

**REGIONAL ASSISTED VOLUNTARY
RETURN and REINTEGRATION (AVRR)
PROGRAMME for STRANDED MIGRANTS in
LIBYA and MOROCCO**



– EXTERNAL EVALUATION –

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November 2010

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LIST of ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

ADECOR

Appui au Développement des Collectivités Rurales

AFJ

Afrique Fondation Jeunes

AGADO

Association Guider et Accueillir les enfants Démunis et Orphelins

ALCS

Association de Lutte contre la SIDA

AMID

Association Malienne pour l'Intégration et le Développement

ANPE

Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l'Emploi

AVRR

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration

CIGEM

Centre d'Information et de Gestion des Migrations

CoD(s)

Country(ies) of Destination

CoO(s)

Country(ies) of Origin

CoT(s)

Country(ies) of Transit

CP

Civil Protection

CSO(s)

Civil Society Organisation(s)

CSP

Country Strategy Paper

DGME

Direction Générale des Maliens de l'Extérieur

EU

European Union

GDP

Gross Domestic Product

GP

General Practitioner

ILO

International Labour Organisation

IMADEL

Initiative Malienne d'Appui au Développement Local

IOM

International Organisation for Migration

ISPI

Institute for International Political Studies

le DEFI

Développement par l'Expérimentation, la Formation et l'Innovation

LiMo

Regional Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) Programme for Stranded Migrants in Libya and Morocco

MSF

Médecins sans Frontières

SIVE

Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia del Estrecho

ToRs

Terms of Reference

UN

United Nations

UNDP

United Nations Development Programme

UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aim of this report is to provide some independent insight on IOM's *Regional Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) Programme for Stranded Migrants in Libya and Morocco (LiMo)*, so as to contribute to facilitating decision-making in the planning phase of analogous future interventions.

IOM implemented LiMo between 2009 and 2010 as a multi-pronged response to the situation originated in sub-Saharan and Northern Africa over the past few years with regard to migratory flows directed northwards. Given the difficulties faced by migrants, who become “stranded” in Maghreb on their way to Europe, and by governments of both CoTs and CoOs in assisting them, a comprehensive intervention was deemed necessary so as to facilitate migrants wishing to return to their CoOs and to alleviate the pressure on national authorities in both CoOs and CoTs. The project, in fact, on the one hand intended to provide migrants in CoTs with the opportunity to return to their CoOs in full respect of their rights and to reintegrate through the implementation of a business activity of their choice once back; on the other hand it worked towards strengthening state and non-state actors' capacities to approach the phenomena of migration/returns in CoOs and CoTs.

According to the Terms of Reference¹ agreed with IOM, the evaluation team focussed its analysis on the project's main activities and/or areas, as follows:

- the campaign conducted in CoTs to spread information on the opportunity provided by the AVRR scheme
- pre-departure assistance provided in CoTs
- post-departure assistance provided in CoOs (Mali and Niger only)
- the impact of LiMo on the lives of migrants upon return to their CoOs

¹ - See ANNEX A.

The findings based on gathered data led to the formulation of relevant conclusions and recommendations – here follows a list of the most significant, while details are provided in the section ANALYSIS (pp. 37-81).

CONCLUSIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Information Campaign

The INFORMATION CAMPAIGN was effective.		
WORD of MOUTH bore more relevance than the Referral System in advertising the project in Morocco.	→	Try to control and exploit the mechanism of WORD of MOUTH through the actors of the Referral System.
LEAFLETS do not appear to have played a key role in either CoT.	→	Try to establish whether LEAFLETS are an appropriate tool and, if so, print them in languages other than English and French in order to expand their outreach.
Reference to POCKET MONEY to be distributed to migrants may instil doubts as for disbursement procedures.	→	Avoid making any reference to the DISTRIBUTION of MONEY on the leaflets.

Pre-Departure Assistance

CANDIDATE SCREENING was effective, allowing the selection of vulnerable cases and not admitting on the programme people not entitled to it.		
INFORMATION on the REINTEGRATION step of the project seems to have presented some minor lack of clarity (disbursement).	→	Produce LEAFLETS with information on reintegration to be distributed to migrants waiting to be interviewed by IOM.
Assisting migrants who were not declared fit for travel, while necessary, required extra resources.	→	Formalise procedures with local partners in order to make providing MEDICAL ASSISTANCE to migrants who need it smoother.

Post-Departure Assistance

ARRIVAL ASSISTANCE in CoOs was appropriate but, while no hosting facilities exist in Niger, those in Mali are in extremely bad conditions.	→	Provide structural upgrade and maintenance of HOSTING FACILITIES in Mali and try to arrange an equivalent in Niger.
Providing 3 QUOTATIONS for goods and services to be purchased in CoOs seems to have been at times problematic for returnees, who also reportedly encountered difficulties in establishing their business activity without receiving any of the 485€ contribution in CASH.	→	Involve NGOs as MEDIATORS between returnees and providers and disburse a small percentage of the contribution in CASH.
Postponing the start of their business activity in order to allocate some time for TRAINING does not seem to have been a feasible option for returnees.	→	Consider the idea of providing TRAINING in business management while migrants are still in CoTs.
Providing TRAINING seems to have weighed considerably on local NGOs' resources.	→	Consider the possibility to increase the SERVICE FEE allocated to cover the expenses faced by local NGOs.
The establishment of NETWORKS in CoOs encountered structural difficulties that do not appear easy to overcome.	→	Try to rely on existing NETWORKS, possibly already connected to national authorities or initiatives.

Impact

It was not possible to properly evaluate the impact of the project on returnees' lives, due to the limited time elapsed since its inception/completion. At this stage it does not appear as if the activities implemented under LiMo will have any LONG-TERM EFFECT in CoOs, owing to factors that are beyond the scope of an AVRRE project.	→	Consider the possibility to involve DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES in the planning and implementation of the reintegration step of future projects.
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PREFACE

In order to obtain an external and independent evaluation of its *Regional Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) Programme for Stranded Migrants in Libya and Morocco (LiMo)*, IOM Tripoli selected a team of 7 ISPI² graduates with a Master's degree in International Cooperation and tasked it with producing a report. Aim of the report is to analyse the activities implemented under LiMo, and to formulate conclusions highlighting the project's strengths/shortcomings and recommendations that IOM might consider useful in the planning phase of future interventions.

² - ISPI (Institute for International Political Studies), Milan.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team (hereinafter referred to as “the team”) started the evaluation while the project was ongoing and concluded it upon project completion. The evaluation Terms of Reference (ToRs)³ were developed by IOM Tripoli and underwritten by the team upon appointment in April 2010. The assigned ToRs concerned the main aspects of the project and the evaluation therefore regarded those aspects only.

The evaluation was conducted in four different steps:

1. DESK REVIEW
2. FIELD MISSIONS
3. ANALYSIS of FINDINGS
4. FORMULATION of CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DESK REVIEW

The desk review consisted in a preliminary data collection phase (A), a preliminary analysis of both primary and secondary data thus collected (B) and a final phase in preparation for the field missions (C). Primary (fresh) data are defined as “information collected and analyzed [...] by the evaluation team”, while secondary (existing) data “refers to information collected and analyzed by outside experts or organizations other than the project evaluation team”⁴.

A. PRELIMINARY DATA COLLECTION

This phase included two steps.

³ - See Annex A.

⁴ - OSCE 2010.

In the first step, background research was conducted to collect secondary data on the LiMo project, its context and the countries involved.

Documentation on the project was provided by IOM staff in Libya, Mali, Morocco and Niger. It consisted of:

- detailed project documents
- interim reports
- information and training material produced *ad hoc* for the project
- common criteria and operational procedures agreed with partners
- reports from partner NGOs
- IOM internal statistics about the project

General information on the four countries in the scope of the LiMo project – Libya, Mali, Morocco and Niger – and on the situation with regard to international migration was gathered from a wide selection of printed and online documentation available⁵.

In addition, the team undertook interviews with IOM staff involved in the design, management and supervision of the project. These interviews allowed gathering more detailed and first-hand information on the project, its context and the countries involved.

Data gathered in this first step were mainly of statistic and macro-analytical nature and they allowed outlining the framework in which the project developed.

In the second step, primary data on the implementation of LiMo were collected thanks to telephone conversations and email exchanges with IOM staff in Tripoli, Rabat, Bamako and Niamey, and to questionnaires distributed to key actors involved in the project (Embassies of CoOs in Libya and implementing partner NGOs in Niger – ADECOR, AGADO, AGROPAST, le DEFI).

This allowed, on the one hand, clarifying issues that had arisen during the background research phase, while on the other hand granting access to important informants whom the team would not have been able to reach on field mission.

⁵ - See BIBLIOGRAPHY and SITOGRAPHY for full reference.

B. PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

Upon completion of phase A, the team focussed on a preliminary analysis of the data collected.

The analysis provided further insight and clarified issues that were raised by the evaluation ToRs, to be (in)validated on field mission. Provisional findings were reached and then synthesised into a series of first partial answers to the evaluation questions outlined in the ToRs.

It was, moreover, possible to identify unanswered questions to be investigated on field mission.

C. PREPARATION

The results of preliminary analysis also served to further develop primary data collection methods, with particular reference to the tools to be used on field mission. A template of questions for the primary data collection exercise was, in fact, developed taking into account both provisional answers based on the analysis and relevant unanswered questions that had arisen.

The team followed criteria that allowed preventing confirmation and strategy biases. Questions were therefore formulated so as to avoid implying or suggesting any answers, revealing the interviewer's opinion or eliciting the interviewee's point of view instead of focussing exclusively on facts. A list of questions was prepared for each actor and tailored to their role in the project.

At this stage the team discussed with the project manager in Tripoli and IOM offices in Mali, Morocco and Niger the indicative methodology to be followed on field mission, the access to informants and documents, and foreseeable difficulties.

2. FIELD MISSIONS

The field missions covered both CoTs and CoOs. Due to time and budget constraints, the team, in accordance with IOM, limited them in geographical scope to three locations

– namely Bamako, Niamey and Rabat⁶. They were conducted during the month of May 2010, each by a different member of the team (evaluator), and lasted approximately 4 days each.

During the field missions, the evaluators were able to observe the project site, operational and management practices and the living and working conditions of returnees.

In **Morocco**, the team investigated the situation with regard to the establishment of a network concerned with migration management and to the pre-departure assistance provided to migrants.

The evaluator interviewed:

- IOM staff in Rabat
- the General Practitioner contracted by IOM
- Implementing Partner NGOs CARITAS Rabat, Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) and the Association de Lutte contre le SIDA (ALCS)
- Representatives of the Embassies of Ivory Coast and Cameroon

In Mali and Niger, the team focussed on investigating the establishment of a network in charge of facilitating reintegration and the implementation of the micro-entrepreneurial initiatives planned by returnees.

In **Mali** the evaluator interviewed:

- IOM staff in Bamako
- IOM International Reintegration Officer
- Representatives of the Direction Générale des Maliens de l'Extérieur (DGME)
- Staff of the Centre d'Information et de Gestion des Migrations (CIGEM)
- Representatives of the Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l'Emploi (ANPE)
- Civil Protection officers
- Staff of implementing Partner NGOs AMID (Association Malienne pour l'Intégration et le Développement), IMADEL (Initiative Malienne d'Appui au Développement Local) and Layidu Wari

⁶ - Data on Libya were collected thanks to constant exchange of information with IOM staff in Tripoli.

- Returnees

In **Niger** the evaluator interviewed:

- IOM staff in Niamey
- Representatives of the Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle et Technique of Niger
- Representatives of the Ministère de la Promotion des Jeunes Entrepreneurs et de la Réforme des Entreprises Publiques of Niger
- Representatives of NIGETECH
- Staff of implementing Partner NGO AFJ (Afrique Fondation Jeunes)
- Returnees

During each field mission, the evaluators relied on visual observation and key informant interviews, to triangulate and validate the data collected.

During interviews, evaluators employed both open and closed questions, following the template prepared during the desk review phase with unanswered questions and questions to which a provisional answer had been given and needed validation. Interviewers always took great care in establishing a good atmosphere and making interviewees feel at ease in the process, so as to stimulate broader discussion whenever possible; especially in the case of migrants/returnees, attention was paid not to convey the impression that they were being assessed and/or judged in any way; interpreters guaranteed a smooth and transparent exchange of information.

3. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Upon completion of the field missions the team performed an analysis of all data gathered during both desk review and field missions. A variety of documents and data was collected in the field, ranging from minutes of meetings and interviews to notes/photos/recordings taken during project site observation.

The team focussed on a limited set of useful information, categorised it according to its nature, relevance and strength (reliability), and cross-checked its validity before

establishing facts. They, moreover, agreed on external factors which may have influenced the project, discussed whether the project had unintended effects and analysed the cause-and-effect relationship between the project and any observed changes.

For each evaluation question presented in the ToRs the team identified the relevant data to reach an objective assessment of the situation and the ensuing findings. Once findings were categorised according to the evaluation questions presented in the ToRs, the team cross-checked their validity by comparing what was obtained from different sources. The effects of external factors, ranging from political, legislative, economic, financial, environmental, social issues to geographical conflicts, were considered. The team discussed the extent to which these factors were influential on the project. The team members based their opinions solely on facts gathered during desk review and on data collected from key stakeholders and on the project site.

To overcome biases, generalisations and subjective judgments the team, whenever possible, used different data collection sources and methods to verify each assessment and final finding. Each data provided by project stakeholders and relevant to final findings was verified by confirming it with at least two other sources. The team relied almost exclusively upon verified data, giving priority to direct observation of facts and direct statements by key informants, and only secondarily on proxy data and indirect (reported) statements.

4. FORMULATION of CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

The formulation of each conclusion and recommendation followed from thorough debate among the whole evaluation team, involving both members who participated in the desk review and members who conducted the field visits.

On the grounds of the analysis of findings, the team focused on formulating conclusions making sure they were sound, credible and supported by facts.

From those conclusions, recommendations were drawn so that they would be useful for managerial decision-making purposes. In particular, this was obtained by suggesting how analogous future interventions could be improved. Recommendations were

formulated as concrete and practical actions such as optimising resource allocation, implementing alternative options, redesigning or terminating certain interventions, adding new activities, and strengthening the cooperation with certain actors.

INTRODUCTION

In order to contextualise the analysis conducted in this report, this section treats first the situation that has prompted the formulation of LiMo and presents then the project itself, stressing how it was conceived to respond to diverse and multi-faceted issues. In particular, the chapter BACKGROUND intends to provide a brief yet exhaustive description of the several aspects characterising the phenomenon of “stranded migrants”, highlighting its seriousness and complexity in terms of root causes and effects. The following chapter aims instead to clarify how the LiMo project, in the framework of AVRR interventions, constitutes IOM’s response to both migrants’ needs and authorities’ demands.

BACKGROUND

from SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA to EUROPE: causes of the migratory flow

Since the 1990s, many Africans have tried to enter Europe illegally and in the last ten years the media have diffused images of their, at times tragic, attempts to cross the Mediterranean or to climb the fences around the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla.

In some cultures migrating is ritual and it constitutes a step in the initiation passage from childhood to adulthood. In certain regions of Mali, for instance, young people are not allowed to marry until they have gone abroad⁷. Trans-Saharan mobility has always been intense and saw a sharp arrest when colonisation imposed borders between arbitrarily created countries. The Mediterranean basin, as well, has traditionally constituted a place of exchange based on free movement.

At least from the 1970s, the Maghreb started to attract labourers while Maghrebis themselves engaged in a pattern of circular migration with Europe that posed the basis for the networks later used by sub-Saharan migrants⁸.

In the 1990s, Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi's "pan-africanism"⁹, combined with the breaking out of conflicts in many parts of Africa, prompted a flow of sub-Saharan migrants towards Libya. This contributed to revitalise ancient routes across the desert¹⁰ and to create networks that will later be used by migrants wishing to reach Europe. The introduction of mandatory visas in Italy and Spain in 1990 and 1991, respectively, on the one hand ended legal circular and seasonal migration from Africa, while on the other contributing to originating a flow of irregular migrants¹¹.

⁷ - FINDLEY 2004.

