information, flyers and posters in university campuses. Information sessions were held, which provided details about the services of the MSCs, procedures for regulated and legal migration, visa arrangements, opportunities for work and studying abroad, and awareness about human trafficking. Particular groups of students who were most likely to be seeking employment abroad, such as student nurses, were targeted with specific information and presentation sessions.

In addition, MSCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina provided a joint service with the Youth Employment & Information Centres (CISOs) offering employment counselling, training and advice services to young people. MSC counsellors were also CISO counsellors, which helped with reaching the target group and allowed for cost savings and pooling of resources.

Sources of information for students on studying abroad

The European Union: http://europa.eu/eu-life/education-training/index_en.htm

The United States: <http://www.usa.gov/visitors/study.shtml>

Canada: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/study/index.asp>



2.3 Training and skills development services

Objective: Provide potential migrants with training and skills development services to enable them to enhance their skills prior to migration or in their home country context

MRCs have a significant function as both providers and facilitators of training for clients who are planning to migrate and for those that have returned to their country of origin. In some cases MRCs refer potential migrants for training and skills development to enable them to access employment in their home countries. This is particularly relevant for low-skilled and potentially vulnerable migrants who have been unable to access decent employment in their home countries.

The following are some of the options to consider in providing training and skills development services:

- Provide support and information about training opportunities in order to enhance migrants' skills prior to departure, including CV and interviewing skills;
- Implement a career planning process for clients, identifying employment goals, training pathways, and career development opportunities – this will enable migrants to develop appropriate skills to find suitable employment opportunities;
- Provide information about training courses, entry requirements for training, and the qualifications and skills that can be acquired;
- Provide information about language training courses to help meet language needs and to fulfil any language requirements of employers in countries of destination;
- Refer clients to training courses run by relevant training organizations and government agencies in the country of origin.

Example**Examples of training for MRC clients**

The IOM **Migration for Development project in the Western Balkans** (MIDWEB) organized interactive training workshops for potential migrants and returnees to increase their general employability. Topics covered included interviewing skills and professional writing techniques (Curriculum Vitae, cover letters).

The **Migration Information Centre in Slovakia** is an example from a destination country of provision of a programme of personalized counselling and interviews for migrants. A personal development plan is drawn up that sets out options for training. Centre staff provide support to clients, evaluate the training that has been carried out and assist clients in making contact with employers. It is a model that could usefully be developed by country of origin MRCs.

Reducing the level of irregular migration was an objective of a project in **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, which aimed to reduce irregular migration amongst Roma youth through assistance in skills training and employment. (Although the project was not run directly through an MRC, it illustrates the type of focus that MRCs could give to vulnerable young people).

2.4 Information and reintegration services for returning migrants**Objective: Provide accurate and relevant information and services for returning migrants to promote their reintegration**

Many MRCs provide information, assistance and referrals for returning migrants on reintegrating into their country of origin, including support for those who have experienced exploitation and may want to pursue redress against their recruiters or employers.

MRCs can make a significant contribution in helping returned migrants to find work and deal with the social, economic or other changes that may have taken place in their country while they were abroad. This is particularly important for migrants who have returned after many years overseas and who may have lost their social networks or links to employment. In some



cases, skilled migrant workers may return with new skills and competences that can be beneficial to the overall development of their origin country.

There are also concerns, however, that migrants returning from working in irregular employment situations may seek to migrate again under similar circumstances. Therefore, finding ways to contact and provide assistance to returning migrants is one of the keys to promoting future migration that is safe and legal.

In the advent of a growing number of bilateral labour agreements and a trend towards higher levels of temporary and circular migration, it is likely that MRCs in the future will need to provide a wider range of services for migrants returning to their country of origin.

Example**Examples of information and assistance provided to returnees**

Mobility Centres in Georgia offer integrated services designed to support the reintegration of returnees, which include assistance in finding jobs in the local labour market.

Colombian MRCs, *Oficinas de Atención al Migrante* (Migrant Care Offices), are run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and local municipalities. The MRCs provide guidance and information for Colombians returning to the country, families of Colombian migrants, and Colombians who are interested in travelling and working abroad. **An Inter-Agency Network for Migrants** has been established as a joint initiative of public, private and civil society organizations and trade unions, which aims to provide a range of support and care services covering education, health, legal issues, humanitarian relief and emergency facilities to meet the needs of migrants, returnees, and their families in Colombia. Local Inter-Agency Networks have been formed through the MRCs in areas that experience most international migration (Bogota and Antioquia, Nariño, North Santander, Risaralda, Quindio, Putumayo and Valle del Cauca Departments) in order to implement assistance strategies for Colombians returning from abroad.

The following are some additional services MRCs can provide for returning migrants:

- Assistance in finding temporary accommodation; and in the case of migrants with little or no funding, assistance in finding support networks that can help with food and other personal requirements;
- Information on job searching, including career development plans that address training and skills development and relevant career opportunities;
- Information for skilled workers on job searching that may include job matching to maximize the skills and knowledge gained from working overseas;
- Direct services to support health, safety and integration;
- Directly provided psychosocial services or referrals to services to support physical and mental health, including on-site medical assistance and provision.

2.5 Protection of migrant rights: services for migrants at risk or who have experienced exploitation

Objective: Provide services for migrants at risk or who have experienced exploitation in order to promote their protection

A large number of MRCs provide services directly to migrants who are at risk to promote their protection. Some groups of low-skilled migrants experience workplace exploitation and violation of rights. For example, women domestic workers experience some of the worst forms of labour and sexual exploitation, often migrating without contracts of employment or finding the terms of the contract are not upheld.

MRCs providing services to migrants at risk or who have experienced exploitation should consider providing:

- Information about ethical recruitment processes, ensuring that potential migrants know their rights, including contractual rights and rights of redress.
- Information about how to address employment related disputes, for example, if an employer does not honour a contract, fails to pay a salary or exploits a worker.



- Information about how to contact a trade union, seek consular assistance, or access legal advice in a country of destination.
- Assistance in dealing with complaints about recruitment and employment, for example, as a result of non-payment of wages.
- Information and assistance about non-work related issues such as legal status, accessing health and housing services, and protection against violence and discrimination.

Example

Examples of specialist services provided by MRCs

The **MSC in Sri Lanka and the Bienvenido a Casa (Welcome Home) Centre in Colombia** provide temporary accommodation for returnees unable to directly return home. Centro de Informacion y Atencion sobre Migracion Internacional in Colombia offers specialized mental health support to migrants and returnees.

The **MRC in Sri Lanka** is a trade union-funded NGO with a specific focus on labour exploitation, particularly of women who have worked overseas in domestic work, and provides training and reintegration upon return to Sri Lanka. The MRC is funded by international trade union organizations and operates as a service of the All Ceylon Federation of Free Trade Unions / ACFFTU, Sri Lanka. The MRC's main objective is to organize and represent migrant workers in trade unions, including potential migrants and returnee migrants. Sri Lanka's MRC offers targeted information for migrants seeking domestic work to inform them of risks and the resources they can access at destination if they feel their rights have been violated.

The **ILO Tripartite Action to Protect the Rights of Migrant Workers** (the GMS TRIANGLE project) has an objective to promote safe migration and decent work through effective labour protection policies and recruitment practices in six countries in Asia. One part of the project is the establishment of Migrant Worker Resource Centres (MWRCs) to provide information and legal support to migrant workers in situations of labour exploitation and risk of rights abuses. The MWRCs have been set up under different management arrangements in nineteen locations in Cambodia, Thailand, Viet Nam and Penang in Malaysia. As well as providing accurate information and counselling on safe migration, MWRCs provide legal assistance and access to justice where exploitation has taken place.

MWRCs assist in settling grievances with employers and recruitment agencies, and in pursuing cases through the legal system. In countries of origin, typical cases relate to non-deployment, non-fulfilment of contract terms, and family members who have lost contact with migrants in destination countries. In countries of destination, the MWRCs give support in the recovery of unpaid wages and in accessing compensation for accidents suffered at work. In Viet Nam, the MWRCs store copies of the contracts and passport information of migrants in case of problems in the destination workplace. The project has had additional benefits in raising awareness amongst multiple stakeholders about issues such as human trafficking, labour exploitation and unethical recruitment practices.⁵

Filipino Workers Resource Centres (FWRC)

FWRCs established in key countries of destination provide physical and mental health services that include psychosocial counselling, on-site medical assistance and shelters for clients, in particular women, who have experienced abuse and violence. Support is provided to migrants who have absconded from their employment, have been imprisoned in private dwellings or on work sites by their employers or agencies, have been abused, had their contracts terminated illegally or have been recruited illegally and face homelessness. The shelters provide migrants with a safe place to stay until their cases are resolved. For example, the FWRCs in Dubai and Abu Dhabi provide shelter and skills development programmes for women. The women, mainly housemaids, are provided psychosocial and health support in overcoming trauma as a result of exploitation, lack of food or sleep, maltreatment, sexual abuse, overwork or non-payment. The women then go on to learn new skills to enable them to return to the Philippines and establish new businesses in areas such as massage therapy, reflexology, crafts, secretarial skills and dressmaking.

Where MRCs are unable to provide services to migrants at risk, it will be important to:

- Put in place protocols, including Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), for referrals to specialist services with agencies providing shelters, safe

⁵ For further information see: ILO Migrant Worker Resource Centre operations manual: A manual on establishing and operating a resource centre for migrant workers including information for potential migrants. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/asia/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_312450/lang--en/index.htm



houses and homeless shelters for women who have experienced violence and exploitation.

- Ensure that there are swift referral routes, particularly where safe accommodation needs to be provided at short notice.
- Provide safe or emergency accommodation where this is necessary for migrants who need to be protected and/or supported after a traumatic migration experience, such as migrants who have escaped imprisonment from an employer or trafficker, women migrants who experienced abuse and exploitation, migrants whose contracts of employment were terminated leaving them destitute, and migrants who are homeless.



Chapter 5 provides more detailed information about referrals to other services.

Example

Examples of MRCs dealing with migrants who have complaints

Haryana Overseas Placement Assistance Society, an MRC in India, raises awareness of workers' rights pre-departure and continues to support migrant rights while abroad. A dedicated hotline is available for migrants (and potential migrants) to report any abuses of their rights regarding migration and overseas employment. The MRC attempts to follow-up directly on reports and to assist in the redress of the grievances.

The **MRC in Kochi, India,** hosts a counselling/crisis centre to handle complaints about recruitment and employment contracts, and offers first aid remedies to overcome crisis situations involving migrants and their families.

Some MRCs, such as the **MRCs set up by ILO** and partners under the GMS Triangle project, provide information about rights and also direct legal assistance to migrants who have experienced exploitation. Although MRCs do not always have in-house legal services for this purpose, MRCs often refer clients to specialist NGOs or governmental agencies for legal assistance.

The role of private recruitment companies and migration agents

Some private recruitment companies and migrant agents/brokers practice unethical recruitment procedures, which can result in exorbitant recruitment fees, unilateral changes in contract terms or unreasonable deductions from agreed wages, leaving workers vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation and becoming undocumented in destination countries. In the worst of circumstances, such fraudulent practices can lead directly to exploitation and trafficking.

- It is important that MRCs have knowledge of private recruitment companies and, where relevant, up-to-date information about recruitment company registration.
- MRCs should aim to source information about trustworthy recruitment companies, and where they can be found, and include this in pre-departure orientation.
- The orientation sessions should aim to empower migrants with the skills and capacities to avoid fraud and deception.

The **Tajik Migrant Support Centres** have been involved in training and providing technical assistance to Tajikistan's Private Employment Agencies to ensure they understand their obligations, implement ethical recruitment practices and promote the rights of migrants.

For further information about standards for ethical recruitment practices see:

- ◆ IOM International Recruitment Integrity System: <http://iris.iom.int>
- ◆ ManpowerGroup/Verité: *An Ethical Framework for Cross-Border Labor Recruitment*. Available at: http://www.verite.org/sites/default/files/ethical_framework_paper_20120209_PRINTED.pdf



2.6 Information services and advice about remittances and investment-related services

Objective: Empower migrants to contribute to the economic and social development of their home countries

Remittances have individual, family, social and economic benefits, for example, in supporting family members' participation in health and educational opportunities.

MRCs can actively contribute by providing advice and information about remittances and investments in the following ways:

- Provide information services and advice about remittances including efficient and affordable ways of transferring funds.
- Advocate for reduced remittance transfer costs, including working with government departments and agencies for cost-reducing, bilateral agreements with local agencies involved in money transfer.
- Provide information services and advice about financial literacy.
- Provide information to support investments in a migrant's home country, for example, through advice about making investments in housing, businesses and entrepreneurship, as well as social and philanthropic investments.

Example

Examples of information about remittances and investment

The **Migrant Support Centres in Tajikistan** provide information about remittances in their brochures, and in advice provided to clients, concerning efficient and cost-effective means of remittance transfers to Tajikistan.

Filipino Overseas Workers Resource Centres (FWRCs) also provide an excellent example of the benefits that can be achieved by MRCs. This network has actively liaised with local money transfer agencies to promote the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of money transfers. Using their links with the government, the FWRCs have negotiated bilateral agreements to reduce the cost of remittances. An example is the FWRC in Libya, which has acted to facilitate reduced remittance transfer costs for overseas Filipino workers. The FWRCs have also provided information

and assistance in the use of remittances for philanthropic investments, for instance, by pooling resources from overseas workers remittances for the building of schools in their home regions. Information and training is also given in the use of remittances for productive investment as well as assistance in investing in further personal education and training.

2.7 The contribution of Migrant Resource Centres to migration policy development

Objective: Enhance the contribution that MRCs can make to national policy development concerning migrant protection and migration for development

Through provision of information and assistance MRCs are in an important position to promote positive opportunities for migration leading to decent work and personal and professional development, which in turn has a wider impact in migration for development.

MRCs are well placed to support and influence migration and development policy formulation and implementation in countries of origin. This is particularly relevant in the area of migrant protection and in empowering migrants to make informed choices about migration.

MRCs can also actively engage in giving advice and information that promotes diaspora exchanges and knowledge transfer in the following ways:

- Establish links with diaspora organizations for the sharing of information about countries of destination, about working in different sectors of the economy, and about integration into a new country.
- Provide information about how migrants can contact diaspora organizations when they arrive in a country of destination.

Some MRCs have begun to link their activities into national and other development frameworks, so that their roles and functions become closely connected to broader economic and social development goals, which include provisions on safe and informed migration, and the integration of migrants and returning migrants.



MRCs can have an important influence in building the capacity of recruitment agencies and employers' organizations in order to promote compliance with international normative standards on labour rights and migration policy, as well as ethical recruitment practices.

In some cases MRCs provide training and expertise to encourage a greater understanding of migration-related policy and practice amongst governments, NGOs, employers, trade unions, recruitment agencies and others. This can assist with referrals to and from MRC services and contribute to promotion of the MRC.

Example**Examples of how MRCs have contributed to development goals**

The Centre for Information and Management of Migration (CIGEM) in Mali was established with clear development goals under the framework for employment and sustainable development within the Africa-EU Partnership on migration, mobility and employment. It is an example of an MRC that has linked its work on migration to the broader development of the country (IOM, 2009:17).

The MSC in Sri Lanka has been an active partner in the development and implementation of the country's national labour migration policy.

The FWRCs managed by the Overseas Workers Welfare Agency in the Philippines provide important information for the Philippine government on the conditions and issues faced by Filipinos working abroad.

The Tajik Migrant Support Centres have provided training to NGOs to enable them to provide information and support to migrant households.



See Chapter 3 for further information about the different methodologies used for providing these services



See Chapter 8 on how to ensure the quality and accessibility of service and information provision





Chapter 3

Methods of service delivery



Chapter 3:

Methods of service delivery

Objective: Provide a wide range of services to reach migrants, potential migrants, returnees, and their families, to empower them to protect themselves during all stages of the migration process

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the different issues and themes that MRCs address in providing counselling, advice and information to migrants. Chapter 3 looks in more detail at the methodologies by which services are provided, identifying how services are provided and adapted to meet the needs of specific target groups. This chapter starts by setting out the standards that should guide the provision of services.

Methods of service delivery vary from one MRC to another. They also vary according to the target group of migrants, whether they are migrants that have already decided to migrate, potential migrants, and/or their families. With information services and advice ranging from the simple to the complex, MRCs have to take into consideration a wide range of methods and approaches with which to provide these services. Some potential migrants may be seeking broad-based information about a country of destination, while others may be seeking very focused or specialized information prior to departure.

Information can be provided in written form, in person at a physical location such as an MRC or outreach centre, via the telephone, online, or in information kiosks. In some cases the provision of passive information, or signposting where a person can find relevant information, is all that is needed. However, in other cases there may be a need for a more individualized approach from an MRC, in which case MRCs provide an important function in being able to offer individualized counselling, advice and assistance services.



Methods of Delivery

The most common method for providing information and counselling services is from an office or other easily accessible location. However, it is important to consider alternative methods of delivery in order to reach all potential clients.

Outreach sessions: use other organizations' premises in order to provide services to hard-to-reach groups. Examples of outreach sessions include providing information services and advice to young people through a youth club, school or college setting.

Mobile information services and advice centres: disseminate services in different localities, especially in areas where there is a high level of outward migration, or in remote regions where there is little or no local transport.

Electronic delivery methods: for example, a dedicated website, online communicators such as Skype, and social media.

Telephone hotlines: provide confidential and anonymous services to migrants, including vulnerable migrants and victims of human trafficking, who seek help and information.

People access information and advice from a wide range of formal and informal sources, ranging from simple information to complex types of counselling. The type of information and advice sought will depend on the specific situation and the knowledge, capacity and background of migrants, potential migrants, returnees, and their families. Complex cases may involve addressing the needs of clients whose rights have been violated because of human trafficking, irregular migration, exploitation and abuse, or where clients have suffered significant risks or social costs related to migration, such as family breakdown or the difficulties faced by returnees reintegrating into their country of origin.

Broadly speaking, there are three main types of information services and advice that are provided by MRCs:

Passive information services and advice: This is information that does not involve any interaction, and includes general information contained in leaflets and country fact sheets provided to people visiting an MRC, or information displayed on the MRC website.

Note: Leaflets and country fact sheets can quickly become out-of-date. Providing web links to official government websites ensures that information is up-to-date and relevant. Chapter 4 gives more information about how to keep information resources up-to-date.

