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Migrant Resource Centres: Examining Global Good  
Practices in Providing Services to Empower Migrants for  
Development and Protection

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## Executive Summary

This rapid assessment considers the work of Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) in the context of roundtable 2 of the 2009 Global Forum on Migration and Development in Athens, “Migrant integration, reintegration and circulation for development”. Although in recent years the growth in number of MRCs, defined here as physical structures which provide services to migrants which facilitate and empower them to migrate in a legal, voluntary, orderly and protected fashion, has been notable, there has thus far been no attempt to assess the impact of these MRCs on migration management goals. This assessment does not aim to provide a comprehensive report of the work of MRCs; however, it does aim to provide an overview of good practices in empowering migrants to facilitate development, and ensuring that though this empowerment they can better protect themselves in connection with the work of 17 different MRCs around the world.

In relation to *empowering migrants for development*, good practices among the MRCs studied show how they play an important role in providing migrants with information on how their migration, remittances and return plans can be linked to development.

In relation to *providing services which enable migrants to protect themselves*, the MRCs covered in this assessment displayed a range of good practices in gathering and actively distributing information to enable migrants to exercise their rights and prevent their exploitation. Moreover, a number of MRCs also provide services to migrants to ensure they are able to access their rights.

In addition to studying good practices in these areas, the assessment has also examined institutional issues, such as the set-up procedures MRCs have employed, and how they have been able to secure their sustainability over time.

The assessment finds that the MRCs studied undertake a range of tasks which are important in harnessing migration for development, as well as in empowering migrants for protection. It argues that MRCs should consider their work from the perspective of supporting migration for development; moreover, their expertise would be helpful to governments and other actors in the formulation and implementation of migration and development strategies and programmes. Their role therefore deserves recognition, both in the context of the Global Forum on Migration and Development process and beyond.

The further development of these Centres can be assisted through the sharing of information and practices among MRCs themselves, as well as between MRCs and other stakeholders. More research and consideration of tools such as job-matching mechanisms would be of assistance in aiding MRCs to push their work forward and provide even more comprehensive and effective services.

## Section 1 – Introduction

Since the 1970s, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) have established Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) and other similar facilities in both countries of origin and destination. This interest in MRCs represents a recognition of the support they provide in migration management. There is a consensus that migration should be managed so that it occurs in a safe, orderly and humane manner, and is for “the benefit of countries of origin and

destination, and of migrants and their families” (OSCE-IOM-ILO, 2006: 23). MRCs support this objective by empowering migrants<sup>1</sup> to migrate in a regular and protected way, fulfilling their obligations and receiving their rights and thus avoid the vulnerabilities to trafficking and exploitation that irregular migration entails. This protected, regular migration is also key in promoting the links between migration and development.

As there is currently no commonly-agreed definition of an MRC, for the purposes of this assessment MRCs have been defined as physical structures which provide services directly to migrants to facilitate and promote their recourse to legal, voluntary, orderly and protected migration.<sup>2</sup> MRCs aim to become reference points as part of normal migration processes. The focus of this assessment does not cover services which operate solely as web- or telephone-based services; although these tools are very useful and often make up an integral part of the spectrum of MRCs’ services, they do not in themselves represent the full potential range of MRCs’ activities, especially in relation to empowering migrants for development.<sup>3</sup>

Although they go under a number of different names,<sup>4</sup> reflecting the diversity in actors involved in their set-up, functioning and objectives that they serve, MRCs share a number of key features: principally, they provide an independent and impartial structure through which male and female migrants are able to obtain accurate information on: legal migration procedures; the rights and responsibilities that migrants have throughout the migration process; and information on how to protect themselves so that migration is a positive experience.

In providing this service, MRCs support a number of key policy objectives, directly or otherwise. These objectives include:

- 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);
- and promoting the links between migration and development.

Although most MRCs have not been directly implemented with development in mind, in line with the growing recognition that migration can contribute to development, some

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<sup>1</sup> “Migrant” will be used throughout this paper to refer to both *potential* and *actual* migrants for the sake of brevity. The term “migrant” has been used as it denotes a range of different migration statuses, including permanent migration. According to the *Glossary on Migration*, the definition of a migrant refers to “persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospect for themselves or their family” (IOM 2004: 40). It includes migrants in an irregular, as well as a regular situation

<sup>2</sup> The services offered by these structures, it should be noted, are also available to migrants in an irregular situation.

<sup>3</sup> Welfare Officers and halfway houses, given their role in providing such personalized and intense support, are however included in this definition. This definition does not, however, include those Centres which provide reception and humanitarian services to forcibly returned migrants; although the work of these Centres has impacts on development, their primary focus is on dealing with the consequences of irregular migration rather than promotion of regular migration.

<sup>4</sup> Such Centres may be called, *inter alia*, Migrant Service Centres, Migrant Assistance Centres, Centres for Migrant Advice, Migrant Information Centres, or Migrant Worker Centres. For simplicity, Migrant Resource Centre or MRC will be used throughout this assessment.

are beginning to focus on how their work can help empower migrants to contribute to development in countries of origin as well as in host countries. Development is conceptualized in this paper as a process which “connotes human, economic and social growth” (GFMD Background Paper for RT 2.2, Athens 2009: 2). This growth can take place at an individual, local or national level.

Migration has the potential to contribute to the human development of migrants, their families and, indirectly, their communities, opening up new opportunities in terms of investment in socio-economic improvement and empowerment through the creation of job-creating businesses or necessary infrastructure, as well as adding to the skills available to these communities.

In order to empower migrants to participate in this, an active approach is required, providing migrants with information, training and advice which will enable them to fully unleash the potential to contribute to development that safe migration provides them. This empowerment goes beyond the economic sphere, and includes information and training in aspects that impact the well-being of migrants, for example in relation to health promotion and gender-related issues. In taking this broad approach, this assessment takes a first step in showing how MRCs can play an important role in the development of systems of mobility which ensure that migration is mutually beneficial to all involved.

Despite the important growth in the number of MRCs in the world, and the interest in the services they provide, to date no examination has been undertaken to identify good practice in the work undertaken by these MRCs. Good practices in this context follow the definition provided by the European Commission’s Web Site on Integration, namely, “strategies, approaches and/or activities that have been shown through research and evaluation to be effective, efficient, sustainable and/or transferable, and to reliably lead to a desired result” (European Commission, N.D.). However, the definition used in this paper also includes practices which show new and innovative aspects that can be considered for further evaluation; which include a wide range of stakeholders and a mix of Governmental, non-Governmental or private actors; and/or have been shown to have benefits beyond the national context. This broader definition of good practice also enables the inclusion of emerging practices whose impacts have yet to be seen but which show potential directions for future work.

The present rapid assessment provides an outline of what selected MRCs are doing in relation to empowering migrants for development and protection, and what they themselves have identified as “good practices” in their work. Specifically, it ascertains how MRCs empower migrants for development in their countries of origin, as well as which elements of MRCs provide effective services to enable male and female migrants to protect themselves and enjoy their rights. It also examines how MRCs have been set up and become sustainable. Good practices were identified in individual areas of MRCs’ work, rather than attempting to identify MRCs which show good practice across all areas.<sup>5</sup> This assessment generally does not provide multiple examples of the same good practice as its purpose is to be illustrative; see annex A for a full list of services provided by each MRC. Finally, this rapid assessment does not aim to provide a

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<sup>5</sup> This reflects the context-specificity of many of the services and structures of the different MRCs, which makes it difficult to judge the MRCs in relation to each other. In addition, limitations in the scope of the paper mean that it is not possible to show case all MRCs which have similar good practices

definitive or comprehensive overview, but rather to serve as a basis for future more comprehensive evaluations and study of these MRCs.

With these limitations in mind, the assessment in the rest of section 1 outlines briefly the methodology used in gathering information, before going on to briefly discuss the history of MRCs. In section 2, the assessment shows what the MRCs aim to accomplish in relation to empowering migrants to link migration with development and protect themselves, and how they go about achieving it, showing concrete good practices from the different MRCs studied. Section 3 will look at the processes through which these MRCs are set up and sustainability is assured. The final section 4 contains recommendations for the establishing and functioning of future and current MRCs.

### *Objectives and Methodology of the current study*

A number of MRCs were identified through an internal analysis of the MRCs managed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) itself. In addition to this, other MRCs were identified through web-based research and consultation of reports on migration issues which mentioned MRCs, and IOM field staff were contacted to assist in the identification process. Efforts were made to ensure a wide and balanced representation of geographical regions, countries of origin and host countries, and actors involved in the management of the MRCs (namely NGOs, IGOs and governments) in the selection of MRCs to be studied.

A list of criteria in relation to good practices in identified areas of MRCs' work was developed. On the basis of this list, questionnaires were developed for managers of MRCs to gain insights into the different activities of their MRCs, where they identified good practices in the services they deliver to migrants in relation to empowerment for development and protection, their institutional structures and how they have attempted to achieve sustainability.

This questionnaire was undertaken over the telephone or via e-mail (according to the preferences of the respondents) to the managers of MRCs in 12 different countries.<sup>6</sup> The examples are therefore dependent on the good faith of the respondents.<sup>7</sup> Unless otherwise stated, the information in the below sections is based on the answers provided in these interviews

In addition, a separate questionnaire was sent out to governmental and other stakeholders identified by the respondents from the MRCs themselves in order to gauge their perspectives on the impact of the work of the MRCs.<sup>8</sup> Where possible, statistics and other information have been gathered from the MRCs. Owing to time and resource constraints it was not possible to assess the impact and importance of these services according to clients' responses.<sup>9</sup> It is also likely that a number of MRCs equally worthy of study were not identified due to limitations in the identification process.

### *A Brief History of MRCs*

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<sup>6</sup> See annex B for details of all the Centres studied

<sup>7</sup> Moreover, given the wide range of experiences, it was difficult to capture fully all of the experiences of the different Centres.

<sup>8</sup> A list of these stakeholders can be found in the bibliography

<sup>9</sup> It is also conceivable that the identification of stakeholders by Centre managers themselves introduces an element of potential bias and limits the range of views surveyed by this study.

Structures and physical centres providing support for migrants have existed for some time. However, the exact origins of centres explicitly referred to as MRCs are unclear. It would seem that some of the earliest MRCs can be found in Australia, in which two “experimental” Centres “provid[ing] migrants with settlement information and ... promot[ing] community development” were set up in 1976 (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2003: 224).<sup>10</sup>

Since the establishment of what appear to be the first MRCs in Australia, MRCs have been developed in a number of different countries and contexts, in countries of origin as well as those of destination, and reflecting the specific situations of each country. In the mid-1980s, for example, the Government of the Philippines began to set up what would later be called the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Resource Centre in Singapore, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates in recognition of the need for support of the large numbers of Filipinos working in these countries. Later in 1994, Caritas Lebanon established a Centre in Beirut to respond to the needs of particularly vulnerable refugees and migrants (Caritas, N.D.). Since the turn of the century, a number of countries of origin such as Albania, realizing that the issue of irregular migration could be linked to a lack of information on the part of migrants, began to seek assistance in ensuring that migrants were aware of means through which they could migrate legally.

