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FOSTERING AND STRENGTHENING INTERLINKAGES BETWEEN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES

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INTRODUCTION

Portrait of Théodore Kabore welding.
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.
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AIM AND SCOPE OF THIS PAPER

This Knowledge Paper aims to examine the interlinkages between sustainable development and migrant reintegration to promote engagement and coordination between relevant practitioners.

This paper is not intended to be a policy or a position paper, nor a handbook or a toolkit. It is intended to provide ideas and practical information to reintegration and development practitioners on how reintegration and development programmes can be better connected to increase the sustainability of migrant reintegration and to maximise the positive impact of reintegration on sustainable development. It is intended as a starting point for more research, more dialogue and more intense cooperation between relevant actors and programmes. In doing this, it inevitably presents limitations, one of which being that the paper mostly reflects the perspectives of organizations that implement reintegration and development programmes and of organizations that produce research on this matter, which does not represent the full spectrum of reintegration and development stakeholders.

The paper examines how sustainable development impacts migrant reintegration, and how conversely migrant reintegration can, with the right conditions, be a key contributor to sustainable development outcomes. It analyses how programmes can contribute to maximize this positive mutual impact and illustrates this through a variety of examples and case studies. Finally, it suggests some recommendations to improve interlinkages between development and reintegration interventions in view of enhancing the sustainability of migrants' reintegration and maximizing its impact on sustainable development.

Written by the EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub and using numerous examples of IOM programmes, this paper also features other actors' programmes and approaches and targets the full spectrum of reintegration and development practitioners, including but not limited to practitioners from national and local governments, United Nations agencies and other international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector.

THE MIGRATION – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

It is widely recognized that well-managed “migration can be a powerful driver of sustainable development for migrants and their communities in countries of origin, transit and destination.” On the contrary, when “policies do not consider the needs of migrants or the effects of migration, migrants can be put at risk, communities can come under strain and development gains can be jeopardized.” “Migration and sustainable development are [thus] multidimensional and interdependent.”¹

The link between migration and sustainable development has been largely researched and can be wide-reaching in scope; ranging from the contribution of migrants and diaspora to the sustainable development of their country of origin through financial and social transfers, to migrant workers' contributions to economic, social, cultural and environmental dynamism in their host country as well as upon their return.

The first ever global agreement to recognize the development potential of migration is the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).² The Agenda consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 accompanying targets. The central reference to migration is made in target 10.7 under the goal “Reduce inequality within and among countries”, calling to “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.” More generally, “migration and migrants are directly relevant to the implementation of all the

¹ IOM, [IOM Institutional Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development](#) (2020), pages 7, 10 and 17.

² Adopted in September 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly, the Agenda's objectives include for all human beings to enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives, to end poverty and hunger in all their forms, to protect the planet from degradation and take urgent action against climate change, and to



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and many of their targets. The SDGs, and the commitment to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind, will not be achieved without due consideration of migration.”³

The [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) (GCM) adopted by United Nations Member States in 2018, constitutes an opportunity to further maximise the sustainable development potential of migration. Anchored in the 2030 Agenda, the GCM “serves as a roadmap to help achieve the migration dimensions of the SDGs.”⁴

Furthermore, migration features in other multilateral development frameworks, including the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#), the [Paris Climate Change Agreement](#), the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#), the [New Urban Agenda](#), and the [SAMOA Pathway](#).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRANT REINTEGRATION: TWO INTERLINKED PHENOMENA

While it has been included in the wider discussion on migration and sustainable development, the link between sustainable development and one of the specific components of migration, namely migrant reintegration, has until recently received less attention. Historically, return and reintegration policies have tended to be disconnected from development processes and priorities. Reintegration assistance was traditionally provided in the framework of assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programmes funded by home affairs actors, that were “not originally conceived as a tool to generate development in countries of origin, but rather as a migration management instrument to facilitate the humane and dignified return of migrants who were unable or unwilling to remain in host countries.” There is, however, growing recognition that sustainable development impacts reintegration opportunities and outcomes and that, vice versa, reintegration can to an extent, impact sustainable development. Reintegration and development experts and practitioners thus increasingly assert the need to better link these two areas of work.⁵

Interlinkages appear in some targets of the 2030 Agenda, including target 10.2 (“Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”), target 17.17 (“Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnership”), and target 17.9 (“Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North—South, South—South and triangular cooperation”).

Reintegration also features prominently in the GCM. Through Objective 21, United Nations Member States have committed to “create conducive conditions for personal safety, economic empowerment, inclusion and social cohesion in communities, in order to ensure that reintegration of migrants upon return to their countries of origin is sustainable.” To do so, States will “(h) facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants into community life by providing them equal access to social protection and services, justice, psychosocial assistance, vocational training, employment opportunities and decent work, recognition of skills acquired abroad, and financial services, in order to fully build upon their entrepreneurship, skills and human capital as active members of society and contributors to sustainable development in the country of origin upon return” and

foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies. By tackling such a wide range of development issues, the Agenda aims by 2030 to make significant progress across the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The 2030 Agenda currently constitutes the central and overarching framework guiding the development planning and programming of the United Nations as well as of numerous other development actors. Hereinafter “2030 Agenda”.

³ IOM, *IOM Institutional Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development*, page 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, page 4.

⁵ IOM, [Reintegration Handbook - Practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance](#) (2019), page 11.



“(i) identify and address the needs of the communities to which migrants return by including respective provisions in national and local development strategies, infrastructure planning, budget allocations and other relevant policy decisions and cooperating with local authorities and relevant stakeholders.”⁶

“Sustainable development” and “migrant reintegration”

According to the 2030 Agenda, “sustainable development recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, combatting inequality within and among countries, preserving the planet, creating sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and fostering social inclusion are linked to each other and are interdependent.”⁷

Sustainable development thus refers to a variety of objectives including poverty eradication, economic inclusion and sustainable growth, social inclusion, and environmental preservation.

Reintegration is defined as “a process which enables individuals to re-establish the economic, social and psychosocial relationships needed to maintain life, livelihood and dignity and inclusion in civic life.”⁸

Reintegration occurs in a variety of contexts and for diverse target groups. This paper focuses on reintegration in the context of return migration across international boundaries, thus referring to migrants unable or unwilling to remain in host or transit country who returned to their country of origin under a variety of different circumstances. This target group comprises migrants who may have relatively limited social and economic resources, but also migrants who have skills and other forms of capital, sometimes acquired during their time abroad. Some may have been able to prepare for their return and be willing to invest, transfer their knowledge, experience and skills upon return, while some may have experienced forms of abuse, violence or exploitation during their migration experience, or have been deported by governments. This target group also comprises spontaneous returnees, i.e. migrants who decided to return to their country of origin using their own resources, for various reasons, for instance as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, some programmes presented in the paper also supported returning internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. While these groups do not constitute a specific focus of the paper, they sometimes co-exist in practice – especially in post-crisis contexts - highlighting the relevance of the reintegration programming across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.⁹ Moreover, programmes targeting such groups may constitute a relevant source of inspiration or replication for programmes targeting returning migrants.

Reintegration is influenced by a variety of factors, including, notably, the socioeconomic and environmental context in migrants’ communities of return: “successful reintegration depends on various factors such as the migrant’s time spent abroad as well as his/her personal abilities and resources; the acceptance by his/her family, peers, and community; but also on *environmental and structural capacities as well as development and economic opportunities available in the country of origin.*”¹⁰ According to the

⁶ United Nations General Assembly, [Resolution 73/195 adopted on 19 December 2018](#), pages 30-31.

⁷ United Nations, [Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) (2015), para 13.

⁸ IOM, [Glossary on Migration](#) (2019), page 176. According to IOM, “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 as a matter of choice, rather than necessity.” See IOM, [Towards an Integrated Approach to Reintegration in the Context of Return](#) (2017), page 3.

⁹ Participants to the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit acknowledged that humanitarian tools alone are insufficient to resolve protracted crises. Consequently, there was a call for improved collaboration across the humanitarian–development nexus and a “New Way of Working” to reduce needs, risk, and vulnerability. This included a commitment to work over multiple years, based on comparative advantages, towards collective outcomes and, wherever feasible, reinforcing the capacities and resilience at national and local levels. That same year, the twin resolutions on Sustaining Peace in the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly emphasized the significance of insecurity as a driver of vulnerability. They also called on the development, peace and security, and human rights pillars to work in an integrated fashion to prioritize prevention, address root causes of conflict and support institutions for sustainable peace and development. This has come to be known as the humanitarian–development–peace nexus. See IOM, [Operationalizing the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus: Lessons Learned from Colombia, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and Turkey](#) (2019).

¹⁰ IOM, [Towards an Integrated Approach](#), page 2.



integrated approach to reintegration conceptualized by IOM, achieving sustainable reintegration requires a holistic and a need-based approach, one that takes into consideration the various factors impacting reintegration, including economic, social and psychosocial dimensions, across individual, community and structural levels.¹¹

Economic reintegration is the process by which a returning migrant re-enters the economic life of his or her country of origin and is able to sustain a livelihood. Social reintegration implies the access by a returning migrant to public services and infrastructures in his or her country of origin, including access to health, education, housing, justice and social protection schemes. Psychosocial reintegration refers to the reinsertion of a returning migrant into personal support networks (friends, relatives, neighbours) and civil society structures (associations, self-help groups and other organizations). This also includes the re-engagement with the values, ways of living, language, moral principles, ideology, and traditions of the country of origin's society.¹²

This approach deploys three levels of support: the *individual level* that addresses the specific needs and vulnerabilities of returnees; the *community level* that responds to the needs, vulnerabilities and concerns of communities to which migrants return, including returnee families and the non-migrant population; and the *structural level* that promotes good governance of migration through engagement with local and national authorities and stakeholders, and interventions at governance and legislative level, and supports continuity of assistance through adequate local public services.¹³ This classification will be used further in this paper to analyse how interventions can maximize the sustainable development impact of reintegration and vice versa.

While each of the different levels of intervention follow their own objectives, they are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Therefore, coordination, complementarity and coherence across all relevant governmental and non-governmental, public and private, local and international stakeholders should be ensured in host, transit and countries of origin.¹⁴ Interventions should thus promote a whole-of-government approach and a whole-of-society approach, necessary to address the multidimensional processes of reintegration.¹⁵

Two interlinked phenomena

This integrated approach clearly suggests how the general development conditions in communities of return impact reintegration. The availability of and access to services such as health, education, or social protection schemes, which constitute key aspects of sustainable development, are central factors in migrants' social reintegration. At the economic level, livelihoods or employment opportunities are essential to foster returning migrants' reintegration. The socioeconomic conditions are directly affected by environmental conditions, which are thus also key for migrant reintegration, particularly those reliant on agricultural livelihoods and natural resources to carry out livelihood activities. Communities resilient to climate and environmental change and to land degradation offer an enabling environment for sustainable reintegration.

While the influence of sustainable development on migrant reintegration is relatively clear, the opposite is less immediately evident. Yet, there is evidence that *under certain conditions* reintegration can positively impact sustainable development, principally at local level.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² IOM, *Glossary*.

¹³ IOM, *Reintegration Handbook*.

¹⁴ IOM, *Towards an Integrated Approach*.

¹⁵ The whole-of-government and the whole-of-society approaches include some of the guiding principles of the GCM, that describes them as follows: "*Whole-of-government approach*: The Global Compact considers that migration is a multidimensional reality that cannot be addressed by one government policy sector alone. To develop and implement effective migration policies and practices, a whole-of-government approach is needed to ensure horizontal and vertical policy coherence across all sectors and levels of government."

"*Whole-of-society approach*: The Global Compact promotes broad multi-stakeholder partnerships to address migration in all its dimensions by including migrants, diasporas, local communities, civil society, academia, the private sector, parliamentarians, trade unions, National Human Rights Institutions, the media and other relevant stakeholders in migration governance." United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution 73/195*, page 6.



“The existing literature analyses the development impacts of return migration and classifies the contribution of returnees to their countries of origin into four broad categories or channels. First, they bring with them new skills (human capital) acquired through experience, training, or education in host countries. Second, they may come back with financial capital in the form of savings from abroad. This acquired capital allows returnees to participate as entrepreneurs or investors in their home countries. Third, they contribute through their social capital (networks) that they acquired as a result of their migration experience. Finally, returnees can act as social change makers. For instance, they can exert a positive impact by challenging and changing existing relations within the origin societies.”¹⁶

However, certain conditions need to be met as the above primarily applies to migrants who are ready to return and can prepare for it. This is often not the case when considering returnees typically enrolling in programmes providing assistance to return and/or reintegration, deported migrants or migrants forced to return, or migrants who decide to return spontaneously due to negative factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, whose social and financial capital may be limited.¹⁷ In such cases, while the influence of reintegration itself on sustainable development may not always be readily apparent, programmes and policies can still be designed and implemented in a way which maximizes the potential positive impact of reintegration on sustainable development. The next chapter will look into this in detail.

¹⁶ Debnath P., KNOMAD Working Paper 17, [Leveraging Return Migration for Development: The Role of Countries of Origin. A Literature Review](#) (2016).

¹⁷ Regarding this statement, see for instance the following extract from a briefing paper of the Development Research Center on Migration, Globalization and Poverty: “Although the image of the migrant as entrepreneur has become increasingly widespread, there are often significant limitations of migrants’ agency when they return home, particularly if the country they return to is unstable or they are discriminated against because of their status as returnees.” Development Research Center on Migration, Globalization and Poverty, Briefing Paper No. 20, [Assisted Voluntary Return \(AVR\): An Opportunity for Development?](#) (2009), page 3.



Chapter I

CONNECTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND REINTEGRATION IN PRACTICE

Returnees in the midst of plastering a building being rebuilt
Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire. © IOM 2021/Mohamed Aly DIABATÉ



Given the potential for the mutual impact of reintegration and sustainable development, the synergies between reintegration and development programmes - which can be sought in terms of activities and processes - and their potential outcomes, should be examined. Interlinked interventions allow development programmes to be leveraged to achieve sustainable reintegration and, conversely, reintegration programmes to be leveraged for sustainable development outcomes. The numerous potential links between development and reintegration programmes are described in this chapter, looking at interventions at the structural, community, and individual levels.¹⁸

1. MAXIMIZING THE MUTUAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES AT THE STRUCTURAL LEVEL



“To facilitate sustainable reintegration and to link it to longer-term development, national, local and community systems, structures and capacities [...] need to be reinforced.”¹⁹

Reinforcing these systems, structures and capacities that concern both reintegration and development should thus be a key objective of programmes aiming both at the sustainable reintegration of migrants and at sustainable development.

Development and reintegration programmes can intervene in many ways to strengthen the systems, structures and capacities in migrants' countries of origin and communities of return. Appropriate approaches include supporting reintegration and development actors (including government and service providers) with skills development and with financial or material resources, developing, adjusting and/or implementing policies, which take into account both reintegration concerns and development priorities, and establishing or strengthening procedures and cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination mechanisms.

Such interventions can be implemented ahead of return flows – to create an enabling environment for sustainable reintegration and to prepare actors in countries of origin to manage the consequences of these flows and to leverage the development potential of reintegration – as well as in response to return flows – to support the reintegration process of returnees and ensure the receiving population also benefits from the support.

Development and reintegration actors can facilitate this by applying a whole-of-government approach in their programmes and by building upon the systems, structures and cross-sectoral governance and coordination mechanisms related to sustainable development and/or reintegration that may already be in place at local or national level.

¹⁸ One can argue that de facto “reintegration assistance is development assistance”. Indeed, reintegration assistance responds to the objectives of the SDGs to eradicate poverty and ensure economic and social inclusion. Reintegration assistance supports access to livelihoods, to health or to education, among others. However, this paper will not look at sustainable development in terms of outcome for individuals, but in terms of impact at the community or local level, as well as on countries of origin. Although assistance at the individual level will be examined in this paper, it will be addressed from this perspective, i.e. in terms of its potential impact on sustainable development in migrants' communities and countries of origin.

¹⁹ Knoll, A., P. Veron and N. Mayer, ECDPM Discussion Paper No. 291, [A sustainable development approach to return and reintegration: dilemmas, choices and possibilities](#) (2021), page 14.



1.1 Engaging relevant stakeholders and establishing or strengthening coordination mechanisms

Engaging relevant stakeholders

Linking reintegration and sustainable development requires the mobilization and involvement of a large range of actors, including governmental and non-governmental, national and local, in countries of origin and of destination, who are involved at different levels of development and reintegration policy and programmes, and related to beneficiaries with diverse profiles.

The actors involved in reintegration, are also often involved in sustainable development. This is especially the case in countries of origin, where there may not necessarily be a fundamental distinction between reintegration and development.

For instance, the coordination body (steering committee) of the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration*²⁰ in Senegal, which largely focuses on reintegration, is chaired by the Directorate General for the Support of Senegalese Abroad under the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its members also include the Ministry of Economy and Cooperation, the Ministry of Finance and Planning, the Ministry of Justice, the Regional Development Agency, the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID), the French Agency for Development, the Delegation of the European Union and IOM. In Mali, the technical working group on reintegration includes the Ministry of Malians Living Abroad, the Ministry of Solidarity and the Fight against Poverty, the National Directorate of Civil Protection and the Delegation of the European Union.²¹ All these actors also have a significant role in development planning and programming.

Chart 1 below presents a non-exhaustive overview of the different stakeholders which can better link development and reintegration programmes and policies.²²

BOX 1

The role of local authorities in connecting reintegration and sustainable development

Migration and development “affect each other, especially at the local level where the drivers and impacts of migration are often most strongly felt.”²³ Local authorities have a key role to play in migrant reintegration and in linking it with sustainable development, including by:

- Ensuring that national authorities consult, coordinate with and empower subnational government actors with the means, competencies and capacities to be at the forefront of dealing with communities and service provision;
- Ensuring that returning migrants and reintegration considerations are included in local development

planning and programmes;

- Ensuring that reintegration programmes take into account local development priorities;
- Setting up structures and mechanisms to support the reintegration of migrants, where they do not exist;
- Facilitating links and synergies among actors and programmes at the local level;
- Being directly involved through decentralized cooperation schemes.

“The role of local authorities lies in building on the opportunities and overcoming the challenges, through the establishment of policies, services and initiatives – but also through partnerships with other actors at the international, national and local level.”²⁴

²⁰ Hereinafter “EU-IOM Joint Initiative”.

²¹ IOM, [EU-IOM Joint Initiative, Biannual Reintegration Report #4](#) (2020).

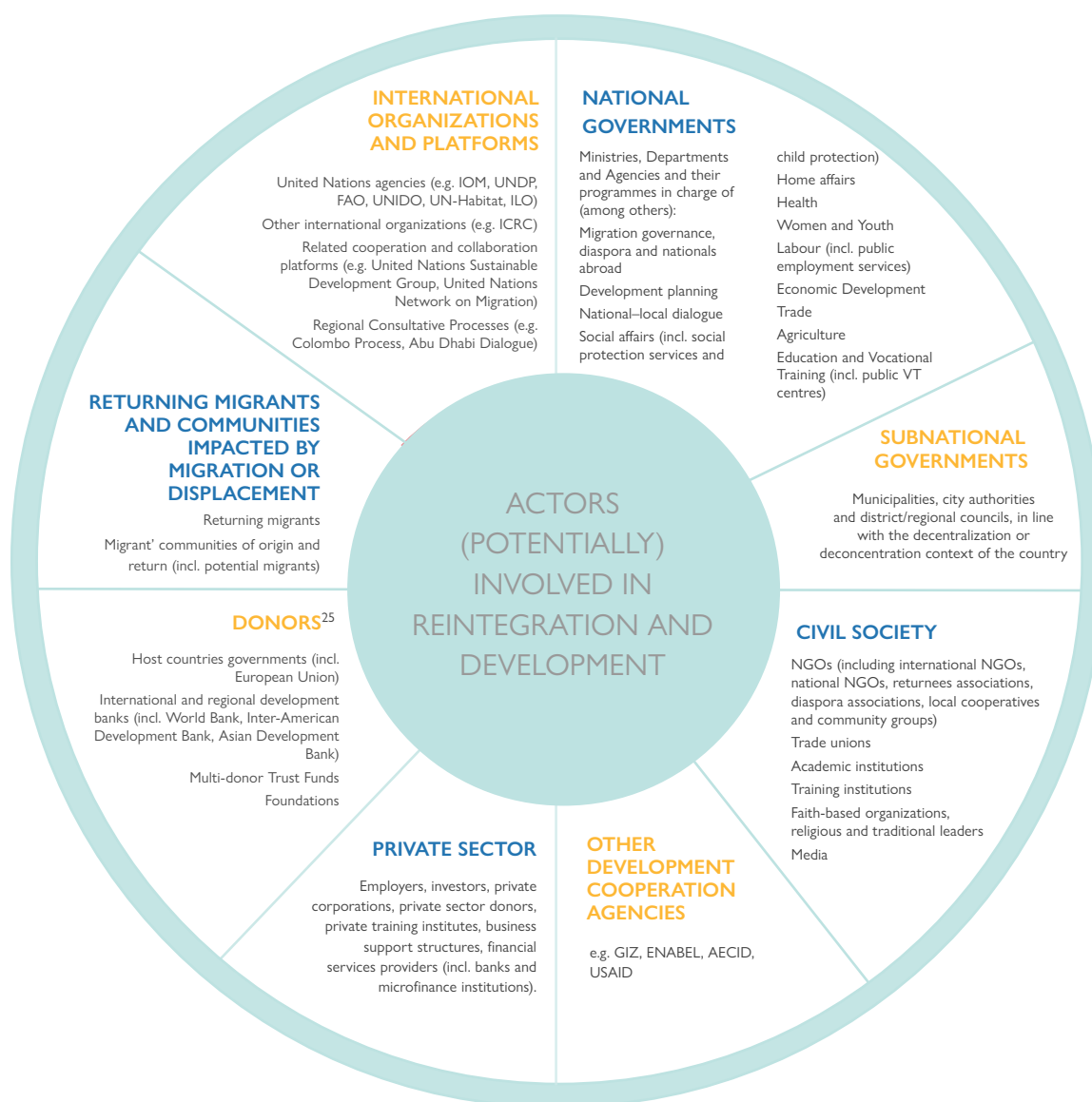
²² This categorization is inspired by the stakeholders analysis tool in IOM, [Integrating Migration into Urban Development Programmes](#) (2021). A description of the relevance and functions of these actors can be found in the *IOM Reintegration Handbook*, table 4.1 on pages 138–141.

