



Knowledge Bite #1
October 2020

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

Rationale of the Sustainable Reintegration Knowledge Bites Series

The Sustainable Reintegration Knowledge Bites Series aims to present findings pertaining to sustainable reintegration outcomes emerging from analyses based on the Reintegration Sustainability Survey (RSS) data and other monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data available. The data has been collected in the framework of the [EU-IOM Joint Initiative](#) and other [EU-IOM Actions](#) supporting migrant protection and sustainable reintegration. This series is designed to bring such findings to the attention of reintegration practitioners and policy-makers worldwide, as well as to inform and disseminate good practices, lessons learned and recommendations.

Specifically, this series of Knowledge Bites attempts to: (i) empirically explain cross-country, cross-regional and cross-programme patterns on sustainable reintegration outcomes, (ii) assess the effectiveness of reintegration assistance in terms of achieving reintegration sustainability, (iii) determine which type(s) of reintegration support measures have proven to be the most impactful on each of the three dimensions of reintegration – economic, social and psychosocial, and (iv) investigate which are the external/structural factors affecting sustainable reintegration outcomes.

Knowledge Management Hub

The development and production of this series is supported by the EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub (KMH), which was established in September 2017 under the EU-funded Pilot Action on Voluntary Return and Sustainable, Community-Based Reintegration in Southern Africa. The KMH aims at supporting the implementation of the EU-IOM Actions addressing migrant protection and sustainable reintegration in Africa and Asia by ensuring coherent voluntary return and reintegration approaches, harmonising M&E activities, setting up knowledge management tools, and producing knowledge products.

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SUMMARY

This first introductory Knowledge Bite focuses on a high-level analysis of the RSS data collected in the framework of the various EU-IOM Actions and centrally available with the scope of defining some of the factors affecting sustainable reintegration outcomes and providing insights on the reasons behind these.

The main results suggest that returnees benefiting from economic reintegration activities – specifically Microbusiness support and Trainings – have on average higher sustainable reintegration scores across the economic, social and psychosocial dimensions, compared to returnees not benefiting from them. On the other hand, results reveal that individual level activities are associated with higher reintegration scores compared to community level activities. Similarly, the results suggest that benefiting from more than one reintegration activity does not necessarily translate into higher sustainable reintegration outcomes.

Finally, the results of the analysis presented in this document showcase the importance played by context-specific and structural factors in the country of origin on the sustainable reintegration of returnees, highlighting the relevance of a context-specific approach to sustainable reintegration.

These results set the ground for more in-depth and fine-grained analyses of sustainable reintegration outcomes, which will be in the scope of future Knowledge Bites to be produced as part of this series.

1. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Measuring sustainable reintegration

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) views reintegration to be sustainable when “returnees have reached levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities, and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with (re)migration drivers. Having achieved sustainable reintegration, returnees are able to make further migration decisions a matter of choice, rather than necessity”¹. This definition highlights the multi-dimensional nature of a reintegration process – economic, social and psychosocial – and the need to approach migrant reintegration in a comprehensive manner, considering the factors that can affect reintegration at the individual, community and structural levels.

Based on this new definition, IOM has moved to standardize the measurement of reintegration². Drawing on empirical research and analysis conducted in 2017 by Samuel Hall in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Iraq, Senegal and Somalia under the DFID-funded Mediterranean Sustainable Reintegration (MEASURE)³ Project implemented by IOM, new tools, namely the RSS, to measure reintegration sustainability were developed. Building on global protection frameworks and on the literature on reintegration, the research team field-tested indicators in these five countries reflecting different return contexts. This work resulted in the development of 15 indicators and 30 measurement elements relating to the economic, social and psychosocial dimensions of reintegration, together with a scoring system for measuring reintegration outcomes that facilitates the measurement of returnees’ progress towards sustainability. Designed to be easily deployed in IOM’s reintegration programming, the RSS⁴ and related scoring system generate a composite reintegration score and three-dimensional scores measuring economic, social and psychosocial reintegration, as outlined in the definition of sustainable reintegration.

¹ See IOM (2017), [Towards an Integrated Approach to Reintegration in the context of Return](#).

² See IOM - [Migration Policy Practice special issue on Return and Reintegration](#), “Measuring sustainable reintegration” N. Nozarian and N. Majidi – Page 30.