Meanwhile, the Centro de Información y Atención sobre Migración Internacional in Colombia and the Migrant Services Centre in Sri Lanka were set up by trade unions that recognized that their missions to protect the rights of workers had an international dimension, as large numbers were travelling abroad for work, while the Maison des Congolais de l’Etranger et des Migrants in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was set up in partnership with countries of destination with the shared goal of reducing irregular migration, promoting regular migration and developing the links between migration and development. From IOM’s perspective, the sharing of experiences and success stories from these varied MRCs has shown their worth, and has meant that their popularity has spread. The result is that Migrant Resource Centres can now be found in all continents and a variety of different country contexts.<sup>11</sup>

## **Section 2 – Examples of Good Practices**

Having outlined in general terms the growth of MRCs, this paper examines how MRCs envision their work, and provides examples of good practices in the two main areas of (1) empowerment for development and (2) empowerment for self-protection.

### **2.1. Services Empowering Migrants for Development**

#### *MRCs and Development*

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<sup>10</sup> This was expanded following the proposal by the “Galbally Report” in 1978 to establish migrant resource centres in recognition of the changing, increasingly diverse, face of migration to Australia. By 1981, 19 centres had been established, of which 16 were still in operation in 2003, often run on a voluntary basis although working in close cooperation with local and national government (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> IOM alone runs Migrant Resource Centres in Africa, Europe, Asia and South America

The potential for migration (including, where appropriate, the voluntary return of migrants) to contribute to development is increasingly well-recognized (see, for example, UN 2008). Migrants can contribute to country of origin development through the remittances not only of money but also of skills: through the temporary, long-term or virtual<sup>12</sup> return of migrants to their countries of origin, migrants can use and pass on their skills to promote the development of their country of origin.

Migrants themselves, meanwhile, are often concerned with improving the situation of their families and communities of origin, as shown by the vast size of remittance flows from north to south (and from south to south). Moreover, they are often enthusiastic about undertaking philanthropic activities or engaging in business in their countries of origin. In recognition of this potential for migration to contribute to development, countries of origin and destination, NGOs and IGOs are increasingly developing programmes to link migration and return to development, such as circular migration schemes which enable migrants to move between countries of origin and destination to the benefit of countries of origin and destination as well as the migrants themselves.

However, a lack of information for migrants themselves on potential means of leveraging their migration, return, or remittances for the development of their countries of origin can represent an obstacle to effectively linking migration to development. In terms of remittances for instance, knowledge gaps around affordable money transfer mechanisms particularly affect women's remitting capacity, as they tend to send less money but more frequently than their male counterparts, and are thus disproportionately impacted by transfer fees. Moreover, as health is a precursor to development, a lack of information on possible health risks linked to migration or how to access migrant-friendly health services can lead to health problems which prevent migrants from reaching their full development potential. Traditional information-dissemination networks advertising migration for development opportunities may also exclude potential participants. In particular, outreach to women migrants, because they often work in unregulated and informal sectors with little access to professional networks and trade unions, or women left behind leaving in remote areas, can be difficult through traditional methods.

MRCs, given their closeness to migrant communities, are therefore well-placed to provide potential and actual migrants and returnees with information on how they can link their migration plans towards appropriate development goals of their countries of origin. In providing information on linking their migration to development benefits, MRCs enable prospective migrants to consider their migration in a broader framework, building direct links between migration and development.

MRCs can also provide training that builds the capacity of migrants and migrant organizations to plan and undertake self-directed and -managed interventions for country of origin development. Such training can encompass issues such as project development and financial management, either directly in relation to development-related activities, or as part of a general programme of migrant organization capacity-building. They can also act as a location for diaspora organizations to meet and coordinate their activities for country of origin development. Or they can provide access to virtual space, such as an internet discussion forum. Such spaces provide diaspora

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<sup>12</sup> "Virtual return" describes the situation by which migrants are able to contribute to development without physically returning to their countries of origin

organizations interested in country of origin development means to discuss their ideas and work on the development of initiatives.

In addition to these directly developmental services, MRCs can also provide services to enable their clients to participate effectively in the labour market of the country of destination. Highly-qualified migrants in particular are often employed in the country of destination in jobs which do not match the actual level of their skills and qualifications; this can be due to a lack of knowledge of the local labour market situation or isolation from networks that enable candidates to find appropriate jobs. This phenomenon of “de-skilling” not only represents a barrier to migrants’ individual human development; it is also important in the context of the migration and development nexus, as migrants are not able to acquire or develop their skills through these experiences. This prevents them from being able to find appropriate employment, capacity-building or entrepreneurial opportunities on their return. This is particularly true for migrant women, who, are often faced with discrimination (as women and as migrants) and gender-segregated labour markets. Through job training and referral, MRCs can assist migrants develop and gain recognition of their existing skills and learn new ones, improving their capacity to find appropriate work.

MRCs may also assist migrants in their job searches. In helping migrants to find work that empowers them to develop their personal skills, MRCs not only provide a valuable service to migrants themselves but also help prepare them for participation in country of origin development.

Although direct involvement in development-related activities represents an emerging practice, some good practices can already be seen in this area. Moreover, a number of MRCs provide services that indirectly support and empower their clients to engage in development-related practices. These activities are outlined below.

**Text Box 1: Criteria for Good Practices in Services Empowering Migrants for Development**

- Integration into development plans
- Remittances and Investment:
  - Information Gathering, Provision and Dissemination on Transfer Costs
  - Partnerships for Remittances Facilitation
  - Information on Investment Opportunities
- Employment-Related Assistance
  - Job-Matching
  - Training
  - Recognition of Qualifications
- Building Diaspora Capacities and Links
  - Promoting Involvement in Migration for Development Projects
  - Indirectly Building Diaspora Capacities

### *A. Integration into Development Plans*

The impact of MRCs on development can best be supported where MRCs are integrated into national or other development frameworks. Integrating MRCs into these frameworks will enable them to take a more development-friendly approach and align their activities with wider poverty reduction and development goals. Although this is an aspect that has not been highly developed in MRCs, the **Centre d'Information et Gestion des Migrations (CIGEM, or Centre for Information and Management of Migration) in Mali** has been conceived in the framework of the Africa-European Union (EU) Partnership on migration, mobility and employment agreed at the Africa-EU Summit in 2007, which aims, inter alia, to “ensure that migration and employment works for sustainable development” (EC, 2007). Thus the MRC is conceived so as to be able to develop its activities to work coherently towards identified development priorities.

### *B. Remittances and Investment*

#### *i) Information Gathering, Provision and Dissemination on Transfer Costs*

The systematic gathering and provision of information on remittances is not yet considered a core feature of the work of many MRCs. However, it is an emerging practice. The **Information and Resource Centres for Labour Migrants (IRCLMs) in Tajikistan** has been innovative in systematically gathering and integrating information on remittances as part of their work, including information on remittances in the brochures and leaflets they provide to clients. The **Maison des Congolais De l'Etranger et des Migrants (MCDEM, or the House of Overseas Congolese and Migrants) in the Democratic Republic of Congo** is currently investigating how it can provide information on low-cost remittance transfer services to migrants. These practices ensure that clients are able to learn how to use the most efficient options for transferring money to their countries of origin, maximizing the potential for remittances to be invested to support social or productive investment.

#### *ii) Partnerships for Remittances Facilitation*

Beyond providing information on the costs of remittances, some MRCs also engage with providers directly to advocate for reductions in the costs of transfers. Perhaps the MRCs with the most comprehensive vision in this area are the **Filipino Overseas Workers Resource Centres (FWRCs)** which are encouraged not only to gather information on cheaper remittance transfer options, but also to identify and engage with local money transfer agencies in order to reduce costs and speed up transfers. These practices are shared between FWRCs to provide advice and encouragement to other Centres in the network to take similar action. The FWRCs' links to the government also enable them to negotiate cost-reducing bilateral agreements with service providers. This has proved to be effective in reducing the costs of remittances for migrants in a number of contexts: for example the **FWRC in Libya** was able to provide this service to its clients, facilitating their remittance transfers to the Philippines.

### iii) *Information on Investment Opportunities*

MRCs can facilitate the use of remittances for productive investments by providing information on opportunities for making such investments. A good practice in this area is shown by the **FWRCs**, which provide comprehensive information on philanthropic investment opportunities in the Philippines to migrants and their families. The FWRCs encourage temporary contractual workers from the same region to pool their resources to fund the construction of classrooms in their home regions; according to the respondent from the Philippines, this programme has proved to be popular.

The **Congolese MCDEM**, meanwhile, provides information on business-related investment opportunities for returnees and migrants, to promote the involvement of the diaspora in the development of productive infrastructure in the private sector. This represents a successful conceptualization and integration of an MRC's work in broader frameworks of investment and development, although it is too early to be able to judge the impact of this measure.

### *C. Employment-Related Assistance*

#### *i) Job-Matching*

Although it is not always conceptualized as a contribution to development, providing support to clients' attempts to find employment and acquire skills is a key part of the work of many MRCs. By assisting clients to find decent work in countries of origin and host countries that provides them with an opportunity to develop their skills and increase their salaries, clients are empowered and their potential to support development processes through financial and social remittances (such as skills transfers) is enhanced. Currently, this assistance tends to be provided in an indirect manner, especially in the absence of concrete multi- or bilateral agreements providing recruitment support mechanisms.

Support is provided through assistance with migrants' and returnees' job searches: the **MCDEM in the Democratic Republic of Congo** for example has a job portal on its website,<sup>13</sup> with links to job websites both in-country and abroad. This gives its clients an opportunity to see which jobs are available to them, and to apply for them. The **Migration Information Centre in Croatia**<sup>14</sup> includes information on quotas open to Croatians in countries of destination, enabling clients to target their migration project towards specific positions. The Centre's location in the offices of the Croatian Employment Service Counselling Centre also facilitates the process of client referral to assist their job searches within Croatia. Migrants returning to the **Philippines** meanwhile are able to benefit from job-matching schemes which use databases of vacancies to provide returnees with information on relevant job opportunities, providing concrete support for job searches.

<sup>13</sup> For more information, see [http://www.mcdem.cd/emploi\\_etr.php](http://www.mcdem.cd/emploi_etr.php)

<sup>14</sup> This Centre has been set up in the context of the 2006 AENEAS-funded project "Capacity Building, Information and Awareness Raising towards Promoting Orderly Migration in the Western Balkans". Although the Centres founded under this project are generically called "Migrant Service Centres", individual Centres in different countries have been named differently; hence the Centre in Croatia is called the "Migration Information Centre", and the Centres in Albania are the "Sportele Migracioni"

## ii) *Training*

MRCs also provide support for clients' training, either through referral to training facilities and financial support for training, or through direct provision of training. This training support is most effective when it is conceived holistically, as part of a broad plan of support for the client's career path. This support aims to ensure that migrants are able to develop and use their skills to find appropriate work in their country of destination, and contribute to their human development. The **Migration Information Centre (MIC) in Slovakia** shows good practice in this area. After an intensive programme of personalized counselling and interviews to work with migrants to develop a personal development plan, to identify appropriate courses, the MIC provides grants to migrants for job-related training. Staff follow the migrants' progress and help them make links with employers. The process is evaluated by staff at the end of the course to ensure that appropriate training has been provided. The training provided under this heading can include vocational courses, language courses and specialized training (such as in book-keeping or information technology). These grants have proved to be popular: 33 clients (10 female clients and 23 male clients) were accepted for these grants between April and September this year (out of 59 applicants, of whom 14 were female), suggesting that they meet a real need of migrants.<sup>15</sup> Such a holistic approach could also include training with an explicit developmental focus.