²³ UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI), [My JMDI Toolbox on Migration and Local Development, Core Module](#) (2015), page 27.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, [Module 5](#), page 21. On decentralized cooperation, refer to [Module 2](#).



Chart 1. Overview of key stakeholders



The engagement and active involvement of relevant stakeholders contribute to building their capacities as: (1) they are better informed about ongoing and planned interventions and priorities; (2) this information allows them to better orient and adapt their services, as relevant; and (3) they can gain hands-on experience. Stakeholders' engagement and involvement also contributes to policy and programmatic coherence (including among the different reintegration and development programmes operating in a specific area) and ensures that reintegration support is anchored in sustainable development priorities. Finally, they contribute to ownership, which in turn contributes to sustainability of interventions. In this light, reintegration and development programmes should encourage the involvement of a diverse range of relevant stakeholders in programme design, implementation and monitoring.

²⁵ This category overlaps with other categories, including national governments, private sector and international organizations, but it is made distinct here to underscore donors' important role in this topic, as also highlighted in the recommendations.



Supporting coordination and governance mechanisms

To optimize the contribution of relevant stakeholders, inter-institutional coordination and governance mechanisms must be in place. These mechanisms, which include actors often involved both in reintegration and in sustainable development, can contribute to better mainstreaming reintegration into development planning and programming and, conversely, to better mainstreaming sustainable development into reintegration planning and programming. Reintegration and development programmes can support the establishment, strengthening and/or operationalization of such mechanisms, for instance by helping to identify a clear lead and defining clear terms of reference for these mechanisms, as well as by ensuring active involvement and clearly defined roles for the partners involved. They can also support their functioning by providing adequate financial resources.

The *EU-IOM Joint Initiative* has significantly contributed to engaging stakeholders in reintegration and to establishing or strengthening coordination mechanisms at different levels in East, North and West Africa, as briefly described in [Case Study No. 1](#) below.²⁶

Coordination between relevant actors can facilitate the establishment, strengthening and operationalisation of referral mechanisms among programmes, and encourage the use of existing structures and services. Programmes should as much as possible utilise such structures and services, including those available to the whole population (“mainstream structures”²⁷). If they do not function appropriately (in general or more specifically for returnees), efforts should be made to build their capacity (see below), including to cater for the specific needs of returnees, and support them with adequate resources, instead of duplicating them or creating specific services for returnees. This approach enables strengthening of capacity in the country, to the benefit of both returnees and the larger population, thus contributing to sustainable development. For instance, in the case of supporting job placements, reintegration and development programmes should, to the extent possible, work hand-in-hand with existing services of public employment agencies and, if relevant, support them improving the quality of their services or their reach, instead of creating parallel structures. When such structures and services do not exist, they should be created, but reintegration and development programmes should as much as possible try to make them accessible to the whole population.

This is the approach followed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (BMZ) programme *Returning to New Opportunities*, implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and described in [Case Study No. 6](#). As part of the programme, Advice Centres for Jobs, Migration and Reintegration have been established to provide various services to returnees, but also to IDPs and to the local population.

Coordination mechanisms originally focusing on specific thematic areas (i.e. sustainable development or reintegration) can lead to addressing wider issues of relevance to returnees and to the wider population.

For instance, in the Niger, a Migration Working Group was established under the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative*. Through this coordination mechanism, IOM flagged the need to address gaps in mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for returnees. IOM with the National Program for Mental Health thus developed a working group with actors working on MHPSS in a variety of contexts, not necessarily linked to migration. The working group, which meets on a monthly or bi-monthly basis and currently operates as a sub-group of the child protection cluster, allows the coordinating of actions and the organization of referrals between actors to the benefit of persons with mental health and psychosocial needs in the Niger.

²⁶ More detailed information is also available in the biannual reintegration reports published under the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative in the Sahel and Lake Chad region* [#1 \(March 2019\)](#), [#2 \(November 2019\)](#), [#3 \(March 2020\)](#), [#4 \(November 2020\)](#).

²⁷ ‘Mainstream structures’ are pre-existing and serve the whole population. These may be schools, hospitals, municipality services, and so on. On the contrary, ‘specific structures’ are ad hoc structures created to address very specific needs. The former can be adapted to become migrant-friendly, ensuring migrants also have access and are able to benefit equally from such services. The latter can be set up specifically for migrants, or for a larger fraction of the population that also includes migrants (for instance, community centres bringing together the members of a neighbourhood where many migrants live). See JMDI, My JMDI Toolkit, *Module 5*.



1.2 Strengthening the capacity of stakeholders

Involving stakeholders and using existing services is important, but for this to have an impact on sustainable reintegration and development, relevant stakeholders should have the capacity to deliver quality services to returnees and non-returnees. When this is not the case, reintegration and development programmes should carry out capacity-building interventions at the local and national levels in the form of technical or material support.

Reintegration and development programmes can provide key stakeholders with technical support on a variety of aspects that are related to both reintegration and sustainable development (for instance protection of persons in vulnerable situations, community cohesion or business support).

To address a shortage of mental health professionals in some areas of high return of Nigeria, IOM in close coordination with the Federal Ministry of Health, rolled out the *WHO Mental Health Gap Action Programme* training of trainers for health professionals. Health professionals in Edo and Delta States were trained on the identification and treatment of mild to moderate mental health conditions, with a focus on the specificities of the mental health and psychosocial distress most typical of returning migrants. The skills they gained could then benefit both returnees and the local population.²⁸

Besides classic training courses, on-the-job training and joint operations can also be a powerful means to strengthen stakeholder capacity, ensuring they gain practical experience. Technical support can also focus on strengthening internal processes and procedures (for instance by developing or improving standard operating procedures), or on improving inter-institutional coordination, as described above.

In many contexts, stakeholder involvement is limited by their resources. They may lack staff to attend coordination meetings, be unable to travel to communities due to a lack of vehicles or of resources for fuel, and so on. To address these challenges, reintegration and development programmes can provide stakeholders with material or financial support.

Improved skills and resource availability allow for increased and improved interventions by stakeholders, including if and when external (reintegration or development) programmes cease. It is to this end that, in Ethiopia, the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative* provided training to and covered the cost of twelve reintegration officers from the Bureaus of Labour and Social Affairs. These officers are now involved in facilitating the delivery of reintegration assistance, providing technical support to returnees, coordinating interventions with key stakeholders and other development initiatives carried out by the government, and participating in monitoring and evaluation exercises, among others. In the longer term, local governments are expected to continue covering the salary of these officers from their own budget.

1.3 Elaborating and aligning policies, plans and programmes on reintegration and sustainable development

National and local authorities can contribute to maximizing the impact of reintegration on sustainable development and of development on reintegration by designing and implementing adequate policies, plans and programmes. Reintegration and development programmes can support authorities in this regard by supporting the integration of reintegration concerns in sectoral (e.g. labour, trade, health, education, social protection and environment) and inter-sectoral policies and programmes, and the integration of sustainable development concerns in reintegration policies and programmes.

Integrating reintegration into sectoral policies is part of a larger approach to mainstreaming migration in general, as evidenced under IOM's EU-funded [Mainstreaming Migration into International Cooperation and Development \(MMICD\)](#) project. Under this project IOM is working with partners to provide practical guidance and tools for development stakeholders to integrate

²⁸ IOM, *EU-IOM Joint Initiative, Biannual Reintegration Report #3*. Updated following an exchange of emails with a staff involved.



migration - in all its forms - into policies, plans, and programmes across various development sectors, such as education, governance, and employment.

Integrating migration not only supports the principle of leaving no one behind, but it also enhances development cooperation interventions in the following ways: (1) it makes development cooperation more inclusive and rights-based; (2) it helps to identify and address challenges and opportunities; (3) it makes development cooperation more coherent and effective.

Ministries in charge of employment, health or social affairs, to name only a few, have a key role to play in both reintegration and sustainable development. Integrating or embedding reintegration matters into the policies and programmes of relevant Ministries contributes to maximizing the impact of development interventions on reintegration, avoiding overlaps and duplications, and strengthening the coherence of interventions in a specific sector.²⁹

Furthermore, making sure that national and local policies and programmes focusing on reintegration, integrate sustainable development concerns, and are aligned with national and local development plans (as well as with other development planning strategies or frameworks such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, United Nations Development Assistance Framework or ILO Decent Work Country Programmes), contributes to extending the benefits of the reintegration programmes to the wider population, and maximizing the economic, social and environmental development impact of reintegration programmes.

In Guinea, for instance, municipal councils hold an annual review of the various achievements reached in their respective municipalities, including returnees' reintegration. These results then feed into local development plans at the prefectural level (intermediate level between municipality and region) and inform annual investment plans in urban and rural communities.³⁰

Challenges and opportunities related to the COVID-19 pandemic³¹

The COVID-19 pandemic provoked unprecedented return flows of migrants who lost their jobs due to the economic downturn and containment measures. Millions of migrants returned spontaneously to their countries of origin, many of which intended to stay on a long-term basis or indefinitely. The return of such high numbers of persons poses health risks and threatens the labour markets in communities whose resilience had already been eroded by the pandemic and lockdown measures, and who suffered drastic reductions of remittances. Addressing these threats requires supporting returning migrants in their reintegration, as well as supporting communities largely affected by the consequence of their return.

This context highlights the links between return, reintegration and development, and presents opportunities to revisit approaches to reintegration assistance. In particular, the crisis has highlighted the need:

- To build resilient health infrastructure and to assist returnees in registering with public health care or social security systems;
- To include migrants who have returned by their own means in reintegration support programmes;
- To focus on the economic, social and physical health of the communities and countries of origin.

More broadly, while these needs were increasingly considered within reintegration programmes, the crisis has presented an opportunity to orient (even more) reintegration programmes towards

BOX 2

²⁹ Other relevant resources available include: IOM, [Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning: A Handbook for Policy-makers and Practitioners](#) (2010); JMDI, [Guidelines on Mainstreaming Migration into Local Development Planning](#) (2017) and *My JMDI Toolkit*. See also the resources available on [M4D Net](#), the global hub on migration and sustainable development.

³⁰ Other relevant examples can be found in the documents referred to in footnote 29.

³¹ This box is largely inspired by and extracted from Le Coz, C. and K. Newland, Migration Policy Institute Policy Brief, [Rewiring Migrant Returns and Reintegration after the COVID-19 Shock](#) (2021).



BOX 2



the sustainable development potential of returning migrants. Reintegration programmes focusing on skills development suited to future economic potential (e.g. green economy) and future mobility schemes (e.g. equipping returnees for better jobs abroad once international migration resumes at large scale), have the potential to position struggling economies to rebound when the emergency phase of the pandemic is over.

As reintegration programmes have the potential to mitigate the negative effects of returns on local communities and better prepare returnees for future opportunities, development programmes are also key to supporting countries of origin to adapt to the combined burdens of the pandemic, the decrease of remittance flows and the massive return flows on communities.

The [Case Study No. 4](#) illustrates how the Government of Nepal responded to the high influx of migrants who returned as a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis.

Besides mitigating the destabilizing impact of massive returns on countries of origin, in some countries IOM has supported returnees' involvement in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic by training them to raise awareness on the virus and protection measures, or by supporting them producing protection material. In Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Nigeria, for instance, IOM mobilized returnees to produce personal protective equipment.³²

³² See IOM, *EU-IOM Joint Initiative, Biannual Reintegration Report #4*; IOM, Press releases, "[Returnees and Peers Lead Face Mask Production in Nigeria's Migration Hotspot](#)" (10 June 2020), "[Gambian Returnees Produce Protective Equipment for COVID-19 Frontline Border Officials](#)" (5 May 2020), "[Gambian Returnees Produce 50,000 Face Masks for Schools](#)" (3 September 2021).



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◇ Structural level initiatives promote good governance through engagement with local and national authorities and stakeholders, and support continuity of assistance through adequate local public services. By working at a governance and legislative level to enact policies and plans that ensure returning migrants' needs and opportunities to support sustainable development are recognised and bolstered, interventions at the structural level can contribute to create an enabling environment for sustainable reintegration and can leverage the development potential of reintegration.
- ◇ Maximizing the positive mutual impact of sustainable development and reintegration necessitates the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, and the establishment or strengthening of inter-institutional, cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms with concrete terms of reference and a common vision. These mechanisms can jointly assess the gaps and interlinkages in relation to reintegration and sustainable development. They can also establish a plan to refine or mainstream reintegration into existing policies, or develop new targeted policies and plans that establish an improved legal and policy framework that is conducive to sustainable reintegration, and can contribute to sustainable development.
- ◇ A whole-of-government approach across all levels of government, from local to national, is essential to address the interlinked challenges of reintegration and sustainable development. While it is at national level that policies and programmes are usually made, engaging with, learning from and ensuring participation of local and regional authorities and other local actors in these processes contribute to ensuring that national approaches are responsive to assessed needs and gaps at the territorial level.
- ◇ Coordination and programming should, as much as possible, build upon the systems, structures and mechanisms that may already be in place at local or national level. Likewise, programmes should assess the extent to which it is possible to extend existing services to returning migrants rather than create new services accessible only to returnees, which may cause community tensions or perceived inequalities.

Credits:

Page 8. Halaba district youth center, in Ethiopia's SNNP regional state, renovated under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative programme. Local government authorities present during the handover event. © IOM 2020/Taye BIRAMO.

Page 14. Returnees oriented by the Gambia Standards Bureau on the production of the suits. © IOM The Gambia 2020.



2. MAXIMIZING THE MUTUAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

In most return contexts, communities have a variety of needs that may be related to a lack of economic opportunities (livelihoods, jobs, economic infrastructure) and to a lack of access to basic services (including health, education, water and sanitation, energy, civil registry). Many communities also face environmental threats (climate change, environmental degradation, and natural hazards). These needs and threats – that often contribute to the decision of the individual to migrate in the first place - affect returnees as much as others in the community. Left unaddressed, they can negatively affect returning migrants' reintegration. For instance, lack of access to health services is a serious obstacle to returnees' reintegration. Likewise, a lack of access to clean drinking water hampers the returnees' health, and a vulnerability to climate induced disaster and other climate change impacts poses a severe threat to the sustainability of livelihoods. Addressing these related needs contributes to sustainable development and, by improving returnees' environment of return, also contributes to a more sustainable reintegration.

Development and reintegration programmes can help to address these needs by intervening at the structural level, as described in the above section, but also by intervening at the community level. Community-based interventions “do not only reinforce a community's capacity to absorb their returning members but may also contribute to strengthening the links between return migration and local development. They allow the community to harness the skills of returnees while also addressing issues that impact the larger community.”³³ By addressing the main needs of the communities of origin of migrants, programmes can contribute to producing conditions that are conducive to sustainable reintegration, as well as to the sustainable development of communities themselves. Furthermore, ensuring that any services or projects for returnees consider and include the entire community, in line with the whole-of-society approach underlined in the GCM, contributes to reducing inequalities, to avoiding potential tensions between different groups of the community, and to ensuring that efforts intending to improve social cohesion, benefit everyone.



2.1 Economic reintegration and development

One of the main issues faced by migrants upon their return, is the lack of economic opportunities in their community of origin. This is a major driver of migration, and a significant obstacle to sustainable reintegration. This is particularly the case for migrants from rural areas, who may prefer to settle in cities upon their return, due to the greater opportunities for employment and business.

³³ IOM, [A Framework for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration](#) (2018), page 14. See also IOM, *Towards an Integrated Approach and Reintegration Handbook* for information and guidance on designing and implementing community-based reintegration assistance.



Programmes focusing on economic development can benefit returnees as well as the community at large. In particular, they can contribute to economic reintegration and development by supporting returnees and community members to establish income-generating activities or secure employment. This can be achieved through direct assistance to individuals (see [Chapter I, Section 3](#)) and community groups, for instance, but also through interventions focusing on economic infrastructure and system strengthening.

2.1.1 Local economic development and community-based reintegration projects

Many development programmes support local economic development projects, including projects bringing together a number of community members into cooperatives or other kinds of economic interest groups. Such projects do not necessarily specifically target returnees or consider the specific needs and preferences of (future) returnees, but they can provide options for returning migrants who, in certain contexts, could be included in the projects.

Support to returnees through community-based initiatives can also be provided indirectly: for instance, supporting returnees' families in countries of origin (including ahead of their return) allows families to be ready and able to receive and support their returning member. The *Rural Enterprises and Remittances* project implemented in Nepal, described in [Case Study No. 4](#), has applied a similar approach. Aiming to improve enterprises in Nepal's rural areas, it demonstrates that targeting the families of migrants can support their reintegration upon their return home.

Reintegration programmes, can also encourage, complement or implement community-based interventions, which aim to have a positive impact on local communities, and support returnees in their reintegration. IOM has designed and implemented initiatives of this kind in a number of countries, particularly those covered by the [EU-IOM External Actions supporting migrant protection and sustainable reintegration](#) including the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative in Africa* (see below), the *Reintegration Assistance and Development in Afghanistan (RADA)*³⁴, *Prottasha* in Bangladesh, and the *Pilot Action on Voluntary Return and Sustainable, Community-Based Reintegration* in Southern Africa.

These initiatives may be small in size, but nevertheless have had positive impacts on local development, by providing jobs or making new services available. In the Gambia, for instance, IOM supported a group of returnees and non-returnees to establish a bakery and provided them with a motorcycle to distribute bread in the neighbouring villages. Thanks to the intervention, community members can buy bread in their own village. Whereas before this project villagers had to travel across the border to Senegal to buy bread, the group is now selling bread also to villages on the other side of the border. In addition, 30 per cent of the revenue generated by community-based projects in the village, is paid to the village development committee to support local development initiatives. These initiatives include, for instance, the construction of a public water tap connected to a solar powered borehole, which among other benefits, freed up the time and labour of women in the village, who traditionally had to fetch water from remote locations, or the fixing of damaged roads.

These initiatives can also include a larger number of beneficiaries and engender a positive dynamic in the community, for instance by creating village cooperatives. Examples of such projects can be found in the biannual reintegration reports published under the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative in the Sahel and Lake Chad region*.³⁵

In some cases, community-based projects can combine economic and social objectives. In Côte d'Ivoire, returnees and local youth of three localities received training in various construction-related jobs under the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative*, and rehabilitated damaged schools as part of their training. This had the double advantage of providing them with hands-on experience before setting up their own collective construction business and of restructuring school buildings that could not be used anymore,

³⁴ At the time of this paper's release, and considering the prevailing insecurity across Afghanistan, IOM's AVRR Programme, as well as post arrival reintegration assistance to returnees, have been put on hold temporarily. See IOM Press Release "[Safety of Afghans and Humanitarian Access Must be Top Priorities](#)" (17 August 2021).

³⁵ See footnote 26.



enabling hundreds of children who had to share space with other elementary school classes and hence to reduce their own school attendance, to re-attend classes on a full-time basis.³⁶

2.1.2 Employment support and job opportunities for returnees and community members

Given the importance of extending the benefits of reintegration services to non-migrant members of their communities, employment support provided to returnees should wherever possible, be extended to community members as well. This was successfully achieved, for example, through the Advice Centres for Jobs, Migration and Reintegration (presented above and described in [Case Study No. 6](#)) operated by the programme *Returning to New Opportunities* are open to the general public. These Centres have a particular, but not exclusive focus on returnees: as of April 2021, more than 108,000 advisory sessions had been conducted in these centres, including close to 27,000 with returnees.

Programmes can also provide vocational and technical training to both returnees and community members. Furthermore, the link between reintegration support and local development can be strengthened by supporting training that takes into account community development needs or plans.

Finally, programmes can also support economic actors in return areas to expand their enterprise so as to create jobs that can be filled by local people and returnees. IOM has adopted this approach in Iraq under the *Enterprise Development Fund*: small and medium-sized enterprises that have a potential for growth in their production capacity, have been supported with the aim of creating jobs for returnees.³⁷

2.1.3 Economic systems and infrastructure

The building or rehabilitation of infrastructure in support of economic sectors such as agriculture (e.g. boreholes, irrigation systems), industry (e.g. electricity supply, factory building, industrial plant), transportation (e.g. roads connecting villages to markets) or sales, can also positively affect economic vitality and strengthen livelihood opportunities, thus improving the conditions for reintegration.

In Baidoa, Somalia, a synergy between the *Midnimo* project (described in Box 4 below) and the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative* led to the construction of a bridge linking an area densely populated by returnees and IDPs, with the central area of the town where markets are located. The intervention was able to improve economic prospects for the inhabitants of the opened-up area, including for returnees.³⁸ Infrastructure related interventions can be part of a wider approach focusing on local economic systems (i.e. systems related to production, processing, transportation and sales). Focusing on territorial systems and needs, and thus benefiting the whole population living and working on these territories, programmes following this approach can address infrastructure gaps (see above), but also target other aspects of the local economy such as value chains. Such a spatial planning approach to economic systems is being piloted in Afghanistan, as described in the [Case Study No. 2](#), as well as in Georgia, as described in [Case Study No. 3](#).

2.2 Access to basic services and social reintegration

The availability of and access to basic services (including but not limited to health, education and housing) are important factors of sustainable development and significantly contribute to migrants' reintegration. At the community level, development and reintegration programmes can contribute to improve service availability and access by building or rehabilitating appropriate

³⁶ A short video on the results of this project was produced and is available at [this link](#).

³⁷ The *Enterprise Development Fund* implemented in Iraq is detailed in EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub, Reintegration Assistance: Good, Promising and Innovative Practices Factsheet #9, "[Boosting Returnees' Employment through Support to SMEs in Iraq](#)" (2020).

³⁸ This intervention is described comprehensively in EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub, Reintegration Assistance: Good, Promising and Innovative Practices Factsheet #8, "[Revitalizing Economy and Enhancing Social Cohesion through Community-based Planning and Community-prioritized Infrastructure Works: The Construction of a Bridge in Somalia](#)" (2020).



infrastructure (for instance, health centres or clean water distribution systems), and by ensuring access to the whole community. As mentioned in [Section 1](#) of this chapter, using “mainstream structures” and ensuring services created specifically for returnees are also, where possible, made available to the population at large, contribute to the sustainability of development and reintegration programmes. Supporting the delivery of services in communities of return can mitigate tensions and frustrations that could arise if only returnees were targeted, thus potentially contributing to social cohesion, in particular in case of large return flows. For instance, the Service Hubs established in pilot communities in Georgia (see [Case Study No. 3](#)), aimed at enhancing access to services and counselling for all local residents, follow this logic.

A precondition for services to be accessible, is that they exist. In this light, public infrastructure is key. Infrastructure-related needs can vary significantly in size. Small-scale infrastructure works can include the building or rehabilitation of community centres (as implemented by IOM in El Salvador³⁹) or of health centres (as implemented in Mozambique in the framework of the *Pilot Action on Voluntary Return and Sustainable, Community-Based Reintegration*⁴⁰). Large infrastructure programmes can for example include the building of hospitals or large housing projects.