⁸ - BETTS 2008; de HAAS 2006.

⁹ - The Libyan leader started to pursue an "open doors" policy towards sub-Saharan Africans, encouraging them to go to Libya in search for employment, in order to compensate for the isolation his country was suffering from as a consequence of the UN and U.S.A. embargoes.

¹⁰ - de HAAS 2006.

¹¹ - BALDWIN-EDWARDS 2004; de HAAS 2007; LALOU 2005.

From the beginning of the new millennium, sub-Saharan migrants joined Maghrebis in the attempt to cross the Mediterranean in search for opportunities in Europe¹².

Aspects of globalisation such as the spread of media based on technological advancements, like the internet and satellite television, have facilitated the penetration of information even in the most remote areas of the world. As a consequence, people in Africa have come in contact with a different culture, lifestyle, mentality, approach, which they consider better than theirs in terms of learning and working opportunities, rights protection, welfare, freedom of movement and expression. In the eyes of (especially young) Africans, the Western World embodies what they cannot have in their countries – in short, a better life for themselves and their families¹³. To a much lesser extent countries in Maghreb, too, represent an ideal of prosperity and safety for citizens of sub-Saharan countries.

Data seem to support this perception¹⁴.

	EUROZONE	SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
Life expectancy	80 years	47 years
Population growth	0.6%	2.3%
School enrolment, primary	98.9%	65.7%
HIV prevalence (aged 15-49)	0.3%	5.8%
Internet users (per 1,000 people)	439.4	29
Time to start a business	26.9 days	61.5 days

This relatively recent development adds on to what have traditionally been indicated as main “push factors” of migration from Africa and particularly the sub-Saharan region¹⁵, which can be summarised as follows:

- Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rate of demographic growth ever registered in the world¹⁶.
- According to UNDP 2009 statistics, out of the 21 poorest countries in the world only 2 are not in Africa (Mali ranks fifth last and Niger last among the poorest countries on the planet)¹⁷. According to World Bank 2009 statistics most poor people live in sub-Saharan Africa¹⁸.

¹² - BETTS 2008; de HAAS 2006.

¹³ - LALOU 2005.

¹⁴ - Source: World Bank 2005.

¹⁵ - LALOU 2002.

¹⁶ - Source : UNFPA 1999.

¹⁷ - Source : UNDP 2009.

¹⁸ - Source : World Bank 2009

- Africa is not only one of the regions facing greater decrease in the availability of water, but also the least able region to cope with it. Even countries that potentially avail of water lack the capacity to exploit it. The scarcity of water affects a country on several levels: from individual consumption to farming to economic development, undermining therefore its very survival on the whole.
- After the decolonisation process, most countries located immediately under the Sahara desert have been plagued by at least one internal or international conflict, with obvious profound social, political and economical consequences. From the 1990s the following countries have been affected by some kind of conflict that have generated a more or less significant migratory flow towards north: Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Guinea Conakry, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo.

There are other, more social and psychological, factors that encourage sub-Saharan migration. The pressure exerted by family and community and the belief that those who do not succeed in arriving safe to Europe were not meant to do so by fate contribute to create a sense of predestination in the people who decide to embark on the journey¹⁹. The feeling of being wasting their skills, while they could be much more profitably employed in a different context, spurs especially young educated people to leave²⁰. Feedback from those who have succeeded prompts both expectations and the will to leave²¹. Regularisation campaigns in main destination countries like Italy and Spain – to respond to internal constant demand for cheap unskilled labour – have created even greater hope in those who wish to seek an opportunity there²². These campaigns, in fact, trigger a vicious mechanism of false expectations in prospective migrants, who mature the conviction that once in Europe they will eventually acquire regular status. Irregular migration becomes, therefore, in their eyes the fastest and smoothest – if not the only – way to reach Europe, since regular channels are not easily accessible²³.

¹⁹ - FINDLEY 2004; SULLEY and EL-HAWAT 2007.

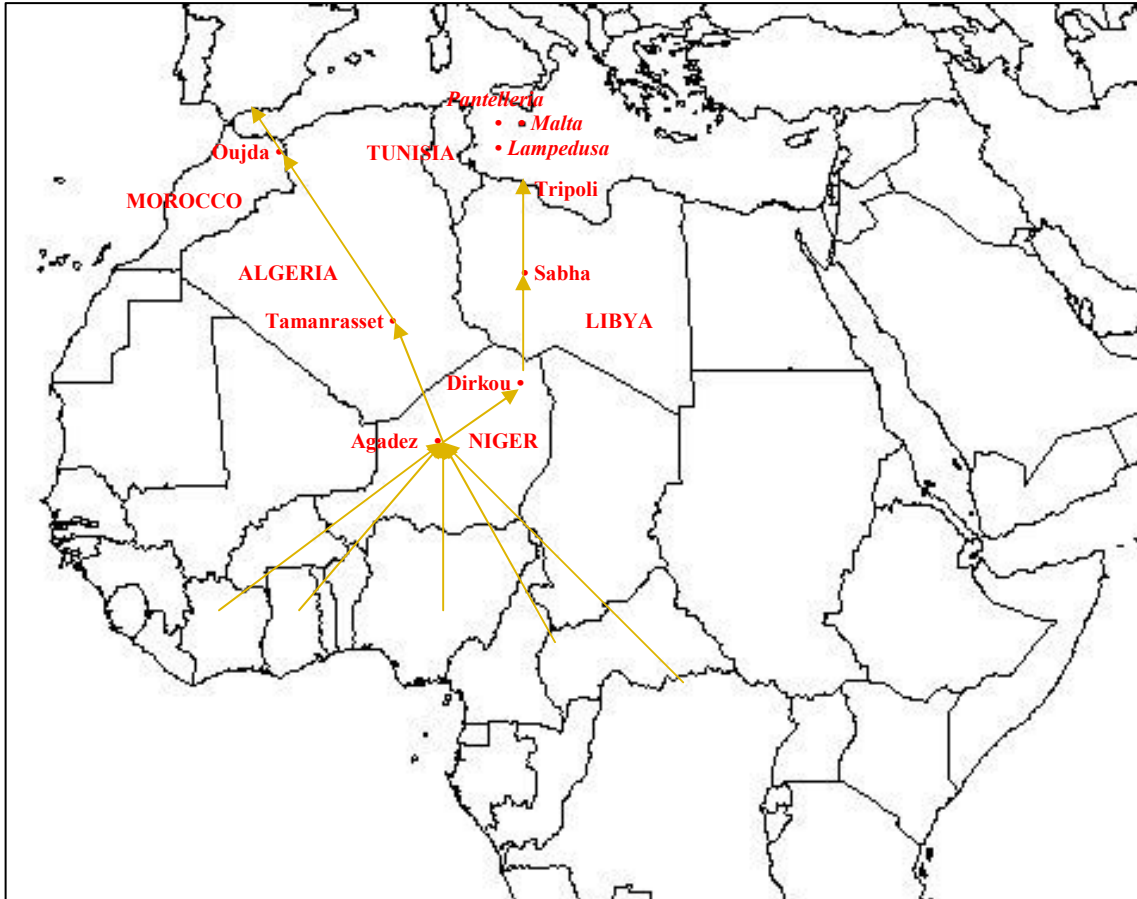
²⁰ - de LUCA 2007.

²¹ - LALOU 2002; SULLEY and EL-HAWAT 2007.

²² - de HAAS 2006.

²³ - For the reasons of this see pp. 22-23.

the JOURNEY²⁴



The main route followed by sub-Saharan migrants trying to reach Europe is via Niger and Libya²⁵, through the Sahara desert. Migrants gather in Agadez, Niger and from there take either the direction of Sabha, Libya or that of Tamanrasset, Algeria; from Sabha they travel North, to the coastal towns of Libya or to Tunisia, and from Tamanrasset they move towards northern Algeria or enter Morocco near Oujda.

Most migrants buy a passage on a truck or a 4WD pick-up, although some undertake the journey by foot²⁶. Crossing the desert takes place in inhumane conditions, with migrants crammed for days into trucks where temperatures are unbearable, lacking any comfort.

²⁴ - Detailed accounts based on interviews with migrants can be found in UNDP CSPs 2008-2013 for Mali and Niger.

²⁵ - HRW 2006; LALOU 2005; SULLEY and EL-HAWAT 2007.

²⁶ - SULLEY and EL-HAWAT 2007.

They usually pay for one leg of the trip at a time and stop along the way in order to earn enough money to continue. Especially in Agadez and Dirkou they are often exploited for work and this can make the venture last from several months to three years²⁷. During the journey they are regularly subtracted whatever asset they hold by security officials both when crossing borders and within CoTs and it is not uncommon to hear of people who were abandoned in the desert by the smugglers from whom they had bought a passage²⁸.

Once in Libya or Morocco they are accommodated in empty houses along the coast, where they wait to have enough money to pay for the final leg of the journey or for enough people to be gathered in order for a trip across the Mediterranean to be organised²⁹.

Between paying for transport during the different steps of the journey, at border crossing and at all police check-points, migrants spend on average between US\$ 2,000 and 3,000³⁰. The cost is partly sustained by the families, often even the whole communities of origin, of migrants, which adds on to the emotional stress they undergo, especially in the event of failure³¹.

The entire journey is managed by well-established trans-national networks that organise every detail from the departure of migrants from CoOs to their supposed arrival in Europe. These networks include complaisant, if not openly corrupt, local authorities and mediators who deal with false documents and other services³².

the EU RESPONSE

Due to the near impossibility to obtain visas to Europe, a great deal of African migrants resort to alternative, illegal channels³³. EU regulations to obtain a Schengen Visa are, in fact, quite strict and it is very difficult for the vast majority of sub-Saharan Africans to possess the requisites, namely of financial nature (such as bank warrantees or a sponsor), which could allow them to fulfil all criteria for the Schengen Visa application.

²⁷ - LALOU/ESCOFFIER 2002.

²⁸ - de LUCA 2007; DOWD 2008; SULLEY and EL-HAWAT 2007.

²⁹ - LALOU/ESCOFFIER 2002; SULLEY and EL-HAWAT 2007.

³⁰ - de HAAS 2008; de LUCA 2007; LALOU 2005.

³¹ - de LUCA 2007; UNDP CSP for Mali 2008-2013.

³² - de LUCA 2007.

³³ - BALDWIN-EDWARDS 2004; de HAAS 2007; LALOU 2005.

However, this is not a deterrent, and the situation faced in their home countries push more and more young sub-Saharan Africans to approach an expensive and dangerous journey across the desert in the hope to reach Europe.

In response to a consequently quite complex scenario, the EU has reacted with a multi-faceted approach. It has tried to seal off its southern borders, laying the ground for bilateral agreements between its members and both North African and sub-Saharan countries. While falling in the framework of broader cooperation schemes, these agreements involve joining efforts in coast patrolling and the adoption by CoTs of readmission and expulsion measures³⁴. Some EU countries have then been implementing regularisation campaigns targeting migrants already present on their territory and not enjoying regular status. These campaigns respond to both constant internal demand for cheap unskilled labour and to the need to curb the public perception of the presence of too many irregular immigrants, which is often made to coincide with potential insecurity. Such measure has impacted negatively on the issue of migration management in the region, as it contributes to invalidating the quota systems in place in most major European countries. Migrants who reach an EU country irregularly are presented, in fact, with the opportunity to acquire regular status, while those who follow regular channels are faced, in the best case scenario, with years-long waiting lists. On the other hand, the EU has often in principle condemned actions and attitudes in breach of migrants' rights, though never so far taking concrete steps towards preventing them from re-occurring.

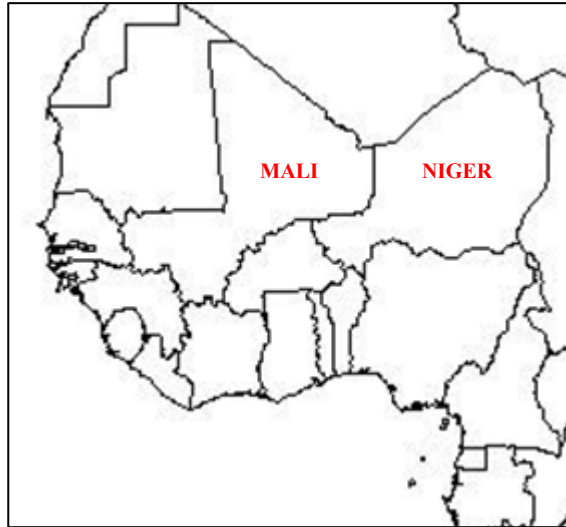
the CONSEQUENCES

COUNTRIES of ORIGIN focus on MALI and NIGER

Sub-Saharan countries of origin of migrants are characterised by diffused poverty and a general lack of opportunities, often toppled by general country insecurity and exposure

³⁴ - Details on all agreements can be found on the EC website www.ec.europa.eu.

to violence, lack of good governance practices and absence of rule of law³⁵. This framework outlines not only the reasons for emigrating, but also the issues with which governments must cope on a daily basis.



Returnees, therefore, constitute a burden for national institutions already struggling with a very difficult internal situation: they present specific and severe needs, addressing which would require further and *ad hoc* resources that cannot be improvised. More than other citizens, returnees are likely to necessitate assistance in order to overcome what traumatic events they may have endured while away from their country – events that unmistakably leave medical, psychological, emotional and economical scars.

On the other hand, and for the same reasons, returnees do not avail of proper assistance towards social and economical reintegration, as they arrive to countries that are not able to respond adequately and sufficiently to their necessities and the ensuing consequences, owing to quite low national capacities in terms of authority, law enforcement and economic issues.

Mali³⁶

Mali has been a democracy since 1992, when a decentralisation process was also commenced, although civil society does not yet play a significant role on the political level and corruption is widespread and rooted. The economy is largely dominated by the primary sector, with agriculture representing 1/3 of GDP, while the informal sector accounts for 40% of employment opportunities.

Since 2007 CIGEM³⁷ deals with migration issues, including the reintegration of returnees. It works in partnership with several state agencies, CSOs, migrant associations and research institutes – all active in the field of migration and/or

³⁵ - Source: World Bank 2009.

³⁶ - All information on Mali in this section was taken from UNDP CSP 2008-2013 for Mali.

³⁷ - CIGEM – Centre d'Information et de Gestion des Migrations, was created in the framework of the dialogue between the Malian Government and the EU following the Rabat and Tripoli 2006 meetings and it is financed through the 9th EDF instrument.

reintegration. It constitutes, therefore, an excellent local partner with which to develop AVRR activities, particularly in view of the hand-over of the management of migration-related issues.

Niger³⁸

Since 2004 elections, Niger has been politically stable³⁹ and has embarked on a path of decentralisation reforms, although in order for the reforms to be successful, the country still needs to receive substantial capacity building, especially in the fields of inclusion and participation of civil society, also due to the high level of corruption.

The economy is based on agriculture. Small businesses encounter difficulties in flourishing and spreading across national territory owing to lack of training opportunities and circulation of information.

Repatriations of Nigerien nationals actuated by both the EU and some North African countries contribute, therefore, to worsen an already critical situation. The government, in fact, lacks both institutional and operational capacity to face it. The AVRR system appears, instead, to be welcome by both authorities and society.

COUNTRIES of TRANSIT focus on LIBYA and MOROCCO

It is estimated that between 65,000 and 120,000 sub-Saharan migrants enter the Maghreb each year – 70/80% through Libya and 20/30% through Algeria and Morocco⁴⁰. Libya and Morocco have, in the past 20 years, become



³⁸ - All information on Niger in this section was taken from UNDP CSP for Niger 2008-2013.

³⁹ - This information does not take into account the February 2010 coup d'état, which took place after the LiMo project had been conceived.

⁴⁰ - de HAAS 2006; de HAAS 2008; de LUCA 2007.

countries of transit and destination at the same time – with Morocco having traditionally also always been a country of origin.

Libya has a population of just over 6 million⁴¹. In 2004 the government declared the presence of between 1 and 1.2 million irregular immigrants on its territory⁴².