The **Migration Information Centre in Croatia** has also been effective in the provision of job-related training. A good practice for facilitating this process has been the location of the Centre in the Centre of Counselling of the Croatian Employment Services (CES), enabling an easy referral for clients to the training services of the CES.

MRCs in countries of origin also provide similar support to returnees in order to ensure their successful reintegration into the local context, and, where relevant, to support entrepreneurship. This is a particular focus of the **Migrant Services Centre (MSC) in Sri Lanka**, which provides a good practice in focusing training on gender-specific reintegration needs. The MSC focuses its activities particularly on female returnees who worked previously as domestic workers, whose skills (as opposed to male temporary contractual workers who often work in construction while abroad) are not in demand in Sri Lanka. It therefore aims to re-skill these workers to work in the local context. As a result, 82 per cent of returnees (largely women) who participate in the MSC's training courses are able to find employment.

## iii) *Recognition of Qualifications*

In addition to direct support to migrants, MRCs also play an important, if indirect, role in ensuring that migrants' qualifications are recognized wherever they are. A lack of recognition of qualifications can be an important factor preventing migrants and returnees from being able to access employment that matches their skill sets. Recognizing this problem, a number of MRCs have engaged in negotiating for the recognition of foreign qualifications in the country: the **MCDEM** is involved in discussions with the Government of the **Democratic Republic of Congo** so that returnees' qualifications are recognized. In **Portugal and Slovakia**, where systems of qualification recognition are already in place, the MRCs support migrants going through this process: the **Centro Nacional de Apoio ao Imigrante (CNAI, or National**

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<sup>15</sup> Figures supplied by the MIC Slovakia. Unfortunately there is no data as to whether these migrants have been able to find work following the assistance provided by the MIC.

**Immigrant Support Centre) in Portugal**, for example, works as a facilitator and information service provider to link migrants and government schemes for the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad. In doing this, MRCs effectively empower clients by assisting them to find decent work in line with their qualifications.

#### *D. Building Diaspora Capacities and Links*

##### *i) Promoting Involvement in Migration for Development Projects*

The MRCs which have been most active in this area are the **FWRCs**. These MRCs play host to a number of co-development initiatives which engage Filipino community groups as partners, assisting migrant organizations to build their capacities and promoting their engagement in migration for development initiatives where they are judged capable of undertaking such activities. This shows a good practice in engaging and empowering diaspora groups in countries of destination for their participation in development processes. As a result, a number of co-development projects involving migrants have been undertaken.

Although the practice of engaging with the diaspora has not yet been taken up by a large number of actors, this area is being developed. In September 2009, the **CIGEM in Mali** launched a series of initiatives aiming to involve Malians residing abroad in co-development projects, in the framework of a broad EC-funded diaspora engagement programme. It also hosts the United Nations Development Programme's Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Networks (TOKTEN) for Mali within its premises. Other MRCs, such as the **Lebanese Caritas Lebanon Migrant Centre (CLMC)** and the **Congolese MCDEM** also aim to involve themselves in activities linking migration and development. The **MCDEM** in particular, in addition to maintaining links with diaspora groups, such as the Belgian-based diaspora NGO "Entreprendre-CEDITA", organized the "Forum Economique de la Diaspora Congolaise" (The Economic Forum of the Congolese Diaspora) in August 2009, to promote dialogue between the government and around 400 members of the diaspora to facilitate their investment in the country (AllAfrica.com 2009). This forum represents an innovative means of paving the way for greater diaspora engagement in the country's development, by involving the diaspora themselves in identifying the obstacles and issues they face.

Finally, MRCs' role as meeting points for migrants also provides organizations promoting migration for development initiatives with important opportunities to advertise their activities to potential participants. According to the IOM Office in Lisbon, the **Portuguese CNAI** shows a good practice in this area. It was able to use its position as a reference point for migrants, trusted and used by a large proportion of the target group from a wide range of backgrounds to assist the outreach for the IOM "DIAS De Cabo Verde" initiative. This initiative aims to mobilize the human, social and professional resources of the Cape Verdean diaspora for the development of their country of origin.<sup>16</sup> The CNAI advertises the initiative through the Centre and thereby facilitates the work of identifying and engaging diaspora members in initiatives. The **CNAI** is also part of IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return Information and Referral Network and as such provides information on the programme, counsels and undertakes initial interviews with potential beneficiaries. Finally the CNAI proves useful whenever there is the need to undertake exercises such as diaspora mapping,

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<sup>16</sup> For more information, see : <http://www.diasdecaboverde.org/Default.aspx>

The **Tajik IRCLMs** also show good practice in this area, as they provide information on IOM projects focusing on the investment of remittances in social infrastructure, contributing effectively to the outreach efforts of such projects. These examples show how MRCs have been effective in gathering together migrants and proposing practical means of contributing to development, and show how other MRCs could also assist other organizations in the implementation of migration for development initiatives.

*ii) Indirectly Building Diaspora Capacities*

While they may not be directly linked to migration for development initiatives, a number of MRCs provide support to migrant communities and associations to build their organizational capacities. The **Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre (Spectrum MRC) in Australia** plays an important role in this, providing training for migrant community groups, so that they are able to register themselves legally and apply independently for grants and projects. Moreover, the MRC itself serves as a useful base for these associations, providing in-kind resources such as meeting spaces. This support ensures that migrants and their associations are able to participate fully and independently in the associative sphere in a sustainable way, which is a prerequisite for their participation in migration for development activities. The **MIC in Slovakia and the MSC in Sri Lanka** also provide training on organizational issues such as project development and financial literacy. These MRCs therefore show good practices in assisting the empowerment of diaspora groups to participate in associative activities in general, and suggest that it could also be possible for such practices to be brought to bear to assist these groups to be able to work on development issues.

## **2.2. Services Empowering Migrants for Protection**

Having considered MRCs' impacts on empowering migrants' ability to contribute to development, the assessment now turns to how MRCs assist migrants in protecting themselves. It was noted during the GFMD in Manila in October 2008 that migrants who are able to exercise their rights are better able contribute to development in origin and destination countries (GFMD 2008: 7). Protected and informed migrants are, for example, able to take up decent jobs that will enable them to earn money for themselves and to send to countries of origin. They can also develop their skills and take up opportunities in countries of origin and destination. From a broad human development perspective, they are also empowered to take actions to reduce their vulnerabilities in relation to health, for example.

The study of MRCs' work in protection is therefore important in understanding their impact on development. A key goal of MRCs' work has been to provide services to empower migrants to protect themselves. An important aspect of this empowerment is the provision of accurate and realistic information and advice to assist migrants in making an informed decision as to: whether or not to migrate; the implications of migration; the risks of irregular migration; how to migrate safely; their rights; the risks to their health and well-being; where to migrate to; under what circumstances; and the necessary conditions through which migration can be undertaken.

These services are provided in recognition of the fact that migrants' ability to access this information on their own can often be constrained: it is often difficult to find up-to-date guidance on how to migrate through regular migration routes and information about the

rights and obligations linked to migration presented accessibly and in a single place. Moreover, legislation and procedures are often subject to regular changes, and peoples' perceptions may be coloured by inaccurate or misleading information provided through networks, by unscrupulous employment agencies, human traffickers or other third parties (Home Office, 2002).

As a result of this difficulty in accessing up-to-date, impartial and accurate information, migrants or potential migrants are often not aware of their rights (particularly their rights in relation to employment, the labour market and access to public services), or of the possibilities and procedures for regular migration (which can lead to migrants turning to irregular means to migrate or remain in a country of destination). Such an information gap can therefore lead to the use of irregular means of migration, and migrants (regular and irregular) being vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

MRCs use a number of means, such as individualized legal counselling delivered at dedicated offices, and telephone hotlines and websites, to address this information gap, enabling people to make informed choices about migration based on information that gives them a realistic impression about what it entails. Such information is important throughout the migration process:

- Before leaving the country of origin: support from MRCs can ensure that migrants are able to apply for and obtain (or have applied for and obtained) the correct documentation and understand the implications of their status.
- In host countries: migrants can be provided with information and advice on safe migration,<sup>17</sup> and referred to relevant services and provided with appropriate assistance if their rights are violated; if they have difficulties in accessing services; if they are being exploited by their employers; or if their movement is restricted. For irregular migrants, the services provided can ensure that they are aware of their ability to access services and their options in relation to voluntary return.
- Finally, where relevant, during the return and reintegration process: migrants are supported in understanding and dealing with the legal, social and economic changes that may have taken place in their countries, communities and families during their time in the country of destination.

The range of information that is gathered varies from MRC to MRC, depending on their capacities and interests. A common thread is that information on laws and procedures relating to migration is collected: for example, requirements for entry and residence for the different kinds of status. MRCs also provide information relating to the host country, such as access to health and other social services and information on NGOs and other important actors in the local context, relevant migration health issues such as HIV prevention,<sup>18</sup> and cultural expectations.

MRCs also provide services to migrants to assist them directly in resolving their problems, such as *pro bono* legal counselling and on-site provision of healthcare and employer conciliation to assist in dispute resolution. Where MRCs are not able to

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<sup>17</sup> For an example of safe migration advice, see

<http://www.migrantinfo.org.ua/?lng=eng&menu=rest&tbl=usefull&submenu=6>

<sup>18</sup> While migration in and of itself is not a health risk, the conditions of the migration process may create specific health vulnerabilities, and migrants must be aware and prepared to protect themselves.

provide services directly, they can provide referrals to other organizations, governmental or non-governmental, which can assist them.

Thus while the core role of MRCs in ensuring migrants' empowerment for protection consists of the provision of information to assist migrants to move in a regular, informed manner, the provision of additional services to ensure that clients are able to protect themselves is also important. This element is even more important in the context of migrant workers engaged in domestic services and living with their employers as they are exposed to greater risks of verbal, physical and sexual violence. Activities to promote and protect the health of migrants are particularly important, as healthy migrants are more productive members of the societies in which they live.

Despite the different actors involved in the set-up and running of the MRCs studied here, they all provide a range of services to assist migrants' empowerment for protection, from identifying their needs, obtaining relevant information and disseminating it to clients, ensuring that the largest possible number of people are aware of how the MRC can help them, as well as providing them with services ranging from assistance in filling in visa applications to providing emergency accommodation, or referring them to appropriate service providers, such as health services.

