

**ASSESSING THE IMPACT AND
EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION
PROGRAMS, TOOLS AND MESSAGES IN
COMBATING DISCRIMINATION AND
PROMOTING MIGRANT INTEGRATION –
THE CASE OF MAURITIUS**

Basic Statistics on Mauritius

- Population- Around 1.3 million
- Land of migrants (from Africa, France, UK, India and China) and multi-ethnic following past history of colonisation and import of indentured labourers
- Around 50,000 foreign nationals living and/or working in Mauritius (39,000 expatriate workers under work permit scheme mainly from Bangladesh, China, India, Sri Lanka and Madagascar working for the textile and construction sectors, 5000 non-citizens under Occupation Permit and remaining under other schemes)

Conventions/Legislation

- Non Citizens (Employment Restriction) Act and its Regulations on work permit
- Recruitment of Workers Act
- Immigration Act
- Investment Promotion Act
- Employment Rights Act
- Equal Opportunities Act
- Employment Relations Act
- Occupational Safety and Health (Lodging and Accommodation) Regulations
- National Pensions Act
- Migration for Employment Convention

Policies for migrants

- Work Permits granted by M/Labour
- Occupation Permit by Board of Investment
- Residence permit by Prime Minister's Office
- Circular Migration Scheme since 2008 with France, Canada and Italy
- New Diaspora Programme announced in the budget speech by Minister of Finance and Economic Devt to attract Mauritian professionals

Positive Impact of Migration

- To meet labour shortages in the manufacturing sector as there was full employment
- Foreign labour is more productive (Mauritians refuse to work overtime or during public holidays which impacted negatively on export)
- Increase in remittances (from Mauritian diaspora) which has boosted economic growth
- Capacity building due to scarcity of skilled manpower (in some specialised sectors)

Rights of Migrants

- Migrant Workers enjoy the same terms and conditions of employment as those laid down for local workers in our legislation
- Regular inspections are carried out by the Migrant Workers Unit of M/Labour to ensure compliance with the law
- A total of 2695 inspections carried out over 3 years have enabled recovery of a sum of around USD 285,000 in favour of the migrant workers
- In addition following 1150 complaints received, around USD 571,000 have been recovered on their behalf
- Contract of employment for foreign labour is vetted by Migrant Workers Unit of M/Labour

The Way Forward

- The need to develop a migration policy to mainstream migration into national development planning due to the following challenges:
 - (i) Ageing Population
 - (ii) Declining fertility rate
 - (iii) Increasing emigration of women
 - (iv) Increase in the number of unemployed graduates
 - (v) Increase in the number of foreigners
 - (vi) Leveraging the diaspora

The Way Forward

- A National Working Group on Migration and Development has been set up since 2015 under the chairpersonship of the Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office
- Subcommittees set up to look at Research and Statistics, Education and Migration, Labour Mobility and Social Integration
- A Migration Policy Unit has also been set up
- Recruitment of a Migration Analyst by PMO to work on the formulation of the migration policy

Assessing the communication programs in combating discrimination and promoting migrant integration

- Due to our multi ethnic population, migrant workers have no problem of language and practice of religion
- Religious festivals are celebrated together which create a special bond and these are broadcasted on tv
- Embassies and Consulates (Bangladesh, China, etc) monitor closely the living conditions of their workers
- The Government is held accountable for migrant issues in the National Assembly which ensure transparency

Assessing the communication programs in combating discrimination and promoting migrant integration

- There have been some isolated cases of social unrest with migrant labour in some areas where unemployment is high
- Some foreigners who were granted residence permit have created gated communities which is not in line with our aim of integration
- In view of the sensitivity of such problems, needful is done by M/Labour and Police with the employer to settle the problem

Assessing the communication programs in combating discrimination and promoting migrant integration

At an IOM workshop held last year, it was proposed to have the following:

- a) Launch a communication programme for inward, outward and internal migrants.
- b) Put in place an outreach programme targeting the Mauritian population.
- c) Establish a Resource centre on migration.
- d) Involve civil society.

Communication strategy

Communication Programme for Inward, Outward and internal migrants

- Communication tools such as brochures, movie clips, a portal on migration and migration issues will have to be prepared for the relevant target groups. In the initial phase of conception, the Migration Policy Unit may require external assistance from the IOM to build up the capacity of the unit as well as to benefit from existing communication materials which may already be available..

Communication strategy

Outreach programme targeting Mauritian population

- The Migration Policy Unit will organize a sensitisation campaign for specific target groups (as per goals set).

Communication strategy

Resource centre on Migration

To be able to manage well the migration process it is important that resources on migration are available. As information/data may already exist in different institutions it will be important to have an inventory of resources so that the Migration Policy Unit may guide stakeholders to the relevant institutions. This will also help to identify the resource gaps.

Therefore, the following tasks will be required:

- Identify resources to share at the level of various stakeholders
- Source documents and provide access to the general public on same
- Provide access to statistics and relevant reports
- Development of a documentation centre / online documentation centre on migration issues targeting both inward and outward migrants

Communication strategy

Civil Society Partnership

The involvement of Civil Society is essential to cushion any potential negative social impact that migration may have. The following tasks will have to be carried out:

- Identify Private sector associations, Trade Unions and NGOs to support M&D projects and actions
- Build capacity of Private sector associations and NGOs on M&D issues
- Share with Private sector associations and NGOs relevant materials on M&D issues
- Develop opportunities of joint actions with Private sector associations and NGOs on specific themes or regions.