

MIGRANT ASSISTANCE UNIT – SRI LANKA

IOM Safe Migration and Career Guidance Workshops Assisting Unemployed Youth to Explore Pathways on Regular migration



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency



Figure 1 – The safe and regular migration based career guidance session conducted for unemployed youth in Trincomalee District

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Sri Lanka has been conducting special information outreach campaigns popularly known as safe migration campaigns (SMC) to curb the irregular migration attempts of Sri Lankans through irregular channels. The Global Assistance to Irregular Migrants (GAIM), which is running in its fifth phase, funds this programme. The campaign informs the benefits of safe and regular migration and the ill effects of irregular migration by targeting students, youth, government officials, community leaders, and communities prone to irregular migration.

The IOM involved in the above SMC campaign believes that proper guidance to career of an individual defines a comprehensive, developmental program designed to assist him or her in making and implementing informed educational and occupational choices. It is very much important in the current context of irregular migration attempts taken by the young unemployed youth in Sri Lanka.

According to the recent Central Bank report statistics (2019), Batticaloa has the highest unemployed youth populated district. Based on the IOM Sri Lanka's hotline based records (2019), it is further evident to be one of the highest irregular migration prone communities in Sri Lanka as well.

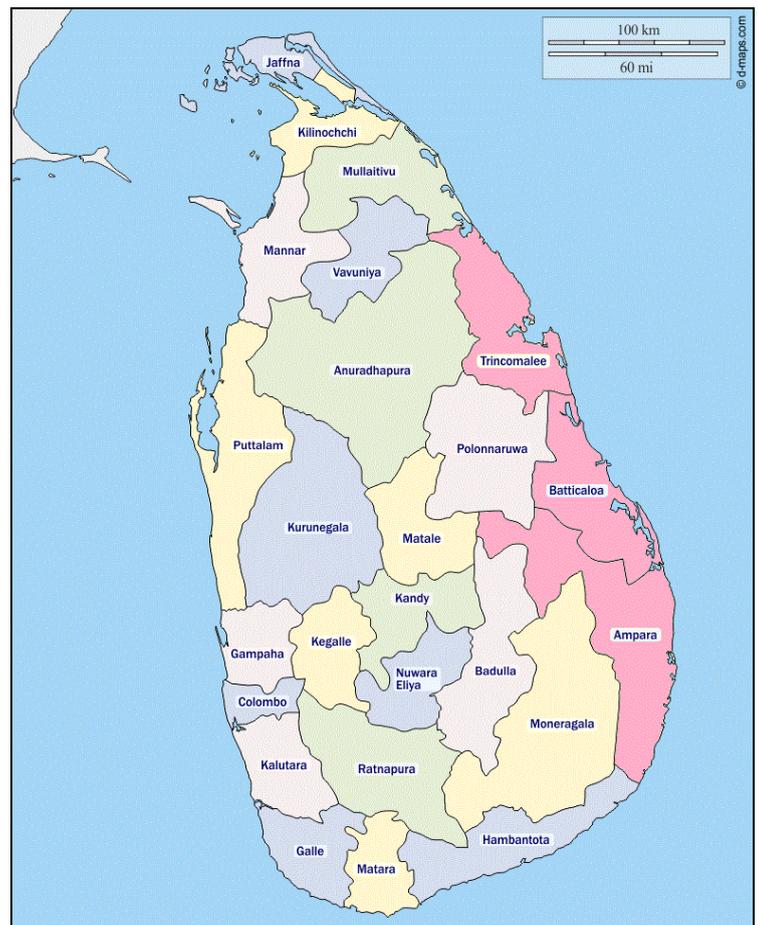


Figure 2 - Map of Eastern Province in Sri Lanka

For more information on the above activities, please contact Migrant Assistant Unit (MAU) at RBALASURIYA@iom.int or visit our web platform <https://srilanka.communityresponsemap.org/dashboard/2019->



Such evidence determines the need of conducting more and more skills development based career guidance programmes in Batticaloa and Trincomalee as the youth in the area might be facing challenges in identifying a verified job agent and a certified skills development course to lead them for a better employment opportunity in Sri Lanka and abroad. Therefore, the SMC team intends to offer them comprehensive and reliable informational support to guide their career in safe and regular means of migration.

In September 2019, three career guidance sessions were organized by the IOM Batticaloa sub office in the Eastern Province where there is a growing tendency at present towards unemployed youth being irregularly smuggled to West Africa by human smugglers promising better a lifestyle and fake job opportunities in Canada.

Among these programmes, two held in Trincomalee where some of the current irregular migrants in the GAIM Phase V project originated from and stranded in Nigeria and Senagal. Meanwhile, the other Career Guidance programme was held in Batticaloa where there is growing tendency to promote irregular tourist visa based migration to Canada and Europe via Russia.

Significantly, the Batticaloa Career Guidance school student's workshop included 73 students who look forward to face the Advanced level examination end of this year representing the age group of 17-18 years. As the students belong to Generation Z, the workshop training strategy was changed to capture their attention.



Figure 3 - Career Guidance activities involving students in Batticaloa

As usual, government Skill Development Officer and Career Guidance Officer from the area also made the event colourful by providing their insights to the potential job market leaders with meaningful information on how to select the most relevant job to lead their lives. At the end of the session, they were given a chance to take the IOM safe and regular migration based career guidance survey to understand their knowledge, attitude and behavior shift towards the resource content shared with them during the event. Meanwhile, the youth in Trincomalee participated in an SMS campaign.

Overall, 98% of the youth mentioned that the reliable information on career guidance and migration provided by IOM has helped them to develop a better career decision that would further lead them to achieve an overall higher result in their social, financial and emotional well-being through safe, regular and informed skilled migration.

Following are some of the interesting insights received as questionnaire responses from youth in Batticaloa;

