

Reintegration

– Effective approaches –



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Reintegration is a key aspect for return migration to be sustainable. While there is a growing understanding among stakeholders that the reintegration process needs to be supported in order to be successful, the means of doing this widely differ.

Is there a magic formula to ensure effective reintegration? What is the role of monitoring and evaluation in a reintegration project? Can reintegration be meaningful both to the returnees and their communities? Is there untapped potential for stakeholders who have not been involved so far? In this paper, we have attempted to take a snapshot of the current debate around reintegration – indeed a fascinating one – and portray various positions and practices that can support practitioners and academics in making further progress.

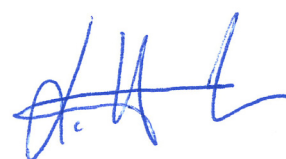
IOM has been at the centre of designing and delivering reintegration assistance since the inception of assisted voluntary return and reintegration, and thanks to its global presence and experience around the world¹, the Organization is in an undoubtedly privileged position to share expertise gained over many years of conceptualization and implementation. Preserving migrants' rights, ensuring their protection and well-being, contributing to the local development while enhancing the reintegration perspectives of the individual, and developing activities to minimize irregular and unsafe (re)migration, are some of the things we continue to strive for at IOM, and this paper takes into account the many valuable contributions provided by various stakeholders – States, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other international fora.

This paper intends to analyse past and current frameworks to offer inspiration for future ones, conscious that in order to develop sustainable, balanced, complementary, measurable and innovative reintegration schemes, joint approaches building on the expertise of key actors in countries of origin, transit and destination are fundamental. We intend to look at reintegration for beneficiaries in transitional settings at a later stage, as certain parameters in such contexts may differ.

Despite our best intentions in capturing the essence around the discussion on reintegration, we may have not portrayed everything, including some significant practices, and we look forward to receiving additional contributions so that we can be as holistic and comprehensive as possible, while keeping this document a living one. In the meantime, we hope you will enjoy reading this paper and that it will serve as an inspirational tool.



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¹ IOM has more than 480 Country Offices and Sub-offices worldwide. (<http://www.iom.int/cms/where-we-work>)

Petrus decided to go back to Armenia. Through the reintegration assistance he could start a sheep farm. © IOM 2014

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Introduction

Reintegration is an essential part of return migration, as it empowers and protects returnees by providing them with the necessary tools and assistance for their reinsertion into the society of their country of origin, while generally contributing to the sustainability of return. It has gained prominence in recent years, and numerous efforts have been made towards improving return policy formulation and making assistance more effective to those in need. Furthermore, facilitating sustainability is a crucial element of migration-related assistance to returnees, being a vital part of policy formulation by governments. IOM's project experiences indicate that return will likely be more sustainable if the decision to return is an informed and voluntary one and is supported by appropriate reintegration assistance.

The discussion on the need to include reintegration in the return process is increasingly appearing on the agenda of host countries, transit and origin. Several international and regional forums have been dealing with reintegration assistance as a key element of the return process, as it is perceived as one that can motivate migrants to return or which can minimize vulnerability and empower returnees upon their return – especially return in the aftermath of a crisis, whether natural or man-made.

Unless the factors that push people to emigrate in the first place are addressed, a considerable number of migrants will return to situations of vulnerability, and many look at irregular and unsafe remigration options due to unsustainable living conditions at home. Most migrants invest substantial effort and resources into a migration project. In cases where migrants are not allowed to remain in the host country, or may even be faced with a provision to leave, options may be limited to: (a) overstaying, which leads to exclusion and exploitation; (b) attempts at regularizing their stay; (c) voluntary return; and (d) forced return. Regular migrants might also consider voluntarily returning to their home country if the conditions allow for sustainable reintegration.² It is with this scenario that

an accurate socioeconomic assessment of the potential returnees may assist in better tailoring reintegration assistance interventions that can be used as incentives (as opposed to inducements) to pick the option of voluntary return.³

Reintegration assistance can range from limited, one-time reinstallation grants at the micro level, to a range of economic and social assistance measures, including for the community of return and individualized assistance for vulnerable migrants. Assistance may be provided directly to the migrants and in the form of institutional assistance at the macro level to the communities of return in the country of origin. Targeting communities in return countries may involve longer-term, structural and development aid.

Some stakeholders argue that affording reintegration assistance to migrants could actually constitute a pull factor and attract irregular migration. However, IOM's experience has shown that the promise of reintegration support actually represents a valid alternative which makes them consider the voluntary return option. This is particularly true for migrants in an irregular status, especially those who find themselves in difficult situations without clear prospects for the future. On the other hand, reintegration packages, however generous, are unlikely to ever cover the financial and human costs of irregular migration. These costs include money to pay for the services of smugglers and recruitment agents; bribes for law enforcement officials to “turn a blind eye”; transport and accommodation; the time spent on the journey, which may amount to several years; the psychosocial costs of being away from family and friends; and the cost of moving children back to the country of origin after many years in the destination country, among others. In many cases, migrants have also experienced theft of their belongings and money en route, which add to the already high costs of the journey to reach the final destination. Regardless of these costs, irregular migration is likely to continue due to the escalating demand for cheap labour in many countries and

² Some studies suggest that migrants are more likely to return if the doors of the host country are not permanently closed to them. For example, Mexican migrants in the United States at the time of the economic downturn were inclined to return home, but feared that they would have trouble re-entering the United States later on.

³ While more research is needed on this, some studies suggest that migrants are more likely to take the decision of returning through AVRR if reintegration assistance is available. (See for example Leerkes, Arjen (2014). What Drives Soft Deportation? Understanding the Rise in Assisted Voluntary Return Among Rejected Asylum seekers in the Netherlands. Erasmus University Rotterdam.)

the gap in the access to regular migration channels. Offering return and reintegration schemes to migrants in transit countries has also proven to address several issues: for example, it reduces the vulnerability of the migrant and prevents continuation of the often dangerous travel to their final destinations; it takes away the psychological pressure from migrants, who are often ashamed of returning to their home countries empty-handed; and it considerably reduces assistance costs. Migrants returning to their home countries by their own means – such as former refugees, internally displaced persons and deported migrants who may find themselves in situations of vulnerability – also face these challenges. As such, the principles and recommendations formulated in this paper should be considered for all returnees.

The purpose of this paper is to offer a comprehensive portrait of promising reintegration practices and contributing to informed discussion among stakeholders. While IOM has been the major service provider of return and reintegration assistance, it is also true that other stakeholders, such as civil society and the private sector, have offered meaningful contributions towards enhancing these. The paper will argue for the importance of reintegration being sustainable, measurable, balanced, complementary and innovative, indicating principles and practices leading to these parameters. The paper also argues that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to reintegration approaches. It is out of the scope of this paper to deal with reintegration in countries in transition, as these face very different challenges as a consequence of large flows of refugees and displaced persons.

Mr. R. through IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) Programme in Ghana, realized his dream of setting up a second-hand auto car parts shop. © IOM 2010

A man with a mustache, wearing a black t-shirt and a bright yellow apron, is working in a cluttered workshop. He is holding a large, curved metal part, possibly a car bumper or fender, which is partially covered with a piece of silver foil or paper. The background is filled with various car parts, including headlights, taillights, and body panels, some of which are red. The lighting is somewhat dim, and the overall atmosphere is one of a busy, industrial environment.

Economic

Social

Psychosocial

Dimensions of reintegration

IOM has been operating assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programmes for over 35 years now and today manages over 100 AVRR programmes. The Organization's approach to return stems from a broader and more comprehensive migration management perspective, which takes into account all migrants — both regular and irregular — in need of return assistance. These migrants include not only rejected asylum-seekers, but also other categories such as persons currently in the asylum determination process, persons in a temporary protection status, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied migrant children and regular migrants who wish to return to their countries of origin.

As part of its comprehensive approach to return migration, IOM has long held that the effectiveness of return depends on successful reintegration assistance measures based on adequate return preparation prior to departure and effective monitoring in the country of origin. Return and reintegration policies are more effective when linked with the protection of migrants' rights and development opportunities in the country of origin, particularly those that address the root causes of migration. Nevertheless, IOM also recognizes the fact that return migration is a complex process, and that more information is needed on the factors contributing to successful reintegration — and, hence, sustainability — as well as on indicators that can be used to measure the sustainability of return.

According to IOM's definition, reintegration can be defined as the re-inclusion or re-incorporation of a person into a group or process, for example, of a migrant into the society of his or her country of origin or habitual residence. Reintegration is thus a process that enables the returnee to participate again in the social, cultural, economic and political life of his or her country of origin.⁴

In order for successful reintegration to occur, Ruben et al.⁵ propose three elements to be considered:

- (a) opportunities to become self-sufficient,
- (b) access to social networks and
- (c) psychosocial health.

Without access to income-generating activities that allows returnees to meet their and their dependents' basic needs, it is difficult for return to become successful. There are exceptions wherein vulnerable migrants are unable to become self-sufficient, such as in the case of migrants with mental health problems; nevertheless, in these cases, alternatives guaranteeing returnees' basic needs will be covered need to be sought.