It is Africa's second wealthiest country, thanks to its crude oil reserves. It is significantly more developed than other North African countries, but also endemically corrupt, as reported by both citizens and government officials⁴³. Its economy has been crippled by international sanctions imposed by the UN between 1992 and 1996 and by the U.S.A. between 1986 and 2006, and continues to remain totally dependent on oil and gas, in spite of the government's effort to diversify it⁴⁴.

Libya's appeal on sub-Saharan migrants can be explained by four main factors:

- its approximately 4,400 kilometres of predominantly desert borders are quite difficult to patrol;
- its proximity to Europe transformed it into a springboard for those wishing to cross the Mediterranean;
- its relative economic development and political stability compared to sub-Saharan countries make it a land of opportunity in itself;
- Al-Qadhafi's "pan-africanism" of the 1990s called for non-nationals to go and contribute to Libya's development, disguising behind the veil of solidarity the country's need of manpower to compensate for international embargoes⁴⁵.

Its geographic, economic, political and governance-related features, therefore, have turned Libya into an essential piece in the puzzle of trans-Saharan and intercontinental migration. Smuggling networks have flourished, often with full and more or less open support of local authority representatives⁴⁶.

According to the Libyan government, migrants constitute a burden for the country's economy and pose a threat to its security, as foreigners bring criminality, drugs and diseases such as HIV/AIDS and hepatitis⁴⁷.

⁴¹ - OECD 2007 statistics.

⁴² - EC 2005. In the absence of more recent and/or independent official figures, and owing to the difficulty to produce reliable estimates, those data must be considered as final for the time being, although IOM Tripoli believes that they could be increased (no precise figure could be provided).

⁴³ - HRW 2006.

⁴⁴ - OECD 2008.

⁴⁵ - de HAAS 2006; de LUCA 2007; HRW 2006.

⁴⁶ - HRW 2006.

⁴⁷ - EC 2005.

Libyan society has reacted in line with its government and the friction with foreigners peaked in 2000 when clashes between Libyan nationals and non-nationals in the town of Zawiyya reportedly led to the death of 50 immigrants. As a consequence, increasingly more repressive measures have been taken by the government against migrants, migratory routes have shifted towards Morocco and more people have decided to move further North towards Europe⁴⁸.

Prompted by the EU, and by Italy in particular, the Libyan government has made efforts to become a significant actor in the management of migratory flows across the Mediterranean, entering into a cooperation partnership with Italy that has been sealed by several agreements. These agreements involve the provision of Italian technical and financial support and resources aimed at enabling Libya to effectively perform its role in dealing with irregular migration. Since 2000 Libya has thus started to repatriate irregular migrants – the government considering this a “favour” to the migrants and acknowledging that the costs involved are significantly weighing on its budget. At the beginning repatriation happened overland and involved the same risks migrants faced during the journey from sub-Saharan countries, then chartered planes began to be used⁴⁹. In particular, according to the latest Italy-Libya agreement, the latter is tasked with deporting irregular sub-Saharan migrants present on its territory back to their CoOs, while the former can hand over to Libyan authorities irregular migrants intercepted in the Mediterranean. This represents a clear breach of the non-refoulement principle established by the Geneva Convention, of which Italy is signatory⁵⁰. Libya’s view on migration has not always been negative – as mentioned above, in the recent past the government itself prompted sub-Saharan Africans to go and contribute to the country's development. An alternation between phases of zero tolerance and generalised amnesties can currently be witnessed in the country⁵¹. The issues of the presence of many irregular migrants in Libya and of the attitude of the Libyans towards them remain unresolved.

Morocco has witnessed two major changes related to migration in the last 40 years. First, after the 1973 oil crisis, circular migration within the Mediterranean basin came to

⁴⁸ - BBC 2000; de HAAS 2006; de LUCA 2007; HRW 2006.

⁴⁹ - HRW 2006.

⁵⁰ - That of *non-refoulement* is a principle of international law that forbids the expulsion of a refugee into an area where the person might be again subjected to persecution.

⁵¹ - Source: IOM Tripoli.

an end due to the closing of European frontiers to Moroccan workers⁵². Then, since the mid-1990s, Morocco has developed into a transition country for sub-Saharan migrants on their way to Europe. Morocco is not as wealthy a country as Libya, and does not therefore offer employment perspectives, but it attracts migrants owing to its proximity to the coast of Spain (only 14 kilometres away) and to the presence of the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on its northern coast⁵³. As in Libya, a network revolving around irregular migration is well established in the country and it involves both regular citizens and local authority representatives⁵⁴.

The overall number of sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco is significantly lower than in Libya, and so is the proportion with respect to the total population. Against approximately 30 million Moroccan citizens, in fact, in 2005 the government estimated that between 10,000 and 20,000 migrants from sub-Saharan Africa were in the country⁵⁵.

Sub-Saharan migrants mostly live in major cities (Rabat, Casablanca, Salé), in the area near the main border transit point (Oujda, close to the North-Western Algerian border) or the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, and in the towns (mainly Tangiers) closest to the points from where it is possible to try to reach Europe.

In Morocco the attitude towards migrants was never so negative as in Libya, although the ever increasing presence of migrants did indeed raise some issues with both the government and public opinion. Sub-Saharan migrants face substantial xenophobia, especially after the 2005 incidents around Ceuta and Melilla⁵⁶, and the subsequent raids of Moroccan police accompanied by forced expulsions that took place from 2005 to 2007. This drew criticism to the government of Morocco from both the international community and local CSOs⁵⁷. As a matter of fact, it has been referred of migrants arrested and transported outside the border and left in desolate areas⁵⁸.

The first bilateral agreement between **Morocco and Spain** on the readmission of irregular migrants dates back to 1992 and was signed in the framework of the Schengen Treaty. It was followed by several others that progressively defined the role of both

⁵² - de HAAS 2005; de HAAS 2005b.

⁵³ - de HAAS 2005; de HAAS 2005b; de HAAS 2006.

⁵⁴ - HRW 2006.

⁵⁵ - de HAAS 2005; LALOU 2002.

⁵⁶ - Between 28th and 29th September 2005 a large number of irregular migrants tried to scale the fences surrounding the two Spanish enclaves on Moroccan territories. The reaction of border guards led to some deaths, but both Spain and Morocco denied responsibility.

⁵⁷ - O'CONNELL 2005.

⁵⁸ - MSF 2005.

countries in stemming the flow of migrants towards Europe and included joining efforts in patrolling their coasts, until the installation in 2002 of an early warning radar system (SIVE)⁵⁹.

Although Morocco appears somehow reluctant to play the role of one of the Mediterranean's "policemen", in compliance with its new role within the migration management framework, in 2003 it passed a law regulating entry and residence of foreigners⁶⁰. The law includes heavy sanctions against undocumented immigrants and people smuggling, without taking into account migrants' rights⁶¹.

For any government forced expulsions are expensive, as they involve a significant effort by the police, and they have limited deterrent potential, as migrants are likely to decide to leave their CoOs again. Repressive policies, moreover, have several side-effects on migrants including police and border officers asking migrants for higher bribes to let them stay or cross the borders and smugglers attempting new and more dangerous routes.

Such policies are, in any case, counterproductive for North African countries for several reasons. First, while they do respond to popular discomfort, they also provoke outraged reactions from some part of civil society, damaging the image of implementing governments both nationally and internationally. Then, they tend to encourage the transformation of Maghreb from transit to destination area of migration. Finally, they may lead to diplomatic issues with sub-Saharan countries of origin⁶². Although they are, therefore, seemingly thoroughly willingly embraced by North African governments, it is easy to guess what downsides they involve.

STRANDED MIGRANTS

According to UNHCR research paper 162⁶³, there is no universally accepted definition of "stranded" migrants⁶⁴. As a matter of fact, "stranded" migrants fall into a protection

⁵⁹ - Since 2004, Morocco and Spain have collaborated in joint naval patrols and readmission of Moroccan and non-Moroccan nationals in return for \$390 million in aid – see de HAAS 2005.

⁶⁰ - For full text see http://www.justice.gov.ma/fr/legislation/legislation_.aspx?ty=2&id_l=140.

⁶¹ - de HAAS 2006.

⁶² - de LUCA 2007.

⁶³ - BETTS 2008.

⁶⁴ - Some working definitions do exist, such as those offered by GRANT 2007 ("*migrants become legally stranded where they are caught between removal from the state in which they are physically present, inability to return to their state of nationality or former*

gap as, not only there is no authoritative comprehensive and clear legislation on whose responsibility it is to protect them but, and most importantly, governments often deliberately ignore it⁶⁵.

In the case of Maghreb, “stranded” migrants are those individuals who arrive with the intention to reach Europe, but for diverse reasons do not succeed in doing so. Usually they do not have the money necessary to pay for the boat trip across the Mediterranean and must work to earn it or wait for someone to send it to them. Often they wish they could return to their CoO, but lack the means. Sometimes they prefer to stop for a while in North Africa hoping to gather some money to bring back home.

Estimates indicate that there are approximately 2 million sub-Saharan migrants in Maghreb⁶⁶. Two main components have made their condition critical:

- On the one hand, pressure by the EU on northern African governments to stem the flow of irregular migrants across the Mediterranean have prompted those governments to pass laws to regulate the entrance and the presence of non-nationals on their territory, in an effort to eradicate people smuggling and human trafficking that has not so far taken into proper account migrants’ rights.
- On the other hand, the economic conjunction – especially since the global crisis of 2008 – has limited the availability of jobs and consequently increased the competition between nationals and non-nationals.

As a result, migrants who become “stranded” in Maghreb are subject to discrimination, xenophobia, verbal and physical abuse by the locals – in Libya in particular, they are exposed to blanket accusations of criminality, harassment, extortion⁶⁷. They lack legal status and are therefore vulnerable to severe exploitation. They struggle to find work and – owing to their situation of illegality, which does not grant them any rights and prevents them from appealing to relevant authorities in case of abuse and/or violation of

residence, and refusal by any other state to grant entry”) and DOWD 2008 (“*those who leave their own country for reasons unrelated to refugee status, but who become destitute and/or vulnerable to human rights abuses in the course of their journey. With some possible exceptions, they are unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin, are unable to regularize their status in the country where they are to be found, and do not have access to legal migration opportunities that would enable them to move on to another state*”).

⁶⁵ - BETTS 2008; DOWD 2008. An attempt to recall governments to their obligations made in 2006 by the Council of Europe with resolution 1509 went practically unnoticed and its following efforts to develop standards have not so far met real formal commitment from the concerned States. Resolution 1509 on the “Human Rights of Irregular Migrants” outlines all relevant international obligations based on existing treaties to which governments are theoretically bound.

⁶⁶ - de LUCA 2007.

⁶⁷ - HRW 2006.

those rights – when they do find it their working conditions are appalling, even with respect to those of other irregular migrants. Employers, in fact, feel free to reduce them into (semi)slavery, knowing that they will incur in no consequences. They live and work in highly degrading circumstances⁶⁸. They have no access to the education and welfare systems⁶⁹. They are victims of extortion and bribery. They do not have the possibility to integrate into societies that are unable to absorb external elements and that consider them an obstacle to their own development. They cannot circulate freely. Authorities actuate “urban sweeps”⁷⁰ during which migrants are arbitrarily arrested, deprived of their assets and confined in detention centres waiting to be deported back to their countries. In the centres migrants do not avail of proper food and sanitary facilities; they are denied access to legal assistance and are often subject to physical and psychological violence⁷¹. The treatment they receive during their permanence in Maghreb does not always comply with basic human rights.

⁶⁸ - It must be stressed that this is a relatively recent development as, at least in Libya, until the end of the XX century sub-Saharan migrants were welcome precisely in order to employ them as workers and enjoyed, therefore, much more favourable conditions.

⁶⁹ - In Libya, although they are legally entitled to them, high fees and the obligation for medical staff to report anyone who cannot prove their entitlement to reside in the country to competent authorities make it virtually impossible for irregular migrants and their children to avail of these opportunities. In Morocco, although not legally entitled to them, they can access some schools and health centres – access is, however, granted on an *ad hoc* basis.

⁷⁰ - According to HRW 2006 urban sweeps intensified in late 2004 and, as of 2005, the government no longer considers them a valid means to implement its policies.

⁷¹ - HRW 2006; ILO 2004.

IOM's RESPONSE

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)

IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) activities play a key role in the Organisation's comprehensive approach to migration management and lie in the framework of its close collaboration with national governments.

They constitute IOM's response to the situation outlined in the Background chapter of this report and aim "to achieve an orderly, humane and cost-effective return and reintegration process of migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in host countries and wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin"⁷². The concept of voluntariness is central in the AVRR approach and it differentiates it from other return and reintegration schemes – not only a genuine will to return is an essential requisite of potential beneficiaries of AVRR activities, but IOM also strives to make sure that migrants understand they can decide to opt out of the scheme up to the very last minute before departure from CoTs or CoDs.

Since AVRR schemes benefit origin, transit and destination countries alike, they effectively tackle irregular migration and help countries to better manage the migratory phenomenon. They, in fact, provide migrants with a dignified alternative to deportation; lift the costly weight of forced repatriations off CoTs and CoDs; facilitate CoOs in their assistance to returnees. CoOs, CoTs and CoDs can all benefit from AVRR schemes, since when they are well and quickly implemented they may prevent irregular migration. Beneficiaries of AVRR programmes are all migrants in an irregular situation and migrants stranded in transit; IOM return programmes are also available to – and can even be tailored to – the particular needs of specific groups, including vulnerable migrants⁷³.

⁷² - <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/activities/by-theme/regulating-migration/return-assistance-migrants-governments>.

⁷³ - IOM 2008.

Short-term purposes of AVRR programmes are to offer migrants the possibility to exit a difficult situation, while simultaneously alleviating the pressure they exert on the governments of CoTs. Although AVRR undoubtedly presents all features of emergency relief interventions and is not intended to produce long-term results, it may, however, enhance cooperation among CoOs, CoTs and CoDs by providing technical support to their governments in order to facilitate the exchange of information and the adoption of best practices in the management of return⁷⁴.

AVRR projects are implemented worldwide. In regions affected by transit migration, such as Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, South-East Asia, and the Americas they are particularly useful to strengthen the capacity of CoTs and CoDs in managing the flow of irregular migrants.

While tailored to the different countries where they are implemented, all AVRR projects present some common features:

- **pre-departure assistance** (in CoTs – it consists of: dissemination of information on the project, medical assistance and arrangement of travel documents)
- **transportation assistance** (between CoTs and CoOs)
- **post-departure assistance** (in CoOs – it consists in reception and in land transportation, disbursement of reinstatement grants and, generally speaking, in long-term reintegration assistance in cooperation with local authorities and NGOs⁷⁵. All these activities aim at ensuring the sustainability of the return for migrants by supporting their socio-economic re-absorption).

the LiMo PROJECT

The LiMo project (*Regional Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration – AVRR – Programme for Stranded Migrants in Libya and Morocco*) was implemented to respond to the pressure created by flows of irregular immigrants on Libya and Morocco, countries that have become a crossroad for migrants originating their migratory experience in sub-Saharan Africa and wishing to reach Europe.

⁷⁴ - IOM 2008.

⁷⁵ - IOM 2008.

Migrants who become stranded⁷⁶ in Libya and Morocco are unable to leave the country they are currently in; even if they do manage to do so, once back in their CoO they are still in a vulnerable situation, due to the lack of national capacities in terms of reintegration assistance. This situation is impossible to be addressed by both CoTs and CoOs, due to their lack of means, and the intervention of the international community becomes therefore necessary.

This is the rationale behind the AVRRE Programme for Stranded Migrants in Libya and Morocco financed by the European Union through EuropeAid's "Programme of Cooperation with Third Countries in the Areas of Migration and Asylum"; the project is co-financed by the governments of Italy, the United Kingdom and Switzerland.

In line with EU guidelines⁷⁷, its actions – fighting irregular immigration and facilitating the readmission of irregular migrants; protecting migrants' rights, preventing them from exploitation and exclusion – aim at fostering Policy Dialogue and improving the Policy Making process in both CoTs and CoOs.

