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PEOPLE INNOVATION INCLUSION PARTNERSHIPS

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# PROMOTING SAFE MIGRATION IN 2020

West and Central Africa

# Promoting Safe Migration in 2020



Girls participate in a skit on safe migration in The Gambia.

Photo: IOM/Simon Meienberg

The second year of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration saw a rise in new approaches promoting safe migration, and the evolution of existing activities becoming ever more adapted to a changing environment. In 2019, IOM inaugurated its first Regional Awareness Raising Unit for West and Central Africa. The Joint Initiative has served as an inspiration to set out its thematic lines and future orientation. Our 2020 outlook takes stock from our achievements and lessons learnt implementing hundreds of activities over the past two years. Based on tendencies observed as well as feedback received from partners as well as target audience members, this outlook is built around four key elements: People, Innovation, Inclusivity and Partnerships.

**People** (p. 7) remain at the centre of what we do and of our mission to advocate for safe migration. In 2020, we will strengthen our links with returnees, local leaders and community members to make sure the goal of safe and informed migration is shared and owned by all stakeholders. We will continue to work from a human-centered perspective, answer actual needs expressed by our migrants, and empowering those we work with.

2019 was a year of **Innovation** (p. 15). We partnered with experts from the design sector and returnees to develop fresh solutions to existing challenges. This includes using technological applications and social media to increase our engagement with youths and potential migrants.

New activities can only be impactful when they're accessible. That is why this year, we integrate sports and the arts in our approach to promote **inclusivity** (p. 31) and empower youths to take over public spaces through performances. In the region, we also support participative painting, video screenings and theatre sessions to encourage social cohesion between migrants and host or home communities.

Finally, none of this would be possible without **Partnerships** (p. 43) with government entities, other UN agencies, migrants' associations, NGOs, CSOs, youth and women's associations, as well as the private sector.

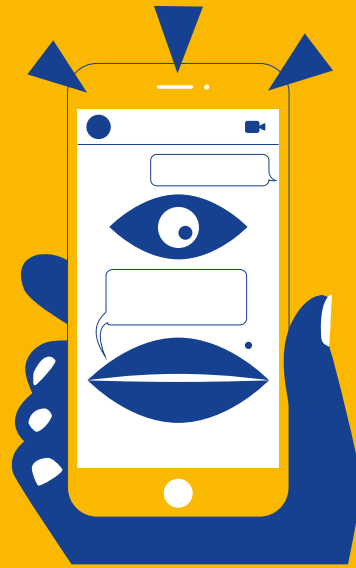
*Sophie Nonnenmacher*  
Regional Director a.i., IOM Regional Office for  
West and Central Africa

## People

## Innovation

## Inclusion

## Partnerships



Awareness raising for safe migration is first and foremost about putting people at the centre, not as objects but as actors of the desired knowledge, behavioural or attitudinal change. Through our activities, we seek to empower people, whether they are volunteers, returnees, women or marginalized groups, to own the process by co-designing and supporting the implementation of activities.

As we expand our activities, it is important to maintain a spirit of innovation. To do that, we first listen to our audiences, look for ideas everywhere and use new technologies and approaches such as gamification and human-centered design to better engage.

Inclusion fosters acceptance of other people, and their own unique abilities. It helps marginalized groups such as returnees or migrants in transit find a community to which they belong, while encouraging them to express themselves in creative ways. With careful planning and organisation, inclusive activities also allow migrants and communities to develop strong bonds, or in some cases rekindle lost ones.

Partnerships are at the heart of our mission to help potential migrants make informed migration decisions. Our partnership approach is anchored on three principles: capacity-building, networking and co-design. Through this approach we want to make sure that the goal of safe migration is shared by all stakeholders, and that activities are scalable, transformative and have a long-lasting impact.



# People

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# Volunteers as Community Mobilizers

2019 was the year of the community mobilizer. These volunteers, who can be returnees, foreign nationals, community or youth leaders, play a pivotal role in IOM's awareness raising activities across the region. They go by different names in different places – volunteers, voluntary field officers, community outreach officers, community mobilizers focal points – but all have the same mission. They raise their voices to promote safe migration, using their ability to work directly with people in their communities, in a language they understand. As peers, members of the community or migrants themselves, volunteers can engage with different actors of the migration spectrum – young people, migrants, leaders – in the most culturally adapted ways, and by creating trusted settings.

## How it works

Volunteers can take on various roles and tasks. In some countries, they provide direct assistance to stranded migrants (as is the case with search and rescue missions in Niger), they ensure referral of migrants to adequate protection services, reach out to communities (see Engaging Leaders and Communities), participate in radio or television debates, make videos, or even implement activities directly from A to Z (see *Games and Learning*, p. 18).

In many cases, the volunteer community mobilisers are returnees. Before they go into the field, they learn about community engagement techniques and key migration information. In Niger and Côte d'Ivoire, IOM and volunteers co-designed peer-to-peer outreach guides to help volunteers in their outreach work. Volunteers regularly produce activity reports which help assess the relevance of, and response to, specific community engagement approaches.

## Why it works

Working with returnees as volunteers empowers them to define activities with unique content, to learn new skills, discover new interests and reconnect with their communities. Because of their personal experiences and deep knowledge of the target communities, volunteers can reach the most vulnerable individuals, even in remote or protected areas.

Working with returnees as volunteers empowers them to define activities with unique content, to learn new skills, discover new interests and reconnect with their communities.

Empowering returnees  
for social change



Community volunteers lead a grin in Côte d'Ivoire. Grins are a style of community conversations held in Côte d'Ivoire held usually around tea. They provide spaces where youths can openly debate and discuss societal and political issues. Photo: IOM/Mohamed Diabaté

## Next steps

Building on the successful experience of working with returnees to implement awareness raising, the regional office for West and Central Africa is exploring ways for returnees to be a more concrete part of project implementation and strategy. The regional awareness raising unit is working to promote the approach through its campaigns, creating more opportunities for returnees and community leaders to be heard and involved.

