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Better Migration Management
Horn of Africa



Better Migration Management (BMM) Programme in Uganda

Context

Uganda has one of the world's fastest growing and youngest populations, with almost half of its people aged under 15 and nearly 80% under 30. Limited livelihood opportunities drive a significant number of young people into labour migration. The Government of Uganda estimates that close to 85,000 Ugandans left the country in 2022 in search of employment in the Middle East. While measures and frameworks are in place to promote safe labour migration, a study conducted by the international consultancy ICF and Makerere University shows that 89% of Ugandan labour migrants experience conditions indicative of forced labour as they continue to be recruited through deceptive means and irregular channels, potentially exposing them to risks in the host country, such as unacceptable living or working conditions (*Respondent-Driven Sampling, Study of Ugandan Labor Migrants in the Middle East*; Global Fund to End Modern Slavery, 2021).

Uganda is a country of origin, transit and destination for migrants, and Africa's main host country, with

Better Migration Management Horn of Africa



Project name	Better Migration Management Programme
Political partner in Uganda	Coordination Office for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (COPTIP)
Duration	April 2016 to September 2025
Partner countries	Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda
Implementing partners in Uganda	British Council, CIVIPOL, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). GIZ heads the implementing partnership.

about 1.7 million refugees and asylum seekers (UN, 2023). The country has progressive policies to support the integration of those who have fled their homes, but the continuous influx of refugees and migrants to Uganda has challenged response capacities in recent years. Uganda also registers considerable internal migration, due to factors such as

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natural disasters and climate change, and also as a result of poverty and limited opportunities, which increase migrants' vulnerability to instances of trafficking in human beings (THB).

Uganda has taken steps to counter THB, including the ratification of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) in 2005 and enacting the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (PTIP) Act in 2009, and its regulations in 2019, which have served as a model for other countries. Responsible for the implementation of the PTIP Act is the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA), i.e., the Coordination Office for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (COPTIP) and the National Task Force on Prevention of Trafficking in Persons ("National Task Force"). The latter consists of relevant ministries, government departments and agencies, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), as well as international organisations and programmes, including from the United Nations.

Despite significant progress towards promoting safe, orderly, and regular migration, Uganda continues to face challenges in establishing and implementing a comprehensive legal and policy framework for migration.

The Better Migration Management (BMM) Programme accompanies the Government of Uganda in developing and improving national migration policies and frameworks and in contributing to regional migration governance.

BMM's approach and activities

The objective of BMM is to enable national authorities and institutions to facilitate safe, orderly, and regular migration and to effectively address and reduce THB and the smuggling of migrants (SoM) within and from the Horn authorities of Africa region using a human rights-based approach. Activities are implemented in three components: migration governance, strengthening effective institutions to address THB and SoM, and the protection of vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking.

BMM focuses on consolidating a regional, holistic and sustainable approach to migration management.

Through alignment and cooperation with other projects and international initiatives, BMM's national and implementing partners work towards building synergies in pursuit of the programme's objective.

Migration Governance

With the support of BMM, the MoIA has drafted and is now validating the National Migration Policy. Furthermore, BMM supports the operation of the National Trafficking in Persons Database, improving the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking. The programme also assists COPTIP in reviewing the National Action Plan for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (NAP) 2019–2024 and supports

anti-trafficking District Task Forces. Next to this, BMM works with local governments, CSOs and COPTIP to develop and implement a community engagement strategy, strengthening CSOs and ensuring community involvement in decision-making processes.

BMM gives technical support to the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM) under the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) to facilitate partnership and dialogue on migration related issues in Uganda. This includes support to the development, validation and dissemination of the Uganda National Action Plan to Implement the Global Compact for Migration (GCM).

BMM further assists the government in reviewing national legislation and in exploring opportunities for ratifying protocols supplementing the UNTOC, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.