The project was implemented by IOM in Libya and Morocco, countries of transit (CoTs), and in other African countries, that are countries of origin (CoOs) of "stranded" migrants, with a special focus on Mali and Niger.

The main partners are: the General People's Committee for Public Security of Libya and the Direction for Immigration and Border Control of the Moroccan Ministry of Interior.

In Libya, a very important role is played by the Embassies of CoOs, while in Morocco local and international NGOs are the most important non-state actors.

As for CoOs, in Mali the main state actors are CIGEM, DGME and ANPE, working in close collaboration with local NGOs; in Niger, state actors are ANPE (the equivalent of the Malian counterpart by the same name), the Ministry for Young Entrepreneurs and NIGETECH, an organisation created by the European Commission in partnership with the Ministry of Labour of Niger and the ILO.

The action started in April 2009 for the duration of 12 months, and was scheduled to end in March 2010 but, due to additional funds from the UK and Switzerland, the

⁷⁶ - For a definition of "stranded migrants" see pp. 29-30.

⁷⁷ - EC Strategic Paper for the Thematic Programme of Cooperation with Third Countries in the Areas of Migration and Asylum 2007-2010.

project ran for an additional 2 months and, thanks to another no-cost extension, was completed on July 31st 2010.

LiMo aimed at assisting 2000 stranded migrants in Libya and Morocco in returning to and reintegrating in their CoOs, with particular focus on Mali and Niger. For this purpose, action was taken in both CoOs and CoTs in order to, on the one hand, ensure adequate assistance to migrants in every step of the process, while on the other hand facilitating inter-regional cooperation leading to common initiatives between countries of origin, transit and destination with regard to irregular migration. Furthermore, the action provided capacity building for local NGOs and supported policy dialogue at national level in both Libya and Morocco in order to sensitise local authorities in taking the necessary steps and in following best practices when dealing with irregular migrants.

The extension of the project allowed reaching a wider target group, increasing from 2000 to 2250 the number of “stranded” irregular migrants assisted in Libya and Morocco.

The project targeted two groups:

- stranded migrants in Libya and Morocco⁷⁸, with priority given to vulnerable individuals⁷⁹
- authorities concerned with managing migration in both CoTs and CoOs (for this purpose the creation of networks was encouraged so as to enhance the sustainability and ownership of the activities during and upon completion of the project)

Other than these groups, as final beneficiaries were also considered CSOs and NGOs involved in assisting migrants/returnees in CoTs and CoOs.

In particular, in Libya and Morocco (CoTs):

- A campaign was organised in order to reach as many migrants as possible with information on the project. It included the distribution of leaflets and the creation

⁷⁸ - Requirements for admission on the programme were not being an asylum seeker with UNHCR, a genuine will to return to one's CoO and not leaving any member of one's family behind in CoTs.

⁷⁹ - By “vulnerable cases” it is meant all individuals who falls into one of the categories of humanitarian assistance (women, minors, elderly and ill persons) plus victims of slavery and/or human trafficking.

of a Referral System of actors whose mandate include the provision of assistance to irregular immigrants.

- Migrants were received by IOM, interviewed in order to assess their eligibility for the project, briefed on all steps of the AVRR process, provided medical screening and assisted in making travel arrangements.
- A campaign was organised by a local NGO in order to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS and implement prevention practices among irregular immigrants (Morocco only).

In CoOs:

- A network of state and non-state actors was created in Mali and Niger in order to provide returnees with adequate reception, vocational training opportunities and assistance in the implementation of a micro-entrepreneurial activity of their choice (reintegration project).
- A €485 in-kind grant was disbursed to each returnee as a contribution to the start-up of their reintegration project.

ANALYSIS

The project was analysed by dividing it into 4 macro-areas:

1. the CAMPAIGN organised by IOM in Libya and Morocco in order to spread basic information on the AVRR opportunity behind LiMo;
2. PRE-DEPARTURE ASSISTANCE implemented in Libya and Morocco and consisting of CANDIDATE SCREENING, MEDICAL CLEARANCE, HIV/AIDS SENSITISATION and LOGISTICS;
3. POST-DEPARTURE ASSISTANCE implemented in Mali and Niger and consisting of ARRIVAL ASSISTANCE, GUIDANCE to returnees, DISBURSEMENT, TRAINING, MONITORING and FOLLOW-UP on returnees' projects and the establishment of *ad hoc* NETWORKS of state and non-state actors;
4. the IMPACT of all above mentioned activities on returnees' lives.

For each component of the 4 areas specific CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS were formulated.

the INFORMATION CAMPAIGN (Libya and Morocco)

LIBYA

Data were gathered from:

- a. Interviews with IOM Tripoli
- b. Interviews with returnees conducted during the field missions to Mali and Niger
- c. Feedback submitted by the following Referral System actors:
 - Embassies of Burkina Faso, Guinea Conakry, Mali and Senegal
 - Burkinabé, Guinean and Malian community leaders
- d. Information leaflets distributed by IOM⁸⁰
- e. Questionnaires used by IOM in CoOs during the first meeting with returnees

As per IOM Tripoli's account, the selection of the actors of the **Referral System** was based on IOM's pre-existing contacts with those who, by nature, play a significant role in managing migration-related issues and/or communicating with migrant communities. The Embassies of migrants' CoOs were approached first and then, through them, respective community leaders and other associations. Among the latter, the Church played a significant role in reaching the most vulnerable cases⁸¹.

Each actor received from IOM Tripoli a file with basic information on the LiMo project. No-one ever reported to IOM Tripoli of any difficulties encountered while performing their role within the Referral System and IOM did not have major problems interacting with them either. The only note made to this regard was that IOM Tripoli felt the need to establish a mechanism of cross-checks and anti-counterfeiting measures that, fine-tuned through the years, guaranteed transparency in every procedure in order to prevent any possible case of corruption or mismanagement.

The Referral System was hinged on Embassies of CoOs: each one appointed a member of staff as its representative for the LiMo project and tasked him with following every step of the process, liaising between migrants and IOM Tripoli. Embassies also acted as

⁸⁰ - See ANNEX B.

⁸¹ - For a definition of vulnerable cases see p. 35.

filters with regard to migrants' identity and eligibility to the AVRR programme. They did not send regular reports to IOM – and neither did the other actors of the Referral System – but constant contact through their representatives made it superfluous. They did, however, keep files on the migrants they assisted and shared them with IOM Tripoli.

Interviews with IOM Tripoli highlighted how all migrants assisted by them had first been in contact with the Referral System: 98% with the Embassy of their CoO, 2% with a CSO, namely the Church. When IOM Tripoli saw migrants for candidate screening, they seemed to already have a fair idea of the steps of the AVRR process, data confirmed by returnees interviewed in Mali and Niger.

The **information leaflets** distributed in Libya contained information on the LiMo project in English and French, as well as directions to reach the IOM office in Tripoli. IOM pointed out how, although it was originally foreseen by the project to have leaflets printed also in other languages in order to make them accessible to a wider range of migrants, it proved quite difficult to do so. Migrants, in fact, speak a great variety of languages, often dialects which are almost impossible to put in writing.

Leaflets clearly outline the main steps of the LiMo project – so that migrants who saw them could already have an idea of the AVRR scheme – as well as stressing some key concepts such as voluntariness of participation, thoroughness of assistance and inclusion of a reintegration phase in CoOs. They mention pocket money migrants would receive upon departure from CoTs in order to cover their immediate travel expenses, but not the €485 contribution to be disbursed upon arrival in CoOs towards the implementation of the reintegration project.

None of the returnees interviewed stated they had seen the information leaflets and the other interviewees confirmed that the migrants/returnees they assisted never mentioned them. It must be noted, however, that during interviews with the latter it did not transpire that much investigation had been conducted as to verify the importance of leaflets within the information campaign.

The requests for assistance received by IOM Tripoli largely outnumbered the available places for AVRR under the LiMo project. This was due especially to the significant role played by the Embassies of CoOs in liaising between IOM and migrant communities,

which facilitated the circulation of information. The work of the other actors of the Referral System, first and foremost the Church, allowed reaching even the most vulnerable cases, ensuring this way that the assistance targeted those who most needed it. No data on the contribution brought by the leaflets on this matter could be gathered.

MOROCCO

Data were gathered from:

- a. Interviews conducted during the field mission to Morocco with representatives of IOM Rabat and of the following Referral System's actors:
 - Caritas
 - Médecins sans Frontières (MSF)
 - Moroccan NGO Association pour la Lutte Contre le SIDA (ALCS)
 - Embassy of Cameroon
 - Embassy of Ivory Coast
- a. Interviews with returnees conducted during the field missions to Mali⁸²
- b. The following documents:
 - Information leaflets distributed by IOM
 - Questionnaires used by IOM in CoOs during the first meeting with returnees
 - MSF "*Recensement ISS⁸³ à Rabat, Salé, Casablanca, Nador et Oujda*" report
 - ALCS "*Projet de prise en charge et de prévention des migrants PVIH/SIDA de l'Association de Lutte Contre le Sida (ALCS) dans le cadre du programme Régional de Retour Volontaire et Réinsertion (LIMO)*" final report

In Morocco, the **Referral System** was based more on NGOs than on Embassies. The latter fulfilled their traditional task of providing travel documents to migrants, but did not play so significant a role as their Libyan counterparts in accompanying migrants in the AVRR process. IOM Rabat was directly involved in spreading info on the project

⁸² - The number of migrants returned to Niger from Morocco was not significant enough for their feedback to be gathered and included (2 out of 345).

⁸³ - Immigrés Subsahariens.

with missions conducted in places where most migrants gathered on arrival, such as Oujda (on the border with Algeria).

The interviewed NGOs stated that they assist migrants on the grounds of their role, their mission and their regular activities, and that they, therefore, had frequent contacts with vulnerable migrants. MSF, ALCS and Caritas provide assistance to migrants both at their premises in Rabat and in other major towns with a significant presence of irregular migrants – the first two specialise in the health sector (with ALCS focussing on HIV/AIDS prevention), while the latter also offers various activities (such as alphabetisation classes and recreational activities) and accommodation. MSF and ALCS highlighted how Moroccan regulations on immigration (based especially on law 02-03⁸⁴) prevent irregular migrants from relying on public institutions for medical assistance. As a consequence, those who are in need of medical assistance turn to NGOs and this allows NGOs to have a great deal of opportunities to get in contact with vulnerable migrants.

Caritas, MSF and ALCS explained they preferred not to promote the LiMo project too explicitly and directly, and to spread information while keeping a low profile instead, in order to avoid possible frictions and misunderstandings with local authorities, owing to the sensitiveness of their role in the country. The project was instead explicitly suggested to vulnerable cases or to whoever showed a genuine intention to go back to their CoO, but was unaware of the opportunity offered by IOM. The three NGOs dealt with a great number of migrants. In particular:

- Caritas believes to have dealt with approximately 10,000 migrants. In the absence of exact data (such as registers) on which to base it, such figure must be considered as deriving from estimates made by Caritas on the grounds of the average number of people assisted daily at the different Caritas points.
- MSF registered approximately 4,000 migrants eligible for its medical assistance programmes, as mentioned in their report based on analysis conducted between November 2009 and January 2010 in some of the Moroccan cities with the highest rate of sub-Saharan migrants (Casablanca, Rabat, Salé, Nador e Oujda).
- ALCS sensitised just fewer than 3,500 migrants between September 2009 and March 2010, as indicated in the previously mentioned report.

⁸⁴ - For full text see http://www.justice.gov.ma/fr/legislation/legislation_.aspx?ty=2&id_1=140.

Meetings with representatives of the **Embassies** of Cameroon and Ivory Coast highlighted constant interaction and information flow between them and IOM Rabat. It must be noted, however, that the attitude of Embassies towards migrants with regard to their role within the Referral System differed, as it was left up to their discretion.

In this respect the staff of the Embassy of Ivory Coast stated that they had sometimes signalled to potential beneficiaries the opportunity to be admitted on the LiMo project, while that of the Embassy of Cameroon declared that, up to the interview (conducted in May 2010), they had never done it. It must be said that during the interview it could not be clarified whether this happened because of lack of will/interest on their part or because there had never been the opportunity for them to make contact with potential beneficiaries of the LiMo project.

As a consequence, addressing potential beneficiaries to IOM Rabat cannot be considered as having been standard procedure in the activities of the Embassies.

The **information leaflets** distributed in Morocco were identical to those distributed in Libya and therefore the same observations apply.

IOM Rabat estimates that the information campaign reached approximately 3,000 migrants. Due to the lack of specific research or reports on the matter, such figure results from speculations based on the number of interviews conducted and of migrants who arrived at the IOM office (over 2,000 during last year only), on the size of the different migrant communities and on the number of leaflets distributed (2,000). The initial target of 1,065 migrants to be repatriated under the LiMo project was met⁸⁵ and over 2,000 repatriation requests were received by IOM Rabat.

As per the statements made by migrants interviewed during the screening process, IOM believes that information on the project circulated principally by word of mouth – mechanism triggered by the activities of the Referral System, the initial briefings between IOM and community leaders and the distribution of leaflets. The importance of word of mouth as a channel for circulation of information on the project was confirmed by the 2 migrants interviewed in Mali after returning from Morocco.

Both IOM staff and the representatives of Caritas and MSF pointed out how migrants who are victims of slavery or human trafficking were *de facto* not reached by the

⁸⁵ - The initial target was actually exceeded and reached 1,085 persons, also thanks to a budget increase.

activities of the Referral System. These people are, in fact, in most cases segregated and could not therefore make contact either with the Referral System or with IOM.

IOM Rabat also highlighted that in some areas – where the Referral System was less structured (i.e. Agadir and Marrakech) – it is most likely that information on the LiMo project circulated with difficulty.

CONCLUSIONS

The information campaign can be considered to have been effective from both a quantitative and a qualitative point of view, with a few differences between the two countries.

In Libya, the actors of the Referral System performed well, proactively and successfully operating in addressing a large number of migrants to IOM and in reaching most vulnerable cases. Coordination with IOM Tripoli was consistent and profitable and the network proved functional in view of a prospective AVR system that would follow in the footsteps of the LiMo project, revolving exclusively around Libyan state and non-state actors.

In Morocco, even though its actors were not particularly proactive and preferred to keep a low profile in spreading information on the project, the Referral System allowed making contact with a high number of migrants, including vulnerable cases individuated by MSF, ALCS and Caritas. In spite of this and of the direct involvement of IOM, however, the coverage of the information campaign cannot be considered precise. Data show, in fact, that information circulated mainly by word of mouth – although effective, this is a system that by nature leads to misunderstandings, omissions, confusion. It does not appear that leaflets could fully counteract this, as by nature they allow spreading information on the project only. The fact that, moreover, the Referral System did not thoroughly cover several towns that host a significant presence of migrants may have considerably restricted its outreach capacity. It is hence possible that information on the project circulated as incomplete and/or distorted and/or casual.

In neither country do leaflets appear to have had a major impact on spreading information on the LiMo project. Although the lack of available direct data on their role prevents reaching a conclusion on the matter that would bear a significant degree of certainty, proxy data lead to believing that they did not constitute added value within the information campaign. The fact that they were printed in English and French only might have significantly limited their outreach spectrum. As far as direct observation allowed gathering, however, it must be noted that they were well conceived, respectful of cultural differences and politically correct. The reference to pocket money to be given to migrants on departure from CoTs, while not an essential piece of information, might have contributed to generating the misunderstanding related to the €485 to be disbursed (see paragraph DISBURSEMENT pp. 64-67).

RECOMMENDATIONS

As during the evaluation research it did not emerge whether leaflets contributed significantly to spreading information on the LiMo project, perhaps some investigation should be conducted in order to establish their appropriateness as a tool, with special reference to their accessibility. If the result were to be negative, it could be considered not to include them in future projects and to entrust the information campaign exclusively to the actors of the Referral System. This would free up resources that could be re-allocated within the budget.