# Engaging Leaders in Communities

In many countries of the region, IOM works closely with community leaders to create communication channels with returned migrants and community members, young and old, and encourage open dialogue on the push factors of migration, and the role communities can play in encouraging safe migration. Although young people take the decision to migrate on their own, their choices are sometimes motivated by others, including family, friends, acquaintances and migrants. Likewise, traditional and religious leaders in rural settings, whose blessings are often required for any journey, wield important authority to influence migration decisions. Hence the importance (and opportunity) of working with community leaders in awareness raising activities.

## How it works

IOM trains facilitators on community dialogue techniques which include active listening, positive and open questioning, the importance of body language and setting

ground rules for safe communication. The facilitators go – usually in pairs – into communities they are familiar with, and lead dialogues on specific issues. Between 15 and 25 people take part in these conversations during which the participants share their stories and perspectives, as well as questions on issues such as the psychosocial impact of leaving and returning home, and the impact of peer pressure on migration decision-making. Afterwards, the facilitator answers the key questions that arise in the conversation and guides participants through different options.

Community conversations led by local leaders allow community members to learn the ordeals of irregular migration within a familiar setting and through trusted sources.

## Why it works

Community conversations led by local leaders allow community members to learn the ordeals of irregular migration within a familiar setting and through trusted sources. These conversations tap into existing knowledge and information sharing cultures, and hence can take different forms depending on the context, from traditional tea drinking (attaya) sessions in Chad and The Gambia, grins (traditional community meetings) in Côte d'Ivoire, to Djumbai in Guinea-Bissau. Finally, community conversations offer the chance to listen to what's going on in communities, thereby serving as a feedback mechanism for IOM's activities.

Training community leaders for life-changing conversations



A community leader takes part in a training in Tenkodogo, in Burkina Faso. In Burkina Faso where traditional and religious leaders and chiefs are revered, IOM's flagship campaign "FasoNooma" which means "The Faso is good" in Mooré language integrated an advocacy component to ensure that safe migration messages are carried community leaders. Photo: IOM/François-Xavier Ada

## Next steps

IOM plans to produce a training manual for community dialogue facilitators based on the different experiences, lessons learnt and methodologies used the region.

# Women for Change

For women,  
by women,  
with women

In West and Central Africa, IOM works with women, both returnees and relatives of migrants, ensure that the place of women in migration as well as the vulnerabilities of female migrants, are brought to light. In **Niger**, trained female community mobilizers participate in outreach efforts targeting female migrants in transit areas. In **Côte d'Ivoire**, mothers of migrants lead community conversations on their roles as parents in curbing irregular migration. In **The Gambia**, women and girls collaborate with IOM and the National Youth Council to create safe spaces and girl-friendly activities in existing youth centres.

In most contexts, the initiative to create women-specific activities come from women's groups themselves. In **Chad**, IOM is working with the Group of 50, a nationwide association of women in leading roles in politics and business, to implement a campaign together. The need for female community mobilizers is regularly expressed by migrants themselves.

## How it works

IOM organises training workshops, focus group discussions and participative workshops (involving music, painting and slam poetry) for and by women and girls – individually or through associations – in transit centres and in communities to highlight the place of women in migration. After receiving specific training, mothers engage with other mothers to talk about sensitive subjects such as parental expectations and aspirations.

When women and/or girls have the possibility to gather in safe spaces, they can be more open to sharing personal, and sometimes sensitive, information.

## Why it works

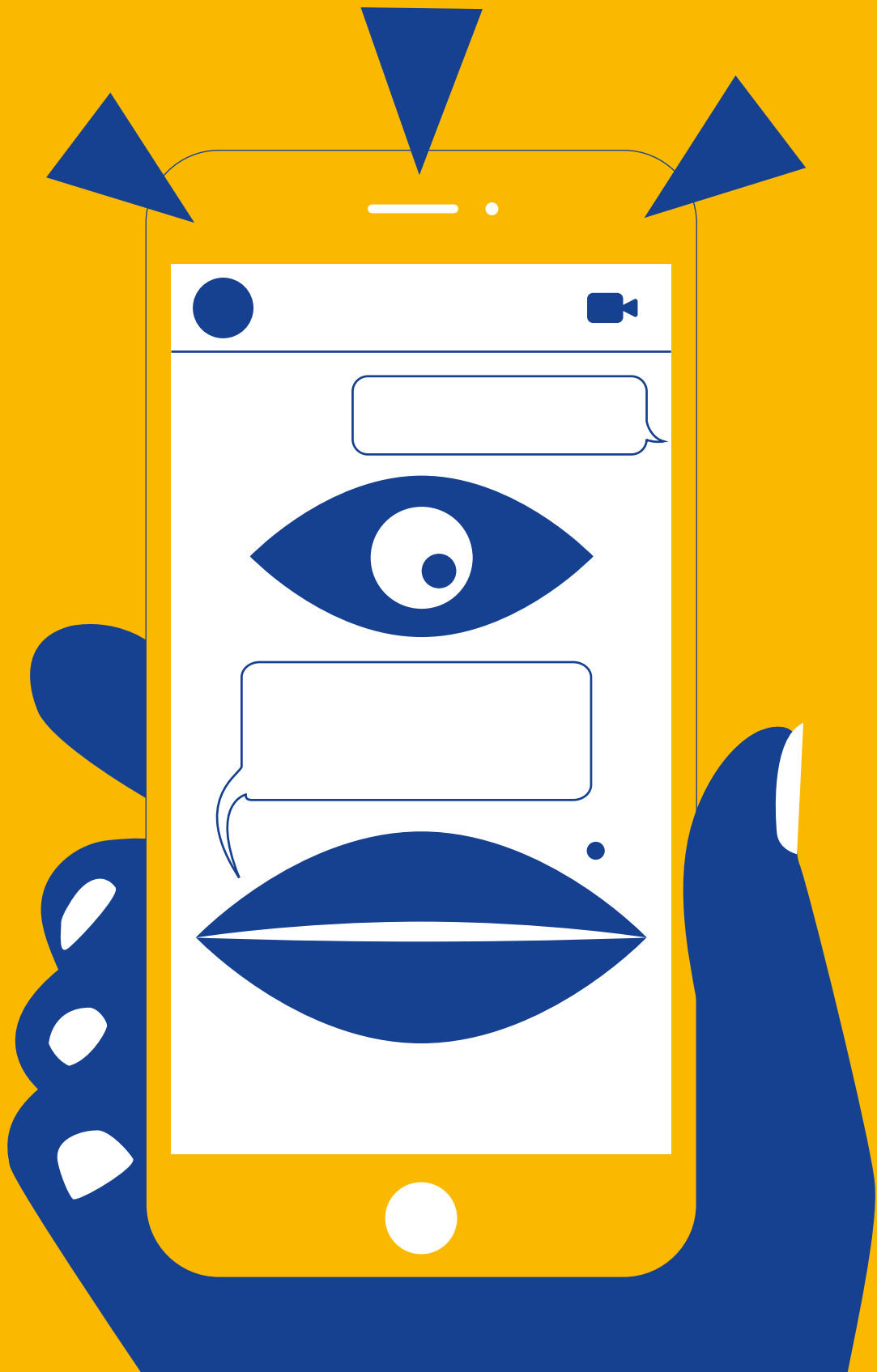
When women and/or girls have the possibility to gather in safe spaces, they can be more open to sharing personal, and sometimes sensitive, information. The activities empower women to speak up for themselves (which many are not used to), and to become messengers reaching more women migrants or relatives of migrants.