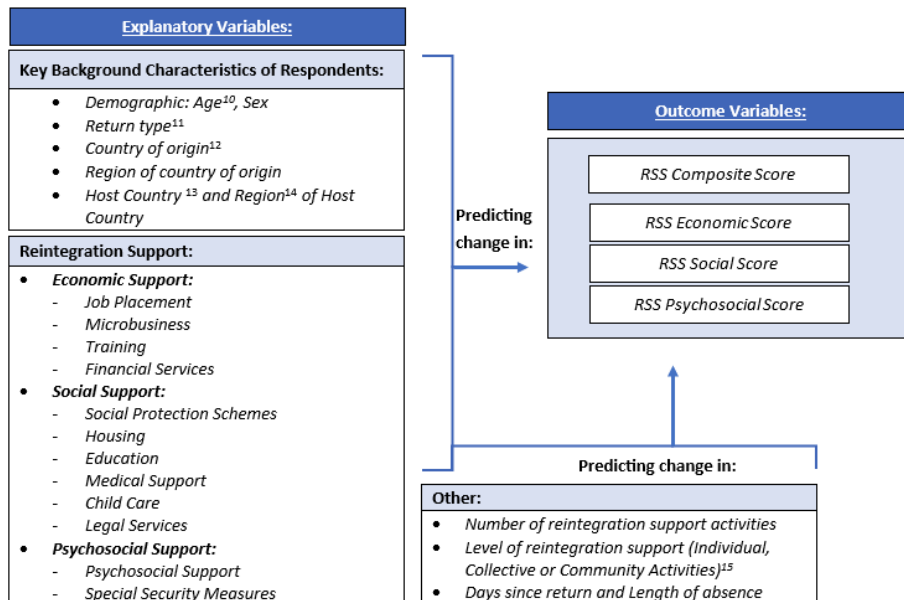
³ Samuel Hall/IOM (2018), [Setting Standards for an Integrated Approach to Reintegration](#).

⁴ See IOM (2019)– [Reintegration Handbook](#) (Modules 1-5 + Annex 4B).

1.2 Methodology

Given the prevailing gap in existing research on reintegration regarding the factors that contribute to or undermine sustainable reintegration outcomes, this analysis aims to explain cross-country patterns along the three reintegration dimensions and to define some of the factors affecting such outcomes. The dataset used for this analysis covers 4,938 respondents that have received reintegration assistance in 16 countries of origin⁵ across four different geographical regions⁶ covered under the EU-IOM Actions⁷ between 2018 and 2020. The set of factors that can affect reintegration outcomes included in the analysis range from key background characteristics of the respondents to the type of reintegration support received. Table 1 displays the list of outcome variables⁸ and prospective explanatory variables⁹:

Table 1: List of outcome variables and prospective explanatory variables



⁵ For the purpose of this study, countries with at least 50 RSS Unique Respondents were selected for the analysis.

⁶ Geographical regions as per IOM regional division. Asia and The Pacific, East and Horn of Africa, Southern Africa and West and Central Africa.

⁷ In line with the EU external policy and migration priorities, IOM and the EU have jointly developed the following programmes focusing on migrant protection, dignified voluntary return and sustainable reintegration: Joint Initiative in Sahel and Lake Chad, North Africa and Horn of Africa; Pilot Action on Voluntary Return and Sustainable, Community-Based Reintegration; Improving Reintegration of Returnees in Afghanistan (RADA) and Sustainable Reintegration and Improved Migration Governance (Prottasha).

⁸ The variables to be predicted, also known as response or dependent variables.

⁹ The variables used for prediction, also known as independent variables.

¹⁰ Only responses collected from respondents aged 14 or above were used in the analysis.

¹¹ Return Type is classified as Forced Returns, Non-IOM Voluntary Returns, Return (AVR/AVRR) and Return (VHR) – Voluntary Humanitarian Returns.

¹² Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia and Sudan.

¹³ Algeria, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Iraq, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Portugal, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

¹⁴ Asia and The Pacific, East and Horn of Africa, European Economic Area, Middle East and North Africa, South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Southern Africa and West and Central Africa.

¹⁵ Individual (assistance provided individually to returning migrants), Collective (assistance provided to several returning migrants as a group) and Community (individual or collective reintegration assistance directly involving local communities and/ or directly addressing their needs).

The first step in the analysis consisted of an exploratory and descriptive analysis of the outcome and explanatory variables. To determine whether there is a relationship between the RSS scores and the explanatory variables, Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficients¹⁶ were estimated. These coefficients give us a first measure of the linear association between the RSS scores and the set of explanatory factors outlined above, to determine whether there is a relationship between these and to describe the magnitude and sign of that relationship – positive or negative. The correlation coefficients also provide an empirical justification for the selection of the explanatory variables used to continue the analysis. The analysis then proceeds with a cross-country regression model, which allows us to examine the relationship between the RSS scores and the set of explanatory variables that displayed a statistically significant relationship with the reintegration scores in the correlation analysis. This analysis enabled us to measure the average change in the sustainable reintegration outcomes for a change in each explanatory variable, holding all other explanatory variables constant.

1.3 Reintegration Sustainability Survey Data

Most of the RSS data is available and accessible for analysis through IOM’s institutional case management system, MiMOSA (Migrant Management and Operational Systems Application). However, in some instances the RSS is first collected in paper format and later imported to MiMOSA, creating some lag between the time of the data collection and its availability. The dataset covers data centrally available in MiMOSA as of 1 August 2020 for four EU-IOM Actions across four different regions: the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, and the EU-IOM Joint Initiative in the Horn of Africa, the Pilot Action on Voluntary Return and Sustainable Community-Based Reintegration in Southern Africa, and the Sustainable Reintegration and Improved Migration Governance (Prottasha) project in Bangladesh, in Asia. Table 2 displays the number of observations broken-down by country and region of origin.

