

DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

OFFSHORE EVALUATION OF IOM CULTURAL ORIENTATION PROGRAM

FINAL REPORT

14 October 2005

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# 1 Executive Summary

Ernst & Young have completed an offshore evaluation of the Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO) program provided by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). The review intended to provide assurance that DIMIA and IOM are managing AUSCO efficiently and effectively in accordance with contractual requirements. Specifically, the review:

- aimed to identify areas where improvements could be made;
- assess the referral processes for the service;
- assess whether IOM has developed appropriate financial management practices; and
- whether these practices are appropriate for providing consistent and accurate invoicing.

This review was performed in conjunction with the AUSCO Curriculum Review conducted by DIMIA Settlement Branch.

Overall we are satisfied that IOM is providing a professional and valuable service on behalf of DIMIA. However, we have also identified a number of areas where enhancements could be made to align with recognised better practice.

## 1.1 Key Findings

To effectively deliver the AUSCO program in broad global terms, the following key themes have been identified as requiring close monitoring by DIMIA:

- the referral process for coordinating AUSCO, between visa grant and arrival in Australia;
- flexibility of AUSCO content, class numbers and the length of courses to address the needs of clients;
- clear communication within IOM and between the Australian overseas missions; and
- attention to regional operational requirements.

Additionally the review highlights areas where improvements will be needed to ensure the ongoing success of the program. These areas relate to:

- further clarification and assessment of DIMIA roles and responsibilities;
- the creation of best practice standards and guidelines;
- closer monitoring of AUSCO expenditure; and
- the monitoring and assessment of contractors through KPI's.

Our detailed findings are presented in Section 3 of this report.

In order to address the identified issues we have provided twelve recommendations and thirteen better practice suggestions. The recommendations are aimed at the AUSCO program as a whole, whereas the better practice suggestions relate directly to each of the visited regional IOM offices.

## 1.2 Background

The AUSCO program typically consists of an intensive fifteen hour course conducted over three consecutive days, covering topics such as: the journey to Australia, assistance and services provided to refugee and humanitarian entrants; Australian society and culture; Australia's legal system, including the role of the police; physical and mental health care; employment; education; transport; housing; and Australian state and territory information. The classes are conducted in the client's local language and provide humanitarian entrants with the necessary knowledge to improve their settlement prospects and have realistic expectations of life in Australia.

In September 2003, IOM was contracted by DIMIA to conduct a pilot program for AUSCO. An onshore review of the program in Kenya was then conducted in May 2004 by the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA). Since that time, no further formal onshore or offshore review has been conducted. The positive results of the review encouraged the Department to expand the AUSCO program globally. Accordingly, DIMIA expanded delivery of AUSCO to provide classes in seven broad locations. IOM was contracted to conduct the program in Egypt, East Africa, West Africa, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent and South East Asia.

In November 2004, the Department contracted the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) to provide AUSCO training for up to 800 entrants from Laine Camp in Guinea as part of the ICMC's broader role in assisting with resettlement of these persons. Since the conclusion of that project, IOM now conducts all AUSCO classes globally.

With a keen interest in making the program accessible to all offshore clients, trial AUSCO projects are being conducted to address the special needs of children and pre-literate clients. The pre-literate pilot program is currently being run in Tehran. The audit team were able to witness the pilot AUSCO course for children in Thailand while conducting this review.

The outcomes and recommendations provided in this review are intended to aid and improve the future requirements for the AUSCO program, with particular regard to the forthcoming global tender.

# 2 Objectives and Scope

## 2.1 Scope

Ernst & Young has reviewed the AUSCO program provided by IOM and the surrounding contractual relationship with DIMIA.

The review was conducted in a sample of locations in Egypt, Kenya and Thailand. Each site presented its own particular regional challenges and issues. Specifically, in each country we:

- tested the effectiveness of the referral procedures and class scheduling arrangements for cultural orientation between the post and IOM;
- performed a review of the financial management of IOM's budget and invoicing procedures;
- assessed the reporting practices and procedures against the standards set out in the 'Guidelines for Interim Contractor Reporting' distributed by DIMIA;
- reviewed class logistics; and
- identified inconsistencies between the contract and operational arrangements.

The review included discussions with various key individuals within each location including:

- IOM Regional Chiefs of Mission;
- IOM Regional AUSCO Coordinators;
- IOM AUSCO trainers;
- IOM Operations Staff;
- IOM Finance Staff;
- IOM Travel Staff;
- DIMIA National (Central) office staff; and
- Embassy & High Commission staff.

Discussions with the IOM AUSCO Global Coordinator, Genevieve Dooley, also provided more detailed insight into the AUSCO program globally.