## Next steps

With the creation of a regional awareness raising unit IOM has strengthened its outreach to women and streamlined gender into programming through the appointment of a gender focal point. This will allow the Regional Office to support the different



*A group of women participate in a training for women community mobilizers in Côte d'Ivoire.  
Photo: IOM/Mohamed Diabaté*



# Innovation

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# Whatsapp for Safe Migration

Sharing testimonies and saving lives

In Cameroon, IOM partnered with an association of returnees, to pilot a WhatsApp Infoline for safe migration. In 2018, WhatsApp became the most popular messaging platform in West and Central Africa. The ability to share documents, pictures and videos regardless of Internet speed or available bandwidth has made it a prime communication channel for youth in the region.

and community mobilisation. Afterwards, they developed and implemented a range of outreach activities through which the infoline was advertised. These included outreach targeting high school leavers and potential migrants in amateur football clubs. By texting the number, young people can request information on travel requirements, first-hand experience of migrants, and job and scholarship opportunities in Cameroon and abroad.

## How it works

The Infoline is managed by the Organisation sur l'éveil des jeunes sur la Migration Irrégulière et le Traite de Personnes (Organization for youth awakening on irregular migration and human trafficking, OEMIT), an association of returnees who received return and reintegration assistance through the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Association. Prior to the launch of the Infoline, OEMIT members received training on key migration facts

The infoline empowers returnees by providing them opportunities to share their stories and help others, with the occasional support of IOM experts on very technical questions.

## Why it works

The hotline was inspired by a need identified by the partner. Since they started activities, OEMIT members received frequent requests from young Cameroonians on their private numbers and decided to create a hotline to centralise the growing number of requests for information. This initiative is user-driven and relatively cheap to manage. Finally, the Infoline empowers returnees by providing them opportunities to share their stories and help others, with the occasional support of IOM experts on very technical questions.



An IOM staff shows community volunteers how to use the IOM Community Response App, IOM's flagship tool to collect and share migrant testimonies. Photo: IOM/Julia Burpee

## Next steps

In 2019, two other West African transit countries, Chad and Mali, have established similar pilot initiatives to encourage potential migrants as well as migrants in distress to call or text focal points to seek assistance or more information on safe migration. IOM is currently evaluating the three approaches to learn from those experiences and to replicate a tested model, adapted to the different contexts and needs, with sustainability planning.

# Games and Learning

Using games for behavioural change

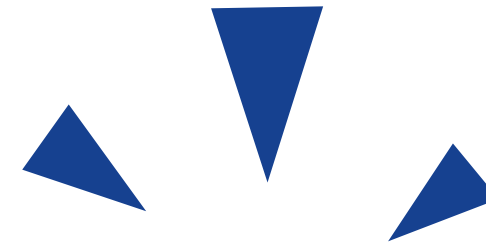
Gamification is a methodological approach that incorporates games into learning. In *The Gambia*, IOM experimented with the approach to help final grade secondary school students learn about the realities of irregular migration and develop “safe reflexes” on migration. IOM partnered with Gambia Returnees from the Backway (GRB) and a learning expert to design an improvisation theatre game, in which students are divided into small groups and tasked to direct and act in a short play representing a migration journey. Together, they reached 250 students nationwide in second half of 2019.

## How it works

Students are divided up into groups of 10 and appointed a facilitator (who’s a returnee, but this will not be disclaimed until the end). Moving through the different steps

of the game, the groups are challenged to pick a migration route, choose items to take on their journey, appoint different roles (actors and directors), decide on a scenario and prepare to bring it to the stage. The plays are evaluated by other students and the winners are rewarded with symbolic prizes. After the session, the students are debriefed by the returnees, who only now share their own migration experience.

Using games as an educational tool provides young people opportunities for deeper learning.



## Why it works

Using games as an educational tool provides young people opportunities for deeper learning. With the help of a facilitator, students get a chance to collectively learn from their own as well as others’ experience. In the end, they test their existing ideas and beliefs against the realities experienced by the returnees. Introducing elements such as competition and artistic expression in awareness raising allows students to experience the impacts of irregular migration, rather than being lectured about it.



*High school students in The Gambia participate in a migration game organized to increase youth engagement in awareness raising for safe migration. Photo: IOM*

adapted into other countries to encourage experimenting gamification techniques for awareness raising. IOM is further elaborating the gamification methodology based on the pilot in The Gambia. Once finalized, it will be applied in similar contexts across the region, and within our training activities. IOM is also working with a Nigerian board-game developer on the production of a boardgame on migration to be disseminated in schools throughout the country.

## Next steps

A bespoke course on integrating Games into Awareness Raising has been developed and is available on IOM’s E-Learning platforms. The course will be rolled out and

# My World Trip: A Board Game to Encourage Learning about Safe Migration



Kenechukwu Ogbuagu is the young CEO of the boardgame company NIBCARDS. In 2019, his board game “My World Trip” became the first grantee of IOM’s call for innovative ideas for awareness raising for safe migration in West and Central Africa.