Large-scale, multi-sectoral programmes are required particularly in post-conflict contexts, where infrastructure is needed to recover from conflict, and prepare for and support returnees’ reintegration and, more broadly, the region or country’s development. For instance, to support the return and reintegration of refugees, migrants and IDPs in Darfur, large and small-scale infrastructure was built and rehabilitated by 13 United Nations agencies and entities in partnership with the Government of the Sudan, as illustrated in Box 3.

BOX 3

Foundational and Short-Term activities to build and rehabilitate infrastructure in Darfur

The Darfur Development Strategy (DDS) was created in pursuit of the overall objective of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur to support the transition from humanitarian assistance to recovery and development. To support the key components of the DDS, a multi-donor trust fund, the United Nations Fund for Recovery, Reconstruction and Development in Darfur (UNDF), was established in 2015. One of the critical objectives of the DDS was to achieve successful social and economic reintegration of returnees.

The UNDF supported 12 Foundational and Short-Term (FaST) activities implemented by 13 United Nations agencies and entities, in partnership with the Government of the Sudan. The FaST projects started in February 2016 and were completed in June 2019. They consisted of a variety of interconnected interventions covering social cohesion, return and reintegration of IDPs and refugees, reintegration of

demobilized armed forces, land management, public facilities and housing, rehabilitation and construction of roads, access to and use of water, sanitation, and hygiene, solar energy systems, rehabilitation of health facilities and basic health services in return sites, education and vocational training, microfinance for rural farmers, and livelihoods recovery.

The area of Angemi, in West Darfur, suffered considerable displacement of people during the Darfur conflict. In response to the high number of displaced persons who were starting to return to the area, a FaST activity was implemented, aiming to rehabilitate roads to better connect the 32 kilometres that separate the area from the capital of West Darfur, El Geneina. Community Development Councils (CDCs), composed of community leaders and prominent members from all communities (farmers and nomads, returnees, women groups, youth and vulnerable groups such as elderly and persons with disabilities), were also established to monitor and ensure the

³⁹ See IOM, Regional Office for Central America, North America and the Caribbean, [“Collaborative Construction for the Reintegration of Returned Migrants”](#); Press release, [“IOM Builds Dignified Environments for Migrants in El Salvador”](#) (15 August 2017); and internal documents.

⁴⁰ IOM, Press release, [“Returnees and Community Members Engage in Rehabilitation of Health Centre in Maputo”](#) (20 December 2019).



BOX 3

maintenance of roads. The ultimate objective of the Roads FaST Activity was the provision of year-round access to basic services and economic markets through an improved road infrastructure and road network for the inhabitants of Darfur.

Across Darfur, over 30 health facilities were also rehabilitated, over 50 schools and 35 health centres were provided with improved water supply, and four schools were constructed and furnished.

Benefiting the entire communities where they were implemented, these interventions contributed to create an environment more conducive to reintegration for returning IDPs, refugees and migrants who could access markets, register their children to school or receive medical care upon return.⁴¹

This example illustrates the scope and variety of infrastructure-based interventions in recovery context (addressing both economic and social needs), which aim to support communities towards sustainable development, and to create enabling conditions for return and reintegration.

Community-based interventions can be designed and implemented so as to contribute to improved services in communities, while providing a source of income for returnees and local people. In Daloa, Côte d'Ivoire, a waste management project was supported by IOM and CARE International in the framework of the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative*. Here, more than 6,500 households have subscribed to the waste collection service provided by five groups of returnees, for a monthly fee.⁴²

2.3 Social cohesion

Upon their return, migrants can, in certain circumstances, be received with distrust by their receiving community. They may be stigmatized, and communities may be reluctant to support them in reintegrating back into their community. In case of large return flows, communities' resources can be strained and social cohesion can be eroded. In some contexts, particularly post-conflict, social cohesion in migrants' communities of origin can be considerably eroded, not only with regards to the relationships between the community and returnees but also between various other groups. This lack of social cohesion can negatively affect the sustainability of returnee reintegration.

In this light, sustainable development and reintegration programmes can support the restoration of trust and the improvement of social relations in returnees' communities through various types of activities promoting positive interaction between different groups and, more broadly, social cohesion, as well as through programmes which indirectly promote social cohesion.^{43, 44}

In particular, "joint initiatives that encourage the inclusive participation of returnees and non-migrant populations alike, while addressing the targeted communities' needs, can foster social cohesion between returnees and their communities."⁴⁵ Participatory, community-based interventions (be they primarily focused on economic initiatives, access to services or social cohesion) can

⁴¹ See [United Nations Darfur Fund website](#) and [UNDP website](#).

⁴² IOM, EU-IOM Joint Initiative, *Biannual Reintegration Report #3*; IOM Medium, "[Make Our City Clean Again](#)" (15 July 2019); and [Reintegration Handbook: Annex 11 – Guidance for mainstreaming environmental and climate considerations into reintegration programming](#) (2020).

⁴³ Development programmes and projects addressing, for example, health care, education, livelihoods, food security or gender empowerment may have a significant impact on enhancing social cohesion. Indirect programming involves efforts to use the full scope of development-oriented work to build community ties and economic or governance interdependencies. See UNDP, [Strengthening Social Cohesion, Conceptual Framing and Programming Implications](#) (2020).

⁴⁴ See IOM, [The Power of "Contact": Designing, Facilitating and Evaluating Social Mixing Activities to Strengthen Migrant Integration and Social Cohesion Between Migrants and Local Communities. A Review of Lessons Learned](#) (2021).

⁴⁵ IOM, *A Framework for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration*, page 14.



contribute to enhanced social cohesion and help returnees reintegrating in their communities. It is however important for interventions aiming to address social cohesion to be as inclusive as possible. In this light, returnees constitute “only” one of the different sub-groups of the community to be considered in such interventions.

Social cohesion in areas of return in Somalia

Such an intervention was implemented by IOM, UN-Habitat and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Somalia. To support the Federal Government of Somalia’s strategies and programmes on community development and local governance, the *Midnimo* programme⁴⁶ (2017–2019) targeted some areas that experienced massive return flows of refugees, IDPs and migrants, hosted large IDPs communities, and presented a range of economic, social, security and protection-related vulnerabilities. The towns of Kismayo and Baidoa were among the areas targeted. In Kismayo, populations “required both humanitarian and recovery support, as well as attention to potential destabilizing factors such as competition over resources, land disputes and historical inter-clan rivalries, in an already fragile context. Community-based planning (CBP) was applied as the principal approach and entry point for building social cohesion among returnees, IDPs and host communities. The process brought together various groups to jointly negotiate and prioritize projects to improve equitable

access to quality basic services, infrastructure and security/ protection to establish the means for peaceful coexistence. An external evaluation of the [...] project highlighted that a key outcome of the approach was in improving levels of acceptance of the IDPs and returnees among the broader community, by increasing positive social interactions and joint identification, as well as implementation of projects providing community-wide economic and social benefits [...]. Projects included the upgrading, rehabilitation and construction of community-prioritized schools, hospitals, water sources, markets, police stations, prisons and stadiums, benefiting 842,225 people, and using labour predominantly sourced from the local populations. The stability dividend was therefore threefold, and derived from a combination of inclusive planning, increased social interactions through community-based public works, and reducing pressure on the availability of public infrastructure and services.”⁴⁷

BOX 4



⁴⁶ “*Midnimo*” means “unity” in Somali. The full name of the programme is Achieving Local Solutions to Displacement Crises in Somalia: A Human Security approach to Durable Solutions.

⁴⁷ Grundy S. and S. Zingg, IOM, Migration Research Series No. 66, [Community Stabilization – An approach for facilitating progress towards durable solutions and operationalizing the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus: Lessons from Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Somalia](#) (2020), page 10.



BOX 5

Social cohesion, reintegration programmes and conflict-sensitivity

In post-conflict contexts, conflict-sensitivity is essential for all interventions, including reintegration programmes. This is particularly so if there is a perception amongst communities that returnees are supporters of a particular side in the conflict. Therefore, interventions at individual level must be carefully assessed, and balanced with support activities for other community members. Conflict sensitivity also requires interventions to be created based on a good understanding of the local context and the conflict and peace drivers within a community. This approach helps to ensure that at minimum, interventions “do no harm”, but also, are able to identify opportunities to contribute to localised peace/peaceful coexistence between returnees and their receiving communities.

“Sustainable reintegration is inextricably tied to rebuilding the social fabric and social capital of communities with an understanding of the causes of the conflict and a determined effort not to recreate

these. Interventions must not privilege any category of returnee or privilege returnees vis-à-vis those that remained behind. This has often been the case with mandate-oriented agencies that work with specific target populations and receive funding in line with their mandates. Today there is much greater recognition by the humanitarian and development communities that programs must take a holistic, integrated approach to communities. This can be done while still meeting the specific needs of particular members of a community such as child-ex-combatants, women-headed households, orphans, and others who require special attention. Facilitating inclusive, representative participation by the community in defining and prioritising its needs and implementing and evaluating projects based on these needs can affect both the sustainability of the interventions but just as importantly social cohesion - no easy task as communities form and reform with new arrivals. Real participation takes time but has a value well-beyond the investment.”⁴⁸

2.4 Reintegration, environment and climate change

Exposure to climate change, environmental degradation and natural hazards threatens many areas of return, jeopardizing local development and migrants’ reintegration process. Scarcity of natural resources triggered by climate change or other environmental shocks can also erode social cohesion and generate tensions within the community and among the different user groups relying on these resources.

Programmes can support communities to adapt to the impact of climate change or reduce the risks related to disasters, for instance by mobilizing communities to build flood-resistant infrastructures, by introducing sustainable agricultural techniques or by promoting green jobs.⁴⁹ In Afghanistan for instance, community-based development planning (described in [Case Study No. 2](#)) brings a wide range of community members together (including returnees) to identify the community’s needs, root causes of underdevelopment and migration, and actionable steps for addressing the most pressing issues. Under the RADA project, this has for example resulted in the construction of flood protection walls, protecting houses and agricultural land from seasonal flooding.

⁴⁸ Lippman B. and J. Rogge, [Making return and reintegration sustainable, transparent and participatory](#), *Forced Migration Review* 21: 4–5 (September 2021), page 5.

⁴⁹ The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines green jobs as “decent jobs that contribute to, preserve or restore the environment, be they in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and construction, or in new, emerging green sectors such as renewable energy and energy efficiency.” See ILO, [What is a green job?](#) (2016).



The threats faced by communities can actually become opportunities for returnees since they can lead to income opportunities in the short term (for instance, cash-for-work schemes to plant trees) and in the long term (for instance, green jobs).

This is especially true in rural areas where communities rely mainly on agriculture for their livelihoods and where the departure of migrants can generate a void in the labour force available. The development of inclusive and environmentally sustainable agricultural value chains can also lead to an increase in producers' income or in the creation of attractive labour opportunities by capitalizing on production, and providing added value in post-harvest sectors. Climate smart solutions implemented along these value chains can also contribute to increase community resilience to climate related shocks. This include, for instance, improving waste management techniques, climate smart agricultural production techniques, and increasing the use of green energy sources.

Access to resources can create tensions that can negatively affect sustainable development and reintegration of returnees. Programmes should therefore promote peaceful access to natural resources for all users. Community-driven conflict prevention and mitigation mechanisms are essential to building climate resilience and enhancing social capital between and within different groups relying on the same resources for their livelihoods. For instance, in agropastoral areas where climate change has led to an intensification of droughts and slowed down the regeneration of pastures, pastoralists have adapted to these new conditions by altering traditional transhumance routes to feed their livestock. As a result, livestock is often brought close to agricultural lands in order to access feed and waterpoints, which has become a driver of farmer-herder conflicts in many localities. In these contexts, structural interventions aiming to create enabling environments for sustainable natural resources management can play a key role in fostering peaceful interactions among communities. These initiatives can be linked to reintegration programmes, for instance by including returning migrants into pasture regeneration or land rehabilitation interventions. At the border between Mali and Mauritania, for instance, a cross-border conflict prevention system has been put in place through the involvement of different communities to facilitate peaceful pastoral mobility and the safe movements of herds along transhumance corridors. Local authorities have improved their knowledge on transhumance while strengthening the implementation of land tenures regimes. In parallel, returning migrants have contributed to improving the access of different communities to natural resources by being involved in land and pasture regeneration programmes.

More information on mainstreaming environmental and climate considerations into reintegration programming and examples of community-based projects integrating environmental consideration can be found in Annex 11 of IOM Reintegration Handbook.⁵⁰



⁵⁰ IOM, *Reintegration Handbook: Annex 11*.



BOX 6

Agroecology to drive climate change adaptation thanks to farmers returning to Senegal⁵¹

The village of Medina Touat is located in Kolda, a region affected by the Casamance conflict and among the poorest areas in Senegal. While the region has traditionally been very fertile, offering significant farming opportunities, climate change and ecosystem degradation have depleted local soils and are now threatening livelihoods of those local communities that depend mostly on agriculture. To survive, communities have turned to illegal deforestation, which aggravates biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, soil stabilization practices and emigration. Over the last decades, Casamance has become the area of Senegal from which most people migrate. Return and reintegration of migrants to the area is difficult due to the lack of local economic opportunities and support structures for returnees, as well as continuing environmental pressures.

As part of the project *Mainstreaming Environmental Dimensions into Reintegration Support to Reduce the Effects of Climate Change on Migration in West Africa*, in 2019, IOM implemented a pilot project in the village of Medina Touat. This is creating economic opportunities for returnees to contribute to managing climate change impacts in the region, reducing pressure on

natural resources and increasing resilience of local communities through increased food security.

Funded by the Government of France, the pilot project was implemented in partnership with the NGO Trees for the Future (TREES) and aimed to inform and train a selected group of returnees in agroforestry and sustainable agricultural techniques – following the TREES Forest Garden Approach – as well as income-generating practices. Trainees attended a course at Sow Ranch, a demonstration farm next to Medina Touat. Hectares of land have been allocated to establish a farming perimeter where returnees cultivate fruits and vegetables that will contribute to the local economy and food security of the entire community. The activities also help protect the local environment by preventing the felling of nearby forests for fuelwood and food products, and thus also contributes to mitigating climate change.

Following expressions of interest in the activities by local community members and local authorities, the project has been extended to target other groups beyond returnees, adopting a more inclusive approach that now increasingly contributes to building social cohesion.

BOX 7

Creating livelihoods through environmental rehabilitation in Ethiopia⁵²

In Ethiopia, IOM in partnership with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Development and the Social Service Commission, implemented the Creating Livelihoods through Environmental Rehabilitation in Ethiopia project to enhance the socioeconomic reintegration of returnees whilst simultaneously rehabilitating the environment and enhancing food

availability for local communities.

This small-scale community project, implemented over the course of 12 months (November 2018 – October 2019), sought to tackle several challenges and problems experienced by returnees in Ethiopia. It worked across three levels to: (i) support the sustainable reintegration of returnees, through increasing their access to livelihoods; (ii) help better protect the environment against degradation and the effects of climate change by enhancing the availability of vegetation; and (iii) create

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Based on EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub, Reintegration Assistance: Good, Promising and Innovative Practices Factsheet #11 (forthcoming). See also IOM Storyteller, [“Fighting Climate Change: Helping Ethiopian Farmers Adapt to Drought and Flooding”](#) (30 September 2019).



BOX 7

spaces for community dialogues and awareness-raising to promote the model of environmental rehabilitation, and the rights and needs of returnees.

Through this intervention, various soil and water conservation structures were constructed to reduce soil erosion and harvest moisture, allowing for better performance of seedlings and grasses. Fruit seedlings were also made available to community members. Training was provided to beneficiaries in soil and water conservation, watershed management and environmental rehabilitation to sustain the intervention. A community committee was established to oversee the watershed project area. In addition, targeted community members benefited from cash-for-work schemes for the construction of soil and water conservation structures, hillside terraces, trenches, and micro basins.

As a result, 25 hectares of severely degraded land were rehabilitated. Trees and grass have significantly grown in the watershed, erosion is controlled, and fodder availability has increased, which constituted an additional support for beneficiaries also involved in goat fattening. Overall, around 205 families living in the nearby area benefited from the rehabilitation.

Returnees and community members were also organized in self-help groups to start small businesses and look into additional income-generating activities options. They were trained in group organization,

entrepreneurship, saving and bookkeeping. They opened bank accounts and were provided with seed money. Self-help group members were also trained in planting and cultivating fruit trees as well as on generating income from fruit sales. Eventually, a total of 1,919 trees (1,739 grafted apple mango and 180 avocado) were planted.

Furthermore, the project tackled overconsumption of fuelwood. Discussions with community members showed a growing demand of fuelwood for cooking and a consequent growth of the market for fuel-saving stoves in the project sites, resulting in deforestation for cooking purposes. The project therefore promoted the use of efficient fuel-saving stoves and supported returnees and community members in their production, which contributed to reduce deforestation.

Members of the committee regularly organize community conversation sessions on environmental degradation and rehabilitation, reintegration of returnees, and other topics. These discussions have contributed to addressing issues faced by returnees, and for instance have led the community-based institutions to mainstream reintegration in their bylaws. It has also led to the organization of activities to facilitate social cohesion as well as social and psychosocial support mechanisms, such as the creation of a football team composed of returnees and other youth from the community.

2.5 Characteristics of community-based initiatives

The above interventions can be implemented in a variety of contexts through community stabilization, community revitalization, community-based reintegration or area-based development projects targeting high migration and return areas. These approaches can differ in terms of primary beneficiaries, but all seek to address communities' needs and pursue recovery or sustainable development objectives, while directly or indirectly supporting returnees' reintegration.

Most also promote participatory methods whereby community members, including returnees, are consulted and participate in the identification of needs and in the design and implementation of the interventions. Finally, by including the community, community-based initiatives are likely to attract support by local authorities and actors.



These interventions should build upon community profiles⁵³ that can be conducted under development or reintegration programmes (making sure both sustainable development and reintegration considerations are incorporated), or in other contexts (e.g. definition of local development plan). Community profiles can include or be complemented with various elements such as labour market assessments, stakeholders mapping, and spatial planning and systemic approaches.

From a reintegration programme perspective, community-based initiatives are particularly relevant when there is a certain concentration of returns in a specific community,⁵⁴ as they can alleviate potential frustrations and tensions between returnees and the local population, and mitigate other potentially negative effects of returns on local development (such as pressure on jobs and services or destabilization of social structures). Where returnees are scattered, community-based initiatives appear to be less relevant and less efficient from a cost-benefit perspective, but reintegration programmes can nevertheless try to consider communities' needs while assisting individual returnees. For instance, in Guinea IOM supported a returnee setting up a computer maintenance project in order, in his own words, "to participate in the economic and social development of Kankan". Since he started the activity, he has recruited five apprentices and trained two students on computer maintenance, thereby extending the benefits of the support received under the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative* to local youth.

Community-based initiatives implemented under development programmes do not necessarily target returnees, but by supporting communities they may also support returnees indirectly. Returnees can also be referred to and benefit directly from these initiatives. In areas marked by migration and return, community-based development initiatives should specifically integrate reintegration considerations.



⁵³ For more information on community profiles, see IOM *Reintegration Handbook*.

⁵⁴ Returns are often concentrated in post-conflict contexts, but they can also be so in other circumstances, for instance when a crisis (violent conflict, economic and health crisis) hits a major country of destination (e.g. crises in Libya in 2011–2012 and in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002–2003 and 2010–2011, COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–2021), when large numbers of migrants are stranded (e.g. in Libya in 2017–2018, in the Niger in 2018–2020, in Mexico in recent years), or when mass deportations are conducted (e.g. Ethiopians expelled from Saudi Arabia in 2013–2014, Afghans expelled from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, especially since 2016).



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◇ Community level initiatives respond to the needs, vulnerabilities and concerns of communities. By addressing these needs, which often affect both returnees and the local population, programmes can contribute to sustainable development at the local level, while directly or indirectly supporting returnees' sustainable reintegration.
- ◇ In areas characterised by migration and return, community-based development initiatives should specifically integrate reintegration considerations.
- ◇ At the economic level, a variety of interventions can be envisaged, including local development initiatives, employment support through enhanced employment services or support to the creation of jobs for specific target groups, and interventions on economic infrastructures and systems.
- ◇ Reintegration and development programmes can contribute to improve the availability of and access to basic services for communities of origin, and to ensure fair access to natural resources, which contributes to mitigating tensions between returnees and local people and to increasing social cohesion.
- ◇ Development and reintegration programmes can support communities adapting to the impact of climate change and environmental degradation or mitigating the risks related to natural disasters, for instance by building adequate infrastructure or by introducing sustainable agricultural techniques, and turning threats into opportunities, mainly in terms of jobs and income-generating activities (e.g. short-term cash-for-work schemes, green jobs).

Credits:

Page 16. Through IOM Afghanistan's Reintegration and Development Assistance (RADA) and Connecting Return with Development (CRD) programmes, Afghan returnees are supported to attend a tailoring school in Herat run by a young female entrepreneur. The programme helps these women to reintegrate, enhance their professional skills and eventually gain new livelihood opportunities. © IOM/Angela WELLS.

Page 21. A mother fondly teases her child while selling fruit and vegetables in the market shed.. © IOM 2019/Rikka TUPAZ.

Page 23. Returnees and community members involved in a greenhouse project in Jebreil, Herat. © IOM/Angela WELLS.

Page 26. In the context of reintegration activities 355 returning migrants have received vocational training and have been accompanied in the creation of micro-enterprises or in the search for a job or work experience. More than 2,437 stranded migrants have voluntarily returned to Burkina Faso under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for the Protection and Reintegration of Migrants. © IOM/Alexander BEE.



3. MAXIMIZING THE MUTUAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Programmes contributing to more cohesive and better-served communities, offering improved economic opportunities, and with more competent national and local authorities and civil society that work in a more coordinated manner in line with local and national policies and plans, can thus make a significant contribution to both sustainable reintegration and sustainable development. Reintegration and development programmes can also establish synergies to increase and improve the individual support to returnees, to address the needs of returnees not included in reintegration programmes and to leverage the potential contribution of individual returnees on sustainable development.

3.1 Establishing synergies to increase and improve support to returnees

3.1.1 Combining support

Reintegration programmes usually envisage individual support to returnees. Synergies with development programmes operating in the same geographic area allow combining support from both programmes to increase the range of options or the amount of support available to returnees in a variety of sectors, including livelihoods and employment, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and access to basic services.