#### **Text Box 2. Criteria for Good Practices in Services Empowering Migrants for Protection**

- Information-gathering on migration issues
- Outreach and information dissemination
  - Use of media
  - Physical outreach and local contact
  - Location
  - Service accessibility through telephone hotlines, websites and extended working hours
- Provision of individualized counselling and support services
  - Individualized counselling
  - Direct Provision of Relevant Services

##### *A. Information-Gathering on Migration Issues*

In order to provide these services of empowerment for protection to migrants, 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.

The means through which MRCs gather information differ, depending on the particular contexts in which the MRCs operate; where MRCs are represented on governmental committees related to migration (such as **in Sri Lanka, Portugal, Lebanon, and Australia**), the MRCs are informed about any legislative or other relevant changes that are made automatically, guaranteeing that they are able to provide accurate and up-to-date information. **In Portugal**, the **CNAI** is able to leverage its governmental links to

ensure that staff are also trained on issues relating to any changes in the law, so that they are able to understand and explain them to clients.

However, those MRCs which do not enjoy such privileged access, or for which information on procedures has to be gathered from a number of countries, have developed other means to ensure that their information is up-to-date. Membership of organizations with an international presence is used effectively by a number of MRCs: for example, the **Migrant Service Centres in the Western Balkans** share information on any legislative changes that have taken place in the different countries of the region, as well as receiving information from IOM staff in countries of destination. Where MRCs are not able to benefit from these international linkages, MRCs in countries of origin and destination can also benefit from formal and informal relationships with embassies as a means of finding information; the **Congolese MCDEM** has focal points in most of its embassies of countries of destination to ensure that they are updated on relevant changes in country of origin procedures, and can pass this information on to clients.

The **Migrant Service Centres in the Western Balkans** also provide a good example of how consistency can be maintained in information gathering, as they have developed a common process, covering the topics on which information should be collected, and the sources to be used. This structures the information-gathering process to ensure that essential topics<sup>19</sup> are covered for each country of destination identified. Respondents also noted that it was essential to train staff to gather information that could meet the individual requests of clients.

### *B. Outreach and Information Dissemination*

MRCs need to make as many potential clients aware of their services as possible and have the capacity to disseminate this information to as wide a range of potential and actual clients as possible. Such outreach requires the consideration of a number of issues relating to the target audience and the client base. Although word of mouth is effective and was credited by a number of respondents<sup>20</sup> as a factor leading to increasing numbers of clients, practical considerations such as gender, age, education, membership of organizations and networks have implications for the strategies and sources that migrants use to access information, their ability to access information and the kinds of information they will be looking for.

#### *i) Use of media*

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<sup>19</sup> These include: general conditions of entry and stay into the country(ies) of destination; immigration legislation in countries of origin and destination; visa information and country of origin embassy address; residence and work permits requirements, documentation, links to websites, forms, responsible authorities; job search websites; existing quota systems, bilateral or multilateral labour/migration agreements between countries of origin and destination where applicable; study options in the country of destination (conditions of entry, residence, right to work if applicable, graduate and post-graduate scholarships); family reunification in the country of destination: conditions of entry and stay; medical services and social insurance obligations, rights and options in the country of destination; support services offered to migrants by public agencies, NGOs, trade unions, hotlines (also for Victims of Trafficking), contact details and websites in countries of destination; citizenship requirements; return (assistance with voluntary return, legal provisions regarding forced return)

<sup>20</sup> For example the **MIC in Slovakia and the CIGEM in Mali**

MRCs have undertaken active outreach, through advertisements in different kinds of media, including newspapers, organization newsletters, radio and television. For example, **the Spectrum MRC in Australia** is running advertisements on a television channel that caters for migrant communities, the Special Broadcasting Service, ensuring that their outreach is efficiently aimed at the target communities.<sup>21</sup> The **Sportele Migracioni in Albania** has also run advertisements on the main national television channels to advertise the services of these MRCs to as wide a target audience as possible.

In addition to advertisements, the **CLMC in Lebanon**, the **Centro de Información y Atención sobre Migración Internacional (CIAMI, or Centre for Information and Attention on International Migration) in Colombia** and **CNAI in Portugal** all have specific programming on local and national radio (and, in the case of **CNAI**, its coordinating body, the **High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue**, also develops programmes for the television), which explains and promotes the work of the MRC in addition to focusing on migrant-related issues. In the case of the **CIAMI**, the respondents indicated that their weekly Friday-night radio programme is particularly effective in reaching out to new clients, as they receive most clients on Monday.<sup>22</sup>

ii) *Physical outreach and local contact*

MRC staff also physically work in areas where they are likely to encounter potential clients, in particular in remote or inaccessible areas or areas of high immigration or emigration pressure. MRCs undertake outreach at important community events (such as fiestas held by Filipino migrants, or Trade Union-organized events in **Sri Lanka**); in **Tajikistan**, meanwhile, to overcome the physical isolation of communities, the **Tajik IRCLMs** undertake mobile information and consultation sessions. This is a particularly effective practice, as the staff's physical presence allows them to tailor the information provided to specific audiences: for example, while the **IRCLMs** provide information to (mostly male) returnees in the winter outreach sessions, during the summer information is mostly tailored towards the needs of (mostly-female and young) populations left behind. Relevant information is thus directly provided to migrants, empowering them to take appropriate actions to better protect themselves.

In **Slovakia and Portugal**, meanwhile, cultural mediators, collaborators drawn from the different migrant communities, in play key roles in providing outreach to migrant communities, leveraging their position in and familiarity with these communities to actively go out and provide migrants with information about the MRC as well as providing some consultative services. For example, Outreach Teams comprising cultural mediators from the **CNAI** were created in 2006. These Teams visit local neighbourhoods and institutions to raise awareness about the existence of, and services provided by, the **CNAI**. The Outreach Teams also seek to bridge information gaps among immigrant communities not only about their rights and duties in Portuguese society, but also about integration services available.

In **Lebanon**, the **CLMC** maintains a presence at the airport, which is used to provide informational leaflets to new arrivals in the main languages of the migrants (such as Sinhalese, Tagalog, Amharic and Nepalese). These methods of active outreach ensure

<sup>21</sup> Such media can be particularly useful where literacy among target groups is an issue

<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, in the absence of an evaluation and the opportunity to discuss this with clients themselves, this trend cannot be verified

that potential clients are informed about the MRCs and even counselled without having to take the initiative to actively search for them. The practices identified here therefore enable the MRCs to reach a wide range of migrants and overcome factors that potentially isolate certain kinds of clients from accessing this information, such as is particularly the case with the secluded nature of domestic work.

*iii) Location*

The location of the MRC is important in making its services and information accessible, both to clients and potential partners. A network of MRCs is a useful tool to assist in this process: although it is important for the MRC to have a presence in capital cities, where relevant institutions are located, local MRCs in specific areas of high emigration pressure or in areas of high immigration help make MRCs accessible to the populations most likely to require their services. With this in mind, the MRCs run by the **Colombian America España Solidaridad y Cooperacion (AESCO, or America-Spain Solidarity and Cooperation)** NGO have been located in areas identified through preliminary research as zones of high emigration pressure, to ensure this accessibility. Moreover, in addition to this consideration, the **Portuguese CNAI** was deliberately located in an area easily accessible to public transport, which is an important consideration for migrants. The three centres of CNAI in Portugal also work in connection with ACIDI network of 86 Local Immigrant Integration Support Centres spread throughout the country, ensuring a high level of physical accessibility.

*iv) Service accessibility through telephone hotlines, websites and extended working hours*

Another tool in the context of MRC service provision to overcome the possibility that potential clients may not be able to physically access the MRC are telephone information lines and, in certain cases, such as the **Congolese MCDEM, the Slovak MIC and the Colombian AESCO Centres**, websites and e-mail access to MRC staff. These services complement MRCs' physical presence, enabling migrants, regardless of their physical location, to learn about the MRCs, the services they offer, and to access the information they require. The SOS-Immigrant helpline run by the **Portuguese CNAI** enables migrants to ask questions of CNAI staff in the 13 main languages of migrants.<sup>23</sup> This service received over 85,000 calls in 2007, with a majority of respondents surveyed expressing a good level of satisfaction with the responses received (International Organization for Migration, 2008: 132-134). The **FWRCs** also often maintain these hotlines, as do the Centres in the **Democratic Republic of Congo, Slovakia, and Lebanon**. They are particularly helpful in situations where clients' mobility may be restricted. Figures from the **Slovak MIC** also suggest that these complementary means of accessing the Centre's services are particularly beneficial for female clients: between April and September of this year, although only 32 women received in-person legal counselling, (compared to 70 men), most e-mail- and telephone-based counselling (129 out of 243 consultations) was provided to women.

The provision of services outside normal office hours also enables MRCs to provide immediate support in emergency situations, and provide migrants access to normal services without having to miss work. The Filipino **FWRCs** show particularly good

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<sup>23</sup> Through the Centre's telephone translation services, information can be provided in over 60 languages

practices in this respect, as they are required to be available to migrants at all times, on public holidays and weekends as well as working days.

### *C. Provision of individualized counselling and support services*

#### *i) Individualized counselling*

Most MRCs provide individualized support and counselling; the **Lebanese CLMC** identified an individualized approach as the basis for their philosophy of support. Such an approach recognizes that, although some issues may be generic for migrants (for example, questions relating to migrants' access to services), the highly complex nature of migration means that individual migrants often present particular cases which require individual attention and advice. It is thus important to ensure that MRCs are able to see beyond generic issues to understand the particular situation of individual migrants themselves.

According to the respondent from the **Portuguese CNAI**, the provision of access for migrants to individualized, subsidized or free legal advice has been highlighted as highly appreciated by clients. Indeed, for a number of MRCs, such as **the MIC in Slovakia, the CLMC in Lebanon and the IRCLMs in Tajikistan**, the provision of such advice and legal assistance is a core aspect of the work of these MRCs. Staff are trained to help migrants follow the appropriate legal procedures throughout the migration process (including regularization processes), as well as provide pro bono assistance to migrants who need help accessing their rights (such as assisting bringing court cases or providing conciliation in the case of unpaid wages, or where changing jobs requires a legal process, such as in **Lebanon**). These practices are effective in ensuring that migrants are able to learn about their rights as well as obtain support in exercising them where necessary.

It is therefore important to promote a culture of listening to enable clients to explain their situations fully, something which has been facilitated by the use of cultural mediators in the **Portuguese CNAI** who are able to provide services in an empathetic manner, reflecting their shared experiences, as well as facilitating interaction between service providers and migrants. The **AESCO-run MRCs in Colombia**, meanwhile, employ psychologists. Both enable clients to access the required information and services.

#### *ii) Direct Provision of Relevant Services*

While the above practices support migrants in protecting themselves, some MRCs also provide services directly to migrants in order to promote their protection.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the MRCs that have been open the longest are currently able to provide the widest range of services: **the Spectrum MRC and the Filipino Workers Resource Centres (FWRCs)** are both institutions with a long experience in assisting migrants and their services have expanded to meet the wide range of needs required by migrants.