Social networks form another important element of reintegration, as these contacts can accompany returnees through the reintegration process by welcoming them back in the community, providing them with information and social capital, and assisting them in difficult situations through safety nets.⁶ These networks will also provide emotional support, which is linked to the third element — psychosocial health. Migrants' return might be accompanied by feelings of shame, loss, failure, disorientation, anxiety, insecurity and stress, which will hinder the reintegration process. Poor economic prospects and security concerns will further destabilize the psychosocial well-being of the returnee. It is also important to consider that the person returning is not the same one that left, as the migration experience would have shaped who he or she is. Psychosocial support may help the returnee to readjust and become reinserted in the society of his or her country of origin.

While reintegration projects should, therefore, aim at addressing all three elements described above, financial constraints or lack of coordination with local actors often impedes this. Psychosocial support, which should begin pre-return, often needs close follow-up, and facilitating reinsertion into social network in the country of origin will likely require previous work with family members, neighbours and community leaders. Both processes demand time and money (especially when more remote locations are concerned) and must be led primarily by the country of origin, where the migrant will return and undergo the process of reintegration.

⁴ Return Migration and Development Platform. European University Institute 2011. <http://rsc.eui.eu/RDP/glossary-2/>

⁵ Ruben, Van Houte, Davids (2009). What Determines the Embeddedness of Forces-Return Migrants? Rethinking the Role of Pre- and Post-Return Assistance. IMR Volume 43 Number 4. 2009. pp. 908-963.

⁶ Ibid.

Another indispensable component for successful reintegration is the migrant's motivation, ownership and active participation in the reintegration process. Therefore, pre-departure and post-arrival counselling, information-sharing and individually targeted support are vital. In addition, the extent of successful reintegration also depends on the migration experience itself, the amount of time spent abroad, the conditions that influenced the return decision and the situation in the country of origin, for example, the economic conditions, the political and social stability and security of the country, and the availability of social networks, as outlined above.⁷ In the case of migrants who were trafficked or subjected to exploitation by criminal actors, successful reintegration measures also need to include certain other elements, such as the mitigation of security risks. This also needs to be considered for migrants who left the country due to threats to personal security, such as gang violence. However generous reintegration assistance may be, they will not be able to reintegrate as long as violence persists.

With regard to the return decision, readiness to return and a freely taken decision support the reintegration process. Readiness is often linked to savings and/or experiences earned abroad that facilitate reintegration in the country of origin. The longer the migration period and the fewer the personal links to the home country, the more difficult the reintegration process will be and more support will be needed for it to be successful.⁸

2.1 Economic reintegration

Assistance to returnees upon their arrival in countries of origin generally consists of reception, inland transportation and reintegration assistance, as well as return monitoring and evaluation. In addition to basic post-return assistance, a variety of responses have been developed in order to ensure the appropriate delivery of reintegration assistance geared towards the

promotion of economic reintegration. Nevertheless, the existence of a stable political and socioeconomic environment is an important factor contributing to the sustainable reintegration of migrants. It is thus imperative for reintegration projects to contribute to addressing the root causes of irregular migration and to incorporate the development or reconstruction needs of communities of return, especially where return takes place in a post-conflict/stabilization environment.

Challenges to economic reintegration

Economic reintegration forms the basis for the self-sufficiency of the returnee. Feelings of belonging in the country of origin and defining a new identity depend on providing for oneself and one's family, as well as on access to housing, health care, and other services enjoyed by the wider population. IOM carried out a reintegration project in India for young women who had been forcibly prostituted and were thereafter ostracized by their communities. Through a joint project with private companies, local government and civil society, these victims of trafficking were able to develop profitable businesses. As breadwinners, they were gradually accepted back into their communities.

Despite its importance and the amount of resources devoted to facilitating economic reintegration, certain challenges recur regardless of the context in which it takes place. The skill set of the returning migrant may not be well matched to the economy in his or her home community, and, depending on his or her personal networks, he or she may not have easy pathways to enter the private sector. Moreover, depending on the amount of time spent away, economic activity in the community of return may be drastically different compared to when the migrant left it. Creating a sustainable livelihood can also be difficult as a result of structural challenges in the country of origin. Labour markets may be underdeveloped in communities of return, and economic opportunities may be low for the population as a whole, not just for returnees. Moreover, labour markets may be vulnerable to shocks.

⁷ J.P. Cassarino Jean, "The conditions of modern return migrants" (Editorial Introduction), *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 10(2):95–105. Available from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001812/181209E.pdf>.

⁸ H. Chobanyan, *Return Migration and Reintegration Issues: Armenia* (CARIM East, Fiesole, 2013). Available from <http://www.carim-east.eu/media/CARIM-East-RR-2013-03.pdf>.

For example, countries that depend heavily upon agriculture may be dramatically affected by drought or blight, drastically reducing income for many. It is not until returnees can withstand these shocks that their reintegration can be totally sustainable.⁹ Especially if return takes place in high numbers, returning migrants also risk putting a strain on the community of return and their social/family networks.

While working abroad, some migrants earn valuable remittances that contribute to the well-being of their families and communities in the country of origin. Consequently, cessation in the flow of remittances to communities that depend on them, following migrants' return from abroad, can lead to new vulnerabilities in terms of access to education, health care and housing, among others. In addition, sending countries might promote emigration as a strategy for economic growth. In this case, while departure is seen positively, return is not encouraged, which poses an additional challenge for returnees in their reintegration process. Access to existing social services often requires specific documentation or administrative steps that can block the effective reintegration of migrants if processes are delayed or difficult to achieve. In contexts where social services exist, but access for returnees is complicated or inefficient, this can mean that returnees spend months or even years waiting to receive basic services. Lastly, but not less importantly, feelings of dependency on financial support from the government in the host country can present an important challenge to return migrants' economic reintegration. As a result of tightened asylum and migration policies in many host countries, migrants often encounter conditions restricting possibilities regarding work and education, as well as their options for maintaining social relations.¹⁰ This is especially true for those placed in asylum centres and who are entirely dependent on social welfare. These conditions can have a negative impact on returnees' self-esteem and sense of agency, which reduces their chances for successful economic reintegration.

Socioeconomic reintegration assistance needs to respond to this complex situation, or at least

contribute to the mitigation of existing problems and impediments to successful reintegration. The widely differing conditions among countries of origin require creativity in programme development and flexibility among donors to allow the implementation of interventions from a country-of-origin-driven approach, with reintegration options catering to local needs. While individual interventions and support are of fundamental importance, they should be linked to broader programmes facilitating the access to credit among returnees and link individual returnees with existing national or local development or migration management plans, as these can provide opportunities for returnees to reintegrate economically.

2.2 Social reintegration

Strategies such as group reintegration projects and building returnee networks greatly contribute to the social reintegration of returnees who have little to no social network upon their return to the country of origin. Group reintegration projects not only contribute to the economic betterment of returnees and the surrounding community, but also provide a social support structure for them. Returnee networks are important because of the shared experiences of returnees, but it is also important to consider methods of integrating returnees into the wider community to prevent them from becoming too insular. Migrant resource centres that cater to migrants in destination countries, such as the "House of Rights" in Costa Rica, facilitate events and provide services, such as sociocultural activities, legal and psychological support, for the community that address common interests.¹¹

Challenges to social reintegration

Returnees are not always perceived positively by those who have never migrated. Tension can develop between local populations who persevered through poverty, conflict or crisis and populations who left in search of better living and economic conditions. Moreover, competition for social standards and roles, which may have changed during the absence

⁹ R. Black and S. Gent, "Sustainable return in post-conflict contexts," *International Migration*, 44(3):15–38. Available from http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/1732/1/Sustainable_return_in_post_conflict_contexts.pdf.

¹⁰ R. Ruben et al. (2009).

¹¹ Municipalidad de Desamparados website at www.desamparados.go.cr/index.php/2012-07-06-20-07-58.

of the returnee, can increase tensions between local populations and returnees receiving financial reintegration assistance. In addition, stakeholders involved in social reintegration – host governments, governments of countries of origin, civil society and the community of return – are diverse and may be difficult to coordinate.

Returnees must also cope with a changed support structure in their community of return. A returnee's family and social networks often change while he or she is abroad, especially over long periods of time. Therefore, returnees often need to rebuild their networks, which are important for social capital, information, safety nets and access to the job market. This is especially crucial for vulnerable migrants or migrants who have survived violence, for example, trafficking in persons.

2.3 Psychosocial reintegration

Returnees who have access to psychosocial counselling are likely to have an easier time coping with the impacts of return, both before and after the actual return. While the needs of returnees are important, the lack of funding for reintegration programmes, as well as of awareness about the importance of this specific support for returnees, has prevented the systematic implementation of psychosocial support services in many countries.