Active information services and advice: This is information provided in person, orally, in writing or via the Internet, as well as by signposting or client referral to other resources and/or services that are available. Active information provision focuses on an individual seeking assistance about a specific issue or case. It requires a formulated approach that ensures a specific problem or issue is identified, examined and diagnosed, following which different options are provided to the client. After an initial consultation this can result in:

- A follow-up interview, particularly if the case is complex and further information needs to be sourced for the client;
- A referral to another specialist service;
- A course of action that the client can follow themselves;
- Assistance in contacting other providers of services, including legal advocacy and client representation.

Advocacy: Advocacy refers to the role carried out in representing and empowering clients to defend and safeguard their rights. Some groups or individuals may be disadvantaged because of illiteracy, disability or poverty, or because of bureaucratic complexity in accessing the services they need. Providing information may be insufficient in some circumstances, and some clients may require an advocate to represent, support and help them navigate through institutional systems and bureaucracy.



Mobility Centres in Georgia

The Mobility Centres provide accurate information from official sources aimed at promoting safe migration practices for potential migrants, and thereby reducing irregular and unsafe migration. Assistance is also provided through reintegration measures for returned migrants. The main target groups are potential migrants, including migrant workers, family members of migrants already abroad, and students. Information for potential migrants is provided in a number of different ways:

- ◆ Individual face-to-face counselling;
- ◆ Online, using e-mail or Skype, and by phone;
- ◆ A dedicated website and a Facebook page, established to provide relevant information (www.informedmigration.ge);
- ◆ Bimonthly community outreach meetings, conducted in remote rural areas with local partners.

Where individual counselling is provided to potential migrants, the Mobility Centre counsellors request that clients remain in touch with the Mobility Centre in an attempt to monitor the impact of counselling.

3.2 Ensuring the provision of high-quality, client-oriented services

Objective: Ensure the provision of high-quality, client-oriented services that are impartial, effective and efficient

One of the most central aspects of service provision is to ensure MRC services are client-oriented. MRCs should aim to create protocols and standard operating procedures that set out how clients will be attended by MRC staff. Chart 2 below sets out the main elements of client-oriented services.

Chart 2: Client-oriented services



In developing client-oriented services, include consideration of the following issues:

- Staff training will be important, in order to develop listening skills and provide non-judgmental and empathetic responses.
- Individualized information and assistance empowers clients to understand legal migration processes and to follow procedures that are in place, including visa application and renewal procedures, regularization procedures and so forth. This will require up-to-date information about the procedures in different countries of destination.



- Individualized approaches, encompassing a one-to-one approach and/or case management, are very important for migrants requiring specialist legal assistance. This might occur where there is a need for conciliation regarding unpaid wages; supporting victims of trafficking in gaining residence permits; or reporting cases to the police and giving evidence in court cases.
- Procedures for referral to specialist support and information within the MRC, or to external agencies, will need to be put in place; for example, for legal assistance or specific cases concerning exploitation or trafficking.
- If a migrant has returned to the country of origin following a traumatic migration experience staff should be fully prepared to provide tailored support and referrals to relevant counsellors and support services. For example, this may be necessary in supporting women domestic workers who have experienced sexual exploitation, or women and men who have been trafficked for labour or sexual exploitation. It is important to remember that women and men who have experienced exploitation may be rejected by their families, or may not wish to disclose their experiences to people close to them.
- Consider employing psychologists in the MRC or putting systems in place for referrals to known psychologists who have expertise in specialist support for clients who have experienced trauma, sexual violence or exploitation.

For further information about domestic workers' rights see: The rights of domestic workers. A primer on ILO Convention No. 189 (Domestic Workers Convention)

http://www.ilo.org/asia/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_334260/lang-en/index.htm

In summary, the following are some standards that should guide the provision of high quality MRC information and counselling services. Information services and advice should be:

- Clear and easy to understand, written and spoken without jargon or complex words, and with simple sentence constructions;

- Flexible and accessible to take account of the diverse needs of different target groups;
- Impartial, non-judgmental and neutral to enable a client to make an informed decision;
- Private and confidential;
- Up-to-date, accurate and drawn from original sources.

Providing an independent, impartial and confidential service that is responsive to all potential clients means taking account of applying the following as part of service development:

- Drawing up a policy on confidentiality that clearly sets out how services are provided in confidence.
- Acting in the interests of clients, rather than a third party or other agency.
- Having procedures in place for MRCs to access to up-to-date and relevant information, ensuring that the information provided is continually updated. (For further information and resources on this issue see:).
- Establishing protocols and referral agreements for the sharing of information from the relevant countries of destination.
- Putting in place formal referral agreements or MOUs between the MRC and service providers for the referral of clients; (for further information see: **Chapter 5: Cooperation, partnerships and referrals**).
- Ensuring that record keeping and client files are well organized and can be accessed easily by relevant staff.
- At a minimum, client files should record data on the client's age and gender, the area of the town or region where they live, and contact information.
- Client files should record the time and date of each visit or method of contact made with the MRC (in person, by telephone or by e-mail), the purpose of the information provided, the type of advice given, any referrals made, any follow up that is required and the outcomes achieved if known. (For further information see: **Chapter 7: Information management**).



3.3 Providing a range of services to meet the needs of all clients at all stages of the migration cycle

There are many different ways in which MRC services can be provided. This section looks at the different ways of providing information services and advice. Using a variety of different methods of service delivery helps to increase the reach to as many potential clients as possible.

The experience of the **MRC in Viet Nam** is that clients prefer face-to-face interactions with a counsellor, rather than being directed to reference materials. As a result, less emphasis was put on building an MRC library, and resources have been redirected to other activities.

The different methodologies for providing MRC services are discussed under the following headings:

- Individualized counselling and case management;
- Pre-departure orientation training and seminars;
- Outreach and mobile services;
- Awareness raising campaigns;
- Involving clients and former clients in improving the quality of services.



Referrals to other services are another important way in which MRCs provide and coordinate services. This is looked at in more detail in Chapter 5.

3.3.1 Individualized counselling and case management

MRCs should aim to provide an effective individualized system of counselling and case management that coordinates services for clients to facilitate the best quality of service and outcomes

One of the most commonly provided MRC facilities is the provision of individualized counselling and assistance services. These range from counselling for potential migrants on employment, legal, cultural and social issues to counselling and support to resolve problems and complaints for returnees. The basis of an individualized approach is a commitment to quality outcomes for clients, through appropriate deployment of services and resources.

Standards to follow in providing individualized counselling and assistance services

Providing high quality individualized counselling services means that MRCs need to ensure that high standards are in place, and that these are reflected in staff training and MRCs' core work. The objective is to enable and empower the client to take informed decisions and actions on their own behalf.

The following guidelines represent standards that should be observed in providing information and assistance to clients, irrespective of whether a client is documented or undocumented:

- ◆ Listen to clients and identify their needs in a respectful, non-judgmental and empathetic way;
- ◆ Observe professional boundaries and avoid becoming too personally involved in a client's case;
- ◆ Diagnose the problem in an objective and impartial manner;
- ◆ Give accurate and up-to-date information, and do not withhold information that could be relevant to a client's case;
- ◆ Advise on all of the options available and where necessary take action on behalf of clients;
- ◆ Ensure that clear criteria are in place in cases where it is not possible to provide a service to clients, for example, due to a lack of resources. In all circumstances, MRC staff should aim to find alternative service providers to meet the needs of the client and where possible to refer them to appropriate agencies;



- ◆ Avoid creating false expectations about the services that can be provided; it is important to be realistic about the types of information and assistance that can be delivered;
- ◆ Ensure that clients know what they can expect from the MRC and what is expected from them;
- ◆ Remember that all information provided by the client is confidential and no information should be provided to third parties without the consent of the client;
- ◆ Ensure that no hurt results to the client, for example, if information is given to the MRC about trafficking, exploitation or violence. MRC staff should ensure that any reporting to the public authorities is managed without causing harm to the client who provided the information.

The experience of many MRCs is that migration-related information can be highly complex. It is therefore very important that time is given to providing individualized responses. A particularly good practice is to promote a culture of listening, to enable clients to explain their situation fully. This may, for example, involve family circumstances and family reunification issues, different patterns of migration including temporary and circular migration, language and integration issues or gender-related issues. It is important that MRC staff receive complete information so that they can deal with individual and complex cases. If necessary, staff will need to be trained to deal with complex cases and/or know where to refer a client for specialist help. For such cases it will be important to implement a case management approach (discussed below).

Assistance may need to be given to a person in completing application forms and preparing documents. This is particularly important if the client experiences barriers because of literacy, language or disability, and/or where there are complex and bureaucratic procedures to follow.

Case management

MRCs should aim towards implementing a case management approach for clients. If this has not been implemented before, it is advised that MRCs develop case management for complex cases only. Over time, case management can be implemented for all clients.

Case management objectives are to assess, plan, implement, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the different options and services required to meet clients' needs. Case management is a collaborative process for coordinating the services provided to clients. It is based on a service provider, in cooperation with the client, carrying out:

- ◆ An assessment of needs
- ◆ Drawing up an agreed plan
- ◆ Implementing the plan while incorporating a regular plan review

An MRC member of staff (case manager) will be responsible for carrying out a needs assessment and for implementation of the services plan. In some MRCs, such as the Spectrum MRC in Australia, case managers are directly employed to provide case management services. In these circumstances, case management often involves complex cases, for example, addressing people with disabilities or health and medical problems.

MRCs in countries of origin providing services for returnees that involve complex cases should aim to implement a case management approach, for example, for returnees that have experienced exploitation, or who may face various risks, including being homeless. Case management for these MRC services will need to provide a range of specialist services and referrals to dedicated agencies in such areas as physical and mental health, or counselling for women who have experienced trauma associated with abuse. Case management may also involve providing coordinated services for people with disabilities or specialist support services for families, children and young people. The overall purpose should be to provide an integrated service that is documented in the case file.

It is important to give sufficient time to listen to a person's individual concerns and needs, and ensure that full case notes are taken in case a person requires follow-up information. This will avoid the individual having to repeat their situation when they revisit the centre or contact it again.

In collaboration with the client:

- Carry out an assessment of the client's needs, based on information collected about the client's individual situation;



- From this information, draw up a case management plan, with specific goals and timeframes, in order to address the identified needs covered by services provided directly by the MRC, by referrals to other specialist services or by services available from other agencies;
- Implement the different elements of the case management interventions and goals as set out in the plan;
- Evaluate, modify and amend the plan on an ongoing basis so as to ensure it is relevant to meeting the client's needs;
- Document all stages of assessment, plan and implementation on the client's case management file, and ensure confidentiality of the information held.

Example
Example: Case management approach implemented in the One-Stop Resource Centre, Philippines

The One-Stop Resource Centre (OSRC) model in the Philippines addresses the needs of young people and migrants, and deals with cases using a community-based case management approach. A community-based approach refers to interventions that are carried out at the Centre, in schools, or in offices of partner agencies. All cases are evaluated at the Centre and referrals are made to relevant partners, for example, social workers, civil society partners or government employment services. The role, function and purpose of such referrals are set out in a Memorandum of Understanding between partners.

The OSRC uses a resource-sharing facility model, whereby partner agencies provide specific services for migrants in the Centre. A Coordinating Committee, made up of local government and other stakeholders, provides technical support and advice about the implementation, development and sustainability of services.

The case management service developed by the OSRC has established a well-defined referral system. This is particularly relevant in dealing with complex legal, psychosocial and other cases that need specialized services.

The case management approach prioritizes the following steps:

- ◆ Data gathering (build client's trust; assure confidentiality of information)

- ◆ Assessment (define the problem; identify appropriate interventions and resources)
- ◆ Goal setting and planning (assist client in formulating goal and plan for intervention)
- ◆ Implementation of plan and referral (assist client in implementing the plan, including collaboration with other partner agencies and referral to other services)
- ◆ Monitoring (assess the progress of the goals set by the client)
- ◆ Termination (discuss the outcome of the intervention to facilitate closure of the case management)

For further information see: One-Stop Resource Centre for Youth and Migrants: Establishment and Operations Manual (IOM, 2013), available from: http://www.mdqfund.org/sites/default/files/YEM_MANUAL_Philip_One%20Stop%20Resource%20center%20youth%20and%20migrants.pdf

3.3.2 Pre-departure orientation training and seminars

MRCs should aim to provide high-quality and relevant pre-departure orientation training and seminars, using participatory methods of learning that aim to empower and protect migrants

Many MRCs in countries of origin provide pre-departure orientation programmes, often in addition to that offered by governments. These pre-departure programmes target migrants' needs, serving to empower, protect and prepare them for migration. This is crucial to enabling migrant workers to be oriented and protected when they arrive in a country of destination.

The following are tips for MRCs in countries of origin in running effective pre-departure programmes:

- Be prepared to coordinate with a wide range of stakeholders, and involve the main destination countries in pre-departure information and orientation, including employers if possible. For example, NGOs will be an important source of information with regard to rights-based approaches



to migration and contacting associations in countries of destination; and trade union organizations will be important in facilitating trade union contacts in countries of destination for informing potential migrants about national and international standards on decent work and recourse mechanisms.

- Ensure that participatory and interactive methods of information dissemination are put in place so that participants can maximize their learning from the training and seminar sessions.
- Where relevant, consider providing more in-depth seminars on specific countries of destination. Use case studies and involve returnees.
- Given the diversity of migrant populations, pre-departure orientations and briefings may be insufficient to provide the range of specific and general information that migrants need prior to departure. In some cases, MRCs may need to consider running programmes that are tailored to specific destination countries or groups of workers, as well as providing sector-specific information.
- Provide gender-specific orientation programmes that are relevant to the patterns of migration and occupations followed by both migrant women and men.
- Include family members in the seminars and, where relevant, provide specific information about orientation activities for children.
- Provide pre-departure orientation training and seminars in parts of the country where there are high levels of outward migration. In some cases this will mean travelling to and working in partnership with a network of organizations and providers, including local government units.
- Consider running orientation programmes for recruitment agencies and companies in order to promote ethical recruitment practices and the protection of migrant workers.
- Seek the cooperation of destination countries in order to strengthen the programmes, particularly in providing detailed and specific information about laws, culture and working and living conditions.
- Develop country-specific materials and resources to be used in pre-departure information programmes and seminars, and ensure that the information materials are up-to-date.

Table 1 contains a summary of a set of best practices, drawn from IOM's experience in running pre-departure orientation programmes that can contribute to effective pre-departure migrant training. It is drawn from the guide *Best Practices: IOM Migrant Training / Pre-departure Orientation Programs* and covers issues that are relevant to the planning, design and implementation of training courses and seminars.

Table 1: Best practices to contribute to effective pre-departure programmes

<p>Program Design and Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Develop curricula and supporting activities with destination country; ◆ Take into consideration the cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic challenges that specific groups may encounter upon arrival; ◆ Link pre-departure and post-arrival activities, recognize the transitional continuum; ◆ Make use of cross-cultural or bicultural trainers; ◆ Maximize training accessibility; ◆ Consider the timing of pre-departure orientation, and aim to schedule orientation sessions as close to departure as possible.
<p>Migrant Training Approach and Methodology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Develop participatory and learner-centric training; ◆ Address not only factual content, but skills and attitudes; ◆ Help migrants teach each other; ◆ Proceed from the known to the unknown; ◆ Train in migrants' native language;



<p>Psychosocial Aspects of Migrant Training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Address psychosocial issues in pre-departure training; ◆ Create a risk-free, non-threatening learning environment; ◆ Develop pre-departure training that is holistic and addresses the whole family unit; ◆ Promote gender equality in migrant training; ◆ Recognize the inherent strengths and resources of migrants; ◆ Reaffirm the dignity and positive contributions of every migrant.
<p>For further information see:</p> <p>IOM Best Practices: <i>IOM Migrant Training / Pre-departure Orientation Programs</i>, Available at: https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/facilitating/Best-Practices-Migrant-Training.pdf</p> <p>IOM-MPI Policy Brief: <i>Strengthening Pre-Departure Orientation Programmes in Indonesia, Nepal and the Philippines</i>. Available at: http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/MPI_Issue5_28Sept2012_web.pdf</p>	

Example

Examples of pre-departure orientation seminars

A number of destination countries run pre-departure orientation programmes in countries of origin. These include the United States Cultural Orientation (USCO), Finnish Cultural Orientation (FINCO), Norwegian Cultural Orientation (NORCO), Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO) and the Canadian Orientation Abroad initiative (the latter of which is described below as an example).

Canadian Orientation Abroad initiative (Citizenship and Immigration Canada)

The Canadian Orientation Abroad initiative, delivered by IOM in over 40 countries of origin, offers pre-departure orientation and information through

one-, three- or five-day sessions. The objective is to provide information to enhance knowledge of Canada and to ensure that newcomers know how to obtain assistance upon arrival and to be informed about their rights, freedoms and responsibilities. The orientation also aims to determine participants' perceptions of Canada, and dispel any myths or unrealistic expectations, as well as build their self-confidence. Sessions are offered to all categories of immigrants, including live-in caregivers who have been selected for permanent resident status; however, priority is given to resettling refugees. IOM delivers a satisfaction survey to each participant at the end of a given session and there is follow-up through a second survey mailed to participants three months after their arrival in Canada.

For further information see: Citizenship and Immigration Canada: *Evaluation of the Overseas Orientation Initiatives* (2012). Available at: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/research-stats/ER20120801_001.pdf

IOM Migration for Development in the Western Balkans (MIDWEB) project Pre-Departure seminars

This project developed a pre-departure seminar curriculum for potential migrants who planned to work in Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland or the United Kingdom. Each seminar was tailored to a specific country and lasted four hours. Guidelines for trainers in training methods and techniques and in delivering key messages were included for each seminar.

The seminars aimed to provide:

- ◆ Basic country-specific information about geography, climate, national holidays, currency and exchange rates;
- ◆ Information about working in each country (entry visa, work permits and work visas; existing migration programmes and bilateral agreements; residence permits; the labour market situation and job-search websites; and recognition of qualifications).
- ◆ Practical information about living in each country (accommodation and utilities; food and shopping; communication; health care and medical services; social protection and insurance; financial services, opening a bank account and money transfer services; and support systems and resources).



Pre-Departure Orientation Programme, the Philippines

In the Philippines, a multi-stakeholder pre-departure orientation programme has been established by the government in partnership with accredited NGOs and private sector organizations. NGOs have been assigned the responsibility of providing pre-departure orientation programmes to domestic workers and entertainers, while the private sector PDOS programme covers the majority of overseas Filipino workers.

The Pre Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) is a one-day seminar covering:

- ◆ Migration realities: code of conduct for OFWs (Overseas Filipino Workers), possible challenges when working abroad, “Buhay OFW” (life as an OFW);
- ◆ Country profile: laws, culture and customs of the host country;
- ◆ Employment contract: rights and responsibilities of OFWs per contract, what to do in case of contract violations;
- ◆ Health and safety: HIV and AIDS education;
- ◆ Financial literacy: managing earnings;
- ◆ Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) programmes and services and other government programmes, for example, health and social security;
- ◆ Travel procedures and tips.

