

A Somali-Bantu family arrives in Phoenix, USA

© Christophe Calais 2003



# IOM Resettlement Services

## Purpose and Partnership

For 65 years, IOM has played a vital role in refugee resettlement around the world. As part of its global contribution to migration management, IOM fosters refugee integration through comprehensive resettlement services. Article 1 of the IOM Constitution mandates the Organization to “... concern itself with the organized transfer of refugees, displaced persons and other individuals in need of international migration services for whom arrangements may be made between the Organization and the States concerned, including those States undertaking to receive them.”

Resettlement is a sometimes unrecognized yet compelling instrument and symbol of international solidarity and responsibility sharing to find a durable solution for refugees who are unable to return to their country of origin for fear of continued persecution and do not have the option to stay in their country of asylum. IOM works closely with governments, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), non-government organizations and other partners. The process begins with UNHCR. UNHCR identifies, interviews and submits refugee cases to countries for resettlement consideration; subsequently, under cooperative agreements with those same countries, IOM resettlement services — Case processing, Health Assessments, Pre-Departure Orientation and Movement — take place. Upon arrival, resettlement countries provide refugees with legal and physical protection, including access to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals. Most refugees eventually become naturalized citizens of their country of resettlement.

**International Organization for Migration (IOM)**

17 Route des Morillons, CH-1211, Geneva 19, Switzerland

Tel.: +41 22 717 9111 • Fax: +41 22 798 6150

E-mail: [RMM@iom.int](mailto:RMM@iom.int) • Website: [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)



# Refugee Resettlement

Founded in 1951 to assist in the resettlement of Europeans displaced in the aftermath of World War II, IOM has provided essential services in support of refugee resettlement operations for over six decades. In the last decade alone, between 2005 and 2015, IOM has organized the resettlement movements of well over 1 million refugees and other vulnerable persons of concern from 186 locations around the world.

Resettlement is a humanitarian endeavor, sometimes lifesaving and always life changing. Looking ahead at the evolving resettlement landscape, there will be increasingly more people forced to move who are not protected under the 1951 Refugee Convention, and finding good durable solutions will require the collaborative engagement of many actors across a range of services. IOM is well suited to meet the challenge, and assist governments to help refugees integrate successfully into receiving communities. Successful resettlement is migration management at its best, it's an investment in human capital and an empowerment of people.

**Upon the request of governments, IOM provides the following resettlement services:**

- ⇒ Case Processing
- ⇒ Health Assessments and Related Services
- ⇒ Pre-departure Orientation/Integration
- ⇒ Movement Operations

## Case Processing

IOM Case Processing services are designed to 1) help refugee applicants in lodging correct and complete applications for refugee status and 2) assist governments by providing selection authorities with accurate, detailed and objective information in standard formats in order to streamline the interview and selection process. IOM caseworkers are trained to conduct thorough non-adversarial interviews and case assessments to verify the eligibility and identity of each refugee applicant, to obtain biographic and demographic information required by governments and resettlement agencies and to accurately chronicle each applicant's claim for refugee status. A focus on intensive initial case preparation is aimed at reducing the number of times each case must be reviewed or deferred by selection authorities pending further information.

Through the use of its proprietary case management tools, IOM tracks refugee applicants through each stage of the resettlement process, including Health Assessments, Pre-departure Orientation and Movement/Travel to ensure that approved refugee cases are ready to travel in the timely manner required by the resettlement countries.

Hallmarks of IOM Case Processing services are adherence to standard operating procedures, strict confidentiality and data protection standards, multi-level quality assurance controls at each stage of processing and robust anti-fraud measures to ensure program integrity.


Case Processing services may include any or all of the following elements: conducting in-depth personal interviews with refugee applicants to elicit complete case information and an accurate record of testimony; gathering all required bio-data; providing on-site assistance during selection missions, including

scheduling refugee appointments, managing case files, distributing government decision letters at the conclusion of interviews and supervising interpreters, requesting and receiving reception and placement information for all approved cases; referring approved applicants to designated panel or IOM physicians for medical exams; receiving completed medical exams for each case member and notifying relevant government authorities and/or resettlement agencies of health conditions requiring follow up treatment in receiving countries.



▶ **CASE PROCESSING**

IOM Case Processing improves the efficiency of country selection missions. © IOM 2009



IOM employs internationally accepted protocols and practices for detection and treatment of tuberculosis. © IOM 2009

## ▶ HEALTH

### Health Assessments and Related Services

Health assessments in the context of refugee resettlement constitute one of IOM's most established activities. Refugees are a particularly vulnerable population, with health profiles that vary according to the displacement experience, pre-existing health conditions and epidemiological profiles, among other factors. Pre-departure health assessments and related services, including travel health assistance, ensure that refugees are fit to travel and meet the requirements of the resettlement country.