Challenges to psychosocial reintegration

Beyond the challenges generally faced by migrants in terms of adapting to their new host societies, returnees are in a unique position, as they experience these twice during their migration process: (a) upon arrival in their country of destination, where the process of re-establishing identities in relation to their host societies is often difficult, and, subsequently, (b) during the process of returning to and re-adapting to their communities of origin. Traditions, gender roles and the culture tend to be different in the host society

and, therefore, change migrants' identities in relation to these societal factors. Migrants need to cope with their new identities both in terms of how the host society views them and in terms of the resulting self-perceptions. Subsequently, when a migrant returns to his or her country of origin, this process may need to be repeated, depending on certain factors, such as the length of time spent abroad, the amount of time the migrant had initially intended to be away, the extent to which the migrant retained his or her connections to family and social networks in the country of origin, and the extent to which the migrant integrated in the host country. All these factors profoundly affect the reintegration process upon return to the country of origin. Returnees cannot simply revert to their pre-migration identities due to the skills, experiences and norms they may have acquired and adopted in the host country. Rather, returnees often try to form transnational identities, that is, "trying to combine the best of both worlds."¹² However, without fitting into the society of the host or origin country, migrants can lose their sense of belonging, which might result in serious psychological disorders,¹³ negatively affecting their livelihoods and the sustainability of their return. In addition, returning migrants may also have with them children and adolescents, who face specific challenges – specifically, those related to language and culture – in returning to countries they have never lived in or may not remember after years of living abroad.

2.4 Target groups

While reintegration projects are primarily designed for returning individual migrants and families, they can also address issues in the returnees' local community, in order to respond to the root causes of risky and/or irregular migration and to prevent returnees from being viewed as a burden instead of as people with valuable skills and talents who can contribute to local development.¹⁴ As such, this paper focuses on measures to enhance reintegration for all, rather than focusing on a specific group.

¹² R. Ruben et al. (2009).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ There may be special projects or project components depending on the migrant's situation, gender, age and vulnerabilities, such as certain health needs, being a victim of trafficking, or an unaccompanied migrant child.



Components of successful reintegration programmes

Yusriati, farms corn at the garden behind her new house. IOM has built permanent houses for many homeless and displaced people originally from the devastated Banda Aceh and Pulau Aceh Areas to make these communities sustainable and get back on its feet.
© IOM/Edy Purnomo 2006

3.1 Sustainable

Although the concept of sustainable return is largely referred to by international actors on migration, governments and civil societies as the main desired outcome of AVRR programmes, there is no common or formal definition of “sustainable return.”

The European understands sustainable return as “the absence of migration after return because the returnee is fully integrated socially and economically in the home community.”¹⁵ However, with migration being a viable choice for millions of people around the world because of the better opportunities it often creates, the notion that it is the absence of migration that defines the sustainability of return would seem narrow and impractical for a world increasingly on the move.

Furthermore, the fact that a returnee remigrates a certain time after return does not necessarily mean that the reintegration assistance and/or the external environment has not contributed to a sustainable solution for the individual. For example, if a returnee moves legally to another country to take up a job or develop an enterprise, with the help of the skills and experience facilitated by the reintegration assistance he or she received, the outcome of such an analysis will naturally link the assistance delivered to a sustainable solution for the migrant. Thus although the migrant did not stay in the country of origin, key principles of sustainability were met.¹⁶ On the other hand, the migrant may still be in the country, but not feeling integrated and perceiving his or her return and reintegration as a failure, difficult or unsuccessful. Apart from socioeconomic factors, the well-being and psychosocial stability of the individuals are of equal importance when measuring the sustainability of return.¹⁷

As such, sustainable return should be understood either as: (a) successful reintegration in the country of origin, which includes the economic, social and psychosocial aspects and the capacity of the individual to cope with push factors, both old and new, on the same level as the local population or (b) eventual legal remigration made possible by skills acquired during the reintegration process. Either way, reintegration is closely linked to the protection of migrants’ rights and the development of opportunities in the country of origin,¹⁸ particularly those that address the root causes of irregular migration. For example, return can be more sustainable when it is linked to an assistance mechanism that contributes to the creation of socioeconomic opportunities in the country of origin, or to a strategy ensuring that non-migrant local communities are not disadvantaged but rather benefit from the newly-acquired or enhanced skills and experiences of returning migrants. Sustainability is also based on the returnee’s political reintegration into society, that is, he or she is able to enjoy the same safety and rights as the wider population in the country of origin.¹⁹



¹⁵ European Commission Directorate-General for Home Affairs, Comparative Study on Best Practices to Interlink Pre-Departure Reintegration Measures Carried out in Member States with Short- and Long-Term Reintegration Measures in the Countries of Return (Matrix Insight, Brussels, 2012), p. 7. Available from http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/doc_centre/immigration/docs/studies/ECHOMEREINTEGRATION_Final-January_2012.pdf.

¹⁶ For humans, sustainability is the potential for the long-term maintenance of well-being, which has social, economic, ecological, political and cultural dimensions. (See RIO 2012 Issues Brief No. 15: “Migration and sustainable development” at <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=544&menu=35>).

¹⁷ Psychosocial stability or well-being refers to “a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.” Source: World Health Organization (WHO), Promoting Mental Health – Concepts Emerging Evidence and Practice: Summary Report (WHO, Geneva, 2004). Available from www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/en/promoting_mhh.pdf. (See also: R. Ruben, M. Van Houte and T. Davids, p. 914).

¹⁸ R. Black and S. Gent, “Defining, measuring and influencing sustainable return: The case of the Balkans,” working paper, p. 2 (Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation, and Poverty, Brighton, 2004). Available from www.migrationdrc.org/publications/working_papers/WP-T7.pdf.

¹⁹ IOM has internal policies in place to ascertain when these conditions are fulfilled and when it is not safe to conduct AVRR assistance. These have been applied, for example, in Haiti in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake and during the Libya and Syria crisis.

Based on IOM's experience, the following conditions enable a migrant to sustainably reintegrate:

- (a) Involvement and active participation of the returnee in his return and reintegration process;
- (b) A stable socioeconomic environment that provides income generation opportunities;
- (c) Mitigation of possible security risks, especially if these were the reason for migrating in the first place;
- (d) Psychosocial support to adapt to the new reality, define one's role in the community and ensure psychosocial stability;
- (e) Sufficient time for the returnee to process the migration experience through a follow-up during the first 12 months upon arrival;
- (f) Adequate skills training and financial support to empower the returnee to develop and implement a livelihood strategy;
- (g) Support for the re-establishment of social networks by involving family members, friends and the local community in the reintegration process;
- (h) Effective access to social protection schemes on the same level as the local population, including addressing the basic needs of vulnerable returnees;
- (i) A "Do no harm" approach to ensure that communities are not negatively affected by the return.

3.2 Measurable

Despite developments in monitoring and evaluation, space remains for IOM, academics and other actors involved or interested in return migration to conduct richer and more consistent evaluation of reintegration. Evaluations analysing the different aspects of reintegration should be included as an essential part of each project. This has also been requested by different groups critical on AVRR as they feel that longer term monitoring of individuals such as evaluations will allow for assessing the contribution of the reintegration assistance to a sustainable return.²⁰

Determining which factors improve returnees' well-being will continue to inform future project design to

best serve returnees. Moreover, more comparative research exercises are needed to analyse the differences in the outcomes of the reintegration process between beneficiaries who have received reintegration assistance and those who have not, as well as compare the living standard of returnees with the one of the local population. In addition, it is recommended that longer-term evaluations be carried out in order to analyse the different steps of the reintegration process and identify possible gaps in reintegration assistance. These evaluations need to reflect the full spectrum of assisted voluntary return and reintegration, including the different perceptions and contexts. As such, they should be carried out in countries of destination, origin and transit. In Libya for example, IOM commissioned the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris to evaluate the AVRR programme in order to better understand

²⁰ Myriam Cherti, Miklos Szilard. 2013. Returning irregular immigrants – How effective is the EU's response? Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR).

migration trends in Libya and to identify how to better address migration challenges in transit countries.²¹ A later study focused on the impact of direct assistance, in both the country of transit and country of origin, to identify key aspects for future AVRR projects.²² Such studies should also analyse the profiles of the migrants who have returned. As noted in the regional meeting of the Latin American Social Sciences Institute (FLACSO), IOM and the Government of Ecuador in South America in 2012, return policies must take into account the heterogeneity of returning migrants and their diverse needs.

While evaluation is an essential tool to improve practices, it is also a crucial element in identifying gaps in research. For example, there is not enough evidence on the role of the migrants themselves in ensuring the success of reintegration and sustainable return. In areas of the world such as Sri Lanka, IOM has gathered a significant number of return stories whereby the entrepreneurship of migrants and the vision and experience they bring from their stay in their host countries have been the key factors behind their success. Furthermore, migrants who return with technical expertise and social capital are much more likely to reintegrate successfully.²³ Much more information is needed on how countries of origin can better facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants through individual support, as well as community-based initiatives, such as the migrant community centres jointly implemented by IOM and the Government of Colombia. More extensive research is required in order to develop measurable indicators of successful reintegration and sustainability of return.