If, on the other hand, this were not the case, measures should be implemented so that leaflets play a more important role within AVRRE projects. Since it is probably easier to reach someone with a leaflet than to make *vis-à-vis* contact with them, especially when they do not enjoy thorough freedom of movement and/or do not access regular social channels, printing leaflets, other than in English and French, in some major languages spoken in several of the main CoOs of migrants (the same ones as for the videos shown during candidate screening) might contribute to widening the range of their users, thus facilitating the circulation of information on the project and improving their effectiveness within the campaign. This would be particularly helpful in countries like Morocco, where the actors of the Referral System adopted a low-key strategy, in order to prevent and/or limit possible distortions of the information on the project due to the

mechanism of word of mouth and to grant, as a consequence, an even better understanding of the AVRR opportunity. Avoiding any reference made in the leaflets to money to be received by migrants, moreover, could perhaps contribute to preventing misinformation and confusion on the disbursement procedure.

Regardless of the inclusion of leaflets in future projects, and of the indubitable effectiveness of the information campaign within LiMo, the Moroccan model of Referral System could raise some doubts as to its reliability and sustainability. Although it could be appreciated that word of mouth allowed contact with a great number of migrants prospective beneficiaries of the AVRR scheme, it cannot be underestimated that this is subject to unpredictable variants that prevent from considering it a reliable tool. It is true that in countries where migrants do not enjoy participation in main social channels and the actors of the Referral System see their action limited by political constraints word of mouth can be a precious instrument to contribute to the circulation of information. The establishment of mechanisms to control it, however, could be considered in order to channel its potential and exploit it to the full advantage of the project, such as holding frequent meetings with community leaders to improve their understanding of AVRR and enabling them to transmit a correct message. As for sustainability, in view of a prospective national ownership of the AVRR mechanism, a system should be designed which would not be based on word of mouth but rather on local actors. In this respect CoOs Embassies could be involved more radically, provided that corruption prevention measures are adopted like in Libya.

Further action could be taken in order to improve the overall effectiveness of the information campaign by ensuring a planned and frequent presence of the actors of the Referral System, other than capital cities, in all towns that host a significant number of migrants, hence making the network even more effective.

PRE-DEPARTURE ASSISTANCE (Libya and Morocco)

CANDIDATE SCREENING

Data were gathered from:

- a. Interviews with:
 - IOM Tripoli
 - IOM Rabat
 - IOM Bamako
 - IOM Niamey
 - Nigerien NGO Afrique Fondation Jeunes (AFJ)
 - Returnees in Mali and in Niger
- b. Questionnaires used by IOM during candidate screening in Libya and Morocco
- c. Synthesis of feedback submitted by IOM offices in CoOs to the International Reintegration Officer

LIBYA

Candidate Screening in Libya was performed by appointment only. Appointments were made by the Referral System's actors and, if migrants visited the IOM office on their own initiative, they were addressed to their Embassy of competence first.

It took place at the Reception and Information Migration Centre opened in March 2008 and consisting of a section where up to 40 people can be accommodated and of another where interviews were held.

It was based on an interview with an IOM officer who guided migrants in the compilation of a questionnaire, but it practically never happened that someone was rejected. This was probably due to the actors of the Referral System acting as "filters"

between migrants and IOM. Candidates were selected on the grounds of pre-set requisites⁸⁶ and of their genuine will to return to their CoO. Priority was given to particularly vulnerable individuals. Out of a total 1,165 persons repatriated under the LiMo project, around 5% (20 individuals) were victims of slavery or human trafficking. Another 5% circa fell into one of the vulnerable categories typical of humanitarian assistance outlined on p. 35. IOM Niamey confirmed that the procedure allowed the selection of most vulnerable candidates.

All questions asked during the interview were relevant and allowed IOM not only to outline each migrant's profile, but also to gather information on the dynamics of sub-Saharan migration. Possible language barriers were overcome thanks to the presence of Embassy representatives or of interpreters.

Since migrants visited the IOM office only after contact with an actor of the Referral System, they always arrived in groups and before being interviewed they were briefed on IOM and the AVRR programme.

MOROCCO

Most migrants approached IOM directly and were interviewed immediately, as a consequence of IOM policy aimed at favouring direct solicitation by migrants and at eliminating any mediators. After having been admitted on the programme, they were sent to their Embassy to obtain a laissez-passer or an extension on their passport.

The forms used during candidate screening consisted of relevant questions that IOM Rabat integrated according to individual cases at the time of the interview. The screening allowed IOM to reconstruct each migrant's profile and to individuate vulnerable cases and their genuine intention to return to their CoO and start a business. Possible language barriers were overcome thanks to the fact that usually migrants arrived at the office with someone who spoke either English or French. In the few cases where this did not happen, IOM advised the migrant to return with an interpreter.

The selection at the end of the interview was based on the answers provided, but also on the experience of IOM Rabat in individuating vulnerable cases. In addition, IOM, Caritas, MSF and ALCS pointed out how vulnerable cases were often also signalled by

⁸⁶ - For the requisites migrants needed to show in order to be admitted on the LiMo project see p. 35.

other actors of the Referral System. IOM and the actors of the Referral System stated that the selection of vulnerable migrants was effective and that no vulnerable subject who declared their interest in participating in the project was rejected. According to final statistics, of 1,085 repatriated migrants, about 10% were vulnerable cases.

All interviewees declared their satisfaction on the procedure in both Libya and Morocco. In particular, IOM Niamey and AFJ Niger reported no complaints from the returnees they had assisted. The feedback sent by Congo Brazzaville and Guinea Conakry to the International Reintegration Officer in Bamako reported that, however, in the opinion of the staff working at local IOM offices, some students and small traders benefitted of the LiMo project without being entitled to it.

CONCLUSIONS

The difference in the approach adopted by IOM Tripoli and IOM Rabat on the role of the Referral System in the step immediately prior to candidate screening, while highlighting the stronger involvement of Libya's actors as opposed to Morocco's, did not appear to bear much significance with reference to the selection process in general. The Libyan approach seemed to be more systemic and, at the same time, perhaps less flexible, as migrants needed an appointment to be received by IOM. The fact that organising appointments was delegated to the actors of the Referral System might have lifted some administrative weight off the IOM office while at the same time further empowering the former within the programme of assistance that was being implemented. Considering that most vulnerable cases may have encountered difficulties in freely circulating and relating to other subjects, it is possible that tasking actors such as the Church and NGOs with organising a meeting with IOM allowed identifying and prioritising those cases over other candidates for AVRR, especially those living in a town other than the one where the IOM office was located. The mediatory role performed by the Referral System's actors, moreover, might have facilitated migrant's access to IOM, overcoming possible issues of trust, although the same role might have

been played by the word of mouth mechanism in Morocco, by nature based on strong personal and social links. On the other hand, the presence of an intermediary implied reliance by IOM on their ability to judge the eligibility of candidates for the programme, which is not the same in a more spontaneous system as the one adopted in Morocco. In the absence of well-established countermeasures, the fears of corruption felt in Morocco probably contributed to the decision of not delegating this step linking information campaign and candidate screening, relying instead on pre-existing relations.

Through both systems the screening of candidates appears to have been effective. The selection was performed on a first-come first-served basis, although priority was always given to vulnerable cases and the experience of IOM staff allowed them to individuate possible non-eligible cases. On the grounds of how IOM Tripoli and Rabat conducted interviews and of the questions they asked, we believe it unlikely that many could have benefitted from the project without being entitled to it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Some investigation should be conducted in order to individuate strengths and weaknesses of both Libyan and Moroccan approaches to the issue of organising meetings for candidate screening. Consequent relevant findings could provide important indications as to whether they can be improved or constitute *de facto* the most appropriate solution for two different contexts and can therefore be considered as best practice for future similar interventions. Great attention must, however, always be paid to the fact that the mechanism of word of mouth is by nature unpredictable – although it unmistakably relies on very strong links, it can also be volatile and easy to manipulate. As for the candidate screening procedure, surely the presence of a member of staff of the Embassies of CoOs in Libya made it easier and more comfortable for migrants and probably granted certain standards to the interpreting between the parts. If the same role cannot be performed by Embassy staff in Morocco, perhaps the employment of translators chosen among prominent members of migrant communities could be considered, so that it would not be left up to migrants to provide an interpreter.

COUNSELLING and INFORMATION on REINTEGRATION

Data were gathered from:

- a. Interviews with:
 - IOM Tripoli
 - IOM Rabat
 - IOM Bamako
 - IOM Niamey
 - returnees in Mali and in Niger
- b. Synthesis of feedback submitted by IOM offices in CoOs to the International Reintegration Officer

IOM Rabat and IOM Tripoli stated they assisted migrants in selecting an activity to implement upon return. Usually migrants already had a fair idea of what kind of activity they intended to implement when they visited IOM and the interviewer only recorded the details. Normally migrants formulated their project on their own, but when this was not the case, IOM helped them to outline a plan that was likely to be easy to implement and successful. It could happen that migrants had been away from their country for many years when they approached the AVR programme and that they therefore needed to be updated on the situation in their CoO with regard to local economy and work opportunities. In order to provide counselling, IOM employed several criteria (level of education of migrants, previous occupation, age, etc.) and referred to guidelines provided by IOM offices in CoOs. Such guidelines consist in annotations on the economic context and on business opportunities in the different countries. All this was confirmed by interviews with IOM Bamako and Niamey.

As for information on the assistance to be received in CoOs, all interviewees indicated as the most frequent misunderstanding the fact that migrants thought they would receive the €485 contribution in cash instead of goods and services. Another, much less common, misunderstanding was that migrants thought that upon arrival they would find all equipment and materials they needed ready for them, instead of having to obtain them directly from providers. Although not able to provide figures on the matter, IOM

Rabat underlined that misunderstandings may have depended much upon the level of education of migrants or upon the fact that returnees might have pretended they did not understand, hoping to receive the contribution in cash. IOM Tripoli added to these reasons the fact that the emotional condition of migrants during the interview might have prevented them from grasp every detail of the information they were being given.

IOM Niamey, on the other hand, reported that the Nigerien Embassy in Libya did not always provide migrants with correct information on disbursement, which may have been the cause of the above mentioned misunderstandings.

In order to prevent confusion, IOM introduced videos realised in CoOs for migrants to watch them during the screening process. The videos explain, in local languages, the reintegration phase of the project. Unfortunately they were introduced rather towards the end of the project and therefore not all migrants could benefit from them.

IOM staff and returnees in Mali and Niger stated that the latter understood in what the AVRR offered by IOM consisted. Surprisingly, the synthesis of feedback prepared by the International Reintegration Officer shows that the following IOM offices in CoOs reported that some of the returnees they assisted were not fully aware of the AVRR process: Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Mali and Niger.

CONCLUSIONS

IOM Tripoli and Rabat showed full availability in assisting migrants in the choice of the activity they would implement upon return to their CoO.

After the introduction of videos in the screening process, information on the reintegration phase should have become exhaustive and thorough, but there is no proof of it, also due to their late introduction and to the fact that not all migrants saw the videos. Although this is a good system to explain reintegration – especially to illiterate persons – it must be considered that videos might not have been fully understood by migrants. Sometimes, in fact, pressure and stress due to the importance of the interview with IOM might have prevented them from focussing entirely on a video message.

Moreover, the discrepancy between statements gathered in Mali and Niger and data contained in the feedback synthesis makes it all the more difficult to give an opinion.

The evaluation team does believe, however, that the misunderstanding about the disbursement step of reintegration assistance could be attributed to the reasons indicated by the different IOM offices interviewed (nervousness of migrants during their visit to IOM, their being more inclined towards relying on information provided by someone belonging to their immediate circle, an attempt to obtain the contribution in cash) and not to any flaws in the way information on reintegration is transmitted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

An information sheet with details on the project could be distributed to migrants at IOM offices during the screening process. This should be written in the same languages as the videos and the information leaflets and clearly synthesise and clarify the various steps of the reintegration phase. By doing this, migrants would be able to have an idea of that phase and think about possible questions to ask IOM during the interview, comparing what they have read with what they have watched in the video and what they are told.

MEDICAL CLEARANCE

Data were gathered from interviews with:

- General Practitioner contracted by IOM Rabat to conduct medical check-ups
- IOM Tripoli
- IOM Rabat
- IOM Bamako
- IOM Niamey
- Caritas Rabat
- Returnees in Mali and Niger

In **Morocco**, the medical clearance activity went well beyond being an examination aimed at ensuring that migrants were in good enough conditions to travel by plane. The General Practitioner explained what it involved: after a short interview with the patient, he performed a complete check-up that did not stop at verifying whether they were fit for travel but included a thorough evaluation of their health. No cases were reported of people who, despite having been declared fit for travel, had medical problems when leaving. The GP referred of approximately 10 people who were refused the authorisation to travel. In these cases IOM Rabat and its partners, Caritas and MSF in particular, assisted each individual in order to resolve the pathology that prevented them from travelling, sometimes coping with significant difficulties in terms of resources.

In **Libya** the medical examination consisted in a fit-for-travel check-up that took place at the Reception and Information Migration Centre immediately after the interview. If someone was affected by a pathology that prevented them from travelling, IOM tried to refer them to national health structures or to NGOs providing health care services. In Libya basic medical care is, in fact, completely free for Libyan nationals and non-nationals alike, but migrants are at risk of being deported whenever requesting assistance, since personnel is obliged to ask them for a piece of ID and report to the authorities those found to be in the country illegally.

All actors interviewed expressed their satisfaction with regard to the medical clearance activity in both Libya and Morocco – although it was not possible to hear migrants in Morocco on this matter, IOM referred of positive feedbacks. IOM Niamey confirmed that the procedure had been performed well in Libya, especially in consideration of its sensitiveness. The staff, in fact, pointed out how serious the issue of stigmatisation is with regard to migrants and how easily a medical check-up could lead to fostering such feelings, particularly in the eyes of migrants themselves.

CONCLUSIONS

On the grounds of the satisfaction directly expressed by all interviewees and reported of migrants, the medical clearance activity can be considered to have been effective and satisfactory.

The fact that, in Morocco, migrants who could not be declared fit for travel were assisted by some of the actors involved in the project was an extra activity performed with some difficulty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

None with regard to the medical clearance activity in general.

On the grounds of the experience of Morocco, procedures could be formalised between IOM and its local partners in order to make assisting those who are not considered fit for travel smoother and overcome the lack of available resources. This would perhaps compensate for the impossibility to recur to national health structures in countries where doing so is problematic, such as Libya.

LOGISTICS

Data were gathered from interviews with:

- IOM Tripoli
- IOM Rabat
- IOM Bamako
- IOM Niamey
- Nigerien NGOs (ADECOR⁸⁷, AGADO⁸⁸, AGROPAST, le DEFI⁸⁹)

⁸⁷ - Appui au Développement des Collectivités Rurales.

⁸⁸ - Association Guider et Accueillir les enfants Démunis et Orphelins.

⁸⁹ - Développement par l'Expérimentation, la Formation et l'Innovation.

- Returnees in Mali and in Niger

IOM Tripoli and IOM Rabat described the procedure as follows:

- Interview of migrants performed by IOM: see above CANDIDATE SCREENING.
- Assistance to migrants in obtaining travel documents: IOM referred migrants who did not hold valid travel documents to their Embassy of competence.
- Flight booking and ticket purchasing: in Libya the procedure was smooth and efficient, although there were difficulties connected to the payment system. Credit cards are not, in fact, accepted and bank transfers are not in use in the country. The air company with which IOM has an agreement, Afriqiyah Airways, requires that each transaction be paid at the time of booking – IOM had to appoint a full-time member of staff to follow the procedure. In Morocco, no agreement on a reduction of fees could be concluded between IOM and Royal Air Maroc.
- Airport assistance and accompaniment: IOM Tripoli met migrants directly at the airport in order to give them the opportunity to withdraw up to the very last moment before departure, but Embassies offered a shuttle service from their premises to the airport; IOM Rabat gathered migrants on departure day at their office and accompanied them to Casablanca airport, assisting them during every step of the boarding procedure. All migrants received at this stage a €30 contribution in order to cover their immediate travel expenses.

Between the interview with IOM Rabat and departure generally elapsed 2 to 3 weeks; in Libya the average was 3 weeks. This was subject, however, to a few constraints, like the number of persons willing to leave on a same date for a same destination (no more than 5 persons could be boarded on a same flight for security reasons, on the grounds of an agreement between IOM and national authorities) and flight availability.