Health assessments of refugees admitted for resettlement to third countries are funded and carried out at the request of resettlement countries such as Australia, Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom, the United States and others. Health assessment protocols are based on the legislation and/or best practices of resettlement country governments, and are performed prior to a refugee's departure for resettlement. Pre-departure refugee health assessments are intended to ensure that people travel in a safe and dignified manner, are fit to travel, receive appropriate assistance when required, and do not pose a hazard to other travellers or receiving communities.

Traditional components of refugee health assessments conducted by IOM's Migration Health Division (MHD) include medical history and physical exam, an assessment of certain conditions of public health significance, pre-departure treatment and referrals (including pre-travel hospital stabilization), pre- and post-test counseling, and pre-embarkation fitness-to-travel checks. Individuals in need of travel health assistance (e.g. wheelchairs, supplemental oxygen,

medical escorts, etc.) during transportation are identified at the time of the health assessment to ensure that they travel safely and without undue hardship to themselves or to other travellers, and to avoid in-flight medical emergencies or flight deviations. Specific provisions to the health assessment protocol (e.g. additional diagnostics, presumptive treatment, immunizations) are made upon request of resettlement countries in order to ensure safe travel, to facilitate proper follow-up of medical cases after arrival and to facilitate the integration of refugees into their receiving communities. Health assessments are increasingly recognized as an important tool for public health promotion and prevention in the pre-departure resettlement phase.

### Pre-departure Orientation/ Integration

IOM provides pre-departure cultural orientation training courses for refugees accepted for resettlement to a third country. Over the past 25 years, IOM has conducted courses for over 500,000 refugees in over 70 refugee processing locations around the world.

**Cultural orientation** prepares refugees by providing practical information on country of destination, and assists refugees in setting realistic goals and developing the skills and attitudes needed to succeed in their new environment. IOM works closely with governments to identify the key priority messages and values that are critical for refugees' successful resettlement. Pre-departure orientation is designed to assist refugees to develop realistic expectations and to become self-sufficient more quickly. Courses by IOM's multilingual, multi-ethnic trainers help refugees

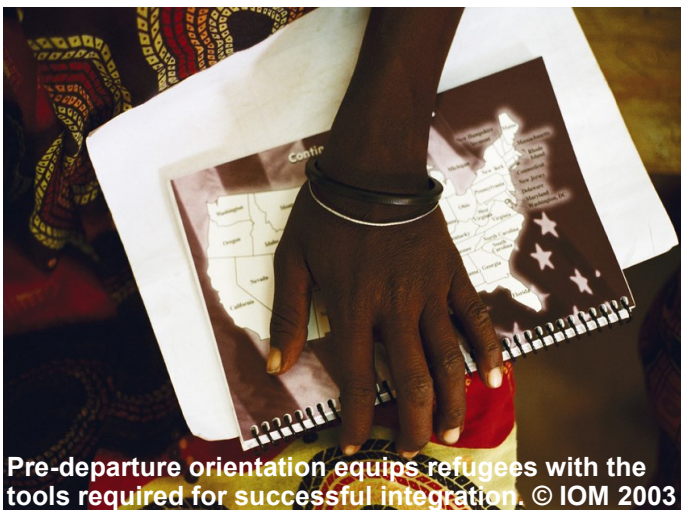
anticipate integration challenges and facilitate their transition into the receiving society. Topics addressed in the orientation include housing, health, money management, role of settlement service providers, education, cultural adaptation, rights and responsibilities, and others. Upon request, IOM conducts needs assessments and produces cultural profiles of new refugee populations designed to help service providers better plan for their arrival.



**Language and literacy training** equips refugees with basic language and communication skills in order to facilitate the adjustment process and help refugees become more independent. With knowledge of these functional and practical skills, refugees are able to increase their chances for employment and become productive members of the receiving society.

**Pre-embarkation briefings** prepare refugees for their flight, including what to expect at the airport, in-flight, while in transit, and upon arrival in country of destination. The briefings also address safety, customs and immigration formalities, as well as how to plan their travel with children. IOM offers these briefings as close to departure as possible in order to ease the process and help first-time travellers feel less anxious and more prepared for the journey.

IOM believes pre-departure orientation is an integral component of successful resettlement programmes and is most effective when linked closely to domestic settlement services.