The PDOS programme in the Philippines has been expanded and supplemented by two other information programmes: the pre-employment seminar (PEOS), which precedes PDOS, and the post-arrival orientation seminar (PAOS), which is a follow-up to PDOS and takes place in the migrant’s destination country. Unlike PDOS, the two programmes are not mandatory.

For further information see: http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/MPI_Issue5_28Sept2012_web.pdf

3.3.4 Services provided by telephone, e-mail and via the MRC website

MRCs should aim to provide good quality services using a range of technologies, including telephone and hotline services

The MRC's telephone services, as well as hotlines if they are in place, will often be the first point of contact for migrants, potential migrants, returnees, and their families. Telephone services are particularly important for people living in remote areas, people who are blind or vision impaired and people who have mobility problems. With the increase in mobile phone usage, text messaging and helplines, the telephone has become an accessible and inexpensive way for clients to access information. It is therefore very important that the MRC's main telephone or telephone hotlines, established for clients seeking help and assistance, are widely publicized. Ensure that the telephone is staffed at the times that are advertised and make provision for out-of-hours callers and for calls during busy times.

Staff should be trained in handling a wide variety and number of calls, and have a mechanism in place to record queries and answer them within a prescribed period of time.

The following are suggestions of how to handle telephone and hotline calls:

Respond to callers professionally with courtesy, compassion and respect.

- Ensure the confidentiality of callers.
- Be patient, listen actively to the caller, be honest and avoid giving personal opinions.
- Encourage the caller to describe their experiences, insights and feelings, and to ask questions.
- If a call is received from a person in distress, respond calmly and be aware that callers in distress may be angry, upset or incoherent. Consider putting in place procedures for handling calls of this nature.
- Have guidelines in place to ensure the safety of the caller, particularly if they have been trafficked. This means keeping all information confidential.
- With a hotline service for victims of trafficking, do not give information about the address of the office to callers and do not meet the caller in person.



- Establish the nature and content of the call and interact with the caller in an appropriate and realistic way.
- Ensure that information and referral information provided by telephone is up-to-date, accurate and appropriate to the enquiry.
- Provide information about referrals to specialist agencies or organizations, where appropriate.

Hotline services

Hotlines are effective ways to provide information, counselling and referrals to services or resources. Hotlines are anonymous, which can be useful for vulnerable migrants such as victims of human trafficking. Hotlines generally aim to provide accurate and timely information and details about relevant service referrals, and can also provide an opportunity for dialogue, supporting callers by listening to them and providing counselling if necessary.

Two resources are provided below that are useful for MRCs considering setting up and running hotlines:

John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Field Guide: *Setting up a Hotline* (2003): The Field Guide provides a step-by-step guide for starting a hotline or enhancing an existing hotline. It covers the tools needed for deciding if a hotline is required, and the planning, designing and setting up of a hotline. Also included are issues such as recruiting and training staff to operate a hotline, developing referral and information resources, and monitoring and evaluation of the hotline. For further information see: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACU54l.pdf

IOM Guide: *Hotline Management in the context of trafficking in persons: A Basic Guide* (2007): The IOM Guide provides instruction on how to assist callers through a Hotline, for example, the operator's role, handling calls, safety and security, background information about trafficking, myths and facts about trafficking in persons, frequently asked questions for operators and referrals and sample screening forms, together with monitoring and evaluation methods.

Text messaging using SMS (short text messaging service) is a very accessible way to provide information. MRCs can encourage text messaging by advertising a mobile phone number or by introducing telephone landlines that accept and send text messages. Text messages can be a useful way to remind clients about the time and place of a meeting or counselling session, or to provide specific information about MRC services.

E-mails are an increasingly common form of communication. Publicize an e-mail address that can be used by clients and potential clients requiring information about MRC services. Always write simply and clearly, and avoid jargon.

Make use of Skype and other Internet-based messaging services, and aim to stay in touch with migrants, potential migrants, returnees, and their families, via social media and the MRC website.



For further information on communications strategies and use of websites and social media see Chapter 6: Communication, visibility and outreach.

The **MRC in Sri Lanka** provides a telephone and Skype service for potential migrants, migrants working abroad and their families. The MRC receives an average 300 local and international calls per day, 1,051 Skype calls per month and 399 e-mails per month. Due to the differences in time zones between Sri Lanka and countries of destination, migrants are able to communicate with the MRC in Sri Lanka 24 hours a day via Skype if they have work related problems or difficulties. The MRC has a telephone hotline available during working hours and provides free telephone facilities for local families of migrants in distress overseas.

3.3.5 Awareness raising campaigns

Awareness raising campaigns can be a useful way to provide general information to promote safe and legal migration.

- Launch an awareness campaign to dispel commonly held myths about migration.



- Depending on resources, awareness can be disseminated through television/radio adverts, films and podcasts, adverts in newspapers and magazines, and posters and stickers on public transport and in public places.
- Use SMS text messaging to reach people in a broad range of target groups with information about the campaign.



Chapter 6: Communications, visibility and outreach contains more detailed information on providing awareness and outreach programmes, including media dissemination strategies.

In **Azerbaijan**, the MRCs launched an awareness campaign with stickers and posters in subway stations. During the period of this campaign, the average website hits went from 80 to 800 per month.

MRCs in Cambodia, established under the ILO TRIANGLE project, have used a film about a domestic worker migrating to Malaysia to raise awareness about the risks involved in migration and how to migrate safely.

3.3.6 Outreach and mobile services

Providing services on an outreach or mobile basis can be very useful in reaching out to remote communities that are unable, or unlikely, to travel to a physical MRC in a city location. In providing outreach or mobile services the following should be considered:

- Partner with local associations, NGOs or municipalities to provide services in remote areas where there is evidence of significant outward migration.
- Provide services via hotlines, mobile phones, SMS, Skype or other free Internet-based messaging services, as well as through the MRC's website. This will enable the MRC to remain in contact with potential migrants and their families who live in remote areas or with migrants living and working abroad.

Example**Examples of how MRCs have provided mobile and outreach services**

In the **Western Balkans** outreach efforts to students has enabled them to be informed about MRC services, which are offered through targeted information sessions held on college and university campuses. Fliers, posters and other promotional materials advertising the information sessions were placed around university campuses and in student dormitories. Some information sessions have provided general information for students, others have been targeted at specific student groups who have shown intentions to migrate.

In **Tajikistan**, the **Migrant Support Centres'** mobile services tailor their programmes to specific times of the year to provide information on the topic of seasonal migration for potential migrants living in remote communities.

In **Myanmar**, MRCs run in conjunction with the Labour Exchange Offices (LEOs) provide outreach on safe migration amongst local communities in migration source areas, offering individual counselling and job advice to potential migrants. A key objective is to provide information and promote safe and legal migration, which is of especial importance as many of the migrants have used irregular channels to migrate. The LEOs also provide support for returned migrants and their family members to register complaints related to over-charging, unfair treatment or exploitation by unscrupulous job brokers, recruitment agencies or employers.

The MRC in **Armenia** has provided outreach services to potential migrants through its mobile unit, which has travelled to the Armenian regions of Lori, Shirak and Siunik. The mobile service provides free consultations and information for potential migrants.

The Mobility Centres in **Georgia** conduct regular outreach meetings with potential migrants in local communities. They also provide information services on a remote basis through hotlines, websites, and instant messaging services such as Skype. This enables the Centres to provide services regardless of the client's physical location. This is particularly helpful for potential migrants living in remote areas, those with limited access to MRCs and migrants working abroad.



3.3.7 Involving clients and former clients in improving the quality of services

Involving clients and former clients in improving the quality of MRC services is vitally important to ensuring that MRC services remain relevant, to enhancing credibility and community connections, and to providing opportunities for networking amongst returnees.

- Find ways to involve returning migrants in work or volunteering at MRCs so that they can provide first-hand peer support to potential migrants and enhance the credibility of the MRC;
- Draw on the experiences of migrants who have worked overseas and their networks of diaspora communities in countries of destination;
- Empower returnees to participate in information networking with the countries of destination that are known to them.

In **Thailand**, returning migrants are encouraged to work or volunteer at MRCs. They are trained on how to assist their peers in preparation for the migration process and are provided with opportunities to present information about their experiences to various communities throughout Thailand.



Further information on involving clients in improving the quality of services can be found in Chapter 8: Monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance.



Chapter 4

Building blocks of Migrant Resource Centres



Chapter 4:

Building blocks of Migrant Resource Centres

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter looks at the building blocks that are important for MRCs in the following areas:

- Legal basis and institutional structure
- Governance, management and policies of the MRC
- Recruitment and staffing structure
- Staff training and support
- IT, resources and equipment
- Planning and reviewing the MRC and its services

Some of the other building blocks of MRCs were included in Chapter 1, which covered a range of issues that need to be taken into account in the planning and designing of MRCs, including MRC premises and opening times.

4.2 Legal basis and institutional structure

Objective: Implement an appropriate legal and institutional structure for the MRC and involve all relevant stakeholders

There are different legal and institutional structures that can govern MRCs. In most cases, MRCs have been established by international organizations such as IOM and ILO, which provide support and capacity-building in setting up the MRC. In some cases, this takes place in partnership with government bodies, NGOs or other providers. IOM's model is based on the provision of initial financial and technical support and capacity-building of the MRC, usually in partnership with a government department or agency. MRCs have been established through external project funding or through IOM's Development Fund. The sustainability of the MRC can be ensured by handing the MRC over to a governmental or other institutional body.



The **EU Global Approach to Migration and Mobility** (GAMM) calls for creation of MRCs in partner countries “to provide resources and support to individuals and partner countries in the areas of skills and labour matching”. The EC Communication on the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (2011) is specific about the role and institutional setting of Migration and Mobility Resource Centres, suggesting that they should be integrated within the relevant national authorities or employment agencies. The objective is that they focus on migrants’ needs and serve as a one-stop shop for information on validation of qualifications, skills upgrading and skills needs at national or regional levels, or in the EU. The EC Communication specifically calls for the Migration and Mobility Resource Centres to provide pre-departure, return and reintegration measures, and it outlines the role of such entities as a link between relevant authorities in the partner countries, including the public employment services, and EU Member States.

Example**Examples of different approaches to setting up MRCs**

The following are two examples of different approaches to MRCs that have been established under specific IOM and ILO projects:

- ◆ EU funding led to the launch of several MRCs in EU neighbourhood countries and in countries with which the EU has a Mobility Partnership. The majority of these Centres are delivered through government structures in partnership with IOM. For example, the *Regional Dialogue and Programme on Facilitating Managed and Legal Migration between Asia and the European Union (EU)* was funded by the EU and has facilitated the establishment of several MRCs in the countries involved.
- ◆ The *ILO GMS TRIANGLE* project in Asia started with funding from Australia with the objectives of ending the exploitation of migrant workers by improving recruitment and labour protection policies and practices, and promoting safe and legal migration in the region. The project is being implemented by the ILO and has led to the establishment of 19 Migrant Worker Resource Centres in Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam. The management and operation of the MRCs rest with different institutions. For example,

the MRCs in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia and Thailand are run by trade unions, and six MRCs, in Cambodia and Myanmar, are run by civil society organizations.

Government-run MRCs

- ◆ In the Philippines, 17 local government-run MRCs have been established in partnership with an NGO that provides services to migrant workers. Some of the MRCs have been supported by IOM. National agencies such as the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) and the Overseas Workers' Welfare Association (OWWA) provide services through these locally based MRCs to enable clients in remote areas to have access to government services. NGOs and migrant family organizations also provide services in the MRCs.
- ◆ In Myanmar, MRCs have been established by IOM in close collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security and co-located in the Ministry's Labour Exchange Offices (LEOs). The LEOs provide services for migrants planning to work in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and East Asia.
- ◆ Under the ILO GMS TRIANGLE project, Migrant Worker Resource Centres established in Viet Nam have been incorporated into five Employment Service Centres in provinces that produce high numbers of migrant workers. These Centres are able to reach job-seekers who are considering working abroad. The Employment Service Centres in Viet Nam have estimated that 20 per cent of job-seekers consider migrating to work in another country.
- ◆ In Albania, 36 Migration Counters have been established by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities in partnership with IOM. MRC services are provided through a network of local and regional public employment offices. Following initial support from IOM in establishing the first MRC, Migration Counters have since been set up by the Government of Albania, in line with the National Strategy on Migration and the Reintegration Strategy for Returned Albanian Citizens (2010–2015).

Trade union-run MRCs

- ◆ Trade union-run MRCs include the Information and Support Center for Migrants in Colombia, led by the General Confederation of Labour,



and the Sri Lankan MRC, which is funded by international trade union organizations and operates as a service of the All Ceylon Federation of Free Trade Unions / ACFFTU.

- ◆ The Public Services International (the global federation of public service unions) has developed a project on international migration that has led to the establishment of migrant information desks in Kenya, Ghana, the Philippines and South Africa. These countries have also drawn up pre-departure information guides for specific countries of destination.
- ◆ Info Points, run by trade unions in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, have been established through collaboration between the Italian, Moldovan and Ukrainian trade unions.

NGO-run MRCs

- ◆ NGOs provide and run six Emigration Information Bureaus (EIBs) in Egypt, which were initially funded by the EU AENEAS project.
- ◆ EU funding has supported the establishment of the Vojvodina Information Centre in northern Serbia, which was set up by an NGO from Hungary, DARTKE (Southern Great Plains Region Social Research Association).
- ◆ In the Philippines, the Athika NGO, which provides services to overseas Filipinos and their families in the Philippines, has established 17 MRCs in local municipalities. Four of these have been set up with the support of the MDG-Achievement Fund and the IOM.

When considering the institutional structure of an MRC, it is important to consider the advantages and disadvantages of different institutional providers. Where possible, partnership working is encouraged so that shared services and referrals can be made to and between relevant providers and services.

Table 2 sets out the main advantages and disadvantages of the different MRC providers. It is evident that all have advantages in relation to services provided and in reaching out to specific target groups. By working in partnership there is scope for coordination with regards to referrals, shared services and sharing of information amongst providers.

Table 2: Advantages and disadvantages of the different country of origin MRC providers:

Type of MRC	Advantages	Disadvantages
Government-run MRCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Information provided directly from official sources is likely to be accurate and up-to-date. ◆ Partnerships with government agencies in countries of destination. ◆ Funding can be aligned with national strategies / policies on migration. ◆ Good potential for MRCs to promote coordination of information and signposting to other government services. ◆ Local government-run MRCs have the potential to reach out to remote and rural areas where there are high levels of outward migration. ◆ Operating costs can be provided from the state budget, and in some cases combined with other information services (for example, the Public Employment Service). ◆ Long-term sustainability is more likely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ In some countries there may be distrust of government agencies, particularly if the MRC is located within a government or institutional building. ◆ May be harder to reach certain migrant populations, particularly those who are irregular migrants. ◆ Government may have a limited agenda, for example, for reducing irregular migration. ◆ When combined with other information services, MRC services may be deprioritized.



<p>NGO-run MRCs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Close connection to and trust of the most vulnerable migrants, including women, low-skilled and irregular migrants. ◆ A focus on rights-based approaches to migration and ethical recruitment practices. ◆ NGOs often have good international links, including partnerships with NGOs in countries of destination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Funding may be difficult to access in the long term. ◆ Difficult for NGOs to build sustainability into MRC planning. ◆ Accessing accurate and up-to-date information may be challenging.
<p>Trade union-run MRCs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Offer a specific focus to worker protection, decent work, rights-based approaches to migration and redress against exploitation. ◆ Rights of migrant workers are a key area in collective bargaining agreements in some countries. ◆ Potential for identifying workplace exploitation and acting upon it. ◆ Linked to recruitment and organizing of migrant workers. ◆ Good potential for international networking between trade unions in countries of origin and destination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Trade unions may be weak in some countries of origin and therefore have limited capacity to network internationally or provide other services. ◆ Funding may be difficult to access in the long-term, which may affect sustainability.

4.3 Management and policies of the Migrant Resource Centre

Objective: Put in place an effective management structure, policies and standard operating procedures for the MRC

The establishment of the MRC should be set down in a legal document signed by relevant funding partners, which sets out the functions of the MRC, its organizational structure, and roles and responsibilities.

An important building block of an MRC is to have a well-defined management structure with robust policies that govern the organization. This includes ensuring:

- An explicit management structure, with clearly identified responsibilities for MRC resources and staffing.
- Standard operating procedures that are documented and understood by all staff.
- Compliance with all relevant government legislation and policies (company law, public liability, health and safety, employment, indemnity insurance, and so forth).
- Clear lines of internal communication to ensure that staff are aware of, and kept up to date with, all relevant policies, procedures and responsibilities.
- Sound, transparent and effective systems for financial management, so that all expenditure is properly accounted for and the service is financially viable.
- An annual budget, effective financial management against the budget, and implementation of a system for the regular monitoring of accounts.

Where services are shared, or where pathways of referral are established with partners, MRCs should agree and put in place a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU should set out the commitments and responsibilities of each organization, including methods of communication, services provided, and personnel and resources requirements.



Chapter 6 looks at the issues of cooperation and referral in more detail and should be referred to where MRCs establish agreements between partners.



The planning and ongoing governance of an MRC should involve as many stakeholders as possible. Putting in place a multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee will enable the MRC to gain insights and direction from a wide range of stakeholders. This can also be useful in facilitating shared resources and services, and partnerships with national and local government agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders.

4.4 Staffing, staff competences and staff training

Objective: Ensure that all staff have appropriate skills that are relevant to the post held. MRCs should provide further skills development for staff in order to provide a high-quality service

Staffing structure and policies

Well-qualified, knowledgeable and experienced staff that are skilled in migration information provision and in providing client-focused services are one of the most important building blocks for MRCs.

MRC services can be staffed through direct employment, secondments or partnerships with relevant organizations, or a combination of these. Regardless of the way in which staff are recruited, it is essential that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge, and receive ongoing on-the-job training, in order to provide high-quality responsive services.

The secondment of staff from partner institutions to the MRC is a cost-effective way to build capacity in an MRC. It will help to reduce the MRC's operational costs, build on-the-job capacity, and contribute to knowledge transfer and the sustainability of the MRC if it is handed over to other partners.