## Where did it all start?

I grew up in Emene, an Igbo sub-urban community in Enugu state, Nigeria. I am the second son out of five, and we were raised by our mother who is a businesswoman – my dad passed away when I was 11 years old. As a child, I loved to engage in sports and games; we always counted which sports we did in school and on the street. I have gone on to design of these sports and games as boardgames.

## How did you find out you wanted to create boardgames?

In 2013, I was volunteering in a cross-cultural program – I was a co-team leader in a team with Kenyan, British and Nigerian nationalities. A member of the team brought along other board and card games. They encouraged me to design more boardgames and showed me some of the games I had never seen in my life. My curiosity was raised, and I surfed the internet to see how much more is out there. I think that was when I decided to keep designing and finding ways for people to buy and play them.

## What were the reactions of your environment when you said you wanted to start your own company?

When I designed my first boardgame, I didn’t realize it could lead to a business. In fact, it took 2 years for me to bring out the prototype. It was a gradual process; I didn’t really talk about creating a company; I wanted to know if people would even play new boardgames because the whole boardgame market in Nigeria is based on just 8 boardgames that have been in existence since before I was born. But when I told people I was going to resign from a dream job with a British organization to focus fully on a business that is still very new in Nigeria, a few showed their discomfort and it is understandable considering the many risks of doing business.

## What do you reply to people who think games are not serious business?

This has been one of our objectives; we are sending targeted responses to everyone we can reach. To the schools, organizations and care givers, we are showing them how boardgames can be used to increase learning outcomes among their students by designing and introducing them to new games. To business inclined people, we are constantly raising awareness on the various Boardgame value chains and how it requires different talent/skill sets. Value chains such as game designer, illustrator,

comic artist, writer, editor, marketer, manufacturer, convention convener, etc. We are also showing people global financial statistics and market predictions in a way to get them involved in the Tabletop Gaming industry. We also go to schools, IDP Camps and on the street to teach children how to design their own games.

## What have been your strongest and most difficult moments?

Our strongest and most difficult moments have been the first couple of months, when I still funded most of what we did from my salary. Today, we are completely functional and being here fulltime provides me the time and strength to be with the team, customers, create more games and leverage on more opportunities.

## Where did the idea of MY WORLD TRIP come from?

The idea came out of curiosity! I thought of the best way I could raise the curiosity of everyone to want to know more about countries that existed. I asked myself, ‘how can I tell someone that a certain country exists even though that country rarely makes the international news or gets featured in the World-Cup competition in a way that they don’t forget the information as soon as I leave the room?’ I am glad and grateful IOM provided such a platform and support to make this a reality.



Why do you think we should have a conversation with african youth on migration today?

Africa has a growing population which is, sadly, faced with corruption, human rights abuse, terrorism, displacement, unemployment – factors that cause migration. It makes more sense to include young people who make up a large percentage of this population in the decision making.



How would you describe the role of games in awareness raising? Why should we use them?

In my years of designing and promoting games, I have seen how boardgames have made children and adults pause to ask questions about a something that came up as a result of playing. I have seen school children ask their teacher questions and adults using their phones to search instantly in a bid to end an argument and continue playing the game – sometimes to decide the winner too. I believe Games provoke enthusiasm and engagement. Boardgames stir up emotion; when you win, lose, bluff, call a bluff, negotiate or prioritize which action to take, you mix up your emotions with the information on the game. That is one of the best ways to raise awareness – when people feel something about it and not just receive the knowledge.

How could we better raise awareness for safe migration?

I encourage having more child-centered activities. This such as comic, cartoons and games with patriotic messages and contents for children. I have always believed that patriotism can help stop a lot of negative causes of irregular migration and supporting children to be patriotic (including their environment) can be productive in the long term.



# Design for Migration

Integrating human-centered design into awareness raising for safe migration

In The Gambia, IOM partnered with a 'designer for social transformation to investigate how the engagement of young people within youth centers, such as Migrant Information Centres (MICs), could be enhanced, and how that can contribute to promoting safe migration. MICs are one-stop-shops built, managed and/or co-managed by IOM to provide young visitors with easy access to information on safe migration. They are located in communities with high rates of migration such as Basse, Brikama and Soma in The Gambia, and Benin City in Nigeria, to encourage potential migrants to make informed migration decisions.

## How it works

For four weeks, the designer conducted human-centred design research with young people in Basse and Soma youth centres. This comprised of co-creation sessions with teenagers to activate their potential and agency, while creating in them a sense of ownership. Co-creating and testing ideas with young Gambians allowed the designer to identify inter-locking processes and to come up with different scenarios for redesigning the spaces they're already familiar with.



The youth inform their audience about two days of self-organized activities at the MIC in Soma-Pakalinding's Youth Take Over. Photo: IOM/Simon Meienberg

Co-creating and testing ideas within the local context allows us to come up with reality-based scenarios.

## Why it works

A design-based approach to problem-solving enables a holistic view of the local challenges concerning young people and the MIC. Co-creating and testing ideas within the local context allows us to come up with reality-based scenarios that – when implemented as a whole – can lead to adapted and sustainable solutions.

## Next steps

Following the recommendations from the research conducted by the designer, IOM and the National Youth Council (who manages the MICs in The Gambia) have agreed to proceed with the redesign of two MICs in 2020. The basketball court,



A young woman presents her future vision of the youth centre's redesign in Soma-Pakalinding.

Photo: IOM/Simon Meienberg

conference hall and two study cafes will be readapted, alongside participative design interventions that favour more youth-centred activities.