Although IOM Operations and Travel staff do not have a direct operational relationship with the AUSCO program, the resulting discussions proved vital in determining information flows within IOM and between the relevant Australian Embassy or High Commission.

## 2.2 Scope Limitations

Ernst & Young performed the review in accordance with the scope of work as agreed with DIMIA management. We have therefore relied upon information provided by DIMIA and Australian Embassy staff, and these information sources have been referenced in this report. Ernst & Young accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of information supplied by DIMIA and Australian Embassy Staff, except to the extent where we have verified it.

We reserve the right to alter or amend our conclusions should information provided prove to be inaccurate or incorrect, or additional relevant material becomes available.

DIMIA is the intended recipient of this report and as such no other parties should place reliance on the content of the report.

## 2.3 Conflict of Interest

We have verified internally any potential conflicts and advise that Ernst & Young has identified no conflicts of interest in undertaking this Review.

## 2.4 Acknowledgements

Ernst & Young would like to thank all individuals who contributed their valuable time and input during the review. In particular, we would like to thank DIMIA staff, Dale Ness & Alison Constance; Embassy and High Commission staff, Ross Wilkie, Robert Chambers & Joanne Ogle; and IOM staff who hosted the team during the visit, Genevieve Dooley, Pindie Stephen & Peter Salnikowski.

# 3 Audit Findings

## 3.1 Referral Procedures

As stated in each AUSCO contract, the local Australian Embassy or High Commission in each country will provide IOM with refugee referrals for training on an ongoing basis.

### 3.1.1 Referral Procedures from the Post to IOM

Each Post selected for review has differing procedures for informing IOM of eligible clients for AUSCO. This varies from advice provided on an ad-hoc basis as visas were granted, to no advice at all in some instances.

#### Findings

##### *Kenya*

Specifically, in Nairobi, The High Commission of Australia provide IOM with the original Document for Travel to Australia (DFTTA) upon its creation for each client. The High Commission is confident that the security of the DFTTA's is appropriate. We were advised by The High Commission, that this document is created immediately upon visa grant notification. Upon receipt of the DFTTA and client location details, IOM enter the accurate client details into their client management database, MIMOSA, which is accessible by most IOM staff through their local intranet. The collected data is then collated and provided to both IOM AUSCO and IOM Travel for each sections use.

IOM indicated that MIMOSA has a training unit which could track AUSCO clients more effectively; however, not every IOM mission globally has this package available for use, due to limited remote access systems in place.

##### *Thailand*

Currently in Bangkok, IOM Travel is regularly provided with faxes from the Australian Embassy, detailing visa grantee particulars, including names and locations. Separate details from the Australian Embassy are also provided fortnightly to IOM AUSCO. This segregation of information flow into IOM creates additional work for the embassy, which has led to instances where individuals' names and details have differed or have been incorrect.

The Nairobi approach mentioned above would be considered ideal in Thailand, which now has no urban caseload.

#### Better Practice Suggestion 1

We suggest that the Australian Embassy in Bangkok provide IOM with the DFTTA upon creation. We suggest the document be created immediately following information received from DIMIA Settlement Branch regarding the “window” for travel and settlement region. This will ensure that IOM is relying on the one more timely and accurate source document for all client information. The Embassy will need to ensure that the security of the DFTTA’s is maintained by IOM.

### Management Comments

#### *Egypt*

Cairo has an urban caseload of refugees and Special Humanitarian Program entrants. As such, the Nairobi approach would not be considered effective in Cairo. This is due to the lifestyle differences between the caseloads, as the individuals in Cairo often work or live outside the city. Attending AUSCO in Cairo may cause loss of income or job or place too heavy a burden on individuals. If DFTTA’s were given to IOM to distribute, individuals may feel compelled to attend AUSCO in order to receive their DFTTA.

Currently in Cairo, The Australian Embassy provides IOM with a monthly list of ‘Refugee’ eligible clients only. This includes contact numbers and addresses. ‘Special Humanitarian Program’ (SHP) clients however are informed of AUSCO only through an information flyer provided by the Australian Embassy and must refer themselves to the IOM AUSCO centre for class registration. As there is no referral list to check against from the embassy, IOM is unsure of expected participation rates.

### Better Practice Suggestion 2

We suggest that the Australian Embassy in Cairo provide IOM with client details for the SHP cases in addition to the current refugee cases that are being provided monthly. This will provide IOM with a means of contacting individuals and potentially providing AUSCO to a wider audience through better planning, targeting and economies of scale. We also suggest that the reports be provided on a timelier basis, preferably fortnightly, to ensure clients are able to attend AUSCO before departing to Australia.