Pre-departure orientation equips refugees with the tools required for successful integration. © IOM 2003

## Movement Operations

Migration implies movement. For 65 years, moving refugees and other migrants at risk in a safe, orderly and organized fashion has been and continues to be a fundamental purpose of the Organization.

IOM's worldwide network of experienced movement operations staff, supported by global agreements with major airlines offering preferential fares and priority service to IOM passengers, along with proprietary movement management applications and operations protocols, all serve to ensure that refugees are transported smoothly to their final destinations.

Movement services for refugees travelling under IOM auspices may include any or all of the following:

- **Obtaining travel documents:** exit permits, transit/entry visas, passports, etc.
- **Pre-embarkation orientation:** flight schedules, airline regulations, customs requirements, assistance in transit and upon arrival, etc.
- **Transportation to and passenger handling at embarkation airports:** assisted check-in, help with customs and immigration formalities, etc.
- **Arrangement of international and domestic air tickets:** reduced fares, preferential baggage allowances, selected routings, etc.
- **Provision of operational/medical escorts:** help for passengers with special needs, monitoring and attending to medical requirements en-route, liaison with flight staff and other authorities, etc.
- **Assistance in transit:** accommodation and meals as needed, guidance and direction to connecting flights, booking adjustments, etc.
- **Arrival assistance:** meet and assist services on arrival, notification and handover to reception authorities, etc.

Real-time information management and monitoring of refugee movements and established communication protocols ensure that passengers under IOM auspices travel safely and that all partners are kept informed of their progress from take-off to landing.

IOM moves most refugees by scheduled commercial air service using its unique negotiated agreements with leading airlines; however, IOM also maintains standby agreements with air charter operators to conduct movement operations in remote locations or where large numbers of refugees must be moved quickly.

IOM's international movement operations continue to grow in scope and complexity, with over 60 nationalities represented among global refugee admissions, often from far-flung locations posing significant logistical and security challenges. In 2015,

► MOVEMENT



large-scale resettlement operations were organized out of Afghanistan, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Nepal, and Turkey, with smaller operations taking place in over 43 other countries. During the same year, on average, 1 person moved by air under IOM auspices every 5 minutes for resettlement.

Providing essential support to States resettling refugees and other humanitarian entrants is a fundamental purpose of the Organization and its largest ongoing activity. IOM helps its Member States carry out a variety of resettlement and other humanitarian admission schemes, many of which are well-established programmes, while others are ad hoc responses to specific forced migration crises.

IOM resettlement services are designed to support refugees and counterparts across the resettlement continuum, and to contribute to humane and orderly migration.

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To better assist refugees and governments, IOM strives for excellence across all resettlement service areas, placing emphasis on flexibility, efficiency, and consistent high quality.

## 10 Best Practices for Pre-departure Orientation/Integration Programmes

### 1. Develop curricula and supporting activities with destination country.

Key messages should be identified in consultation with receiving countries, and include the cultural, linguistic and socio-economic challenges that refugees will face.

### 2. Integrate activities across the resettlement continuum.

Link pre-departure and post-arrival activities. Information should be shared throughout with those engaged in reception and integration of new arrivals.

### 3. Consider the timing of courses.

Schedule courses as close to departure as possible to increase relevancy of the lessons, and maximize refugees' focus and retention.



**Bhutanese refugees attend a cultural orientation class conducted by IOM. © IOM 2009**

**4. Develop trainings that are participatory and learner-centric.** Refugees learn best and the lessons are more meaningful when the course is experiential and highly participatory. One example is for refugees to teach one another, an approach that increases retention and builds self-esteem and self-confidence.

**5. Address content, skills and attitudes.** While accurate information about the country of destination is relevant, it is equally important to build productive attitudes for successful adaptation, including pro-activity, self-sufficiency, and resourcefulness.

**6. Train in refugees' native language.** Whenever possible, pre-departure orientation courses should be conducted in refugees' native language, ideally by trainers who share refugees' cultural background. Both of these points are particularly relevant when working with pre-literate and or vulnerable refugees.

**7. Address psychosocial issues in pre-departure training.** Pre-departure orientation goes beyond dispensing information about receiving countries; it should also address the psychosocial well-being of participants, taking into account the social, anthropological, cultural and the psychological aspects of resettlement. As such, it is vital to develop pre-departure courses which are holistic and address the concerns of participants. Topics include cultural adaptation, culture shock, communication, family dynamics, gender, and cross-generational issues among others.

