

Reception, orientation and information sharing

Proper reception and orientation of beneficiaries and adequate information sharing throughout assistance is key to establish trust and to ensure a smooth functioning of migrant centres and its services.

Access to information is a basic human right. In the absence of information, it is common to find rumours or deliberate spread of misinformation, which can undermine IOM's interventions and fuel tensions within the facilities. Accurate and up-to-date information will allow beneficiaries to make informed decisions about the assistance they wish to receive on the basis of the information presented. The trust, openness and respect showed by sharing information with beneficiaries will make them more involved, engaged and empowered.

Reception at migrant centres premises is the first step of assistance and it is a **crucial phase** for the establishment of a positive relationship with migrants and other persons of concern in need of MRRM services. The staff welcoming the beneficiaries shall show good listening and communication skills, adapting their language to their interlocutor and showing empathy with regards to their issues and needs.

Depending on the type of centre and its scope, access may be possible only upon appointment, during reception hours/days or 24h/7. In any case, **reception shall take place immediately after the arrival** in order to check if the person meets the eligibility criteria to access MRRMs assistance and services, to respond to any immediate need the person may have and to screen out individuals that may aim at abusing of assistance or pose a risk to other beneficiaries or staff. Priority shall be given to families with children, unaccompanied and separated children, pregnant women, elderly, people with disabilities and those with signs of physical pain, people with mental health needs or people presenting any other type of vulnerability. Reception staff shall be aware of cultural differences, and an interpreter shall be present in case of language barriers. A place to sit shall be offered to the applicant, as well as access to toilets, water and – if possible – food.

Effective communication and information sharing with beneficiaries is key to ensure a welcoming environment. During the reception phase, potential beneficiaries shall be briefed on the purpose of the migrant centres and their services, on the role of the partners operating in the facilities, on the programme's targeted beneficiaries and how these are selected, on the rules of the premises, on

their rights and responsibilities and on how their personal data will be managed.

The **orientation phase** follows the reception one, and it concerns only the beneficiaries admitted to the centres. It shall take place shortly after the arrival, but after beneficiaries have settled in the premises (e.g. after having received food and/or NFI kits, after having used the toilets and showers, after having seen their accommodation, after having received urgent medical assistance etc.).

During the orientation phase, and depending on the type and scope of the centre, the following **topics** may be addressed by the staff:

- Informing that IOM's assistance is based on beneficiaries' needs, clarifying that it does not depend on any payment or favour;
- Explaining that participation is voluntary and that beneficiaries can withdraw from assistance at any time;
- Providing thorough information on the protection and assistance services provided in the facility, including schedules and modalities to access the different services;
- If movements are among the services provided (e.g. onward/domestic transportation, AVRR, relocation, resettlement), clearly explaining how these are organised, the criteria used to prepare the manifests and what beneficiaries will be entitled to (e.g. pocket money, NFIs);
- Presenting an overview of the facility's different spaces and how they are organised (recreational areas, infirmary, dormitories, common spaces, offices, toilets and showers, eating areas etc.) and explain cleaning and hygiene measures to be respected;
- Informing beneficiaries about the facilities' rules and how they will be held accountable throughout the assistance process ([see this entry for guidance on rules information sharing](#));
- Explaining the modalities to meet with the facilities' staff and about the feedback and complaints mechanisms in place (see also [this entry](#))

Information sharing is key not only in the reception phase but throughout the assistance one. To ensure that information is received and understood by beneficiaries of different age, gender and background, a variety of formal and techniques can be used, including information/bulletin boards, radio/megaphone/speaker announcements; meetings with key persons recognised by beneficiaries as their representatives (e.g. a spokesperson per nationality/language/ethnic group, respected members of the community etc.), discussion groups and community meetings, theaters and adaptation of traditional stories and songs. Migrant centres personnel shall also ensure that communication with beneficiaries takes place in a language they are comfortable with. In case beneficiaries from different nationalities or language groups are assisted in the centres, oral and written information sharing shall be ensured in multiple languages in order to ensure inclusiveness.

Printed material shall be translated in the languages spoken at the facility, and interpretation services may be provided on a need basis.

References and Tools

- [Procédures opérationnelles standard centre d'accueil et d'orientation pour migrants. \(Chapter 3: l'Accueil, p. 56\)](#)
- [Semera Ethiopia Migration Response Center SOPs \(Admission in the EMRC, p. 11\)](#)
- [East Africa transit centers guidelines: Standard operating procedures, forms, new hotel SOPs \(Orientation, p. 13\)](#)
- [IOM, NRC and UNHCR Camp Management Toolkit \(Information sharing, p. 40\)](#)
- [Poster on IOM free assistance \(EN\)](#)
- [Poster Bienvenue au centre OIM \(Burkina Faso\)](#)
- [Poster « We are here to help, assist and protect you” \(Greece\)](#)
- [Poster Transit centers adults \(EN\)](#)
- [Poster Transit center for minors \(EN\)](#)
- [About IOM Poster \(EN\)](#)

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