### Management Comments

### Recommendation 1

We recommend that for each AUSCO regional location not reviewed, DIMIA Humanitarian



Branch reassess the information flow between the Australian Embassy or High Commission and IOM, to ensure that IOM is provided with more timely and accurate eligible client data.

#### Management Comments

### 3.1.2 Client Notification & Course Registration

Three very dissimilar processes were identified in each of the three countries visited. These processes are discussed below.

#### Findings

##### *Thailand*

IOM Thailand scheduled courses based on Embassy visa grant information, and then made use of refugee camp officials to inform participants of the upcoming course.

##### *Kenya*

IOM Kenya notified all eligible clients via notice boards based in the refugee camps, and at IOM compounds. Individuals then registered themselves at IOM compounds, with further notices placed by IOM staff when classes had been scheduled.

##### *Egypt*

IOM Cairo contacted only the eligible refugee clients via telephone, who are then required to visit the Training Centre and register for a course. SHP clients are registered for courses only if they read the information flyer and visit the CO Centre.

Although each site used a different process for course registration, each had its merits based on its unique operating environment. We are satisfied that each site dealt with secure and confidential cases in an equally appropriate manner.

The MIMOSA client management system was used in both Kenya and Thailand, to register and track clients AUSCO attendance. In Cairo however, the IOM CO Centre did not use any electronic database for tracking clients. Individual course attendance sheets were the only record of client attendance. Without a database, IOM are unable to effectively monitor and track client participation.

#### Better Practice Suggestion 3

We suggest that the Cairo IOM CO Centre use MIMOSA or an electronic database to record all eligible AUSCO clients. The database can then be used to record attendance, and identify individuals who have not been contacted or received AUSCO.

#### Management Comments

### 3.1.3 Class Scheduling & Timing

From a learning perspective, the Settlement Branch, DIMIA, has stressed the importance of holding AUSCO classes as close to departure dates as possible. IOM understand this learning need and accommodate this request wherever possible. Several other factors however affect the timing of courses. These include but are not limited to:

- minimum class participant sizes needed to achieve a cost effective course;
- the time gap between eligible client list notification to IOM and departure date;
- the number of eligible clients in a particular camp; and
- individual country exit visa processes.

### Findings

#### *Kenya*

Kenya was found to have the most efficient and effective process for ensuring that most individuals receive AUSCO training before departure to Australia. This can be attributed to the following factors:

- the caseload is predominantly refugee camp based, not urban;
- DFTTA's are received from the Embassy immediately upon creation;
- there is generally a large flow of migrants to Australia; and
- they have a full time operational transit centre to 'catch' many of the entrants prior to departure. The Nairobi IOM team also have an agreement with the Kenyan Government to allow entrants to stay at the transit centre for five days which allows enough time to conduct a full AUSCO course or refresher if needed.

We found the timing and scheduling of courses in Kenya to be efficient and effective.

#### *Egypt*

IOM Cairo relies upon monthly eligible client lists of refugees provided by the Australian Embassy, in addition to SHP clients who present themselves at the centre. When travel advice is provided by IOM Travel, the IOM CO Centre does not currently attempt to ensure that eligible clients have either undertaken CO or are booked on a course.

### Better Practice Suggestion 4

We suggest the Cairo IOM CO centre cross check travel advice with attendance records utilising the electronic database referred to in Better Practice Suggestion 3. We suggest that as MIMOSA has the functionality, that it be used for this exercise.

### Management Comments

Results of testing found that for the latest monthly listing of referred eligible refugee clients in Cairo, provided on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August, no attempts had been made to contact clients as at the 25<sup>th</sup> of August

(eighteen days). The listing contained individuals who had been granted visas between 1 July and 31 July 2005. This delay increases the risk that clients may not receive AUSCO due to approaching travel dates.

#### Better Practice Suggestion 5

We suggest the Cairo IOM CO centre contact all eligible clients upon receipt of advice from the Australian Embassy. Follow-up contact can be made to confirm the dates of the scheduled AUSCO class.

#### Management Comments

#### *Thailand*

IOM Thailand currently suffers from the greatest timing issues with AUSCO. This can be attributed to:

- The delayed processing and receipt of Thai Government exit visas, usually taking 1 month to process;
- The low numbers of migrants from each camp per month; and
- Thai government restrictions disallowing any transit for refugees.

Currently, it is very difficult for IOM to achieve class sizes of the minimum fifteen participants required, as stated in the contract. This is due to the low monthly eligible client numbers received for each camp. Additionally this can be impacted if departure scheduling is more ad hoc and not properly coordinated.