The role of migrants and stakeholders in countries of origin in measuring and improving sustainability

Apart from the need to define key indicators, there must be adequate understanding of migrants' perspectives for reintegration policies and programmes to be effective. Previous studies involving returned migrants have highlighted a number of methodological obstacles and sampling limitations, including returnees' reservations about participation and their unavailability for future assessments, sometimes as a result of re-emigration. The perspectives of the countries of origin (as expressed by government and non-governmental actors) are also important for better research and evaluation in this field, to ultimately identify measures to promote the sustainability of return. While most AVRR programmes have traditionally been led by destination countries, there is increasing interest and action on the part of origin countries. IOM has conducted a number of such assessments in both host countries (e.g. the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom) and countries of origin (e.g. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iraq, UNSC resolution 1244-administered Kosovo,²⁴ Mali and Niger), either as internal exercises or in conjunction with partners from government, the private sector and/or academia. These evaluations allowed the assessment of the appropriateness and effectiveness of assistance, in order to identify best practices and rectify programme flaws.²⁵ Furthermore, a study implemented by the European Migration Network in Austria entitled Programmes and Strategies in Austria Fostering Assisted Return and Re-integration in Third Countries highlights that monitoring is important in order to readapt measures to the evolving needs of returnees, as dictated by prevailing conditions.²⁶

²¹ Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po), "Evaluation of the program for the enhancement of transit and irregular migration management in Libya" (Sciences Po, Paris, 2008).

²² J. Gut et al., Regional Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) Programme for Stranded Migrants in Libya and Morocco. External evaluation (2010). Available from <http://graduateinstitute.ch/files/live/sites/iheid/files/sites/globalmigration/shared/News/RavelReport.pdf>.

²³ L. Vogiazides, "Return migration, transnationalism, and development: Social remittances of returnees from Sweden to Bosnia and Herzegovina," master's thesis submitted to the Faculty of Social Science, Stockholm University. Available from <http://su.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:529312>.

²⁴ Hereinafter referred to as Kosovo/UNSC 1244.

²⁵ IOM Iraq conducts returnee assessments (access to food, health care, water, sanitation, among others) and location assessments (infrastructure, economy, education, health services, security, commodities and institutions present) to inform project recommendation. Refer to the IOM Iraq website for more information: <http://iomiraq.net/article/monitoring-and-assessment>.

²⁶ European Migration Network (EMN), Programmes and Strategies in Austria Fostering Assisted Return to and Re-integration in Third Countries (EMN, Vienna, 2008), p. 68. Available from http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/assisted-return/01a.austria_national_report__assisted_return__reintegration_study_version_12jan11_en.pdf.

Studies may also contribute to the development of innovative project ideas, such as the MAGNET project²⁷ implemented by IOM Iraq, which was developed as a direct result of an IOM-commissioned study on economic reintegration opportunities.²⁸

Despite a number of initiatives directly involving migrants and actors in countries of origin, there is still more to be done to incentivize and support more research projects led by academics and evaluators in countries of origin. It is still a fact that most of the studies are dominated by actors in destination countries or regions such as the European Economic Area.

3.3 Balanced

There currently are significant gaps between policy and practice around the world, especially in relation to the approaches to the reintegration assistance provided under various return-related programmes, as well as the levels of financial assistance provided to migrants.

While reintegration assistance may include in-kind or cash assistance for setting up businesses, vocational training, housing, medical treatment, including drugs, job placement, education, day care and psychosocial support, among others, depending on the specific needs of the migrant, there are important differences among reintegration projects concerning the kind of assistance and amounts offered. Some projects only provide support for setting up businesses, while others offer more comprehensive assistance packages that also include psychosocial support. Amounts range from USD 569 to USD 8,845 per person and may be provided in kind and/or cash, depending on the project. Some projects give every migrant the same amount, while others are requested by donors to differentiate amounts according to whether the beneficiaries are adults or children, and individual or families, and/or depending on their level of vulnerability.

Experience also shows that in-kind assistance, complemented by moderate amounts of monetary assistance to address immediate needs after arrival, may better support the reintegration process than cash support. Large cash grants can put the returnee at risk of being robbed or extorted, create tremendous pressure on the returning migrant to share the money with extended family members and may cause recipients to invest in projects that do not contribute to sustainable re-establishment. In addition, in-kind assistance may facilitate closer monitoring of the returnee's reintegration process through individual counselling on expenditures.

Migrants' needs differ, the situations of countries are different, and personal circumstances can lead to different reintegration experiences and outcomes for beneficiaries. Furthermore, differences in assistance provided can be explained by a number of factors, such as the reluctance by donors to include longer-term reintegration assistance, insufficient time given to migrants for return preparations in light of restrictive migration policies, and socioeconomic conditions in countries of origin, such as cost of living, inflation and exchange rates. Also, return flows and the security situation in the country of origin can affect the type of reintegration assistance that may be provided, as well as its resulting impact. While IOM advocates for in-kind assistance, dispersed return to remote locations and unstable security conditions for IOM staff might require the delivery of assistance in cash.

It is crucial for IOM that an approach to individualized assistance be balanced with the implementation of group- or community-based approaches in the country of origin, so that all the key factors affecting reintegration are addressed and long-term solutions have a positive impact on the community as well.

²⁷ For further information, see www.magnet-project.eu/home and <http://magnet.iomiraq.net>.

²⁸ Altai Consulting, "Reintegration of returnees in Iraq: Local economy absorption capacity, scalability of IOM programs and potential local partners – a study in seven governorates" (IOM, Geneva, 2010).

3.3.1 One size fits all? Tailoring reintegration assistance to the individual

Measures to encourage the reintegration of returnees have included tailored strategies adequately matching reintegration assistance to the needs and interests of migrants. Identifying these needs and interests through return counselling and socioeconomic profiling of potential returnees in the host country allow IOM's AVRR programmes to incorporate a degree of flexibility in the assistance offered in order to enhance the commitment of returnees to the reintegration process and increase the sustainability of return. As far as possible and where economically feasible, programmes allow the returnee to decide on the reintegration option to opt for, based on his or her needs and preferences.

Most projects also allow for the possibility to adapt the reintegration assistance after the arrival of the returnee in his or her country of origin, following an in-depth assessment that considers the local conditions and the returnee's personal capacities and interests, in order to facilitate a sustainable livelihood. Active participation of the returnee throughout the whole reintegration process is important in ensuring his or her long-term commitment. IOM internal analysis has also identified the need to recognize that while the development of a reintegration plan usually begins in the country of destination, it is in collaboration with actors in the country of origin that final decisions regarding reintegration must be made and implemented. Again, these programmes are undergoing an important and fundamental shift in terms of the role of the origin country. Active engagement of the origin country is of increasing importance, especially regarding local development, complementary reintegration measures and combating irregular and unsafe (re)migration. This implies significant changes in how these programmes are designed and implemented.

Studies by IOM Austria²⁹ and the European Commission³⁰ suggest that in-kind assistance should be tailored to

individual returnees. As returnees return to different economic/social contexts in their respective countries of origin and with a broad range of preferences/skills, tailoring reintegration packages and considering the cost of living in the country of origin becomes very important. While these tailor-made projects strongly enhance the reintegration prospects of each returnee, at the same time they might not represent the most cost-effective approach.

According to a European Commission (EC) study,³¹ returnees benefit from having a choice in how much of the assistance is devoted to certain elements of the return package (business set-up, vocational training, education, housing, medical expenses, and so on), suggesting however that programmes should dictate that returnees devote at least a portion for income- or skill-generating activities. The EC study additionally recommends that reintegration assistance should be provided beyond 12 months because it could take longer to create a livelihood capable of supporting the returnee and his or her family.³² IOM strongly agrees with this recommendation, stressing that for unaccompanied migrant children, assistance has to be provided at least until they turn 18.

Individualized reintegration assistance should be placed within a context of wider community development to ensure greater sustainability. Considering the needs and concerns of communities of origin can help address the push factors of irregular migration; prevent conflict and resentment stemming from perceived disadvantages for local populations that the assistance brings; and support the welcoming of returnees, thus improving reinsertion outcomes.

3.3.2 Support to local development through individualized assistance

A number of AVRR programmes to countries of origin, such as Afghanistan, Ghana, Kosovo/UNSC 1244 and Sri Lanka, have proven successful, as they have been based on an integrated approach to return.

²⁹ EMN (2008), p. 73.

³⁰ European Commission (2012).

³¹ European Commission (2012), p. 55.

³² European Commission (2012), p. 61.

The individualized assistance given to returnees led to increased job opportunities for local residents. The case of Kosovo/UNSC 1244 illustrates this point well: Throughout the duration of IOM Austria's AVRR programme to Kosovo/UNSC 1244,³³ 95 per cent of assisted returnees established a formal or informal business in their places of origin. Other reintegration measures chosen by beneficiaries were employment subsidies for up to six months and provision of temporary accommodation given on top of the grant for business startups in around 7 per cent of cases. In an external evaluation of the IOM's programme, 74 per cent of all interviewed returnees indicated that they believed to have contributed to the development of their respective communities, specifically by employing family members and members of the extended local community. The evaluation also showed that businesses established through the AVRR programme created 2.75 workplaces per returnee on average. Also, while most employees belonged to the returnees' families, 23 per cent of the returnees also employed other community members. This is a direct indicator of the impact of an AVRR programme on the socioeconomic environment in Kosovo/UNSC 1244, specifically on local economic development. Of the total number of businesses that have managed to increase the number of their employees, 22 per cent of them are owned by Kosovar minorities. The evaluation revealed further that the project has created around 695 jobs within the last three years. The number itself may look small, but given the socioeconomic environment of Kosovo/UNSC 1244, where unemployment is around 40 per cent and is one of the major challenges facing the country's economy, the project seems to have had a positive impact on overall economic development.³⁴ In addition, around 13 per cent of beneficiaries have declared that they are engaged in business partnerships where activities are complementary to one another. This is another indication of the project's positive impact on local economic development.

