MIGRATION & HIV

Health inequities, inadequate social protection, human rights violations, stigmatization and discriminatory policies throughout the migration process create vulnerability to HIV infection in migrants and persons forced to migrate due to natural disasters or conflict. IOM implements multi-sectoral programmes where local community members and migrants interact in spaces at high risk for HIV. These Spaces of Vulnerability create environments conducive to increased vulnerability for everyone in that community, whether they are migrants or local community members. The spaces form a vast risk network that links migrants and mobile populations through their partners at home, on the journey and at the site of destination.

Restrictions on entry, stay and residence for people living with HIV, which may involve mandatory and periodic HIV testing without confidentiality, counselling or referral to services or treatment; incarceration; deportation; total bar on entry or bars on short-term or long term stays/work; and waiver requirements.

HIV THROUGHOUT THE MIGRATION PROCESS:
There are health determinants (i.e. social, economic, physical and individual) that affect HIV vulnerability and access to HIV treatment and care at all points of the migration process.

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS
- Prolonged/frequent absence
- Separation from family
- Poor financial status
- Lack of education, awareness and ability to use preventative measures
- Gender-based violence
- Risky sexual practices
- Substance use

SOCIAL BARRIERS
- Poor working and housing conditions
- Language barriers
- Limited access to healthcare and lack of HIV testing and counselling
- Limited access to information on HIV transmission, screening, and treatment
- Lack of documentation
- Low psychosocial support
- Marginalization and social exclusion

ECONOMIC BURDEN
With no access to treatment and care
- Loss of income for the migrant and his or her family.
- Loss of productivity and revenue for the hiring industries
- Increased burden on health system in place of origin and destination
- Loss of remittances for place of origin

ADDRESSING HIV AMONG MIGRANTS:
4 KEY BUILDING BLOCKS FOR ACTION, guided by the 2008 World Health Assembly Resolution on the Health of Migrants (61.17)

- HIV is influenced by numerous social, economic and political factors which are not all within the control of an individual.
- Health both contributes to and benefits from development; a people-centred and inclusive post-2015 health agenda should prioritize the marginalized, stigmatized and vulnerable populations, regardless of legal status.
- IOM HIV interventions include: research, mapping and risk assessments; education, sensitization and awareness; capacity building in health systems to increase migrants’ access to HIV screening, prevention, treatment and psychosocial support services; policy review, capacity building and support to governments and multi-sectoral partners to increase and improve access to HIV related services.