#### Recommendation 2

In conjunction with Recommendation 8, we recommend that DIMIA Humanitarian Branch determine its maximum allowable per capita expenditure amount per region. This will determine the minimum class number size allowable for each location. We recommend that future IOM AUSCO contracts include flexibility for minimum class numbers based on the determined maximum per capita expenditure. Approval would be required for classes exceeding these limits.

#### Management Comments

The Senior Migration Officer from the Australian Embassy in Thailand has advised that attempts will be made to maintain both a steady flow of migrant numbers over the next year and concentrate migration from three Thai refugee camps. This will aid IOM in planning and budgeting for future AUSCO classes and travel.

Discussions with both the Australian Embassy and IOM also revealed plans for a possible transit refugee centre closer to Bangkok that could be used for all CO. This Transit centre will however require extensive International funding and Thai Government approval. It is expected that such a centre would help alleviate all aforementioned issues with the timing of AUSCO in Thailand.

### Recommendation 3

It is recommended that the DIMIA Executive consider the benefits to the AUSCO program of the proposed Transit Refugee Centre in Thailand.

### Management Comments

## 3.2 Financial & Asset Management

In each of the three countries visited, IOM financial operations and asset management practices were reviewed. This included:

- inspection of DIMIA assets and assessment of security issues;
- review of asset registers and related insurance contracts;
- review of asset purchase documentation and authorisation;
- review of segregation of duties; and
- review of expenditure approval processes.

### 3.2.1 Financial Management and Approval Processes

In each of the three locations, we reviewed a sample of expenses for the current calendar year. Additionally, we discussed with the finance officers the specific operational protocols employed in each finance team.

#### Findings

Each finance officer from the tested IOM sites demonstrated strong financial management capabilities. Specifically, each office had procedures to:

- ensure all purchases had adequate authorisation;
- ensure segregation of duties was sufficient;
- ensure accurate recording of AUSCO expenditure including records management processes; and
- operate within budgeted fund allocations.

In two of the three IOM offices visited, a total of three instances were noted where inaccurate allocation of costs had been expensed to the AUSCO account. When informed of the discrepancy, finance staff corrected the corresponding expense entry. It is noted that each instance was a nominal monetary value, all under \$500.

We consider that adequate segregation of duties and financial management practices are being employed in each IOM region visited. Errors such as those identified are immaterial and are not considered to be a systemic issue within the IOM operations.

### 3.2.2 Asset Management

In each IOM location, DIMIA has provided funding for the purchase of Assets including, but not limited to:

- TV's;
- Computers;
- VCR players;
- DVD players; and
- Classroom chairs.

DIMIA requires that each of these assets are recorded on IOM asset registers and insured for theft, fire or damage.

#### Findings

All assets selected for review of existence were located in classrooms within IOM secured premises. Each asset appeared to be in working order. Asset registers in each location were reviewed and confirmed the inclusion of the AUSCO assets. Valid insurance contracts were in place for the full value of all assets.

#### Recommendation 4

We recommend that DIMIA Humanitarian Branch maintain an asset register for all AUSCO assets purchased. The AUSCO contract manager should also ensure that all future asset purchases are recorded as required by the Department for accounting purposes.

#### Management Comments

### 3.2.3 Value for Money assessment

IOM currently provides Cultural Orientation (CO) classes on behalf of several resettlement countries in each location, including USA and Canada. Due to the comparatively large migrant intake in the USA, USCO courses are run more often than AUSCO. IOM regional offices coordinate and schedule courses with regard to resource constraints. These constraints include:

- classroom availability;
- trainer availability, as many trainers perform both AUSCO and USCO;
- refugee Camp location; and
- attendee numbers.

We found that IOM coordinators attempt to reduce costs wherever possible. The largest cost reduction efforts can be seen for courses run within refugee camps in Thailand and Kenya. Firstly, IOM attempts to schedule AUSCO classes in conjunction with USCO classes, so that travel costs for trainers are shared between the US and Australia. Secondly, IOM attempt to ensure that minimum class size numbers are met, so that the proportional per capita cost of training individuals does not exceed the budgeted amounts.

Cost reductions are also achieved for IOM support and office operations. These operational costs are shared between participating countries. We consider that if the Australian Government were the only procurer of IOM travel and IOM CO services, then costs for operating AUSCO classes would be dramatically increased.

## 3.3 Reporting Practices & Procedures

Each IOM CO contract refers to, 'AUSCO: DIMIA's Guidelines for Interim Contractor Reporting'. This document provides IOM regional offices with guidance for required reporting to DIMIA, including:

- session information and class lists;
- monthly statistical summaries;
- delivery of reports; and
- invoicing procedures.

