

CSOs and NGOs working for the Rights of Migrant Workers¹

Name of Organisation: The Centre for Indian Migrant Studies (CIMS), India, 2003

Website of Organisation: <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 'Pravaslokam' in Kairrali- a Malayalam regional language television channel from Kerala - a southern state of India. This innovative TV show assists families in India to track down, and reconnect with, their relatives who have gone missing while working overseas. Pravaslokam is widely watched in the Gulf and viewers, migrant workers themselves, become actively engaged in the efforts to reunite families.

The great success of the TV series contributed to raising awareness on the plight of 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. The TV show first aired in 2000 and CIMS was established three years later to meet the needs of migrant workers and their families.

CIMS focuses on the rights of migrant workers in the Middle East and helps migrant workers to better understand the legal systems and 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 provides other services including financial aid for orphaned families, sponsorship for education of missing person's children, reparation and treatment of accident victims, assistance to victims of visa racketeers, campaign against illegal recruitment agents, rescuing victims from sex rackets, and seeking consular and financial aid for prisoners to secure their early release, and repatriation of deceased migrant workers.

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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.