Table 2: Number of observations broken-down by country and region of origin			
REGION OF ORIGIN	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS	PER CENT
Asia and The Pacific	Bangladesh	437	9
West and Central Africa	Burkina Faso	205	4
West and Central Africa	Cameroon	394	8
West and Central Africa	Côte d’Ivoire	358	7
East and Horn of Africa	Ethiopia	452	9
West and Central Africa	Gambia	414	8
West and Central Africa	Ghana	175	3
West and Central Africa	Guinea	382	8
West and Central Africa	Guinea-Bissau	186	4
West and Central Africa	Mali	232	5
Southern Africa	Mozambique	84	2
West and Central Africa	Niger	282	6
West and Central Africa	Nigeria	590	12
West and Central Africa	Senegal	188	4
East and Horn of Africa	Somalia	304	6
East and Horn of Africa	Sudan	255	5
Total		4,938	100

¹⁶ These coefficients range between -1 and +1. The signs of the coefficients indicate whether the association is positive or negative and the magnitude of it states the strength of the linear association.

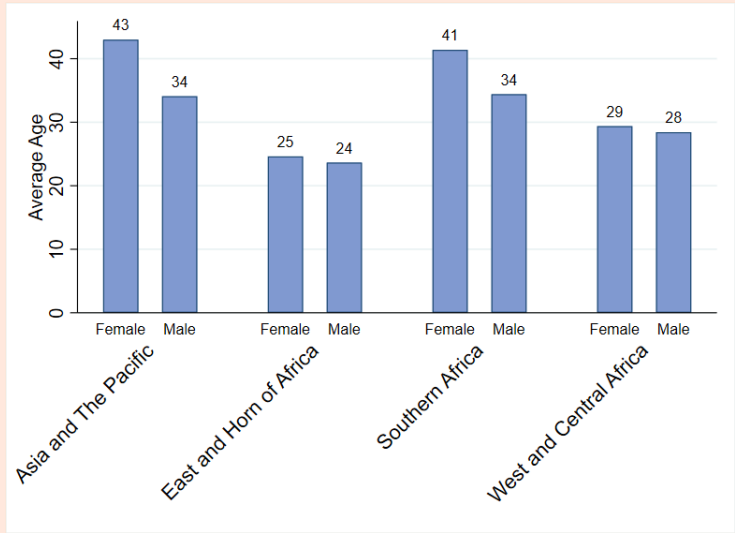
Approximately 69 per cent of the observations in this study were collected in the West and Central Africa region¹⁷, with 11 out of 16 countries in the dataset being from this region.

The RSS can serve as a baseline assessment before reintegration assistance is provided, as a progress assessment, as well as for the final evaluation of returnees’ sustainability after the provision of reintegration assistance is concluded (12 to 18 months after return to the country of origin). For this study, in order to assess the impact of reintegration support activities and other explanatory variables on the RSS scores, only responses collected as progress assessment and as final evaluations were used.

On average, the responses used for this analysis were registered in MiMOSA 22 months after return, with only 25 per cent of the responses registered in the first 18 months. Although this gives us a good proxy of the time between the return date and the survey completion date, it may not be accurate in the case where the survey is first collected on paper form and registered in MiMOSA at a later stage.

Overall, across the entire dataset, 87 per cent of the survey participants identified as male. This figure is representative of the sex breakdown of migrants assisted to return and having received at least one type of assistance through the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration¹⁸. Almost 100 per cent of the respondents participating in the survey under the Prottasha project in Bangladesh identified as male, affecting the extent to which the results are generalizable to female returnees returning to Bangladesh. Furthermore, due to the lack of data under Prottasha, it is not possible to determine

CHART 1: Bar graph of average age of respondents by region and sex



whether this is representative of beneficiaries receiving reintegration assistance under the project. Gender balance in the sample is only achieved for responses coming from the Southern Africa region – specifically Mozambique – where 54 per cent¹⁹ of the returnees being provided with reintegration assistance identified as female. The average age of the respondents in the dataset is 28 with less than 10 per cent of respondents being 40 years of age or above. The average age varies across the four regions and with the sex of the respondents, with East and Horn of Africa region having the lowest average age and female respondents being on average older than male respondents across all regions.

¹⁷ This has resulted from substantial M&E efforts taking place in the region for the collection of representative monitoring data as outlined in the [EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration](#) - page 41.

¹⁸ As per the EU-IOM Joint Initiative Flash Report and the Results Database - June 2020, 94,531 migrants received at least one type of reintegration assistance among which 13 per cent female.

¹⁹ As per the Pilot Action on Reintegration Flash Report – May 2020, 255 were provided with reintegration assistance in Mozambique, among which 54 per cent female.

Returns took place from 41 different host countries in seven regions (see Table 3 below). Most migrants returned from the Middle East and North Africa, with 68 per cent of returnees assisted to return from this region of which 63 per cent returned only from Libya. According to the available monitoring data, the most frequent route of return is from Libya to Nigeria, with 11 per cent of the surveyed returnees following this return journey.

