

Practice #3

Support for Entrepreneurship 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 Burkina Faso, an integrated system has been set up to enable returning migrants wishing to engage in entrepreneurial projects to choose a relevant activity. This system is based on different activities including, in chronological order: job counselling sessions, entrepreneurship trainings, business plans development and their approval by a selection committee.

Building on the returnees' skills and experience and through the involvement of experts in the targeted sectors, this system enables beneficiaries to acquire the required tools for the viability of their entrepreneurial project.

It ensures the involvement of actors on the ground, including local authorities, technical experts and civil society members, who guide migrants in their choices and support them to design, fund, and implement their entrepreneurial project.

Operational details

► Description of the activity

A series of complementary and interrelated activities are conducted to ensure the implementation of a reintegration project that meets both the preferences and skills of the beneficiary as well as the local economic constraints and opportunities.

After the reception assistance and immediate follow-up for the most vulnerable cases, the first step in the reintegration process takes place about one month after the migrant's return to his or her community of origin. Commonly termed as "**job counselling**" (*orientation professionnelle*), this one-day session aims to inform migrants about local reintegration opportunities. To this end, group sessions bring together relevant technical experts (livestock, agriculture, National Employment Agency to discuss about available opportunities related to vocational training, social enterprises, private service providers, etc.) as well as local authorities and civil society organizations (CSOs). As these sessions are held in the return communities, the nature and number of these experts depend on local development opportunities. The advantage of conducting these sessions in the return communities is to have access to local

expertise and to be able to illustrate real development opportunities.

After this stage, migrants who wish to engage in entrepreneurship receive a five-day **entrepreneurship training**. This training enables them to familiarize themselves with basic accounting and management tools, but also to effectively develop an entrepreneurial spirit and implement an entrepreneurial project through the development of a business plan. During this phase, they are invited to form groups and develop a collective project.

Before the project implementation phase, a **Selection Committee** reviews the business plans and approves or disapproves submitted projects. This selection committee assesses the projects' relevance to the local context and their overall viability. The committee is composed of representatives of local authorities, civil society members and technical experts in the targeted field. Therefore, the approval of a project is locally well rooted. The committee also has the authority to amend projects as required. Initially, 15 to 20 business plans were reviewed at each selection committee meeting. Now, given the decrease in the number of returns each month, meetings take place at the local level as soon as 4 or 5 business plans are developed. A number of 250 business plans (for 441 beneficiaries) were developed, including 185 (344 beneficiaries) reviewed and 83 approved (147 beneficiaries) between September 2017 and March 2019, i.e. over 18 months.

All projects approved by the selection committee will progress to the **implementation phase**.

► Approach/Rationale

In the first focus group discussions with returning migrants, IOM noted that these migrants had little information on local employment opportunities. In addition, some migrants who had developed skills in different domains did not know how to use them for their reintegration project.

This lack of information could lead to frustration and hasty choices relating to their reintegration plans (often submitting projects for trade-related businesses). To ensure sustainability of the action and meet the returnees'

expectations, it was deemed relevant to conduct job counselling sessions to inform people about actual opportunities in the region.



Two migrants defending their project during a Selection Committee session. © Danielle Pfister/IOM

At the end of these counselling sessions, many migrants wanted to engage in entrepreneurship, without having the necessary management skills for a small-size business. Training was provided in this regard to strengthen their capacities.

The establishment of selection committees helps provide local expertise that is inaccessible to IOM alone. This expertise helps ensure that all submitted projects are solid and sustainable.

► Partnership/Synergy

The local authorities, CSOs and technical experts are involved at every stage of the process. Any partner deemed relevant within the local context can take part in the job counselling sessions or be invited to the selection committees to provide expertise on a project's feasibility.

Partners are identified following individual counselling sessions provided upon the migrant's return to his or her community of origin. These sessions offer an opportunity to conceive with the migrant a first idea of an economic reintegration project by identifying what he or she wishes to do and what his or her skills and experience in the targeted fields are. Based on collected information, IOM

may invite relevant partners to facilitate job counselling sessions.

► **Useful contacts and references**

For more information: jointinitiative@iom.int.

Evidence base

► **Outcome and Evidence**

The system put in place offers beneficiaries the possibility to make informed decisions about the economic reintegration opportunities in the form of income-generating activities, while providing them with the necessary tools for their projects' sustainability.

It is difficult to assess the added value of such a process in the absence of robust data on the pre-EU-IOM Joint Initiative reintegration assistance system¹. However, indications about the relevance and impact of this entrepreneurship support system will be provided during the satisfaction and follow-up surveys among beneficiaries, which will be conducted in the coming months.

► **Recommendations**

One of the crucial phases of the process is the business plan development. It is important to involve the migrants in the process and ensure their participation (in-kind contribution by the returnees) in the project they wish to implement, in a bid to hold them accountable.

Similarly, it is important to have the plans reviewed by the accounting and/ or procurement services before their approval. Some technical specificities may be missing, and budget estimates may be distorted, leading to disbursement problems once projects are approved by the selection committees. Involving the Procurement service makes it possible to accelerate the process by directly

identifying the services/products requested and to better budget the entire activity, thus ensuring a better efficiency of the overall process.

► **Conditions for Replicability**

These various activities are integral part of the economic reintegration system as developed in Burkina Faso. Each returnee must go through the job counselling session, at the end of which, those wishing to develop an entrepreneurial project must follow the next steps.



An expert from FAO highlights opportunities in the Centre-East pertaining to livestock and agriculture during a training session

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Knowledge Management Hub

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¹ A comparative analysis with a control group that did not benefit from such a counselling and follow-up support could offer interesting data and findings. It is not envisaged in the framework of the programme but it is an interesting lead for future evaluation exercises.

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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