In such a scenario, each programme covers particular needs of returnees based upon their respective parameters. This requires a division of tasks and a sharing of resources, and often results in more comprehensive assistance for returnees. This is the approach that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and IOM have adopted in Darfur, where they combined their support to provide tailored assistance to returning farmers and herders, as illustrated in Box 8.

Synergies can involve varying degrees of commitment from relevant actors: when considering synergies between a TVET and a reintegration programme, for instance, there can be a general agreement that returnees can benefit from the TVET activity under the development programme without any condition regarding the type of support provided under the reintegration programme, or a mutual commitment that any beneficiary supported with TVET, should then be supported to set up a business in the same field under the reintegration programme. In this case, the development programme provides returnees with the required skills to work, the reintegration programme with the goods and equipment required to set up their business. This ensures that beneficiaries have both the skills and the means to work, while limiting the burden (in terms of human and financial resources) on each programme. In any case, the combination of activities under different programmes should contribute to achieving the returnees' reintegration plans in a comprehensive manner.

Examples of such synergies include those between the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative* and the *Support Program for the Socio-Economic Integration of Youth* (INTEGRA) programme in Guinea, and between the same reintegration programme and the *Youth Empowerment Project* (YEP) and the *Building a future – Make it in the Gambia – Tekki Fii* project in the Gambia. These synergies are described in the [Case Study No. 1](#).



BOX 8

FAO and IOM combining support for returning farmers and herders in Darfur

In the Sudan, FAO and IOM have partnered to support the reintegration of migrants returning to West Darfur who rely on agriculture and livestock for their livelihoods. FAO has supported returning farmers and herders (returning IDPs, refugees and migrants) to restore crop production and support livestock related livelihoods through the provision of inputs (machinery, seeds and fertilizers) and training. FAO faced some challenges, as farmers and herders regularly reported lacking cash to better sustain their activities. On the other side, IOM has been supporting returning migrants under the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative*. Many migrants returning to West Darfur were involved in crop or livestock-related livelihoods before migrating, and wanted to re-establish themselves in these livelihood activities upon return.⁵⁵

As IOM shifted its assistance modality from in-kind to cash in 2020 (linked to the COVID-19-related situation), FAO and IOM identified an opportunity for synergies between both programmes: IOM would transfer cash to returnees involved in agriculture to enable them to re-establish their livelihood activities and successively cover associated costs, and FAO would provide them with agricultural inputs. Between August and December 2020, more than 100 returning migrants were assisted jointly by IOM and FAO in West Darfur. Based on the initial success of this partnership, both agencies agreed to extend it over 2021, with the potential to target additional regions of the Sudan.

The assistance provided to returnees under both partners' interventions allows for a more comprehensive

response to returnees' needs. Both support returnees implementing their business plan in the agricultural sector, with IOM's support used to establish the business (e.g. pay for the cattle, prepare the field, etc.), while FAO provides complimentary support in the provision of machinery, seeds or fertilizers. There is a clear distinction of tasks, assistance provided, and costs under the joint partnership.

FAO considers the returnees referred by IOM as (also) their beneficiaries, enabling them to benefit from any other future support activities implemented by FAO.

The selection criteria for returnees to benefit from this partnership are very clear: they are based on location and returnees' reintegration plans (the partnership works for returnees willing to establish businesses linked to agriculture).

This partnership could also have another, indirect effect. Given the challenging situation in Darfur, many Darfuri migrants prefer to settle in the capital Khartoum rather than returning to their community of origin. In Khartoum, returnees usually favour trade businesses that generate incomes quickly but have weak prospects of sustainability (e.g. mobile phone shops). As many Darfuris are experienced in agriculture, the increased support made available through the IOM-FAO partnership may provide an incentive for migrants to return to their region of origin and establish more sustainable livelihood activities.

FAO's approach to reintegration in rural areas is developed in [Case Study No. 5](#).

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⁵⁵ As of January 2021, approximately 3,200 migrants had returned to the Sudan as part of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative, including more than 500 to West Darfur. Among them, 104 expressed their will to work in the agriculture and livestock sectors, and were assisted accordingly.



in the same field under the reintegration programme. In this case, the development programme provides returnees with the required skills to work, the reintegration programme with the goods and equipment required to set up their business. This ensures that beneficiaries have both the skills and the means to work, while limiting the burden (in terms of human and financial resources) on each programme. In any case, the combination of activities under different programmes should contribute to achieving the returnees' reintegration plans in a comprehensive manner.

Examples of such synergies include those between the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative* and the *Support Program for the Socio-Economic Integration of Youth* (INTEGRA) programme in Guinea, and between the same reintegration programme and the *Youth Empowerment Project* (YEP) and the *Building a future – Make it in the Gambia – Tekki Fii* project in the Gambia. These synergies are described in the [Case Study No. 1](#).

Complementarities can also be established in non-economic sectors, such as health, psychosocial support, or childcare. Examples of complementarities in the health sector in Mali and the Sudan are presented in Box 9.

BOX 9

Medical assistance plans in Mali and the Sudan

In Mali, returnees assisted under the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative* who have chronic health conditions are referred to the National Direction for Social Development of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Direction can include them in the national medical assistance plan (“Régime d'assistance médicale”) through which they gain access to free health care in all public health centres in Mali for a period of two years. This support addresses one of the major stress factors for returnees in Mali: the high cost of medical care, allowing the reintegration programme to focus on returnees' other needs.

In the Sudan, IOM has piloted an initiative to link returnees and their families with the National Health Insurance Fund. Medical screenings, referral of returnees to medical service providers and coverage of medical fees were originally funded under the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative*, but the partnership with the Fund improves access to primary health care for returnees

and cushions them against prohibitive medical bills. At the moment, IOM pays the annual premiums to the Fund, which is then responsible for providing the health services. However, this is an initial step towards universal health coverage in the Sudan.⁵⁶



Development programmes can build on the initial support provided to returnees by a reintegration programme and strengthen its outcomes and sustainability. For instance, numerous reintegration programmes support returnees to set up a business, but lack resources to make these businesses grow and create jobs. To boost the growth and sustainability of these businesses,

⁵⁶ IOM, Press releases, “[Sudanese Migrant Returnees to Access Health Insurance](#)” (26 July 2019; IOM Medium, “[Medical Coverage Provides a Lifeline for Returning Migrants in the Time of COVID-19](#)” (3 June 2020).



reintegration programmes can link them with development programmes able to provide additional support in the form of, among others:

- Business support, including through the provision of equipment or material or of services such as coaching, marketing and business linkages, or through facilitating access to business incubators or accelerators;
- Facilitation of access to capital, by linking returnees with financial service providers (including microfinance institutions)⁵⁷ or with the private sector;
- Specialized training to improve returnees' income-generating activities or provide them with increased employment opportunities, including in sectors in demand such as green jobs.

Programmes working with diasporas (including those managed by local authorities or migrant associations) can also engage the diaspora to further support returnees and communities of origin. They can contribute “to create transnational connections, aiming at, not only knowledge and capacity transfer, but also the advantage created by migrant transnationalism to link local production in territory of origin with the local and national needs of the territory of destination”, thus offering opportunities to sell the goods produced by returnees and their community on the international market.⁵⁸

Creative Spaces and access to technology and livelihoods for returnees in Djibouti⁵⁹

In Djibouti, IOM in partnership with the University of Djibouti and the Swiss-based NGO Terre des Hommes, established in December 2019 the ‘Creative Space’, a digital fabrication lab or ‘fab lab’ with a humanitarian and migration focus. Through training, access to computer-assisted equipment like 3D printers and laser cutters, and mentoring to work through different phases of product design and prototyping, the Space provides returning migrants, students, unaccompanied minors, refugees and young people who do not have access to education in the local community, with digital skills to increase learning in technology and job opportunities in the digital economy. The Space benefits persons who have limited access to higher education and training opportunities, including persons who never used a computer before.

The beneficiaries can use the equipment to develop creative digital fabrication projects and develop business initiatives, as well as access funding and



BOX 10

⁵⁷ For more information on the use of microcredit schemes in the context of reintegration, see EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub, Knowledge Paper No. 1, “[The use of microcredit schemes in migrant reintegration context](#)”(2021).

⁵⁸ JMDI, My JMDI Toolkit, *Module 4*, page 98.

⁵⁹ See IOM, Press release, “[IOM Djibouti's First 'Fab Lab' Offers Young Migrants Tech and Support](#)” (18 December 2019). Box 10 is also based on Project Interim Report (Year 1), the [Fablabs.io website](#) and exchange with project staff.



BOX 10

create new partnerships. The team running the space contributed to the COVID-19 response by creating 3D-printed face shields and supplying them in three hospitals during a time of critical shortage of personal protective equipment.

It also supports users with business development training and mentoring so that they can scale innovations to a commercial level and/or access livelihood opportunities. For instance, two students developed specific business initiatives in the area of furniture making from recycled materials, and in

energy efficiency. These students received support to develop business plans, and guidance on prototyping and refining their products and developing their start-ups.

Between December 2019 and January 2021, a total of 183 young people affected by migration, including returnees, received training in digital skills. The project continues under the management of the University of Djibouti with financial support by the World Bank.

Development programmes can also contribute to returnees' reintegration in a more creative manner: in the Gambia, returnees trained in construction-related sectors under a reintegration programme, have successively been referred by IOM to the Belgian Development Agency (ENABEL), who employed them under a cash-for-work scheme in the construction of a youth centre, as well as in other community projects. This support significantly enhanced their economic well-being, which was highly needed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In view of the different time constraints between reintegration and development programmes (see [Chapter II](#)), synergies can allow for the continuation of provision of services to returnees after the end of the assistance period under the reintegration programme. This does not mean that the development programme continues providing the same support carried out under the reintegration programme, but that the development programme can include returnees in its activities, within its own timeframe, as relevant. In West Darfur, the synergies established between FAO and IOM (see Box 8) allow returnees originally supported under the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative* to become "FAO beneficiaries", and thus they have the opportunity to participate in FAO's activities in the region (e.g. training, distribution of agricultural inputs, marketing support), even after the end of the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative*.

Given that reintegration programmes should as much as possible support returnees in their transition out of the programme, these synergies can constitute a relevant "case management closure" or handover strategy for reintegration programmes, and provide a well-structured transition process to progressively foster returnees' autonomy from assistance.

This is an approach adopted by the *Returning to New Opportunities* programme implemented by GIZ on behalf of BMZ: "The comprehensive approach for local development and structural long-term support in countries of origin lies behind the [...] programme "Returning to New Opportunities", which aims to support training and employment as well as provide social support to returnees. The programme is linked to existing projects focusing on the institutional, legislative and structural improvement of labour markets, vocational education or municipal development, and its main structures – Advice Centres – are designed to work alongside and in coordination with local institutions."⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), [Sustainable Reintegration of Returning Migrants: A Better Homecoming](#) (2020), page 84.



3.1.2 Supporting returnees not included in reintegration programmes

Reintegration programmes increasingly include the communities of return in their interventions. However, many projects, for instance many AVRR projects funded by countries of destination's home affairs or migration ministries, limit support to certain categories of returnees, like those returned under specific return schemes, from specific host countries, and/or with specific status. Even those funded by development donors that explicitly intend to avoid any beneficiary discrimination, usually limit the range of returnees they can assist (except in the framework of community-based projects). The *EU-IOM Joint Initiative*, for instance, has broad eligibility criteria, but they remain limited to migrants returning from Europe, North Africa or other countries implementing the Initiative, which means that, for instance, Ethiopians or North Africans returning from Saudi Arabia are not part of the beneficiary caseload. These groups can benefit from community-based initiatives under the reintegration programme where such initiatives are implemented, but this limits the geographical scope of the support available to communities where such projects are implemented, and limits the types of support available to them. Furthermore, migrants who return spontaneously – who outnumber migrants assisted in their return but often fall off the radar of reintegration or development programmes⁶¹ – are often not included or not eligible to take part in reintegration programmes.

Development programmes, however, follow a different logic when it comes to identifying their targets and eligibility criteria. The latter, including those related to vulnerability, age, gender or socioeconomic conditions, can be utilised to provide support to returnees who are not eligible under reintegration programmes. Synergies with development programmes can thus help overcome the possible imbalance that some reintegration programmes create between different types of returnees, ensuring that a larger part of the population has access to services and opportunities.

3.2 Leveraging the positive contributions of returning migrants on sustainable development

Reintegration and development programmes can encourage and enable returnees to create jobs for members of the community, be it in the framework of their micro-businesses or in the framework of cooperatives or other types of collective projects benefiting the community. Beyond this, returning migrants' skills, networks and resources can be leveraged to contribute to the development of their countries and communities of origin.⁶² Financial incentives can encourage returnees to use their financial capital for this purpose. The "1+1" principle, for instance, is an incentive mechanism whereby the funds invested by individuals to create or develop businesses, are matched by non-refundable grants of equal value (i.e. for each dollar invested by the individual, one dollar is granted by the state or programme).⁶³ IOM and governments have implemented similar schemes in various countries.

In the Republic of Moldova, IOM conceptualised, initiated and piloted a 1+1 mechanism for remittances invested in business creation and development, that was successively handed over to the public National Organisation for Supporting Small and Medium Business Sector. Between 2011 and 2021, the *PARE 1+1 Program for Attracting Remittances into Economic Development* supported 1,700 businesses through this mechanism, with 40 per cent of these established by returning migrants (the others

⁶¹ In many contexts, spontaneous returns are not easily identifiable, and thus not counted, making it extremely difficult to even estimate their number per country or region. However, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is estimated that millions of migrants have returned to their countries of origin and many others are still expected to return. For instance, India "assisted more than 600,000 migrants in coming home" between the beginning of the pandemic and October 2020, and Egypt foresees that "1 million Egyptians may ultimately return". Le Coz and Newland, *Rewiring Migrant Returns and Reintegration after the COVID-19 Shock*.

⁶² As suggested in the first part of this Paper, "the return of migrants can promote development through the promotion, mobilization and utilization of productive resources that they have gained abroad. In practice however, gauging the extent to which return migrants contribute to development is complex, and much consideration needs to be given to understanding: [i] the profile of returnees (age, skills, investment potential, gender...); [ii] the time, motivation and condition of return migrants; [iii] the level of preparedness and willingness; [iv] their ability to reintegrate and/or invest into labour markets of their countries of origin." JMDI, My JMDI Toolkit, *Module 4*, page 46.

⁶³ The ratio between the individual's investment and the amount provided by the state or programme can vary according to the programme. For instance under a "1x3" programmes, for each dollar invested, the state or programme invests 3 dollars.



were established by migrants' family members). The programme contributed to attracting USD 57 million from migrants' remittances and to create more than 4,000 new jobs.⁶⁴ In Ukraine, IOM has targeted returnees in a pilot initiative implemented since 2019. As of early 2021, over 260 migrants had applied for the initiative and 10 businesses have been supported in various sectors, including industry, agriculture, construction, services, and education. This support contributed to the creation of 11 jobs.⁶⁵ The returnees not only contributed to local development through their investments, but also through the transfer of their professional experience and knowledge gained abroad. Returnees' skills and their matching with local needs and development opportunities, can also be leveraged for sustainable development. Programmes can encourage this by supporting returnees with training and facilitating skills recognition, including in the host country before returns take place. They can also support or directly implement job orientation and job placement services, including through job fairs, the dissemination of job offers among qualified returnees, the creation and maintenance of job matching websites/databases, and so on.

In line with the Mobility Partnership signed with the European Union, the Government of the Republic of Moldova developed a *Plan of Action on Fostering Return of Moldovan Migrants from Abroad* in 2008. In its framework, job fairs were organized in Germany and Italy, where Moldovan employers presented their various job offers to Moldovan migrants. An agreement between the Italian regional employment and labour market agency "Veneto Lavoro" and the Moldovan Public Employment Services allowed for sharing of information on potential returnees residing in Italy and vacancies available in the Republic of Moldova. Socioeconomic reintegration services were also made accessible to returning migrants who were offered professional (re-) qualification, employment counselling and grants for small business start-ups. The new jobs and services established in rural communities, contributed to local development, retention of young people and better livelihood opportunities.⁶⁶ Since its development in 2008, the Plan has been revised every three years, and as of April 2021, IOM was supporting the development of a National Reintegration Programme for the period 2021 - 2024. This latest edition includes a focus on COVID-19-driven returns and efforts to leverage the material and human resources of returning migrants for early socioeconomic recovery in the post-COVID-19 context.

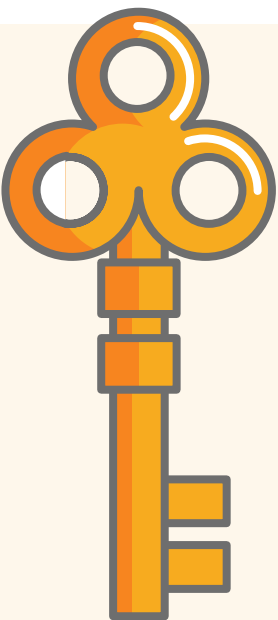
Contributing to the development of their community or country of origin, can also be at the centre of migrants' decision to return. Programmes can support them and optimize their contribution by matching returning migrants with assignments in key development-related sectors such as health and education.

IOM has supported similar initiatives since the 1970s under different programmes, including the *Return of Qualified Nationals and the Migration and Development for Africa (MIDA)* programmes. These programmes aim to utilise the contribution of migrants for the economic and social development of their country of origin, mainly through the transfer of skills and knowledge to build institutional and individual capacities. For instance, Somali migrants residing in Finland decided to return to Somalia through the MIDA FINNSOM programme to support the country in improving its health sector and became nurses, curriculum developers or hospital directors.

⁶⁴ Data based on exchange of e-mails with IOM staff based in the Republic of Moldova.

⁶⁵ See various articles on IOM Ukraine's webpage: "[Nobody wants to go to work abroad](#)"; "[The Story of One Discovery](#)"; "[Chinese Cabbage. Polish Experience. Ukrainian Business](#)".

⁶⁶ See Hincu D., *Synergies between Migration and Development. Policies and programs: Moldova* (2011); Migration 4 Development, [Consolidated Reply: Promoting Government and Civil Society Partnerships in Migration and Development](#) (2011).



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◇ Reintegration and development programmes can establish synergies to increase and improve individual support to returnees, including after the end of the reintegration programme implementation or assistance period, and for returnees not included in reintegration programmes.
- ◇ Synergies between reintegration and development programmes can result in a combination of support, whereby each programme covers some of the needs of returnees in the economic and non-economic spheres, according to each programme's parameters.
- ◇ Reintegration and development programmes can leverage the potential contributions of returning migrants to sustainable development, especially when migrants decide to return with the specific objective to contribute to the development of their community or country of origin. Programmes can support them creating jobs or new services in their community or opening up new markets, support the matching of their skills with local needs and opportunities (including through assignments in key development-related sectors such as health and education), or provide them with financial incentives to invest their financial capital in the country of origin.

Credits:

Page 28. "Stories Untold: Return of Georgian Migrants in Photos" features personal accounts of Georgian migrants who returned to their home country after their time overseas and rebuilt their lives in Georgia with the support of IOM. © IOM 2019/Dina OGANOVA.

Page 30. IOM staff assisting Sudanese migrants returnees. © IOM 2019.

Page 31. IOM is supporting a youth-led fabrication lab or "fab lab" which will provide training and access to computer-assisted equipment like 3D printers and laser cutters for returnee migrants, refugees and the local community. © IOM 2019.



Chapter II

DESIGNING PROGRAMMES AND ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS TO PURSUE SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A Nepali returned migrant's wife seen grazing the goats that her husband bought with reintegration support provided by the IOM in 2020. He returned upon losing his employment in foreign country to COVID-19. © IOM Nepal 2020.



A vast range of interventions connecting reintegration and development outcomes were presented above. This chapter examines how programmes can be designed to foster these important interlinkages, and how synergies should be established.

1. EMBEDDING REINTEGRATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN PROGRAMMES

Reintegration and development programmes can be designed so as to explicitly combine both reintegration and development goals. Reintegration programmes can apply a development-oriented approach, while development programmes can include returnees among their target groups, or seek to establish conducive conditions for reintegration in migrants' countries and main communities of origin.

1.1 Development-oriented reintegration programmes

Development-oriented reintegration programmes are programmes primarily aiming to support returnees' sustainable reintegration, and adopting a development-focused approach (i.e. aiming to also contribute to sustainable development through reintegration interventions). They combine reintegration-related goals with sustainable development objectives. "A development perspective assesses sustainability by the extent to which reintegration support contributes to the development of the origin country. In addition to expecting the individual returnee to benefit, [...] it extends to consider overall impact – economically, politically and socially. Programmes are sustainable when there is a net economic benefit for the origin country; when the political leadership shares the goals of the programme and integrates them into legislation and administrative practice; when the programme contributes to societal acceptance of return migrants."⁶⁷

As detailed in [Chapter 1](#), reintegration programmes can achieve sustainable development outcomes by designing and implementing interventions that are inclusive of the returnees' communities of return, by engaging with, mobilizing and fostering dialogue and coordination among a range of stakeholders at local and national levels, or by leveraging the positive contribution returnees may bring to their communities.

[Case studies No. 1, 2 and 3](#) describe development-oriented reintegration programmes implemented in East, North and West Africa, in Afghanistan, and in Georgia.

1.2 Development programmes targeting returning migrants

Development programmes have increasingly targeted high migration and high return areas with programmes aiming to offer economic opportunities to the local population and improve their living conditions, providing a potential alternative to migration, and facilitating returning migrants' reintegration.

This is the case with the *Rural Youth Mobility* project⁶⁸ implemented by FAO in Ethiopia and Tunisia, with the support of the Italian Development Cooperation Agency and in partnership with relevant ministries and rural stakeholders, ILO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and IOM. It supported rural youth, including returning migrants, through productive employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in agriculture. It sought to address the challenges of rural youth, who were increasingly migrating due to poor opportunities to make a living in agriculture. Finding gainful employment in agricultural

⁶⁷ OECD, *Sustainable Reintegration of Returning Migrants*, page 21.

⁶⁸ The project's full name is *Youth mobility, food security and rural poverty reduction: Fostering rural diversification through enhanced youth employment and better labour mobility*. See also the project's [webpage](#) and FAO, [The Rural Youth Mobility Project: Methodology And Results](#) (2018) and [Promoting alternatives to migration for rural youth in Tunisia and Ethiopia](#) (2018).