Table 3: Number of observations broken-down by host region

REGION OF HOST COUNTRY	NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS	PER CENT
Asia and The Pacific	1	0 (~)
East and Horn of Africa	378	9
European Economic Area	226	5
Middle East and North Africa	2,890	68
South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia	2	0 (~)
Southern Africa	210	5
West and Central Africa	563	13
Total	4,270	100

Almost 23 per cent of surveyed returnees were assisted to return from host countries located in the same region as their country of origin. In Ethiopia, 65 per cent of returnees returned from countries in East and Horn of Africa, with over 50 per cent only from Djibouti. Over 39 per cent of the migrants returning from Niger, return to Cameroon. Across the entire dataset, 57 per cent of returns were registered as Voluntary Humanitarian Returns (VHR)²⁰, another 41 per cent as Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) and the rest as non-IOM voluntary returns (approximately 2%).

2. ANALYSIS

Among the three reintegration dimensions, the economic one displays the lowest average score in the sample, whereas the psychosocial dimension is on average the highest (see Table 4 below).

Table 4: Summary Statistics RSS scores

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
RSS Composite	4,938	.6658811	.1251538	0	.98
RSS Economic	4,938	.567257	.1845316	0	1
RSS Social	4,938	.6276382	.1493899	0	1
RSS Psychosocial	4,938	.7661027	.1504075	0	1

When looking at cross-regional differences in scores, Asia and the Pacific displays the lowest average RSS Composite and Psychosocial scores (0.60 and 0.62 respectively), whereas Southern Africa displays the highest average scores across all dimensions (0.62), except for the social dimension on which Horn of Africa displays a slightly higher average score (0.63).

²⁰ VHR often represents a life-saving measure for migrants who are stranded or in detention. Similar to AVRR principles and objectives, the IOM approach to VHR is based on the respect of migrants’ rights, including the right to return, and the provision of timely, unbiased and reliable information on the return and reintegration process to ensure migrants can make an informed decision on whether to return or not. See IOM (2019) [Return and Reintegration Key Highlights](#).

Compared to migrants returning from different host regions, those returning from countries within the same region tend to display lower reintegration scores, particularly across the economic and the social dimensions. While the RSS data is not enough on its own to explain these results, a possible interpretation could be that these returnees may have lacked the financial means to undertake a longer journey, explaining lower economic reintegration scores. Another possible explanation could be that some of these returnees might not have been able to reach their intended destination having had their migration journeys interrupted at an early stage. This may have resulted in additional hardship and pressure experienced by the returnees, affecting the extent to which the returnees are able to reintegrate sustainably in their country and community of origin. Further qualitative data is needed to corroborate these two possible interpretations.

CHART 2: Bar graph of average RSS scores by region of origin

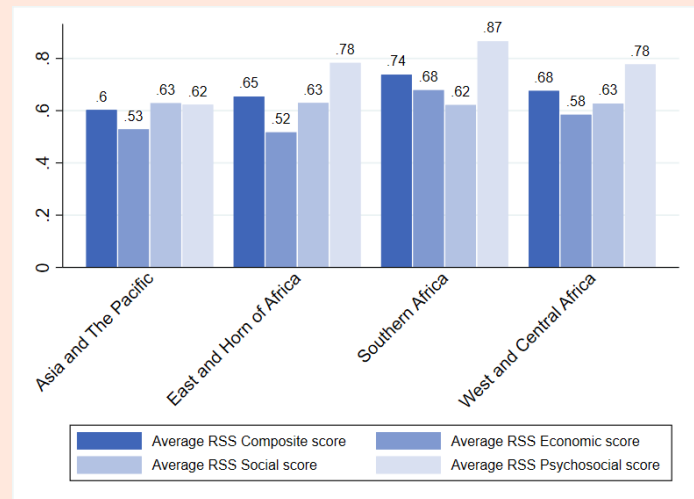
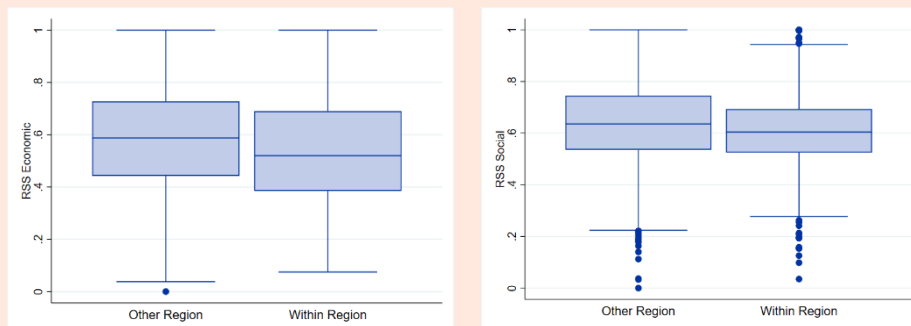


CHART 3: Box plots show for migrants returning from countries within the same region and outside – the distribution of RSS Economic score (Left) and RSS Social score (Right)