Staffing costs are usually the largest part of any MRC budget. These costs will need to be built into MRC planning from the outset. One way to reduce staffing costs is to make an agreement with existing government ministries, agencies and/or NGOs to second or relocate staff as an alternative to hiring new personnel. There may also be possibilities of working in close partnership

with community organizations, NGOs and trade unions in the provision of some shared services.

MRCs should draw up a staffing plan to ensure that an appropriate mix of skills and knowledge are in place to meet the information and advice needs of clients, and that job descriptions are in place setting out the main tasks of staff. It will be important from the outset to identify what level of staffing is needed in the MRC. This will be dependent on the overall budget, but may also be affected by the needs identified, potential partners who can provide services, and whether staff are seconded to work in the MRC.

At a minimum, an MRC staffing plan should include:

- MRC Manager/Coordinator (1)
- Administrator/receptionist/website and database manager (1)
- Case manager/counsellor (2)

Additional case managers/counselling staff will greatly assist the functioning of the MRC in meeting anticipated demands for services in the centre itself, in responding to telephone inquiries and in providing outreach services. In addition, interpreters may be necessary if the MRC provides services to migrants from different linguistic groups.

Consideration should be given to employing specialist staff and/or having clear lines of referrals to competent staff in government agencies, NGOs and civil society organizations, covering for example:

- Specialist legal advisors/counsellors
- Social work/welfare officers
- Employment advisors
- Specialist counsellors/psychologists who provide trauma counselling

If referrals are planned it will be important to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for services that are to be provided in partnership with other organizations. This is relevant, for example, for referrals to specialist staff in other organizations and/or for staff from other agencies providing services in the MRC at specified times of the day or week.

In addition to directly hiring staff, consideration should be given to introducing:

- Volunteers, who are trained and supervised in provision of services;



- Interns who are trained and supervised to provide specific information services;
- Peer counsellors (members of the community who can provide relevant information and counselling services);
- Cultural mediators (representatives of migrant communities who work in partnership with the MRC and people from different migrant communities).

An MRC opened in Pohnpei in the **Federated States of Micronesia** in 2013 with the objective of providing accurate information, professional advice and referral services to potential, actual and returning migrants. It also aimed to raise awareness of the risks of irregular migration and trafficking for those within high emigration areas and among relevant stakeholders and policymakers. IOM trained six staff to provide advice and services. The MRC has recruited three interns and also trained ten volunteers, in a series of training of trainers, to assist in MRC training workshops and provide services at the MRC.

Staff recruitment

It is essential that MRCs employ competent, professional staff that have experience and knowledge of migration, information provision and working in partnership with relevant agencies. All MRCs should have a clear commitment to equal opportunities and an equal opportunities policy that includes non-discrimination in the recruitment of staff, and in pay and conditions of employment.

The following checklist sets out the main staff competencies and skills that are required for case managers/counsellors in MRCs in countries of origin:

Migration-related knowledge:

- Knowledge and understanding of migration (in the context of countries of origin and countries of destination);
- Knowledge of migration laws in countries of origin and destination.

Organizational and programme-related knowledge:

- Strategic planning and programme development;

- Analysis of client needs and services to be provided;
- Provision of accessible and gender-sensitive information services;
- Analysis of stakeholders' contributions, partnership working and referrals.

Information-related knowledge:

- Provision of information services, including case management;
- Provision of pre-departure seminars and training;
- Where relevant, provision of reintegration training, financial literacy, and employment, business and investment opportunity knowledge for returnees.

Information technology skills:

- Information technology, website management and database management.

Monitoring and evaluation:

- Monitoring and evaluation of quality standards, clients' needs and the services provided.

Language skills:

- Provision of services in languages that the client can understand; this is important where MRCs in countries of origin provide services to migrants in transit or where several languages are practiced in the country of origin.

In addition, the MRC Manager will need to have management skills and experience, covering staffing, financial, strategic and operational management.

Staffing policies

Staffing/human resources policies will need to be agreed upon and set out in a staff handbook. The recruitment of staff should take account of equal opportunities as it will be important to recruit a mix of both men and women to staff the MRC. This is especially important as some clients may prefer to talk to a staff member of a particular gender. Staffing policies will need to be drawn up in line with existing government policies concerning recruitment and contracts of employment, equality, health and safety, leave arrangements, social protection, and so on.



Staffing policies should also emphasize the importance of MRCs working closely in partnership with relevant government departments, agencies and NGOs. This will lead to more efficient and relevant services at lower cost than MRCs that work in isolation. As a result, staff contracts will need to reflect the importance of this and staff will need to be trained in how to provide services in partnership, for example, by putting in place agreements for the sharing of services and referral pathways.

Staff training and capacity-building

MRCs should ensure that there are sufficient resources for the training and development of staff and for annual staff appraisal. Staff training is vital to the provision of high-quality information, counselling and outreach services. MRC staff must be well trained on migration policy issues and have good counselling skills. Staff should be able to provide on-the-spot advice, or know where to find relevant information in response to client visits to the MRC, telephone inquiries, or during outreach or training activities. It is important to ensure that staff are up to date with relevant local, national and international law, and policies and procedures that impact on service provision, together with any changes in governmental and non-governmental services that are provided to migrants and potential migrants.

Initial training for staff must cover the legal rights and labour rights of migrants, the procedures and visa requirements for migrating legally, the ethical recruitment procedures and responsibilities of recruitment agencies, international standards and rights-based approaches to migration, and information on support services in the country of origin and in destination countries.

Staff should also be trained in how to deliver this information. Specific skills in counselling and information provision are required in providing accurate and accessible information.

The following are some of the topics that are relevant to initial and ongoing staff training and to ensuring that a high-quality service is provided:

- Sources of information, using the Internet to keep information up-to-date and relevant;
- Migration law, information and terminology;
- Migration and employment trends in the main countries of destination;

- Sourcing and providing information in an individual and group setting;
- Counselling and advice in relation to national and international migration law;
- Human trafficking and the protection of vulnerable migrants;
- Employability skills (CVs, job interviews, and so on) and assistance in finding employment in a country of origin.

Keeping up-to-date with information about country of destination legal and integration issues will require skills in using, updating and searching for information using the Internet. As a result, it will be important for MRC staff to receive training in this area. This is also relevant to enable MRC staff to pass on these skills and empower clients to access information themselves.

MRCs are encouraged to provide coordinated training, information and advice services in order to share and promote learning among other organizations and avoid duplication of work. This can also facilitate wider awareness about MRC services amongst different stakeholders and will be particularly helpful when information is complex and specialized. Networking between MRCs (nationally, regionally and globally) can be beneficial to MRC staff that can learn from good practices in other MRCs.

4.5 Resources, equipment, information technology and information resources within the Migrant Resource Centre

Objective: Provide sufficient resources and equipment in the MRC to ensure that information is up-to-date and relevant

The resources and equipment, including information technology, available within the MRC will significantly influence the ability to provide a high-quality service. Considerations will need to include:

- A modern computer system, with a well-designed data management system for recording, processing and monitoring individual cases, referrals to other agencies and information sharing;
- Consideration to sharing ICT systems with agencies and organizations that the MRC works with, for example, a shared database of information sources and referral routes that is updated regularly, and published on the MRC web site;



- Investment in office furniture and separate meeting room(s) to ensure privacy and confidentiality when meeting with clients;
- Display stands with information and brochures that can be easily accessed by clients and kept up-to-date and relevant.

MRC website

An accessible website will be important for provision of simple, easy to reach information, the downloading of documents and online support. In designing a website it will be important to adopt the following principles on accessibility and usability:

- Have an easy-to-use interface so that information is simple to find and access;
- Ensure that all written content is easy to read and written clearly;
- Make the website accessible for a wide range of information users, including people with physical, sensory or learning disabilities, people with literacy difficulties and people from migrant communities who may require alternative languages;
- Design for universal access, so that information is accessible for everyone as a best practice approach;
- Be aware of the digital divide that can mean people from disadvantaged communities do not have access to the Internet. Aim to have one or two computers available for clients to use in the MRC to enable all clients to have Internet access.

Information resources

MRCs should aim for all information provided by the MRC to be up-to-date, relevant and regularly verified.

In establishing an MRC, aim to collect up-to-date information and relevant resources and reference materials:

- Put in place a plan **to collect and regularly update information** leaflets, posters, flyers and other printed material on national and international legal information about migration and labour rights. This

can include facts about international treaties and conventions, including areas such as decent work and human trafficking.

- It is important to ensure that information is in a **language** that migrant workers can understand and is clear and **accessible** for people with disabilities and for those with limited education who may experience literacy difficulties.
- Enable clients to have access to PCs in the MRC and provide links to official government web sites that contain original sources of information so that clients can search for information themselves.
- Set up a library space for important reference documents and materials so that MRC staff can access information to be given to visitors.
- Include a suggestions box in the MRC to solicit ideas and feedback from visitors and clients about resources or services required by the community.

Mobility Centres, Georgia

In seeking to provide accurate and up-to-date information the Mobility Centres rely on official information sources posted on websites operated by state authorities, reliable NGOs and think-tank organizations. IOM also follows up with IOM offices in countries of destination to collect additional information or verify existing information.

Keeping information up-to-date and relevant

The importance of up-to-date and accurate information

It is vital that information is up-to-date and relevant. A major challenge that many MRCs face is ensuring that the information they provide is accurate, relevant and up-to-date. Keeping up-to-date with frequently changing information on destination countries' immigration rules and procedures can be difficult and time consuming. Without ensuring this, MRCs risk providing information that is inaccurate and possibly damaging to clients' interests.

MRCs in countries of origin should put in place strategies, which should include necessary personnel and financial resources, to collect up-to-date information from original and official sources, and ensure regular updates and frequent verification of that information. In this context, it is vital to build links and



relationships of trust with information providers and “owners” of information in countries of destination. Maintaining links with relevant government agencies, embassies and official news sources in destination countries will ensure a regular flow of up-to-date information.

It may be necessary to do this as part of a *phased approach* so that trusted sources of information exchange and verification can be established and maintained over time.

Safe Surfing – IOM’s guide to keeping information up-to-date and relevant

IOM’s resource, *Safe Surfing: A quick guide to navigating the Sea of Information for those wishing to work abroad* (2015), provides valuable information for MRC counsellors in South-Eastern Europe about how they can update and provide correct information about labour migration options in the main destination countries.

The Guide covers:

- ◆ Use of the Internet for job search and related issues
- ◆ Importance of empowering clients to decline fraudulent migration or job offers, including trafficking
- ◆ Identifying reliable sources of information
- ◆ Raising awareness of the significance of language skills for a successful migration experience
- ◆ Importance of choosing regular and appropriate migration channels

The Guide makes it clear that MRC counsellors can provide guidance and support and direct clients to main sources of information and appropriate Internet tools. In order for them to do this, MRC counsellors need to use Internet tools “effectively, safely and with confidence”.

Useful links are given to Internet-based information sources, in countries of origin and destination and the European Union, in areas such as legal status, job vacancies, and integration and social matters.

Good practice tips for keeping information up to date:

- MRCs must have the capacity to gather information on a range of topics, such as relevant laws and procedures relating to migration and migrants' rights and responsibilities, as well as the ability to keep up with any changes to these procedures.
- Where information is not available, for example, because it is of a specialist nature, it is important that MRC staff know how and where to source information or put in place referrals to other agencies that have access to this information.
- It is essential that MRCs implement schedules to verify accuracy of information and identify changes; networks and partnerships between countries of origin and destination should be formed for this purpose.
- Information should ideally be obtained from **original sources**, for example, from government agencies, consulates and international organizations. Often NGOs, trade unions, employers and recruitment agencies in the countries of origin and destination rely on secondary sources of data, in which case it will be important to verify that information as secondary sources of information can become quickly out of date.
- Protocols for information sharing and exchange are helpful for agreeing how to communicate with partners to facilitate efficient information updating. This will be important if there are changes in legislation in a country of destination regarding, for example, migration policy, visas requirements, language testing or registration prior to departure.
- Maintain contact with migrants once they are working abroad and promote exchanges of information with diaspora communities. These can be important sources of information about integration, and can provide contacts with migrant organizations and associations in countries of destination.
- Establish links, networks and information exchanges with local consulates of countries of destination, MRCs, integration services, and information providers in countries of destination. Inter-agency cooperation within the country and between countries of origin and destination is crucial to ensuring MRCs operate with up-to-date information.
- MRC counsellors also need to be fluent in languages of the main destination countries and to be given responsibility for updating destination country information on a regular basis.



The **Democratic Republic of the Congo's MCDEM** (Maison des Congolais de l'Étranger et des Migrants) has focal points in most of its country's embassies in countries of destination, which ensures that it has access to up-to-date information, including changes in laws or procedures in destination countries.

The Counselling and Information Centre for Migrants (Centro de Apoio ao Migrante no País de Origem-CAMPO) in **Cabo Verde** was established under the framework of the EU Mobility Partnership. It aims to make direct links between skills and available job vacancies abroad, to promote legal migration as a means of accessing these jobs and to support reintegration for returning Cabo Verdeans. Information is regularly updated from government sources in countries of destination. The Centre provides pre-departure and reintegration orientation, and services are coordinated with nine Employment and Vocational Training Centres.

4.6 Planning and reviewing the Migrant Resource Centre and its services

Objective: Ensure an ongoing review and planning of services in order to provide services of high quality

The following are some suggestions about ways in which MRCs can implement regular planning and an ongoing review of its services. If this is not carried out on a periodic basis there is a risk that MRC services may not fully meet the needs of migrants, potential migrants, and their families. The following are some suggestions that can help MRCs carry out ongoing planning and service reviews:

- Draw up a strategy statement that sets out the strategic aims and operational goals for the MRC; this should clearly set out whom the service is for, what services are provided and how they are provided.
- Aim to draw up a strategic plan setting out the direction and goals of the service every three to five years. The MRC should be monitored against the strategic plan on an annual basis.

- An annual plan should be drawn up to ensure that resources meet the needs of the service and the clients that it serves. This should list:
 - Current services, including location and hours of operation;
 - Methods of service delivery;
 - The estimated number of clients who will use the service;
 - Relationships and partnerships with other providers, including referrals.
- MRCs should aim to carry out a regular assessment of the clients that it plans to serve; this should include an assessment of the methods of delivery and opening times that best suit different client groups. Account should be taken of the specific needs of women and men, including women with family responsibilities.
- Where resources permit, MRCs should organize a regular, independent review and/or evaluation of services. This should address the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of services as well as areas for development.



See Chapter 7 for more information about monitoring and evaluation of MRCs.



Chapter 5

Cooperation, partnerships and referrals



Chapter 5:

Cooperation, partnerships and referrals

Objective: Implement effective systems for cooperation, partnership and referral with all relevant governmental and non-governmental agencies to provide clients with an integrated range of high-quality services

5.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the different ways in which MRCs can establish effective forms of cooperation, networking and referral with other services and organizations in migrants' countries of origin and destination.

Inter-agency cooperation is crucial for pooling expertise and for the provision of integrated services to migrants, potential migrants, returnees, and their families. MRCs often lack resources or specialist expertise to provide a full range of services to clients, particularly where there is an identified need for specialist services. Cooperation and referral systems will help to enhance the visibility, capacity and sustainability of MRCs, and will enable each agency providing services to specialize in what it does best. The coordination of information, advice, training and other activities helps to promote learning among partners.

5.2 Cooperation with other stakeholders in countries of origin

Cooperation with other stakeholders is crucial for MRCs for the following reasons:

- *Improved knowledge of the services provided by MRCs* is gained by all relevant agencies; this can help to facilitate the promotion of MRCs and encourage client referrals from other agencies to MRCs.
- *A wider range of services can be provided.* Cooperation between agencies can increase take up of a broader range of services. For example, clients that experience barriers in accessing services may be more willing to access a service from a community organization.



- *Improved access to services avoids MRCs existing in a silo:* Knowledge of the services that are provided by other agencies can avoid “gatekeeping” and facilitate referrals to other services. Services are more likely to be streamlined and integrated.
- *Service provision will be more integrated and holistic:* MRCs will be able to respond to the multiple needs of clients, including the specific needs of women migrants, potential migrants, and their families. This is particularly important in the provision of specialist services, such as mental health services or services for victims of trafficking.
- *Clients have a better quality of service:* Involving other agencies collaboratively means that clients are not required to tell their story multiple times; this is facilitated by providing consistent information and good communications between the MRC and referral agencies.
- *Staff in MRCs and referral agencies are able to provide a more professional service,* which can result in shared skills, knowledge and professional outcomes.

Example**Examples of cooperation and partnerships**

In India, MRCs have been established in Kochi (Kerala), Panchkula (Haryana) and Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad). **A Network Centre** has been set up with the aim of reaching out to a wider group of potential migrants; this works in close partnership and coordination with a selected network of NGOs and social partners. Information is disseminated through the local structure of NGOs and their capacities are enhanced through training.

An MRC has been established by IOM as a pilot Office for Assistance to Overseas Workers in **Viet Nam**. It has partnered with the Department of Overseas Labour (Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs) and Viet Nam’s Women’s Union, to implement safe migration and promote better awareness and understanding of the risks of labour migration. The MRC also provides services to migrant workers living in Viet Nam, for example, from Taiwan Province of China or Malaysia. Services often involve information and support concerning deductions from salaries or conflicts with employers.

Under the **ILO Tripartite Action to Protect the Rights of Migrant Workers** (the GMS TRIANGLE project), Migrant Worker Resource Centre staff carry out work with local authorities to prevent and resolve problems of labour exploitation. In Cambodia, for example, this has included training of local government officials on legal migration. This led to local government officials disseminating the training within their local communities, which also raised awareness of the services provided by the MWRC to facilitate legal migration. In Thailand, a similar model has been developed with community leaders, and in Thailand and Malaysia migrants have been organized through existing trade unions and through migrant networks. In 2013, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Thai and Cambodian trade unions to provide for enhanced cooperation in organizing migrant workers and resolving rights abuses.

The following are some of the factors to take into account in establishing inter-agency coordination and referrals:

- Establish a comprehensive network of referral agencies, contact details of which should be logged in a directory.
- Build relationships with a wide range of potential partners, for example, government agencies, NGOs, migrant organizations, trade unions and recruitment agencies, and involve them in the launch and ongoing activities of the MRC.
- Establish regular channels of communication and sharing of information. Aim to publicize information about the MRC's services in the information leaflets and e-newsletters produced by other agencies.
- Inter-agency coordination should prioritize the training of staff from the MRC and partner agencies to facilitate shared learning and cooperation, for example, in establishing referrals for services.
- If it is possible, consideration should be given to developing shared information systems to enable partner agencies to communicate directly with each other and monitor activities.
- Aim to establish an inter-agency advisory group or committee to facilitate cooperation.
- Joint approaches to case management should be put in place, including the sharing of information about client outcomes. MRCs should be able



to track and monitor client outcomes so that there is integration across and between different services.