3.3.3 Supporting local development through assistance to groups and networks of returnees

Approaches that build upon returnee networks can be crucial in facilitating the social reintegration of returnees who do not have much social capital upon return. Not only is this type of initiative relevant to economic integration (as it facilitates sharing of experiences and cooperative spirit), it also provides the platform for social support among returnees and local populations. This has been proven key for returnees engaging in specific economic sectors such as fishing or agriculture, and also very important in ensuring a social protection network of community services for unaccompanied migrant children returning to their families.³⁵ Subsequently, creating opportunities in the local community can have a positive impact in preventing migrants from migrating irregularly in the future and being exposed to the risks associated with it.

In Ghana, following recommendations of a market assessment, IOM assisted Ghanaians in forming a cooperative union and provided migrants with training to start producing sunflowers, which would later be brought to local markets to be sold for their oil and biodiesel products.³⁶ These activities not only benefitted returnees, but also their families and communities of return by increasing employment opportunities, living standards and, as a result, well-being. Through this inclusive approach, IOM provided assistance tailored not only to cater to the needs of the returnees themselves (e.g. by providing them with the means for effective socioeconomic reintegration in the country of origin) but also addressed the needs of local communities, thus addressing the risk of irregular migration more broadly. These integrated schemes also reduce the burden placed on communities of return that may need to support returned migrants and lose the benefit of remittances from abroad.

³³ For more information on the programme, visit IOM Vienna's website: www.iomvienna.at/en/return-and-reintegration-assistance-voluntary-returnees-kosovo.

³⁴ Riinvest Institute, *Improving the Kosovo Serbian Business Community Involvement in Economic Activities in Kosovo* (Riinvest Institute, Prishtina, 2012). Available from www.riinvestinstitute.org/publikimet/pdf/imp-eng_en.pdf.

³⁵ Based on experience by IOM El Salvador in developing life plans for unaccompanied migrant children by retaining the child in the family circle while developing life plans with the child and ensuring a network of community services such as health, education, and so on.

³⁶ IOM, *From seeds to oil: Community development and sunflower production*, IOM Ghana Newsletter, June 2010, p. 2. Available from http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/countries/docs/IOM_GHANA_NEWSLETTER.pdf.

External research echoes the effectiveness of models like the Ghana sunflower model. The EC study and the reintegration evaluation of the UK Department for International Development recommend providing group reintegration on common projects, such as small farms³⁷ like those in Ghana. The research states that initiating collaborative ventures will prevent duplication and misuse of funds.³⁸ Projects are developed as partnerships not only between returnees, but also between returnees and local populations in the country of origin. Similar to the case in Ghana, IOM's reintegration assistance to Georgian returnees equally focusses on the needs of unemployed Georgian non-migrants. Returnees are assisted within the context of a larger project that aims to improve economic opportunities for local communities. Initially established to assist internally displaced persons, a specific component focusing on returnees was added. The project established a network of job counselling and placement centres that provide job counselling, referral outreach to employers, vocational training and microfinance opportunities.³⁹

3.3.4 Tailored assistance for vulnerable migrants

For the majority of migrants, the concept of reintegration can be complex, and some time is usually needed for an individual or family to decide and plan for their return back home. The pre-return stage can be used as an opportunity to foment the empowerment of returnees, which will increase the likelihood of sustainable return. It is therefore crucial for return counselling to be comprehensive and for vulnerable groups, including victims of trafficking, unaccompanied migrant children, and migrants with health-related needs to be given special attention. Projects assisting these types of migrants usually need to have stronger emphasis on security concerns and other risks related to migrants' specific vulnerabilities, legal assistance, psychosocial counselling and alternative solutions tailored to the needs of migrants both before and after the return.

It is imperative that the security concerns of victims of trafficking are addressed to ensure their sustainable return. The trauma suffered during the trafficking experience often has a profound negative impact on the trafficked person. The presence of continued threat posed by individual traffickers, criminal groups and others, as well as the high risk of discrimination and stigmatization, requires that trafficked migrants be given special consideration. Ideally, these individuals should be offered at least temporary residence status in host countries, without any corresponding obligation to assist with the investigation or prosecution of their cases, in order to prevent them from returning to the environment in which they were trafficked in the first place. When offered or provided with any direct assistance, including assisted voluntary return and reintegration, everything needs to be done to avoid compounding the harm suffered. For this reason, a risk assessment has to be conducted prior to return, in coordination with counter-trafficking actors in the country of origin, to evaluate security vulnerabilities affecting the safe voluntary return and reintegration of trafficked migrants to their respective countries of return. IOM has developed procedural guidelines that include appropriate security safeguards which have been developed with the intention to help return counsellors to determine the feasibility of assistance by the Organization, under its AVRR programme, and to guarantee the highest possible degree of safety for a return. Back in the country of origin, returning victims of trafficking should be integrated into local protection and assistance programmes with sustained monitoring (e.g. minimum of six months), which is often beneficial in ensuring a smooth reintegration process while addressing protection needs.

Unaccompanied migrant children require assistance tailored to their specific needs. In addition to issues of legal guardianship, unaccompanied migrant children require assistance until they reach 18 years of age. A minimum of 18 months of socioeconomic assistance should be provided to ensure that the minor will not become vulnerable and potentially face the risks of irregular remigration, exploitation and possible abuse.

³⁷ European Commission (2012), p. 62.

³⁸ Altai Consulting, Understanding the Return and Reintegration Process of Afghan Returnees from the UK (2009). Available from <http://www.altaiconsulting.com/docs/migration/Altai%202009%20Return%20and%20Reintegration%20of%20Afghans.pdf>, p. 31.

³⁹ IOM, Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Annual Report of Activities 2011. Available from http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/AVRRreport2011FINAL_25Aug12.pdf.

Before return, a best interest determination⁴⁰ process is required, as it helps assess the feasibility of return and likelihood of sustainable reintegration through family tracing and family assessments. Access to coordinated response by social services that address identified risks is paramount for their successful reintegration. IOM is increasingly assisting older unaccompanied migrant children (e.g. those who are 16 or 17 years of age) through vocational training or apprenticeships programmes adequate to their age, as well as through psychosocial assistance which addresses the transition to adulthood, leading to their self-sufficiency.

Equal attention needs to be paid to migrants with health-related needs which require specific standards and procedures to be put in place within AVRR programmes. In the context of assisted voluntary return and reintegration, health-related needs refer to a disease or disability of the beneficiary which can have an impact on the standard implementation of the project, either at the pre-departure stage (for matters of eligibility, e.g. the beneficiary's capacity to make a competent decision, the availability of necessary life-saving health support in the country of origin, etc., or in relation to transportability, e.g. fitness to travel, special travel requirements, need for a medical/nurse escort, etc.), or post-arrival (e.g. continuity of care, physical rehabilitation, etc.). In fact, assistance might be declined to a migrant willing to return home precisely because the examining doctor does not declare him/her fit to travel.

Sustainability of return for migrants with severe health-related needs refers to their and their family's ability to access affordable medical services and medical treatment on a permanent basis in the country of origin. Very often, however, the provision of these

services should go beyond a project's lifespan. Thus, referral to existing health and social services in the country of return is essential.

In all cases involving migrants with special needs, the individual's informed decision and consent⁴¹ is even more important than in normal AVRR cases, particularly if the migrant wishes to proceed with the return despite recognized grounds for the inappropriateness or inadvisability of the return, according to IOM's criteria.⁴² Informed consent can be ensured through individual pre-departure counselling providing realistic and up-to-date information about the situation in the migrants' country of origin. IOM Missions provide detailed information to migrants and return counsellors about the conditions for medical treatment in countries of origin, as well as detailed answers to particular questions that migrants may have, such as the availability or prices of certain medicines and treatment. In the cases of migrants suffering from mental health problems, the voluntariness and informed consent requirements inherent to IOM's AVRR programmes are of even greater importance, considering that their ability to make a competent decision⁴³ may be limited. Before agreeing to extend voluntary return and reintegration assistance to an individual, IOM therefore requests clear and authoritative assurance from a physician stating in writing that the person in question is fit to make his or her own decisions and providing recommendations concerning the return travel.

For all categories described above, the element of self-sufficiency is often a complex one that requires flexibility and creativity by the migrants and all stakeholders involved in the assistance, as they require sensitivity to the individual case.