BOX 11

Matching ambitions with adequate resources

In order for reintegration programmes to both address the needs of returnees (that can be multiple, especially for those in vulnerable situations) and contribute to sustainable development (including by extending their activities and outcomes to communities of return and by intervening at the structural level), they should be resourced adequately.

Funding allocated for reintegration programmes varies considerably, ranging from a few hundred euros to several thousand on average per individual returnee. It is however, most often insufficient to guarantee a fully sustainable reintegration, not to mention to have an impact on sustainable development.

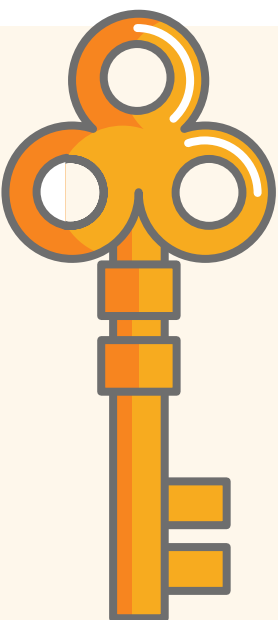
Partnerships and synergies between reintegration and development programmes, as described in this Chapter and illustrated throughout this Paper, and referrals towards existing programmes and services, allow for the optimization of resources (and thus reducing the costs of reintegration programmes). However, they often require capacity-development, which also has a

cost. Furthermore, options for synergies and referrals might be limited, requiring higher resources under reintegration programmes.

Determining an adequate budget for reintegration assistance is a very complex exercise, but reintegration organizations must provide donors with guidance on the cost of development-oriented reintegration assistance, while donors should allocate appropriate financial means to match these programmes' objectives. Specific budget lines for structural support, community-based interventions and other activities contributing to sustainable development outcomes, should be included in budgets in addition to the budget lines for individual reintegration support. Failure to dedicate adequate resources to reintegration programmes would require a reconsideration of these programmes' objectives and the altering of their ambitions.

sectors was hampered by low productivity, poor access to markets and lack of dynamism between farm and non-farm activities. Young people often lacked access to land, credit, and inputs to start their own farms. This situation constituted a strong driver of migration, and a challenge for migrants returning to rural areas. Promoting viable employment opportunities for youth in farm and non-farm rural activities contributed to addressing such a situation. FAO's approach to reintegration is further described in [Case Study No. 5](#).

Even when they do not specifically focus on high return areas, development programmes can benefit returnees either as a specific target group, or as part of wider target groups, for instance the local population, vulnerable groups, or the youth in the targeted communities. In these situations, there is significant room for synergies and complementarities with reintegration programmes.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◇ Reintegration and development programmes can be designed so as to explicitly combine both reintegration and sustainable development goals.
- ◇ Development-oriented reintegration programmes combine the objective to support returnees' sustainable reintegration, with sustainable development objectives. For reintegration programmes to both address the needs of returnees and contribute to sustainable development, they must be resourced adequately.
- ◇ Development programmes can support returnees' sustainable reintegration in a variety of ways, for instance by including returnees among their target groups, or by targeting areas prone to migration and return and seeking to establish conducive conditions for reintegration in these areas.



2. DESIGNING AND FORMALIZING SYNERGIES AND PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN REINTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Development-oriented reintegration programmes and development programmes operating in isolation can achieve both reintegration and sustainable development outcomes. However, maximizing the mutual impact between sustainable development and reintegration often requires combined efforts and coordination of all relevant “actors – governmental and non-governmental, public and private, local and international – with different mandates and areas of expertise.”⁶⁹ This section explores how synergies and partnerships between reintegration and development programmes should be designed and formalized.

2.1 Identifying relevant stakeholders and programmes

Synergies are influenced by the context and the relevant reintegration and sustainable development needs. They also depend on the actors present and programmes active locally. Establishing synergies thus requires knowing which development and reintegration actors are present in areas of return and which programmes they are implementing (or designing).

To this end, programmes should as much as possible build upon assessments and mapping. This can include those already developed within the framework of other programmes, or those built into the programme, ideally at design or planning stage. In addition to the assessment of the socioeconomic context (situation analysis), and of the labour market in the areas of return, as well as of the relevant frameworks, regulations and policies in place, which all help guiding programmes, key elements to identify potential synergies include the mapping of stakeholders and services⁷⁰ available in the fields of reintegration and development in the areas of intervention. More information on relevant assessments and mapping to be conducted in view of reintegration programmes is available in the IOM Reintegration Handbook (Section 1.4.2 on “Assessing the return context”).

Beyond specific assessments, valuable information can be gathered through the various coordination platforms addressing reintegration, migration and sustainable development. Day-to-day meetings and networking with potential partners can also provide useful information.

Existing development plans and national and local strategies in relevant sectors, as well as considerations for stakeholders’ frameworks and strategies, can help in identifying opportunities for synergies. Furthermore, many actors have a clear framework for their activities, which facilitate the identification of potential synergies. Governments in countries of origin and in host countries define political priorities that steer the interventions of their ministries, services and programmes. NGOs and international organizations are usually driven by their mandate, and often develop specific frameworks or strategies for their reintegration and/ or development programming. IOM, for instance, has developed a Policy on the Full Spectrum of Return, Readmission and Reintegration, as well as a [Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development](#), and FAO has developed a [Migration Framework](#)⁷¹ linking its interventions on migration, including reintegration, to its broader mandate.⁷²

⁶⁹ IOM, *A Framework for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration*, page 11.

⁷⁰ “Stakeholder mapping provides a comprehensive assessment of the capacity, needs, willingness and potential for partnerships of different stakeholders at the national and local level.” “Service mapping is the identification and recording of providers and services in a systematic way. It details what local services are available to local populations and returnees, the criteria for accessing those services, who offers those services, the quality of the services and any risks associated with accessing the services. [...] A service mapping should also identify barriers to access (such as eligibility or intake criteria that exclude certain returnees, the location and distance of service delivery, safety and security concerns, time and financial constraints, and documentation requirements) or where services are lacking.” IOM, *Reintegration Handbook*, pages 21, 24.

⁷¹ FAO, [FAO Migration Framework: Migration as a Choice and an Opportunity for Rural Development](#) (2019).

⁷² See also [Case Study No. 5](#) on FAO’s approach to reintegration.



2.2 Distinctive characteristics of development and reintegration programmes

Synergies between reintegration and development programmes should take into account and build upon their respective characteristics. For instance, synergies can leverage the robust support activities implemented by development programmes in a specific sector (e.g. training on agricultural techniques to support returning farmers, value chain development, or maternal and child health) while the reintegration programme can address the other types of needs of returnees as identified through the counselling sessions conducted under the reintegration programme (e.g. provision of tools, inputs or seed capital for farmers, or health support for medical cases).

Reintegration programmes tend to be more adapted to address the most immediate needs of returnees (including in terms of housing, health needs, or quick income generation), while development programmes often follow other time-related logics. Indeed, upon return, many migrants (especially those who have not been able to prepare adequately for their return) need quick and flexible support, tailored to their needs, opportunities and preferences. They often need support from an organization that understands the dynamics of migration, return and reintegration – and thus understands their experiences and needs, - especially those with psychosocial needs. Furthermore, often they must generate an income quickly, in order to sustain themselves, but also in many cases, to demonstrate to their family and neighbours, that they are successfully reintegrating into their community. They also may not be in a mind-set which allows them to focus on long-term sustainability, not to mention the local impact, of their business. At this stage, timely and tailored support is essential. However, it might not be possible to meet such needs within the timeframes and functioning of development programmes. Nevertheless, once returnees are more settled, start earning an income, and have stabilized their relations within their family, they may be willing to adapt their activities and contemplate contributing to local development. At this stage, development programmes focusing on economic development may become more opportune. They can build upon and strengthen the initial support provided to the returnee, by scaling up their businesses or improving their management or technical skills, as illustrated by the example of the Gambia in [Case Study No. 1](#).

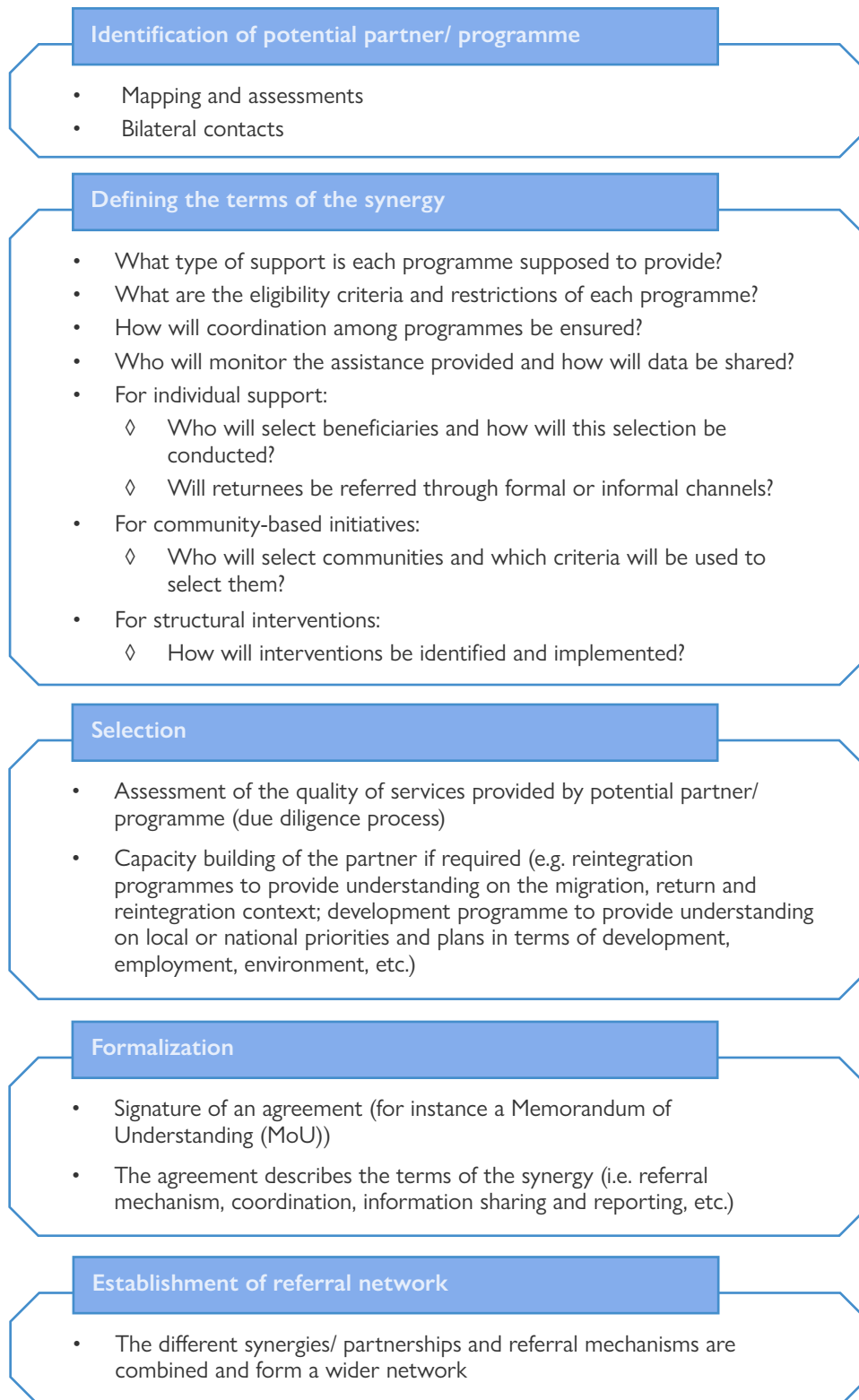
The resources available for reintegration and development programmes should also receive sufficient attention. Development programmes may have access to (or the ability to access) large funds for development, made available by multi-donor trust funds, the World Bank or regional development banks programmes, for example. While reintegration programmes can in some cases access such funds, this is relatively rare. Seeking synergies with development programmes thus allows reintegration programmes to tap indirectly into these broader resources, with a view to addressing identified gaps in these programmes. The European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF) and the Citizen's Charter in Afghanistan (see [Case Study No. 2](#)) are examples of large funding sources explicitly linking development programming and migrant reintegration, and promoting synergies between the two, but more generally this is possible in any context where reintegration programmes are implemented and development funds are available.

2.3 The process of establishing synergies

Once the relevant actors and programmes operating in the fields of reintegration and development are identified, potential synergies can be designed. Reintegration and development programmes should define the terms and extent of synergies, based on their respective objectives, their comparative advantages, and the gaps each actor could fill, among other considerations. The organizations or institutions should then formalize the synergy or partnership, and embed it into a wider referral mechanism. This process is briefly described in Chart 2.



Chart 2. The process of identification and formalization of synergies





2.4 Challenges in fostering partnerships

While the creation of synergies presents many advantages (as described throughout this paper) and can seem relatively simple to establish, synergies between reintegration and development programmes have not been as widespread as one might expect. This is due to the many challenges faced in building effective partnerships and coordination mechanisms, as has been acknowledged by most of the experts and practitioners consulted in view of this paper.⁷³ These challenges include differences in stakeholders' approaches, priorities, capacities and institutional habits and attitudes, overlapping mandates, lack of coordination at the programme design stage (see Section 2.5), and stakeholders' procedures and regulations (e.g. data protection, procurement rules hindering direct contracting).

Furthermore, even when synergies are successfully established in the framework of specific projects, their institutionalization may remain more challenging. Funding predictability would help institutionalising these synergies and ensuring their continuity.

Finally, establishing synergies requires setting up strong coordination mechanisms, not only to ensure good management and to maximize the potential of the synergies, but also in regards to efficient and stream-lined management of beneficiary targeting. Indeed, for beneficiaries, "multiple interlocutors can be confusing; without a strong referral mechanism, there is a risk of duplication and blurring of responsibility."⁷⁴

2.5 When to foster synergies

Synergies can be envisaged and established at different stages of the respective programmes, in particular at design and implementation stages.⁷⁵ Experience shows that synergies or complementarities among projects work best when they are defined at the design stage of the respective programmes. This allows ensuring that the objectives, geographic areas of interventions, activities and target groups of both programmes are aligned and complement each other according to needs, and as relevant in the local context. In addition, it can also make actual coordination, cooperation and referrals between projects more efficient, since common procedures can be defined and necessary resources for coordination allocated, before activities start. Due to their role, donors are in a privileged position to suggest or insist upon the facilitation of synergies at the programme design stage.

Synergies fostered at the design stage can actually lead to the development of a consortia of organizations, whereby specific expertise, division of tasks and coordination mechanisms are embedded within a single programme.

While synergies between programmes should ideally be fostered at design stage, in practice they are often developed during the implementation phase of projects. At that stage, synergies cannot be proactively embedded into the project and the respective projects' parameters (such as the target groups or the activities and their calendar) need to be examined to assess whether they are compatible.

Many programmes funded by the EUTF could potentially assist returning migrants supported under the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative*. For instance, many of the vocational training and job creation programmes target returnees, among other groups of beneficiaries. Despite this "ideal" scenario, where complementarities are relatively apparent, synergies have remained relatively limited, at least initially. There are various reasons for this, including a mismatch of implementation periods, of geographic focus (e.g. TVET and employment programmes targeting areas prone to conflict in Burkina Faso, Cameroon or Mali on the one hand, and *EU-IOM Joint Initiative* targeting areas of return on the other hand), or of beneficiaries' needs, skills and preferences.⁷⁶

⁷³ See also EU-IOM Joint Initiative biannual reintegration reports (see footnote 26).

⁷⁴ OECD, *Sustainable Reintegration of Returning Migrants*, page 18.

⁷⁵ Synergies fostered at the closing stage of the reintegration programme to ensure continuity of care could also be envisaged. This is briefly covered above in [Chapter I, Section 3.1](#).

⁷⁶ See the EU-IOM Joint Initiative biannual reintegration reports (see footnote 26).



BOX 12



Mismatching parameters

In Burkina Faso, synergies were established between the *Ethical Fashion Initiative* implemented by the International Trade Center (ITC), and the EU-IOM Joint Initiative implemented by IOM. The *Ethical Fashion Initiative*, building on the nexus between fashion and sustainable development, provides training to transform local cotton in textile products and leverages its worldwide connections to sell them on the international market and create job opportunities. ITC and IOM were both willing to develop a sustainable approach that encouraged the socioeconomic self-sufficiency of returning migrants. Despite both programmes' interest, less than 10 returnees benefited from the project. One of the main factors that limited the number of returnee beneficiaries, was that the project was perceived as being for women, while an overwhelming majority of Burkinabe returnees are men. A mismatch was also observed between the locations of the *Ethical Fashion Initiative's* centres and the main communities of return of migrants. This project had an impact on local communities as the raw materials used, were produced by and purchased exclusively from Burkinabe craftsmen to encourage local production.⁷⁷

Coordination during these programmes' design stage would have allowed for a better alignment of their parameters and the optimization of synergies among them. Addressing the above issues is still possible at the implementation stage, through discussions and projects adjustments, but it is likely to be more complex and to require more effort. Actors might be required to adjust their programmes' parameters and plans in order to make the desired synergies possible, as illustrated by the example of the synergies between the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative* and the INTEGRA programme in Guinea, presented in [Case Study No. 1](#).

While it can be challenging to foster general synergies between development and reintegration programmes when these programmes already started, this is not the case with specific, ad-hoc activities. On the contrary, through their activities, reintegration and development programmes may identify specific needs that other programmes could better address, or that they are unable to address (due to the parameters of the project or to the budget available, for instance) but that other programmes active in the area could be in a position to address. This is how the partnership between FAO and IOM in West

⁷⁷ See IOM, EU-IOM Joint Initiative, *Biannual Reintegration Reports #1 and #2*; IOM Medium, "[Tailor Made: New Hope for Migrants Returning... and their Communities](#)" (28 March 2019); and the [Ethical Fashion Initiative website](#).



Darfur (see Box 8) was established: both programmes identified gaps in the assistance they provided, which they realized the other programme could fill.

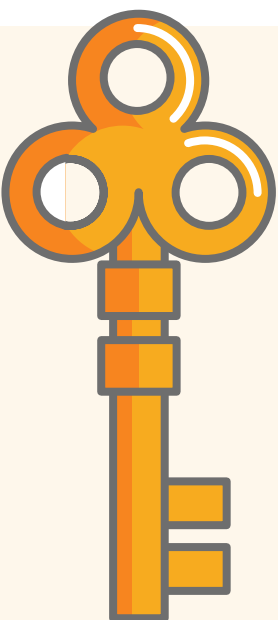
2.6 Internal synergies

Synergies do not necessarily have to involve two different actors: organizations and institutions implementing reintegration programmes often implement other projects in the same countries/areas, with which internal synergies can be established. For instance, IOM implements a variety of projects in the fields of community stabilization, protection, health, sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk reduction, and others.

In Senegal, IOM, in partnership with the National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment (Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l'Emploi Des Jeunes, ANPEJ), and with funding from AECID and the Foundation “La Caixa”, established in 2015, the Youth Self-Employment Training Centre in Guediawaye in the outskirts of Dakar, to train local youth. Under the *Motuse* project,⁷⁸ IOM used this training centre and its trainers, to provide business training to returnees. Based on this successful synergy, the *Motuse* project supported the opening of two additional training centres in two areas of high return migration (Kaolack and Saint-Louis) in partnership with ANPEJ to offer training opportunities to returnees and youth in these regions.

Similarly, GIZ, who implements different programmes in the fields of TVET, employment, and education in countries targeted by the German cooperation, also builds on internal synergies to support returnees, as described in [Case Study No. 6](#).

⁷⁸ The project's full name is *Enhancing the sustainability of reintegration schemes for migrants returning to Morocco, Tunisia and Senegal from the EU* (2015–2016).



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◇ Maximizing the mutual impact of sustainable development and reintegration often requires combined efforts and coordination of all relevant actors. To this end, synergies and partnerships between reintegration and development programmes should be designed and formalized.
- ◇ Programmes should as much as possible build upon assessments and mapping of relevant stakeholders and available services related to reintegration and development in their areas of intervention.
- ◇ Synergies should consider and build upon the respective characteristics of reintegration and development programmes.
- ◇ To the extent possible, synergies should already be defined at the design stage of programmes to make them as effective as possible.
- ◇ Challenges for building effective partnerships include differences in stakeholders' approaches, priorities and capacities, issues related to stakeholders' procedures and regulations, and a lack of coordination.



Chapter III

CASE STUDIES

"Stories Untold: Return of Georgian Migrants in Photos" features personal accounts of Georgian migrants who returned to their home country after their time overseas and rebuilt their lives in Georgia with the support of IOM. © IOM 2020/Dina OGANOVA.



CASE STUDIES

A large number of examples were provided in the above chapters to illustrate specific aspects addressed. More comprehensive case studies can help promote a better understanding of how interventions can be designed and implemented in order to combine reintegration and sustainable development objectives, and maximize the positive mutual impact of both. Six case studies are presented below, providing different perspectives on how interlinkages between sustainable development and reintegration can be fostered or strengthened. They also highlight how the different levels of intervention (individual, community and structural) are interlinked.

- ◇ The [EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration](#) implemented in 26 countries in Central, East, North and West Africa, with a focus on synergies fostered in the Gambia, Guinea and Somalia;
- ◇ [Reintegration and development programmes implemented in Afghanistan](#) by a variety of stakeholders, including the government and IOM;
- ◇ [Sustainable reintegration and community revitalization](#) interventions piloted by IOM in Georgia;
- ◇ The [Rural Enterprises and Remittances](#) project implemented by the Government of Nepal;
- ◇ [FAO's approach](#) to sustainable reintegration in rural areas;
- ◇ The [Returning to New Opportunities](#) programme implemented by GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.





Case Study No. 1

THE EU-IOM JOINT INITIATIVE FOR MIGRANT PROTECTION AND REINTEGRATION

A DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED REINTEGRATION PROGRAMME

The *EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration (EU-IOM Joint Initiative)*⁷⁹ is implemented by IOM in 26 countries in North, East, West and Central Africa, with funding from the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF). Primarily focusing on migrant protection and reintegration, it also contributes to local development in some of the areas of return of migrants. The interventions carried out at structural and community levels have not only improved the management and delivery of reintegration assistance, they have also contributed to the extension of the benefits of the programme to local communities, both directly, through the creation of training and employment opportunities for community members, and indirectly, through the improvement of services, institutions and mechanisms in the countries.