- Ensure that there are sufficient resources to assess the impact or outcome of cooperation, for example, regarding inter-agency referrals for clients.

Stakeholders in **local** community organizations and among local government officials are important partners for MRCs. They can help to publicize MRC services and provide valuable information on migration-related issues and local community needs and special characteristics. As a result, it is important that MRCs actively involve local stakeholders in the establishment and operation of MRCs.

5.3 Making referrals to other agencies

In practice, MRCs may not be able to provide all services that are needed by migrants, potential migrants, returnees, and their families. Setting up referral mechanisms will be important for MRCs, so that they can operate as a one-stop-shop. This should enable MRCs to provide clients with access to a wide range of services, including specialist services, in addition to services the MRC provides directly. It is important that there is no service duplication. Having an effective client case management system will ensure that services provided by other agencies can be coordinated and tracked by the MRC.

MRC staff and referral partners need to be clear about their roles and responsibilities, including how client information is provided confidentially to the referral partner. This can be achieved by agreeing a **Memorandum of Understanding** that sets out the main roles and responsibilities of referral partners, methods of communication and information sharing between the MRC and the referral partner and how client outcomes are monitored.

One way to facilitate inter-agency referrals is to put in place an **inter-agency referral form**, which should be included in the client's case file and the MRC database.



See Chapter 7: Information management, which addresses this issue in relation to MRC databases.

The following are some suggestions of what can be included in the referral form:

- Name of referrer and date referral made
- Consent from the client prior to making a referral
- Demographic details of the client (gender, age, migration profile, family responsibilities, and so forth)
- Contact details of client
- Contact details of a family member in the event of an emergency
- Specific needs identified to assist communication (for example, preferred language, disability or literacy difficulties)
- Reasons for the referral
- Outline of the assessment made
- Services currently accessed by the client from the MRC or other service provider

Once a referral has been made, MRCs will need to ensure that there is follow-up with the referral partner about the services that were provided for the client, and whether services are ongoing or if they have ended. This is important for monitoring purposes and in tracking the outcomes and impact of the service provided.

5.4 Cooperation with relevant organizations in countries of destination

MRCs in countries of origin should establish cooperation with government agencies and relevant information and service providers in the country of destination. This will contribute to safe migration and integration for a newly arrived migrant.

There is great potential in the future for MRCs in countries of origin to develop partnerships and cooperation with MRCs and public authorities that provide integration services.

The following are some potential ways that MRCs in countries of origin can cooperate with their partners in countries of destination:



- Establish links with information services working with migrants in countries of destination, including Public Employment Services, NGOs, and other MRCs where they exist, and build a regular form of communication to facilitate information sharing. Aim to build these links into a formal partnership agreed through a Memorandum of Understanding, which sets out the roles and responsibilities of each party.
- Use IOM or ILO offices in countries of destination, or contact focal points within the embassies of key destination countries, to provide regular exchanges of information.
- Request regular updates from immigration authorities of key destination countries, as the “owners” of immigration information, including immigration information from their local embassies and government web sites.
- Share information between MRCs in countries of origin and destination about migration policies, visa and entry requirements and integration, including resources from government web sites.
- Include in pre-departure briefings the contact details and website links for post-arrival services that are available to migrants in the country of destination.
- Cooperate with trade union organizations providing services to members in countries of origin and destination, on issues such as decent work, wages and working conditions, and provide links to relevant web sites.
- Share information and advice about remittances and the transfer of money.

Example**Examples of MRCs that have established cooperation in countries of origin and destination**

Sri Lanka's MRC provides pre-departure information to migrants about access to services in key destination countries. This information was provided through Sri Lanka's diplomatic missions, who can assist in cases of emergency, provide additional information, and help in facilitating reception upon arrival in some cases. This example shows the importance of good lines of communication between the Sri Lankan diplomatic missions and MRCs in the country of origin.

The country of origin **MRC in Micronesia** has developed direct linkages to a wide range of services located in the United States. The MRC provides direct referrals to service providers, including the Office of Health Services Division in Hawaii, Hawaiian and Guam Consulate Offices, the Director of Police in Hawaii, and the University of Hawaii's Sea Grant College Program. These service providers are committed to assisting Micronesians integrate into their host communities and in providing information pre-departure.

The **IOM Migration for Development in the Western Balkans (MIDWEB) project** created leaflets on return information and contacts for diaspora communities that were given to embassies and consulates in the EU and Switzerland. These leaflets provided information to returnees on how to access information and services upon their return to their country of origin.

Filipino Workers Resource Centres (FWRC), Philippines: FWRCs have been established by the Philippines government in 21 countries of destination, principally in Asia and the Middle East, to protect overseas Filipino workers. The FWRCs are managed by the government's Overseas Workers Welfare Agency. They play a key role in informing government policy on migrant protection; this information is relayed back to a central office in the Philippines. By law, FWRCs are required to be set up where there are more than 20,000 migrants in any one country. They directly provide a wide range of services, such as legal assistance in cases of labour exploitation, preparation for migrants' return and reintegration, job-matching services and skills recognition schemes, training in the use of remittances and negotiating reduced costs for local money transfers, and creating initiatives to engage Filipino community groups as participating partners in development processes.



Chapter 6

Communication, visibility and outreach



Chapter 6:

Communication, visibility and outreach

Objective: Produce and implement a communications, visibility and outreach strategy to reach all potential clients, particularly migrants and potential migrants who are most vulnerable, at-risk and hard to reach

6.1 Introduction

This chapter gives information and guidance on creating an effective communication and outreach strategy for MRC services that includes information dissemination and working with the media. A variety of communication activities using several media can be used. Using the mass media is a useful way to reach a large audience.

As a starting point, MRCs should draw up a communications plan setting out key messages, audiences to be reached, and the use of outreach, media and other promotional avenues to improve knowledge about safe migration and enhance the visibility of the MRC and its services.

6.2 Dissemination and information to publicize the MRC

It is vitally important that potential clients, referral organizations, specialist information providers, governmental and non-governmental agencies know about the services and resources provided by the MRC.

MRCs will need to put in place strategies to reach out to the potential migrants who are the most vulnerable to exploitation and abusive migration practices, for example, from unethical recruitment agencies or traffickers, and to those who are most at risk of irregular migration. These groups often have poor or limited access to information.

MRCs will need to consider innovative ways of contacting “hard-to-reach” groups, particularly people who do not have access to the Internet or are unfamiliar with its use, and those who do not have the support networks



to enable them to access MRC services. In some cases people may be very distant from services, because they live in a remote area, or because of a disability or poor literacy skills.

The experience of many MRCs is that word of mouth can be a very effective way of disseminating information about the location and services of MRCs. However, it is important to use multiple forms of information dissemination about MRCs if word of mouth is to be effective in reaching all target clients.

When planning dissemination strategies, the following can be considered:

- Inclusivity and diversity of the target group(s) should be built into dissemination strategies. This means taking account of gender, age, ethnic or linguistic status, disability, low literacy and other barriers in accessing information. For example, dissemination activities that aim to attract young people will need to be different from those for older people. Having a gender-sensitive approach will be important, particularly in reaching out to disadvantaged women. Aim to use as many different media as possible, so as to reach isolated or vulnerable groups.



Chapter 9 looks in more detail at how MRCs can have an equal and inclusive approach, taking into account the needs of different target group(s).

- Ensure that the diversity of the target group(s) is taken into account in the messages given and the images used in leaflets and on the MRC's website, so that they are tailored to different target groups. Make sure that they reflect the experiences and needs of women and men, of younger people and older people.
- Consult with different target group populations to gain their feedback on the messages and images that the MRC plans to use, and the best locations and networks through which information about the MRC can be disseminated.
- Some target group(s) will be part of existing networks, organizations or groups, in which case the mapping exercise that should be carried out at the design stage (see Chapter 1) will be an important source of contacts for these networks, groups and organizations.

There are a number of ways that the MRC can be publicized, initially when it is first established, and then on an ongoing basis.

- When an MRC is opened, it is advisable to **launch the centre** with a high degree of publicity. Raising the profile of the centre should involve widespread media coverage, as well as communicating with all relevant stakeholders (national and local government, NGOs, community organizations and migrant organizations, key information providers, trade unions, employers, recruitment agencies).
- Hold **information workshops or information days** on specific themes, with the aim of informing target groups and community organizations about changes in policy, or on a theme such as “applying for a job in another country”, “migration: legal rights and responsibilities”, “family reunification and migration”, and so on.
- Hold an **open day or event** in partnership with local organizations to publicize the MRCs services. Invite local organizations to visit the MRC so that they can see the services provided and let others know about the services.
- **International Migrants Day**, marked on 18 December each year, is a good opportunity to hold an event or open day in the MRC, to disseminate materials about safe migration, and to involve local media in coverage of the event.
- **Disseminate information** about the MRC and its services through posters and flyers for display in community centres, migrant and community organizations, NGOs, government departments and agencies, local shops and cafes, as well as through trade unions, employers and recruitment agencies. Posters and flyers should present information in clear and simple ways, with a design that is eye-catching and inclusive of a diversity of groups, genders and ages.
- **Posters and billboards** in public places such as railway and bus stations, airports, border crossings, educational institutions and shopping centres can be a good way to disseminate a high impact message about the dangers of irregular migration and human trafficking, and to publicize the contact details of the MRC.
- Produce **pens, pocket cards and calendars** with the MRC’s logo and information about its location.



- Produce podcasts of the lived experiences of migrant workers, which can be disseminated by Facebook, Twitter or via the MRC's website.
- **Local networks and media** are often reliable ways of sharing information; for example, organize a regular slot on local and community radio in order to reach people living in rural areas, and run information programmes and/or question and answer sessions on local radio.

Community radio “Voices without borders”

MRCs have used creative ways to disseminate information about migration, particularly in reaching isolated migrants. The Migrant Action Programme (MAP) Foundation in Thailand, supported by the ILO TRIANGLE project, provides information and advocacy for migrant workers in Thailand. Since 2008, it has produced a community radio program in Myanmar, Karen and Thai languages. Migrants working in factories and farms in border areas in Thailand rely on community radio for information; many are isolated, illiterate, have a precarious immigration status and do not have access to the Internet or newspapers. They rely on MAP radio broadcasts, provided in their own language, for information on a range of immigration, labour, health and community issues. Radio has been found to be the best way to reach mobile populations. The radio station “Voices without borders” can be accessed via the Internet, via a MAP radio app (<http://www.mapradio.org/>) or via Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/mapradiocmms/info?tab=overview>)

For further information see: <http://www.mapfoundationcm.org/eng/news/123-inside-the-factory-walls-myanmar-radio-reaches-migrants-in-thailand.html>

6.3 Outreach activities

Outreach activities should be planned as an additional way to disseminate information about MRC services. Initially, and prior to the MRC opening, this can be organized through meetings with relevant organizations. Once the MRC has been established, outreach activities can include presentations to key personnel in community organizations, NGOs, government departments and

agencies, trade unions, employers and recruitment agencies, amongst others, who may be important mediators of information to target groups.

Outreach should aim to reach target groups in the locations where they socialize and congregate, in shopping centres, churches or community centres. Consider providing an information desk in outreach locations, festivals or events organized by local communities, NGOs, trade unions or local authorities, as well as at local and national conferences and seminars.

Outreach to isolated communities and locations should also be considered as a way of communicating with people in locations that make it difficult for them to access MRC city-based services.

Tajik Migrant Support Centres have held mobile information and consultation sessions in isolated communities; the service has been tailored for specific groups - in the winter months the services are provided mainly to men returnees, while in the summer months services are tailored to the needs of the women and young people who are left behind. By tailoring pre-departure information programmes to specific times of the year, the centres have been able to provide information on the topic of seasonal migration with potential migrants living in remote communities. The information addresses the risks of trafficking and smuggling in persons, as well as potential health risks and how to channel remittances.

A further way of reaching vulnerable migrants is to have a presence at departure areas in airports in countries of origin, so that people can access information just prior to departure. Linking with MRCs in countries of destination is also important in ensuring that services are provided across the whole migration cycle, as the example below from the Information Resource Centre (IRC) in Moscow shows.



The Information Resource Centre (IRC) IOM Moscow has developed a number of innovative ways to reach migrant workers soon after their arrival in the Russian Federation, as this can help to avoid future problems with legalization in the country of destination. IRC IOM Moscow staff, together with counsellors from the Labour Migrants Trade Union, organized a series of mobile consultations in the trains coming from Tajikistan, which is one of the key source countries of labour migration to the Russian Federation. The mobile consultations are usually carried out in spring, when most of the migrants come to the Russian Federation for work. On the train, informal small-group talks are given to identify the main expectations of migrants and to give information on procedures for a legal stay, work permits, medical and social insurance in the Russian Federation, and access to medical assistance and education. On average, each train outreach session gives information and consultations to around 700 people. Information materials are also disseminated, with useful contact and hotline numbers.

6.4 Using the media

The media can be an effective partner in publicizing an MRC and in reporting on safe migration practices and related information.

- The media strategy should be explicit about its aims and target audience.
- Ensure that the messages communicated are relevant, accessible and clear.
- Consider the best way to get the message across by choosing the most relevant media channel. This can include press releases, blogs, discussion fora, Facebook, Twitter, articles in newspapers, radio, and film/drama. Consider creative ways to get a message across, for example, using photography and art exhibitions.
- Ensure there are sufficient resources to implement the media strategy.
- The publicity for the MRC launch should aim to attract maximum media attention, and will require a media strategy to be put in place. This will

include producing press releases, developing key media messaging and making contact with media representatives in advance of the launch.

- Maintain contact with key media representatives and contacts to gain television and radio coverage, newspaper articles and opinion pieces, and circulation of information through relevant websites.
- If resources permit or if government funding and support is available, carry out television and radio advertisements on the main broadcasting channels to reach as wide an audience as possible.
- Television and radio documentaries can be useful ways to raise awareness about migration and to expose the risks associated with undocumented migration and human trafficking.
- Television and radio debates, with audience participation, can stimulate debate and information sharing about migration-related issues.
- Aim to monitor the impact and outcome of the different media used. For the website or social media it is possible to monitor the number of hits, although the impact of this is less easy to enumerate. However, it is harder to assess the impact of national radio or TV debates. One way to assess impact is to gain feedback from MRC clients or from other target audiences. This can be helpful in revising or continuing with a particular media strategy.

6.5 Website and social media

Plan a **social media strategy** using social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Google+. Build in time and staff resources for regular updating and uploading of information. This can be especially useful in attracting young people and a good way to disseminate changes in legislation or migration processes and keep people up-to-date with migration information.

The MRC's website is an important information resource:

- Aim to include as many links as possible to other agencies that provide information in specialist areas, and use the main languages spoken by potential clients.
- Work with partners to ensure that their websites include a link to the MRC's website and that they also display publicity messages about the MRC in prominent positions.



- If resources are limited, social media can be a quick and cheap way of publicizing a message. However, it will be important to examine if there is sufficient capacity in the MRC as implementing an effective social media strategy takes time and staff resources.

A useful guide to drawing up a Communications Plan has been produced under the ILO GMS Triangle project. The Plan aims to assist service providers to deliver clear messaging so that potential migrants can make informed decisions about migration. For further information see: ILO *Regional Communications Plan for Service Providers in Countries of Origin*.

Available at: http://www.ilo.org/asia/WCMS_228085/lang--en/index.htm

For further information about media strategies see, for example, the Migrants in The Media Toolkit, which was drawn up for MRCs in Spain, Hungary, Ireland, Greece and the United Kingdom, in a project funded by the European Programme for Integration and Migration.

Available at: <http://www.migrantsresourcecentre.org.uk/toolkit/>.



Chapter 7

Information management



Chapter 7:

Information management

Objective: Establish good quality systems for managing client data as a core goal for the effective planning, management and monitoring of the quality of MRC services

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides guidance for MRCs on implementing good quality information management systems for client data, creation of databases, data protection and data required for monitoring and evaluation. The more detailed processes involved in the monitoring and evaluation of MRC services are covered in Chapter 8.

Information is key to effective planning, management and monitoring of MRC services. The management of MRCs requires the collection of reliable and comparable data in order to:

- Monitor MRC services and caseloads;
- Monitor and track services provided to specific client groups and individual clients;
- Record client information including case notes, care plans, and client goals and outcomes;
- Provide data for the management of MRCs and summary data for project reporting. This will enable MRCs to compile and extract information to help manage the MRC and clients' needs.

This can be viewed as a process of data collection through to dissemination of results of the data collected, as set out in Chart 3.



Chart 3: The process of data collection



The following are some procedures to consider in the design of an MRC database:

- Provide an easy-to-access computer interface, with drop-down boxes to facilitate ease of entry of information from a selection of options;
- Provide the ability to attach relevant files to client files;
- Ensure that the database is hosted on a secure server;
- Provide comprehensive backup and recovery facilities;
- Include a time-out system if access is inactive for a period of time;
- Ensure client consent if information is being passed to other service providers.

7.2 What to include in a Migrant Resource Centre database?

Table 3 sets out the main data fields that should be included in an MRC database in order to capture a comprehensive picture of client information and MRC services. This data can be collected from client registration forms, client cards and/or client files. All visits or contacts by telephone or e-mail with the MRC should be logged into the database, as well as any referrals to other services and outcomes for the client.

MRC databases should include client profiles (such as name, gender, birth date, marital status, employment status and contact information) as well as services provided (type of service, location of the service, date file opened, referrals, and so on). It is important that data can easily be disaggregated by gender, age, type of service provided, and so forth. Databases should also

provide for date of consultations and subsequent consultations as well as the name of the MRC member of staff that assisted them.

Table 3: Suggested fields to use in an MRC database

Field	Field breakdown
Contact information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Contact details of client ◆ Contact details of family members in the event of an emergency
Client demographic information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Age and gender ◆ Marital status, family status and number of dependents ◆ Country of origin (for MRCs providing destination country services) ◆ Current town/area where client lives ◆ Highest level of education achieved
Client employment/migration information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Current phase of migration ◆ Employment status, and if in employment the employment sector ◆ Professional experience ◆ First and second languages spoken ◆ Previous migration, including type of migration and country of destination ◆ Vulnerabilities (for example, health, victim of trafficking) ◆ Planned country of destination ◆ Reasons for migrating



<p>Services sought and provided</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Type of service sought ◆ Type of service received (one-to-one counselling, pre-departure training, legal services); ◆ Method of communication with the MRC (visit to MRC, telephone, e-mail, website) ◆ Referrals to other services (for example, government employment or training services, services of an NGO) ◆ MRC clients enquiring on behalf of others, including relatives ◆ MRC clients enquiring for themselves ◆ MRC services accessed by clients with previous international migration experience
<p>Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Client outcome when leaving the service: numbers who migrated (through legal channels, irregular channels, course of study, family reunification, and so on) ◆ Client outcome when leaving the service (did not migrate, carried out further education or training, found employment, and so on)

An example is given below of an MRC database that has been developed for the MRC based in Bratislava, Slovakia. The database provides a comprehensive set of data from which data reports and tables can be generated, enabling the MRC to monitor MRC services and client profiles.