Beyond legal assistance, some MRCs such as the **FWRCs** also provide services relating to physical and mental health, such as psycho-social counselling and on-site medical assistance. The **FWRCs** also maintain shelters for clients (primarily women) in

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<sup>24</sup> Those MRCs which do not provide these services directly generally offer referral to services which can.

particular need. This includes migrants who have absconded from their employment; have been imprisoned inside private dwellings or on work sites by their employers or agencies; who have been abused; had their contracts terminated illegally; have been recruited illegally; or are facing homelessness (Department of Labour and Employment, N.D.). This enables migrants to access a safe place where they can stay until their cases are resolved.

Other MRCs also provide different forms of emergency accommodation. The emergency housing provided by the **Spectrum MRC**, for example, is linked to broader support for clients to improve their situations sustainably, showing good practice in providing support which aims to sustainably resolve clients' emergencies; while the **MSC in Sri Lanka and the Bienvenido a Casa (Welcome Home) Centre in Colombia** provide temporary accommodation for returnees unable to return directly home.

## Section 3 – Processes of Good Practice

Having studied the different good practices in empowerment of migrants for development and protection, it is also useful to study the institutional set-up of the MRCs to see how this enables them to support these goals effectively, and how MRCs have been to guarantee their sustainability over time. Some MRCs are run by governments directly; others are developed and implemented by NGOs; while the involvement of inter-governmental organizations such as IOM has also proved important in a number of cases.<sup>25</sup> The involvement of different actors has important implications for the objectives of the MRC, its relationship to development and protection, the resources and expertise available to it, and its sustainability.

### 3.1. Set-Up

#### Text Box 3. Criteria for Good Practices in Set-Up

- Undertaking a needs assessment
- Maintaining contacts with client populations
- Networks and Partnerships
  - International Networks
  - Mechanisms for referral to other services

#### *A. Undertaking a needs assessment*

The motivations underlying the set-up of MRCs, as noted above, vary according to the migration context in the country of the MRC. Determinants of MRCs' goals and focus include factors such as the migration context of the country or area in question and the different conceptions, assumptions and policy objectives relating to migration of different countries and organizations involved in their running. The different MRCs share the fact that they respond to an identified need, which to date had not been

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<sup>25</sup> In this latter case, however, the aim is generally to hand over the running of the Centre to other organizations over the long run

addressed in the country, in relation to providing services to migrants. This helps ensure that the MRC is set up to complement, not replace, other services in the local context.

Complementarity can best be ensured through practices such as undertaking needs assessments and feasibility studies to map the existing context into which the MRC will fit. The **MIC in Slovakia**, prior to entering into operation, commissioned a needs assessment, which used qualitative research methods to work with migrants to identify their experience of migration to Slovakia, their levels of knowledge of Slovak institutions, their needs in relation to employment, barriers, and cultural issues among others, in order to provide a baseline to guide the work of the MIC (Department of Social and Biological Communication, 2006). This ensured that the MRC's services met the needs of its clients effectively.

IOM carried out a feasibility study in Mali as part of the set-up process of the **CIGEM**; this study identified existing, relevant initiatives and institutional gaps, providing baseline data. This can be highlighted as a good practice as it helped ensure that CIGEM would be able to focus its efforts appropriately, filling gaps and working in partnership with other institutions, and that its services are relevant to its users, as well as broader society (International Organization for Migration, 2007).

### *B. Maintaining Contacts with Client Populations*

In order to ensure that clients are able to participate in development processes and protect themselves, it is important to ensure that MRCs are able, as far as possible, to continually identify the needs and interests of migrants effectively, both those that are broadly applicable as well as those that relate to particular, individual cases. In order for MRCs to be effective in this, a flexible and participatory approach is required, reflecting the need to respond to real needs and issues which, given the often-changing nature of migration rules and procedures, are subject to change. This is something which was found to be a constant across the MRCs studied.

In particular, gender sensitivity in identifying potential clients and in assessing their issues can both improve the MRCs' outreach and service provision. It is important for partnerships to be established with migrant organizations in countries of destination including women's associations, and with organizations representing the families of migrants in countries of origin. Such partnerships enable MRCs to ensure that they are able to win confidence among migrant communities and are able to remain up-to-date with the issues that concern them, as well as help promote the MRCs' visibility in these communities. By remaining relevant to the changing needs of their client bases, MRCs also work towards the goal of ensuring their sustainability by becoming a normal reference point for migrants and returnees in the migration process.

In order to remain in touch with migrant communities throughout its work, the **Slovak MIC** has employed cultural mediators, a methodology which has also been highlighted as being successful in maintaining contact with the client population in the context of **the Portuguese CNAI**. These mediators are able to act as two-way conduits of information, providing updates on the situation of the different communities to the MRCs gained through their positions of trust and day-to-day involvement in the life of these communities, as well as providing information on the work of their MRCs to the communities. At the **CNAI**, the cultural mediators also work as frontline staff: their experience of having gone through the same procedures as their clients ensures that they

are able to better understand clients' concerns.<sup>26</sup> Client involvement in the running of the MRCs represents a means to ensure that they are responsive over the long term to the needs of their clients.

Other MRCs use other, equally-effective, methods to maintain lines of communication with the communities they serve. The Migrant Workers Associations set up by the **MSC in Sri Lanka** represent the families of migrant workers and returnees in different localities, and are regularly consulted by six mobilizers who ensure a regular flow of communication in both directions. Through these contacts, the MSC is able to remain up-to-date not only with the needs of these communities but also of migrants abroad. The **MCDEM in Congo and the IRCLMs in Tajikistan** use electronic means to maintain this contact with migrants both within the country and outside it, providing a means through which issues are raised and questions are asked. Clients who come to the **MCDEM** are given a service monitoring form which also enables the MCDEM to identify trends in the needs identified by migrants, and adjust their services accordingly. **The Spectrum MRC and the CLMC** also facilitate regular focus groups to provide forums for migrants to outline their needs and guide service development. All of these structures show practices that managers have identified as successful in ensuring that MRCs are aware of the changing situations and needs of their clients in countries of origin and destination. These practices could be carried out by other MRCs where possible and can be described as good practices

### *C. Networks and Partnerships*

Given the cross-cutting nature of migration across policy areas and countries, MRCs need to know how to intervene in a number of different legal, procedural and socio-cultural issues in countries of origin and destination. MRCs in countries of origin and destination often need to develop relationships with and find information from non-governmental and other actors (such as NGOs, employers and remittance transfer providers) who may also be able to provide, for example, services to protect migrants and run projects linking migration and development. The methods deemed appropriate will depend on the particular context in which the MRC is found; however, formal and informal networking is an important tool in ensuring that MRCs are able to provide up-to-date and accurate information relating to conditions and opportunities in both countries of origin and destination.

#### *i) International networks*

A diversity of practices can be identified, depending on the nature of the MRC and the resources available to it: for example, MRCs run by IOM such as the **Migrant Service Centres in the Western Balkans** and the **IRCLMs in Tajikistan** are able to draw on the expertise of colleagues in countries of destination to gather and exchange information, ensuring that the MRCs are able to provide access to the most up-to-date and accurate information on migration and migration for development opportunities in these countries, which they can share with migrants. Meanwhile, **AESCO's** presence in both countries of origin and destination can be highlighted as another good practice in

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<sup>26</sup> It should be noted that even where "cultural mediator" positions are not formalized or made explicit, many Centres (for example the Spectrum MRC in Australia) often make specific efforts to hire staff from the communities with which they work

this area, as it enables them to provide effective support to migrants in both situations.<sup>27</sup> Finally, the **Sri Lankan MSC**'s parent organization does not have such an international presence, it has developed an innovative approach to networking: it has negotiated agreements with partner organizations in countries of destination (such as the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions) to support the protection of Sri Lankan workers in these countries, thus leveraging their common interests and involvement in the International Trade Union Confederation to ensure MSC clients' access to services in countries of destination. These MRCs therefore show good practices in leveraging their participation in networks and partnerships at an international level to enhance their MRCs' abilities to provide necessary information and services to clients.

ii) *Mechanisms for referral to other services*

Partnerships are also important at the local level. Through such partnerships, MRCs with more limited resources can refer clients to services where they are not able to provide them themselves. For example, the **Slovak MIC**'s informal partnership with the Human Rights League of Slovakia has proved effective in ensuring that clients can access legal representation. The **Albanian Sportele Migracioni** is also able to refer clients to NGOs who can provide appropriate vocational training, empowering them for development. This therefore shows a good practice in leveraging partnerships to ensure clients can be referred to services when they are not provided by MRCs themselves.

### 3.2 Sustainability

#### **Textbox 4. Criteria for Good Practices in Ensuring Sustainability**

- Integration into government structures
- Sustainability for independent centres
- Capacity-Building of Partners and Stakeholders
  - Assisting governments to formulate and meet their wider migration policy objectives
  - Assisting non-governmental actors meet migration management goals

When reference to MRCs is embedded as a normal part of the process of migrating, then MRCs can be said to support the migration management goals of orderly and regular migration. However, this process requires time, so that migrants can gain confidence in the MRC and the services it provides. The sustainability of the actions undertaken by the MRCs is therefore important.

This has been identified as a challenge by many MRCs, especially where funding is linked to short-term projects. However, there are a number of practices which have ensured that MRCs are able to provide their services sustainably to clients.

#### *A. Integration into government structures*

<sup>27</sup> Based on the experiences of the CNAI, the Portuguese Government launched in 2007 the CAMPO Centre in Cape Verde as a pilot project aiming to provide in the countries of origin relevant information for migrants that intend to live, study, work or travel to Portugal. Again, this enables migrants to receive support in both countries of origin and host countries

As noted above, integration into government structures can also help ensure that the MRC's activities are coherent with broader government development strategies and frameworks. However, the integration of MRCs into government structures also means that they are included in nationally-planned and defined long-term funding plans, which can ensure that they are able to provide their services sustainably. The **CNAI** is particularly interesting in this regard, as it was created as a public institution which was part of the state institute for immigrant integration – the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue. This is not the only means of achieving sustainability, but is a good practice in the context of government-run MRCs.

The MRCs which are set up under projects by non-governmental actors have developed means of securing the long-term viability of at least the delivery of core services. IOM-run projects, such as the **MCDEM and the Migrant Service Centres in the Balkans**, have aimed to ensure that these MRCs will be integrated into governmental structures at the end of the project, when external funding sources have been exhausted. The **MCDEM** has already secured a commitment from the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo to ensure that its costs will be included in the budget for 2010. The **Albanian Sportele Migracioni**, meanwhile, have signed Memoranda of Understanding with the governments to ensure that their functions will continue after the end of current project funding.

### *B. Sustainability for independent centres*

Where this integration into governmental structures is not possible or desirable, sustainability has still been achieved through other means.<sup>28</sup> Membership of larger organizations (such as trade unions) or networks assures MRCs such as the **Colombian CIAMI** and the **MSC in Sri Lanka** some level of core funding from parent or partner organizations, enabling them to operate with sustainable funding sources.