Structural interventions

The programme has strongly contributed to engage, mobilize and involve a wide range of actors and to establish functioning coordination mechanisms at a country level, and in some cases at local level. Different levels of coordination fora were established or strengthened, including project steering committees, reintegration technical working groups and case management committees. These mechanisms were reinforced in most countries by the development and adoption of standard operating procedures. Enhanced coordination and shared procedures enabled the anchoring of reintegration within sectoral and cross-sectoral programming, increasing the coherence of reintegration and development interventions and leading to more advanced policy and institutional developments in some countries. Furthermore, the efforts deployed to build stakeholder capacity in all countries involved, although not sufficient yet to ensure a complete handover of the programme to the countries of origin's institutions, better equipped them to address the challenges of reintegration, as well as of sustainable development.

Community-based initiatives

Between April 2017 and July 2020, 265 community-based initiatives were implemented in 10 West African countries, *directly* benefiting 2,490 returnees and 2,943 members of their communities.⁸⁰ Through these initiatives, returnees and community members received training and support to establish community-based income generating activities. Some of these projects had

⁷⁹ More information and concrete examples of activities carried out can be found in the EU-IOM Joint Initiative biannual reintegration reports (see footnote 26).

⁸⁰ IOM, EU-IOM Joint Initiative, *Biannual Reintegration Report #4*. These figures refer to community-based projects that were completed, ongoing and in preparation as of July 2020. They are indicative and might vary depending on return flows to communities and the different phases of the projects.



a wider impact on the communities – for instance the community-based training and employment project implemented in Côte d'Ivoire, through which damaged schools were rehabilitated, described in [Chapter I, Section 2.1](#). Some of these were implemented in synergy with development programmes, but most of them were implemented by IOM or its service providers in the framework of the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative*.

SYNERGIES ESTABLISHED WITH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The *EU-IOM Joint Initiative* has endeavoured to establish a wide referral network based on partnerships with a variety of actors and programmes. Despite numerous initial challenges, synergies with various programmes could be fostered to enhance support to returnees. Some of these synergies are presented below.

Guinea: Overcoming challenges to provide returnees with training opportunities in sustainable sectors

Guinea is among the main countries of origin of migrants stranded along the Central Mediterranean route and assisted by IOM in their voluntary return and reintegration in the framework of the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative*. To address the needs of returnees, synergies were rapidly sought with another programme funded by the EUTF, the *INTEGRA programme to support the socio-economic integration of youth in Guinea* (INTEGRA).

INTEGRA is implemented by ITC, GIZ, ENABEL, UNDP and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). With a budget of EUR 65 million funded by the European Union, it is intended to initiate new dynamics in socioeconomic development in Guinea by supporting more than 15,000 young people, including returnees, through job creation and support to the development of entrepreneurship. The programme identified opportunities for employment or entrepreneurship in sustainable sectors,⁸¹ and provided young Guineans with vocational training in these sectors. Agriculture is one of these growth sectors that offers many job opportunities, especially in rural areas. INTEGRA teaches innovative skills and modernization of agricultural approaches to youth, thus helping professionalize and expand agricultural production, and improve the quality of production, processing and marketing. Several beneficiaries of the programme could, in turn, employ other people in their communities.

Based on this premise, synergies between both programmes seemed particularly relevant and desirable. However, fostering synergies at operational level proved more difficult than expected. One of the challenges faced, related to the different starting dates of both programmes. The *EU-IOM Joint Initiative* commenced its support activities in April 2017 to address the pressing needs of Guinean returnees, while INTEGRA, announced in 2017, actually commenced its activities in the second quarter of 2019. The efforts undertaken by IOM and the organizations implementing INTEGRA illustrate the challenges of trying to build synergies while programmes are ongoing.

INTEGRA's implementing agencies and IOM launched a dialogue to facilitate returnees' access to the support activities implemented by the former. As a result, a referral mechanism was established for the socio-economic reintegration of migrants between IOM and the INTEGRA implementing agencies, and INTEGRA commenced supporting returnees in their professional reintegration through training and support in finding a job, among others.

As of May 2021, IOM had referred 202 Guinean returnees to INTEGRA partners, of which 46 received actual support (many declined the assistance offered by partners and preferred to receive assistance provided by IOM, which they saw as more relevant and "guaranteed").⁸²

⁸¹ For instance, with the COVID-19 crisis having led to restrictions limiting the movement of people, opportunities have been identified in the urban logistics sector, where delivery companies are increasingly in demand. Sewing is another sector that has been identified as in demand, and led to beneficiaries producing protective masks.

⁸² See European Commission, News, "[L'agriculture, un enjeu crucial pour l'insertion professionnelle durable des jeunes au Guinée](#)" (3 December 2020) and "[INTEGRA : un vecteur de réintégration pour les migrants de retour](#)" (24 August 2020); Integra Guinée, News, "[Les jeunes bénéficiaires INTEGRA solidaires dans la lutte contre le COVID-19](#)"; IOM, EU-IOM Joint Initiative, *Biannual Reintegration Reports #2 and #4*.



The Gambia: Strengthening returnees' skills after starting a business

Although it has a population of less than 2 million, the Gambia is one of the main countries of origin of migrants who reached Europe through the Central Mediterranean route in the recent years.⁸³ It is also one of the main countries of origin of migrants stranded along this route, and of migrants who returned from the Sahel and North African countries since 2017 in the framework of the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative*,⁸⁴ making it the country targeted by this programme with the highest proportion of returnees as compared to its total population. Following its transition to democracy in 2017, Member States of the European Union have expected to increase returns of Gambian migrants, despite the threat that an even larger influx of returnees could pose to the country, which faces an extremely adverse economic situation. To address the needs of returnees, mitigate frustrations and risks of destabilization of the country, and address a major driver of migration, jobs must be created.

To this end, the EUTF funded two large job creation projects: the *Youth Employment Project* (YEP, EUR 11 million), launched in October 2016, and the *Building a future - Make it in the Gambia – Tekki Fii* project (EUR 23 million), launched in May 2018.



Implemented by ITC, YEP provides training and employment opportunities to local people and returnees in areas prone to migration. As of November 2020, 1,869 jobs were created and 2,549 people assisted to develop income-generating activities through the project.⁸⁵ The *Building a future - Make it in the Gambia – Tekki Fii* project, implemented by ITC, the Belgian, German and Portuguese Cooperation Agencies (ENABEL, GIZ and Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr) and GK Partners, aims to improve economic development and future prospects for the Gambia's youth, including returning and/or potential migrants by promoting attractive employment and income generating opportunities. As of November 2020, it had created 14 jobs and assisted 51 people to develop income-generating activities.⁸⁶

These programmes supported only a very small portion of the nearly 5,000 Gambians who returned under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative between May 2017 and October 2020 and needed an income. However, the *Building a future - Make it in The Gambia – Tekki Fii* project specifically aims to strengthen the reintegration referral mechanism to be developed under the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative*, suggesting that synergies among programmes will be boosted and access to training and jobs for returnees will be further encouraged.⁸⁷

⁸³ Gambians represented the seventh nationality of arrival in Europe in 2017 (7,600 including 2,700 in Spain and 4,900 in Italy) and the tenth nationality of arrival in Europe in 2018 (4,500).

⁸⁴ Between May 2017 and December 2020, nearly 5,000 migrants returned from Sahel and North African countries and received post-arrival reception and/or reintegration support under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative.

⁸⁵ Data from European Commission, [YEP's webpage](#) (accessed on 15 December 2020).

⁸⁶ Data from European Commission, [Building a future – Make it in The Gambia – Tekki Fii's webpage](#) (accessed on 15 December 2020). See footnote 83.

⁸⁷ Ibid. See also footnotes 26, 83 and 84, and Zanker F., Quartz Africa, [“The Gambia is now free and democratic so Europe is pushing its migrants to go home”](#) (29 October 2017).



The donor expected synergies to be established between the YEP and *Building a future - Make it in the Gambia - Tekki Fii* projects, on one side, and the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative* on the other side. It was expected that some returnees could directly benefit from these training and employment projects, thus reducing the burden on the reintegration project. However, the scope and urgency of the needs of returnees required quick intervention, that was at times not in line with the calendar of the training courses planned under the YEP and *Building a future - Make it in the Gambia - Tekki Fii* projects. Eligibility criteria, application processes, and areas of intervention were other issues faced. Eventually, 88 returnees were referred to these programmes as of January 2021, but most of them benefitted from these training courses after they started a micro-business with support from the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative*.

Somalia: Filling gaps in development programmes

The *EU-IOM Joint Initiative* has also contributed to filling gaps of some development programmes. This occurred in the town of Baidoa, Somalia, in relation to the Midnimo programme (presented in Box 4 above). A community consultation and planning process involving all socioeconomic groups was conducted under the programme to define development priorities. This community-based planning process led to the identification and prioritization of numerous infrastructure needs, and to the implementation of a significant number of the public works identified. These works were carried out by different actors under different programmes. One of the priorities identified, but not covered under local development interventions, was the construction of a bridge to improve access to a neighbourhood inhabited by numerous returnees. The bridge was finally constructed under the *EU-IOM Joint Initiative*. This activity benefitted the entire population of the area including 37,500 returnees (including returning IDPs, returning refugees and returning migrants), 30,000 IDPs and 82,500 members of the host communities, who gained enhanced access to basic services and to economic markets.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ For more information, see footnote 38.



Case Study No. 2

REINTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFGHANISTAN⁸⁹

Conflict and displacement have marked Afghanistan in recent decades. Millions of people have been displaced internally or have migrated abroad due to conflict, insecurity and poor economic conditions, exacerbated by natural hazards and demographic pressures. At the same time, millions of Afghans have returned: between 2002 and 2019, 5.2 million refugees and 5 million undocumented migrants have returned to Afghanistan,⁹⁰ in addition to an undefined number of IDPs who have resettled in new communities or have returned to their communities of origin. In this context, peace, recovery, sustainable development and reintegration of migrants, IDPs and refugees are very closely interlinked.

The Citizens' Charter and the Community Development Councils

To advance development at the local level and provide all communities with core services, the Government of Afghanistan, together with international partners including the World Bank and United Nations agencies, developed the National Solidarity Programme (2003–2017, USD 2.7 billion) and successively the Citizens' Charter (CC) (2017–2026). The CC is a commitment of partnership between the Government of Afghanistan and its citizens to provide all communities in Afghanistan with basic services, based on the communities' own prioritization. As a multisectoral, interministerial national priority programme, the CC aims to reduce poverty and enhance living standards by improving the delivery of core infrastructure and social services to communities in Afghanistan (including access to clean water, quality education, basic health services, and other infrastructure such as electricity, roads and irrigation systems) through strengthened Community Development Councils (CDCs).⁹¹

These CDCs, originally established under the National Solidarity Programme, are community-based participatory decision-making bodies, serving as a liaison between communities, the government and non-government organizations. Responsible for the planning and management of development interventions at the local level, the CDCs are inclusive, with members being elected by their communities. In addition, IDPs and returnees (as well as other vulnerable groups) can elect representatives, ensuring they have a say in local development planning and programming.

The Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project, intended to support the implementation of the CC during its first four years (2017–2021), has a budget of USD 628 million. It focuses on one-third of the Afghan provinces, with priority given to the provinces hosting the most IDPs and returnees. The CC follows a total area development model, which means that returnees, IDPs, and host community members all benefit from the interventions, preventing competition over resources. The Maintenance and

⁸⁹ See footnote 34.

⁹⁰ See Dr. Nasir Andisha, Ambassador for the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations Office in Geneva, [Statement delivered in the 110th Session of the IOM Council](#), 27 November 2019.

⁹¹ See [Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project webpage](#) on the World Bank website.



Construction Cash Grant programme within the CC, provides seasonal, labour-intensive paying jobs for more than one third of the households in villages, targeting the poorest households (including returnees households) in areas of high return so that they have a cushion to tide them over the lean season.⁹²

IOM's Reintegration Assistance and Development in Afghanistan project and its links with the Citizens' Charter and other development plans

Numerous links have been established between the CC and IOM's interventions in the field of stabilization, reintegration and resilience, particularly through the *Reintegration Assistance and Development in Afghanistan* (RADA) project. The project's main objective is to support sustainable reintegration of returnees within their communities through an integrated approach envisaging integrated community development projects, employment through business development support to new and existing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and TVET.⁹³

RADA's activities are closely coordinated with the CC through regular engagement with communities, CDCs, district councils and provincial authorities that inform IOM about the interventions planned and the gaps to be covered. This avoids duplication, allows identifying potential (complementary) interventions, and ensures that interventions are aligned with provincial, district and community-level plans and priorities.

Thanks to the close coordination between RADA and the CC, synergies could be established between these programmes' activities. This allowed the combining of support and resources available under both programmes. Collaboration and referrals to external partners allows the filling of gaps in the respective programmes' activities, building on different organizations' areas of expertise and combining forces to implement broader projects. For instance, the CC and RADA collaborated to improve the road network in the Ansari neighbourhood of Mazar-e-Sharif, Balkh province, whereas the CC built the road and RADA built its drainage system. A 50-bed district-level hospital was built in Marofian village, Spin Boldak district, Kandahar province, but was not functional due to the lack of a water supply system, a septic tank and a waiting area. RADA filled the gap by building these, following the CDC prioritising health response. This will enable the Provincial Department of Health to serve at least 1,000 patients daily. In addition, while interventions under the CC are usually limited to a single community, RADA's territorial planning approach (see below) allows for the extending of the benefits of the intervention to additional communities. For instance, an irrigation system was proposed in Mohmand Dara, Nangarhar, under the CC, but the CC and CDCs mechanisms constituted a constraint to expand it to other communities. RADA was able to link three villages to the same water intake of the irrigation system. Working through the CDCs also ensures that communities are engaged in and can contribute to the defining of their priorities and to the interventions themselves, which improves ownership and governance at the local level.

Where the CDCs have not developed their plans yet, or where such plans can be enhanced and made more strategic, RADA directly supports community-based planning processes that lead to the development of community action plans. These plans present the priorities of the communities in terms of economic and social interventions and look at their impact and feasibility, as well as at their value and at whether they are short term priorities or mid- to long-term priorities. They can then serve as fundraising tools and be used by other stakeholders, including through the CC but also by local NGOs or other United Nations agencies, to identify and implement interventions that fit their priorities, timeframe and budget.

The structural and community-based approach to reintegration implemented under RADA, is combined with individual support to returnees, including in the areas targeted by the above interventions. RADA provides returnees with vocational training and

⁹² See [Citizens' Charter website](#).

⁹³ See [RADA project webpage](#). For more information on RADA's SMEs component, see EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub, Reintegration Assistance: Good, Promising and Innovative Practices Factsheet #10, "[Supporting SMEs and former returnees to create jobs for migrants returning to Afghanistan](#)" (2021).



sustainable jobs through support to SMEs. IOM goes further by trying to link these different levels of assistance, for instance by including in the infrastructure works carried out at community level (e.g. hospital, roads, irrigation systems) those beneficiaries who received vocational training in the field of construction.

IOM ensures it is aligning its interventions with key strategies and plans, including the CC, but also the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework, the Displacement and Return Executive Committee action plan, other national priority programmes, and the One UN plan.

Addressing economic development and reintegration through a territorial planning approach and a focus on market systems

As a large majority of the population of Afghanistan depends on subsistence livelihoods, predominately in the agriculture sector, many transition and development programmes focus on farming and agricultural infrastructure at an individual subsistence level. However, returnees (and people on the move in general) largely prefer to settle in cities or larger towns, where the economic opportunities in terms of livelihoods and employment are greater. RADA has started piloting a profiling and planning process in two districts in early 2021 to link both aspects, based on the premise that evidence-based and participatory planning can give affected populations a meaningful voice in local socioeconomic development, build community cohesion and create trust in government through increased legitimacy and accountability of development interventions. It delivers area-based responses, grounded in an understanding of multi-scalar governance, economic and spatial systems. By expanding the lens from communities (villages and neighbourhoods), to districts (municipalities regrouping several villages, and cities), it is possible to map key infrastructure, marketplaces, factories, and other economically relevant areas in the district, and thus identify how economic systems and service delivery are organized spatially and are linked to the needs of communities.

This allows the identification of appropriate interventions to address root causes of under-development and of migration, and (re)integration challenges. Matching this data with communities and individuals' needs, profiles and priorities, RADA can plan economic development interventions related to production systems, value chain development, market linkages, and transportation systems, taking into account how the spatial characteristics (e.g. related to transportation, access to services and markets, road network) and economic areas (e.g. production, processing, sales) are linked. Additionally, increased civic engagement provides opportunity for active collaboration and exchange with authorities and among community members, particularly vulnerable, marginalized and oppressed groups.



Case Study No. 3

SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION AND COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION IN GEORGIA

Traditionally, a large proportion of Georgia's population has relied on livelihoods facilitated by mobility. Remittances sent by family members working abroad and income from circular or seasonal migration form a common livelihood strategy for many in the country. Except for the capital city Tbilisi, all regions in Georgia have experienced severe depopulation in the last two decades (latest available data show that on average, 25 per cent of population have left every region between 2002 and 2014, with emigration further rising since⁹⁴), with most of those who leave moving abroad. Depopulation and loss of human capital has led to market deterioration in the most vulnerable regions, further destabilizing communities already affected by persistent poverty and lack of opportunities.

Mirroring the accelerated rate of emigration from Georgia, the scale of returns to the country has been growing significantly in the last five years. Each year, however, a decreasing share of Georgian returnees are eligible for individual reintegration assistance, as part of existing assisted voluntary return programmes. Simultaneously, IOM has observed that return to communities affected by depopulation is very difficult for individual returnees, who struggle to establish a sustainable livelihood in areas with diminished social or economic life.

To address this, IOM has identified structural and community level interventions as key priorities for its reintegration and development programming in Georgia. In 2020, IOM has secured the support of the Government of Georgia (at national and local level) to pilot a holistic reintegration and community revitalization programme to deliver a proof of concept and tools for future scale-up of the community and structural reintegration approach.

Before the integrated approach

IOM has implemented Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes in Georgia since 1993. While modalities of reintegration assistance have been diverse (each AVRR project – usually designed and managed in migrants' host countries – had its own modality), the most prominent form of support returnees have been eligible for across years and programmes has been the individual business grant, which was delivered in kind. In practice, IOM has provided thousands of returnees with kettle and other farm animals, bee-farms and equipment, technical tools, shop or hair salon equipment, and other in-kind materials for small scale, individual businesses. Other reintegration services provided have included counselling, health and psychosocial support, among others, though the business grant stands out clearly as the most common type of reintegration assistance distributed.⁹⁵ While local market analysis performed by IOM has informed the business planning of supported beneficiaries, the

⁹⁴ Latest data available from Geostat, 2014 Census.

⁹⁵ See IOM, [National study of Reintegration Outcomes among returned migrants in Georgia](#) (2021).



prevalent model has previously not allowed IOM to specifically address the environment of return beyond the needs of individual returnees and their households.

IOM does, nevertheless, have long-standing partnerships with local municipalities, notably with those in the largest returnee-receiving regions in the country (Kakheti, Imereti). In these municipalities, under separate projects focused more broadly on migration and development, IOM has continually delivered capacity-building training on mainstreaming migration into local planning, focusing especially on drivers of migration, reintegration needs and potential of returning migrants, as well as on diaspora engagement. A governance decentralization process is presently underway in Georgia, granting local municipalities the responsibilities and powers relevant to local development, which previously were governed at the national level. To this end, IOM aims to further support the development of local authorities' capacities to integrate mobility considerations into their new mandates.

A specific example of an opportunity to strengthen the link between reintegration and development programmes in Georgia can be found in the considerable number of existing socioeconomic development programmes funded by the Government of Georgia and international donors, which make significant grant funding available for rural and agricultural business support, youth start-up support, and micro, small, and – at times – medium-sized businesses development. Based on work with individual migrants as well as during exchanges with local municipalities, however, IOM has observed that migrants and the broader population of rural communities are not well informed of these opportunities, and lack understanding of the requirements, grant amounts, co-funding or grant-matching options, accessibility requirements, as well as support for the development of competitive and viable proposals. IOM thus saw the need for information provision at the local level in communities of origin, and included professional mentorship for grant applicants, including guidance on complementing IOM's relatively small grant funding with other existing opportunities, into its pilot programme.

At the structural level, IOM has partnered with the Government of Georgia to support the development and further strengthening of comprehensive migration governance system in the country. The growing diversity of both inward and outward migration, consistent concerns about regional depopulation due to internal mobility, and the role of migration management in shaping regional relations, have formed the backdrop against which Georgia's migration governance system has evolved. Particularly since 2010, the Government of Georgia has supported the development of institutions and institutional coordination mechanisms to enhance a more encompassing migration policy framework. One of the most important mechanisms to consolidate expertise on migration issues and support a coherent vision on migration policy emerged with the creation of the State Commission on Migration Issues. The current migration governance strategic framework - the Migration Strategy of Georgia 2021–2030 - has an overarching ambition to reduce the negative consequences of migration and to enhance the positive potential of migration for the sustainable development of Georgia. The explicit framing of the policy around the “[coordination, proper, and pragmatic orchestration] of all directions contributing to the country development”⁹⁶ emphasizes a government vision of migration as a cross-cutting policy issue that requires coherent government response to positively contribute to development.

Community revitalization as a basis for sustainable reintegration of returning migrant

The integrated approach to reintegration, developed by IOM in 2017, provided a theoretical framework to link multi-level interventions, build on synergies between previously separated efforts, and support the broader development vision of the country's Migration Strategy. IOM has identified community revitalization in regions affected by depopulation as a key common denominator for sustainable reintegration of returning migrants and local development. Community revitalization requires a holistic, area-based approach to stabilize and support livelihoods of the general population as well as returnees, IDPs, refugees or ethnic minorities in the regions. Community-level interventions should involve and benefit both returnees and non-migrants, addressing the root causes of insecurity at community and structural levels to contribute to the development of sustainable

⁹⁶ Government of Georgia, State Commission on Migration Issues, [Migration Strategy of Georgia 2021-2030](#) (2020), page 11.



livelihood strategies for all local residents.

Responding to the complex local needs and supporting the rejuvenation of local economy and community will create conditions enabling for return and subsequent sustainable reintegration of individuals and households in the community, alongside sustainable integration of those displaced by protracted conflict or disaster in the same area. Strengthened service provision, creation of local opportunities and increased community engagement, development of community and collective income generation projects, infrastructure enhancements, or identification of local investment opportunities are all among the interventions which can strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities and capacitate local government structures to benefit from and partake in Georgia's efforts in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

The Sustainable Reintegration and Community Revitalization pilot

The pilot project *Sustainable Reintegration and Community Revitalization Pilot Initiative in Communities of Return*, funded by the IOM Development Fund and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, was in its inception phase as of spring 2021. It aims to contribute to the Government of Georgia's efforts to support sustainable reintegration of returning migrants and community revitalization, while contributing to empower migrants and communities as development actors. The project's chief aim is to generate a participatory, whole-of-government engagement on reintegration and development and to develop together with national actors a proof of concept for future replication and scaling up. National level actors are engaged through the project's Steering Committee, and at the local level, municipalities are directly participating in the project implementation, co-funding, and co-leading community level activities.

