



## Reintegration Assistance

### Good, Promising and Innovative Practices

#### Practice #12

## Entrepreneurship and Leadership Workshops in Côte d'Ivoire

Implementing entity: International Organization for Migrations (IOM)

Project title: EU – IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration

Donor: European Union

### Summary

In the framework of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, IOM in Côte d'Ivoire has responded to the challenges encountered by different groups of returnees by organizing tailor made workshops. Thanks to an experience-sharing approach, these workshops aimed to foster self-confidence and entrepreneurship skills, and to facilitate the creation of social networks and relations of mutual trust and support.

**Entrepreneurship workshops** aimed to give returnees (both women and men) the opportunity to enhance their knowledge on how to successfully establish and manage a business, as well as the space to meet other returnees living in the same area, discuss their personal and professional experience and share contacts.

**Workshops on women's leadership and empowerment** only gather female returnees and are aimed to cover the concepts of leadership and self-confidence, as well as of life competencies, empowerment and women's rights.

Each workshop envisages the participation of about 15 returnees and it is organized on a monthly basis in different neighborhoods of Abidjan. Between January 2020 and April 2022, 78 returnees took part in six workshops.

These workshops have proved to be crucial not only to expand returnees' business networks, but also to inspire and motivate those returnees who have not yet started their business, especially by hearing and learning from the experiences of those who undertook this process before them. The workshops also provided returnees with useful accounting and marketing tools to manage their businesses, and served as a boost to women's self-confidence.



## Operational details

### Description of the activity

The workshops organized by IOM in Côte d'Ivoire on entrepreneurship and women's leadership and empowerment are held once a month in a different neighbourhood of Abidjan. Between January 2020 and April 2022, two workshops on women's leadership and empowerment and four on entrepreneurship have been organised, gathering 78 returnees.

The entrepreneurship workshops cover the following topics: basic notions of a business (e.g. project idea, business plan, income generating activity (IGA)), examples of different types of income generating activities in different sectors (e.g. food, textile, agriculture), the process of establishing an IGA (e.g. project idea, market and feasibility study), IGA management (e.g. budget investment and product marketing). Some of these notions are already presented by IOM staff during the individual counselling sessions with the returnees upon arrival to help them define their business plan. However, during the workshops, these topics are analysed more in depth.

In addition to these modules, the women's leadership and empowerment workshops also include the following themes: definition of leadership, life competencies, self-confidence, women's empowerment and rights. These presentations are developed and led by IOM staff (reintegration and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) staff) and are complemented with individual exercises and group work to make the sessions more interactive.

The pool of returnees participating in these workshops changes every time depending on the neighbourhood where it is organised. Neighbourhoods with the highest number of returnees are prioritized, but the selection is made on a roving basis, to ensure that in time most of the capital's areas are covered and all returnees can benefit from the activity. Once the neighbourhood is selected, each reintegration assistant provides the name of two returnees they assist who live in the area and who are available and interested in participating. The final list includes around 15–20 returnees. It is always advisable to include a higher number of participants as it is likely that some will drop out last minute.

Returnees who are asked to present their stories are selected based on the monitoring missions (organised every week), where IOM staff has the chance to identify those returnees whose business activity works well and who can be a successful and positive example for others. Usually, three successful stories are presented in each workshop. There is no fixed format for their presentation – it is more an informal discussion where they orally share their story, highlighting the challenges that they have faced, how they have overcome them and how their business has evolved. Sometimes they bring pictures or show videos of their activity to the rest of the participants.

Returnees are only invited once to these workshops as the idea is to reach the highest number of migrants who live in different areas, and to create a platform where they can establish personal and business relationships. Participants are invited to share their contacts so that they can keep in touch, give each other advice and mutual support, even after the end of the workshop.



Intervention of a beneficiary sharing her management strategies that enabled her and her spouse to open two mobile money transfer points within six months of activity.

© IOM Côte d'Ivoire



Apart from transport fees and the lunch, no additional incentive is given, not even to those who have already developed their business and share their story - they are personally motivated to share their experience and be an example for other returnees. The other participants see these workshops as an opportunity to acquire more technical knowledge on the management of a business, to learn from the experience of others and to have the contacts of other migrants who could eventually help them in the future for some advice or business reasons.