Particularly noteworthy in this area are the activities of the **Spectrum MRC**: although it is an independent MRC, it has nonetheless expanded its services over time, diversifying its sources of funding from different government departments as well as covering the costs of other services through charging clients to use some services, such as their immigration service, which supports clients going through procedures such as family reunification. The staff respondents noted that the lack of stable funding sources had meant that some services had had to be discontinued after funds ran out, an issue which can be problematic in maintaining clients' confidence in the service. However, the Centre actively sought out funding from different sources, guaranteeing that an important level of financial sustainability has been achieved core services at least.

### *C. Capacity-Building of Partners and Stakeholders*

- i) *Assisting governments to formulate and meet their wider migration policy objectives*

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<sup>28</sup> It is notable that some of the longest-standing Centres studied here – the Spectrum MRC, the CLMC and the MSC in Sri Lanka – are NGO-run Centres, suggesting that sustainability is not entirely dependent on integration into government structures

Ensuring that migration contributes to development and takes place in a protected fashion requires a holistic, cross-sector vision of migration which MRCs, through their regular and direct contact with migrants and understanding of their needs and the challenges they face, can help provide to governments. This can be achieved either through support to policy formulation and implementation. The Australian MRCs such as the **Spectrum MRC**, for example, support governmental goals of integration of long-term migrants after the diversification of countries of origin of migrants had taken place owing to a liberalization of migration policy. Similarly, the **Migrant Service Centres in the Western Balkans** aim to promote the policy goals of supporting legal emigration of citizens of these countries in a context of previously-high rates of irregular migration. In certain contexts, MRC operate within and support the framework of particular migration-related agreements, such as European Mobility Partnerships, through which nationals of certain countries of origin (such as Cape Verde and Moldova) enjoy facilitated temporary migration access to European countries of destination, or circular migration arrangements.

A number of MRCs provide this support and expertise to governments through different means. The participation of representatives of MRCs in national committees on migration issues, for example, ensures that their expertise and understanding can be brought to the policy-making arena. For example, the **MSC in Sri Lanka** has been an active partner in the development and implementation of the country's national labour migration policy, while the **Malian CIGEM** has been instrumental in the set-up of a working group on return and reinsertion, bringing together the government, civil society and other stakeholders to discuss this issue. It also contributed in the setting-up of a national working group on legal migration.

In countries of destination, meanwhile, where there are important cultural differences between migrants and the host society, MRCs can also become expert in ensuring effective intercultural understanding and communication to facilitate service design and delivery. Such understanding and expertise can be passed on, formally or informally, to governments, building their capacities to effectively design and deliver services. The **Spectrum MRC in Australia** provides this assistance to governments and agencies. In partnership with migrant communities it also provides "community profiling" services, which help the government and service providers to gain a better understanding of the specific make-up of the different communities they serve, including specific issues and needs that the communities have, and the means through which they can be approached. These profiling services assist local authorities to engage with migrant communities, building confidence among the communities themselves in these services.

MRCs such as the **Migrant Service Centres in the Western Balkans**, meanwhile, systematically gather information on the profiles of their users, a practice which supports the government through providing an overview of the profiles of the migrants (emigrants and immigrants) that use these services, including, *inter alia*, their gender, employment status, skills level, reasons for migration, and preferred countries of destination (Albanian Socio-Economic Think Tank and IOM, 2006).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Although this data should be treated with some caution, as it only represents the findings from a portion of the population who migrate, nonetheless it is of some use. A separate study under the same project (the Aeneas-funded Capacity Building, Information and Awareness Raising towards Promoting Orderly Migration in the Western Balkans) aims to study the propensity to migrate among the general population

The **FWRCs**, managed by the Overseas Workers Welfare Agency, provide vital information for the government of the Philippines by sharing information on the conditions and issues faced by Filipinos abroad directly to a central clearing house in Manila. They thus assist the government's policy development processes in the fields of protection and empowering migrants to contribute to development.

*ii) Assisting non-governmental actors meet migration management goals*

Migration management, although a government-led and directed process, also implicates non-governmental stakeholders, such as employment agencies and employers. The compliance of these actors with government policies is essential to ensure that migrants are empowered for development and protection: employers, for example, play a key role in providing migrants with decent jobs in which they can acquire skills and avoid exploitation. It is therefore important for MRCs to work with these actors, building their capacities to assist governmental migration management goals and effectively address the specific challenges faced by migrants.

The **Tajik IRCLMs** provide an example of good practice in this area: they have been involved in training and providing technical assistance to Tajikistan's Private Employment Agencies to ensure that they understand their obligations and are able to carry out their work to support migrants' rights effectively. The Tajik IRCLMs have also undertaken trainings of staff at Jamoat Resource Centres, locally-organized NGOs, to provide information and consultation services to migrant households, ensuring that they are also able to support migration management goals.

## **Section 4 – Conclusion and Recommendations**

MRCs around the world are currently engaged in a wide range of different, innovative practices to protect, support and empower migrants. While many MRCs are still in their early stages, they are increasingly considering how their work can enhance the benefits migration can bring to development. Already, a number of their practices are assisting in ensuring that migrants' capacities to participate in these processes are increased. MRCs have been found to be able to: assist clients in facilitating remittances transfers at lower costs; advise them on investment opportunities in their countries of origin; involve them in migration for development initiatives. Moreover, they are involved in assisting migrants' human development, assisting them to find fulfilling work and building the capacities of their organizations.

This work has been undertaken in addition to the MRCs' work in empowering migrants with the information and capacities to protect themselves through informed, regular and orderly migration. A number of good practices can be identified in this area, in relation to: information-gathering; outreach and dissemination strategies to make this information accessible to migrants; and the provision of counselling and support services. These MRCs have succeeded in making themselves relevant to the local context, and many have found effective means of not only maintaining financial sustainability, but also ensuring that they are a reference point of expertise and support for migrants and other stakeholders.

Moving forward, a number of recommendations for MRCs, governments, international organizations, NGOs and other stakeholders can be made:

*Recommendations for Services Empowering Migrants for Development*

1. Most MRCs do not see their work in the framework of empowering migrants for development. A more explicit focus on migration for development in the activities of MRCs would enable them to provide more focused support in this area. This would be particularly effective in relation to training, where development-related project management training could be of particular benefit.
2. Inherent in the development potential of any migrant is his or her well-being, which is linked to his or her living and working conditions, as well as the information received throughout the migration process. MRCs should work with countries of origin and destination to protect and invest in the well-being of migrants. Information on how to protect their health for example can lead to healthier migrant workers in countries of origin and destination, which is a benefit to all.
3. The GFMD could consider devoting a session during the Civil Society Day at the next meeting in Mexico in 2010 to the subject of MRCs, and invite MRCs as participants. This could represent the start of continuous engagement of MRCs in international dialogue on migration and development.
4. MRCs could also assist in helping build links between diasporas and the country of origin, through taking part in or initiating co-development-type activities, such as Return of Qualified Nationals or Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA)-like programmes, to engage diasporas for development.
5. MRCs should be given greater attention and consideration from development actors and donors.

*Recommendations for Services Empowering Migrants for Protection*

6. MRCs' work should include, wherever possible, the engagement of the wider community through activities such as training and awareness-raising on migrants' rights and responsibilities. Beyond migrants and governments, employers and society at large are important stakeholders in ensuring migrants are able to access and enjoy their rights, and are therefore key actors in creating a wide culture of respect for migrants' rights.
7. Some of the examples of MRCs have shown good practices in relation to gender-specific needs. However, a more widespread sensitivity to the vulnerability to exploitation, physical and social violence that many women migrants and returnees face, as well as a greater understanding of how services can be made accessible and tailored to the needs of female and male clients, would enable MRCs to more efficiently meet their needs for protection. Greater gender-sensitivity in assessing the needs of migrants would allow for a more targeted and efficient protection of male and female migrants and would help harness migrant women's participation to Migration and Development activities.
8. Given that health is a precursor to development, activities to promote and protect the health of migrants within MRCs should be strengthened. Migrants should be empowered to protect their own health, and should be given the knowledge to improve their health literacy and health-seeking behaviour. Health prevention is more effective (and less expensive) than dealing with the negative health impacts of migration in countries of destination.

9. A tool that appears to be particularly effective is to involve members of the client group in the activities of the MRC, for example through their engagement as cultural facilitators, or through the regular consultation of representative committees of migrants and their families. This aspect of MRCs' work should be strengthened wherever possible.

#### *Recommendations for Set-Up and Sustainability*

10. There is not a single, "ideal" model for an MRC. The specifics of each MRC will depend on the broader policy context. Studies to collect baseline data against which the activities of the MRCs can be judged can be an important tool in identifying the institutional landscape into which they will fit, identifying gaps and stakeholders, as well as the needs of the potential clients themselves
11. Contacts with governments of host countries and MRCs in countries of origin could be developed, enabling MRCs to provide information on the profiles, expectations and needs of migrants.

#### *General Recommendations*

12. Where appropriate, governments should consider setting up, or supporting the set-up of, MRCs to assist in the fulfilment of their migration and development-related goals. The setting up of MRCs could also be considered as a part of national or regional development strategies. Governments' leverage, resources, and contacts could enable MRCs to carry out activities sustainably in countries of origin and destination alike.
13. Where MRCs already exist governments should consider MRCs as stakeholders in migration policy development and implementation processes, especially where this relates to migration and development and protection issues. This reflects the expertise that MRCs can bring to the debate on these questions
14. More research and evaluation of the work of MRCs is needed to better identify the benefits they bring, as well as areas for improvement.
  - a. Longitudinal studies examining the direct impacts of MRCs on migrants, particularly in relation to their empowerment for development and protection over time would help clarify which practices are particularly effective.
  - b. Studies focused on the human development dimension of MRCs, such as the impact of health prevention and health referral activities, would help document the positive benefits and could be important for advocacy with Governments towards improving access and protection of all migrants.
15. Greater networking between MRCs around the world would be of great benefit, facilitating the sharing of information related to legal procedures, as well as the cross-fertilization of good practices and transnational practices for migrant protection and empowerment. A knowledge platform along similar lines as the European Commission-United Nations Joint Migration and Development Initiative could be a useful tool for this purpose, providing an e-mail distribution list through which questions can be asked of experts in different countries, as well as online forums and blogs to promote experience and information-sharing.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> IOM has just instituted an internal mailing list to enable this exchange between IOM-run Centres. For more on the JMEDI, see <http://www.migration4development.org/>

16. MRCs could benefit from tools and support enabling them to identify concrete job and study opportunities for migrants in countries of destination and returnees in countries of origin. Such a tool could follow the example of the European EURES portal enabling both prospective migrants to search for work or scholarship opportunities abroad, and providing tools for employers to search for employees.<sup>31</sup> Such tools could also enable them to identify and keep updated lists of fraudulent employment or migration agencies.
17. Where concrete circular mobility schemes are being developed, the establishment of MRCs could be considered as an important part of this process to direct and support the process of recruitment, travel, and return and reintegration.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The Integrated Migration Information System set up by the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, which enables job-matching between Egypt and Italy is another prospective model.

<sup>32</sup> The **Malian CIGEM** has already been involved in this process, facilitating the temporary migration of 29 Malian workers to the Canary Islands.



