

Practice #2

Skills and employability enhancement in Burkina Faso

Implementing entity: IOM

Project title: EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Sahel and Lake Chad region

Donor: European Union under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa

Summary

In preparation for the national Independence Day, the Government of Burkina Faso invests massively in public works and civil engineering. Every year, in a different region, many construction projects are launched, including housing construction, road upgrading, etc. These projects offer excellent job opportunities for many Burkinabè returnees who were employed in construction works during their migration journey (mainly in Algeria and Libya).

Based on these opportunities, COFEC (*Cercle d'orientation et de formation Emergency Consult*), a vocational training consulting firm, applied for a tender issued by IOM to select organizations that could contribute to the implementation of reintegration assistance activities. This proposal, which aimed to train 40 individuals on masonry skills, caught IOM's attention as vocational training was part of the local development dynamics building on the opportunities created through state investments.

In a bid to maximize the impact of the vocational training and ensure better reintegration, business management and literacy trainings were also provided to beneficiaries who could neither read nor write.

To better set this training within the local context, the community, including prospective migrants, was engaged with the support of the Ministry of Social Action. Thus, local community members participated in the training and were reunited with returnees who were sometimes disconnected from the local realities after many years of migration, stigmatized or isolated. This contributed to the psychosocial reintegration of returnees.

The immediate post-training results indicated that 82% of the trained beneficiaries found employment almost immediately after the end of the training, either in an established company or in their own company jointly created with other beneficiaries.

Operational details

► Description of the activity

Through this activity, 40 individuals were trained on skills pertaining to construction and manufacturing of the most widely used products in the region. The training was

designed not only to exploit the opportunities offered by the projects implemented in preparation for the national Independence Day, which takes place each year in a different region of Burkina Faso (regional rotation system), but also to strengthen the capacities of trainees, particularly returnees who worked in the construction sector during their migration journey as well as prospective migrants in the local community.



The training covered several aspects of construction works
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Prior to the training, individual interviews were conducted with returnees (19) to ensure everyone's commitment to complete the entire one-month training. In addition, an IOM partner, the Ministry of Social Action, identified the local community members considered as vulnerable or prospective migrants (21) to engage them in the training which will benefit the local community, help prevent unsafe migration and facilitate the returnees' economic and psychosocial reintegration in the community. The Ministry of Social Action identified the local community beneficiaries at the occasion of on-street work. It mainly targeted unemployed and unskilled youth staying in the streets at night, which constitutes a group particularly prone to migration.

The training addressed different techniques related to masonry and construction works. Moreover, entrepreneurship modules using the SIYB programme ([Start and Improve Your Business](#) – a training module developed by the ILO, recognized and widely used throughout the world) were integrated into the training as the construction sector not only offers job opportunities but also promotes self-employment and business creation. In addition, and considering the low-skilled profile of some trainees, basic literacy courses (reading and writing) were provided.

Finally, active listening, building self-confidence as well as behavioural change sessions on sexual and reproductive health issues were conducted.

At the end of the training, individual and collective projects were developed and submitted to the “*Fonds d'Appui aux Initiatives des Jeunes*” (a development fund that supports youth entrepreneurship initiatives, under the supervision of the Ministry of Youth). All business plans will also be submitted for funding to the “*Programme d'Appui aux Economies Locales*” (PADEL), a programme implemented by the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The officers in charge of this programme were contacted, and they expressed a wish to support the beneficiaries of the training as soon as the fund is operational.

As these funds were not operational yet when this specific initiative was implemented, IOM has decided to provide supplementary funding to back some of these projects (especially those of returnees who are the direct beneficiaries of the project). This additional support included the equipment required for construction activities. IOM will also continue its advocacy among institutions for the early establishment of this youth support fund.

► Approach/Rationale

This training aimed at strengthening the returning migrants' economic reintegration through **improved employability and real prospects for income-generating activities.**



Practical lessons © Julien Kinda/COFEC

Indeed, this type of training was chosen based on the high demand for manpower in the masonry/construction fields in the selected region and the adequacy of the returnees'

professional experience and skills. Therefore, it was conducted to **strengthen and enhance the skills of the beneficiaries while offering them real employment opportunities.**

Contributing to building the capacity of beneficiaries (eligible returnees) while **involving the local community** (other returnees not eligible under the project and prospective migrants identified among unemployed youth) gave a particular importance to this training.