As of May 2021, a policy-level gap and opportunity analysis had been completed to support national stakeholders in mainstreaming migration considerations for sustainable reintegration of returning migrants in policy documents relevant to local development. The document was to be validated by policy actors partaking in the projects' Steering Committee, including the Deputy Ministers of the Ministry of Regional Development and of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Affairs and its implementing agencies, and representatives of the State Commission on Migration Issues, the key intergovernmental coordination body for migration management in Georgia.

Through its activities, the project will establish Service Hubs in pilot communities to enhance access to services and counselling for all local residents, aiming to support their sustainable livelihoods, and access to social and psychosocial assistance. Under this objective, IOM will develop updated referral guides to strengthen awareness and increase uptake of existing socioeconomic development programmes. The project will also support collective reintegration projects in pilot communities to support groups of local returnees in achieving higher levels of sustainable reintegration. In addition, the project will engage pilot communities in participatory identification of community revitalization priorities through community consultations, assessing the viability and potential of small-scale projects to strengthen social or physical infrastructure, and funding pilot initiatives expected to positively contribute to community revitalization.



Case Study No. 4

THE RURAL ENTERPRISES AND REMITTANCES PROJECT IN NEPAL

In Nepal, the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies is implementing the *Rural Enterprises and Remittances project* (2015–2022) through local governments, in partnership with the Agro Enterprise Centre of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Helvetas, financial institutions extending services to the rural areas and other key partners including IOM, and with financial support of IFAD.

The project has supported rural households, including migrant families, to develop and improve on-farm and off-farm enterprises. The project promotes self-employment and small businesses that can generate better incomes and jobs, carries out vocational training and apprenticeship for gainful job placement, and develops mechanisms specifically targeting rural households, including migrants' households and returnees. The project also provides reliable information on overseas employment opportunities through migrant resource centres, as well as financial literacy trainings so that the migrant households and returnees can make the best possible use of their remittances.

As Nepal is particularly dependant on remittances (more than half of the households receive remittances), ensuring livelihoods and jobs for migrants' families constitute an extremely relevant safety net in case the flow of remittances diminish, for instance as a result of conflict or economic downturn in migrants' countries of destination. The Government of Nepal expected that the COVID-19 pandemic would strongly hit Nepalese migrant workers: it forecasted a decrease of remittances by 14 per cent⁹⁷ and estimated that around half a million Nepalese migrant workers might lose their jobs and return to Nepal. The support provided to migrants' families under the project may thus be key in mitigating the negative impact of the pandemic on returning migrant workers and on their families (including the reduced remittances and increased supply of labour), and more broadly on Nepal's economic development.

As the return flow started, a survey conducted by IOM in close coordination with the National Planning Commission highlighted that around half of the returnees interviewed were not willing to remigrate after the crisis, and that 37 per cent of them were interested in engaging in agriculture in Nepal.⁹⁸ It was thus agreed to extend the support of the programme to returnees, engaging them in agriculture, potentially creating other jobs and matching jobseekers with available jobs, and addressing any emerging food crisis.

⁹⁷ Contrary to predictions, remittances have increased after the start of the pandemic. See Central Bank of Nepal, [Current Macroeconomic and Financial Situation of Nepal](#) (2021); and Khadka, U., Nepali Times, "[Remittances from Nepali workers rise](#)" (30 October 2020).

⁹⁸ See IOM, [Status of Nepali Migrant Workers in Relation to COVID-19](#) (2020).



IOM and the *Rural Enterprises and Remittances* project have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to support returnees' sustainable reintegration through grants to set-up micro and small enterprises, training, supply chain management, access to financial services, as well as to support local governments designing reintegration policies and programmes.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ See Babu Aryal, B. and S. Kumar Shrestha, [Coming back home: The road ahead for migrant returnees in Nepal](#) (2020); IFAD, [Samriddhi - Rural Enterprises and Remittances Project](#); UN News, [From the Field: Supporting Nepal's migrants, as overseas work dries up](#) (28 June 2020); IOM, [IOM Nepal support to migrants during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (2020).



Case Study No. 5

FAO'S APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION IN RURAL AREAS

Return migration to rural areas interlinks with broader issues such as the governance and management of natural resources, land tenure systems, lack of available infrastructure and services, and the multiple dimensions of food and nutrition insecurity. Further challenges consist of limited employment opportunities in agriculture and food systems, the lack of investment in marginalized rural areas, the effects of climate change and the sustainability of environmental management. As a technical agency with significant expertise in the recovery and development of rural and agricultural livelihoods, agriculture and food security, rural migration and decent rural employment, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) contributes to addressing these challenges and supports the reintegration of returning migrants and displaced people in rural areas. In this regard, FAO also leverages its close partnerships with agricultural and rural stakeholders. With regards to return migration, FAO supports Member States in achieving the objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration,¹⁰⁰ as well as of the [Global Compact on Refugees](#).¹⁰¹

*The Sustainable Reintegration and Community Revitalization pilot*¹⁰²

At the individual level, FAO provides direct support to returnees to enhance access to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities along the agricultural value chain. This includes provision of tailored agribusiness skills training,¹⁰³ start-up incubation services,¹⁰⁴ and integration of digitalization solutions¹⁰⁵ for improved access to decent employment opportunities in the agri-food sector. FAO collaborates with several national farmers' centres, university business schools, and agribusiness incubation centres to carry out tailored training in agribusiness, including modules on crop production, value addition and processing, farm

¹⁰⁰ See footnote 6. Specifically, Objectives 6 ("Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work") and Objective 21 ("Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration").

¹⁰¹ United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 73/12 (Part II) adopted on 17 December 2018. In particular, Chapter III.B.3.1 ("Support for countries of origin and voluntary repatriation").

¹⁰² Whether in post-conflict or in other contexts, FAO's support to returnees is usually provided within broader interventions targeting farmers and members of the rural communities, that may include returnees. However, some programmes specifically target returnees, as in the examples presented below (Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Iraq, Pakistan, Senegal and Tajikistan).

¹⁰³ The agribusiness sector comprises the business activities performed "from farm to fork". It covers the entire agriculture value chain, including the supply of agricultural inputs, the production and transformation of agricultural products, and their distribution to final consumers. FAO works to stimulate food value chain development and support the inclusion of smallholder farmers and small rural food enterprises in agrifood systems.

¹⁰⁴ FAO collaborates with several rural incubators, rural hubs helping youth and returning migrants start up or strengthen agri-entrepreneurial activities. Rural incubators offer a range of services critical to business success, including theoretical and practical training in agribusiness, agricultural inputs, shared offices space, business services, and networking opportunities.

¹⁰⁵ The use of information and communications technology services in agriculture represents an important opportunity for rural population to improve productivity, enhance access to employment and agricultural-related information, training opportunities, and labour orientation and intermediation services and markets.



management, entrepreneurship, business planning and marketing. Furthermore, FAO seeks to enhance small-scale business-oriented activities in agriculture or agribusiness led by returning migrants through matching grants. In Tajikistan, FAO, together with the government, supported returning migrant workers by establishing a matching grants fund to support the start-up of small and medium-sized agricultural and agri-businesses activities, which matched funds contributions of returnees, with FAO funds (50/50). FAO also provided a complementary capacity development programme, which allowed beneficiaries to build skills in small- and medium business development in the agricultural sector. FAO supported beneficiaries both during the preparation of investment proposals and by advising and raising their capacity in agricultural production, storage, processing and marketing to ensure the sustainability of the investments. FAO is currently undertaking feasibility studies in a number of countries to replicate this approach. Lastly, FAO pays special attention to the promotion and protection of decent working conditions of returning migrants. This entails awareness-raising and capacity-building on decent work, as part of larger agribusiness training programmes.

In conflict and post-conflict contexts, FAO's work can include immediate assistance to returnees in the form of agricultural services and inputs (as in the example provided in Box 8 above), or the distribution of cash and vouchers. It can also include longer-term development and local peace-oriented actions, which prioritise working along the humanitarian, development, peace nexus. To support returnees' adaptive capacities, FAO provides technical training in agriculture, through its Farmer Field School methodology, which is designed to strengthen returnees' capacity to respond or adapt to future shocks and crises (such as the recurrence of disasters and the negative effects of climate change), and is usually accompanied by capacity-building in business, entrepreneurial, financial, organizational and language skills. For instance, in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, FAO has provided returnee families with agricultural inputs, extension services and agricultural training on climate resilient practices such as tunnel farming. In Iraq, FAO is active in Salah al-Din, Ninewa, Kirkuk, Anbar and Diyala governorates where it implements cash-for-work activities with returnees for the rehabilitation of water infrastructure and rebuilding of agricultural livelihoods (e.g. irrigation canals, water drainage canals, river embankments) which is crucial to the resumption of the agricultural sector.

FAO's interventions at the community level

At the community level, FAO works to improve mutual trust, understanding and collaboration between returnees and local communities by promoting activities that range from technical training, to community farming, setting up of producers' groups and joint rehabilitation work. Bringing together returnees and local communities through joint construction and rehabilitation work pursues the double objective of contributing to the reactivation and proper functioning of local agricultural infrastructure, while also supporting the role of returnees as active contributors to the local economy and community. Likewise, joint capacity-building for returnees and members of the local community has proved successful in strengthening trainees' skills, while challenging pre-existing negative perceptions and prejudice towards each other. FAO's development of and support to Community Production Centres integrates this approach, providing returnees and host families with a place to gather, not only to exchange knowledge on agricultural and food conservation techniques, but also to jointly produce food on test plots.

Establishing local spaces where returnees and members of local communities can meet and exchange opinions in a safe and comfortable environment is also instrumental in strengthening community relations. FAO has done so through Dimitra Clubs: informal groups of women and men, who come together on a voluntary basis to identify common problems, discuss, seek solutions and take collective action to resolve them.¹⁰⁶ Dimitra Clubs also represent an excellent platform to organize training on the prevention and management of conflicts, and encourage dialogue and cooperation on potentially contentious issues such as access to land and the shared management and access of natural resources. For example, in Mali, where FAO is implementing a joint project with the World Food Programme (WFP) and IOM, Dimitra Clubs are a space for dialogue within the community, where training on conflict prevention and management is also provided. As economic self-sufficiency can also contribute to

¹⁰⁶ The FAO Dimitra community listeners' club have been set up in a number of sub-Saharan African countries, including in post-conflict settings, to contribute to the achievements of FAO projects and programmes in areas like nutrition, peace, gender equality, food security, rural development, climate change adaptation, and more. FAO facilitates their set-up and provides them with training and coaching. More information is available [here](#).



increased social cohesion at the local level, FAO also supports returnees and communities through the provision of agricultural and livestock inputs.

*FAO's interventions at the governance level*¹⁰⁷

At the governance level, FAO works to ensure that governance mechanisms and policies, both at the local and national level, are inclusive of the needs of returnees in rural areas. This includes the revision and updating of policies relevant to FAO's mandate. Areas of policy support include governance and management of natural resources, customary land tenure systems, rural and territorial development, climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk management and prevention, and migration in the context of food systems and rural development. FAO also fosters dialogue across relevant actors at national and local levels for designing, implementing and monitoring strategies and policies. For example, FAO and IOM have collaborated on a joint study to identify the needs of returnees in Iraq and formulate policy recommendations on how to best support the recovery of agricultural production in the rural areas of return.¹⁰⁸ FAO's support at the governance level can also include direct support to government and local parties in responding to the needs of returnees in rural and peri-urban areas through tailored workshops, multi-stakeholder dialogue, and institutional capacity development (for example, as part of broader post-conflict reintegration strategies or community stabilization initiatives).

To encourage returnees' involvement and active participation in local governance mechanisms, FAO also provides targeted training to returnees and local communities on how to engage in and contribute to local decision-making procedures and promotes closer cooperation between different policy sectors and government levels. In Guatemala, FAO is working with IOM and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to promote an integrated and territorial approach to conflict prevention and the effective reintegration of returnee youth in the Department of San Marcos. The project is strengthening the capacities of local and national government institutions to develop gender-sensitive actions and programmes promoting the socioeconomic reintegration of rural youth. It also promotes youth leadership through appropriate educational programmes increasing their agency capacity and participation in community decision-making platforms. Moreover, it supports alternative and sustainable livelihoods in rural areas through technical training, access to financial services and income-generating activities. In El Salvador, FAO supported the Government in the implementation of the programme *El Salvador es tu Casa* through a project that promotes economic and psychosocial reintegration for returnees in rural areas. It has also promoted organization among returnee groups, as well as coordination mechanisms between public and private stakeholders at a territorial level, to identify and support the implementation of productive projects and entrepreneurial opportunities in rural areas. In addition, FAO has provided direct technical assistance to returnees, contributing to their reintegration process and promoting recovery of both their livelihoods and self-esteem.

Supporting the Government of Senegal for the socioeconomic reintegration of returnees in rural areas

FAO has been supporting the Government of Senegal in the implementation of two programmes focusing on the socioeconomic reintegration of returnees in rural areas, namely the *Migration and Youth Employment in Food Systems* and the *Strengthening Capacity to Harness Positive Effects of Migration* programmes. These programmes have promoted the establishment of coordination mechanisms between migration and agricultural stakeholders (including the Ministries of foreign affairs, internal affairs, rural development, agriculture, labour, youth, gender, and social development), and agribusiness skills development and orientation services.

¹⁰⁷ The "governance level" is relatively similar to the "structural level" mentioned throughout the paper. "Governance level" reflects FAO's terminology.

¹⁰⁸ The study "Why Iraqi Displaced Farmers Do Not Return to Agriculture?" was presented internally in November 2020, and to the best of our knowledge has not been published yet.



Through the projects, FAO provided support to government officials at national and district level to integrate migration considerations into development planning. This entailed awareness-raising activities on the linkages between migration, rural development and decent youth employment as well as institutional capacity building.

In addition, FAO assisted the ANPEJ in integrating returning migrants in its model of youth-centred rural hubs (Modèle d'Insertion des Jeunes Agripreneurs), a network of rural hubs for training, incubation and agribusiness support piloted under the FAO Programme Integrated Country Approach for boosting decent jobs for youth in the agri-food system. This resulted in returning young migrants benefiting from agricultural and entrepreneurial skills training in the area of Silane, in the region of Diourbel.¹⁰⁹ The training package included training modules on horticulture, poultry farming, cattle fattening, aquaculture, agricultural transformation, entrepreneurship and marketing.

Finally, FAO is supporting the Directorate General of Support to Senegalese Abroad (Direction Générale d'Appui aux Sénégalais de l'Extérieur) in the set-up of communal offices for reception, orientation and monitoring of Senegalese from abroad (Bureaux Communaux d'Appui, d'Orientation et de Suivi des Sénégalais de l'Extérieur) to facilitate the reintegration of returning migrants in rural areas through orientation and coaching. Main services include: provision of information on employment and investment opportunities in the agri-food sector; project management coaching and facilitation of linkages with national and decentralized technical services, among other services.



FAO's support to the process of land restitution to Colombian returnees

In 2011, the Government of Colombia adopted the Victims and Land Restitution Law, which provides for the restitution of land to Colombians who have been dispossessed and forced to migrate because of the armed conflict. As an implementation strategy, the Government of Colombia created the Land Restitution Unit, in charge of creating and administrating a registry of dispossessed lands and filing the victim's claims of restitution before the civil courts. The Land Restitution Unit must also ensure compliance with orders of restitution and compensation, including any specific measures indicated by the courts to guarantee the sustainability of the land restitution process (e.g. quality and availability of local infrastructure and services, institutional support to local initiatives for rural development, and so forth).

At the governance level, FAO supported the post-restitution process by facilitating the coordination among different entities at the national and local level to jointly identify and implement specific actions to ensure the long-term sustainability of the land restitution process. Activities such as the organization of information days, supported sustainability, allowing national institutions to visit communities to raise awareness on services available, and discuss ways of improving their support at the local level. FAO also promoted the development of inter-institutional coordination plans and advocated for the inclusion of a specific budget line in the Territorial Action Plans at the department and municipal level to fund priority actions identified in close consultation with Colombian returnees and local communities.

At the community level, returnees and local families received agricultural production support and took part in joint economic and social initiatives such as working together to build community infrastructure, setting up small agricultural enterprises, and organizing community sessions of storytelling and art laboratories to share memories from the armed conflict and promote

¹⁰⁹ The beneficiaries were identified through a call launched online. They comprised migrants who returned both spontaneously and through IOM's assisted voluntary return programmes.



healing. As a result, 1,733 beneficiaries formed 28 agricultural cooperatives, organized in a network of local producers to coordinate their production outputs and strengthen their commercialization techniques.

At the individual level, returnees received agricultural inputs and technical training on agricultural practices with a focus on environmental sustainability. This was particularly important to ensure that agricultural activities were in line with environmental protection standards and adopted a sustainable management of natural resources. Returnees also received training on engaging with local authorities to contribute to the development of local action plans. This training also included targeted capacity building for women returnees in an effort to challenge traditional gender structures and encourage them to take an active role in consultations with local authorities.



Case Study No. 6

THE GERMAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION'S RETURNING TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAMME

The programme *Returning to New Opportunities* is implemented by the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It aims to support the sustainable reintegration of returnees in their countries of origin. The programme operates Advice Centres for Jobs, Migration and Reintegration in the countries of origin together with national partner institutions. There are currently Advice Centres in Afghanistan, Albania, Egypt, Ghana, Iraq, Kosovo,¹¹⁰ Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Serbia and Tunisia. An Advice Centre in the Gambia is planned.

The Advice Centres provide services to returnees, IDPs and the local population. As of April 2021, more than 108,000 advisory sessions had been conducted in these Centres, including close to 27,000 with returnees. These services include individually-tailored advice on professional prospects and individual opportunities, including mental health and psychosocial support, employment support through vocational qualifications, placement and transition management (e.g. job placement), career guidance and counselling, entrepreneurship support and publicly-funded employment (e.g. cash for work and wage subsidies).

The reintegration support measures are implemented in close cooperation with partners in the countries of origin, including ministries in charge of employment promotion and reintegration, as well as the related subordinate authorities (e.g. national employment agencies). Moreover, the programme works closely with civil society organizations, international organizations, institutions, and the private sector. In doing so, the programme creates linkages with local and national structures and processes, which enables the referral of clients (returnees and others) for further opportunities and increases the sustainability of the approach. Referral mechanisms exist with diverse partner structures. For instance, in Ghana, the Advice Centre refers clients, inter alia, to the civil society organizations Oak Foundation, which trains clients to become farmers, as well as to the Adventist Development and Relief Agency and the African Development Organization for Migration, which provide clients with support for their social reintegration (for example, through temporary accommodation).

GIZ also systematically coordinates its reintegration interventions under the *Returning to New Opportunities* programme with other GIZ programmes and projects implemented in the migrants' countries of origin. Depending on the German cooperation's priorities and programming in each country, the reintegration programme benefits from other programmes' activities, such as training organised under TVET programmes, among others. Importantly, they also benefit from the links these programmes established with partner countries' institutions. In Senegal, a joint job fair was organized with the implementation partner ANPEJ to support returnees and the local population in their economic reintegration. Next to a wide range of private sector companies, diverse national bodies and authorities also participated in the fair and provided information about opportunities in

¹¹⁰ References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).



Senegal. Through the interlinkage of the services in the field, and the avoidance of double structures, more comprehensive and complementary services are ultimately available for individuals.

Furthermore, *Returning to New Opportunities* supports capacity development, with a view to anchoring the programme's approach in local structures. For instance, in almost half of the partner countries (Albania, Morocco, Pakistan, Serbia and Tunisia), the programme has integrated advisory desks at the partners' premises. In certain countries, ministry employees also work at the advisory desks, which allows for a better knowledge transfer. Through a variety of measures, the programme strengthens the capacity of partner institutions for two interrelated reasons: firstly, to be able to provide more services specifically to returnees and secondly, to improve the services in the countries in general. Capacity strengthening measures include knowledge transfer, the strengthening of core competencies (e.g. in the field of employment promotion, counselling of vulnerable groups, mental health and psychosocial support as well as in the application of reintegration measures), support for the digitalization of job offers and the strengthening of digital competencies, the improvement of infrastructure and the provision of equipment for partners and downstream partners. Through these diverse capacity development measures, the ownership of local and national partners is fostered and the programme is sustainably anchored in the local context, paving the way for a handover to local authorities.

To support a development-oriented approach towards sustainable reintegration, an interministerial approach is applied within Germany. The different ministries involved in AVR, namely BMZ and the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) as well as their respective downstream institutions, GIZ GmbH and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), closely coordinate their planning and programming in this field. In the scope of this collaboration, a data exchange pilot between GIZ (on behalf of BMZ) and IOM (on behalf of BAMF) is currently in preparation. Within this project, the transfer of selected data on beneficiaries of the *StarthilfePlus* programme from IOM to GIZ is planned, in order to strengthen the coherence of the AVR approach of the German government. The data transfer should allow for a more comprehensive range of reintegration services for voluntary returnees from Germany by enabling access to complementary assistance from IOM and GIZ.

Credits:

Page 48. April 2021, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Portrait of Ouedraogo Moussa working. © IOM 2021/Alexandre BEE.

Page 49. IOM meets with the beneficiaries during the implementation of the project of school rehabilitation in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire. © IOM 2021/Mohamed Aly DIABATÉ.

Page 51(a). Survivors of the fatal shipwreck continue to recover, rebrand themselves and rebuild their communities, now against the backdrop of a pandemic. © IOM 2020/ Assan JOBE.

Page 51(b). The team of returnees and youth engaged over 7,300 community members, including influential female leaders. © IOM 2020/ Sheick Omar SAWANEH.

Page 53. Returnees and community members involved in a greenhouse project in Jebreil, Herat. © IOM/Angela WELLS.