The Guideline also provides a brief description of the roles and responsibilities of both the Humanitarian and Settlement Branches and their management functions in relation to the contract.

### 3.3.1 Session Information & Class Lists

Currently IOM is required to provide DIMIA by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month with the class list for each of the courses provided in the prior month. The Humanitarian Branch retains each of these lists.

#### Findings

IOM class lists and monthly reports provided to DIMIA are not always received by the monthly deadline. The class lists are then stored by the Contract Manager, Humanitarian Branch. Data from these lists however is not regularly being collated and analysed into useful information and statistics. The information provided on the lists and in the reports have potential for DIMIA to create some useful statistics for each location including:

- average teaching hours per class per month;
- average number of participants per class per month;
- non-Attendance percentages; and
- languages used for each course.

#### Recommendation 5

We recommend that DIMIA Humanitarian Branch extract information from monthly reports and class lists that can be used for future analysis of AUSCO. This information can be used to assess IOM's performance against KPI's as designed in Recommendation 9.

#### Management Comments



As explained below, three of the fields on the listing sheet were also noted to be deficient. These were the, 'Total hours per day', 'Languages of Orientation' and 'Going To' fields.

#### *Total hours per day*

Facilitators regularly record the *planned* five hours per day in the field. As a result, DIMIA is unaware of the actual time required to complete a course. Oral feedback from CO facilitators suggests that AUSCO regularly takes longer than five hours each day. Without this accurate information recorded on the class lists, it is difficult for DIMIA Settlement Branch to understand why facilitators are requesting extra days for AUSCO classes.

#### *Languages of Orientation*

Currently the template does not require specific languages used to be recorded, with 'Mother Tongue' used as the current description. Without the actual languages spoken noted on the class list, DIMIA will be unaware of actual caseload needs.

#### *Going To*

This field, when filled properly, gives the facilitator direction in class and additionally provides DIMIA with more useable statistics.

### Recommendation 6

We recommend that DIMIA Humanitarian Branch reformat the current 'Class List' template, to include:

- actual class hours per day; and
- specific languages used.

Additionally, DIMIA needs to re-emphasise the need for accurate destination information. The reformatted templates need to be distributed and enforced by the DIMIA Humanitarian Branch.

### Management Comments

### 3.3.2 Invoice Preparation

We reviewed the invoice preparation process in each IOM region visited and conducted sample testing on the latest invoices provided.

#### **Findings**

All invoices reviewed were found to be adequately supported by appropriate documentation. Based on our limited testing we consider that IOM has the appropriate controls in place to ensure accurate billing to DIMIA.

As per each contract, IOM is required to invoice DIMIA based on the agreed service fee per capita stated in each IOM region's yearly budget. Although DIMIA pay monthly invoices based on the per capita agreed rate, DIMIA is liable to repay IOM for the actual costs in providing the services received. Any expense amounts over the per capita agreed rate are paid by DIMIA at the end of the financial year. As the per capita rate is determined using several variables including average class numbers and yearly caseload estimates, any changes or errors in these estimates will seriously alter the actual per capita cost of providing AUSCO. IOM attempt to provide accurate forecasts for yearly expenditure; however it is the variable costs based on caseload estimates, such as travel and facilitator expenses, that are most adversely affected.

#### Recommendation 7

We recommend that for future budget proposals, DIMIA Humanitarian Branch obtain the budget for each region with fixed administration costs separated from the variable per capita estimate. This will allow DIMIA to assess each regional contract more effectively. Additionally, tender documents for future contracts should detail the required format.

#### Management Comments

We have also found that the current method of invoice payment, based on a per capita amount, does not allow DIMIA to monitor the actual IOM expenditure on AUSCO.

#### Recommendation 8

We recommend that for future contracts, DIMIA Humanitarian Branch request invoices based on actual monthly expenditure with statements of 'Budget to Actual' expenditure included. For evaluation purposes, actual expenditure can be more effectively monitored and assessed against budgeted figures. DIMIA will then be able to identify material variances in a timely manner.

#### Management Comments

## 3.4 Class Logistics

In each location visited, as was planned, only a sample of courses were reviewed due to time constraints. The following comments relate only to the observations made on those visits.

### 3.4.1 Venue Suitability

Generally, each regional IOM office established training venues in suitable locations with regard to cost, safety, availability and accessibility.

#### Findings

##### *Cairo*

IOM Cairo has established a CO Centre in a suburb close to the city. The centre has four classrooms, two Australian, one US and one Canadian. The centre is deliberately not signposted, so as not to draw attention to itself, however has a clear street address. The noticeboard is posted just outside the entrance, with details of participants for upcoming classes. Security staff are employed during the operating hours of the centre. The facilities, as observed, are considered satisfactory. Childcare facilities were small, however adequate.