Practical exercise
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► Partnership/Synergy

This training was provided with the support of several actors. Besides a vocational training consulting firm (COFEC), recruited based on a selection process led by IOM, various partners participated in its implementation:

- The Town Hall facilitated contact with company managers who were granted projects for 11 December (national Independence Day);
- The Ministry of Social Action helped identify 21 beneficiaries from the community;
- The Ministry of Youth was contacted by COFEC for financial support of business plans under the FAIJ fund (Fonds d'appui aux initiatives des jeunes): the launch is in progress;
- The Ministry of Economy, Finance and Development was contacted by COFEC and IOM for financial support of the business plans under the PADEL: regional committee newly established, pending further action;
- The Association Alert Migration actively participates in the mobilization, data collection and post-training monitoring of migrants.

► Additional Information

To successfully conduct this one-month training, a limited subsistence allowance was provided to the participants to cover basic daily expenses.

It should be noted that the community learned a lot from the returnees about their experience in Algeria/ Libya as well as the risks of irregular migration.

This type of support will be replicated for the 2019 Independence Day in Tenkodogo (Central-East). It is the main region of return of Burkinabe migrants where IOM has noted a lack of skilled personnel. To this end, contractual arrangements are under way between IOM and COFEC to replicate the action in the Centre-East. This new activity will target 150 beneficiaries in 4 different domains related to building works. They will be divided as follows: 75 individuals trained in masonry and related skills, 15 in plumbing, 30 in building electricity, solar and cooling systems; and 30 in tiling, paving, painting and plaster works. Diversifying the training fields will help avoid flooding the market with too many workers in the same field.



Sample of cobbles produced by trainees in the framework of the training course © Julien Kinda/COFEC

► Useful contacts and references

For more information: jointinitiative@iom.int.

Evidence base

► Outcome and Evidence

40 young individuals (all male, 19 returnees and 21 community members) were trained on skills related to masonry.

At the end of the training, several participants had already a job. **For 36 of them, the period between the end of the training and their first job was less than a week:** 24 trainees were employed in small projects and 12 started their own business (in groups of two people).



Handover of reintegration kits to trainees
© Julien Kinda/COFEC

Field studies indicated that the 4 beneficiaries not yet working in construction were just busy with the rural activities in which they traditionally had to engage during the rainy season (from July).

During the following visits (a monthly monitoring programme was set up for post-training monitoring, conducted by COFEC, Alert Migration and IOM), it was observed that several beneficiaries **lacked equipment to ensure the sustainability of their activity**. Since PADEL and FAIJ funds were not operational at that time, IOM provided supplementary support to beneficiaries (primarily to returnees) by purchasing the lacking equipment and materials. However, access to these funds is indispensable given the necessity to acquire the additional equipment.

In view of this lack of equipment and the end of the annual festivities (and therefore the related expenditure), some beneficiaries have to combine several jobs and are unable

to fully engage in the activity. A better involvement of the financial support programmes would thus help to ensure sustainable reintegration.

► Recommendations

- Analysing and building on existing labour market opportunities that are potentially in line with the returnees' skills;
- Working in cooperation with local authorities and actors to identify these opportunities;
- Continuing advocacy to ensure that support programmes work and take over in the long-term;
- For such an activity to be successful, a daily presence is required. It is also important to foster good communication between the training consulting firm/trainers, participants and IOM.

► Conditions for replicability

It is important to identify a promising sector, if possible in line with the returnees' experience (e. g. jobs that migrants have carried out during their migration journey), so that the vocational training leads to jobs or the establishment of stable business.



Family picture of all the trainees at the end of the training course © Julien Kinda/COFEC

Knowledge Management Hub

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This factsheet is part of a series of factsheets on good and promising practices in reintegration assistance. It aims at disseminating good and promising practices on reintegration assistance to reintegration practitioners worldwide.

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