

Pilot Action
on Voluntary Return
and Sustainable,
Community-Based
Reintegration



Funded by the European Union



Supported by the Mozambican Government



Table of contents



The Pilot Action on Voluntary Return.....	4
Dorflavia, eight years in South Africa.....	6
Ilda, ten years in South Africa.....	8
Rabeca, 20 years in South Africa.....	10
Guilherme, benefits from health centre rehabilitation along with other returnees and community members.....	12

Publisher: International Organization for Migration
Rua Joseph Kizerbo, 139
Maputo
Mozambique
Tel.: +258 21 310 779 / 21 328 484
Website: <https://mozambique.iom.int>
E-mail: iommaputo@iom.int

© 2020 International Organization for Migration (IOM)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher.

The Pilot Action on Voluntary Return



The health centre that was rehabilitated in the framework of the Pilot Action to respond to the needs of the community. © IOM



In an effort to promote safe, orderly and regular migration management in Southern Africa, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with financial support from the European Union (EU DG-DEVCO) and in close partnership with the National Institute for Mozambican Communities Abroad (INACE), implemented a three-year “Pilot Action on Voluntary Return and Sustainable, Community-Based Reintegration” (from 2017 to 2020) with the overall objective to contribute to the development of voluntary return and sustainable, community-based reintegration approaches in the targeted pilot countries, South Africa, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia.

In this regard, **284** returnees, **141** males and **143** females, have been supported in their voluntary return from South Africa to Mozambique and have received reintegration assistance in the form of post-arrival assistance, individual reintegration assistance, trainings, educational support, medical support, psychosocial support, housing assistance or material assistance such as food, clothes or hygiene kits. The majority of returnees include stranded labour migrants whose situation and living conditions in South Africa were not in line with their expectations and at the same time were not able to return to Mozambique. But the returnees also include migrants in vulnerable situations, such as unaccompanied migrant children and victims of trafficking, who benefitted from tailored reintegration

“ Reintegration can be considered sustainable when returnees have reached levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities, and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with (re)migration drivers. Having achieved sustainable reintegration, returnees are able to make further migration decisions a matter of choice, rather than necessity. ”

- Towards an Integrated Approach to Reintegration in the Context of Return (2017)

assistance in close coordination with the Reference Groups on Child Protection and Combating Trafficking in Persons.

This booklet provides a platform to four returnees who benefitted from the Pilot Action to express their views and feelings about the initiative.

Dorflavia, eight years in South Africa



Dorflavia left for South Africa in 2010, she was 24 years old and returned in November 2018.

When in South Africa, she worked as a house cleaner and later joined a Chicken Licken' in Randburg. She said she realized the job still was not satisfactory enough to provide for her family and her responsibilities in South Africa, so she started selling drinks, food and fruits in the street. Dorflavia said, "Anything was better than just staying at home."

"I left looking for conditions to be able to take care of and feed my siblings and nephews. It wasn't easy, but I tried to do anything to help, then I joined this project and decided to return home. I thought it was a big opportunity and today I am very happy", said Dorflavia.

She first heard about the outreach activities implemented by IOM South Africa through a friend who told her where they were taking place. When Dorflavia took part in the outreach activities, she mentioned that she thought it was best to return home and be close to her family. She admitted to not feeling safe being outside her country, being an orphan and the eldest and she also felt her responsibility was back home.

Fearful of what awaited her, Dorflavia said she was taking a leap of faith since most Mozambicans around her were saying that the project would take her to other countries or steal her things. She decided to send photos once she arrived to show her friends back in South Africa that she was safely back home and that it was well worth it.

In the beginning, her community was not so welcoming, especially after her brother passed away. But that only pushed Dorflavia to focus on her goal of opening a grocery store.

"The Government of Mozambique and IOM, in line with the project, helped me getting supplies, getting my driver's licence and my store is going really well. My plan is to expand this store and open it to have a restaurant, take away," says an excited Dorflavia.

Besides selling grocery store products, Dorflavia says she plans to sell hamburgers and soup at her take away restaurant that will open with the income generated from her grocery store. Dorflavia would also like to return to school, finish grade 12, go to university. And when her driver's licence is complete, she will become an executive secretary.



Ilda, ten years in South Africa



2018 marked ten years since Ilda left for Durban, South Africa. She lived in the community of Bobole, where she left behind her grocery store, her job as a Portuguese and Mathematics teacher, as well as her two children in search of better opportunities for herself and her family. Ilda said she had no better option, so she left her young children to be able to attend and finish school.

When Ilda arrived in Durban in 2008, she found a position at Mukuru, a money transfer business, that sent money to Mozambique with the use of Mpesa, as supervisor for Mozambique and Durban transfers. Unfortunately, the pay was still not enough to provide for her children and herself. Many times, they had to fend for themselves. Surviving with just R3,000 monthly, she had to first pay for her rent, daily transport to work, buy food for herself and only then would Ilda send the remainder to the children. The transfer itself also cost money, which left her with little money to send back home.