				Set-Up				Sustainability			
		Provision of individualized counselling and support services		Undertaking a Needs Assessment	Maintaining Contacts with Client Populations	Networks and Partnerships		Integration into Government Structures	Sustainability for independent centres	Capacity-Building of Partners and Stakeholders	
Location	Service Accessibility	Provision of Individualized Support and Counselling	Direct Provision of Relevant Services			International Networks	Mechanisms for referral to other services			Assisting governments to formulate and meet their wider migration policy objectives	Assisting non-governmental actors meet migration management goals
								✓		✓	
			✓						✓	✓	
✓		✓				✓					
			✓								
									✓		
								✓		✓	
	✓				✓			✓			
	✓	✓	✓		✓						
	✓			✓							
	✓		✓							✓	
✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓			
	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓				
					✓	✓			✓	✓	
			✓		✓						✓

## Annex B: Services provided by the Migrant Resource Centres

Listed below are tables outlining the main findings from each of the MRCs studied as part of the research for this rapid assessment. The tables give a brief outline of the history and nature of the MRCs, website details for further information, a listing of the different practices identified by the respondent(s) from each MRC during the interview, and a brief outline of some of the challenges they noted. Where practices have been highlighted in bold, it indicates that this practice is mentioned in the main body of the assessment, in sections 2 and 3.

### Sportele Migracioni, Sarande, Albania

<b>General Information</b>	
<b>Centre Name</b>	Sportele Migracioni, Sarande, Albania
<b>Centre Type</b>	International Organization for Migration; to be handed over to the government of Albania
<b>Established</b>	2008
<b>Location(s)</b>	Saranda, Albania (part of a network of 14 Centres in the country)
<b>Funding sources</b>	European Community Aeneas fund, along with co-funding from the governments of Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Hungary and Liechtenstein
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.migrantservicecentres.org/">http://www.migrantservicecentres.org/</a>
<b>Services Provided</b>	
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Development</b>	<b>Partnerships to provide employment-related training</b>
	Provision of information/referral to returnees
	Registration of clients in the Albanian Registry of Emigrants
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Protection</b>	Referral to employment-related training for potential emigrants
	Partnerships with local civil society for referral services; NGOs refer clients to the MRC
	Use of a range of media for outreach
	Use of active outreach methods
<b>Set-Up</b>	<b>Methodology to ensure the consistent gathering and provision of information</b>
	<b>Involvement in an international network of MRCs, facilitating cross-country cooperation in information-gathering</b>
<b>Sustainability</b>	Partnerships with local civil society for referral services
	<b>Procedures to ensure the integration and continuation of services into government structures at the end of the project</b>
<b>Challenges</b>	Lack of legal migration opportunities for migration

## Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre, Australia

<b>General Information</b>	
<b>Centre Name</b>	Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre
<b>Centre Type</b>	Non-Governmental Centre
<b>Date established</b>	Founded 1980; Incorporated 1984
<b>Location(s)</b>	Preston, Victoria State, Australia
<b>Funding sources</b>	Mostly governmental funding (local and national); some costs covered by fees for services charged for migration agency services
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.spectrumvic.org.au">www.spectrumvic.org.au</a>
<b>Services Provided</b>	
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Development</b>	<b>Community capacity-building</b>
	Job-related training
	Financial support to clients for training
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Protection</b>	Base for diaspora activities
	<b>Focus groups for needs identification</b>
	<b>Housing support for homeless clients</b>
<b>Set-Up</b>	<b>Outreach through a wide range of media</b>
	<b>Diversification of funding sources</b>
	Membership of network of Australian MRCs
<b>Sustainability</b>	Partnerships with other actors for service delivery
	<b>Support for local government authorities in profiling local migrants' groups</b>
	Capacity building of other actors for service delivery
	Advocacy for mainstreaming of migration issues
<b>Challenges</b>	Staff recruited from migrant communities
	Projectized funding and different requirements from different donors, as well as high levels of competition for limited funding

## America-España Solidaridad y Cooperación, Colombia

<b>General Information</b>	
<b>Centre Name</b>	America-España Solidaridad y Cooperación
<b>Centre Type</b>	Non-Governmental
<b>Established</b>	2002
<b>Location(s)</b>	3 offices in Colombia; headquarters in Spain, and Centres in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia
<b>Funding sources</b>	Spanish decentralized cooperation, contributions from other organizations in the same field, services offered at social prices for the community
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.aesco-ong.org/">http://www.aesco-ong.org/</a> (Spanish only)
<b>Services Provided</b>	
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Development</b>	<b>Employment-related training in country of origin and destination</b>
	Micro-credits for entrepreneurial activities
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Protection</b>	<b>Research to ensure location of MRCs near populations in need</b>
	<b>Use of e-mail and internet forums to remain in contact with migrants abroad</b>
	<b>Promoting culture of listening to migrants</b>
	Active outreach to target communities
	Information-gathering and dissemination
<b>Set-Up</b>	<b>Presence in both countries of origin and destination, enabling protection and co-development activities in both</b>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Developing a coherent vision of co-development along an identified migration route</b>
<b>Challenges</b>	Lack of funds
	Disconnect in policy-making in countries of origin and destination

## Bienvenido a Casa, Colombia

<b>General Information</b>	
<b>Centre Name</b>	Bienvenido a Casa
<b>Centre Type</b>	International Organization for Migration, in partnership with the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Mayorality of Bogotá
<b>Established</b>	2009 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Location(s)</b>	Bogotá initially, although it is hoped that this pilot model will be extended elsewhere
<b>Funding sources</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mayorality of Bogotá, International Organization for Migration
<b>Website</b>	N/A
<b>Services Provided</b>	
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Development</b>	In the process of creating information sheets on remittances
	Referral to services for employment- and entrepreneurship-related training
	Contacts maintained with local and international development actors
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Protection</b>	Use of a wide range of local and international media for outreach, as well as having a presence on social networking sites, such as “Red Es Colombia”
	Provision of emergency accommodation, transport,
<b>Set-Up</b>	Partnerships with local civil society for referral services
	Conceptualized within a regional development strategy
	Learning from examples of other MRCs in operation
<b>Sustainability</b>	Capacity-building and sensitization of local service providers about returnee issues
<b>Challenges</b>	The project has not been able to benefit from pre-existing research as it is tackling an area which has not been greatly considered
	Lack of funding

## Centro de Información y Atención sobre Migración Internacional, Colombia

<b>General Information</b>	
<b>Centre Name</b>	Centro de Información y Atención sobre Migración Internacional
<b>Centre Type</b>	Non-Governmental Centre
<b>Established</b>	2008
<b>Location(s)</b>	Head office in Bogotá; 23 regional offices
<b>Funding sources</b>	Ministry of Social Protection, Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT), International Organization for Migration <sup>1</sup>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cgcolombia.org/actualidad.html">http://www.cgcolombia.org/actualidad.html</a>
<b>Services Provided</b>	
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Development<sup>1</sup></b>	Provision of information on an individual basis on remittances
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Protection</b>	<b>Use of a wide range of media for outreach</b>
	Personalized attention
	<b>Provision of specialist mental health support</b>
	Provision of information leaflets on countries of destination
	Maintenance of contact with Colombians abroad
<b>Set-Up</b>	Partnerships with local organizations
<b>Sustainability</b>	Membership of a larger body ensures financial sustainability
	Advocacy for migration-related changes to the law
<b>Challenges</b>	Lack of policies on migration and return to support the work of the MRC

## Migration Information Centre, Croatia

<b>General Information</b>	
<b>Centre Name</b>	Migration Information Centre, Croatia
<b>Centre Type</b>	International Organization for Migration; to be handed over to the government of Croatia
<b>Established</b>	2008
<b>Location(s)</b>	Located in the Counselling Centre of the Croatian Employment Service, Zagreb; however, the Croatian Employment service intends to establish 3 new Centres at its own expense
<b>Funding sources</b>	European Community Aeneas fund, along with co-funding from the governments of Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Hungary and Liechtenstein
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.migrant-servicecentres.org/">http://www.migrant-servicecentres.org/</a>
<b>Services Provided</b>	
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Development</b>	<b>Job-matching through information on employment quotas in countries of destination</b>
	<b>Partnerships to provide employment-related training</b>
	Referral to state banks for information on remittances
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Protection</b>	<b>Methodology to ensure the consistent gathering and provision of information</b>
	Use of a range of media for outreach
	Provision of a telephone helpline and counselling via e-mail
	Information provided on Assisted Voluntary Return options
<b>Set-Up</b>	<b>Involvement in an international network of MRCs, facilitating cross-country cooperation in information-gathering</b>
	MRC conceived of in relation to the country's eventual integration into the EURES framework
	Partnerships with local civil society for referral services
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Procedures to ensure the integration and continuation of services into government structures at the end of the project</b>
	<b>Systematic profiling of clients</b>
	Capacity-building of other actors on migration issues
<b>Challenges</b>	Project parameters have constrained the extension of services somewhat

### Maison des Congolais de l'Etranger et des Migrants, Democratic Republic of Congo

<b>General Information</b>	
<b>Centre Name</b>	Maison des Congolais de l'Etranger et des Migrants
<b>Centre Type</b>	International Organization for Migration; to be handed over to the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>Established</b>	2009
<b>Location(s)</b>	Currently, one office in Kinshasa, although further offices in the regions are planned
<b>Funding sources</b>	Government of Switzerland and Government of the United Kingdom
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.mcdem.cd/">http://www.mcdem.cd/</a>
<b>Services Provided</b>	
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Development</b>	<b>Investigating means to include information on remittances</b>
	Integration into national development strategies
	<b>Information on investment opportunities in the DRC</b>
	<b>Provision of a job portal for job searches</b>
	<b>Involvement in discussions on qualification recognition</b>
	<b>Organization of migration and development-related events to link the diaspora and the country of origin</b>
	Referral to local employment and job-matching services
	Training to improve livelihoods of populations at risk of irregular migration
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Protection</b>	Assistance with administrative procedures linked to Small-Medium Enterprise creation
	<b>Use of e-mail and internet forums to remain in contact with migrants abroad</b>
	<b>Systematic monitoring of clients' needs</b>
	<b>Focal points in embassies to facilitate information-gathering</b>
<b>Set-Up</b>	Information campaigns against irregular migration
	Local partnerships for service delivery and referral
<b>Sustainability</b>	Learning from examples of other MRCs in operation
	<b>Integration into government budget planning structures</b>
<b>Challenges</b>	Limitations of budget
	Location of the MRC in government facilities initially caused distrust among potential users, who are suspicious of public authorities

