

► Migrant Worker Resource Centres (MRCs) in Africa

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For safe, orderly and regular migration, fair recruitment, and sustainable return and reintegration

The ILO supports its partners to deliver direct assistance to migrant workers and local communities through Migrant Worker Resource Centres (MRCs) across Africa. As of January 2024, the ILO supports the establishment and operational capacity of **25 MRCs in 7 countries in Africa**.

The MRCs, operated by government and social partners, provide critical information and services to migrant workers and their families and communities throughout

the migration cycle – by providing information and counselling on rights, fair recruitment, regular migration and return and reintegration; providing referrals to a network of specialised services; ensuring critical links to access to justice mechanisms; and providing emergency support for migrant workers in distress where required. Union-run MRCs also support organizing of migrant workers.

ILO-supported MRCs in Africa, as of January 2024¹



Tunisia (6) Trade union-run MRCs in Sfax, Tunis, Sousse, Médenine, Jendouba and Nabeul

Ethiopia (6) Government-run MRCs in Agaro, Areka, Jeri, Sekota, Tulu Bolo and Wukro

Somalia (1) Trade union-run MRC in Mogadishu

Uganda (1) Trade union-run MRC in Kampala

Kenya (7) Government-run trade unions in Nairobi, Mombassa, Eldoret, Kisumu, Machakos and Thika, and trade union-run MRC in Nairobi

Nigeria (3) Government-run MRCs in Abuja, Lagos State and Benin City

Côte d'Ivoire (1) Trade union-run MRC in Abidjan

¹ **Tunisia:** Run by the Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail (UGTT), supported by the SDC-FES funded FAIR Phase III project

Ethiopia: Run by the Ministry of Labour and Skills, supported by the EU-funded Development of a Tripartite Framework for the Support and Protection of Ethiopian Women Domestic Migrant Workers to the GCC States, Lebanon and Sudan project, and the FCDO-funded Improved labour migration governance for the protection of migrant workers and combatting irregular migration project

Somalia: Run by the Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU), supported by the FCDO-funded Better Regional Migration Management project

Key areas of work and achievements

The scope of activities provided by the different MRCs varies, depending on the local migration context, the stakeholders who are running the MRC, and the priorities that have been determined. Key areas of work and achievements to date include:

- **Provide information and counselling** for migrant workers in the pre-decision and pre-departure phases, and for returning migrant workers, their families and communities
- **Support fair recruitment**, by directing potential migrant workers to licensed recruitment agencies, providing guidance on the administrative processes, recruitment fees and related costs, and supporting workers to understand their employment contracts. In Uganda, the trade union-run MRC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the national private recruitment agency association² to refer migrant workers to the MRC for services
- **Provide paralegal and administrative assistance** including mediation to resolve complaints of potential and in-service migrant workers. For example in Tunisia, the MRC mediates between employers and workers in the case of non-payment of wages, often resolving disputes before they need to proceed through the legal system
- **Provide referrals to specialized services** to address migrant workers' needs, including rescue and repatriation, shelter, medical support, psychosocial and psychological health and legal aid services
- **Provide critical humanitarian and emergency response services**, for example during the COVID-19 crisis, where repatriated workers were received by the MRCs and provided with health services in Tunisia and Ethiopia
- **Ensure links to local employment opportunities and systems**, for example, in Kenya, the MRC supports integration of jobseekers and returnees within the National Employment Authority Integrated Management System (NEAIMS) system
- **Conduct rapid research and data collection** in order to collect vital information on the latest trends, issues, and emerging areas of concern in order to inform policy advocacy
- **Facilitate access to reintegration support services** including public employment services and their support programmes for waged work, skills recognition and training, job placement, financial education and entrepreneurship and business development, alongside support for social and community level reintegration
- At trade union-run MRCs, **unionize workers**, and engage in **union-to-union bilateral cooperation**, including between trade unions in countries of origin and destination. For example, the union-run MRCs in Côte d'Ivoire and Tunisia have signed a cooperation agreement to provide full migration cycle support and services³
- Facilitate **knowledge exchange and peer learning**, by hosting study visits and exchanges, for example between the MRCs in Kenya and Uganda
- Develop **outreach programs** to reach larger numbers of migrant workers, including through developing regional networks of focal points, producing communication materials in different languages and formats, and establishing websites, social media pages and hotlines.

Community outreach session run by the MRC in Lagos, Nigeria



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Uganda: Run by the Uganda Hotels, Food, Tourism, Supermarkets and Allied Workers Union (HTS-Union), supported by the SDC-funded FAIRWAY Programme

Kenya: Six MRCs run by the National Employment Authority (NEA), supported by the SDC-funded FAIRWAY Programme; and 1 MRC run by the Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU-K), supported by the FCDO-funded Better Regional Migration Management Project

Nigeria: Run by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment (FMLE), supported by the SDC-funded FAIRWAY Programme

Côte d'Ivoire: Run by the Union Générale des Travailleurs de Côte d'Ivoire (UGTCI), supported by the SDC-AICS-funded FAIR Phase III project

² The Uganda Association of External Recruitment Agencies (UAERA)

³ [L'UGTCI et l'UGTT signent un protocole de coopération, soutenu par la Fondation Friedrich Ebert et l'OIT](#)

The ILO approach on MRCs

As part of a broader strategy on fair migration and decent work for migrant workers, the ILO promotes a rights-based approach to the provision of information and services for migrant workers. The right to adequate and free information and services for migrant workers is articulated in international labour standards and a number of international governance frameworks, including the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), the General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment, and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, among others.

The ILO provides support for the establishment of the MRCs; capacity building of MRC staff; development of training manuals and materials to be used at the centres – including Operations Manuals and Monitoring & Evaluation Frameworks; and facilitates knowledge sharing and exchange.

For example, in September 2023 the [ILO FAIRWAY Programme](#) hosted a regional symposium on MRCs, bringing together government and social partner stakeholders to discuss key challenges and share good practices and solutions. The participants highlighted the importance of full migration cycle support; establishing

comprehensive referral services and networks; and improving their capacity in the areas of public awareness raising and data collection and analysis.⁴ The Symposium provided insights contributing to the development of the [ILO Guidance Note on Migrant Worker Resource Centres \(MRCs\)](#).

To promote sustainability of the initiatives, the ILO-supported MRCs in the region are housed within existing structures of government and trade unions, aligning with their mandates in order to ensure ownership and long-term viability of the services.

Many of the MRCs in the region build upon work developed by other development partners, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), the Italian Istituto Nazionale Confederale di Assistenza (INCA) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

Learn more

ILO (2024) [ILO Guidance Note on Migrant Worker Resource Centres \(MRCs\)](#)

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⁴ See: ILO (2023) [FAIRWAY Migrant Resource Centre Symposium](#)