Finishing touches for the Youth Take Over  
at the MIC in Basse The Gambia. Photo: IOM/Simon Meienberg





MIC officer Hamza takes notes of the youth's proposals for the redesign of the youth center.  
Photo: IOM/Simon Meienberg



The female basketball team of Soma is scoring the winning goal.  
Photo: IOM/Simon Meienberg

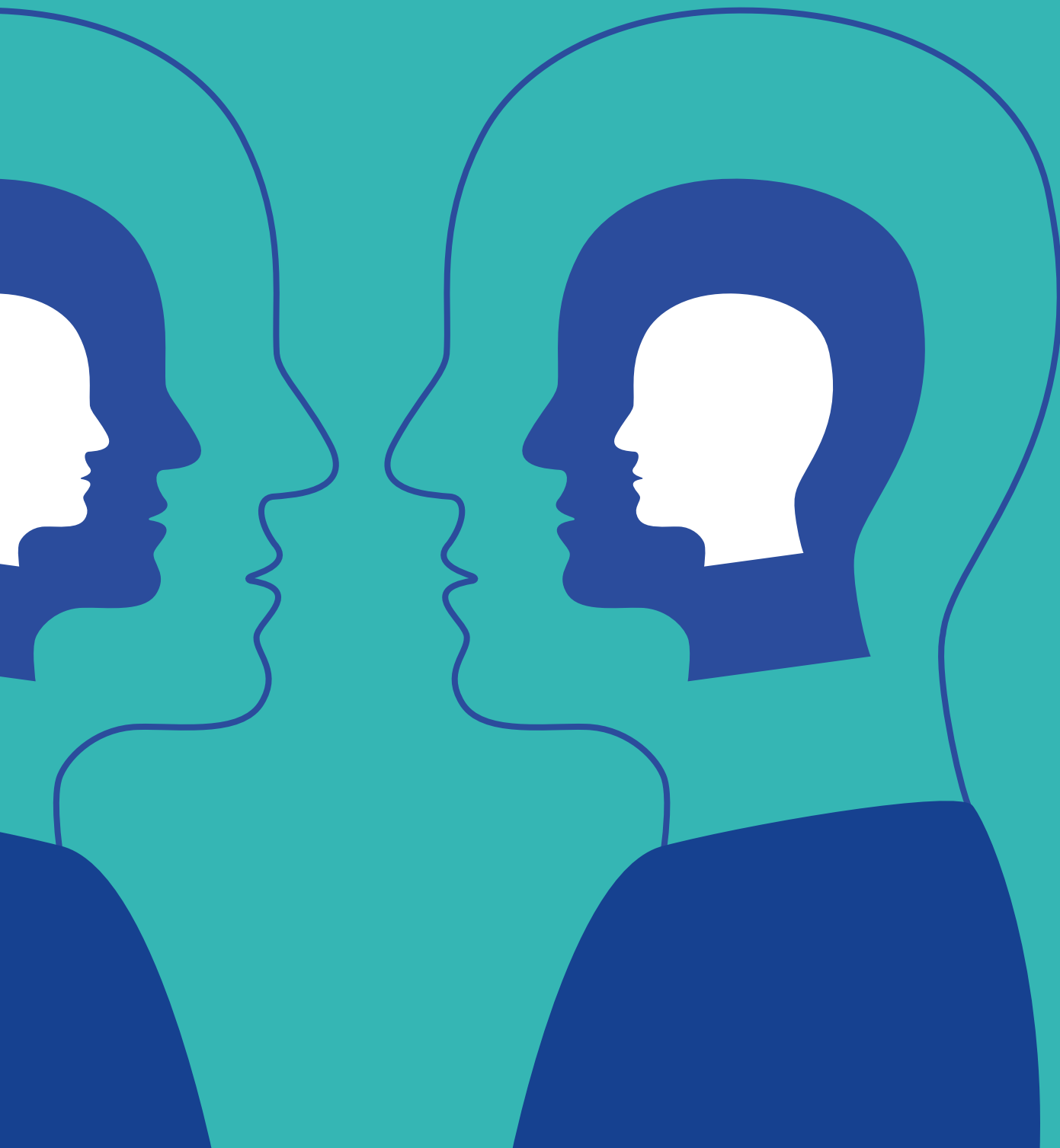


Advertising the Youth Take Over at Paradise FM in the four local languages  
Photo: IOM/Simon Meienberg



The Audience' attention is with Basse Got Talents drama performance.  
Photo: IOM/Simon Meienberg





# Inclusion

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# Raising Awareness through Sport

Encouraging social cohesion and belonging through sports

In West and Central Africa, IOM uses sport to strengthen social cohesion between migrants, returnees and host communities, and to raise awareness on safe migration. In [Burkina Faso](#), IOM partnered with local authorities to organize a Maracanã football tournament bringing together more than 2,000 young people including returned migrants. In [Cameroon](#), IOM and its implementing partner facilitated community conversations with aspiring professional football players from small to medium size clubs. In [Niger](#), IOM teamed with the coeducational sports camp Hoops 4 Kids to organize a basketball summer camp for young people and teenage migrants living in IOM's transit centres in Niamey.

## How it works

IOM organizes sports and other athletic activities in public spaces to make them accessible to the wider community. In the case of tournaments, young people and migrants or returnees organize in teams, thereby developing friendships and bonds with each other. After each activity, a trained facilitator guides the participants through an informal discussion on safe migration.

Sport provides a universal framework for developing the soft skills needed for responsible citizenship.

## Why it works

Sport provides a universal framework for developing the soft skills needed for responsible citizenship. When used as a vector for change, sport has the potential to build social cohesion, and to increase the social integration of vulnerable youth, while all the same contributing to improved physical and mental health. It is also an ideal way to instil in participants key values such as respect, teamwork, determination and discipline which they can transfer in their daily lives.

## Next steps

IOM will continue using sport for awareness raising and refine the methodology of life-wide learning. In The Gambia, IOM



*A group of girls take part in a basketball game in The Gambia. The game was organized as part of field research to understand the role of sports and outdoor activities in social cohesion and youth engagement for awareness raising on safe migration. Photo: IOM/Simon Meienberg*

will work with a designer for social impact to improve sports facilities in Migrant Information Centres (MICs) and make activities more sustainable and accessible. At the regional level, IOM will also explore partnerships with international sport associations to test innovative approaches to sports and social cohesion and behavioural change.