2.1 Correlation Analysis

The results of the correlation analysis suggest that **reintegration scores are significantly impacted by the country of origin**, confirming the importance played by the country-specific context and structural external factors on the sustainable reintegration of returnees. The magnitude and the sign of the correlation vary from country to country. For example, we can see that half the countries are positively associated with the composite measure of sustainable reintegration. Ghana seems to display a higher positive (albeit weak) association with the composite reintegration score, mostly driven by the RSS social score (with a coefficient of 0.28²¹), compared to the other countries of origin. Bangladesh, on the other hand, displays a higher (albeit also weak) negative association than

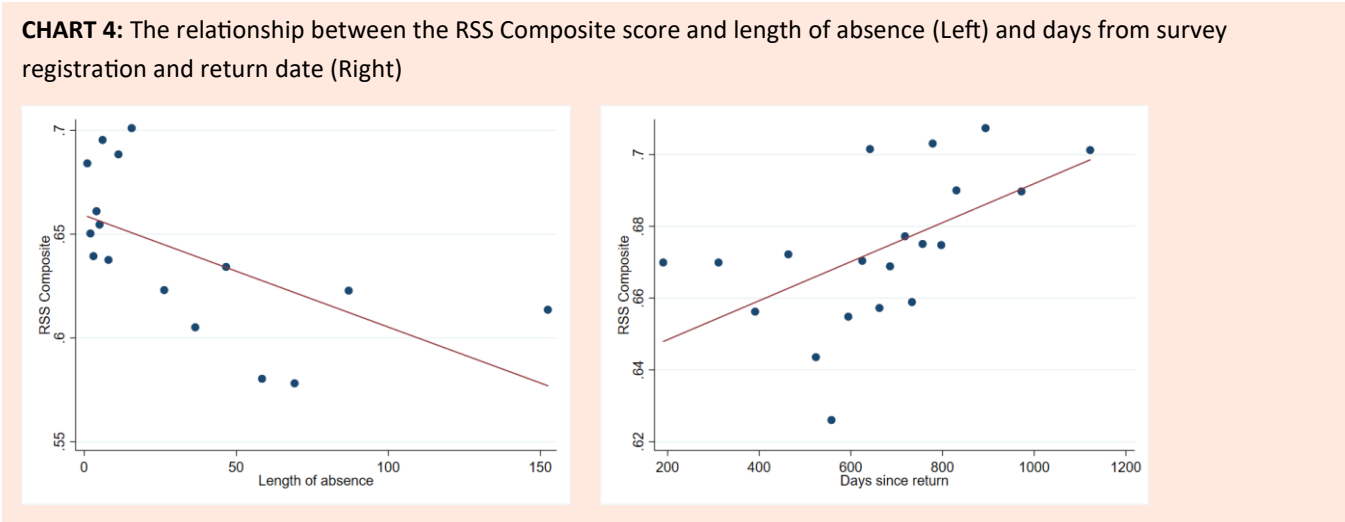
²¹ The stronger the association of the two variables, the closer the correlation coefficient will be to either +1 or -1 depending on whether the relationship is positive or negative, respectively.

the other countries of origin, with the highest negative association estimated for the RSS psychosocial score (with a coefficient of -0.30).

Similarly, host countries display significant associations²² with the RSS scores, although – on average – the magnitude of the association is relatively lower compared to countries of origin. Among all host countries, Libya seems to display the highest positive association across all reintegration dimensions, with a coefficient of 0.14 for the composite measure of sustainable reintegration.

The results reveal a positive relationship between *Age* and the *economic reintegration score* (0.06) and a negative relationship between *Age* and the *psychosocial reintegration scores* (-0.06) – although not particularly strong – suggesting that **the older the returnee, the higher the RSS Economic score and the lower the RSS Psychosocial score**. Sex of the respondent seems to affect the reintegration outcomes, with **male respondents being more likely to display higher reintegration scores** across all sustainable reintegration dimensions.

The analysis also shows significant associations between the time variables (*Length of absence* and *Days since return*) and some reintegration outcomes. On one hand, the length of absence of the returnee from the country of origin negatively impacts the composite and psychosocial measures of reintegration, with the strongest negative association with the RSS Psychosocial score (-0.27), suggesting that **longer absences are associated with lower levels of psychosocial reintegration**. On the other hand, time between the registration of the survey date and the return date seems to be another important driver of sustainable reintegration outcomes and associates positively with all RSS Scores, suggesting a **gradual improvement of reintegration scores over time**, since the return. These findings are further investigated in the regression analysis in the section that follows.



When reintegration assistance activities at the individual, collective or community level are analysed, the results suggest that only **microbusiness support**, which usually consists of a business start-up grant, **and training are positively and significantly related to score improvements across all sustainable reintegration dimensions**. The strongest relationship – albeit still relatively weak – is recorded between *Microbusiness support* and the RSS

²² The sign of the relationship varies across host countries.

