FINAL EVALUATION OF THE EU-IOM KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT HUB (KMH)

This evaluation brief presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluator for use by key stakeholders, including internally by IOM staff and externally by project partners. More details can be found in the full evaluation report.

Evaluation type: Independent final evaluation

Evaluator: Anna Lucia Colleo

Field visit dates: July - October 2022

Final report date: 15 November 2022

Commissioned by: IOM Return and Reintegration Unit

Managed by: Aleksandra Izydorczyk, Project Manager

Evaluation purpose: To assess the extent to which the KMH has been able to contribute to the harmonization of dignified voluntary return and sustainable reintegration approaches across EU-IOM Actions, and to foster a virtual community of practice. The evaluation report includes conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations, and its findings were expected to feed into the KMH sustainability strategy.

Evaluation criteria: The evaluation criteria include standard OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, i.e. relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact orientation and sustainability, as well as the following additional criteria: quality of design, monitoring and reporting system; communication and visibility; cross-cutting issues (gender equality and human rights, inclusiveness, environmental and climate-change impacts).

Evaluation methodology: Mixed approach, with documentary review and interviews with key informants.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The EU-IOM KMH is the only support and resource hub on return and reintegration that is available to support practitioners and policymakers worldwide.

KMH is part of the larger Pilot Action on Voluntary Return and Sustainable, Community-Based Reintegration. By design, it is intended to transcend the Pilot Action and play a more global role in support to return and reintegration endeavors implemented by IOM and other actors. Within IOM, it offers direct support to IOM field offices implementing six selected EU-IOM actions, which include the EU-IOM Joint Initiative (JI) for the Protection and Reintegration of Migrants in Africa funded by the EU Trust Fund and actions in Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

For KMH, a critical shift was marked by the first amendment of the grant agreement between IOM and

Project information:

Geographical coverage: Global

Project type: Return and Reintegration

Project code: C-364220

Gender marker: OECD-DAC: 1 - Significant objective

Project period: 1 March 2017 to 31 December 2022

Donor: European Union

Budget: EUR 15,000,000

the EU in 2020, which acknowledged that KMH presented a substantial opportunity to support a progressive standardization of approaches and a generative learning process on return and reintegration for IOM, the EU and

other concerned players; an agreement was reached to refocus the Pilot Action on KMH, while phasing-out the other activities. The latest revision of the agreement in 2021 has extended the KMH implementation period until December 2022.

As part of the Pilot Action, KMH contributes to its Overall Objective to support the development of return and sustainable, community-based reintegration approaches. It specifically aims for (i) a stronger harmonization of models of intervention, (ii) strengthened capacities of key stakeholders, (iii) more in-depth and evidence-based knowledge on reintegration dynamics and outcomes.

Direct beneficiaries include IOM field offices implementing return and reintegration programs and other relevant governmental and non-governmental actors at the regional, national and local level.

Final beneficiaries include the larger community of practitioners, scholars and policymakers who can access the tools developed by KMH and other references made available through the KMH Return and Reintegration Platform, as well as the assisted returnees and communities.

KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

Relevance: The design of KMH is based on a solid reading of the state of the art on return and reintegration and remains a relevant response to the needs of beneficiaries, within and outside IOM. The choice to target stakeholders in partner countries is especially critical to pave the way towards more sustainable benefits.

Quality of design, monitoring and reporting: Maintaining oversight of the outcomes of reintegration assistance is important and while there is room for improving the quality of the log-frame associated to KMH, KMH is concretely contributing to improving monitoring functions in IOM return and reintegration programs.

Coherence: A positive and generative collaboration is noted between KMH and IOM field offices implementing return and reintegration actions. New partnerships are established with other international organizations, civil society, and academia. Complementarities and synergies with other support available to the EU and EU

Member States in this domain can be further explored.

Efficiency: As a global support hub, KMH is correctly positioned at IOM Headquarters; IOM expertise and office infrastructure are key assets to correctly implement KMH. The implementation mechanisms and the resources available are adequate to pursuing the planned results. The expectation is that all activities are implemented, and all funds used, before Dec/2022.

Effectiveness: The current pace of delivery and quality of outputs is positive for all four KMH components and in many instances, outputs are translating into meaningful outcomes. The KMH is concretely supporting a more articulated understanding of reintegration amongst its beneficiaries and contributing to establish more solid capacities in IOM.

Visibility: The core KMH visibility asset is the online Return and Reintegration Platform, which is progressively positioning itself as a global point of reference on return and reintegration.

Impact: Key stakeholders in partner countries are participating in KMH trainings and events in increasing numbers, suggesting appropriate traction and good preconditions for institutional sustainability. Capacity building activities are ongoing and there will be no time until Dec/2022 to adequately assess their long-term benefits. The availability of adequate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and knowledge management (KM) functions remains a structural issue in IOM's return and reintegration programs, which IOM seems to be more strongly addressing following on the collaboration of the KMH with the EU-IOM JI.

Sustainability: The finalization of the KMH Exit Strategy is in progress. Sustainability prospects are mixed: more positive when considering signs of strengthened capacity within IOM, more open when looking at donor resources to maintain the KMH operational.

Cross-cutting issues: KMH guidance and tools accord adequate sensitivity to gender equality, human rights and vulnerability issues.

LESSONS LEARNT FOR THE FUTURE

1: Ensuring sustainable reintegration prospects for the returning migrants requires more testing and learning to further consolidate models and practices.

2: Results are more sustainable when they support the capacity of the partner countries to facilitate the social and economic integration of the returnees, with due consideration of the interlinkages between sustainable reintegration and local development dynamics, and of the perspective and capacities of the partner countries.

3: The sustainability of current efforts on return and reintegration requires coordinated action between the players operating with a migration management perspective and those operating with a more development-oriented mindset.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KMH

1: By Dec/2022: Complete the KMH Exit Strategy, distinguishing between the continued institutionalization of M&E and KM functions within IOM and the available options for continuing the support offered by KMH.

2: By Dec/2022: With DG INTPA, organize an event to present the support offered by KMH to model and design development-oriented return and reintegration programmes/actions, and discuss coherence with other existing lines of support and KMH's added value.

3: By Dec/2022: Complete a Roadmap for the revision of the institutional M&E Package and aim for (i) adequate balance between harmonizing data collection and adapting to specific contexts; (ii) available information on the conditions under which reintegration becomes more effective and sustainable; (iii) guidance to translate lessons learnt, good practices and new knowledge into actionable points.

4: By Dec/2022: Consider translating selected KMH knowledge products into actionable inputs.

5: By Dec/2022: Develop a calendar of events to promote KMH audio-visual products beyond 2022.

6: For the future: Ensure that design is supported by a clear Theory of Change presenting change pathways and informing a univocal understanding of the links between activities and expected outcomes and impact.

7: For the future: Solicit engagement of partner countries beyond individual events and trainings.

8: For the future: Require the use of the M&E Package and continue consolidating M&E and KM capacities in IOM return and reintegration programs, for example by incorporating a research focus, and introducing good practice factsheets and end-of-activity reports presenting enabling factors and existing obstacles as well as inputs for sustaining sustainability of the results achieved, eventually informing the final exit strategy.