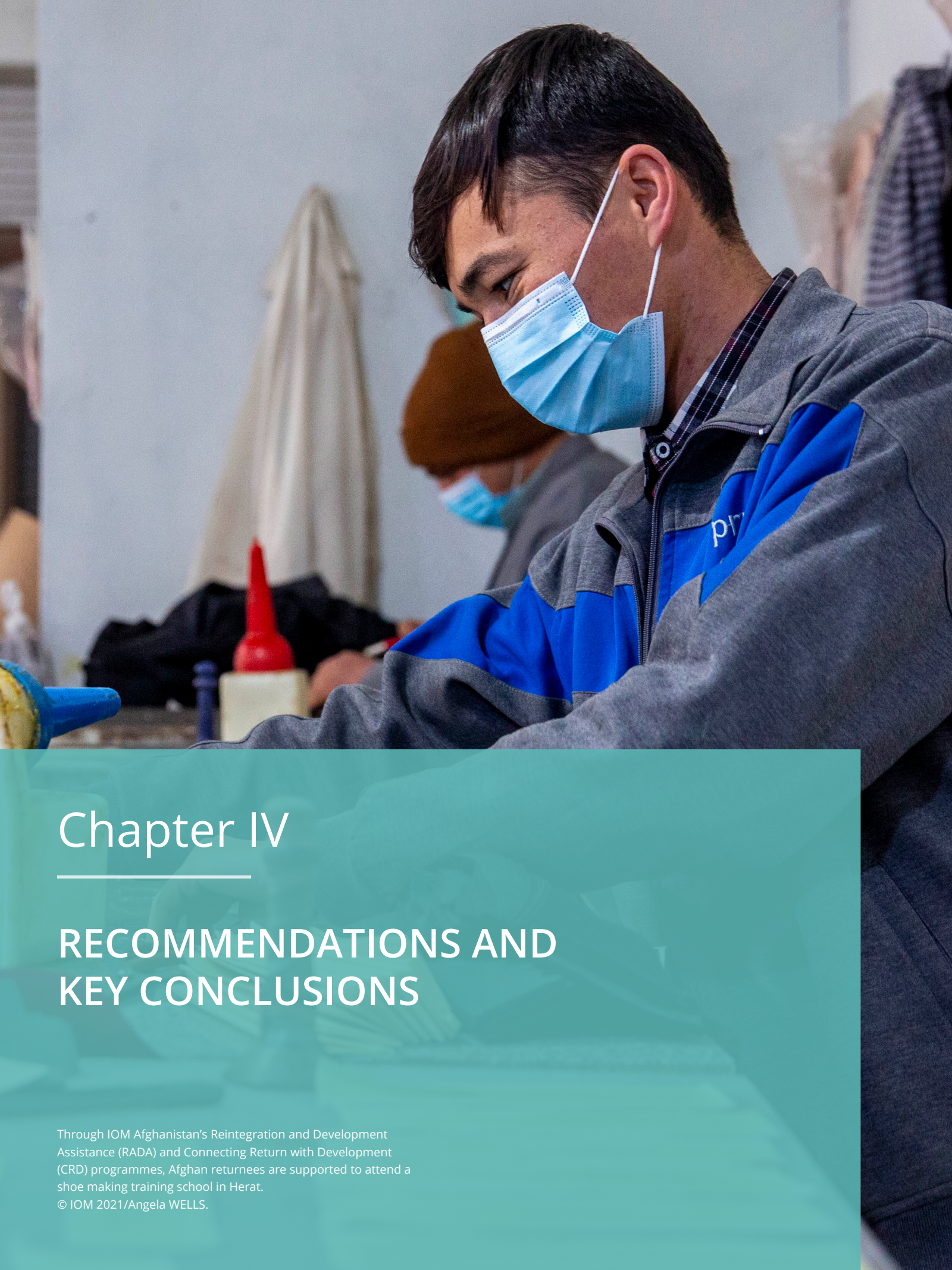
Page 56. "Stories Untold: Return of Georgian Migrants in Photos" features personal accounts of Georgian migrants who returned to their home country after their time overseas and rebuilt their lives in Georgia with the support of IOM. © IOM 2020/Dina OGANOVA.

Page 59. Udayapur, Nepal, is one of the regions in the country vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Several families have lost their houses and livelihoods due flooding. They also face difficulties with their plantations because of changes on rain patterns. © IOM 2016/Amanda NERO.

Page 61. In Côte d'Ivoire, returning migrants and community members were trained on a rice farming project through the EU-IOM Joint Initiative. © IOM 2000/Mohamed AlyDIABATÉ.

Page 64. Robeiro, an ex-combatant from an illegal paramilitary group in Colombia, carries the harvested chili peppers. Robeiro is one of 300 beneficiaries of an income generation project implemented by IOM Colombia. © IOM 2009/Diego SAMORA.

Page 66. In the context of reintegration activities 355 returning migrants have received vocational training and have been accompanied in the creation of micro-enterprises or in the search for a job or work experience. More than 2,437 stranded migrants have voluntarily returned to Burkina Faso under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for the Protection and Reintegration of Migrants. Launched in December 2016 with funding from the EU Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for the Protection and Reintegration of Migrants is the first global programme to save lives, protect and assist migrants along key migration routes in Africa. © IOM/Alexander BEE.



Chapter IV

RECOMMENDATIONS AND KEY CONCLUSIONS

Through IOM Afghanistan's Reintegration and Development Assistance (RADA) and Connecting Return with Development (CRD) programmes, Afghan returnees are supported to attend a shoe making training school in Herat.

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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Design and implement reintegration interventions to maximize their sustainable development potential, and development interventions to support sustainable reintegration

- **Reintegration should be integrated into sectoral, inter-sectoral and development policies, strategies and programmes, and sustainable development should be integrated in reintegration-related policies, strategies and programmes.**
- Development programmes in main areas of return should **include migration considerations** and where relevant **include returnees** among their target beneficiaries.
- **Migration mainstreaming** should explicitly include **reintegration concerns**.
- Programmes should consider **all types of returnees** in a comprehensive manner to better apprehend the potential positive or negative local impact of return and reintegration, and to maximize their positive impact. This includes not only returnees in vulnerable situations, migrants supported through AVRR schemes and forced returnees, but also **spontaneous returnees** and non-vulnerable migrants returning with skills, savings and other forms of capital who are **able and willing to contribute positively** to their communities of return.
- Programmes aiming at addressing returnees' reintegration must **build upon robust mapping and assessments** of the local context (including stakeholder mapping and service mapping).
- Whenever possible, returnees should be supported through **structures and services already available** to the larger population, rather than duplicate or create specific services and structures for returnees. Existing structures and services could be strengthened if needed.
- Programmes should help returnees **to formalize** their income generating activities to contribute to their country of origin's **tax revenue**.
- Structural support must be given particular attention in view of addressing some of the core challenges of reintegration. Reintegration programmes should envisage engaging governments in countries of origin to **reform** key legislation and regulations that may hinder migrant reintegration, for instance related to identification documents, land rights or diploma and skills recognition.
- Reintegration actors should provide donors with realistic estimates of the **cost of development-oriented reintegration assistance**. Specific budget lines for structural support, community-based interventions and other activities contributing to sustainable development outcomes, should be included in budgets in addition to budget lines for individual reintegration support.

1.2 Strengthen synergies between development and reintegration programmes and enhance cooperation and coordination

- Based on needs assessments and stakeholder mapping, reintegration and development practitioners should engage with one another and **envisage synergies** between their respective programmes to seek to maximize the mutual impact of reintegration and sustainable development.
- Programmes should **use as much as possible, existing mapping** and assessments (including community mapping, returnee needs assessment, labour market assessment, value chains assessment, and others) instead of duplicating existing tools. The tools produced under these programmes should be shared widely with development and reintegration stakeholders to foster a common understanding and common prioritization of interventions in communities of return.



- **Synergies** should be discussed (and possibly formalized) **as early as possible** during the respective programmes' design stage to optimize the potential offered by the synergies and to embed coordination mechanisms in the programmes.
- When discussing possible synergies, **clear referral pathways and conditions of access** for beneficiaries should be defined, if relevant.
- Practitioners and programme designers in the fields of development and reintegration should be **creative** and think “out of the box”, in order to foster partnerships, complementarities and referral options to maximize the impact of development programmes on reintegration sustainability, and vice-versa.
- Practitioners and programme designers should strive to **break down silos** between different programmes within and across the migration and development sectors, in order to enhance coherence of interventions and to maximize the mutual impact of such programmes.
- Synergies between reintegration and development programmes must take into account and build upon their **respective specificities in terms of approach, timeframes and resources**.
- Both the **short-term and long-term needs** of returnees must be taken into account. Reintegration programmes usually address the short-term needs and provide beneficiaries with tools to foster sustainable reintegration, but this initial support alone is often insufficient to cover returnees' long-term needs. Reintegration programmes must consider how short-term plans link with a longer-term, development-oriented perspective notably through synergies with development programmes.
- Programmes supporting returnees' reintegration should leverage reintegration actors' **sound understanding of reintegration challenges, to better tailor their activities** or align them more closely to the needs and preferences of returnees. Reintegration programmes aiming at contributing to sustainable development should leverage development actors' **sound understanding of the local context and local needs, as well as development approaches** (including participatory and area-based development approaches).

1.3 Involve relevant actors, including returnees and communities of return

- To maximize the sustainable development potential of reintegration and make sure local needs and priorities are taken into account, **local authorities** must be closely involved, and **locally led solutions** should be promoted.
- The **private sector** must also be closely involved, in particular in view of the potential role of employers and of the central importance of (decent) jobs for returnees' reintegration.
- Importantly, **returnees and their communities of return should be empowered**. Programmes should apply a **bottom-up and participatory approach**, placing returnees and their communities at the centre of the identification of reintegration needs, of the definition of the support required, and of the implementation of interventions (as opposed to top-down approaches designed or significantly influenced by migrants' host countries or reintegration programmes). **Returnees** should be supported to participate in the local decision-making processes and in the implementation of interventions to address local reintegration and development challenges. **Communities** should be supported to identify locally led solutions to reintegration challenges that take into account their needs and priorities (for instance, through inclusive and participatory community dialogues), and community initiatives benefiting returnees should be supported.



1.4 Maximize the mutual impact of sustainable development and reintegration through increased ownership and targeted action of countries of origin, host countries and donors

Through their actions and decisions, countries of origin, host countries and donors have a key role to play to maximize the positive mutual impact of sustainable development and reintegration.

Countries of origin

- A **large range of actors must be engaged** in migrants' countries of origin, spanning all reintegration-related concerns and needs. Authorities should make all possible efforts to ensure a **whole-of-government** and **whole-of-society** approach is applied with regards to reintegration and sustainable development.
- Authorities at all levels in the migrants' countries of origin (including national, regional and local authorities in main areas of return) should **integrate migrant reintegration in development and other relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral policies and programmes**.
- Authorities at all levels in countries of origin should participate in reintegration-related **coordination mechanisms** to make sure reintegration support is anchored in the local context and into existing services, programmes and plans.

Host countries

- Authorities in migrants' host countries should increase efforts to **coordinate the priorities and funding of the institutions in charge of migration and of sustainable development**.¹¹¹
- As well-prepared return and reintegration positively influence reintegration outcomes, relevant authorities and organizations in host countries should **support migrants in the preparation of their return and reintegration**. For instance, strong pre-departure counselling, sharing of job vacancies and trainings in sectors in demand or with good prospects in countries of origin, skills and job experience certification, links with diaspora initiatives, and other interventions, maximize the likelihood of sustainable reintegration, but can also contribute to addressing market needs in the community of return, and potentially contribute to creating jobs at the local level, thus potentially having a positive effect on local development.
- Relevant authorities and organizations in migrants' host countries should envisage ways of supporting migrants' economic reintegration that can contribute to sustainable development outcomes, for instance by facilitating the **creation of a market** in the host country for the selling of the returnees' production.
- Authorities in migrants' host and origin countries should continue (or engage in) discussions on the **transfer of the social security benefits** acquired abroad, in the countries of origin.

¹¹¹ "Reintegration assistance sometimes occurs outside of development assistance frameworks and independent of other diplomatic initiatives. To address this, liaison officers within embassies, regular meetings and key contact points appear to have been effective, especially with respect to the identification of shared objectives and areas for collaboration." OECD, Sustainable Reintegration of Returning Migrants, page 18.



Donors

- Donors should use their position to **suggest and facilitate synergies** between development and reintegration programmes, especially at programme design and planning stages.
- Donors should **allocate appropriate resources** to match the objectives of development-oriented reintegration programmes.
- Donors should **invest in building the capacities of key stakeholders in countries of origin** and in programmes addressing the needs of both returnees and the local population.

All

- Countries of origin and host countries' governments, as well as donors, should strive to **break down silos** between various dimensions of migration management and development cooperation.
- They should also **consider reintegration as a broad and long-term process, which requires long-term planning and programming and subsequently, adequate resources.**

1.5 Produce more knowledge and evidence to better understand the links between reintegration and sustainable development and enhance related programming

- **Better data** should be collected on return and reintegration, including through improved returnee profiles and needs assessments. Particular efforts should be made to improve data on **spontaneous returns**, which constitute a significant part of returns worldwide.
- **Better evidence** should be collected on how reintegration programmes actually contribute to sustainable development outcomes. **Monitoring and evaluation** should be systematically included, with adequate resources, and measurement tools standardized (at least to a certain extent) to allow for comparison. Different actors should participate in monitoring, producing data and results that can be compared across countries and programmes.
- Reintegration actors should **take stock of reintegration approaches** that work and do not work to identify the types of interventions they should focus on, and those requiring strengthening of partnerships and synergies. It is essential to define what types of interventions have the biggest **“return on investment”**, including in terms of development outcomes.
- **Case studies** should be developed to highlight successful examples and **research** conducted to enhance understanding of the interlinkages between sustainable development and reintegration.
- The links between **sustainable development, reintegration and environment** should be given particular attention. Research should shed light on how reintegration can have a positive or negative impact on communities affected by climate change and environmental degradation, and on how reintegration can contribute to improve resilience to these phenomena. In addition, “potential synergies between reintegration activities, employment strategies and environmental objectives, via “green jobs” – including those which specifically aim to preserve or restore the environment in communities of return”¹¹² – should be explored.

¹¹² IOM, *Reintegration Handbook*, page 165.



2. CONCLUSIONS

Reintegration and sustainable development can influence each other. Through interventions at the individual, community and structural levels, programmes can contribute to sustainable reintegration and sustainable economic, social and environmental development. Local economic development initiatives contribute to create an enabling environment for reintegration and can directly benefit returnees. Returnees’ economic reintegration, in turn, may contribute to local development by creating jobs or new services. In some contexts, returnees can also bring back capital or relevant skills from abroad, which they can leverage for local development. Access to and availability of quality services strongly contribute to returnees’ reintegration, and by utilising and strengthening services available to the general population, reintegration programmes can contribute to sustainable development at the local level. Development interventions which are designed in a participatory and inclusive manner and address essential needs in communities, contribute to improved social cohesion, and in turn, help returnees’ reintegration. By supporting returnees and mitigating the strain on local services and job markets in areas with high levels of returns, reintegration interventions can also contribute to social cohesion. Interventions aiming to mitigate the risks of environmental degradation and increase resilience and adaptation to climate change, may also contribute to creating a more conducive environment for reintegration. Furthermore, the green economy can offer great opportunities for returnees and local people.

These are some examples of the vast areas in which development and reintegration programmes can intervene to foster sustainable reintegration and sustainable development. They suggest the scope and the importance of these links.

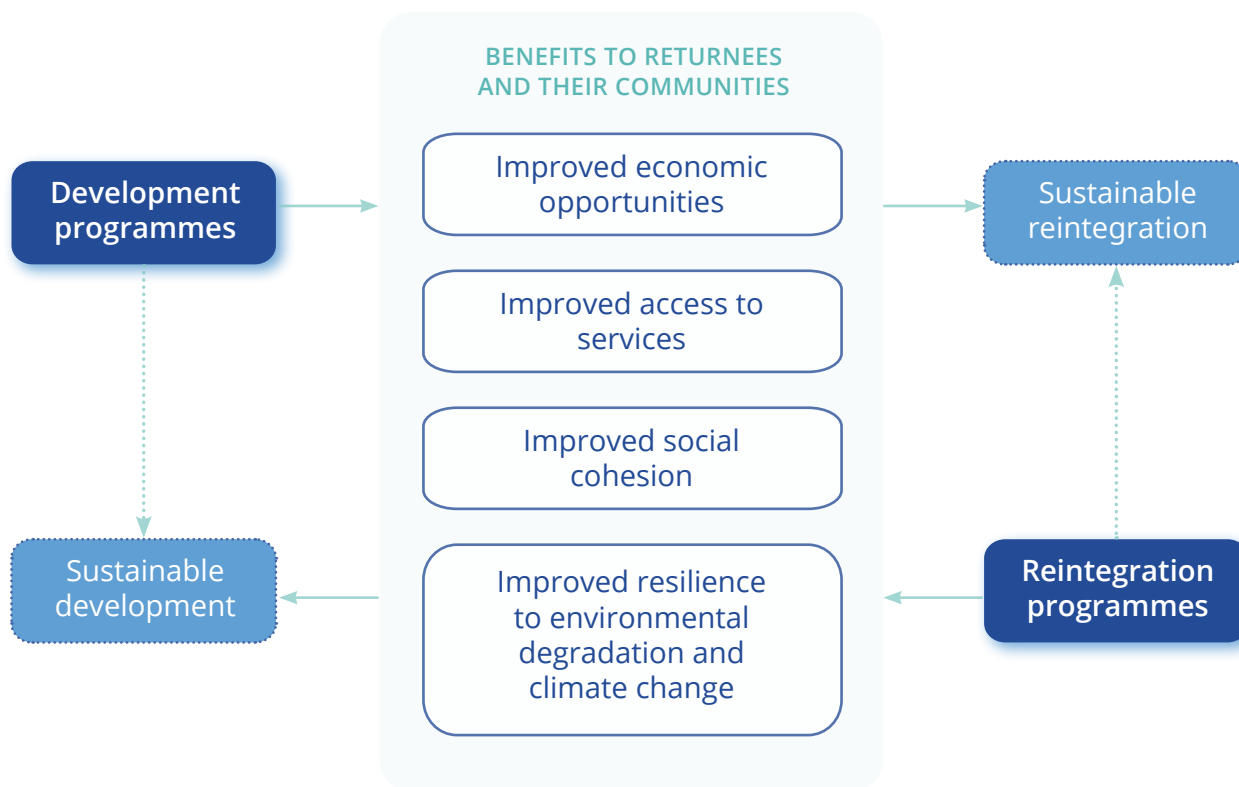


Chart 3. How development programmes impact sustainable reintegration and vice versa



To maximize the mutual impact of reintegration and sustainable development, related programmes and actors can seek to mainstream reintegration and sustainable development in their respective plans and programmes, or to foster synergies. Mainstreaming sustainable development into reintegration planning and programming requires applying an integrated and whole-of-government approach, and examination of the impact of return and reintegration on the areas of return, both among the members of the communities and at structural level (e.g. in terms of access to services, institutional and policy frameworks, etc.). Mainstreaming reintegration into development planning and programming requires analysis of the potential impact of migrant return and reintegration on local development and necessitates the inclusion of reintegration-related concerns in plans and programmes.

In addition, synergies between reintegration and development programmes offer great opportunities. They allow a combining of respective expertise, networks and resources, and a leveraging of the specific priorities and added value of each type of programme (such as the experience of development programmes with regards to inclusive and participatory processes or to area-based planning and programming, and reintegration programmes' sound understanding of returnees' profiles and needs) with the objective of reinforcing sustainable development and reintegration outcomes. They contribute to increasing coherence among interventions and can help addressing both short- and long-term needs of returnees, while considering the needs and priorities of communities and countries of origin. Overall, maximising the mutual impact of reintegration and sustainable development requires a number of conditions, or facilitating factors, such as stakeholder engagement and effective coordination, and the existence of appropriate policies and mechanisms.

Efforts have been made to maximize the sustainable development potential of reintegration and to build upon development interventions to foster sustainable reintegration, as highlighted through the various examples and case studies presented in this paper. But much more can be done to more systematically leverage this link to foster sustainable reintegration and advance sustainable development outcomes, to better anchor reintegration interventions in local development priorities, the GCM and SDGs, and to integrate migration and reintegration-related concerns in development programmes targeting areas of high migration and return. In addition, in light of the importance of environmental challenges faced by many countries of origin, and the increasing economic opportunities offered by the fight against environmental degradation and climate change as well as by the green economy, the environmental aspect of the interlinkages between reintegration and sustainable development should be given particular attention.





The primary objective of reintegration programmes is to enable returnees reintegrating in a sustainable manner, and the primary objective of development programmes is to advance sustainable economic, social and environmental development. However, policymakers, programme designers and practitioners' choices and actions can contribute to maximizing the positive mutual influence of sustainable development and reintegration. By deciding to strengthen existing services instead of creating ad hoc services for returnees, or by facilitating inclusive and participatory community-based reintegration planning instead of designing top-down interventions, for instance, reintegration programmes may contribute to sustainable development at the local level. By integrating mobility and reintegration concerns and including returnees in their plans and activities, development programmes can contribute to support sustainable reintegration.

This paper highlights the potential impact of these choices as well as the conditions that enable a maximization of the interlinkages between reintegration and sustainable development. It highlights the need for more cooperation and partnership, for improved planning combining sustainable development and reintegration concerns, and for the allocation of adequate resources to meet the challenges of migrant reintegration and sustainable development, particularly in the main areas of origin and return of migrants.

This paper also aspires to be a key building block in further investigating this topic, and to be a starting point to create more links between reintegration and sustainable development programmes, to foster additional synergies and partnerships, and to increase evidence and learning on these interconnections (including through adapted data collection exercises and dedicated research, for instance under the EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub's Research Fund and other knowledge products).

Credits:

Page 71. Returning migrants and community members smiling after their work for the school rehabilitation in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire. © IOM 2021/Mohamed Aly DIABATÉ.

Page 74. Returnee migrants of Dhading district attend skill development training under an IOM initiative aimed to empower women migrants through financial sustainability. © IOM Nepal 2017.

Page 76. A returnee, in Habru district of Amhara regional state, Ethiopia, assisted with economic reintegration under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative programme. © IOM 2019/Genaye ESHETU.



Rationale of the Sustainable Reintegration Knowledge Papers Series

This report is part of a series of *Knowledge Papers* focusing on aspects of migrant reintegration that have been largely under-researched, not implemented to their full potential, or that have consistently been identified in reintegration programmes' evaluations as programmes gaps or opportunities. The *Knowledge Papers* series complements other knowledge products developed by the EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub (KMH), such as *Good, promising and innovative practices factsheets*, the *Knowledge Bites* series and the research studies under the KMH's Research Fund. The *Knowledge Papers* aim to take stock of the state of the art in various areas related to reintegration assistance and programmes, and to propose leads for future reintegration programmes implemented by governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations worldwide.

Knowledge Management Hub

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