Economic Score (with a coefficient of 0.23). Moreover, the results suggest that, overall, the level of the reintegration support received – individual, community or collective – does not have a strong²³ effect on the reintegration scores and varies across the individual’s reintegration activity number one, two and three²⁴. **Looking at the reintegration activities at the individual level, when the first reintegration assistance activity is conducted the results demonstrate positive and significant associations** – albeit weak – with all the RSS scores (with the coefficients between 0.03 and 0.06) except the RSS Psychosocial score (with a coefficient of -0.03). **The sign of the relationship changes with the second reintegration activity** (with an average coefficient of -0.06 across scores) **and the strength and significance of the relationship decrease with the third reintegration activity** (with an average coefficient approximately equal to 0). When the association between community level activities and the RSS scores are analysed, the results show a negative and significant – albeit still weak - relationship across all RSS dimensions and each number of reintegration activity. The relationship between reintegration activities at the collective level and the RSS Composite and all three dimensions scores varies across reintegration activity number one, two and three. When the first reintegration activity is conducted at collective level, the results show positive and significant association – albeit weak – only with the RSS Psychosocial score (0.05). When the second reintegration activity is conducted at collective level, the correlation coefficients are positive and significant across all RSS score (with an average coefficient of 0.08 across scores), except the RSS Social score where the result does not display any significance. Like the individual level, the strength and significance of the relationship drop with the third reintegration activity. Overall, **collective level activities have a significant and positive relationship to the RSS Psychosocial dimension** (i.e. the provision of reintegration assistance at the collective level positively affects a returning migrant’s RSS Psychosocial score). These results, although preliminary, may suggest that the effect of the reintegration activity’s level on reintegration scores may change according to the type reintegration activity. Another possible interpretation could be that a mixed-level approach to reintegration – i.e. mixing individual, community and collective level activities – may result in better reintegration scores compared to benefiting only from reintegration activities at one level such as the individual one. Further analysis is needed to confirm these findings and substantiate these interpretations.

2.2 Regression Analysis

To formally explore the factors that affect change in sustainable reintegration outcomes, a cross-country regression analysis is used. The regression results are based on a multivariate analysis that controls for key respondent background characteristics such as *Age, Sex, Months since return, Country of Origin, Type of Return, Reintegration Activities, Level of Reintegration Activity* and *Within or Outside region moment information*. The *Employment Status* and *Debt to Spending*²⁵ ratio variables are also used as explanatory factors of the RSS Composite score, the RSS Social score and the RSS Psychosocial score.

²³ Correlation coefficients between -0.10 and 0.10.

²⁴ The reintegration assistance received varies across returnees and so does the number and order of reintegration activities each returnee has benefited from.

²⁵ The Employment status is a binary variable that takes value 1 if the returnee reported to be employed at the time of the survey and 0 otherwise. The Debt to Spending ratio is a binary variable that takes value 1 if the returnee reported to not have debt of that his/her spending is larger than the debt. These two variables are used to compute the returnee’s economic reintegration score with a weight of 10 per cent and 8 per cent respectively – therefore are not used as predictors for the RSS Economic score. Given the lower weight assigned for the composite reintegration measure (3% for employment and 4% for the debt to spending ratio) the two variables are used as predictors for the RSS Composite measure – requiring careful interpretation of the results.

In line with the findings from the correlation analysis, the results for the regression analysis display positive and significant relationships between economic reintegration activities and sustainable reintegration outcomes across all three dimensions. **Microbusiness support is positively and significantly related to the RSS scores**, with the strength of the relationship being relatively stronger for the economic dimension: returnees benefiting from microbusiness support have, on average, an RSS Economic score that is approximately 10 percentage points higher than to those not benefiting from it. This finding highlights the importance of this kind of reintegration assistance towards achieving sustainable economic self-sufficiency. Similarly, **returning migrants benefiting from training activities, display an average increase of approximately 2 percentage points on the RSS Composite score compared to those returnees who did not receive any training**, with the highest effect displayed for the RSS Psychosocial score (approximately 3 percentage points higher). These results confirm the important role played by informal education on building returnee's resilience and facilitating their reintegration. Interestingly, psychosocial support seems to be negatively associated with sustainable reintegration outcomes, especially with the economic and composite measures of reintegration. However, this result could also suggest the presence of simultaneity bias²⁶ between the reintegration scores and the psychosocial support rather than a causal relationship: returnees in need of and assisted with psychosocial support are more likely to have lower reintegration scores.

When looking at the level of the reintegration support and the number of reintegration activities, the results are interestingly contradictory. Results reveal that **individual level activities are associated with higher reintegration scores compared to community²⁷ level activities**. Specifically, receiving community level assistance is associated with an average three percentage points decrease in the RSS Composite score and approximately 11 percentage points decrease in the RSS Economic score compared to receiving individual level assistance. While further analysis is needed to further investigate and corroborate these findings, a possible interpretation of these preliminary results could be the lack of reciprocal trust between returnees and the local communities they return to, which affects the extent to which returnees and non-migrant community members are willing to invest and remain committed to a collective economic activity. Yet, the number of reintegration activities seems to negatively affect the sustainable reintegration outcomes, suggesting that **more activities are not necessarily translated into stronger sustainable reintegration outcomes**. Benefiting from only one reintegration activity is associated on average with an increase of approximately 2 percentage points in the RSS Composite score, compared to benefiting from a total of three reintegration activities. Similarly, benefiting from two reintegration activities is associated on average with a 1 percentage point increase in the RSS Composite score compared to benefiting from a total of three reintegration activities. When looking at the type of return, results suggest that the circumstances under which the return took place have a significant impact on the economic and psychosocial sustainable reintegration outcomes but not on the RSS Social dimension. Both **IOM voluntary returns under AVRR and VHR programmes are associated, on average, with higher sustainable reintegration scores compared to non-IOM voluntary returns**. This is particularly visible for the RSS Economic score: compared to non-IOM voluntary returns, IOM AVRs and VHRs display higher RSS Economic scores (on average 13 percentage points and 10 percentage points, respectively).