##### *Nairobi Transit Centre*

The transit centre is used for temporary accommodation whilst transporting humanitarian entrants out of Kenya. Nairobi-based entrants and individuals who have not received AUSCO at a refugee camp can attend a course at the centre. Two rooms are used for CO, with one room used for group activities and the other for classroom based learning. The Transit Centre is a heavily secured compound, with no signposting to draw unwanted attention. Surplus classes are held within the IOM compound in Nairobi when there is a need. These facilities, as observed, are also satisfactory. Childcare is sufficient, with both a crèche and a classroom available.

##### *Kakuma*

There are 3 classrooms within the secure IOM compound at Kakuma. One of these is dedicated for AUSCO. The US classroom also contains a model kitchen and bathroom which are used for demonstration in AUSCO classes. Kakuma residents are very aware of the IOM compound location, due to prior interview and medical processing visits being located in the same area. A separate room adjacent to the classroom is provided for childcare.

##### *Mae La Camp, Thailand*

AUSCO is conducted in each camp within Thailand due to refugee movement restrictions. IOM hires venues such as churches or schools for AUSCO within the refugee camps. Venues are not always ideal; however there are very limited options available for CO.

### 3.4.2 Transport & Reimbursement Procedures

Transport and reimbursement procedures in place are dependent on both the location and caseload.

## Findings

### *Refugee Camps*

Kakuma is the only site reviewed where transport is provided for AUSCO participants. A van collects and returns participants to their local area within the camp. Transport within the Thai camps is not available and participants are required to walk to the venue. This is due to the fact that the Thai camps do not have vehicles or roads and the paths are much smaller in size and unsurfaced. The clients are therefore not reimbursed for travel in camps.

### *Urban Caseload*

At the Nairobi Transit Centre, urban based participants are repaid the cost of travel to and from the centre each day, based on a pre-determined rate structure with detailed locality formulas. Those clients actually transiting through the centre have no reimbursement costs for transportation. In Cairo however, participants are paid a set amount of two Egyptian pounds per day at the end of the third day. This amount does not cover all participants travel expenses, especially as some of the entrants were travelling long distances, such as from Alexandria which is at least three hours commuting time.

### Better Practice Suggestion 6

We suggest that IOM Cairo reassess the flat rate used for transport reimbursement, to ensure that participants are reimbursed the reasonable cost of attending AUSCO.

### Management Comments

## 3.4.3 Refreshment Provisions

Due to the length of courses, it is essential that participants are provided with adequate food and water during the course. We noted that refreshments provided vary greatly in each location visited.

## Findings

### *Cairo*

As the course ran from 10am till 3pm daily, the refreshment provided was lunch. McDonalds, consisting of a burger and fries, was provided at midday each day of the course. We understand that IOM have reached an agreement with the local store, to provide each meal delivered for under \$2US.

### Better Practice Suggestion 7

We suggest that Cairo reassess the current food contract and attempt to provide healthy food to participants where possible. Consideration should also be given to providing a light fruit

snack.

### Management Comments

#### *Kakuma*

Classes in Kakuma commence at 8am and conclude at 1pm. Kakuma residents regularly eat one meal per day, usually around 1-2pm. We observed that participants were lethargic in the morning session. Participants are provided with a mid-morning snack consisting of a ‘mandazi’ (similar to a western doughnut) and a drink at approximately 10:30am.

### Better Practice Suggestion 8

We suggest that IOM Kakuma consider providing an additional morning snack to participants prior to class commencement. This will potentially increase concentration, participation and information retention levels. A morning snack should be considered in each of the AUSCO locations.

### Management Comments

#### *Thailand*

Participants at the Mae La camp were provided with a traditional Thai meal, consisting of rice, vegetables and meat for lunch. We consider this the best practice among the reviewed locations. In the children’s program however, a class activity held mid- morning was preparing and eating toast and promite, peanut butter and strawberry jam. On another day, a mid-morning activity was making and eating tuna salad sandwiches. Oranges were provided on the day when no activity of this kind was scheduled.

### Better Practice Suggestion 9

We suggest that consideration should be given to removing peanut butter from the ingredient list in case of any anaphylactic reaction, as peanuts have the potential to kill people who are allergic to them.

### Management Comments

### 3.4.4 Length and Size of Classes

AUSCO is a flexible program that is currently conducted over fifteen hours, spread over three days. Sizes of classes range from fifteen to 25 depending on regional operational requirements.