# Roving Theatre Shows

Finding expression through art

Theatre has the ability to effectively capture the public's attention and elicit conversations. It cuts across literacy skills to reach a wide audience and taps into traditional cultures and symbols (using local songs and indigenous names) to create a unique experience for learning and sharing. In this case, drama acts as a mirror to reality, transporting the audience in the shoes of migrants in the desert, in a detention centre, or in a boat, allowing them to question why they like or dislike a character, and inviting them to find alternative solutions.

acting drama. After training, the actors travel through communities to perform, usually in open places such as markets and town squares. The impromptu nature of the play creates a surprise effect, drawing people's attention to the actors. At the end of the play, the actors engage with the audience and answer their questions on safe migration.

When topics are sensitive or difficult to express, art – including theatre – can be a strong way to start conversation.

## How it works

Returnees are invited and trained to co-write, direct and produce the plays, drawing inspiration from their own experiences. Sometimes, a professional playwright is recruited to train migrants and community members on writing and

## Why it works

When topics are sensitive or difficult to express, art – including theatre – can be a strong way to ignite conversation. Theatre is already used in many countries as the preferred mode of edutainment. As such, it is easy to tap into the local currency of culture (languages, music, clothes) to develop a play the audience can identify with.

## Next steps

IOM plans to create a collection of the plays written across the countries, record and produce audio and video capsules to be published and disseminated to wider audiences through TV, radio and social media.



Two returnees participate in a theatre play on safe migration and human trafficking in Nigeria. Photo: IOM



# Street Art Together

Transforming spaces  
and connecting people

IOM partnered with Street Art Sans Frontières (SASF), a collective of international artists, to develop 'Street Art Together' an initiative to promote social cohesion between migrants, vulnerable youths and host communities through transformative participative street art. The activities are public and opened to everyone. Trained youth and migrants act as facilitators, encouraging passers-by to engage in the action, this way contributing to the colourful results of a common effort.

Street art is a way to make art free and accessible, in places where you'd least expect it. Street Art Together adds a third dimension by focusing on participation. The painting and the artwork are used as vectors for change, as the action inspires interaction and conversation around local development, the role of young people in public space and migration.

## How it works

A joint IOM and SASF team rolls out basic training and coaching for artists and returnees. These trainees then act as facilitators of the street art workshops. They identify suitable locations (popular neighbourhoods, public spaces with high visibility and accessibility), decide on a design and prepare materials. At the end of the training cycle, the facilitators can independently roll out the sessions from mixing colours, to facilitating conversations, to cleaning brushes.

Street art is a way to  
make art free and  
accessible, in places  
where you'd least  
expect it.

## Why it works

Street art taps into the natural desire for people to engage in creative activity, and the love for colour and beauty. The use of neutral, nature-inspired, simple patterns and lively colours allows everyone to be part of the process, without imposing any specific meaning or message on the participants. By training local artists and returnees, the project contributes to the creation of a region wide Street Art Together network of individuals capable of rolling out workshops without the direct intervention of IOM. These skills can also be applied for projects from other actors in the field such as NGOs or local youth associations.



Two returnees participate in a theatre play on safe migration and human trafficking in Nigeria. Photo: IOM

## Next steps

In 2019, IOM rolled out a pilot version of Street Art Together in Niger, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. In early 2020, a third edition was organised by IOM Mauritania with support of the regional office for West and Central Africa. This initiative has supported the creation of a step-by-step guide which will be made available as an open source tool for all actors active in awareness raising on migration.





Youths paint a wall in the streets of Nouadhibou in Northern Mauritania as part of the Street Art Together initiative.







# Partnerships

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# Schools and Youth Organizations

High school clubs and youth organizations are key partners for sustainable awareness raising for safe migration in West and Central Africa. Co-creating information campaigns with young leaders allows them to take ownership of the process and ensures that the messaging (tone and channels) is appropriate and relevant to their peers. In **Ghana**, students at eight high schools decided to form Migration Clubs after having heard testimonies of returned migrants. They asked IOM for support to learn about peer-to-peer education on safe migration while sensitizing the larger community using drama, poetry, quiz games and arts. To date, more than 200 students are involved in the Migration Clubs.

In **Burkina Faso**, **Mauritania**, **The Gambia** and **Guinea-Bissau**, IOM partnered with national and youth councils to co-design awareness raising activities and campaigns to amplify messaging on safe migration. National Youth

Councils (NYC) are umbrella organizations tasked with the coordination of youth work in their countries. They implement national youth programmes and advise governments on key youth issues. NYCs are key to reaching young people and building bridges with local governments. In Mauritania, IOM works with the Association YALI Alumni Mauritanie (AYAM), an association bringing together alumni from the Young African Leaders Initiative. The partnership was instrumental in shaping the Street Art Together initiative.

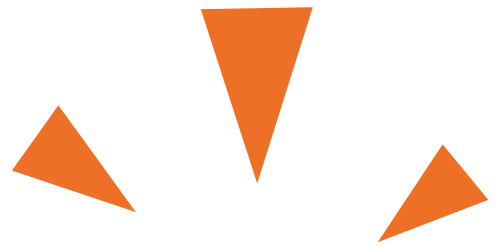
## How it works

To identify suitable partners, IOM directly selects organizations or launches calls for partnership based on project needs. Once the partners are identified, IOM trains them on the basics of social and behavioural change communication. During the training workshops, IOM and the partners



*In Ghana, students from the Mercy High School formed the country's first ever migration club to raise awareness for safe migration among high school leavers. Photo: IOM*

jointly design campaign strategies, select appropriate communication tools and draft key messages to be tested with the target audiences before they are rolled out. The partners are also trained on monitoring and evaluating activities through which valuable insights on communication channels and communication needs are gained.



## Why it works

Working with already established organizations is cost-effective and helps to reach people in places where many local organizations already have field presence and can improve buy-in from local governments. Furthermore, partnerships empower local organizations by increasing their portfolios and strengthening capacity, which increases their chances of conducting activities on their own in the future.