⁴⁰ A best interest determination (BID), as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, should consider certain factors such as, but by no means limited to: "the safety, security and other conditions, including socio-economic conditions, awaiting the child upon return; the availability of care arrangements; the views of the child; the child's level of integration in the host country and the duration of absence from the home country. The BID also requires a clear and comprehensive assessment of the child's identity, including her or his nationality, upbringing, ethnic, cultural and linguistic background, particular vulnerabilities and protection needs. The physical, psychological, social well-being of the child must be ensured throughout the return and reintegration process."

⁴¹ The informed consent must be based on free will, the capacity to make a competent decision, and a full awareness and understanding of the facts, implications and potential future consequences. The consent form should include a disclaimer of IOM's responsibility; it is recommended that an informed consent form only be signed by the applicant following proper counselling (IOM AVRR Report 2011, p. 77).

⁴² For example, in cases where the applicant is severely ill and knowingly faces the lack of availability of needed care after the return, but is still willing to return to the country of origin.

⁴³ Competent decision refers to the possession of sufficient mental capacities to understand and make a reasonable decision in relation to a problem, and to understand and appreciate the potential consequences of that decision. In cases of incapacitated individuals, informed consent is usually required from the State authority or other legal guardians, though the willingness to return in such cases might be questionable (IOM AVRR Report 2011, p. 77).

3.4 Complementary

Reintegration projects should be linked to existing structures and schemes, be it institutional frameworks, programmes run by the State or local development initiatives, including those by the private sector, as these enhance reintegration prospects. On the one hand, this allows for more options to be presented to returnees, thus giving them more flexibility to decide how to reshape their lives; on the other hand, complementing reintegration activities with existing programmes on the ground may help addressing AVRR programme/project gaps. This is especially relevant for returnees in need of longer-term assistance, for example, unaccompanied migrant children, migrants with health related needs, and victims of trafficking, violence, exploitation, torture, and other abuses. This can also be vital for the reintegration process of migrants returning to more remote areas where regular monitoring might be difficult to arrange. Community projects might thus support their social reinsertion.

3.4.1 Local development initiatives

Local development initiatives are based on the needs of the local community and will as such address at least some of the needs of returnees. Linking reintegration projects to these development initiatives will thus enhance their effectiveness and at the same time avoid duplication of activities. Parallel structures are not only more expensive, they can also endanger the success of a project when they compete for the same resources.

Cooperation with local actors, whether developmental, humanitarian, social or financial, during the design phase of the reintegration project helps ensure that the project responds to the needs on the ground and that different activities are feasible and efficient.

Doing no harm is one of the principles of development cooperation. By connecting reintegration projects to existing local development initiatives, the risk of one group being favored over others – thereby creating conflict between the local community and the returnees – will be reduced.⁴⁴

Including returnees in local development initiatives may also contribute to their psychosocial reintegration, as they are able to take part in projects and work with the local community, and, as such, create or re-establish social networks in the process. In addition, it can prevent resentment and discrimination against returnees through regular exchange and a joint engagement in improving living standards for the whole community.

3.4.2 State-based national or regional programmes

In many developing and recently industrialized countries, measures have been set up in order to decrease the vulnerability of the local population and to support their livelihoods. Some of these States, particularly those in Latin American, have also set up national policies to reintegrate their returning nationals, for example, micro-credit schemes and employment and social services for the most vulnerable returning migrants. Ministries of labour often offer vocational training courses, support the search for employment, manage job placement programmes, provide access to micro-credit and counsel on opening a business.⁴⁵ Ministries of social security in various countries have created social protection schemes designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability among the local population through measures such as financial support, public health care, pension systems and housing.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ It needs to be ensured, however, that the local development initiative meets certain standards of transparency, equal opportunity and access to resources.

⁴⁵ In Argentina, for example, the Ministry of Labour, Work and Social Security carries out an employment programme that provides orientation about the job market, vocational training, support in opening a microbusiness and financial incentives for education and training to vulnerable population groups, including refugees (visit the ministry website for more information: www.trabajo.gov.ar/segurocapacitacion). In Mexico, the Government has created a programme to certify skills and knowledge acquired abroad through migrant's job experience. The diplomas issued have been very useful when applying for jobs in the country of return (visit the Conocer website for more information: www.conocer.gob.mx).

⁴⁶ In Uruguay, the Ministry of Housing, Territorial Organization and Environment (www.mvotma.gub.uy/tu-vivienda.html) provides access to housing to vulnerable groups, while the Ministry of Social Development (MIDES) facilitates the reinclusion of vulnerable individuals and families into society. This is realized through a combination of financial support and activities to promote income generation (visit the MIDES website for more information: www.mides.gub.uy/innovaportal/v/14335/3/innova.front/inclusion_sociolaboral).

When developing a reintegration scheme, it is important to know about any existing programmes by governments, civil society and international NGOs, as well as the statuses of these programmes, in order to identify possible relevant synergies with them. Returnees might have access to such programmes, and this should be reflected in the project.⁴⁷ As there might be barriers to accessing these programmes (for example, residency period in the area), the reintegration project should include advocacy activities to facilitate access. Ideally, reintegration projects should be developed with the relevant actors in the country of origin, to ensure that there will be no access barriers.

When considering programmes run by the State for mid- and long-term assistance to returnees, it is important to analyse if these programmes are likely to continue. Sometimes they are completely financed by development agencies and, thus, might discontinue once the funding phases out. Thus, it is important to raise the issue of sustainability with local actors before relying on State-based programmes for reintegration assistance.

3.4.3 Institutional frameworks

Besides general social protection schemes set up for the whole population, there might also be interest by the State in supporting its returning nationals. Some States have returnee offices⁴⁸ which provide assistance to this segment of the population. It might also be useful to study the legal framework in order to identify laws and regulations that may act as gaps that could hinder the successful reintegration of returnees and vulnerable groups in general if not addressed through the reintegration project (for example, limitations for women to obtain land or own a business).

3.5 Innovative

Since the inception of assisted voluntary return and reintegration, reintegration assistance has enjoyed considerable evolution, both in terms of improvement and innovation, from basic pocket money handed to the returnee at the destination country, to something that follows a more inclusive and phased approach that includes pre-departure counselling, as well as in-kind funding for the purchase of equipment for an income-generating activity in the country of origin. Innovation in reintegration assistance does not consist merely of the adoption of new schemes, but also of having more comprehensive and durable solutions at hand for migrants, with the type of solution depending on the target group and the situation in the country of return, as certain models may or may not work. Innovation nowadays is also about working with partners, particularly those having specific expertise on migrants and outreach capacity in destination countries, as well as presence and the ability to deliver sustainable options to returnees in countries of origin.

Stabilization and revitalization of vulnerable communities and those with a high number of internally displaced persons and returnees to Iraq

To address the challenge of unemployment and lack of income, IOM is promoting the creation of micro- or small business, as well as the development of skills, through the Community Revitalization Programme. Business management training is also provided to enable the beneficiaries to develop and run their small businesses. In addition, IOM provides in-kind grant (IKG) packages as startup capital. The catalogue of standard IKG packages is organized according to business category and type of business. It will be updated after the end of the project according to a “lessons learned” process. However, some changes in the items can occur during the implementation period of the Community Revitalization Programme due to changes in the prices and availability of items in the market.

⁴⁷ It needs to be ensured, however, that this access is effective. Otherwise, alternatives should be sought.

⁴⁸ For example, Brazil (www.brasil.gov.br/governo/2010/12/brasileiros-retornados-do-exterior-terao-nucleo-de-apoio-em-sao-paulo), Colombia (www.redescolumbia.org/content/c%C3%B3mo-aplicar-a-la-l%C3%ADnea-de-cr%C3%A9dito-para-migrantes-retornados), El Salvador (www.migracion.gob.sv/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=90&Itemid=113) and Peru (www.sunat.gob.pe/orientacionaduanera/incentivosmigratorios).

3.5.1 Partnership with the country of origin

It is recommended that responsibility or co-responsibility of receiving countries for creating reintegration policies be promoted in order to facilitate successful long-term reintegration. Partnerships with countries of origin⁴⁹ also help to better target reintegration assistance and link it to

existing programmes and schemes in the country of origin. Some governments provide loans or have established matching funds (for example, public grants that match private entrepreneurs' financial or in-kind contributions). Governments might also help migrants to come back with assets, such as pension schemes, that they have generated/accumulated in host countries.

Ecuador's Fondo Concursable "El Cucayo"⁵⁰

The Fondo Concursable "El Cucayo" is a competitive matching fund programme implemented by the National Secretariat for Migration of Ecuador (Secretaría Nacional del Migrante, SENAMI). The fund supports Ecuadorian migrant-led business creation or expansion in various economic sectors such as tourism, manufacturing, fishing, forestry, animal husbandry, education, construction, and personal, social and community services.