No problems or difficulties arose frequently or, even sporadically, compromised the procedure. On few occasions migrants produced their passport at the airport after having declared it missing. When this happened, it caused a delay in and, in one case, the postponement of the departure. In order to prevent such inconvenient, in the interview IOM always repeatedly stressed the importance for migrants not to lie about their travel documents.

IOM reported positive feedback from the migrants, who could not be heard directly, on this point. Returnees interviewed in Mali, IOM Niamey and NGOs interviewed in Niger confirmed this data.

CONCLUSIONS

On the grounds of data gathered through interviews, the operational procedure for repatriation can be defined quick and efficient, and the airport assistance sufficient.

RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

HIV/AIDS SENSITISATION ACTIVITIES (Morocco only)

Data were gathered from:

- a. Interviews with:
 - ALCS President
 - 2 returnees in Mali
- b. ALCS final report

ALCS is a local NGO that, according to an *ad hoc* agreement with IOM, performed sensitisation activities on HIV/AIDS within the LiMo project.

The President reported that their sensitisation activities were important for migrants, who understood their message. No specific data on which to base such conclusions were provided, apart from statistics on ALCS activities and the number of migrants they dealt

with, although the number of tests taken after such information sessions can be considered an indicator. Information was spread among migrants through a system of peer education, once a week at the IOM office where, moreover, migrants awaiting interviews were shown videos on the topic.

The final report confirmed that ALCS sensitised 3,483 migrant between September 2009 and March 2010, performed 323 tests and 231 post-counselling check-ups.

No migrants could be heard on this matter in Morocco, while the 2 interviewees in Mali did not seem to be aware of the importance of the issue and of the related activities. It must be stressed that these 2 persons were illiterate and did not speak French.

CONCLUSIONS

On the grounds of data provided by ALCS, of the number of migrants they reached and of their activities, it can reasonably be expected that such sensitisation activities were important to migrants and that they understood the message.

If taking into account the feedback from Mali, based on the opinion of 2 persons only, the possibility should be considered that the sensitisation operated by ALCS may not have been understood by migrants who are illiterate and do not speak French. These individuals, therefore, remained excluded from all related activities.

The contradiction in and the nature of the data on the HIV/AIDS sensitisation campaign conducted by ALCS do not allow the evaluation team to express a well-founded opinion on the matter. Surely the fact that 2 people only gave negative feedback could not be considered sufficient to invalidate the statements given by the President of ALCS. The fact that, however, he could not produce any evidence to substantiate his version, nor go into detail when explaining their activities (with particular reference to peer education) raised some doubts. It is difficult to measure the impact of the sensitisation activities, although the number of migrants taking a test afterwards can be considered a good indicator.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Some thought might be given to considering the possibility to conduct an analysis of the methods employed by ALCS with regard to their aptness to convey ideas to people who are illiterate and/or do not understand French.

POST-DEPARTURE ASSISTANCE (CoOs – focus on Mali and Niger)

ARRIVAL ASSISTANCE

Data were gathered from:

- a. Interviews with:
 - IOM Bamako
 - IOM Niamey
 - 2 representatives of the Civil Protection of Mali
 - Malian NGOs AMID⁹⁰, IMADEL⁹¹ and Layidu Wari
 - Nigerien NGOs ADECOR, AGADO, AGROPAST, le DEFI
 - Returnees in Mali and Niger
- b. Synthesis of feedback submitted by IOM offices in CoOs to the International Reintegration Officer

MALI

The Civil Protection (CP) stated that, as per an agreement with IOM within the LiMo project, they provided airport assistance to returnees, which fitted perfectly into their standard activities (arrival assistance to all returnees, regardless of the project). In the case of persons returned under LiMo, a representative of IOM Bamako joined the CP at the airport on arrival of migrants from Libya (flights from Morocco landed too late at night) – together they met returnees before they reached customs and provided information on where and how to benefit from further assistance⁹². They were easily

⁹⁰ - Association Malienne pour l'Intégration et le Développement.

⁹¹ - Initiative Malienne d'Appui au Développement Local.

⁹² - Returnees arriving from Morocco found only CP representatives, who suggested that they visit the IOM office.

recognisable and called out returnees' names, but kept a low profile in order to respect the privacy of returnees, who could choose whether to benefit from their assistance.

Returnees could be hosted in the facilities managed by the CP for the first 3 days of arrival. The stay could be extended up to one month, but the CP reported that this almost never happened. The facilities were not built *ad hoc* for the LiMo project and consisted of 17 rooms; ideally in each room was hosted one returnee at a time, provided the number of requests allowed it. At the time of the field mission the sanitary facilities were out of order and latrines had been built in the garden.

All interviewees expressed satisfaction on the airport assistance activity and did not highlight any issues. The only complaint regarded the facilities to host returnees, which were found in extremely bad conditions. This was stressed by the representatives of the CP themselves and by IOM Bamako, who reported how sometimes migrants preferred to look for accommodation elsewhere rather than stay there. Direct observation by a member of the evaluation team during the field mission to Mali confirmed that the facilities had been neglected for quite some time and that hygienic conditions were well below standard. No-one was hosted there at the time of the visit.

NIGER

IOM Niamey stated they received advance notice from IOM Libya and Morocco as to when returnees were to be expected and that one of their representatives was always present at the airport on arrival. The representative met returnees before customs and helped them with the processing of their travel documents. When interviewed, he said that very seldom difficulties were encountered and, even in these cases, his presence guaranteed a smooth proceeding of the documents.

NGOs and returnees interviewed confirmed that no issues arose with regard to arrival. Both interviews and the synthesis of feedback highlighted that no hosting facilities for returnees exist in Niamey. IOM Niamey even specified that, as of August 2010, it was not foreseeable that any existing structures be employed as hosting facilities for returnees in Niamey, owing to the lack of suitable buildings.

CONCLUSIONS

The airport assistance provided in both Mali and Niger facilitated the arrival of returnees and proved significant to address them towards the following steps of the reintegration process.

It must, however, be pointed out that, as highlighted by interviews and direct observation, the facilities where returnees were hosted in Bamako did not prove to be adequate. Nevertheless, the CP remains a valid partner for IOM.

The lack of hosting facilities in Niger, on the other hand, must have constituted a problem for returnees lacking, upon arrival, of family and/or social connections in Niamey.

RECOMMENDATIONS

None as far as airport assistance is concerned.

A significant structural upgrade of the facilities where returnees are hosted in Bamako is necessary and maintenance should be arranged in order to keep them in good conditions.

Consideration should be given to arranging hosting facilities for returnees in Niamey, at least for the first few nights of arrival.

GUIDANCE PROVIDED to RETURNEES by IOM

Data were gathered from:

- a. Interviews with:
 - IOM Bamako

-
- IOM Niamey
 - returnees in Mali and Niger
 - Malian NGOs AMID, IMADEL and Layidu Wari
 - NIGETECH⁹³
- b. Synthesis of feedback submitted by IOM offices in CoOs to the International Reintegration Officer
- c. Follow-up reports submitted by Nigerien NGOs ADECOR and AGADO

RECEPTION at IOM OFFICES

Returnees did not report of any difficulties in reaching the IOM office in **Bamako** and did not raise any issues about the treatment received there. IOM Bamako confirmed this by pointing out that no complaints on the matter ever reached them. They also highlighted that returnees did not need to make an appointment to be seen, but could visit the office any time during opening hours (Monday to Thursday, 8am-5pm; Friday, 8am-2pm). The field mission allowed appreciating that the office is located in an area of Bamako easy to reach, in a recognisable building.

With regard to IOM **Niamey**, interviews with the staff and the synthesis of feedback reported that, as for IOM Bamako, returnees did not need to make any appointment to be received and they could visit the office any time during opening hours. The office is located on a large, asphalted central street, and it is therefore easy to reach. Returnees were seen a first time within 48 hours of arrival and a second time after a month. The second contact is directly performed by IOM by visiting returnees at their house/working place, or via telephone calls, or it is delegated to local NGOs. IOM is also available for further follow up and counselling, as returnees can contact them anytime. During the first meeting, returnees were invited to talk about the treatment they received during the candidate screening procedure and to raise any complaints they may have – none emerged. They were then explained what next steps the AVRR

⁹³ - NIGETECH is an organisation created by the European Commission in partnership with the Ministry of Labour of Niger and the ILO.

mechanism involved and given contact details for the NGO in charge of assistance in the area of their final destination.

GUIDANCE to RETURNEES

IOM Bamako and IOM Niamey stated that they only gave returnees generic indications as to how to implement their project. Training was, in fact, delegated to local NGOs (business management) and national institutions (technical training), to which IOM addressed returnees.

All interviewees in Mali reported that returnees were impatient to start their business and were therefore not much inclined towards following any counselling once back in their country. This was due to precarious financial situations, worsened by the pressure from reintegration into familiar contexts with all their expectations. Returnees were therefore not encouraged to postpone the start of their business in order to follow some kind of training.

IOM Niamey stated that returnees needed orientation on the details of the local context into which they were going to implement their projects, but that most of them already possessed some kind of expertise based on previous work experience. For this reason both IOM and NGOs provided them with guidance as to which kind of micro-business to implement and on how to adapt it. ADECOR and AGADO confirmed in their follow-up reports that they assisted returnees in this sense and that, after a fruitful exchange of views, some decided to implement a business plan different from what they had originally formulated.

CONCLUSIONS

Returnees were quickly and well received both at IOM Bamako and at IOM Niamey, thanks to staff availability and organisational flexibility.

Since it would be inconceivable to conduct *ad hoc* feasibility studies for each returnee's project, is it reasonable that IOM Bamako and IOM Niamey did not go beyond

providing general suggestions on the implementation phase. It would, in fact, present no little difficulty to conduct a detailed market analysis in countries mainly characterised by informal economy based on small and predominantly agricultural businesses. Different villages may present very different features and it is unreasonable to think of a study that comprises them all. The field missions showed, however, how staff was open and dedicated – they followed each case with due attention, being well aware of the context where they were operating and of the actors on the field who constituted a source of information for them and a reference point for returnees. They kept information flowing with the network of local NGOs in charge of training, monitoring and follow-up, so as to be always up-to-date with respect to possible developments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

DISBURSEMENT

Data were gathered from:

- a. Interviews with:
 - IOM Bamako
 - IOM Niamey
 - Nigerien NGO AFJ
 - Returnees in Mali and Niger
- b. Synthesis of feedback submitted by IOM offices of CoOs to the International Reintegration Officer
- c. Follow-up reports submitted by Nigerien NGOs ADECOR and AGADO

IOM Bamako and IOM Niamey stated they encountered no difficulties in following the guidelines for disbursement provided by IOM Libya – returnees received the €485

contribution in goods and services only and upon presentation of 3 quotations in order to guarantee transparency in the selection of providers.

IOM Bamako assisted returnees in selecting providers according to the best value for money and of their experience on the field. They stipulated agreements with some providers elected through calls for tender on the grounds of their reliability, so as to be able to address returnees to them. Equipment and materials could therefore be easily and quickly obtained.

IOM Niamey did not pre-select providers, but counselled returnees in their choice. For returnees residing outside the capital, local NGOs were tasked with selecting providers and advising returnees.

The synthesis of feedback, however, pointed out how in some CoOs only providers located within the same city as the IOM office were eligible (IOM Rabat confirmed that it is not easy to find providers outside the capital who are able to issue quotations and that in this case payments would be problematic) and this may have constituted an issue for returnees in terms of transportation. IOM Mali and Niger, in order to facilitate returnees, provided them with the amount necessary to transport their purchases from Bamako/Niamey to their village.

About the system based on the 3 quotations, the 6 returnees interviewed on field mission to Mali did not highlight any particular issue. IOM Bamako did, however, report that some of the 352 returnees they assisted encountered difficulties with it, as they said that some providers demanded to be paid to issue a quotation. This was confirmed also by the synthesis of feedback from CoOs. Some returnees also expressed dissatisfaction in having to obtain 3 quotations that were then discarded as ultimately it was IOM to decide who were to be the providers.

In Niger, on the other hand, AGADO mentioned in its first follow-up report that they helped returnees to obtain the 3 pro-forma quotations, as it was difficult for returnees to have them issued by local suppliers also due to mistrust. ADECOR on the other hand mentioned in both its follow-up reports that they made calls for tender in order to find the best local suppliers. Upon selection, suppliers immediately provided returnees with the necessary goods.

IOM Bamako did also highlight that, out of a total 352 persons returned to Mali under the LiMo project, upon project completion (July 2010) only 8 could not benefit from the

contribution, as they never visited the IOM office and/or could not be reached at the telephone number they had provided.

The only difficulty encountered by returnees with regard to disbursement concerned the fact that – as stated by all interviewees in Mali and confirmed by the synthesis of feedback from CoOs – not receiving any cash they did not have a baseline onto which to build their project, for example to rent a space for their business or support themselves and their families while attending training courses. Although no-one reported any issues on this matter, it can reasonably be expected that the situation be the same in Niger, too.

CONCLUSIONS

The guidelines for disbursement developed for the LiMo project were easy to understand and implement.

The 3-quotation system proved to be, however, at times quite problematic for returnees in Mali, while in Niger NGOs provided assistance in the interaction with local suppliers, making the process smoother. It appears that in most CoOs involved in LiMo finding quotations outside the capital is not easy, although this was overcome in Niger thanks to the assistance of NGOs.

Disbursing the contribution in goods and services allowed for the creation of a significant starting point for returnees, but did not grant them the financial stability necessary to invest time in the training opportunities on offer in their country and to start their business without being under too much pressure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the system of the 3 quotations is necessary in order for IOM to guarantee transparency of procedures and to ensure accountability towards all stakeholders, perhaps the staff could make sure that returnees understand these reasons, in order to prevent confusion and avoid any kind of complaints. In particular, returnees should be clearly informed that, although it will be IOM to ultimately decide on providers, this

will be done exclusively in their interest. Furthermore, some thought should be given to the statements reported of some returnees, according to whom some providers requested payment in order to issue a quotation, and possibly re-consider the related procedure so as to prevent this from occurring in the future.

Local NGOs could act as mediators between returnees and goods and services providers, as happened in Niger, so as to facilitate the obtainment of the quotations.

Disbursing a small percentage of the €485 contribution in cash would help returnees in the earliest phase of the implementation of their business – it would allow them to rent a space and perhaps to attend training, constituting this way a platform for full reintegration and the premise for longer-term sustainability of their project.

TRAINING

Data were gathered from:

a. Interviews with:

- IOM Bamako
- IOM Niamey
- a representative of the Nigerien Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training
- CIGEM, Mali⁹⁴
- DGME, Mali⁹⁵
- ANPE, Mali⁹⁶
- Malian NGOs AMID, IMADEL and Layidu Wari
- NIGETECH
- Nigerien NGO AFJ
- Returnees in Mali and Niger

⁹⁴ - Centre d'Information et de Gestion des Migrations au Mali.

⁹⁵ - Direction Générale des Maliens à l'Extérieur.

⁹⁶ - Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi.

- b. Feedback questionnaires submitted by Nigerien NGOs ADECOR, AGADO, AGROPAST and le DEFI
- c. Follow-up reports submitted by Nigerien NGOs ADECOR and AGADO

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Local NGOs provided returnees with training in business management, which in turn they had received by IOM in Mali and NIGETECH in Niger, and followed the implementation of returnees' projects, each in its region of competence. Returnees interviewed in both Mali and Niger expressed their satisfaction with regard to the training in business management provided by local NGOs, stressing its usefulness.

In **Mali**, IOM Bamako chose its local partners on the grounds of previous collaboration or of their experience in the field of refugees and returnees and not of their competence in a specific area of development. The interviewed NGOs are based in Bamako and stated they understood their role in the LiMo project and made every effort to perform in the most satisfactory way. They also stressed that training may at times have been too complex for illiterate persons to follow and that it would have been appropriate to be able to provide returnees with technical training as well as training in business management. One of the interviewees in fact, AMID, went beyond its role by providing technical training in the main and most common fields of activity in Mali, such as dressmaking and horticulture.