When she first heard that IOM is helping Mozambicans return to their country of origin and helping them start over, Ilda admitted to being a bit sceptical at first. The migrants had heard a lot of stories about people who pretended to help but not being their intention. She attended a meeting at the Mozambican Consulate in South Africa, heard all about the project and she decided that it was her best option and volunteered to return.

After arriving on the 7th of August 2018 in Maputo, she received counselling and pocket money to keep her afloat whilst she worked on her reintegration plan with the help of IOM case workers.

"In three months my store was built, during that time IOM organized a Business Management and Psychosocial Support training that taught me how to run my business, especially using my profit to expand and buy more stock instead of using the money for personal use" said Ilda.

Ilda says her life has improved because she is now capable of paying her bills, provide food at home for her children, purchase clothes and assign her children in extracurricular activities. These are possibilities she did not have a few years back, before returning home. With her first sales, she increased stock and bought new products to be sold at the grocery store. From her first experience with the grocery store back at her community, she managed to study the market and see which products were more sought after and that became her goal, to provide to the community what was really needed. Ilda can now provide 30 meticaes each for her children every day so they can catch the public bus to and from school. She has been able to provide tap water for the house, so they no longer have to wake up very early and walk long distances to have water for cooking, cleaning and bathing.

She says her plan is to help her community with the possibility of money transfer, Mpesa.

Besides increasing stock, Ilda managed to add two more rooms and a kitchen to her house. Now her children each have their own room.

Ilda said, *"It is best for me to take care of my children whilst working from home or for myself than be out there and work for someone else."*

Rabeca, twenty years in South Africa



44-year-old Rabeca moved to South Africa in 1998 and returned in 2018. She lived there for 20 years, leaving behind her four children with no adult supervision.

She mentioned that she left because she wanted to find better work opportunities, but unfortunately things did not turn out as planned. Rabeca would sell fruits in the informal sector together with fellow Mozambican nationals. When this no longer allowed her to generate sufficient income, she started washing clothes from different households. She went through a lot of hardship in South Africa. Sometimes she and other migrants were exposed to xenophobic resentment, and also, she was exposed to crime as her money was stolen as she was returning home after a long day of selling fruit in the streets.

Rabeca said she had high hopes when she moved to South Africa. She hoped to learn different trades and find work with reasonable pay. But as she found life there to be not easy for Mozambican migrants, after many years of trying and looking for better opportunities, she started thinking about returning home.

“It wasn’t easy. Life in South Africa is not for those who just want to be there,” said Rabeca.

It was by pure coincidence that Rabeca happened to pass by a location where migrants were volunteering for the project. Curiosity got the best of her, so she stopped to find out what was going on and decided to register herself.

“The project assisted me with reintegrating back in Mozambique and most importantly, setting up the grocery store I wanted. I arrived in Mozambique in September 2018, and by February 2019 I had all my products and my grocery store running,” said Rabeca.

Rabeca confirms that her business has been going well since then. She managed to save money and put it into a bank account. She was also able to purchase a freezer to sell frozen goods like chicken and fish.

Rabeca says that she is now living with her children. She happily admits to being able to provide food for her family and pay for their education. She claims that life in Mozambique is less challenging and her main worry is to save more money to soon expand her store and sell a greater variety of products.

Guilherme,

benefits from health centre rehabilitation along with other returnees and community members



Guilherme Cossa benefitted from a community-based initiative implemented to provide assistance to both returnees and members of the community of Ndlavela. The need for the rehabilitation of Ndlavela Health Centre was identified during a community dialogue held in Matola in March 2019, where community members voiced concerns and expressed community priorities. The participants identified activities that would address the causes of migration, especially to South Africa, and also benefit the communities who welcome returnees back home. Access to quality health services was identified as a community need which at the same time addresses one of the migration drivers.

“This health centre is a lifeline for the community. We receive hundreds of patients every day, who require basic to more complex services,” said Saide Momade, Director of the Health Centre. *“It needed an upgrade in order to provide improved services for our patients. We are thrilled that this renovation took place and pleased that it involved the community.”*

The rehabilitation effort covered several spaces, including treatment rooms, the maternity ward, and bathrooms. The health centre serves the surrounding community which counts more than 17,000 people, including returnees.

The rehabilitation was implemented through a cash for work scheme, whereby 17 (12 males and five females)



returnees from South Africa and 20 male community members, all originally from Matola, had access to short-term employment. In the process they also received valuable training in construction work.

Guilherme Cossa is one of the returnees who benefited from both the cash for work scheme and the services offered by the health centre. He returned on 26 June 2019 to his home in Ndlavela, after 13 years in South Africa.

He said, *“The services of this health centre are essential for our community. I am also a resident of Ndlavela and I believe that an improved health centre ensures quality service.”*

Guilherme has a personal connection with the health centre since his wife gave birth to his son there. So, he decided that with the experience he had in construction, he would make himself available for this effort.

“I am glad for the employment opportunity and to work together with my neighbours.”



Returnees and community members gather for the opening ceremony of the effort to rehabilitated Ndavela Health Centre. © IOM