Example**Example: Webex system, MRC in Bratislava**

The MRC in Slovakia principally provides country of destination services. In order to monitor the profile of clients and the services provided a database has been developed. It has been created using Open Source software, which is provided via the Internet at no cost. A database designer was commissioned to design and programme the database at low cost. The database is currently hosted on the local IOM server, but could be hosted on any local server.

The database provides for a user name and password to access the system. At first point of contact with a client a unique identifier (a number) is assigned to the client. Data is recorded for any subsequent visits to the MRC or if contact is made via e-mail or telephone.

The fields in the database cover client profile, gender, age, country of origin, contact information, employment and education profile, migration and dates of consultations. Fields are included to record the type of services provided (language courses, job counselling, retraining support and financial support for retraining), client evaluation of the services, and outcomes, for example, in finding a job. The database also covers information about referrals and how the client found out about the MRC. The database has a user-friendly interface that is easy to access. Filters can be put in place to generate data reports and tables on a wide range of themes such as the number of clients, number of consultations, issues covered in the consultations, migration profiles and the gender of clients.

The example below from the one-stop-shop in Portugal shows how a well-designed information management system can enable MRC staff to be alerted to any changes that are required to personal documents or visas.



Database of the one-stop-shop CNAI, Portugal

CNAI has developed a database to facilitate the management in digital format of all information that relates to each client using the service. During the first visit, all available personal documents of migrants, such as passport, health card, national ID card, and so on, are scanned and archived in electronic format. This is carried out to avoid repeated submissions of the same documents and to establish a checklist for all personal information relevant to the client. At the first contact between the Centre and the client, a personal number is assigned to the client, which forms the basis for all future contact with the service. The database produces alerts if some of the personal documents or visas are expiring.

Database of the Mobility Centres in Georgia

All counselling sessions are registered in a special database, which is a tool for monitoring trends and developments in the services provided by the Mobility Centres. This monitoring also includes measurement of the impact of the media used (Internet, printed media, TV, and so on) to announce the services of the Centres.

7.3 Generation of monitoring and social policy reports

From the data collected in the database it is possible to generate a wide range of information relevant to the monitoring of MRC services. In particular, intelligence about the issues and problems that cause clients to seek information and advice can provide valuable data to inform MRC service developments, including the need for specialist services. This can also have relevance to the broader issues facing migrants and people planning to migrate. Therefore, it is suggested that MRCs collect and aggregate information generated from its information services and advice activities in order to identify relevant trends and emerging issues. This can be carried out by documenting the main themes and issues that MRC clients seek information services and advice about, drawn from one-to-one counselling sessions held at the MRC, telephone enquiries and advice, the MRC website, and outreach sessions.

When this information is collected and aggregated using the MRC's database it can provide very useful information about the different issues faced by male and female potential migrants. This can also be very useful in generating social policy reports for policymakers and in the planning of services. For example, documenting an increase in the number of visits to the MRC by people who have experienced exploitation or trafficking will be useful in providing evidence of the need for specialist referral and support services.

7.4 Data security and protection

When confidential client data is held on a database or on paper files it is essential that data security and protection procedures be put in place. For information that is held digitally the following protection and security issues need to be assured:

- Gain client agreement and consent for what data will be stored, for what purposes and with what protection guarantees;
- Ensure that all data is held securely and that the Internet service provided (host) guarantees secure web links to prevent data being accessed or hacked by unauthorized parties;
- Client information can only be accessed by authorized staff; with password protection and access restrictions appropriate to different MRC staff;
- A database administrator sets permissions to view or alter client information, with permission levels set for some staff to only view summary client data;
- Provision is made for administrators to audit access to the system to see who has accessed client records;
- Database users have a unique username and password; this identifies the type and level of access to the system;
- Electronic records should be held on the system for an agreed period of time, which should usually parallel the schedule for related paper records;
- Privacy and data security is implemented in line with national legislation on information security and privacy.

Each MRC will need to employ a member of staff with the relevant information technology background and knowledge to oversee general IT administration tasks, including database management. Alternatively, this is a service that can be contracted out to a local IT company.



Chapter 8

Monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance



Chapter 8:

Monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance

Objectives: Monitor and evaluate MRC services to determine the extent to which they contribute to safe migration practices and informed decision-making
Provide continuous systems for client feedback to ensure services remain up-to-date and relevant to clients

This chapter provides information on how to monitor and evaluate the services of MRCs, including client feedback and ways of measuring service outcomes. Collecting relevant and timely data is essential to assuring the quality and relevance of MRC services. These issues are relevant in the context of the objectives established throughout this Handbook, which have the purpose of setting broad standards for assuring the quality of MRC services.

8.1 Introduction

Although at the set-up stage of the MRC the main focus will be to get services up and running, it is still important to implement processes to ensure quality and relevance at an early stage. As a result, MRCs need to develop systems for monitoring and evaluation, and to plan for these to be implemented from the outset.

Monitoring and evaluation should aim to implement a process of learning, reflection and change.

As well as monitoring and evaluating MRC services themselves, it will be important for the evaluation process to include the full range of MRC partners and stakeholders, such as government officials and/or representatives of NGOs. For example, it will be useful to examine whether the roles of these stakeholders have been strengthened, and whether a broader range of services were provided to migrants, potential migrants, returnees, and their families. In some cases, MRC services may have been replicated by other organizations working to improve information and services to promote safe



migration. For example, it will be important to show how training or capacity-building with local community leaders and government officials impacted on, or enhanced, MRC services.

The following are some of the benefits of carrying out monitoring and evaluation of MRC services:

- Assists in showing the impact and outcomes of the services provided;
- Facilitates a review process of MRC activities and achievements;
- Assesses barriers, challenges and unintended consequences;
- Provides a tool for participatory learning and reflection to enable continuous improvement in the quality of services;
- Improves understanding of what works, what doesn't, and why;
- Contributes learning for new MRCs that are being established;
- Offers an effective way to ensure that gender issues are addressed in MRC activities.

8.2 Establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework

The following are some of the issues to consider in establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework for an MRC.

- Are there existing monitoring and evaluation systems in place in the MRC, and if so how can these be enhanced?
- What systems for data collection are currently in place?
- How can data collection be enhanced so that it measures impact, including the impact on women and men?
- Ensure that evidence is collected of what works and how the MRC can work towards establishing, implementing and mainstreaming best/promising practices, avoid unintended consequences, and address any barriers, challenges or other issues.
- Consider the objectives that need to be covered when planning, monitoring and evaluating activities, such as:
 - Policies and procedures, organizational structure and systems for review;

- Effectiveness and responsiveness of the services;
- Impact on migrants, potential migrants, returnees and family members;
- Coordination with other stakeholders;
- Wider community impact.

In addition, monitoring and evaluation should be rooted in an ethical approach that ensures confidentiality of client feedback and outcomes; participation of clients and all relevant stakeholders; equality and respect for clients; quality of the services provided; and avoidance of conflicts of interest.

There are important differences between monitoring and evaluation:

Monitoring is an ongoing process to provide data, based on indicators of progress, in order to measure progress in meeting MRC objectives and outcomes. In some cases, this will be a requirement for reporting on project and donor funding. Monitoring activities are usually developed and implemented in-house and can be drawn from client data and service provision stored in the MRC database (see Chapter 7).

Evaluation is usually a one-off exercise or is carried out periodically to independently and objectively measure progress in meeting MRC goals, outcomes and impacts. Evaluation should be carried out by an independent evaluator so that objectivity can be assured. Most evaluations focus on the following broad issues: efficiency, sustainability, relevance, impact and effectiveness. These can form the basis for making recommendations for the further development and sustainability of an MRC. There are two types of evaluation: summative evaluation and formative evaluation.

Summative evaluation looks at the impact of an intervention on the target group and assesses or quantifies the main outcomes. Its main aspects cover:

- What was achieved, that is, the outcomes;
- Intended and unintended project outcomes;
- Lessons to improve or enhance services provided;
- Objective, quantitative methods of data collection;
- Carried out during the implementation or at the end of a project cycle (sometimes referred to as ex-post evaluation (meaning after the event)).



Formative evaluation contributes to continuous improvement of services and can involve the following features:

- Provides assessment and feedback about the ongoing meeting of identified needs;
- Complements summative evaluation, with a focus on what works and the impact of other internal or external factors;
- Evaluates the process of change to enhance future services;
- Carried out before or during the implementation of a project in order to improve design and performance;
- In some cases formative (or ex-ante) evaluation can be carried out prior to an MRC being established;
- Benefits from qualitative methods of investigation (such as focus groups, participatory workshops, semi-structured questionnaires), with generally open-ended questioning;
- Employs participatory evaluation, involving clients and relevant stakeholders in design and implementation.

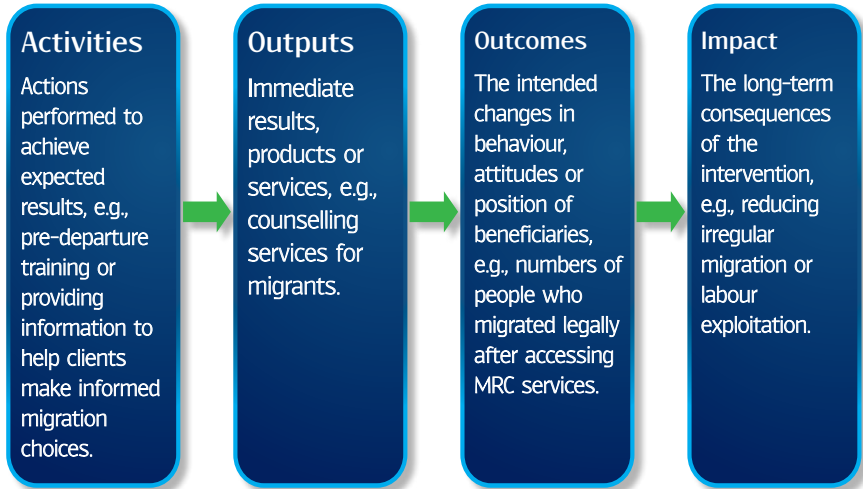
The choice of type of evaluation method to use will depend on the resources available and the stage of development of the MRC. Best practice is to combine both summative and formative evaluation in order to gain insights that can inform the continuous improvement of services. Formative evaluation methods are very useful in promoting ongoing learning and development for MRCs; however, they can be more costly than one-off evaluations.

In addition, it is very useful to draw up **case studies** to further elaborate on evidence and give practical examples. Case studies can be a very good way for MRC partners and other MRCs to learn about the experience of an MRC. Case studies should cover an assessment of what worked, what did not work, what were the expected and unexpected results and what could be done differently. They can bring to life the work and the challenges faced by MRCs or the particular approaches taken to address clients' needs. Case studies can be carried out on individual clients and their families, across all MRC services or on specific services only.

The Theory of Social Change model, shown in Chart 4, is a helpful way to understand the process of monitoring and evaluation: as a chain of results. On this basis, the *impact* should justify the *outcomes* to be pursued, the

outcomes should be supported by the *outputs* produced, and the *outputs* should explain the *activities* carried out.

Chart 4: Theory of change process



Establishing performance indicators for MRC services

There are a number of ways in which data can be collected for the monitoring and evaluation of MRC services. However, to start it is important to ensure that there are robust performance indicators in place against which services can be monitored and evaluated.

Performance indicators are criteria drawn up to monitor the progress made in the provision of MRC services (with a focus on impact, outcome and output). Performance indicators are very important to show whether an action is working and where changes may need to be made, and are a useful tool for the benchmarking of services.

The following should be considered when drawing up performance indicators:

- Aim to ensure that performance indicators are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound).



- Identify ways by which results can be verified, for example, by setting a goal or target to assist a certain number of potential migrants; or in setting specific milestones with targets to reach within particular timeframes.
- Ensure that there is a regular assessment of progress.
- Identify outcomes and impacts regarding different target groups, for example, MRC clients, community leaders or MRC partners (government departments, employer organizations, trade unions, recruitment agencies).
- Ensure that outcomes and impacts are gender sensitive.

Because MRCs should aim to focus on outcome-based monitoring and evaluation of their services, it is important to give focus to specific indicators that can measure outcomes and impacts. This is not only important for learning about the outcomes of the services provided and their impact in relation to the broader goals of an MRC, it can also help to provide an evidence base for funding, sustainability and/or influencing government policy.

The following are a sample of indicators that can be used for tracking client outcomes:

- ◆ How many people who have received a service from an MRC have decided to migrate or not to migrate?
- ◆ Of those that decided to migrate how many migrated using legal channels and how many migrated using irregular channels of migration?
- ◆ Of those who decided to migrate how many migrated for: a) employment, b) study, c) family reunification, or d) other reasons?

8.3 Encourage the feedback and involvement of clients in improving the quality of services provided

Regular and systematic client feedback ensures that services are continually updated to reflect ongoing and changing information needs of migrants, potential migrants, returnees, and their families. This not only helps to improve the ongoing relevance and quality of the services provided, it also ensures that

client feedback continuously informs the types of services provided by MRCs. Encourage feedback on the accessibility and location of the MRC, opening hours, helpfulness and courtesy of staff, competence of staff, and whether the information services and advice provided was accurate and helpful.

It is important that MRCs promote participatory systems of feedback from clients using MRC services that provide for client assessment of service quality and/or gaps in services.

There are a number of methodologies for gaining qualitative feedback from clients about the services they have received from an MRC. These include:

- Client feedback forms completed on paper or in person with an MRC staff member after a counselling session, or when clients leave the service. (A client feedback questionnaire drawn up by IOM in Hungary is provided in Appendix 2 as an example of a questionnaire that can be adapted to suit a specific MRC).
- Client satisfaction comment cards, completed anonymously and left in a box on the counter at reception.
- Complaints system (in writing, by e-mail and via the website), that includes effective mechanisms for responding to and learning from complaints.
- Client satisfaction feedback survey provided on the MRC's website, or a link to the survey e-mailed to the client, providing for client assessment of service quality and/or gaps in services.
- Focus groups with clients (a useful way of ensuring that services are responsive to client needs on an ongoing basis). For example, the holding of regular focus groups is carried out in the Spectrum MRC in Australia and has been a very effective way of keeping up-to-date with clients' needs and changing circumstances. Ensure that there is a gender balance and a balance of clients who have received different types of services.
- Client interviews, carried out randomly, but ensuring gender balance and a balance of clients who have received different types of services. Interviews can be carried out in person or by telephone. (An interview template for client interviews drawn up by ILO can be found in Appendix 3).



- Client involvement in the running and governance of MRCs, for example, through the employment or volunteering of former clients. If the MRC has an advisory body or board of governance, consider inviting former clients to have a seat on the advisory or governance body.
- Consistent approaches to client feedback so that the information provided by clients can be compared over time. It is also important to ensure that all evaluations commissioned include client feedback and consultations with clients.

Client feedback on the longer-term impact of MRC services

It is difficult to assess the longer-term impact of MRC services that are provided pre-departure, particularly after clients have left the country to work abroad, may have lost contact, or do not want to remain in contact with the MRC or family members in their country of origin. Staying in touch with former clients and their family members, however, is one way to assess the longer-term impact of the services provided.

In addition to finding out about the impact on clients' migration or return strategies, this information can be used to gain feedback on the services provided to inform future service provision.

Where possible aim to stay in touch with and follow-up with clients post-migration, by considering the following:

- Put in place systems for a two-way process in which MRC staff can keep in touch with migrants working abroad and overseas workers can provide feedback about relevant issues. This can be carried out through social media, e-mail or the MRC website's feedback pages or discussion forums.
- Follow-up interviews, telephone calls and e-mails, or a simple online survey are other ways to gain feedback.
- Beneficiary tracing, a methodology for tracing and interviewing former clients, has been developed by the ILO (2014). (Guidance on beneficiary tracing can be found in Appendix 4).

8.4 Collecting other data on Migrant Resource Centre services

There is a range of other data sources that MRCs can draw on for monitoring and evaluating the quality of services provided.

Client case files

Client case files are the main way in which MRCs collect data on the services provided to clients. These can either be soft copies (held in paper files) or electronic files contained in the MRC's database (Chapter 6 provides more detailed information about establishing an MRC database). Information should be held confidentially on the demographic profile of clients, contact details and family contact information in case of emergency, and what clients' intentions are in order to inform the type of service that is provided. The case file should aim to record a client's service history including services provided, referrals made to other services, and client outcomes.

- All data should be confidential;
- Ensure that any data collected, such as client registration forms or copies of documents, are stored in a secure place in a locked room or filing cabinet;
- Data should only be shared with the consent of the client;
- Set a timeframe for holding a client's personal data, after which time it should be securely destroyed.

Collecting client data is very important to monitoring the number and type of services provided to MRC clients. MRCs that are funded and set up with external project assistance will need to provide regular data reports, which will specify the type of data to be collected and reported on. However, for all MRCs the ongoing collection of data will be very important in identifying overall trends in client profiles and services provided, and in providing data relevant for the sustainability and long-term funding of MRCs.

Data to assess the impact of one-to-one counselling services

- On the first visit collect background information for the client case file; aim to build the trust of the client prior to asking for personal information and ensure that the client understands that all information held will be confidential;
- Ensure that client case files can be easily accessed if there is a repeat visit; the best way to do this is to ensure that each client has a unique identifier, this will avoid clients' personal details being recorded twice if they visit an MRC on a second occasion;



- Ensure that all repeat visits, services provided and referrals are noted on the client's case file.

Data to assess the impact of telephone and e-mail enquiries

- Record all communications via telephone and e-mail, although it will not be possible to collect detailed information;
- Create a telephone and e-mail log, specifying whether a new caller or an existing client;
- Where possible provide data on the date of the call/e-mail, the gender of the client, the reason for the call and the action taken by the MRC.