# Migrant Associations

In **Cameroon**, IOM works closely with the Organisation pour l'Eveil des jeunes sur la Migration Irrégulière et la Traite des Personnes (Organization for Youth Awakening on Irregular Migration and Trafficking in Persons, OEMIT), an association of returnees from Libya and Niger. Four of the founding members met in a detention centre in Libya and upon their return, decided to join forces to counter illusory narratives of migration to Europe. Many of the returnees from Cameroon had left dreaming of a career in football. OEMIT members conduct regular outreach with informal football clubs and at football practices to help young aspiring football players to increase their knowledge of the risks of irregular migration.

In **The Gambia**, more than 60 returned migrants created the association Gambia Returnees from the Backway Association (GRB). Through the association, the migrants created a strong support system that many couldn't find elsewhere in their communities.

As the association evolved, GRB this year submitted an awareness raising partnership proposal to IOM. GRB's approach to campaigns employs local culture, such as joining community gatherings over tea and "push the ball to stay" football matches. Since then, IOM has supported GRB's campaigns, through which over 3,800 potential migrants in 33 communities were reached.

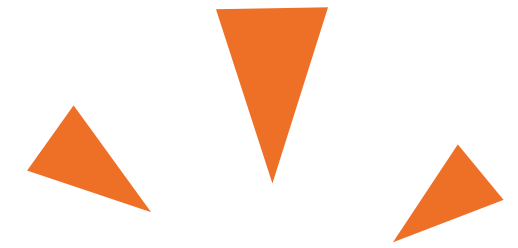
The Organisation guinéenne pour la lutte contre la migration irrégulière (Guinean organisation against irregular migration, OGLMI) was created by returned migrants in August 2018 in **Guinea**. With more than 350 members, the organization has one goal: to share members' experiences with their peers hoping to help them make informed decisions about their migration plans. In addition to conducting outreach activities, OGLMI members are often present at the airport to welcome and counsel returned migrants.



*Returnees and IOM staff in The Gambia take part in a psychosocial counseling session organized to raise awareness on the mental health and psychosocial aspects of return migration. Photo: IOM/Miko Alazas*

## How it works

Migrants associations are created organically and are the result of a need expressed by returnees to share their experiences with their peers. In some cases, the members met along their migration journeys, or after they returned home. New connections are established through the Joint Initiatives' reintegration programme. IOM partners and helps the organizations to strengthen



## Why it works

Migrant associations are driven by the individual need of their members to actively share their stories. Returnees are experts by experience, and therefore the most trusted source for information on the migration journey. Thereby, they have already close bonds with the communities they reach out to, inspire trust, and connect easily to young people and their families. Last but not least, through managing outreach activities, the reintegration process of returnees is enhanced.

their structure and refine their activities. Once they are equipped, the organizations can decide to submit partnership proposals to IOM or to other entities.

# Artists and Influencers

Ghanaian rapper and songwriter, Kofi Kinaata, was named IOM's first Goodwill Ambassador in West and Central Africa back in 2017. As Goodwill Ambassador, Kinaata supports IOM's advocacy and fundraising efforts, including educating young Ghanaians about the dangers associated with irregular migration, as well as the opportunities for youth development in Ghana and Africa. He dedicated his song "No Place Like Home" and music video to a campaign designed by a young creative agency (Now Available Africa). This unbranded, nationwide information campaign is designed to engage young people online, on air and on the ground.



*Kofi Kinaata, IOM Goodwill Ambassador in Ghana speaks at a youth employment and empowerment event organized in Takoradi as part of IOM's awareness raising campaign for safe migration in Ghana. Photo: IOM*

## How it works

Inspired by this example, IOM partnered with Malian singer Ami Yèrèwolo to produce a song on human trafficking in the country. In Niger, IOM partnered with the humourist KROMOZOM and Haraka Comedy Club, a stand-up comedy club to train young people to develop comedic sketches around the question "Why should I leave?".

IOM country teams, in collaboration with the Regional Office and Headquarters reaches out to artists and influencers who, through their work, have expressed interest in migration and could be role models for young people in the region. They are selected based on their integrity, capacity to inspire people in one or more countries, their knowledge on migration

and social capital. Before they engage with the public, artists and influencers are briefed on IOM and its partners' work and goals. Artists and influencers partner with IOM to speak with media and share key messages to their established audiences through their own (social media) platforms.