²⁶ Simultaneity bias occurs when the outcome variable causes change in the explanatory variable and at the same time the explanatory variable causes change in the outcome variable.

²⁷ The analysis does not display significant and conclusive results for collective level activities.

The analysis suggests that **the employment status of the returnees has a significant impact on their social and psychosocial reintegration outcomes**. Being employed results, on average, in a three percentage-point increase in the RSS Social score and approximately a five percentage-point increase in the RSS Psychosocial score. Interestingly, having a no or low debt to spending ratio is negatively and significantly associated with the RSS Psychosocial score – although the relationship is a weak one.

Finally, the results confirm the major role played by country-specific characteristics on sustainable reintegration outcomes. All things being equal, **each country of return displays significant and strong average effects on the reintegration outcomes compared to other countries of return**, highlighting the importance of taking a context-specific approach to sustainable reintegration. The results of the regression analyses for the RSS Composite, Economic, Social and Psychosocial scores are available in the Annex.

2.3 Limitations

The major limitations of this study are the data available centrally on the institutional case management system and the sample representativeness. Only seven countries in the dataset have so far samples that are representative of the EU-IOM Actions' returnees' caseload and therefore allow for generalizations of the results to the overall returns taking place through the EU-IOM Actions. Data quality and completeness are limitations of the data used in this study: information on demographic categories such as the country and the region from which return took place, the length of absence from the country of origin, and whether the community of return is the same as the origin community have not been gathered consistently across the observations. Moreover, as most beneficiary monitoring tools, the RSS takes the form of a self-evaluation by the returnee. This type of assessment could be susceptible to *self-reporting bias*²⁸ and *social desirability bias*²⁹.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND UPCOMING KNOWLEDGE BITES

This paper contributes to existing research on sustainable reintegration by attempting to identify the factors that contribute to or undermine sustainable reintegration outcomes. The findings have demonstrated the importance of demographic factors and determined the diverse effects of different reintegration activities on RSS scores. The findings have further confirmed the importance of country-specific contexts on sustainable reintegration. Moreover, the results suggest that the list of explanatory factors included in this analysis is non-exhaustive and predict only partly³⁰ the changes in the RSS scores, highlighting the importance of further analysis and investigation of the drivers of sustainable reintegration outcomes.

Building on these preliminary findings, future analyses in this Knowledge Bites series will focus on:

- (i) investigating which additional factors explain changes in / contribute to sustainable reintegration outcomes,
- (ii) analysing the relationship between country-level factors and reintegration scores, bridging microstructural factors of sustainable reintegration outcomes and contextual and structural factors,
- (iii) in-depth and fine-grained analyses by reintegration activity to investigate the existence of systematic differences in average RSS scores across activities, the effect of the interaction between the level of

²⁸ Response bias that occurs when the participant self-reported answers deviates from the true.

²⁹ Response bias that influences a participant to choose responses that reflect what they believe is more socially desirable or acceptable rather than their true thoughts and feelings.

³⁰ As per r-square coefficients – 40 per cent for the RSS Composite, 22 per cent for the RSS Economic, 21 per cent for the RSS Social and 24 per cent for the RSS Psychosocial. The r-square represent a measure of the goodness of fit of the model used.

- the activity and each reintegration activity on the RSS scores and the dynamic effect of the number of reintegration activities on sustainable reintegration outcomes,
- (iv) measuring the impact of other voluntary return and reintegration variables collected through other monitoring surveys, and
 - (v) investigating the interrelations between the indicators used to compute the economic, social and psychosocial reintegration scores.