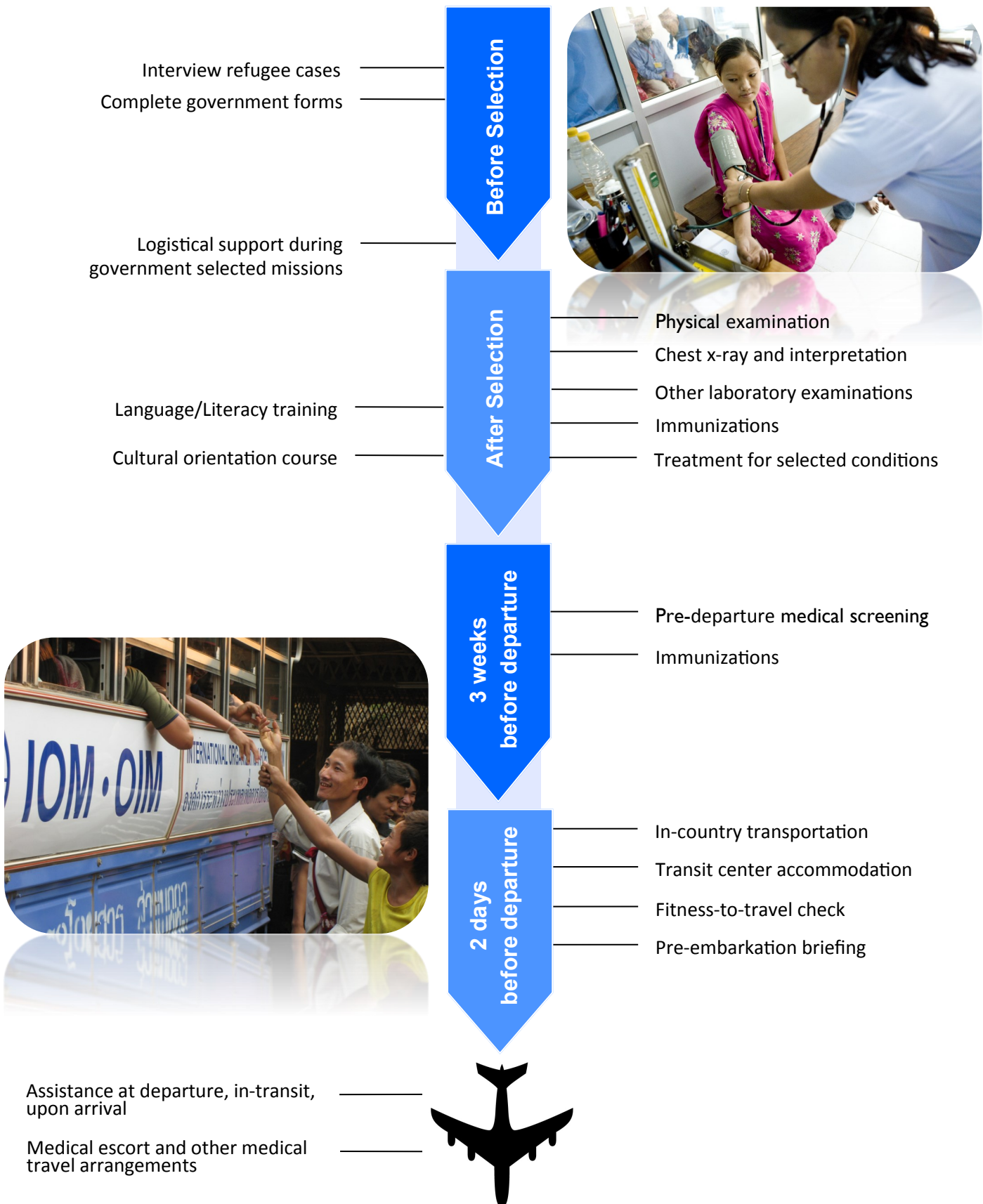
**8. Create a non-threatening learning environment.** A welcoming training atmosphere of inclusion – in which all participants are shown respect – fosters a greater sense of belonging and encourages risk-taking and learning. Many refugees have little or no formal education, and therefore it is critical that trainers consider both the educational and cultural backgrounds of their participants in planning lessons.

**9. Promote gender equality.** It is important to provide an open and secure learning environment in which gender equality is promoted. This sends an important message that the destination country values the role that both men and women play, and paves the way for future social interaction and learning opportunities where participation of all genders is not only encouraged but expected.