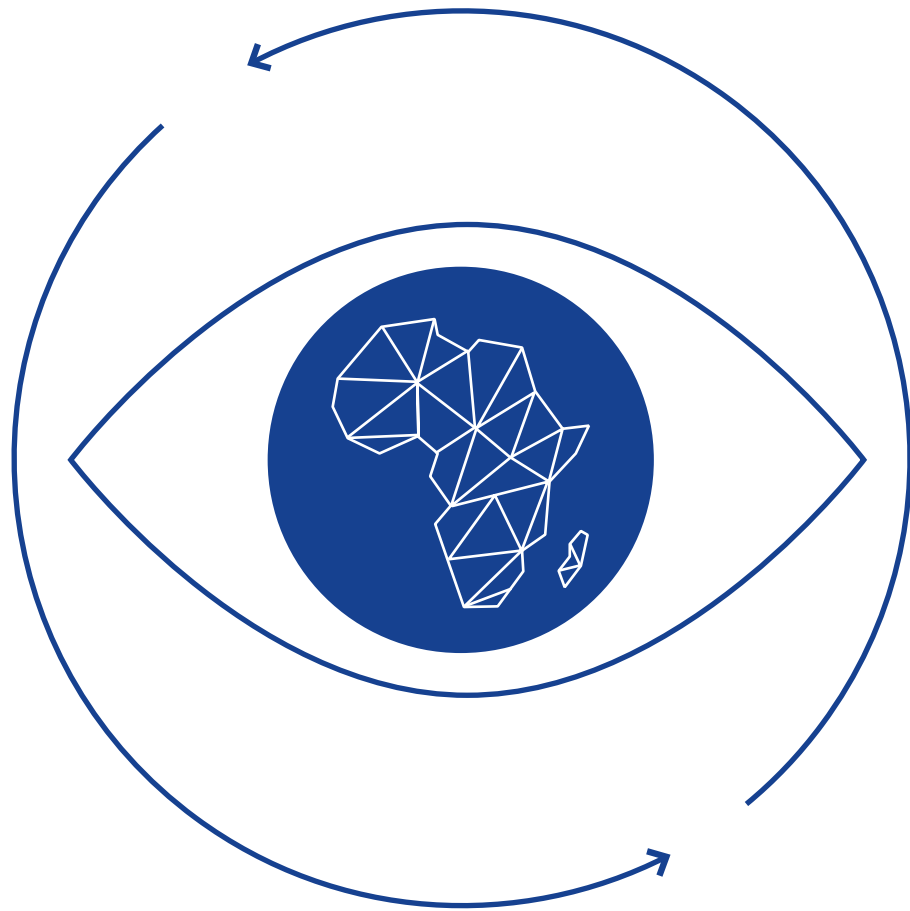
## Why it works

The artists and influencers that IOM works with are often seen as role models by young people, which is why they inspire trust. Besides making it easier to have conversation on difficult topics, artists and influencers can give the confidence to their fans that they too can choose a successful path, at home or abroad.



*A young girl dances during a public event for youth empowerment in Ghana. Photo: IOM*





# A note on Sustainability

In West and Central Africa, we partner with government entities, private sector and civil society organizations to advocate for safe migration at individual, community and societal level. Partnerships with local actors leads to efficient use of resources and helps ensure that awareness raising activities continue beyond the EU-IOM Joint Initiative. To do this, we respect and try as much as possible to use existing approaches, practices and policy spaces to reach our targets.

Where strong coordination mechanisms do not exist and expertise is limited, we increase local capacity and encourage partners to develop coherent networks and structures allowing them to tap into their various expertise.

We asked our colleagues in four countries what they consider a major achievement for sustainability of awareness raising through the EU-IOM Joint Initiative.

## Miko Alazas

### Communications Officer IOM The Gambia



One of the main issue returnees face in **The Gambia** is stigmatization and rejection from peers and family members. As in many countries in West and Central Africa, migration is perceived by migrants and their immediate circles as an opportunity to escape poverty. As such, migrants carry high expectations into their journeys. However, when migrants return, after a journey through the “backway” which, for many is considered unsuccessful, they are ostracized. Through our awareness raising activities, we encourage social cohesion and community-based psychosocial support between returnees and their peers. This message was identified and developed by our partners, which include returnee associations such as The Gambia Returnees from the Backway (GRB) and the National Youth Council of The Gambia.

Both partners already carried out community outreach activities and expressed their interest in being trained on providing mental-health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to returnees. The trainings helped them mainstream MHPSS into their activities and develop bespoke programs to engage with community leaders on the role they play in cushioning the return of migrants.

**We encourage social cohesion and community-based psychosocial support between returnees and their peers.**

## Lucas Chandellier

### Communications Officer IOM Guinea



In **Guinea**, we collaborated with the Ministries of Ministry of Higher Education, of Information and Communication as well as members of the UN Interagency Communications Group to develop a “Migration and the Sustainable Development Goals” course. The course – the first of its kind in the country – is designed in partnership with academics specializing in migration as well as IOM experts, and provides a platform for university students as well as journalists to access information and data on global, regional and national migration trends. The 180-hours course will be delivered at the Institut Supérieur de l’Information et de la Communication, a Conakry-based journalism school, and will cover various subjects such as migration patterns, push and pull factors, the importance of migration management

and the cooperation frameworks for better migration management in Guinea and Africa. The long-term goal is for the course to become a reference migration education in the country, and for it to keep actors engaged in raising awareness on safe migration.

**We co-created a Migration and Sustainable Development Goals course to become a reference in migration education.**



## Joëlle Furrer

Project Officer  
IOM Côte d'Ivoire



In Côte d'Ivoire, we work closely with the regional committees on irregular migration to raise awareness on safe migration. Announced in 2018 by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, regional committees (31 in total, one per region) aim to put all the Regional Prefects at the heart of the conversations on migration. Specifically, the committees are tasked with regularly conducting local awareness-raising activities and monitoring reintegration projects. Members include representatives from the regional prefecture, the gendarmerie, the police, the regional council, the Mayors, religious and traditional authorities, the National Youth Council, women's associations, youth groups and civil society organizations.

Through our partnership with the regional committees, we've been able to work directly with traditional leaders to advocate for safe migration in their communities. We have also collaborated with women groups to develop female-only activities to give female returnees a safe space to externalize their concerns, find closure and rebuild their lives.

**We have collaborated with women groups to develop female-only activities.**

## Cyprine Cheptepkeny

Project Officer  
IOM Nigeria



Nigeria is a key country of origin for victims of trafficking in Europe and in West Africa. Multiple government and non-governmental agencies are mandated with raising awareness on safe migration and the risks of human trafficking associated with irregular migration. These include the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), National Orientation Agency (NOA), and the Edo and Delta State taskforces against Human Trafficking. To strengthen coordination between these actors, and to maximize the impact and sustainability of awareness raising activities, IOM supported the development of PACTHIM (Partners in Awareness Creation against Human Trafficking and Irregular Migration), Nigeria's first network of partners raising awareness against human trafficking and irregular migration.

Chaired by NAPTIP, the network acts as a coordination platform allowing stakeholders to share knowledge, and pool resources to brainstorm, mobilize resources and organize activities. Having such a network ensures coherence in messaging on human trafficking and safe migration across organizations and channels, which contributes to increasing both the reach and the impact of campaigns. Since its establishment, the network organizes regular meetings and develops quarterly work plans, creating synergies between member organizations' mandates and activities. To improve their campaign planning skills, IOM trained the members of the network in Communication for Development (C4D) including strategic campaign design, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

The network created a WhatsApp group for information sharing as well as knowledge management. Another mechanism which was created to amplify and sustain awareness raising campaigns is the network of traditional and religious leaders. It is worth noting that this network was created to tap into the influence of both traditional and religious leaders in their communities. This network includes Christian and Muslim leaders, as well as chiefs from Local Government Areas (LGA) who lead the development of targeted and relevant activities matching the socio-cultural context and responding to the information needs of their communities.

We supported Nigeria's first network of partners raising awareness against human trafficking and irregular migration.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in the meeting of operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

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