



IOM SUPPORTS THE SETTING UP OF THE FIRST MALAGASY CUSTOMS CANINE BRIGADE TO FIGHT AGAINST ILLICIT SUBSTANCE TRAFFICKING

The Malagasy Customs Sets up Its First K9 Brigade

In March 2021, IOM, with funding from the Government of Japan, handed over six narcotics and currency detection dogs to the canine brigade of the Malagasy Customs Directorate (DGD). This handover concluded the project “Response to Emerging Criminal Activities and other Maritime Threats in Madagascar” (or “REACT Madagascar”). The establishment of this canine brigade, which will be progressively extended and deployed to the country’s international ports and airports, demonstrates the efforts made in recent years to make the Malagasy Customs an innovative and accountable administration and a partner in the country’s economic take-off.

The dogs, which arrived in Antananarivo in February 2021, were handed to the thirteen trainees selected by the DGD to follow a four-week training course for dog handlers during the month of March. Through a mixture of theoretical and practical courses, different topics were covered, ranging from basic concepts on hygiene and dog health to the night exercises in the streets of Antananarivo and scenario lessons at Ivato Airport. The dog handlers learned how to direct and track the dogs to successfully detect drugs and currency on people and luggage.

Reforestation and Conflict Management: How Women are Seeding Social Inclusion in the Menabe Region



For several years, the Menabe region, and in particular the Menabe Antimena Protected Area (APMA), has been characterized by a large influx of migrant households from the South of the country who, fleeing hunger, have settled in the APMA and, who have been illegally practising slash-and-burn agriculture of maize and peanuts due to a lack of means of subsistence. This has led to the destruction of more than 50% (100,000 ha) of the APMA over the last decade. As a result, tensions and conflicts between local and migrant communities have developed over access to resources. In 2021 alone, the situation has caused more than 20 arrests and spouts of violence that have culminated in the death of a forestry officer. To address these tensions, IOM, under the REAP project funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), has established 10 women committees, composed of local and migrant women, who act as conflict mediators and environmental protectors.

To strengthen this role, IOM and SAVE have involved members of the women committees to conduct a reforestation campaign of 100 hectares in the APMA (23% of the reforestation conducted in the region in the period 2020-2021). This activity, which lasted from November 2020 to March 2021, helped to develop and strengthen relationships and trust between local and migrant communities, and to initiate a dialogue that – with the support of other dedicated project activities – allows to prevent and mitigate inter-communal tensions. At the request of local and migrant communities, IOM will establish village-based nurseries in 2021 to enable them to continue reforestation activities and to promote awareness of reforestation as an eco-sustainable economic activity alternative to land clearing.

Migration and Urban Development



In March 2021, the first meeting of the Technical Working Group of the project “Integrating Migration into Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Development in Antananarivo, Madagascar” took place, to discuss the upcoming activities with national counterparts and relevant partners, and to share with them the preliminary results of the rapid urban migration diagnosis.

[Read more about it!](#)

Mauritius Diaspora Mapping and Profiling Exercise

On 26 February 2021, the Cabinet of Ministers in Mauritius has agreed to the implementation of the recommendations of the pilot Diaspora mapping and profiling exercise conducted in 3 pilot countries with the financial support of the IOM Development Fund.

Migration Governance Profile of Seychelles



In mid-March, [Seychelles’ Migration Governance Indicators \(MGI\) profile 2020](#) was published on the [IOM’s Migration Data Portal](#).

IOM Hosts Diaspora Dialogues to Co-Design the Future with the Mauritian Diaspora



IOM held three virtual diaspora dialogues on 17, 20 and 21 March 2021 to share the initial findings and recommendations of the pilot mapping and profiling exercise conducted in three pilot countries (Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom) from October to December 2020, and to discuss next steps in engaging the country's diaspora.

Those diaspora dialogues were organized as part of the "Building the Capacity of the Mauritian Government to Strengthen Linkages with the Mauritian Diaspora" project, funded by the IOM Development Fund and implemented in close collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Regional Integration. The discussions informed priorities and ideas from the diaspora to be considered for the development of a Diaspora Engagement Action Plan for the Government of Mauritius.

The diaspora seized the opportunity to highlight their commitment and support to Mauritius, and most importantly the need for diasporas around the world to come together. Though concerns were also raised in regard to the implementation of the recommendations, IOM indicated that taking into consideration inputs from the diaspora as well as relevant stakeholders would be a key success to co-design the future together.

After Experiencing Trafficking in Persons, a Safe Return, and a Reintegration at Home



Mariama (name has been changed for privacy) is a 42-years-old Burundian woman, who alone takes care of her three children and her parents with disabilities. She works in a car spare parts store in Bujumbura, for 20 EUR a month.

In 2018, she met Amir on Facebook. Amir, who lives in Dar-Es-Salam, Tanzania, suggested that she moves to the French-administered island of Mayotte, via Tanzania, with the promise that she would find a job there. He said he was ready to help her and finance her trip. Reassured, Mariama sold her house for 500 EUR and left with her 12-year-old daughter for Dar-Es-Salam. On the spot, Mariama's and her daughter's papers were confiscated. Mariama was beaten and sexually abused by Amir in exchange for her accommodation and travel expenses. Amir's entourage wanted to force Mariama's daughter to do domestic work. To protect her daughter, Mariama agreed to do it for her. This ordeal lasted for more than a year until Amir told her that she could leave for Moroni, Comoros where someone would organize the rest of her trip to Mayotte.

Mariama and her daughter arrived in Moroni in January 2021, but no one was there to welcome them. They were taken in by a family who decided to contact IOM. The mother and daughter were screened by IOM and confirmed as Victims of Trafficking. During the first meeting with IOM Staff, Mariama expressed her desire to return to Bujumbura. IOM organized her and her daughter's repatriation in February 2021. Thanks to IOM's project "Improving referral and management capacities of trafficking cases in Comoros and Mauritius", Mariama is now benefiting from reintegration support to open her spare parts store in Bujumbura, to facilitate her reintegration through a stable and decent income generation.

Counter-Trafficking in Comoros

As part of the project "Improving TIP Referral Outcome in Comoros", IOM, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, held the first national referral mechanism working group meeting in Comoros on March 11. The aim of this working group is to stir the development of the victim-centred and trauma-informed formalized tools for identification and referral of victims of trafficking to care and protection.

Meeting of the Minister of Environment with the Women Committees



On 23 February, the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) met with the representatives of the 10 women committees established by IOM under the REAP project. During this meeting, committee members were able to make a plea to the Minister for interventions to address the lack of access to water and cultivable land, which often leads to intercommunal conflicts.

Construction of the Gendermerie Outposts in the Andriy Mountains



In March 2021, under the PROSUD project funded by the PBF, IOM contracted 3 construction companies and launched the construction work for 3 outposts of the Gendarmerie Nationale in Kelivaho, Soakibany and Begogo in order to secure the areas around the Andriy mountain chain, severely affected by rural banditry.

[Read more about it!](#)

Counter-Trafficking in Seychelles

Supporting the Government of Seychelles in its fight against trafficking in persons, IOM is providing technical assistance for the development of a Counter-Trafficking National Action Plan.

Moto Training for Gendarmes



In February 2021, IOM Madagascar, under the PROSUD project funded by the PBF has equipped the Gendarmerie Nationale with 6 250cc motocross bikes for the operationalization of its Soakibany and Lavaraty outposts and trained 12 gendarmes in motorcycle maintenance and off-road driving.

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