4. ANNEX

CHART 5 Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Composite score

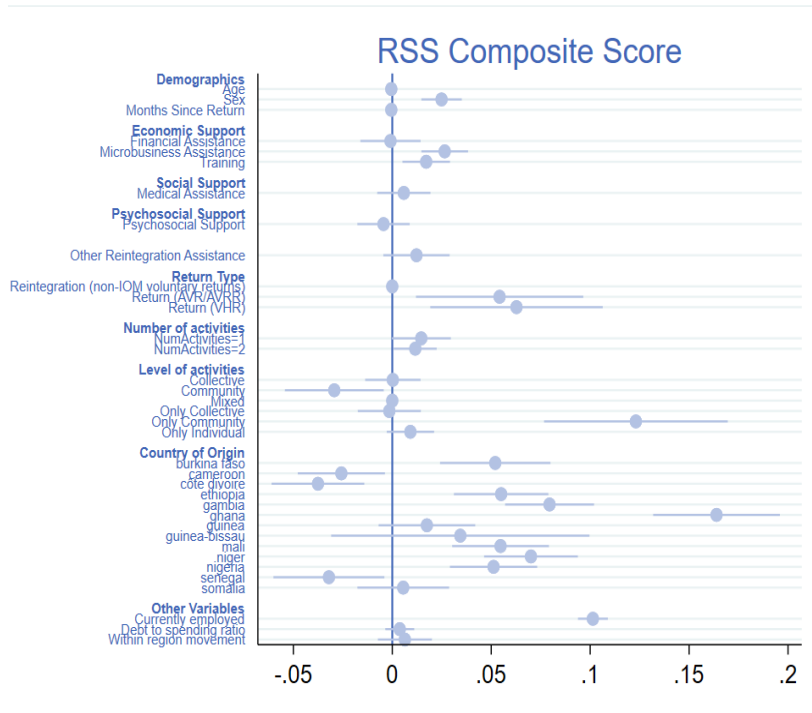


CHART 6 Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Economic score



CHART 7 Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Social score

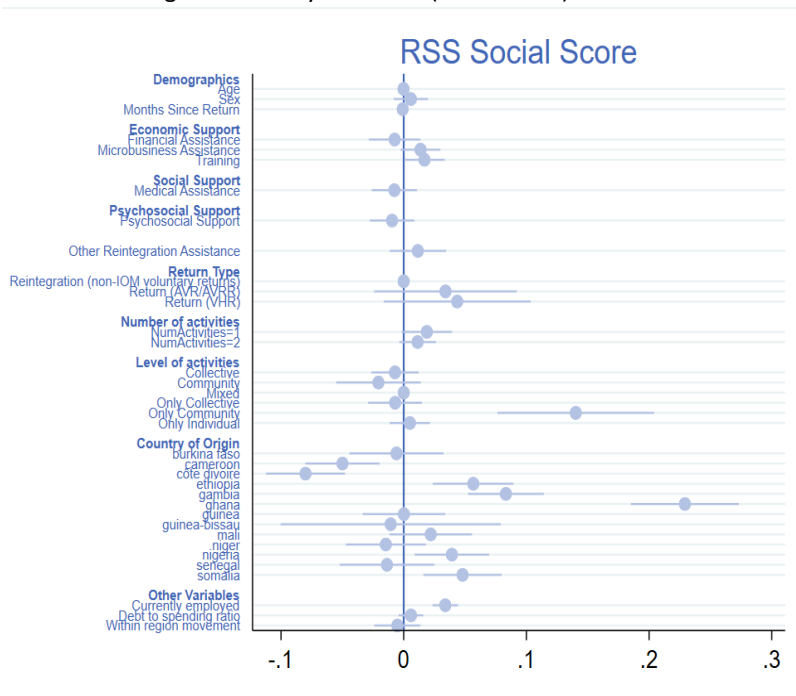
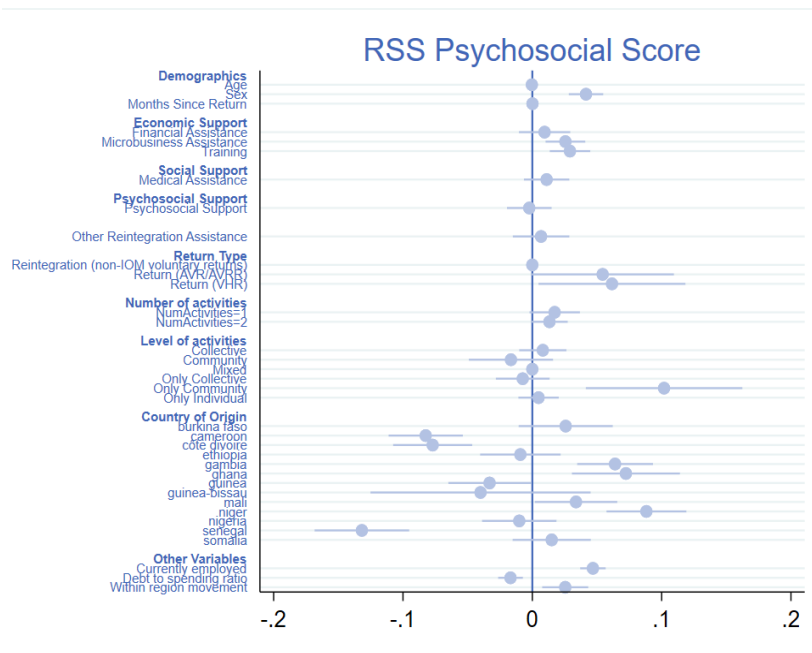


CHART 8 Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Psychosocial score



Project funded by the European Union
Project implemented by IOM

The development and publication of this Knowledge Bite is supported by the EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub (KMH). The KMH has been established in 2017 under the *Pilot Action on Voluntary Return and Sustainable, Community-Based Reintegration* funded by the European Union.

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of IOM and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.