Data to assess the impact of training events

The following are issues to consider for MRCs that provide training events, such as pre-departure training or training for government officials and other stakeholders:

- Provide details of the objectives of the training, the location and the date of the training;
- Record the names and contact details of all participants, including gender breakdown and, where relevant, the agency that they work for;
- Provide a brief summary of the content of the training/event, with links to/copies of the programme and any materials provided during the training;
- Provide an evaluation form for completion at the end of the training/event, to enable participants to give feedback on the usefulness of the training/event, the quality of the presentations and materials, any suggestions they have to improve the quality of future training/events, and any further comments.

Data to assess the impact of MRC legal services

Monitoring the impact of MRCs legal assistance services to migrants requires different methods of data collection. In this context, MRCs should provide information on the results of all cases where legal assistance was provided. ILO has drawn up a Legal Assistance Outcome Record, which can be adapted

by any MRC according to the type of legal issues. The Legal Assistance Outcome record covers the following:

- Issue upon which legal assistance service provided (for example, non-payment of wages, work hours, harassment, termination of employment, job not provided, unlawful deduction of fees from wages, contract substitution, missing persons, stranded/detained in receiving country, forced work/trafficking);
- The amount of any financial compensation/reimbursement requested;
- Duration of the case;
- Information about how the case was resolved and how a remedy was obtained;
- Amount of any financial compensation/reimbursement awarded and whether a sanction was applied to the offender.

Staff and partner feedback

MRC staff and the partners they work with hold valuable information and knowledge about MRC services; this should be factored into ongoing processes for quality improvement.

- Provide a system for MRC staff and partner feedback and self-assessment, enabling staff and partners to reflect on the services they provide and the take-up of different services. This is very important in building staff and partner learning and encouraging their active involvement in continuous service improvements.
- Have a system in place – for example, through regular staff meetings or an annual service review day – to enable staff and partners to make proposals for re-orienting services or responding to service gaps.
- Enable staff and partners to identify training, knowledge and skills gaps to ensure that they have the appropriate capacities to respond to new needs.



Networking and feedback between MRCs and other service providers

Finally, MRCs in countries of origin can gain useful feedback and information to inform ongoing improvement in quality of services through networking with MRCs and other service providers.

- Promote the sharing of learning and promising practices amongst MRCs. This could be facilitated through a network of MRCs in a particular country of origin or region and contacts between MRCs globally.
- Encourage networking and contact with services and organizations in countries of destination, in order to identify new or altered needs that arise because of changes in migration law, processes or procedures.
- Put in place a system for regular liaison between MRCs in relevant countries of destination. This can help MRCs in countries of origin to be proactive in responding to changing circumstances, and can usefully promote the sharing and updating of information.

For further information see: ILO: *Monitoring and evaluation guide for migrant worker resource centres* (2014). Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_313603.pdf



Chapter 9

Making services equal, accessible and inclusive to all groups



Chapter 9:

Making services equal, accessible and inclusive to all groups

Objective: Ensure that MRC services are equal, accessible, inclusive of the needs of all clients and provided on the basis of ‘equality of access to services for all’.

9.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses how MRC services in countries of origin can be provided in accessible, inclusive and equal ways. It gives guidance on how to provide gender-sensitive services and services that meet the needs of people with vulnerabilities, including people with disabilities. It will set out suggestions for developing and monitoring the provision of gender-sensitive services and give guidance on providing universal and inclusive access to services, on the basis that if the service is accessible to one group it will be easier to make it accessible to everyone.

“Equality of access to services for all” means that MRCs provide services that are sensitive to and accessible for all groups of potential clients, regardless of their gender, age, family status, ethnicity, disability or migration background.

It is important that MRCs provide services to people most in need and without discrimination. This should be underpinned by the human rights approach (see Chapter 1 of the Handbook for the main human rights instruments).

Non-discrimination requires that the planning and delivery of services are provided equally for all groups. In some cases providing an equal services means that MRCs have to target resources to groups that are under-represented and face vulnerabilities or barriers in accessing services. Therefore in some circumstances it will be important to identify measures able to



reach particular client groups so that MRC services can effectively target the migrants, potential migrants, returnees, and their families that are in greatest need.

In order to do this MRCs should consider the following:

- Make a statement setting out how the MRC will meet the needs of women and men, as well as disadvantaged groups, who experience discrimination or vulnerability. This statement should identify any specialist services that may be provided for under-represented groups.
- A commitment should be made to delivering a high-quality service, which includes treating all clients, irrespective of their background, with respect and courtesy.
- MRCs should set up a regular review of the accessibility of their services, especially for people with disabilities and people who are vulnerable and socially excluded. This should be informed through consultations with clients and potential clients.
- Provide information in a wide range of formats and in languages that clients can understand; this will ensure that information services and advice are accessible to people from different linguistic communities, as well as people with disabilities and people with literacy difficulties.
- Ensure that staff receive training in providing a gender sensitive and accessible service.
- Ensure that all potential clients, including specific groups of disadvantaged women, are aware of the services provided by the MRC and possibilities of referrals to other services. Carry out regular publicity of the services provided by the MRC, with a specific focus on reaching vulnerable clients.

9.2 Providing gender-sensitive Migrant Resource Centre services

A gender perspective is important when providing information to promote safe and regular forms of migration and to enable women and men to make informed choices about migration. Although migration can be an empowering experience for women and men, many women experience risks in the migration process, such as discrimination, exploitation and vulnerability to violence and abuse. When women migrant workers lack access to information on legal

channels of migration and employment rights, they risk becoming vulnerable to unscrupulous recruiting agents and traffickers.

Gender inequalities are affected by the norms, values and expectations of a society at a particular point in time. They are perpetuated by what is considered appropriate “male” and “female” roles and behaviour. As a result, gender inequalities have a significant impact on women’s and men’s experiences of migration. Consideration of this should determine how service providers respond to women’s and men’s information and other needs. Having a gender sensitive approach can help to uncover stereotypes and attitudes that are potentially harmful to women and men.

It is important to take account of **institutional sexism** when establishing MRC services and referrals to other agencies. MRCs need to be aware of institutional sexism, for instance, where the policies and practices of an organization or institution perpetuate gender inequalities such as not taking into account the specific needs of different groups of women and men. This has the normative effect of perpetuating, reinforcing and in some cases widening gender inequalities.

Institutional sexism can result from gender stereotypes that neglect the specific needs of women and men, which can result in the unequal provision of services.

The institutional sexism approach aims to uncover the barriers that perpetuate gender inequality in an organization or institution. This means changing gender-based assumptions and stereotypes that perpetuate inequality.

One way that MRCs can implement a gender-sensitive approach is to carry out a “gender impact assessment” exercise so that gender is considered at all levels in the planning and provision of services. In doing this it is important to ask the question: “Have the needs and experiences of different groups of women and men been taken into account in the planning and provision of MRC services?” It is also important to go one step further to check that policies, plans, information materials and types of information collected do not unintentionally perpetuate gender stereotypes.



Women and men from minority ethnic groups often experience multiple forms of discrimination because of gender discrimination and race; it is therefore important to be aware of how gender intersects with race, and the barriers experienced by some groups of minority ethnic women and men.

A gender-sensitive approach

- ◆ All MRCs should provide gender-sensitive information and services covering all aspects of the migration cycle.
- ◆ Ensure that a gender-sensitive approach is taken to planning, providing and monitoring services, in the provision of training for staff, and in the production and dissemination of written materials and publicity for the MRC.
- ◆ Check that information and assistance about asylum, family reunification and labour migration is gender sensitive. It is important to have an understanding of how existing migration policies place some groups of migrant women and men at risk of violence, exploitation and abuse.
- ◆ All data collected on the provision of services should be gender-disaggregated. Where gender inequalities are identified, specific measures should be put in place to address them.
- ◆ Gender considerations should be included in needs assessments, case management, monitoring and evaluation of services.

The following are issues to take into account in planning and providing services that are gender sensitive:

- Consider the risk factors and vulnerabilities experienced by different groups of women and men at all stages of the migration process, for example, exposure to labour exploitation or trafficking.
- Be aware of the different migration patterns of women and men, for instance, the different sectors worked in or whether migration is temporary and circular.
- Ensure that factors affecting access to information and services take account of gender roles, such as conditions that affect women's care

responsibilities and unpaid work, or assumptions and stereotypes about women's dependency on men.

For further information on providing assistance for victims of human trafficking see:

IOM: *Handbook on Direct Assistance for Victims of Trafficking* (2007). Available at: http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/IOM_Handbook_Assistance.pdf

IOM: *Caring for Trafficked Persons: Guidelines for Health Providers* (2009). Available at: http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/CT_Handbook.pdf

The following are some of the services that MRCs can consider providing that take account of a gender-sensitive approach:

- Migrant women and men who are survivors of violence and abuse will need information and services to help them to recover.
- Information on access to justice and mechanisms to provide redress from abuses of labour rights, including for migrant domestic workers, and women and men who have experienced employment-related disputes.
- Information about the use of remittances, taking into account how gender impacts on the sending and spending of migrants' monetary transfers. For example, women are more likely to send remittances for the care of immediate family members, whereas men are more likely to send remittances for investments and housing.
- Information about migration issues for women on dependent visas, undocumented women and men, and the need for specific protections for labour migrants.



In **Sri Lanka** and the **Philippines**, MRCs have placed a specific emphasis on preventing labour exploitation, for instance, of domestic workers. This has led to different strategies to reach out to target groups. For example, contact has been made with trade unions and/or labour attachés in countries of destination.

In **Sri Lanka**, the **Migrant Service Centre** provides training to re-skill women who have returned to the country after being employed as domestic workers abroad. The training prepares the women for jobs that are in demand domestically.

In **Bangladesh**, **MRCs** have had a specific focus on providing services to prevent irregular migration and exploitation of women, by offering potential migrants, particularly women, training and employment opportunities as alternatives to irregular migration. The MRC programme is being expanded by ten additional offices with support of the agency UN Women.

Brochures for women and men migrants coming to the Russian Federation for work

The brochure *Kamilla* is an example of information resources drawn up for women migrating to the Russian Federation. It was published in 2011 by the IOM Information Resource Centre (IRC) in Moscow to respond to the specific needs of migrant women. Women who called the IRC hotline also gave suggestions for the content of the brochure. The IRC specialists who created the brochure saw this as an opportunity to help women and girls adapt and integrate into life in Moscow. The brochure covers a range of issues including: migration registration, work permits, accommodation, finding employment, sexual and reproductive health, childcare, and contact details for support and information services. Information from the brochure was also included in the IOM booklet *IOM: Gender Equality in action – II*.

In June 2012, a new brochure *We are in Russia* was produced by the IRC as a sequel to *Kamilla* for migrants who had come to the Russian Federation for work. It is specifically targeted at men who migrated alone or with their families. The brochure covers migration registration, procedures for issuing work permits, signing a contract, receiving additional education, searching for jobs and accommodation, migrant remittances and health and social protection issues. It also includes information about stress and aggression in the family, healthy food and cooking recipes, and advice on family planning.

For more information about the Information Resource Centre (the Russian Federation) see: http://moscow.iom.int/activities_labormigration_CARM_infocentre.html

The following are some practical ways in which MRC services can begin to implement gender sensitivity:

- Locate the MRC in a well-lit and busy part of town that is close to transport networks, this is important to promote women's safety and reduce the risk of violence against women and girls in urban areas;
- Provide facilities for clients to request female counsellors;



- Provide childcare facilities on site or create a partnership with a local childcare provider;
- Make a corner of the reception area available for children, with children's toys;
- Place posters on the walls of the MRC's office and display messages on the MRC's website that promote positive images of women;
- Publish information about a confidential helpline and specialist services available for women who have experienced violence or abuse;
- Ensure that information is designed in formats and with images that are clear, inclusive and understandable. This means making sure that the language and images used in publicity, on the MRC website and in posters displayed in the MRC, reflect the lives of both women and men.

For further information see:

CEDAW General Recommendation No. 26 on women migrant workers and how to define gender-sensitive migration policies

UN Migrant Workers' Committee General Comment No. 2 on undocumented migrant workers, which makes specific reference to violence against undocumented women.

UN Women *Gender on the Move: Working on the Migration–Development Nexus from a Gender Perspective*

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/12/un-report-reiterates-gender-equality-is-a-crucial-component-of-migration>

9.3 Services that are inclusive of the needs of children and family members

Services for migrants' families and children

Having an awareness of the needs of families and children is crucial to providing an inclusive service. It is important to listen to and understand the needs and experiences of a migrant's or potential migrant's children and family. Information services and advice may need to cover a range of family issues, such as family reunification, migration with or without children and family members, and staying in touch with and continuing to provide a service to the client's family if the client migrates alone.

Services for children and youth at risk

It is important that MRCs have knowledge about providing services for the protection of migrant children, including those that are accompanied by their parents. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child states that every child should be treated equally, regardless of their residence status.

Build an understanding of the different ways in which migrant children experience vulnerabilities and violations of rights, particularly in ensuring that undocumented children have access to essential services such as education and health care, and specialist child protection and welfare services.

Specialist services will need to be provided for children who have specific protection needs, for example, because they are unaccompanied or trafficked. If this is the case, specific Memoranda of Understanding should be put in place with child protection and welfare agencies.

**Example****Examples of how MRCs have kept in contact with clients and their families**

The Migrant Workers Associations set up by the **MRC in Sri Lanka** has used various methods to stay in touch with the families of migrant workers and returnees that they serve. This has included regular consultation and contacts with clients in Sri Lanka, which enables keeping up-to-date with the issues that affect family members and migrants working abroad. The MRC also assists family members in tracing domestic workers with whom they have lost contact.

The **MCDEM in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Migrant Support Centres in Tajikistan** have put in place electronic forms of communication to maintain contact with migrants and their families within the country and those working abroad.

MSCs in **Tajikistan** have assisted the families of migrants in finding family members who they have lost contact with. This work has taken place in close partnership with Embassies of Tajikistan in destination countries, the Ministry of Interior Affairs, Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment, and the Red Crescent Society in Tajikistan, who make contact with their counterparts in countries of destination in order to trace family members. The MSCs also work closely with the IOM in Moscow and in other destination countries during the process of finding lost migrants. The comprehensive involvement of all partners has been very successful in tracing family members. In addition, MSCs provide a range of information, psychological and legal services to support the families of migrants left behind in Tajikistan, in close collaboration with government departments. Specialists from the MSCs and relevant government structures working with migrants have been trained in areas such as migration management, counter trafficking, psychosocial support to families, family meditation, effective management of remittances and positive parenting, which has improved their capacity to work with migrants and their family members.

In **the Philippines**, migrant workers and their families are encouraged to actively participate in the implementation of MRC activities.

9.4 Services that are inclusive of and accessible to all client groups

It is important to ensure that MRC services are inclusive and accessible to all MRC client groups. The following are issues to take into account in the planning and provision of services:

- Be aware of a client's gender, socioeconomic background, culture, language preference, literacy or disability. Take note that some MRC clients may need different levels of information, ranging from basic information through to detailed interviews and casework.
- Provide services in equal ways to migrants who are documented and undocumented. If MRCs are providing services to undocumented migrants, it will be useful to refer to the ethical guidelines that have been drawn up by the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM),⁶
- Ensure that **information about the MRC is provided in languages that are spoken by all potential clients**, including those who are the most difficult for the MRC to reach. Where possible, clients should be provided with simultaneous and professional interpretation services when they access spoken information and counselling services from MRC staff. Information leaflets about the MRC should be translated into the main languages spoken by potential clients. This can include short accessible information about the location and services provided and information on the website in relevant languages. (Chapter 1 refers to the target group needs assessment to be carried out prior to the MRC being established, including the languages spoken by potential clients).
- Think about ways to support face-to-face information and counselling services through e-mail, Skype, SMS text messaging, the Internet, social media and outreach to socially isolated groups.

The following are some hints on how to provide equality of access to MRC services; they are relevant for all groups (including women and men, people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups, and old and young people).

⁶ For further information see: PICUM Ethical Guidelines for Assisting Undocumented Migrants. Available at: http://picum.org/picum.org/uploads/file_/Ethical%20Guidelines_proofread%20June%202013.pdf



- The physical environment of the MRC affects the accessibility of the services provided. Making sure that the physical layout of your information centre is accessible is particularly important for people with disabilities.
- It is important that any information provided (whether face-to-face, on the MRC website, in print, on the telephone, in a digital or video format) is checked to ensure that it is accessible and appropriate for all clients.
- Web design should aim to be accessible to and usable by disabled people. Standards for testing the accessibility of web content can be downloaded from the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (version 2.0).
- Consider how different media and formats (written information, information provided visually and information provided on the Internet using video and podcasts) can be provided for different audiences. If information is made available in as many formats as possible it will provide clients with choices about how they access information, which is particularly relevant for people with literacy difficulties.
- Ensure that there are no stereotypes or inappropriate messages given in the language and expressions used to describe a person's status, gender, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability. Avoid using stereotypes and use language that promotes positive attitudes.

The following are some good practices that can help facilitate communication that is inclusive and supportive and can enable or empower the client to make informed choices on taking action themselves:

- ◆ Choose a quiet place to meet with few distractions if possible;
- ◆ Listen to the client and identify his or her needs;
- ◆ Treat the client with dignity, respect and equality;
- ◆ Be patient, calm and professional, and show empathy;
- ◆ Avoid making assumptions about a person's gender or disability;
- ◆ Make the person feel comfortable;
- ◆ Do not patronize the person or make judgments about their background;
- ◆ Observe confidentiality;

- ◆ Ask the client about the best way to provide help; if there is uncertainty always ask the client and involve them actively in communicating;
- ◆ If a member of staff offers help, wait until the person has accepted the offer;
- ◆ Advise on options available and take action or make referrals where appropriate;
- ◆ Continually check that there is understanding of what is being communicated.

MRCs should seek out practical ways to meet the needs of people with disabilities, including people who are deaf or hard of hearing, people with mental health difficulties, people with a vision impairment, people with learning disabilities and people with health issues that limit their understanding and decision-making. One way to ensure that the MRC is accessible to people with disabilities is to consult with clients and encourage them to make suggestions about the best way to provide services. Have a system for feedback to enable clients to comment on the accessibility of the MRC's services. Work in partnership with different organizations and groups to improve the accessibility of the services provided.

Although all clients require the same levels of respect and listening skills, in some cases extra steps may need to be taken to communicate with some clients. This may be relevant, for example, in communicating with people in distress, people with vulnerabilities and people with disabilities.



Chapter 10

Sustainability of Migrant Resource Centres



Chapter 10:

Sustainability of Migrant Resource Centres

Objective: Ensure the long-term institutional and financial sustainability of the MRC

This chapter provides guidance on how MRCs can ensure long-term institutional and financial sustainability.