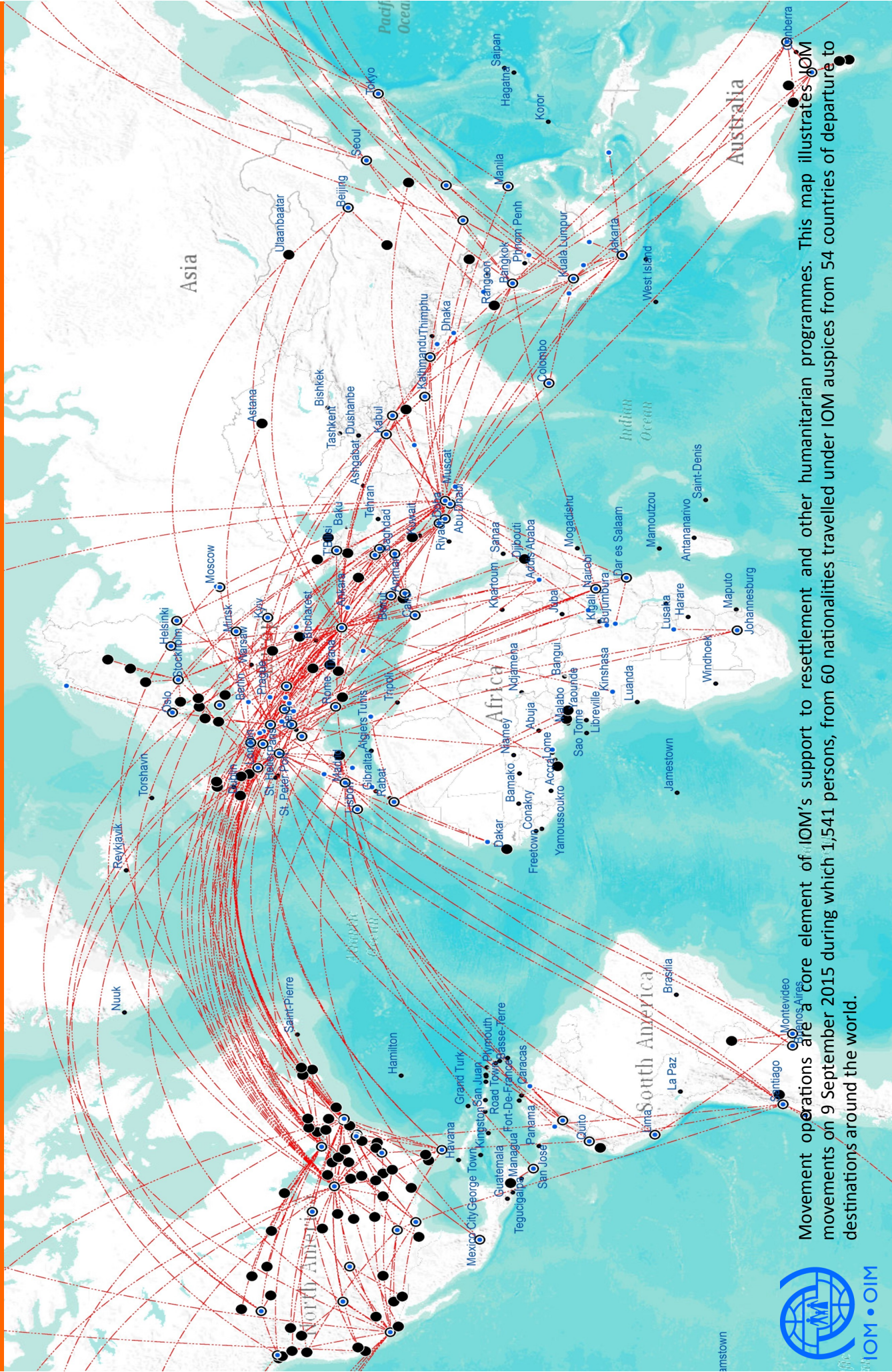
**10. Reaffirm the dignity and positive contributions of every refugee.** Refugees should be made to feel valued for their rich cultural background and experiences and, conversely, receiving communities should be made aware of the positive contributions that refugees offer, including social, economic and cultural contributions.

# Flow Chart of Refugee Resettlement Activities

This chart is indicative of the refugee resettlement process, from the point before a case is selected by a resettlement country until arrival in that country. Not all resettlement cases follow this exact process. For example, some resettlement countries do not include cultural orientation courses or health assessments. Further, there may be some variation in the order of activities.



# One Day in International Air Movement Operations



Movement operations are a core element of IOM's support to resettlement and other humanitarian programmes. This map illustrates IOM movements on 9 September 2015 during which 1,541 persons, from 60 nationalities travelled under IOM auspices from 54 countries of departure to destinations around the world.