In **Niger**, IOM Niamey chose its local partners on the grounds of their expertise in the field of development. IOM stated that they gave notification to NGOs as to when returnees were due to arrive in their region of competence, which was confirmed by most NGOs interviewed. As well as for Mali, NGOs in Niger confirmed they were aware of the objective of the LiMo project and of their role within it. They, in fact, received specific training on the matter from IOM and stated that it was useful, exhaustive, easy to follow and implement. They, moreover, received training on business management by NIGETECH, a national organisation created under a European Commission project in 1995 with the collaboration of the government of Niger.

NIGETECH also provided NGOs with training material for classroom use with returnees. One of the NGOs interviewed, AFJ, said that they did not only provide returnees with training in business management, but also in some technical areas (such as dressmaking, mechanics, computers, cooking, horticulture, poultry farming and literacy).

NGOs provided returnees with training in business management approximately one month after their arrival in order to allow them to settle and obtain the necessary equipment and materials for the implementation of the project of their choice. Once their activities were established, it was easier for NGOs to capture their attention and to transmit concepts which were likely to be absorbed.

Training was provided directly on site so that returnees did not have to travel to visit the NGOs premises.

TECHNICAL TRAINING

In **Mali**, CIGEM provides various training courses in specific areas, tailored to the needs of the local national market. Being the offer concentrated on Bamako, however, it is not very likely that returnees who were not based in the capital benefitted of it, as reported by all Malian actors interviewed. This was mainly due to the fact that, as mentioned above, returnees wished to implement their projects as soon as possible and did not allocate time for training.

In **Niger**, the representative of the Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training interviewed stated that they had opened 8 centres for vocational training around the country. They are dedicated to providing vocational training and to acting on behalf of local NGOs in areas where these are not present by offering returnees training in business management.

IOM Niamey highlighted how, although vocational training is offered at national level, it is almost exclusively concentrated on the capital (the representative interviewed ignored the existence of the 8 centres) and returnees were not interested in attending any courses. This was reported as being due to the fact that the LiMo project did not motivate returnees in this sense, neither promoting the importance of receiving technical

training nor taking into account the fact that most returnees are illiterate. IOM added that, however, returnees almost always already mastered a profession and did not need further training.

CONCLUSIONS

The business management training provided by NGOs appears to have been useful and effective. It is *de facto* the only feasible option for local NGOs, as it adapts to every kind of project. The solutions adopted in Niger appeared to be particularly well conceived: in spite of the difficulties that might have been encountered by illiterate returnees, local NGOs seemed to be well able to guarantee that all trainees acquired the necessary and relevant expertise after attending their courses. The training such NGOs received themselves by NIGETECH – a well established organisation with a strong presence on and link with the territory, which also provided them with very clear, user-friendly training material that would adapt well even to illiterate persons – contributed to this result. The fact that Nigerien NGOs provided individual business management training one month after returnees' arrival, moreover, allowed returnees to predispose their activities without having to stop in Niamey in order to attend training. In this respect it must be stressed that such on-site activity stretched NGOs' resource to a threshold they cannot sustain in time.

Although it did emerge how receiving some technical training would certainly further benefit returnees, it would be impossible to create a network able to offer courses in all specific relevant areas, in consideration of the difficulties in the field of communications that often characterise interaction with returnees (see illiteracy) and of the scarcity of resources of local NGOs in terms of capacity and budget.

Technical training opportunities do exist in both countries, but did not play a significant role in the LiMo project. The fact that, in Mali, the offer is concentrated on the capital made it impossible for most returnees to avail of it, as it does not seem that they could have extended their stay in Niamey. The commitment shown by the government of

Niger by opening the vocational training centres around the country did not, unfortunately, bring any contribution to the LiMo project.

It cannot be excluded, however, that even if technical training opportunities had been more easily accessible to returnees they would have chosen not to avail of them, on the grounds of their expertise and of the pressure to implement their project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Further investigation should be conducted as to determine whether the service fee for local NGOs is adequate to cover the expenses they face when providing training on the field. For as long as the governments of CoOs are not capable of shouldering independently all matters related to the management of the network, and if budget allows for it, local NGOs should be better supported in their strive to acquire competences and to transmit them to returnees, by both adjusting the service fee and providing expertise in the shape of technical assistance. Perhaps low-cost North-South and/or South-South exchanges of experts could be considered with actors able to bring a relevant contribution in this sense. The choice of NGOs active in the field of development (as made in Niger) is probably advisable over that of NGOs with experience with refugees and returnees (as made in Mali)⁹⁷.

As for business management, a cross-cutting topic whose knowledge all migrants need to acquire, perhaps it could be considered to organise training sessions in CoTs, between admission to the AVR scheme and departure. Since an average of 2 weeks elapse between those steps, there would be a considerable period of time during which migrants are likely to be freer than after returning to their CoOs and they would probably also be more receptive. In consideration of the great variety of languages spoken by migrants, training should be organised in collaboration with migrant communities (whose representatives would already be involved as actors of the Referral System) by setting up a low-cost system of peer education whereby know-how would be transferred first to selected community representatives and then, through them, to migrants. The effect of this would be twofold: on the one hand, pressure would be lifted off local NGOs in CoOs which struggle to fulfil their tasks in consideration of the

⁹⁷ - In this respect see recommendations in paragraph NETWORK for an alternative solution.

vastness of the territory of their competence and of the limited service fee foreseen by this kind of projects; on the other hand, migrants could fully benefit of input received at a time when they are supposed to be planning their micro-business project and are not instead concerned with implementing it, without having to dedicate time to it once back in their country.

MONITORING and FOLLOW-UP

Data were gathered from:

- a. Interviews with:
 - IOM Bamako
 - IOM Niamey
 - Malian NGOs AMID, IMADEL and Layidu Wari
 - Nigerien NGO AFJ
 - Returnees in Niger
- b. Terms of Reference agreed between IOM Bamako/Niamey and local NGOs
- c. Follow-up reports submitted at the end of March and at the beginning of May 2010 by ADECOR and in April 2010 by AGADO, Nigerien NGOs

Monitoring and follow-up on returnees' projects were delegated by IOM to local NGOs, although IOM Niamey stated that they relied on NGOs only to integrate their own activities and preferred, whenever possible, to be directly involved. Monitoring and follow-up consisted of: regular visits to returnees in their working/familiar context for the first 6 months of arrival, counselling activities in the field of vocational training, regular reports submitted to IOM. IOM Bamako and IOM Niamey reported that the accuracy of the reports and the effectiveness of other activities depended much upon the capacity of individual NGOs.

IOM Niamey performed the first monitoring check-up one month of arrival of returnees by either visiting them or contacting them by telephone.

ADECOR, Niger mentioned in its second follow-up report that as of May 2010 they had performed one visit to each returnee in their area of competence in order to verify whether their activity had started, and to provide them with training in business management and generic advice and suggestions.

All NGOs interviewed complained about the €50 fee they received for each returnee whose project they followed, stating that it was not sufficient to cover their expenses, considering the logistic difficulties they encountered in reaching returnees scattered in their region of competence.

In particular:

- AFJ, Niger stressed the fact that the fee was not sufficient even to cover their expenses for providing training.
- ADECOR, Niger complained about delays in the disbursement procedure and the lack of appropriate logistic resources to provide a good follow-up on returnees' activities. They suggested that they be provided with a motorcycle so that their representatives can easily reach remote locations. In addition, they prompted IOM to handle suppliers' invoices abiding to the agreed timeframe.

Malian NGOs highlighted how they felt the time allocated to follow-up activities was too limited – AMID and IMADEL suggested a minimum of 6 months. A 6-month follow-up period had indeed been established by the project but, owing to logistic issues related to the appointment of the International Reintegration Officer, the start had been delayed by 2-3 months and the duration therefore reduced.

CONCLUSIONS

Although it appeared that monitoring and follow-up were performed scrupulously, a €50 fee per returnee did not seem to be sufficient to cover the expenses local NGOs faced over a 6-month period in order to fulfil their tasks.

Due to the delay in starting the follow-up activities in Mali, these could not have the same effect as foreseen by the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is advisable that IOM conduct a direct and thorough assessment as to whether the €50 service fee allocated to local NGOs is actually sufficient to cover all related expenses. As mentioned in relation to their training activities, as long as the network is not managed by the governments of CoOs, future interventions should be planned giving careful consideration to whether the budget could include more substantial support for the activities performed by NGOs. In alternative, or as complement, IOM (whenever they are present in the country) could be directly involved in monitoring and follow-up on returnees' project, in line with the Nigerien model.

Some thought should also be given to ensuring that payments of suppliers in CoOs are handled punctually.

NETWORK of state and non-state actors

Data were gathered from interviews with IOM Bamako and Niamey and the following NGOs:

- AMID and IMADEL, Mali
- ADECOR, AGADO, AGROPAST and le DEFI, Niger

MALI

A Working Group on reintegration was created in Mali by IOM in collaboration with the Ministry for Malians Abroad (DMMA) prior to and independently of the LiMo project. It originally gathered the main actors in the areas of assistance to returnees and reintegration, such as IOM Bamako, the Red Cross of Mali, the Civil Protection, DMMA, CIGEM and ANPE. It was then enlarged to include several NGOs and associations working in the field of migrants' reintegration.

In the framework of the LiMo project, assistance to returnees included activities of monitoring and follow-up of their projects and for this purpose more local associations were selected in order to guarantee capillary coverage on the field. This was necessary as the Working Group did not include enough local actors to ensure a presence in all regions and, moreover, not all members accepted to comply with the Terms of Reference proposed by IOM. For these reasons, in addition to the state and non-state actors belonging to the Working Group, NGOs spread across the country were individuated so as to cover all national territory. These NGOs were selected according to the following criteria:

- participation to the Working Group
- previous collaboration with IOM Bamako
- current partnership with CIGEM
- mention by a member of the LiMo project Steering Committee⁹⁸
- being based in important locations with regard to the areas where most people return

The selected associations are: AMLIC (Tombouctou region), AAMR (Kidal region), TIWAIT, (Gao region), ARTD (Mopti and Ségou regions), CIA (Sikasso region), AMID (Bamako district), AMARREX (Kita area), AMRK (Kayes region) and IMADEL (Koulikoro region).

Interviews with representatives of IMADEL highlighted that these associations were not in constant contact with each other within the framework of the LiMo project. IOM Bamako clearly explained that this is due to the vastness of Mali and the difficulties faced by those wishing to move from a region to another. Some NGOs and associations do not have regular access to e-mail, and thus even a virtual network could not be established. Organising regular meetings in Bamako is furthermore not feasible owing to the expenses involved, which the associations could not face and IOM Bamako would have to take charge of. The NGOs were not in contact with national institutions providing vocational training either, as the latter are mainly based in Bamako, but were aware of the services on offer and informed returnees accordingly.

⁹⁸ - Steering Committees were created in Mali and Niger as periodic meetings with all relevant stakeholders. They were aimed at assessing the progress made, identify possible shortcomings and formulate strategies to adapt the project so as to counteract them.

NIGER

Like in Mali, in Niger a network of NGOs was created ad hoc for the LiMo project. IOM Niamey conducted a “*mission d’identification*” in order to individuate potential suitable candidates. A Working Group was then created to analyse each NGO’s history and to assess its competence in the required field. A shortlist was produced and interviews were finally held to select the most suitable actors on the grounds of their capacity. It is IOM Niamey’s opinion that this network will not survive the LiMo project, mainly because NGOs avail of very little resources of their own. However, another pre-existing network operates on national level in approximately the same field, with special focus on young people’s initiatives. This involves NGOs and CSOs and IOM believes that it has good potential and will surely develop positively.

CONCLUSIONS

It cannot be said that the network created by the LiMo project in order to facilitate the reintegration of those returning to **Mali** worked properly. This is because of logistic difficulties due to problems which are intrinsic to the country and cannot easily be overcome. Communication, both physical and virtual, among NGOs on the field is almost non-existing and also communication with more institutional actors is not easy, although IOM Bamako made every effort to act as *trait d’union*.

It must be pointed out, however, that coordination with regard to assisting returnees does exist in Mali to a certain extent, even though outside the framework of the LiMo project. The Working Group may not include all the associations on the field, but it gathers a significant number of both state and non-state actors, among which communication is effective. The independence from the LiMo project is further proof of the fact that the Working Group will survive it, and it can therefore be expected that the capacity-building process aimed at handing over the management of activities of assistance to reintegration will have a positive outcome.

Like in Mali, in **Niger** the network of NGOs created by the project will probably not survive it, but another independent network exists in the country and, although this is

not devoted to provide assistance to returnees, it operates in the field of training and job opportunities, and it will therefore constitute an important resource for Niger.

The creation of a network in CoOs that involves state and non-state actors is something that cannot result solely from a project implemented by an external instance. Despite the efforts to lay the ground for long-term connections between those actors, it is clear that without radical structural reforms at country level such connections are not sustainable. Naturally, these reforms imply ownership by national governments and external intervention can only build on them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As for Mali and Niger under LiMo, future AVRR projects should always concentrate on working with existing networks in order to support their growth by encouraging the exchange of information and through capacity-building activities and the provision of technical assistance in terms of know-how and expertise. This should guarantee local ownership of the actions undertaken and, as a possible consequence, better sustainability. In countries where no network exists, on the other hand, the process would certainly be more problematic, but reliance should always be made on national authorities and initiatives (such as CIGEM in Mali and the centres for vocational training opened by the Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training of Niger). Wherever the scenario did not present even the participation of the government, as mentioned in the recommendations in the paragraph IMPACT, AVRR projects should be planned and implemented in close collaboration with relevant international agencies that are well-established on the territory.

It must be said that, however, as a general rule it would probably be best to adopt whenever possible a bottom-up approach that would empower civil society and sustain grassroots instances instead of focussing (and depending) on national authorities, although this would require an enormous deployment of human, financial and time resources.

IMPACT

Data were gathered from:

- a Interviews with:
 - Nigerien NGO AFJ
 - Returnees in Mali and Niger
 - NIGETECH
- b. Synthesis of reports of Malian NGOs' submitted by the International Reintegration Officer
- c. AGADO second follow-up report (May 2010)

MALI

Of the 6 returnees interviewed in Mali, 4 expressed their satisfaction for the activity implemented and did not show any intention of re-departure. They are 2 women who opened sawing studios and 2 young men who started respectively a food stall and a minimarket shop. Another couple had not yet succeeded in starting their business at the time of the interview (May 2010), but they did not express any intention to leave Mali.

The reports submitted by NGOs responsible for conducting follow-up on returnees' projects indicate how 82% of returnees expressed their satisfaction with regard to the reintegration assistance received – so much so that 95% stated they felt they were fully reintegrated and 99% declared they did not intend to leave Mali again. On the other hand, only 69% said that their activity was fully operational, while 60,5% said it progressed well and 68% thought it adequately provided for their needs. According to the reports returnees were also satisfied with the type of activity they had chosen, even though those living in an urban context had to face greater difficulties, owing especially to higher living expenses and stronger competition on the market. While the LiMo project established a minimum of 6 months before conducting an analysis of the situation, these data refer to persons who had returned between 1 year and 3 months when they were gathered. It must be noted that these reports considered 81 returnees

(arrived between 26th June 2009 and 23rd February 2010) of a total 352 persons assisted in their reintegration process under LiMo.

NIGER

Statistics available in September 2010 showed that, out of 345 persons returned to Niger under the LiMo project, 335 were fully reintegrated. Of the remnant 10 cases, 4 were in process and 6 had been cancelled due to reasons undisclosed to the evaluation team.

IOM Niamey received feedback on the success of the projects through NGOs and directly from returnees. This was generally positive, but a few difficulties emerged, primarily due to incompatibility between local context and returnees' expertise and to the pressure exerted by the families.

Of the 12 returnees interviewed during the field mission, 9 had started a small shop, while 2 had a tailor shop and 1 made storage boxes out of recycled materials. 3 expressed satisfaction with regard to their activity, 1 was moderately satisfied, 1 said it would work better if he did not have to provide for a very large family, 1 stated he had to invest his own savings. In 8 cases returnees reported that their families were very satisfied with both the fact that the person had returned and the activity they had started. According to AGADO's May 2010 follow-up report, 2 of the 6 micro-business activities they followed were performing positively. As for the remaining 4, no indication, either positive or negative, was provided.