The call for business proposals is open to Ecuadorian citizens who have the capital or assets to implement their business idea, who have stayed abroad for at least one year or not have spent more than 60 days in Ecuador during their last stay abroad, or who have returned to Ecuador since 2007 and do not face any legal issues that would impede eligibility for the programme. Business ideas can be submitted electronically through a dedicated website. Entrepreneurs whose business ideas are selected benefit from direct mentoring, including technical advice, training and referrals to public banking institutions for accessing lines of credit. The fund offers the following financing options:

- (a) 50–50 arrangement (the entrepreneur and SENAMI each contribute 50 per cent to the project; the project cost should be USD 50,000 maximum for collective business projects, or USD 2,500 for individual/family businesses);
- (b) 25–75 per cent arrangement (the entrepreneur finances 75 per cent of the project and SENAMI, 25 per cent; project cost is fixed at USD 15,000 for individual/family businesses and USD 50,000 for associative business projects involving at least five individuals, at least two of whom are migrants).

⁴⁹ Please refer to 3.4.2 ("State-based national or regional programmes") for more details.

⁵⁰ IOM, *International Migration and Development, training modules* (IOM, Geneva, 2013), p. 384.

3.5.2 Partnerships with the private sector

As a partner, the private sector is increasingly playing an important role in reintegration, especially when there is a large group of migrants returning to a specific country or a specific city/region within a country. This approach should not be limited to large companies, but should also include micro, small and medium enterprises. The private sector has a significant and valuable role to play in realizing the positive benefits of migration and in minimizing its costs. While the management of cross-border population flow is an intrinsic feature of State sovereignty, many aspects of migration are also of interest to other stakeholders. The multidimensional nature of migration makes the involvement of the private sector an essential component of a coherent and comprehensive approach. Some practices are outlined further in this chapter.

It becomes increasingly important to forge partnerships with private sector actors that focus on reintegration, with full respect for each other's resources, expertise, knowledge and skills. Successful partnerships can involve information exchanges on best practices, in-kind support and direct financial support for projects. Agreed goals and processes for monitoring, evaluating and publicizing partnerships are important elements of such partnerships.

Becoming self-sufficient is a central objective of returnees, especially if their motivation for migrating in the first place was generating a higher income. While there are returnees who are unable to work due to their age or because they have certain medical conditions, most will try to become financially independent as soon as possible in order not to become a burden to their family, friends and community.

As the private sector is usually an important employment provider, partnerships may help returnees obtain work. Although bigger companies, in particular, have a corporate social responsibility strategy and might work in the area of anti-discrimination or employment of vulnerable groups, they will not hire just any returnee in order to fulfill their CSR strategy. Thus, it is very important to have a match between the requirements of the post and the capacities or skills set of the returnee.

A good example is the MAGNET project in Iraq, which was implemented by IOM with the support of the Bureau of Migration and Displacement and in coordination with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Kurdistan regional government. The project aimed to enhance the job placement process for beneficiaries of AVRR programmes in Austria, Belgium, France and the Netherlands, fostering long-term socioeconomic reintegration of Iraqi voluntary returnees by linking them with potential employers in the Kurdistan region of Iraq and vice versa.

If a returnee does not have the capacity to obtain employment directly, there are different schemes aiming at generating employment that could be of interest for both the company and the reintegration project:

- Using reintegration assistance to pay a portion of the returnee's salary when the company agrees to contract him or her for a specific period of time – which is especially relevant when the person has the basic skills but has not worked in this area for an extended period of time;
- Paid internships offered for returning migrants without much working experience;
- On-the-job training with a lower wage during the first months.

Cash for work might be an ideal option for more vulnerable returnees. Persons who do not possess the necessary skills to find a job or participate in the measures mentioned above (usually because they have never worked in the formal sector and have a very low level of formal education) may work for a company for a specified period of time while receiving the salary by the reintegration project. The aim is to train the returnee and provide access to regular employment, so that he would be able to find a regular employment on the medium term.

Partnerships with private foundations often constitute meaningful complementary support to broader reintegration projects. The Western Union Foundation supported a rehabilitation programme for victims of trafficking in Ukraine by publishing awareness brochures, funding medical assistance, legal and transportation costs for beneficiaries, as well as

vocational training. Furthermore, the foundation provided professional expertise in reviewing business plans developed by the beneficiaries.

Another interesting area to explore, especially when assisted voluntary return and reintegration is linked to local development initiatives or to a country's national development plan, are public-private partnerships, where joint projects can be carried out in order to create employment and to respond to the company's needs (for example, in the area of training, production of preliminary products or garbage collection).

3.5.3 Working with the diaspora

Knowledge of the return context and of the profiles of returnees is crucial in order to develop a reintegration project aimed at sustainable return. Working with the diaspora can help to obtain this information and to thus tailor the projects to the needs on the ground. This is of particular relevance when offering reintegration assistance to migrants returning without IOM assistance. In this case, the diaspora might be the only source of reliable information on the capacities of the returning migrants, their experiences and communities of return, which would help develop a comprehensive reintegration project. The diaspora may also help to build trust and obtain access to migrants, in order to better address their concerns regarding possible voluntary return to their country or origin. In addition, the migrant's active participation from the very beginning will enhance reintegration prospects.

3.5.4 Joint projects with other development actors

Joint projects with other development actors help avoid duplication of activities, respond better to the needs of the different target populations and follow a more comprehensive approach. Information-sharing is useful to better tailor projects to the needs on the ground. For areas where the numbers of returnees is low, cooperation with other actors may also be more cost-effective.⁵¹

Many governments, especially those of receiving countries, have implemented cooperation mechanisms with local actors, including migrants. These cooperation initiatives between policymakers and local actors frequently involve pilot projects, combined with access to funding schemes, capacity-building, networking and knowledge-sharing, decentralized cooperation (for example, twinning cities and co-development projects) and consultations with local actors. Pilot projects enable testing of ideas for a limited period of time and with a limited budget. Many migrant-led pilot projects have benefitted from capacity-building and networking opportunities offered by policymakers. Because these projects tend to generate expectations, the interruption of funding and support may lead to frustration.

Sending countries might be interested in linking their reintegration projects to local development in the country of origin. Switzerland, for example, promotes AVRR projects in the framework of the interdepartmental programme "Migration Partnership" through a whole-of-government approach. For receiving countries of special interest, such as the Western Balkans, the Swiss Government has created the Interdepartmental Steering Group on Return Assistance to link return assistance with structural aid. Structural aid is financed by the Federal Office for Migration and implemented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, as well as by Swiss relief organizations.



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⁵¹ See also 4.1.1 ("Local development initiatives").

Burkina Faso's Fonds d'Appui à la Formation Professionnelle et à l'Apprentissage (FAFPA) is an institution dedicated to offering training and other services to address the educational needs of different target groups, including small- and medium-sized enterprises, informal professional organizations, training institutions, job seekers and entrepreneurs and cooperatives. Its partners are the Ministry of Youth and Employment, the Ministry of the Economy and Finance, and agencies for development cooperation of Austria and Switzerland.

The FAFPA finances individual or collective professional training courses that increase trainees' employment opportunities. It can finance up to 75 per cent of the costs of approved training projects and 25 per cent of approved investments dedicated to the acquisition of educational equipment. The FAFPA also identifies professional training needs and supports formal and informal enterprises to elaborate training plans and projects (including business training plans, collective and inter-enterprise training projects, projects relating to the acquisition of pedagogical equipment, and others).⁵²

Micro-finance institutions

The most common form of investment available to migrants is micro- and small-scale entrepreneurship. Small-scale businesses in general, and micro-businesses in particular, are usually initiated by entrepreneurs out of the necessity to generate income. Entrepreneurs are self-employed by default, and their businesses concentrate in petty trade or personal services. These businesses have little capacity to create jobs outside their families or generate large profits. Other businesses are set up using migrants' own resources and networks abroad. These international activities and networks of lower profile migrant entrepreneurs should be further supported through sound development policies providing them with access to credit and training.

Many migrants who set up small-scale businesses rely on microcredit, often managed by microfinance institutions (MFIs) and/or non-governmental and civil society organizations. This is normally owing to the fact that conventional financial institutions are not willing to or cannot meet the financial needs of certain populations. Most bank and non-bank financial institutions perceive migrant-led investment as risky, insofar as the entrepreneur is abroad, and this poses challenges in terms of the effective management of the enterprises.

MFIs, however, face challenges themselves. In many countries, MFIs do not have full banking licenses. Some MFIs partner with banks and/or money transfer operators to offer remittance products (namely, cash payments). As such, MFIs in countries of origin usually have little capacity to address the financial needs of migrants other than paying remittances and making microcredit available. While MFIs are usually "physically" and "culturally" close to the populations they serve and serve clients whose needs are unmet by conventional financial institutions, some MFIs struggle to reconcile their social objectives with the need to ensure their own sustainability. For example, some MFIs borrow from larger institutions at high interest rates, which they sometimes pass on to their clients. It is also worth mentioning that MFIs have, in general, limited capacity to finance other kinds of investment than small businesses. Nevertheless, MFIs offer small credit and sometimes help people to organize themselves in self-help groups and usually apply flexible guarantee requirements and payment schedules to borrowers; in addition, they often have simplified administrative procedures. Many MFIs also provide their clients with non-financial services such as financial literacy or training to increase their knowledge about business and cooperative management. Besides offering financial education, MFIs must protect small entrepreneurs against risk (such as accidents, invalidity, natural disasters and loss of livelihood) to ensure the sustainability of small businesses and entrepreneurs' repayment capacity. As far as micro- and small entrepreneurship are concerned, migrants often invest in individual businesses with direct participation; collective investments/businesses

⁵² IOM (2013), p. 383.

