CSOs and NGOs working for the Rights of Migrant Workers

**Name of Organisation:** The Centre for Indian Migrant Studies (CIMS), India, 2003  
**Website of Organisation:** [http://www.cimskerala.org/](http://www.cimskerala.org/)  
**Organisation of DTP Alumni Y/N:** Yes

Millions of migrant workers from Kerala have gone to work in the Middle East since the 1970s. The Centre for Indian Migrant Studies (CIMS) evolved from a popular TV show called 'Pravaslokanam' in Kairrali- a Malayalam regional language television channel from Kerala - South state of India. This show essentially assists relatives to track down their missing relatives abroad. The TV show first aired in 2000. CIMS was established three years after the first TV series aired. CIMS was created for the welfare of migrant workers and their families. CIMS conducts relevant programmes to respond to the problems faced by migrant workers. This is a pioneering effort for the state of Kerala where no agency or programme exists for providing assistance to workers migrating from the state to various parts of the world.

Pravaslokanam utilises the influence of visual media to track down missing people with the assistance of viewers, social workers and migrant forums. The great success of the popular TV series has contributed to raising awareness on the plight of poor migrant workers and their families. It has also opened a floodgate of issues to be handled to support thousands of stranded workers abroad, mainly in the Gulf region. Pravaslokanam illustrated its success and influence through the number of cases received by the relatives of missing migrant workers.

CIMS’ mission is to build the knowledge and understanding of safe migration. CIMS focuses on migrant workers in the Middle East and helps migrant workers to understand better of the legal systems and of their rights. CIMS aims to lead the world in research and education in the area of migration studies and to share their work on a national and global scale. CIMS also provides other social services which include financial aid for orphaned families, sponsorship for education of missing person’s children, repartition and treatment of accident victims, assistance to victims of visa racketeers, campaign against illegal recruitment agents, rescuing victims from the sex rackets, provides consular and financial aid for prisoners to secure their early release and repatriation of dead bodies.

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1 The Diplomacy Training Program (DTP) is an NGO affiliated with the Faculty of Law at UNSW in Sydney. Since 1990, It has provided training to over 2600 human rights defenders and community advocates. These individuals work for a wide range of organisations working to promote shared values of human rights – in different ways. This profile is part of a series developed by DTP (www.dtp.unsw.edu.au) to illustrate the richness and diversity of the organisations working to promote the rights of migrant workers more broadly.