With reference to the projects' sustainability, AFJ highlighted that, despite all the obstacles they may encounter, returnees will make every effort as to make their business successful in order to maintain their status within their community or acquire a better one. AFJ added that the LiMo project would have had a positive impact on the lives of returnees in any case, as it provided them with training in business management.

CONCLUSIONS

On account of the short time elapsed from the start of the LiMo project, it would be premature to evaluate its impact on returnees' living conditions, as it would be necessary that the activities undertaken develop for at least one year before assessment. This may surely be the case for many returnees interviewed in Mali and Niger and whose opinions are recorded in the above mentioned NGOs' reports, but definitely not for all of them, as voluntary returns started in May 2009 in both Mali and Niger and were ongoing at the time of the field missions.

The positive feedback given by returnees in Mali can be considered an implicit confirmation of their improved economic situation, although there are no other data on which to base such statement. For some aspects it can be reasonably expected that a sample of 81 persons is representative of all returnees (i.e. the 95% feeling positively as to their reintegration and the 99% expressing their intention not to leave Mali again), but many other data were defined by IOM Bamako as too "extreme" to be fully realistic. Considering the influence of extended families on the activities of returnees in Niger, it can reasonably be expected that these will play a role in facilitating the success of these activities.

As for the sustainability of each project, it will have to be assessed by local actors at least one year after the start of the projects, as confirmed by a representative of NIGETECH. He, in fact, stated that at the time of the field mission no official statistics on sustainability or impact of returnees' projects were available. For this reason it was impossible to assess the validity of NIGETECH's contribution to the success of such projects.

Nevertheless, although returnees' living conditions surely benefit from interventions such as LiMo, it is difficult to imagine that those interventions would have a long-term positive impact. In consideration of the nature of the push factors that contributed to prompting migrants to leave their country, it is unlikely that the reintegration assistance provided under AVRR schemes would be enough in itself to create a platform for a significant and sustainable long-term improvement of their situation. This is obviously due to the fact that significant changes to the context in terms of infrastructure, access to

credit schemes, civil participation and, at times, public security are needed in order to produce important and long-term effects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the grounds of the research conducted, no recommendation could be made as to how to design future interventions which would have a better impact on returnees' living conditions than LiMo. The possibility could perhaps, however, be considered of involving development agencies in the co-planning of projects, so that IOM would manage activities in CoTs/CoDs and coordinate the whole return procedure while the partner would be responsible for following the reintegration phase in the framework of its long-term presence in CoOs.

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ANNEX A

EVALUATION TERMS of REFERENCE

This evaluation is a cooperation between the IOM offices in Libya, Morocco, Mali and Niger and the ISPI student team. On the basis of these Terms of Reference provided by IOM, the ISPI team will conduct the evaluation of the LIMO project and formulate some recommendations. The following objectives for this evaluation were accorded with IOM:

1. Pre-departure (Morocco and Libya): to analyze the relevance and effectiveness of every single step of the AVRR mechanism:
 - Referral system: does the referral system allow to reach all potential beneficiaries? Is the referral system the most objective system? Was the information campaign effective?
 - Candidate screening: are the questions relevant and do they allow a selection of the most vulnerable candidates? Is the reintegration assistance process in the country of origin well explained?
 - Medical clearance: should the medical fit for travel be improved?
 - Logistics: is the operational procedure (interview-flight purchase-departure) quick and efficient? Is the quality of the airport assistance sufficient?
 - Sensitization: are the HIV-AIDS prevention activities important for the migrants? Do they understand the message?

2. Post-Departure (Mali and Niger): to analyze the quality and impact of the reintegration process in the countries of origin:
 - Arrival assistance: does the airport assistance facilitate the arrival?
 - Communication: did the migrant understand the information given pre-departure?
 - Reception at IOM office: is the returning migrant quickly and well received by the IOM office?
 - Reintegration plan: does the IOM staff provide guidance on the chosen reintegration activity of the returning migrant?
 - Disbursement procedures: are the procedures efficient and adapted to the local context (bearing in mind the accountancy requirements)? Does the IOM office respect the procedural guidelines given by Morocco and Libya?
 - Impact: Does the reintegration assistance facilitate the reinsertion of the returnee? Does it have an impact on his/her living conditions? Is it sustainable? Is there a risk for re-departure?
 - Network of NGOs: Does the local network of NGOs facilitate the reintegration of the returnee? Does the training have an impact on the success of the migrant's micro-project?

Deliverables

The expected outcome of this external evaluation will be a final report addressing the specific objectives with a set of recommendations at the end. A draft report will be submitted to IOM Tripoli for comments 3 weeks before the final deadline of 31st July. Preliminary results should be presented to IOM Tripoli 2 weeks after the respective field visits by the students.

Methodology

Seven students have been selected in coordination with IOM Tripoli. The students are required to have a good knowledge French (oral) and English (written). They should be flexible and adapt themselves easily in a different cultural setting.

IOM Tripoli and Rabat will share the background documents with the selected students as a preparation to their field missions. The students should send their work plan to IOM Tripoli for approval before the start of the mission. It should include a general framework of questioning, data handling methods and objectives which will be maintained during the field visits. To be taken in consideration are for example who to interview (reintegrated migrants, IOM personnel, medical staff, volunteers) but also the monitoring mechanism for the reintegrated migrants.

The student team consists of seven ISPI students of which one will be traveling to the IOM office in Morocco, one to the IOM office in Mali, and one to Niger for 3 days per country. Upon their return they will be working together with the remaining four ISPI students to process the acquired data and additional information on the LIMO project with as end goal to produce a final report on the conducted evaluation.

Student Evaluation Team



The selected student evaluation team has agreed on a plan of action for their evaluation (see attachment). They have created a work plan based on 6 key activities of the IOM AVRR program, namely:

1. Raising awareness to the options of the program for 100 000 stranded migrants
2. The reinforced AVR support mechanisms in Libya and Morocco
3. 2 000 returned and reintegrated migrants
4. Capacity building in Mali and Niger
5. Capacity building in Libya and Morocco
6. Networking activities between all involved countries

ANNEX B

LiMo INFORMATION LEAFLET (Morocco)

PAIN CHRUD

Berrada and P. - Ouedrao


Etape 4

Au pays d'origine

Assistance de l'OIM du pays d'origine pour mettre en oeuvre votre activité de réinsertion telle que : commerce, assistance médicale ou scolarisation.

Objectifs du LiMo

Le projet LiMo s'adresse à 1000 migrants irréguliers du Maroc souhaitant retourner volontairement dans leur pays d'origine et bénéficier d'une aide à la réinsertion. Ce projet contribue par une réponse humaine à la gestion des flux migratoires irréguliers.




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Avenue Mohammed V
Marrakech

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LIMO objectives

The LiMo project aims to assist 1000 irregular migrants in Morocco wishing to return voluntarily to their country of origin and to receive reintegration assistance. This project contributes with a humane response to the management of irregular migration.



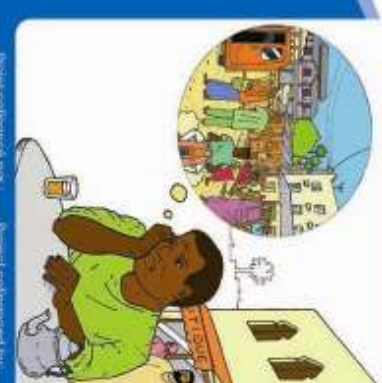
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Retour Volontaire Assisté
et Appui à la Réintégration
Assisted Voluntary Return
and Reintegration

IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones


LIMO




Projet cofinancé par / Project cofinanced by:



Union Européenne

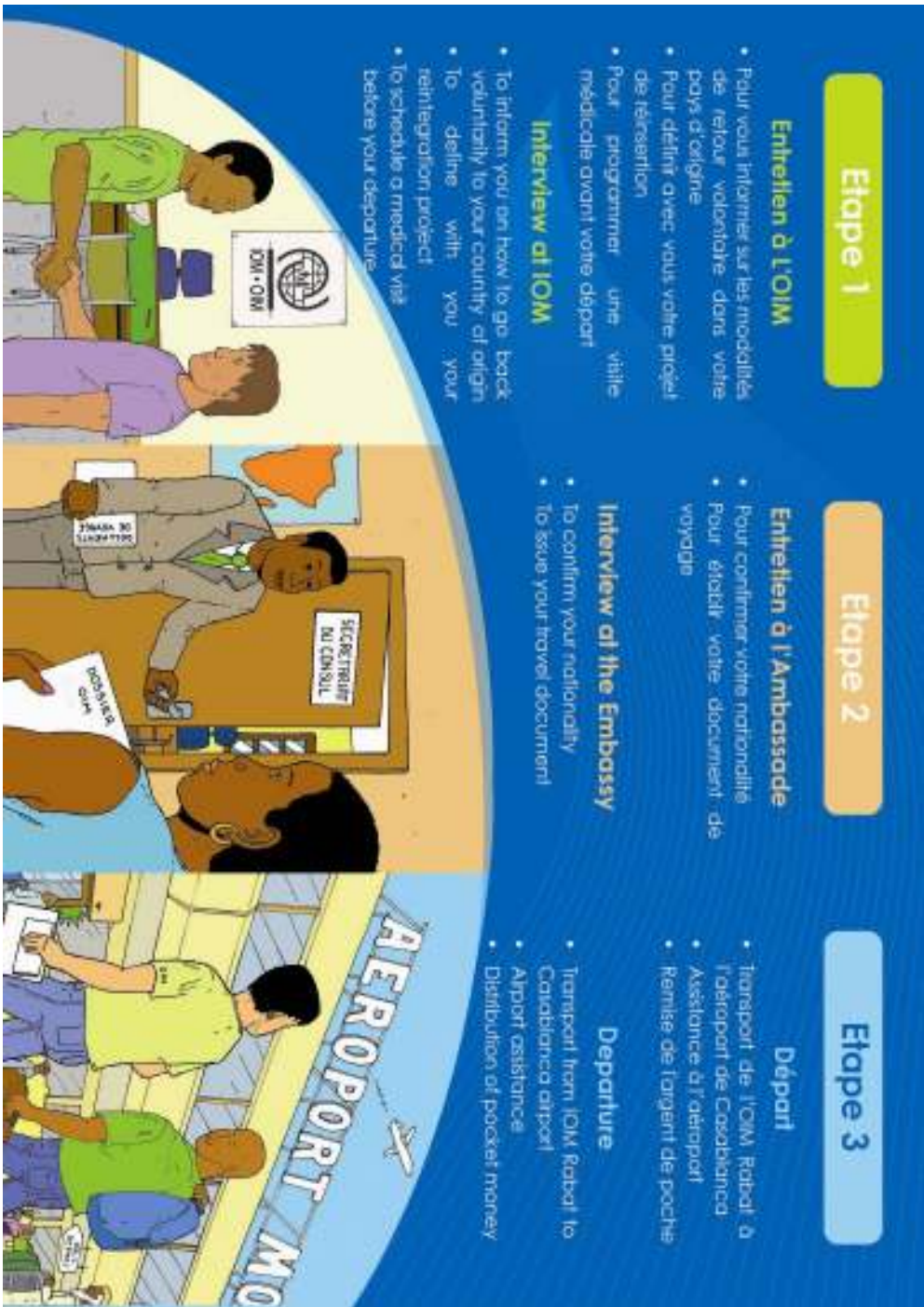


Gouvernement Marrakech
Marrakech - Marrakech
Marrakech - Marrakech



Confédération suisse

La présente publication a été élaborée avec l'aide de l'Union européenne. Les contenus de la publication restent de la seule responsabilité de l'OIM et ne peuvent en aucun cas être considérés comme reflétant le point de vue de l'Union européenne.



ANNEX C

IOM QUESTIONNAIRE (Morocco)



D1

IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

Formulaire d'entretien destiné aux migrants irréguliers de transit au Maroc qui souhaitent bénéficier d'une assistance au retour volontaire dans leur pays d'origine

Informations préliminaires à transmettre aux demandeurs :

- 1) L'entretien ne constitue pas une promesse que le retour va être effectivement assisté par l'OIM.
- 2) Si une personne ne souhaite plus rentrer dans son pays d'origine, elle est libre de le signaler à tout moment.
- 3) Les informations nécessaires pour faciliter le retour seront transmises aux autorités concernées (Ambassade, Min. Int. et MAE marocains).

Date de l'entretien : _____
MA/10/_____

N° dossier :

Pays d'origine : _____

Observations : ____

1. Comment avez-vous eu connaissance des services d'assistance au retour de l'OIM ?

2. Renseignements personnels	
Nom	
Prénom	
Sexe	
Nationalité	
Situation familiale	

Date de naissance	
Lieu de naissance	
Nom du père	
Nom de la mère	
Adresse, téléphone, email actuels au Maroc	
Dépendants accompagnant le demandeur (nom, prénom, DoB, lien de parenté, etc.)	

3. Conditions du retour		
Pourquoi souhaitez-vous rentrer au pays?		
Dans quel ville/village de votre pays souhaitez-vous rentrer ?		
Y a-t-il des membres de votre famille qui vont vous accueillir à votre retour ? Nom, Adresse, Contacts...		
Relation avec le HCR (Haut Commissariat aux Réfugiés)	Pas de réponse	
	Demandeur d'asile – demande en cours	
	Débouté – demande refusée	
	Réfugié	

4. Conditions d'arrivée au Maroc	
Date d'entrée au Maroc	
Frontière d'entrée au Maroc	
Pays traversés avant d'entrer au Maroc	
Moyens de transport utilisés	
Aide d'un passeur ? (combien ?, où ?)*	
Entrée régulière ou irrégulière au Maroc	
Financement du voyage	
Pourquoi êtes vous venu au Maroc ? (pays de destination, pays de transit)	
Avez-vous tenté de rejoindre l'Europe depuis le Maroc ou un autre pays ? (où ? combien de fois ?)	
Avez-vous été reconduit à la frontière ?	
Comment avez-vous eu l'idée de venir au Maroc ? (amis, famille, conseils de personnes, médias)	
Avez-vous une pièce d'identité/passeport ? (photocopier) sinon pourquoi ? (volées, confisquées par quelqu'un ?)	

* question à poser selon la tournure de l'entretien et la disposition de la personne à parler

5. Conditions de vie au Maroc et bilan médico-social	
Sources de revenus au Maroc (travail, assistance d'associations/compatriotes, aide de la famille)	
Si la personne travaille, ce travail est il volontaire, peut elle garder son salaire ou une partie est elle prélevée ?	
Etat de dénuement/vulnérabilité manifeste (forte précarité, personne à haute vulnérabilité : femme seule, mineur non accompagné...)	
Problèmes de santé graves à signaler (maladie graves, traitements en	

cours, suivi...)*	
Assistance d'associations /ONG au Maroc	

* noter les seules informations utiles au retour qui seraient indiquées par la personne (ne pas poser la question si la personne n'en parle pas)

6. Profil socio-économique	
Niveau d'études dans le pays d'origine	
Emploi(s) exercé(s) dans le pays d'origine	
Profession des parents	
Etudes / formations suivies au Maroc	
Emploi(s) exercé(s) au Maroc	
Quel projet / activité / formation pensez vous mener après votre retour au pays ? Qu'allez-vous faire ?	

Signature du demandeur

Signature du responsable OIM

Le départ peut prendre plusieurs mois et reste sous réserve de fonds disponibles.
Les femmes, enfants, personnes malades et personnes âgées sont prioritaires.

ANNEX D PICTURES

RETURNEES' PROJECTS

as observed during field missions to Mali and Niger



Bamako (Mali), small kiosk



Bamako (Mali), sewing studios



Niamey (Niger), returnees attending training



Niamey (Niger), sawing studios





Niamey (Niger), a garage



Niger (Niamey), an agricultural project



Niamey (Niger), food stall



Niamey (Niger), boxes made from recycled materials