Sustainability refers to the continuation of an MRC's goals, principles and activities once project resources have ended. Finding sufficient resources to continue running an MRC, while important, is not the only objective of a strategy for sustainability.

Sustainability means ensuring that the project's goals continue to be met in whatever form is appropriate and that activities meet identified needs.

The sustainability of MRCs is important in ensuring that the services of the MRC are effectively and appropriately provided in the long term. This is especially relevant as it takes some time for MRCs to be established, procedures to be developed, staff to be trained and mechanisms to be put in place to assure the quality of services provided. However, achieving sustainability is a significant challenge for many MRCs as funding is often time-limited to the initial project duration.

A key role for providers of MRCs is to plan and provide for the long-term sustainability of the Centres. Sustainability will be more achievable if the following are already in place:

- Good coordination, links and partnerships with local groups, organizations and government bodies.
- A commitment from those local groups and bodies foreseen to take over the MRC's services to work with the MRC in building a strategy for sustainability.



- A handover strategy should be put in place in the design phase of the MRC, and adapted during the MRC's set up and running.
- There will be a smoother transition to handover where staff secondments from partner organizations have been put in place. Staff secondments are a very good way of reducing operational costs, building the capacity of key personnel in partner organizations and for the longer-term sustainability of the MRC.

Some MRCs become integrated into existing government services and structures, for instance, into government employment services. In these cases, migration information and advice services are carried out in parallel with employment advice.

For MRCs that have the objective to either hand over the service to a government agency or integrate the service into existing government structures, the following are relevant:

- Plan for the integration of MRC services into relevant government structures and link the development of MRC services to longer-term government strategies, plans and funding.
- Establish agreements or Memoranda of Understanding setting out when and how MRC services will be integrated into government structures when project funding ends. This should also set out the conditions and standards that have to be met.
- Build capacity in the government and ensure that MRC services are included in regulatory, legislative or specific frameworks and strategies on migration.
- Sustainability should be built into all planning and operations of MRCs. The best way to ensure sustainability is to establish from the outset that revenue and capital funding for an MRC is guaranteed and factored into the budget of a local government entity or government department.
- Where MRC services are integrated into existing services, such as employment offices, ensure that there are skilled and trained staff who can provide migration-related information services and advice.
- Prior to handover, an MRC must take a key responsibility for knowledge and information sharing and the training of staff who will be responsible for delivering the service in the future.

Data on MRC sustainability

MRCs written into government policies and plans

The Action Plan of the Resolution on Migration Policy of the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** envisages the establishment of Migrant Service Centres in the branches of the Employment Service Agency throughout the country.

The **2012 National Employment Action Plan for Serbia** referred to Migrant Service Centres and their role of building capacity in the labour market institutions and the National Employment Service for the development and monitoring of labour migration policy. The Action Plan provides for the establishment of Migrant Service Centres and/or specialist posts on labour migration in the employment agency.

The **Albanian** Migration Counters (**Sportele Migracioni**) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government to ensure that the functions of the MRC would continue after project funding ended, and would be listed in the National Strategy on Migration and Action Plan. The 36 **Migration Counters**, established at regional and local public employment offices, were initially supported by IOM when it established the first Migrant Assistance Centre in 2002. IOM subsequently supported 14 Migrant Service Centres (under the IOM/EC AENEAS-funded regional project *Capacity building, information and awareness raising towards orderly migration in the Western Balkans*). The 14 MSCs were later transferred to the public regional and local employment offices as part of the network of Migrant Counters managed by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, with support from IOM. The need for services for potential migrants was identified in various government strategies that highlighted the importance of improved services for potential migrants and migrants returning to Albania. A key aim was to reduce the high levels of irregular migration from Albania and to make potential migrants aware of the risks of irregular migration.⁷

⁷ See for example the National Strategy on Migration (2005–2010), the Strategy on Reintegration of Returned Albanian Citizens (2010–2015). Art. 7 of the Law on Emigration obliges the State to supply potential labour emigrants with information on emigration possibilities. The Reintegration Strategy for Returned Albanian Citizens (2010–2015) sanctioned the establishment of a network of 36 Migration Counters located in regional and local employment offices across the country.



A large number of MRCs are established and operate on a short-term, project-funding basis. The project funding allows for design, set up and capacity-building, with a goal of building sustainability from national resources. The following are steps that can be taken in building sustainability amongst project partners:

- Assess the financial viability of the MRC at project end and examine alternative sources of funding, including funding from central/local government budgets.
- Government (central or local) ownership of an MRC can help to reduce the overall costs and will enable MRC services to be integrated with other relevant services, such as employment advice. This model is also important for promoting the alignment of MRC services with a government's migration and employment policies.

MRCs supported by state budgets

Mobility Centres in Georgia put a plan in place from the outset for the sustainability and continuity of the MRCs. This was achieved through an MOU signed with the host Government Ministry in 2009 and the allocation of a state budget to run the centres under the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Migration Strategy of Georgia for 2013-2014. The Mobility Centres originated from an IOM regional project (2005-2008) that established Migrant Resource Centres in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The subsequent creation of the Mobility Centres was closely connected to the signing of the EU Mobility Partnership in 2009 and the implementation of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan. IOM handed over the MRCs to the Government and Mobility Centres continue to be supported under a new IOM project in Georgia.⁸ In 2015 there were four Mobility Centres with nine dedicated IOM staff members and one full-time staff member seconded to the Mobility Centre by the host Ministry.

The **MCDEM MRC** secured a commitment from the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to include its running costs in the 2010 budget.

⁸ Reinforcing the Capacities of the Government of Georgia in Border and Migration Management (More-for-More). See <http://informedmigration.ge/cms/en/About-the-Project>, (2013-2017)

Tips on how to build sustainability into MRC planning and development from the outset:

- ◆ Identify short-term and long-term goals for sustainability of the MRC.
- ◆ Assess what specific activities can and should be continued after project funding has ended, and whether there are gaps in services or alternative services that can be built into a sustainability plan.
- ◆ Formulate an agreed sustainability plan with partners.
- ◆ Identify what resources are needed to sustain the MRC, including staffing, premises, and so on.
- ◆ Gain buy-in and support among partners for MRC services and activities that can be sustained.
- ◆ Document successes and outcomes, backed up by evidence and data from the MRC; it will be important to show the added-value of MRC services in convincing potential partners of the viability and importance of sustaining MRC services in the future.
- ◆ Keep up-to-date data on MRC clients and services, being essential if plans for MRC sustainability are to be achieved (collect feedback from MRC referral partners and other stakeholders, for instance, through an online survey).
- ◆ Demonstrate how the MRC's role and activities complement and/or link into national policy objectives.
- ◆ Show how systems for evaluation and learning have informed the MRC's development and its plans for sustainability.

In many origin countries insufficient resources for public services mean that priority is often not given to funding MRCs in the longer-term after project funding ends. Under these circumstances it may be possible to:

- Integrate some core MRC functions into existing government employment services. This may include provision of information through an Internet-based information portal, which will need to be regularly updated.



- Hold discussions with local partners, for example, NGOs or trade unions, to identify alternative sources of long-term funding for the MRC.
- Discuss with development partners the possibility of securing a commitment to long-term funding for MRCs, and/or building MRC funding into donor-funded programmes.

In the event that funding becomes restricted, it will be important to prioritize services that are provided in the most cost-effective way and have the maximum impact. In these circumstances, MRC staff should aim to maintain administrative activities such as outreach and provision of information and refer beneficiaries to partner organizations where they may access necessary services.

By maintaining focus on connections with local partners and constantly re-evaluating the needs of the target beneficiary group, MRCs can continue to be relevant and sustainable.

Sustainability of independent centres

In some cases integration with government structures will not be possible or desirable. Some MRCs will want to remain independent, for instance, in the case of trade union-run MRCs, and/or because MRCs are already part of a wider institutional structure that can support their sustainability.

MRCs supported by non-state funding

The **Colombian CIAMI** and the **MSC in Sri Lanka** have benefited from funding support from parent or partner bodies, such as donors from trade union organizations or global trade union federations to which national trade unions are affiliated.

The **Spectrum MRC in Australia, a destination country MRC**, has maintained independence and sustainability through multiple governmental and philanthropic funding sources, including client fees for certain services, and core funding from government. However, it was necessary to cut back on certain services after project funding ended.





Appendices



Appendix I:**Standards for high-quality MRC services**

The following table replicates the objectives set out in each chapter of the Handbook. The objectives constitute standards for the development and implementation of high-quality MRC services.

<p>Chapter 1: Planning and designing a Migrant Resource Centre</p>	<p>Have in place an effective plan for the design and institutional set-up of the MRC in order to meet the identified needs of clients at all stages of the migration process and to provide for long-term sustainability.</p>
<p>Chapter 2: Services provided by Migrant Resource Centres</p>	<p>Provide coordinated, relevant, impartial, independent, high-quality information services and advice to enable potential migrants to make informed decisions and choices about migration.</p> <p>Provide potential migrants with training and skills development services to enable them to enhance their skills prior to migration or in their home country context.</p> <p>Provide accurate and relevant information and services for returning migrants to promote their reintegration.</p> <p>Provide services for migrants at risk or who have experienced exploitation in order to promote their protection.</p> <p>Empower migrants to contribute to the economic and social development of their home countries.</p> <p>Enhance the contribution that MRCs can make to national policy developments concerning migrant protection and migration for development.</p>



<p>Chapter 3: Methods of service delivery</p>	<p>Provide a wide range of services to reach migrants, potential migrants, returnees, and their families, to empower them to protect themselves during all stages of the migration process.</p> <p>Ensure the provision of high quality client-oriented services that are impartial, effective and efficient.</p>
<p>Chapter 4: Building blocks of Migrant Resource Centres</p>	<p>Implement an appropriate legal and institutional structure for the MRC and involve all relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Put in place an effective management structure, policies and standard operating procedures for the MRC.</p> <p>Ensure that all staff have appropriate skills that are relevant to the post held. MRCs should provide further skills development for staff in order to provide a high-quality service.</p> <p>Provide sufficient resources and equipment in the MRC to ensure that information is up-to-date and relevant.</p> <p>Ensure an ongoing review and planning of services in order to provide services of high quality.</p>
<p>Chapter 5: Cooperation, partnerships and referrals</p>	<p>Implement effective systems for cooperation, partnership and referral with all relevant governmental and non-governmental agencies to provide clients with an integrated range of high-quality services.</p>
<p>Chapter 6: Communication, visibility and outreach</p>	<p>Produce and implement a communications, visibility and outreach strategy to reach all potential clients, particularly migrants and potential migrants who are most vulnerable, at-risk and hard to reach.</p>

Chapter 7: Information management	Establish good quality systems for managing client data as a core goal for the effective planning, management and monitoring of the quality of MRC services.
Chapter 8: Monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance	Monitor and evaluate MRC services to determine the extent to which they contributed to safe migration practices and informed decision-making. Provide continuous systems for client feedback to ensure services remain up-to-date and relevant to clients.
Chapter 9: Making services equal, accessible and inclusive to all groups	Ensure that MRC services are equal, accessible and inclusive of the needs of all clients, and provided on the basis of “equality of access to services for all”.
Chapter 10: Sustainability of Migrant Resource Centres	Ensure the long-term institutional and financial sustainability of the MRC.



Appendix 2:

Client feedback questionnaire (IOM Budapest)

1. What was the reason for your visit to the Migrant Service Centre?

2. Please provide details on the kind of assistance that you benefited from at the Migrant Service Centre.

3. How helpful was this assistance for your purposes?

1 - Not helpful	2	3	4	5 - Very helpful

4. Did the visit to the MSC help you make a final decision on your plans to leave your country or to stay at home?

Yes

No

A little

5. In your opinion, how can MSCs improve their service?

6. Any other comments

Thank you for your time!

Appendix 3:

Template for client interviews

ILO has drawn up an interview template for collecting qualitative data from clients, which can be adapted to suit an individual MRC. The questions cover:

MRC services: utilization, accessibility and awareness

- What type of service did you use at the MRC?
- How did you first learn about the services available at the MRC?
- Did you face any obstacles in accessing the MRC's services?
- Were you reluctant to access the MRC for any reason?
- Do women in your community face any additional obstacles to using the MRC?

Quality

- Did the services you received at the MRC meet your needs?
- What should be improved about the MRC? (Facilities, staff, services, outreach, etc.)
- Gender sensitivity
- Were the services provided responsive to your needs as a woman/man? (e.g., sectors of employment, channels for regular migration, labour rights, social protection, etc.)

Outcomes and recommendations

- What have you learned about safe migration or labour rights from using the MRC's services?
- How have you applied what you have learned to better protect yourself? Have you changed your plans or behaviour in any way?



- Have you received any practical benefits from using the MRC's services? (e.g., saved money on recruitment, obtained better working conditions, received compensation, etc.)
- What additional services or information should the MRC provide to migrant workers?

For further information see: ILO: *Monitoring and evaluation guide for migrant worker resource centres* (2014). Appendix VII. Beneficiary interview guidelines. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_313603.pdf

Appendix 4:

Beneficiary tracing

Beneficiary tracing has the following steps:

- Each MRC should collect tracing data from 100 randomly selected clients (50 women and 50 men) who received services from the MRC in the previous six months.
- Contact each client by telephone and if the person cannot be reached contact should be made with a family member. If they have knowledge of and are able to complete the survey, it will not be necessary to find a replacement. Otherwise a replacement should be sought.
- Ensure that there is a good balance between former clients who migrated and clients who decided not to migrate.
- A standard set of questions should be completed and attached to the client card so that they can be combined with the demographic information already obtained.
- Participation is entirely voluntary and informed consent should be obtained at the beginning of the phone call.

The ILO's beneficiary survey carried out in Cambodia asked the following questions:

- Have you migrated abroad for work since receiving counselling services at the MRC?
- How did the counselling you received affect your decision to migrate?
- What channel did you use to migrate?
- Based on what source of information did you decide to migrate through a regular channel?
- What type of information most influenced your decision to migrate regularly?
- How did you choose which recruitment agency to use?



- Do you think that your rights were better protected by migrating through a regular channel?
- Based on what source of information did you choose to migrate through an irregular channel?
- Do you plan to regularize your legal status after arrival in your destination country?
- Why did you decide not to migrate?

For further information see: ILO: *Monitoring and evaluation guide for migrant worker resource centres* (2014). Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_313603.pdf

Appendix 5:**Migrant Resource Centres referred to in the Handbook**

Country of origin MRCs	
Migrant Service Centres in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo/UNSC 1244)	http://www.migrantservicecentres.org
Migrant Workers Resource Centres: ILO Tripartite Action to Protect the Rights of Migrant Workers (GMS Triangle project)	http://www.ilo.org/dyn/migpractice/migmain.showPractice?p_lang=en&p_practice_id=84
Migrant Support Centres, Tajikistan	http://www.iom.tj/
Mobility Centres, Georgia	www.informedmigration.ge
Migrant Resource Centre, Micronesia	http://mrcmicronesia.org
Migrant Resource Centre, Viet Nam	http://www.un.org.vn/en/iom-agencypresscenter1-108/3206-iom-s-migrants-resource-center-promotes-safe-labour-migration.html



Migrant Resource Centre, Myanmar	http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/news-and-views/press-briefing-notes/pbn-2014b/pbn-listing/iom-opens-three-migrant-resource.html
Filipino Workers Resource Centres, Overseas Workers Welfare Agency, the Philippines	http://www.owwa.gov.ph/?q=content/owwa
One-Stop Resource Centre for Youth and Migrants, the Philippines	http://www.mdgfund.org/sites/default/files/YEM_MANUAL_Philip_One%20Stop%20Resource%20center%20youth%20and%20migrants.pdf
Migrant Resource Centres, India	http://moia.gov.in/services.aspx?IDI=325&id=m3&idp=92&mainid=73
Migrant Resource Centre, Nepal	http://www.pncc.org.np/?content&id=3
Oficinas de Atención al Migrante, Migrant Services Centres, Office of Migrant Care, Colombia	http://www.redescolombia.org/ejes/mro/oficinas-atencion-migrante
Centre for Information and Care of Migrants, Confederation of Labour, Colombia	http://www.csa-csi.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5762%3Acentro-de-informaci-atenciara-migrantes&catid=209%3Aespecial-migraciones&Itemid=186&lang=es and http://www.cgtcolombia.org/index.php/accordion-b-2/level-3

Migrant Resource Centre, Cambodia	https://www.facebook.com/pages/Migrant-Worker-Resource-Centre/518648411573778
Centro de Apoio ao Migrante no País de Origem-CAMPO, Cabo Verde	http://www.mdc.gov.cv/index.php/testesd/87-campo
Migrant Services Centre, Sri Lanka	http://www.eureka.lk/migrant/
Country of destination MRCs	
Centro Nacional de Apoio ao Imigrante: One-Stop-Shop MRC, Portugal	http://www.acidi.gov.pt/es-imigrante/servicos/centros-nacionais-de-apoio-ao-imigrante---cna
Information Resource Centre, Moscow, the Russian Federation	http://moscow.iom.int/activities_labormigration_CARM_infocentre.html
Migrant Information Centre, Bratislava, Slovakia	http://mic.iom.sk/en.html



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In recent years, Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) and similar facilities have been established in both origin and host countries by Governments, NGOs and international organizations such as IOM. MRCs set up in countries of origin aim to inform, orient and train migrants in preparation for employment and stay abroad and reintegration upon returning home.

In destination countries, corresponding Centres have been established to inform migrants – in a language they understand – on their stay, their employment and integration rights and responsibilities, and their potential return and reintegration. Many Centres cater to the needs of both foreign nationals and own nationals on their territory.

The array of services provided by MRCs varies significantly. Some Centres provide only information services, while others provide a whole range of specialized services such as individualized job counselling and matching, skills development, and facilitation of remittance transfers, to name but a few.

To date, there has been little comprehensive advice on how to manage a Migrant Resource Centre as a specific type of information service, and the corresponding issues of institutional set-up, terms of reference, quality of service, monitoring and long-term sustainability. This Handbook seeks to provide guidance for those considering setting up an MRC on issues of institutional structure, service design and delivery and the resources required. For those already operating such a service, the Handbook delivers a useful reference source on issues of monitoring and evaluation, quality control, communication and outreach strategy and establishing links with organizations in destination countries. It is recognized that the procedures will need to be adapted for local conditions.

The Handbook specifically focuses on Migrant Resource Centres providing assistance to migrants in countries of origin at a pre-departure stage. The ultimate goal is to ensure that migrants accessing MRC services are provided with accurate information and services that will contribute effectively to making their migration experience successful in terms of integration in the host country, and in case of return.

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