Key steps to implement the activity:

- ◇ Identify the neighbourhood where the workshop will take place
- ◇ Gather the contacts of around 30 returnees living in the same neighbourhood where the activity will take place
- ◇ Check their availability and interest to participate to the workshop
- ◇ Check the availability of two to three 'guest speakers' who will be sharing their successful stories
- ◇ Finalise a list of around 15 participants
- ◇ Finalise all the administrative work (room rental, catering, among others)
- ◇ Prepare a short power-point presentation on the successful management of a business and on women leadership and entrepreneurship (this is done at the beginning and the same material is used for the different workshops).
- ◇ Select the type of group activities that will be carried out and ensure that you have all the necessary material (pens, flipcharts, colours, post-it, etc.)

### Approach and rationale

After noting during the monitoring missions that some beneficiaries' activities were more successful than others, IOM staff thought it was important to create a network between returnees who have already established their IGA and those who are about to start it. Sharing contacts, but also some tips and tools for a successful business can allow some returnees to adjust or establish a more sustainable activity.

Moreover, some monitoring missions and MHPSS-related activities have highlighted that local culture and previously lived

distressing events can heavily affect the personal and professional life of some women returnees. Some IOM staff emphasized, therefore, the importance to create a place where women can freely share their previous and daily experience in a confidential and protected environment, while being reminded that they are the protagonist of their own life.

### Partnerships and synergies

Most of these workshops have been organized in collaboration with IOM's main governmental partner (the Directorate General of Diaspora), who has ensured the presence of one of their focal points. The Directorate representative can provide feedback to the participants' concerns on the financial and training opportunities offered by the government as well as advice on how to better manage their activities.

Moreover, this activity is a way to enhance partnerships and synergies among beneficiaries.

### Useful contacts and references

IOM Abidjan Reintegration team:

[IOMAbidjanReintegration@iom.int](mailto:IOMAbidjanReintegration@iom.int):



Group work among migrant women on their migratory journey.  
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## Evidence base

### Outcome and evidence

In addition to the post-workshop evaluation that is always taken at the end of each workshop, the outcome of this type of activity is verified during the phone and physical monitoring missions where IOM staff check the beneficiaries' activities and whether any of the tips given has been implemented. Based on these missions, an improvement in the economic and psychosocial dimensions of reintegration has been observed:

- ◇ **Improved quality of their income-generating activity:** some have reported starting to use an account book allowing them to better monitor their expenses and profits, having opened a microcredit account to regularly save a part of their monthly income, or having changed their marketing strategy by using online platforms, which increased the number of sales.
- ◇ **Stronger social networks:** some participants have remained in contact after the workshops as their business activities were complementary (e.g. grocery shops and restaurants) and those who had shared their success stories have often been consulted by other participants for further advice on how to improve their activity.
- ◇ **Increased women's self-confidence:** different women have reported being more involved in the management of the IGA, especially in those cases where the IGA was a family business.

*"This training has been very useful because it will enable me to better manage my business and my income."*

*"I really appreciated the techniques used to successfully develop a business. Thanks to this, I will be able to put these techniques into practice in the future to develop my business."*

#### – Quotes from the workshops on entrepreneurship

*"The training allowed me to learn more about leadership and women's empowerment, it is a very productive and emotional training."*

*"I take home that women must take charge of themselves at all levels, they must trust themselves and also know their different rights."*

#### – Quotes from the workshops on leadership and empowerment



Returning migrant shares the experience of her migration journey, the difficulties encountered in the destination country and upon return to Côte d'Ivoire. © IOM Côte d'Ivoire



Presentation by the Reintegration Assistant on good practices for the effective management of an income-generating activity. © IOM Côte d'Ivoire



## Recommendations

- Try to make the sessions as interactive as possible and invite some returnees who can share their success stories.
- Ensure to cover the transport fees and lunch of participants to facilitate their attendance to the activity.
- Ensure there is at least one female staff to facilitate the workshops on women's leadership and empowerment, ideally with a MHPSS related background.
- For the half day workshops, try to prioritize morning sessions and for the whole day workshops, ensure that it ends before dark to allow participants to return to their home within security hours.
- If resources allow (staff and adequate space), provide parallel activities for children while their mothers attend the workshop or support other childcare arrangements.
- Ensure that the agenda and objective of the activity is clearly explained to the participants and that those who are presenting their successful stories know the key points they should cover and share with the rest of participants.

## Conditions for replicability

- Motivation of returnees to participate in this kind of activity.
- Selection of "successful" returnees who are comfortable in speaking in public.
- Density of returnees in the areas where the workshops are organised. Neighbourhoods where there is a high level of returnees should be preferred in order to have more chances to have at least 10–15 beneficiaries interested and available (sometimes it is difficult to find people who have an active business who are willing to dedicate half or a full day to participate in the workshop as it requires some organisation and someone who can support their business in their absence).

## EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub

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