(such as rural cooperatives); or investment without direct participation, for which remittances are used as collateral or to repay microcredit (such as microcredit granted to migrants' relatives).⁵³

Although to date no formal partnership with an MFI has been established within the context of assisted voluntary return and reintegration or post-arrival and reintegration assistance, it is worth mentioning two independent initiatives which could expand opportunities for returnees: Kiva⁵⁴, which has a global outreach, and Narwi⁵⁵, specifically for the Arab world, can represent a complementary funding source for reintegration projects.

It is crucial, however, to state that microcredit is not a solution for all returnees interested in opening their own businesses. On the one hand, MFIs need to ensure their own economic viability and, as such, they normally are not willing to offer credit to a migrant without any guarantees, or if the migrant lacks knowledge of the local market and demonstrated capacities in the proposed business area. On the other hand, not everybody has the skills to run a business or should obtain credit. Prior training and follow-up during the first year is essential in order for the business to be successful and may help enhance the returnee's capacity to be self-employed (especially regarding business-administration). Nevertheless, if a returnee cannot meet his or her basic needs, a debt would imply an additional burden instead of serving as a means to support self-sufficiency. Thus, financial assistance, combined with capacity-building and a small grant to start a business, would be a better choice in this case. Microcredit may be the adequate instrument once the business is running and generating first profits, as it can help increase profits and contribute to long-term stability. Additionally, there are other instruments for strengthening returnees' sustainable livelihoods, such as job placement and vocational training, which should be considered as well when analysing the returnees' capacities and needs.

Decentralized cooperation/partnership among territories

The idea behind decentralized cooperation/partnership among territories is to establish cooperation structures among local actors in different contexts to learn from and help one another. This usually entails the establishment of partnerships among local authorities and other local actors, with a view to improving governance or addressing local development issues. Not every form of decentralized cooperation/partnership among territories includes or requires a migration component, but when it does consider migration, it is necessary to reflect the entire migratory space in co-development projects and envisage their effects both here and there. Decentralized cooperation has the power to activate processes of common interest and to enable exploration of synergies towards co-development. It is based on the idea of a common destiny, mutual learning, mutual accountability and the empowerment of the participating actors.

Consultations

These exercises generally advise or inform policymakers and development organizations about specific matters that may or may not relate to migration and development. Consultations may be informal (for example, limited to a number of personal contacts of policymakers), or more formal and systematic (for example, through the establishment of steering or advisory committees or councils with a specific mandate).

⁵³ IOM (2013), pp. 385–386.

⁵⁴ www.kiva.org

⁵⁵ www.narwi.org

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) holds annual consultations with diaspora individuals and associations. These consultations support policy formulation regarding domestic issues (such as integration), promote migrants' participation in their countries of origin and ensure that their voice is heard in international events such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

The United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) country offices are encouraged to consult diaspora groups when formulating DFID national assistance plans. Also, the United Kingdom supports the Senior Executive Service scheme, which draws members from the diaspora to fill high-level positions in public institutions in post-conflict contexts.⁵⁶

3.5.5 Participative approach for project development

Reintegration projects need to be tailored to the capacities and interests of the individual returnee in order to be successful. Otherwise, returnees might lose their interest in pursuing their reintegration plan or, even when interested, might not be able to implement it due to the lack of capacity (for example, in business administration). Additionally, reintegration projects might fail due to the lack of knowledge of local conditions, insofar as these projects are not relevant or impossible to implement in the area where the returnee is re-establishing himself. This may be the case, for example, if the programme foresees vocational training but there are no options available because the returnee lives in a remote area.

A participative approach may solve these challenges. When migrants and local governments participate in the project design, they are likely to initiate project ideas based on their interests and capacities, and

local governments in the country of origin could provide guidance to find suitable projects for the region in order for the returnees to contribute to local development. In addition, a participative approach to project design can help in empowering the returnees and in developing a sense of ownership among them and the local government.

3.5.6 Creating virtual networks: Taking advantage of technology linking migrant communities and countries of origin

Based on past successes, a 2012 European Commission study recommends using an online platform for potential returnees to receive information from the country of origin.⁵⁷ The IRRiCO⁵⁸ project has done much to provide potential returnees with crucial information about conditions and prospects in their respective countries of origin.⁵⁹ IRRiCO's website provides information on return and reintegration opportunities in 20 countries of origin. Under this project, country sheets provide information on the economic situation in origin countries, and IOM staff working in host countries can pose questions and receive answers from the organization's offices in countries of origin.⁶⁰

Technology can also enhance the ability to provide migrants with relevant and current information. For example, IOM Switzerland, Malta and United Kingdom have embarked in the past on projects to elicit feedback from returnees about their experiences with IOM's AVRR programmes through their own "Stories of Return." Migrants provide their own photos and videos relating their experience of return for the You Project website.⁶¹ The videos and pictures associated with these stories of return offer returnees' balanced, first-hand accounts of their points of disappointment and happiness along the return process. These first-hand accounts factor greatly into migrants' decision-making process when considering applying for assisted voluntary return and reintegration.

⁵⁶ IOM (2013), p. 91.

⁵⁷ EC (2012), p. 59.

⁵⁸ *Enhanced and Integrated Approach regarding Information on Return and Reintegration in Countries of Origin*. Project website at <http://irrico.belgium.iom.int>.

⁵⁹ EC (2012), p. 53.

⁶⁰ EC (2012), p. 53.

⁶¹ For further information, visit the project's website: <http://youproject.ch>.

Technology may also help in measuring the impact of an intervention and in identifying gaps, for example, when beneficiaries are asked to provide feedback via SMS. Incentives may include free mobile credit in exchange for information provided. IOM has already used this technology during emergency operations, in particular through community response maps, which analyse information received via SMS and phone calls, allowing for the mapping of affected populations, assessment of further needs and evaluation of the progress of projects.⁶²

There are also other means to promote dialogue between migrants interested in return with those who have already returned, for example, phone conversations or video conferencing. The latter methodology, in particular, allows returnees to pass on first-hand information about their return and reintegration experiences in a specific country of origin to a larger group of migrants still in the host country who are interested in return.



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⁶² For more information on IOM's Community Response Map project, please refer to www.weblog.iom.int.

Célia returned to Angola in 2010 with her mother and her niece. With the support received she could pay her niece's school fees, purchase medication for her mother and set up a small sewing shop. © IOM 2014



Reintegration is a key challenge in return migration. Enabling migrants to reincorporate into the society in their country of origin and empowering them to participate again in the social, cultural, economic and political life should be the aim of reintegration assistance in order for the return to be successful. Reintegration assistance should be sustainable, measurable, balanced, complementary and innovative.

To achieve sustainable reintegration, the returnee should actively participate in his or her reintegration process and assistance should cover economic, social and psychosocial dimensions through adequate training, counselling, networking and financial support, while mitigating possible security risks and allowing for sufficient time for the returnee to readapt. Being measurable will not only help to analyse the impact of a reintegration project and possible gaps, but also to identify the different factors contributing to successful reintegration, thus enhancing the impact of future reintegration projects.

As migrants' needs differ, countries differ and migration experiences differ, a balanced approach is very much needed to ensure that the assistance provided is meaningful to the returnee, addresses his or her vulnerabilities and avoids creating tensions between the returnee and the local community. Reintegration assistance should be complementary to avoid

duplication of efforts, provide a more comprehensive response and respond to the needs of vulnerable groups requiring long-term assistance. Local actors may help to identify the relevant structures and schemes. Successful reintegration also means to break new ground. Through innovative ideas, such as partnerships with countries of origin, the private sector, foundations, development actors and the diaspora, reintegration projects may provide a more comprehensive response, better address root causes of migration and adapt to new challenges of return migration.

While each of the aforementioned factors is highly relevant by itself, their effective combination defines the success of a project. Innovation in providing reintegration assistance, for example, through joint projects with development actors and the diaspora — that is, being complementary — can lead to more balanced interventions that respond to the needs of returnees, as well as the community, thus enhancing the sustainability of the project. Clear indicators and benchmarks and a long-term evaluation can then underline the sustainability of the project and enable its replication. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that there is no single solution to facilitate successful reintegration; the relative strengths of the different factors and the design of each project need to build upon the local context and the profile of the returnees.

Established in 1951, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the principal intergovernmental organization in the field of migration.

IOM is dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. It does so by providing services and advice to governments and migrants. IOM's mandate is to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration; to promote international cooperation on migration issues; to aid in the search for practical solutions to migration problems; and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, be they refugees, displaced persons or other uprooted people. The IOM Constitution gives explicit recognition of the link between migration and economic, social and cultural development as well as respect for the right of freedom of movement of persons.

IOM works in the four broad areas of migration management: migration and development; facilitating migration; regulating migration; and addressing forced migration. Cross-cutting activities include: the promotion of international migration law, policy debate and guidance, protection of migrants' rights, migration health and the gender dimension of migration.

IOM collaborates closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners.



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