## Caritas Lebanon Migrants Centre, Lebanon

<b>General Information</b>	
<b>Centre Name</b>	Caritas Lebanon Migrants Centre
<b>Centre Type</b>	Non-Governmental Centre
<b>Established</b>	1994
<b>Location(s)</b>	Head office in Beirut, Lebanon; 9 regional centres, in addition to a team at the main detention centre for migrants facing deportation and a presence at Beirut airport
<b>Funding sources</b>	Projectized funding from the European Commission, the Catholic Relief Service, International Catholic Migration Commission, and the Office to Monitor Trafficking in Persons (G/TIP)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.caritasmigrant.org.lb/">http://www.caritasmigrant.org.lb/</a>
<b>Services Provided</b>	
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Development</b>	The MRC is working to develop its projects in the area of migration for development
	Job-related training
	Base for diaspora activities
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Protection</b>	Permanent presence at the detention centre for migrants waiting to be deported or released
	Information provision on procedures related to migration
	<b>Active outreach (including at the airport for new arrivals) and use of a wide range of media</b>
	<b>Provision of a telephone hotline</b>
	<b>Focus groups for needs identification</b>
	<b>Individualized support and counselling</b>
	Referral to public hospitals and financial support Provision of shelter facilities
<b>Set-Up</b>	<b>Representation on government committees</b>
	Partnerships with country of origin structures (including embassies)
	Partnerships with a wide range of relevant actors
<b>Sustainability</b>	Active search for projects
<b>Challenges</b>	Lack of funds
	Lack of recognition by authorities
	Generalized lack of awareness on the issue of migrants' rights

## Centre d'Information et de Gestion des Migrations, Mali

<b>General Information</b>	
<b>Centre Name</b>	Centre d'Information et de Gestion des Migrations
<b>Centre Type</b>	Non-Governmental Centre, supported by the European Commission and working in concert with the Government of Mali
<b>Established</b>	October 2008
<b>Location(s)</b>	Bamako, Mali; it is foreseen to develop services in the regions (job-training, NGO training, dissemination of information, awareness raising campaigns on the risks of irregular migration)
<b>Funding sources</b>	EC European Development Fund
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cigem.org/">http://www.cigem.org/</a>
<b>Services Provided</b>	
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Development</b>	<b>Launching a Co-development project</b>
	Conceived of in the context of Euro-African dialogue on migration and development
	Involvement (where legal frameworks permit) in small-scale recruitment of migrants for work abroad
	Support for returnees' professional development, regardless of the manner of their return
	Assist job searches and keep information on job opportunities abroad
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Protection</b>	<b>Employment-related training</b>
	<b>Use of telephone to remain in contact with migrants abroad</b>
	Information campaigns against irregular migration
	Personalized services, attention and information provision pertaining to the conditions of legal migration
<b>Set-Up</b>	Launched call for proposals for civil society organizations to upgrade services/assistance to returned migrants throughout the country. set up of a working group on return and reinsertion
	<b>Undertaking of an initial needs assessment to understand needs and the institutional environment in the local context</b>
<b>Sustainability</b>	Local partnership with civil society organizations, especially in relation to information campaigns against irregular migration, assistance to returnees and in referral to the MRC
	Aims to build the capacities of government services to assist them to fulfil their missions
<b>Challenges</b>	Risk of being spread too thinly across different areas
	Pressure of expectations
	Issues relating to the image of the MRC
	Difficulty of promoting legal migration where few possibilities for it exist
	Somewhat confused institutional environment

### Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Workers Resource Centres, Various countries

<b>General Information</b>	
<b>Centre Name</b>	Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Workers Resource Centres
<b>Centre Type</b>	Governmental Centres
<b>Established</b>	1986
<b>Location(s)</b>	Currently, 21 Centres around the world: 6 in Asia (Hong Kong SAR, Republic of Korea, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Singapore); 13 in the Middle East (Riyadh, Jeddah and Alkhobar in Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria); 1 in Europe; 1 in Saipan. By law, an FWRC can be set up in any country where there are more than 20,000 Overseas Filipino Workers
<b>Funding sources</b>	Government funding and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (a quasi-governmental institution funded by employers' contributions). Some host governments offer in-kind contributions, as do some community groups
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.owwa.gov.ph/">http://www.owwa.gov.ph/</a>
<b>Services Provided</b>	
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Development</b>	<b>Gathering information on and negotiating for lower-cost remittance transfers</b>
	<b>Provision of comprehensive information on investment opportunities in the Philippines</b>
	<b>Coordination of co-development activities</b>
	<b>Capacity-building of diaspora associations</b>
	<b>Job-Matching services for return and emigration</b>
	Preparation of migrants for return and reintegration in the country of destination (supported in the Philippines by a National Reintegration Centre)
	Training for entrepreneurship on return Skills recognition schemes
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Protection</b>	<b>Maintenance of telephone hotlines and 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week opening hours</b>
	<b>Shelters for migrants in distress</b>
	<b>Proactive outreach</b>
	Use of a range of media for outreach Formation of family circles to help migrant families support one another through the absence and return of family members
<b>Set-Up</b>	Partnerships with local migrant communities as well as governments and other actors for protection and development purposes
	Strong central co-ordination from Manila
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Information provided to the government of the Philippines on conditions and issues faced by Filipinos in countries of destination</b>
<b>Challenges</b>	Ensuring the use of the FWRCs by as many potential clients as possible
	Ensuring the appropriate use of migrants' savings and skills
	Finding resources to expand services to meet needs

## Centro Nacional de Apoio ao Imigrante, Portugal

<b>General Information</b>	
<b>Centre Name</b>	Centro Nacional de Apoio ao Imigrante
<b>Centre Type</b>	Governmental Centre
<b>Established</b>	2004
<b>Location(s)</b>	Main office in Lisbon; other offices in Porto and Faro, as well as well as 86 local centres which provide information and referral to the national centres. There is also a Centre (CAMPO) linked to the CNAI in Cape Verde
<b>Funding sources</b>	Government funding
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.acidi.gov.pt/modules.php?name=Content&amp;pa=showpage&amp;pid=1093">www.acidi.gov.pt/modules.php?name=Content&amp;pa=showpage&amp;pid=1093</a> (Portuguese only); see also <a href="http://www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt/">http://www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt/</a> (English and Portuguese)
<b>Services Provided</b>	
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Development</b>	<b>Support for recognition of qualifications</b>
	<b>Acting as a site for the promotion of migration for development and Assisted Voluntary Return programmes</b> Employment support office providing training information, coordination with Job Centres for job-matching, and entrepreneurship training and support (in drawing up business plans, and promoting access to microcredit).
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Protection</b>	<b>Use of cultural mediators as frontline staff</b>
	<b>Active outreach through a range of media and physical contact</b>
	<b>Location chosen for accessibility</b>
	<b>Provision of a telephone helpline</b>
	<b>Culture of listening</b>
	<b>Access to free legal counselling</b>
	<b>Provision of services to migrants in distress</b> Active process of informing migrants on legislative changes
<b>Set-Up</b>	<b>Involvement in government committees on migration</b>
	Dialogue with country of origin authorities
	Support from relevant government departments to train staff on changes in the law
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Registration as a public institution</b>
<b>Challenges</b>	Client diversity can make it difficult to support all migrants in their own languages
	There can be long waiting times for access to services

## Migration Information Centre, Slovakia

<b>General Information</b>	
<b>Centre Name</b>	Migration Information Centre
<b>Centre Type</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>Established</b>	Initially established 2006; services temporarily halted due to funding issues in early 2009; re-opened in March 2009
<b>Location(s)</b>	Main office in Bratislava; another office in Košice
<b>Funding sources</b>	European Community, through the European Integration Funding; the Slovak Ministry of Interior provides some co-funding
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://mic.iom.sk/en/home.html">http://mic.iom.sk/en/home.html</a>
<b>Services Provided</b>	
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Development</b>	<b>Provision of grants, referral and support for employment-related training</b>
	<b>Support for requalification</b>
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Protection</b>	Training on project development and financial literacy planned
	<b>Active outreach through a range of media and physical contact</b>
	<b>Maintenance of telephone hotline</b>
	<b>Access to free legal counselling</b>
	<b>Undertaking of an initial needs assessment to understand needs and the institutional environment in the local context</b>
	<b>Use of cultural mediators to provide links with migrant communities and disseminate information</b>
	Counselling on issues relating to access issues and assistance in accessing them
Information and counselling provided on Assisted Voluntary Return options	
<b>Set-Up</b>	Partnerships with local civil society for referral services
<b>Sustainability</b>	Developing and implementing overlapping, multi-year projects
<b>Challenges</b>	Sustainability has been difficult to assure, as will the expansion of services

### Migrant Services Centre, Sri Lanka

<b>General Information</b>	
<b>Centre Name</b>	Migrant Services Centre
<b>Centre Type</b>	Non-Governmental Centre
<b>Established</b>	1990
<b>Location(s)</b>	Head office in Dehiwela; there are also 15 branch offices around the country
<b>Funding sources</b>	The American Solidarity Center and other foreign trade unions
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.eureka.lk/migrant/">http://www.eureka.lk/migrant/</a>
<b>Services Provided</b>	
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Development</b>	Referral to banks for clients interested in questions relating to remittances
	<b>Work-related re-training assistance for returnees</b>
	<b>Capacity-building of migrant organizations</b>
	Assistance in having locally-obtained qualifications recognized abroad
	Maintenance of informal diaspora contacts
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Protection</b>	<b>Agreements with foreign trade unions to provide services to clients in countries of destination</b>
	<b>Close contacts with target groups through Migrant Worker Associations</b>
	<b>Active outreach</b>
	Use of a wide range of media for outreach
	Provision of a telephone hotline and long opening hours
	<b>Provision of emergency accommodation</b>
	Support in accessing local financial services
	Revolving fund to support entrepreneurial activities
<b>Set-Up</b>	<b>Leveraging membership of international networks</b>
	Local partnerships
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Representation on government committees dealing with migration</b>
	Membership of a larger body ensures financial sustainability
	Capacity-building of local service providers
<b>Challenges</b>	Attitude of the government prioritizes economic benefits of migration over the rights and protection of migrants

## Information and Resource Centres for Labour Migrants, Tajikistan

<b>General Information</b>	
<b>Centre Name</b>	Information and Resource Centres for Labour Migrants
<b>Centre Type</b>	International Organization for Migration, in partnership with local NGOs
<b>Established</b>	2003
<b>Location(s)</b>	Main office located in Dushanbe, Tajikistan; 6 regional centres, and a permanent presence at airports and railway stations
<b>Funding sources</b>	Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), European Commission (EC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.migrant.tj/">http://www.migrant.tj/</a> (Russian only)
<b>Services Provided</b>	
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Development</b>	<b>Provision of information on remittances and investment opportunities</b>
	Partnerships with remittance providers
	Capacity-building of local training facilities
	Referral to employment training facilities
	Partnerships with migration for development projects
<b>Services Empowering Migrants for Protection</b>	Links with diaspora organizations
	<b>Contact with migrants in countries of destination</b>
	<b>Mobile Consultation sessions, adapted to different client groups</b>
	<b>Personalized legal counselling</b>
<b>Set-Up</b>	<b>Leveraging membership of an international organization to gather information</b>
	Local partnerships for referral
	Learning from other examples (Philippines)
<b>Sustainability</b>	Capacity-building of diaspora organizations
	Partnerships with local development actors
	Capacity-building of private employment agencies
<b>Challenges</b>	Lack of funding

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