Data-driven solutions: The National Trafficking in Persons Database, which facilitates the monitoring of trafficking cases and the referral of trafficking victims to protection services, was launched in July 2023 at a signing ceremony in Kampala. (©IOM)

Effective Institutions to Address Trafficking and Smuggling

BMM improves the effectiveness of institutions in implementing migration policies and legislation, amongst others by strengthening inter-institutional cooperation on THB and SoM between first responders, law enforcement agencies, prosecution, the judiciary and civil society. To this end, BMM supports the implementation and monitoring of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for investigating and prosecuting cases of THB under supervision of a multi-agency task force. At the regional level, BMM brings together these multi-agency task forces from different BMM partner countries to assess, promote and reinforce cross-border, regional, and international cooperation. It further assists partner countries with mutual legal assistance and in investigations, including in the area of labour migration to Gulf countries.

In addition, the programme provides targeted and needs-based training for first responders, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and judicial officers, including multi-agency simulations.

It further supports the protection and participation of victim-witnesses in investigations and court proceedings as well as case management in cooperation with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution (ODPP).

BMM continues to promote the mainstreaming of training on investigating THB and SoM into the curricula of police training institutions to enhance law enforcement officers' capacity to manage cases of THB, including the protection and referral of presumed and identified victims and the preparation of cases for prosecution.

BMM also facilitates training for criminal justice practitioners and supports specialised anti-trafficking units in tackling transnational organised crime.

With support from BMM, the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control (DCIC) trains trainers in Integrated Border Management and is integrating aspects of THB and SoM in the curriculum of the Immigration Training Academy.

Furthermore, BMM supports the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) in establishing a functional complaint mechanism and a helpline for external labour migrants. The programme also assists the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) in its capacity building, awareness-raising and monitoring measures to improve the reporting, monitoring, and follow up of human rights violations against migrants.

On regional level, BMM accompanied the establishment of a regional working group of national human rights institutions and supports these in developing solutions and recommendations to protect migrants' rights and inform knowledge management and decision-making processes, for example on finding alternatives to detention.

In order to address the current main trafficking route, which is the air route, BMM supports Entebbe Airport in the improvement of operational processes.



Learning-by-doing: Anti-trafficking actors attend a simulation-based training on the prosecution and investigation of human trafficking, facilitating the referral of trafficking victims and the use of a human rights-based approach. (©CIVIPOL)



Family reunification: Children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and need special protection according to best of interest mechanisms. (©GIZ/Onen)

Protection

BMM strengthens referral systems through which vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking receive assistance and services, including shelter, legal aid, and medical and psychosocial support. To this end, the programme facilitates the implementation of the National Referral Guidelines for Management of Victims of Trafficking (NRG) in all of Uganda's regions.

On a regional level, the East and Horn of Africa Anti-Trafficking Network (EHAAT) of around 100 CSOs serves as a platform for exchange and cooperation. BMM provides training to the members to strengthen their services and their role in the referral systems as well as to develop policy recommendations. In Uganda, the network's activities are being promoted in cooperation with the Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons - Uganda (CATIP-U). With BMM support, the online service directory – a web application that coordinates protection and assistance services – was launched. BMM also works with the Government of Uganda and CSOs to improve trauma-informed care, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), awareness raising on gender-based violence (BGV), and shelter provision.

As part of its protection portfolio, BMM supports relevant CSO activities to enhance the referral of migrants, victims of trafficking and returnees to socio-economic initiatives. With the involvement of the government, CSOs and private sector, BMM further supports the implementation of the Regional Remediation Guidelines for Vulnerable Labour Migrants and a MGLSD-led platform that coordinates and enhances referrals.

Moreover, BMM assists COPTIP and CSOs in raising awareness on safe, orderly and regular migration with a focus on the most at-risk districts and border communities, for which the newly developed national communication strategy is being implemented.



Results of BMM (April 2016 – September 2023)



2,394 representatives of government departments supported in improving the coordinated management of migration and strengthening national migration policies, legislation and cross-border cooperation



69 capacity building measures for **1,503** governmental and non-governmental actors implemented for investigation and prosecution of human trafficking, integrated border management, and the referral of migrants to services



35 million individuals potentially reached through public awareness-raising activities on human trafficking and migrant rights

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