#### Findings

Each country visited operated with differing course times. In Cairo and Nairobi, the course time included a meal break of between 30 and 45 minutes. In Thailand however, the lunch break was in addition to the five hours class time.

Per discussion with DIMIA personnel, facilitators and coordinators in each location, there are differing opinions as to the ideal course length for AUSCO. Class numbers are however usually limited to the venue size, with 25 being the accepted maximum.

Most facilitators suggested that in order to teach the entire content of the AUSCO syllabus effectively, more days are needed. Supporting arguments for this include:

- when interpreters are used, the course runs slower;
- poor literacy levels of participants;
- the detail required in most of the learning areas; and
- participant's questions which need answering.

Our observations of participants on AUSCO classes confirm the value of the training provided. We consider that the lengthening of courses can achieve further rewards and increased benefit for participants, provided that the current training methods are efficient and effective in each location.

#### Recommendation 9

We recommend that any increased course length should be focused on key learning areas and not spread equally across all existing tasks. We recommend that DIMIA Settlement Branch develop a list of core competencies that need to be provided through AUSCO. Requests for extension to courses should be assessed against enhancing these core competencies.

Additionally, requests for extended courses should include a revised per capita estimate. When accepting extension proposals, DIMIA Humanitarian Branch should have regard to the maximum per capita expenditure allowable for the region (developed under Recommendation 2).

#### Management Comments

### 3.4.5 DIMIA Materials

The Settlement Branch in DIMIA is responsible for providing each IOM region with AUSCO resources. These resources include:

- course DVD's & Videos;
- Australian Maps;
- Australian Books;
- children's activities; and
- various other Australian items.

IOM regional coordinators have also purchased additional resources, such as hygiene & healthcare products for demonstrative use in AUSCO classes.

### Findings

In each site visited, problems were encountered with the DVD's and Video Tapes provided by DIMIA. The problems were related to the items being dirty or scratched. The faulty items resulted in course interruptions.

#### Better Practice Suggestion 10

We suggest that each IOM AUSCO Regional Coordinator ensure that several working copies of each DVD/Video are available for each course. Faulty discs and tapes need to be reported to DIMIA in order for supplies to be replenished. Discs will need to be stored in a clean environment.

#### Management Comments

#### *Cairo*

Most resources provided by DIMIA are not being used effectively. Facilitators suggested that Australian books have been locked away due to the risk of theft by participants. Lack of available space for displaying the resources in the centre was also evident.

#### Better Practice Suggestion 11

We suggest that the Cairo CO Centre make more effective use of the provided materials. Books could be shelved on the walls of both Australian classrooms. We also suggest that Cairo facilitators incorporate more 'hands on' activities in the classroom and encourage the use of the Australian books.

#### Management Comments

#### *Kakuma & Nairobi Transit Centre*

Resource usage in each of these locations was much more effective, with emphasis on linking individual destinations with relevant resource material. 'Hands on' activities proved valuable for the participants.

There is also a fulltime resource library that anyone at the Transit Centre can visit. It contained many of the resources sent over and was full of people the day we attended. This is an ideal use of resources outside of AUSCO, as the entrants are able to spend significant time reading the information that is of most interest to them.

#### *Thailand*

Excellent use of DIMIA materials was evidenced in the pilot children's CO class held in Mae La refugee camp. Additionally, other useful resources have been purchased or developed for activities, such as a healthy eating demonstration, education progression activity and a hygiene and healthcare activity.

#### Better Practice Suggestion 12

We recognise that the usefulness of each activity in different global locations will vary greatly. We therefore suggest that the IOM Global coordinator, obtain an understanding and document the unique activities provided in each IOM region. We suggest that the coordinator then inform all regional AUSCO coordinators of the available activities so as to continually improve the program in each location. This will require a rigorous mechanism around achieving customisation within some cost effective parameters.

#### Management Comments



## 3.5 Contractual & Operational Inconsistencies

Several issues and inconsistencies have already been highlighted in the body of this report. Additional inconsistencies and contractual anomalies are discussed below.

### 3.5.1 Contractor Performance Assessment

As part of each regional contract, IOM is required to provide CO services on behalf of DIMIA. The contracts are clear about service specifications and course requirements and include detailed reporting requirements.

#### Findings

Currently, DIMIA do not have any formal processes to assess the performance of IOM against each IOM regional contract. This review forms the first formal offshore assessment of the program. It is essential for DIMIA to have a standard format or criteria for the assessment of such contracts. Such assessment could include the quality of monthly reporting and the timeliness of invoicing.

