



For the past two decades, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Government of Australia have worked in partnership to deliver pre-departure **Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO)** training for Australia-bound refugees and humanitarian entrants. The program is funded by the Department of Home Affairs and has been delivered by IOM since 2003. Since the program's commencement, more than **134,000 beneficiaries** have been supported globally.

IOM Thailand is host to the AUSCO Global Office which oversees permanent AUSCO implementing and coordinating missions in **Thailand, Egypt, El Salvador, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan** and **Türkiye**. AUSCO has been further delivered in **Sudan** and **Uganda**, and through mobile facilitation in several countries, including:

**Asia/Oceania:** Afghanistan, Cambodia, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan

**MENA:** Israel, Libya, Saudi Arabia, UAE

**Europe/USA:** Germany, Greece, Macedonia, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, UK, Ukraine, USA

**Sub-Saharan Africa:** Botswana, Brazzaville, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, Zimbabwe

**Central and South America:** Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad & Tobago, Venezuela

The program objectives are several-fold and include empowering refugees and humanitarian entrants with information on life in Australia, whilst also encouraging language training on arrival, and equipping participants with the basic skills and necessary tools needed to deal with initial challenges experienced during their resettlement journey and to reach self-sufficiency.

Through a 5-day course, AUSCO provides the opportunity for participants to be provided with practical advice and accurate information on the departure and settlement processes, and an opportunity to ask questions about travel to Australia and life in their new home country — including pathways and access to further education and employment, learning English and understanding Australian law.

## AUSCO

Australian Cultural Orientation Program



Locations of AUSCO's Activities in Thailand

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AUSCO participants sharing their creative artwork during workshop activities  
Photo: AUSCO Global Office

## KEY FACTS



**134,625**

Total number of persons who participated in AUSCO classes globally from 2003 – 31/12/2023



**913**

Total number of participants in Thailand who benefitted from AUSCO in 2023



**5 Days**

Length of AUSCO classes



A group of children engaging in pre-departure activities that prepare them for their journey to Australia  
Front page: AUSCO participants sharing their certificates during classroom activities  
Photo: AUSCO Global Office

## Stakeholders in Thailand

Local stakeholders to the AUSCO Program in Thailand are the Australian Embassy in Bangkok and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The majority of AUSCO classes in Thailand are held in temporary shelter areas along the Thailand-Myanmar border and IOM sub-office in Mae Sot where the AUSCO trainer team is based.

AUSCO sessions are also occasionally held in Bangkok for urban caseloads. A total of 913 refugees and humanitarian entrants in Thailand benefitted from the AUSCO program in 2023.

## Link to Onshore Settlement Services

AUSCO links closely with the orientation element of the onshore settlement program, together providing a continuum for humanitarian entrants to facilitate their settlement journey.

To enhance resettlement practices, AUSCO and the Australian based humanitarian settlement program conduct workshops that bring together diverse service providers to exchange ideas in order to make the transition from offshore to onshore orientation as seamless as possible.

This would be in addition to Train-the-Trainer workshops that are held regularly in various global locations.

## The AUSCO Curriculum

The AUSCO Program is offered to refugee and humanitarian visa holders over the age of five who are preparing to settle in Australia.

The program provides practical orientation to Australian lifestyle and culture as well as managing the expectations of participants preparing to resettle abroad. Each AUSCO course is tailored to meet the needs of a diverse range of attendees and is designed to achieve several objectives, including the following:

- ☒ Prepare visa holders for travel;
- ☒ Enhance settlement prospects;
- ☒ Create realistic expectations about life in Australia;
- ☒ Provide information about Australian laws, values and lifestyle.



AUSCO Trainers involve participants in interactive classroom activities.  
Photo: AUSCO Global Office

AUSCO trainers apply a variety of teaching methods throughout the 25-hour course including brainstorming, simulations, case studies, discussions, problem solving and role plays. Course content is supplemented by Standard and Easy Read AUSCO Student Folders available in a number of languages, and an 'Activity Book' to reflect upon and record participants settlement journey, plus the AUSCO DVD "An Australian Settlement Journey".



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Home Affairs**

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