#### Recommendation 10

We recommend that DIMIA Humanitarian Branch develop a set of standardised Key Performance Indicators to assess the performance of IOM under each IOM regional contract. Additionally, DIMIA should plan for future reviews of AUSCO both onshore and offshore in evaluating its contractors.

#### Management Comments

### 3.5.2 Budget Approval Process

Each regional IOM AUSCO project undergoes a proposal process, whereby IOM specifies deliverables including estimated budget requirements. Proposals are assessed and contracts drafted by the Humanitarian Branch.

#### Findings

The Thailand budget proposal does not include budgeted travel costs. This is inconsistent with the required DIMIA process. Currently, IOM is billing travel costs in addition to the agreed per capita rate.

#### Recommendation 11

We recommend that DIMIA Humanitarian Branch ensure that each regional proposal include complete budgeted expenditure estimates before approval is authorised.

#### Management Comments

## 3.6 Other Operational Issues

Several operational inefficiencies have been identified during the course of this review.

### 3.6.1 DIMIA Internal Communication

Due to the offshore nature of the AUSCO training, the Humanitarian Branch is responsible for the management of the IOM contracts. The Settlement Branch however has the skills and knowledge required to ensure the content of the courses is appropriate, and as such is charged with governing content related issues.

#### Findings

Since inception in 2003, the AUSCO program has operated with several difficulties due to the split governance of the project across the two DIMIA Divisions. This has resulted in occasional instances where conflicting communication has been provided to IOM. Recently, miscommunication within the Department led to a four day course being trialled in Kakuma, without the prior knowledge of DIMIA staff. A cohesive operation is needed for providing clear and direct advice to IOM as its key service provider.

We understand that similar difficulties in communication between the two DIMIA Branches are experienced with the IOM Travel contract.

#### Recommendation 12

We recommend that the DIMIA Executive review the need for the division of contract and content management between the two Branches. Although the AUSCO project is clearly an offshore program, we consider it to be more aligned with the targets and objectives of the Settlement Branch. We believe that the CO contract could be more efficiently and effectively managed by the Settlement Branch in consultation with the Humanitarian Branch as appropriate.

#### Management Comments

### 3.6.2 IOM Internal Communication

Established and defined communication channels are essential for effective communication.

#### Findings

We found the best model for communication was in Nairobi. Efficient and effective processes are in place that ensure accurate information flow across IOM. The extensive use of MIMOSA as a client management system has helped achieve this.

Internal communication gaps were identified in both the Cairo and Thailand IOM offices. This directly affects the AUSCO program through increased challenges in ensuring that all eligible clients are able to receive AUSCO training.

### Better Practice Suggestion 13

We suggest that IOM regional offices, in conjunction with Recommendation 1, revise their current internal information flow processes to ensure best practice such as that in Nairobi is achieved.

### Management Comments

### 3.6.3 AUSCO Global Coordination

Currently the role of Global AUSCO Coordinator is an IOM contracted position filled by Genevieve Dooley. This role is essential in ensuring quality delivery of the program. If the result of the forthcoming tender awards contracts to suppliers other than IOM, we believe that the global AUSCO Coordinator role will need to be filled by a DIMIA staff member. The reasons for this are as follows.

For a multiple provider service, three possible scenarios are discussed below:

The first is that IOM continue to employ a global AUSCO Co-ordinator for all IOM contracted regions. In this case, the potential workload is decreased; however the salary is likely to remain the same, being eventually paid for by DIMIA, achieving less value for money. Other contractors would then also need their own global co-ordinators resulting in unnecessary increasing AUSCO costs.

The second scenario would be for the AUSCO co-ordinator for all global regions to continue to be employed by IOM. It would be considered inappropriate and ineffective for an IOM staff member to co-ordinate the global program if they were not however the sole AUSCO provider. It would not be fair on other contractors to have this imposed on them.

The third and recommended scenario would be for the Global AUSCO Coordinator to be a DIMIA staff member. Ideally, this offshore official, funded by DIMIA as a DIMIA position, may continue the valuable work Ms Dooley has brought to coordinating the offshore global program. Creating this role will allow DIMIA to regain more control over the focus and operation of AUSCO. It also reduces any potential management issues that may arise as a result of handling multiple service provider organisations in the future arrangements. The Global Coordinator would have greater ability to more effectively liaise with key DIMIA staff including the Contract Manager and Curriculum Coordinators. The role would ideally be based offshore due to the extensive travel required.

### Recommendation 13

We recommend that prior to the preparation of tender documents, the DIMIA Humanitarian Branch redefine the internal operational structure required to manage the AUSCO program. This should include redefinition of current contract manager roles and responsibilities (in consideration of the outcome of Recommendation 11).

### Management Comments